

# Paraguay National Day Special

## Long shared history a base for a future built on trust

**AMBASSADOR OF PARAGUAY**  
MARIO MASAYUKI TOYOTOSHI

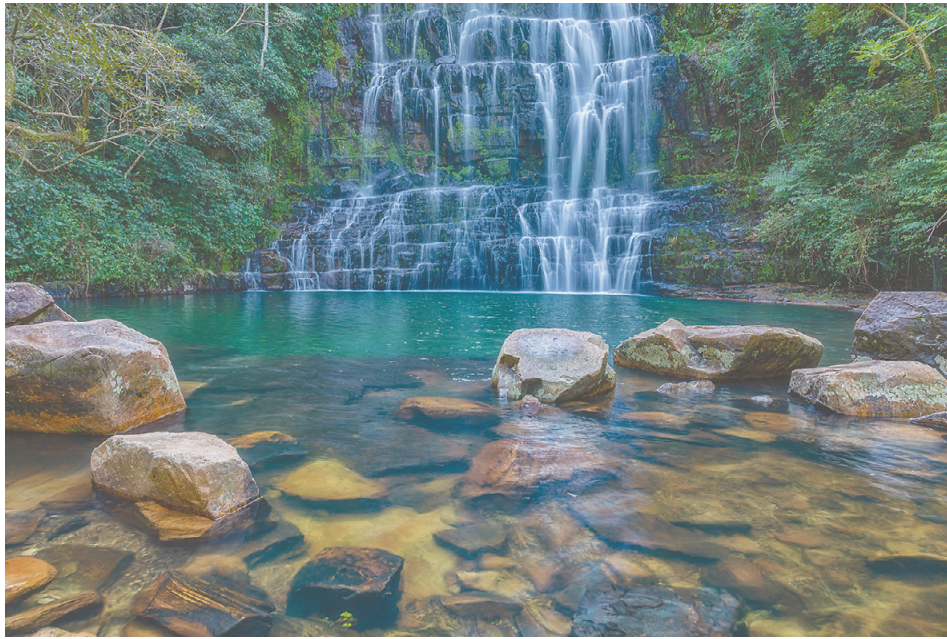


This year, Paraguay proudly commemorates the 215th anniversary of its independence on May 14 and 15, a milestone that honors the courage and determination of a people who chose

freedom and self-governance in 1811. This occasion holds special resonance in 2026 as it coincides with the 90th anniversary of the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants to Paraguay, a legacy that has profoundly shaped the bonds between our nations.

In 1936, a group of Japanese pioneers settled in the town of La Colmena, bringing with them traditions of discipline, perseverance and harmony that would leave a lasting mark on Paraguayan society. Over the decades, their descendants, the Nikkei community, became central to Paraguay's transformation into a major global food producer, particularly in soybeans, beef and grain.

Today, more than 10,000 members of the Nikkei community form a living bridge between our peoples, nurturing a shared identity where tradition and innovation coexist. To honor this milestone, 2026 features a rich calendar of commemorative activities, including cultural festivals, sporting events, the inauguration of the first Japanese Immigration Museum in Fernando de la Mora near Asuncion, and a concert of 55 Paraguayan harps in Tokyo, a powerful symbol of the cultural fusion between our nations.



Located near the town of La Colmena, the Salto Cristal Waterfall is one of the most beautiful in Paraguay. GETTY IMAGES

The bilateral relationship between Paraguay and Japan has never been stronger or more dynamic. During President Santiago Pena's historic official visit to Japan in May 2025, our leaders agreed to elevate ties to a strategic partnership, a milestone that reflects the depth of mutual trust cultivated over more than a century of diplomatic relations.

The same visit produced landmark agreements: a visa waiver program for Paraguayan citizens, a memorandum on political consultations, and the announcement of an investment pact that was formally signed in December 2025 as the Japan-Paraguay Investment Agreement. This treaty, expected to enter into force this year, creates a stronger framework for Japanese

companies seeking to expand into South America to tap Paraguay's competitive advantages: a young workforce, abundant clean energy, low taxation and direct access to Mercosur — the trade bloc comprising over 350 million consumers in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Paraguay's successful participation in Expo 2025 in Osaka, where it welcomed over 4 million visitors to its pavilion under the theme "Ikigai Paraguay: Energy that Connects," showcased the country's capacity for innovation, cultural richness and sustainable vision.

The pavilion celebrated the Nikkei legacy while presenting Paraguay as a nation carving its purpose in a rapidly changing world. From the artistry of nanduti lace to the technological ambition embodied in the Guaranisat satellite program, Paraguay demonstrated that its identity is rooted in both heritage and forward-looking aspiration.

That spirit of cooperation now extends to the frontiers of science and technology. Engineers from the Paraguayan Space Agency are currently in Japan conducting final environmental tests on the Gua-



The Palacio de Lopez in Asuncion serves as the seat of Paraguay's government. Bottom right: The National Pantheon of Heroes is a mausoleum for people of significance throughout Paraguay's history. GETTY IMAGES



The Ybytyruzu Mountains rise 500 meters above the plains below. GETTY IMAGES



raniSat-2 nanosatellite at the Kyushu Institute of Technology. Designed and assembled entirely by Paraguayan professionals trained previously in collaboration with Japan, Guaranisat-2 represents a remarkable milestone in the country's journey toward technological autonomy. Its planned launch this year will advance capabilities in agricultural monitoring and yield prediction, directly supporting Paraguay's expanding role as a food security partner for the world.

Paraguay and Japan are also united by their shared understanding of the cost of conflict and the value of peace. As a nation that endured devastating wars, including one that decimated nearly 90 percent of

its male population, Paraguay has forged a deep national commitment to dialogue, diplomacy and multilateralism. These painful lessons resonate with Japan's own postwar transformation into a principled advocate for international cooperation. In an era where the rules-based international order faces growing challenges, both nations stand firm in defence of sovereignty, democracy and the rule of law.

Looking ahead, Paraguay is uniquely positioned as a strategic gateway for Japanese engagement with the whole of South America. The development of the Bioceanic Corridor, connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans through Paraguayan territory, promises new opportunities for safe and efficient

trade routes. The Japan-Mercosur Strategic Partnership Framework, confirmed during the 2025 meeting, will further deepen commercial ties across the region.

As Paraguay celebrates its National Day in 2026, the 90th anniversary of Japanese immigration offers a moment not only of remembrance, but also of renewed purpose and shared ambition.

Ours is a friendship forged by the hands of immigrants and sustained by generations of shared effort, solidarity and mutual respect. In an increasingly complex world, Paraguay and Japan stand together, united by values and committed to building a future of peace, prosperity and human connection.

**Congratulations**  
to the People of  
the Republic of Paraguay  
on the Occasion of  
the Anniversary of  
Their Independence

**Fujikura**  
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*This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.*



The Ruins of Jesus de Tavarangue were designated a World Heritage Site in 1993. FERNANDO FRANCESCHELLI



The Salto del Monday Waterfall in Municipal Park Monday drops about 45 meters into the Parana River. FERNANDO FRANCESCHELLI

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# Paraguay National Day Special

## Agriculture, forestry, electricity fuel growth

JAPAN TIMES AGENCY

Nestled in south-central South America, the Republic of Paraguay, bordered by Argentina, Brazil and Bolivia, is known for its rich Guarani culture and traditions, agriculture, forestry and hydroelectric power.

Most Paraguayans are of mixed Spanish and Guarani ancestry, and the Guarani heritage is showcased in music, art and festivals. In its 1992 constitution, both Guarani and Spanish were designated as official languages and speaking Guarani is a point of pride for Paraguayans, with about 90% understanding the language.

Geographically, the country is divided by the Paraguay River, which runs from the north to the south, splitting the country into eastern and western regions. The eastern region is characterized by rolling hills, plateaus and mountains and a dense network of navigable rivers. The area's rich fertile soil has long made it an ideal region for agriculture and habitation. The eastern region is by far the most populated area of

the country, and is home to the country's major cities, with many of the people living within 200 kilometers of the capital of Asuncion.

Although it accounts for about 60% of the country's landmass, the western region is less populated, relatively flat, arid and is primarily made up of plains and dry forests.

Agriculture, cattle and forestry account for about a quarter of the gross domestic product of the Paraguayan economy, with soybeans, cotton, corn, wheat, sugarcane and cotton taking the lead in terms of farmed products. Paraguay is among the top 10 exporters of organic sugar, stevia and soybeans.

Beef is also major Paraguayan export, with the country sending upwards of 350 million kilograms of beef to more than 50 markets around the world in 2024. Beef, along with Paraguay's other agricultural exports, are helping to foster the country's growth as a stable food supplier.

Paraguay is home to around 200,000 hectares of forest plantations, with euca-

lyptus and pine dominating due to their rapid growth cycles and commercial viability. In recent years, the industry has shifted from raw materials to processed products: mainly plywood, sawn timber, biomass and charcoal.

Another important factor in the Paraguayan economy is electricity. As of 2021, 100% of the country's electricity was generated from the Itaipu, Yacyreta and Acaray hydroelectric projects. By harnessing power provided by rivers, Paraguay has been able to utilize its hydropower generation to become an electricity exporter to neighboring countries.

While the country continues to nurture its traditional economy, Paraguay is also moving forward in technology, expanding its GuaraniSat satellite program with the launch of the GuaraniSat-2 planned for later this year.

*This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy and references excerpts from The Asuncion Times and industry sources.*



The Saint Claire Cathedral is a historic Roman Catholic church in the city of Villarrica. GETTY IMAGES

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