

Georgia Independence Day Special

Growth marked by ongoing cooperation

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More than a century ago, on May 26, 1918, Georgia declared independence from the Russian Empire and established the first Democratic Republic of Georgia. Unfortunately, this

was followed by Soviet occupation in 1921, but finally, our country declared the restoration of independence in 1991. It needs to be mentioned from the very outset that Japan was one of the first countries to recognize the independence of our country first on Jan. 27, 1921, and then again on Aug. 3, 1992.

Since the first days of our independence, Georgia and Japan have maintained excellent political relations. The Japanese government and people have been providing Georgia with enormous support on our journey of democratic and economic transformation. Both of our countries are old

nations with unique cultures and traditions that we have managed to preserve until now, while developing modern societies based on common values of democracy, freedom, human rights and a liberal, open economy.

Although Georgia faced several challenging years, today, we are one of the most progressive countries in the region. According to prominent international rankings, we are leading performers in many important fields, such as building a safe and secure environment, a liberal and flexible tax system, an exceptionally positive investment climate and so on. Georgia's favorable business environment is also reinforced by its strategic geopolitical location and free trade agreements with the European Union, neighboring countries and other major regional or global players.

Achievements of Georgian people were presented to Japanese business circles during the recent Georgian-Japanese business forum, held on March 15, at the Japan External Trade Organization's headquarters. The forum turned out to be exceptionally successful and we are delighted to be witnessing increased interest in Georgia

from Japanese companies. Furthermore, it is also notable that we are on the verge of signing a bilateral investment treaty between our countries that will establish additional safeguards and special conditions for Japanese companies to start their business activities in Georgia.

I am delighted that our countries have significantly intensified cooperation in political affairs, our economies, culture and education. The recent months have been especially active and included the exchange of a number of political visits at the highest level, the latest of which was the visit of Japan's Foreign Minister Taro Kono on Sept. 4 and 5 to Tbilisi and the visit of Prime Minister of Georgia Mamuka Bakhtadze to Tokyo from March 13 to 15.

I am proud to mention that intensification of already positive cooperation led to successful projects such as the recent exhibition "Georgia Homeland of Wine," that was held in Tokyo from March 10 to May 7. The exhibition, together with numerous side events, significantly boosted the popularity of Georgian wine and cuisine while acting as a widespread introduction to our culture, traditions and modern lifestyle at



The town of Sighnaghi and Alazani Valley are centers of wine making.
EMBASSY OF GEORGIA

the same time.

In the end, I would like to once again express my sincere gratitude to the Japanese government and people for their valuable contribution to Georgia's development, as well as strong support of our sovereignty and territorial integrity. I express my firm belief that our exemplary partnership based on the principles of mutual respect and equality will be further developed and enriched in the years to come.

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

**Congratulations
to the people of
Georgia on their
Independence Day**

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