

Jamaica Independence Day Special

Strong friendships support a resilient future

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CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF JAMAICA



On Aug. 6, Jamaica proudly celebrates its 64th anniversary of independence under the theme “United in Celebrating Resilience.” This proudly honors what it means to be Jamaican.

Resilience has long defined our national character and is reflected in our determination to persevere in the face of adversity, our courage to rebuild after setbacks and our unwavering confidence in a future filled with hope and optimism.

Over the past year, that resilience was tested. The passage of Hurricane Melissa in October 2025 brought significant devastation to communities across Jamaica, disrupting hundreds of thousands of lives and livelihoods.

Jamaica suffered damage and loss estimated at \$12.23 billion (¥1.952 trillion), equivalent to 56.7% of our gross domestic product in 2024. This staggering figure underscores the scale of the devastation



The Bob Marley museum in Kingston celebrates the singer's life.
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and the challenge ahead as Jamaica continues the long process of national recovery and reconstruction. Nevertheless, the enduring spirit of the Jamaican people continues to shine brightly, exemplifying the strength, determination and unity that have long defined our nation.

In moments such as these, we are reminded that resilience is strengthened by partnership and sustained by friendship. Jamaica and Japan have nurtured *kizuna* (bonds) founded on mutual respect, shared values and genuine affection between our peoples. Japan has been a steadfast partner, not only providing immediate assistance after Hurricane Melissa, but, over the longer term, supporting Jamaica's development goals to build more resilient communities and sustainable infrastructure over the 62 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations. Thank you, Japan.

As island nations, Jamaica and Japan share the realities of a changing climate that make devastating natural disasters more likely. Jamaica therefore appreciates Japan's continued collaboration in advocating for meaningful international climate-conscious policies and a practical global architecture that allows for climate financing and, importantly, ensures its accessibility.

The enduring bonds of friendship between our countries are best exemplified through our people-to-people connections, bound by a shared love of Jamaican culture, reggae music and food. These are strengthened by the many Jamaicans in Japan who continue to build bridges across cultural and language differences.

These bonds are further evident in the friendship between Tottori Prefecture and Westmoreland Parish, which this year marks the 10th anniversary of their sister-city partnership. Over the past decade, this relationship has fostered meaningful

exchanges in education, sports and culture, bringing our peoples closer.

The past year also deepened the partnership between our countries. The 2025 World Expo in Osaka provided Jamaica with a remarkable platform to showcase our rich culture, dynamic people and boundless creativity, welcoming more than 1.9 million visitors to the Jamaica Pavilion. It was a source of immense pride that the Jamaica Pavilion received the Silver Award for Pavilion Theme Development, a testament to our nation's creativity and ability to connect with global audiences through the powerful theme “Out of Many, One People: Let's Link Up.”

Likewise, the 2025 World Athletics Championships in Tokyo provided another opportunity to deepen our connections through sport. Jamaica's athletes delivered outstanding performances, encouraged by the extraordinary warmth and support of the Japanese people, particularly in Tottori Prefecture, where long-standing support for our athletes has become a shining example of grassroots diplomacy.

As Jamaica commemorates 64 years of independence, we do so with profound gratitude for the steadfast solidarity of our friends and partners and the enduring bonds of friendship that unite Jamaica and Japan.

Inspired by our resilience, determination and indomitable spirit, we remain confident in our ability to build a stronger, more resilient and prosperous future for generations of Jamaicans to come.

Happy Independence Day, Jamaica! One love.

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



Far left: A view of the sunset from Strawberry Hill in Jamaica; Left: Senator Kamina Johnson Smith, minister of foreign affairs and foreign trade, poses with Tottori Prefecture Gov. Shinji Hirai and his wife at the Osaka Expo in 2025.

CAREY SAMPSON;
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
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Congratulations to Jamaica on its Independence Anniversary

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