

# Panama Independence Day Special

## Desire to further strengthen bilateral ties

**CARLOS PERE**  
AMBASSADOR OF PANAMA



On behalf of the government of the Republic of Panama, my first words are to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all Panamanian nationals in Japan and all Japanese people

with whom we share friendship, from our small but neutral and serviceable country Panama on this 117th anniversary of our Independence Day, on Nov. 3, 2020.

I would also like to express our greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and all our dear friends, members of the Japan-Panama Parliamentary Friendship League.

In these times of tribulation, pandemic, re-adaptation and difficulty overseeing a bright future, I hope that citizens around the world remain in good health and are successful in overcoming this epidemic.

This year has not been easy. On a personal level, the pandemic has reinforced even more how important the family nucleus is and how indispensable cooperation and friendship are for a better life together. We will surely move forward and reinvent ourselves for a bright future.

Although Panama's separation from Colombia is celebrated today, little is known about Panama celebrating many patriotic holidays in November. For this reason, Panamanians call November "the patriotic month."

In 1502, Christopher Columbus arrived in what is now the Caribbean port city

of Portobelo on the Isthmus of Panama during his fourth and last historic voyage of discovery across the Atlantic.

Annual dates of significance in November are the National Anthem of Panama (Nov. 1); Separation of Panama from Colombia (Nov. 3 since 1903); National Symbols Day (Nov. 4); First Shout of Independence or "La Villa de los Santos" (Nov. 10 since 1821); and the Independence of Panama from Spain (Nov. 28 since 1821). Celebrations of the foundations of different local cities are also held.

Many think that Panama's connectivity is because of the canal, but history has shown that the isthmus has held its own rich multicultural territory due to the arrival of many foreigners. No less important are the indigenous tribes of Panama.

While Panama seems young, it boasts a long commercial history. Such traffic has been seen in Colon, at Portobelo, the Camino de Cruces, Panama la Vieja and Tacita de Oro, among many more historical places.

This history has enriched our multicultural character and is symbolized in the national motto found on Panama's coat of arms, "Pro Mundi Beneficio" (For the Benefit of the World).

Panama has become the home and interest of many hearts. Its geographical advantage is its prime location in the Americas.

The government has hence promoted several hubs, such as digital, logistics, academic, cold chain, banking, transportation and other commercial services, organizations and institutions.

Panama, serving also as a humanitarian hub, has set the task of increasingly improving its standards, norms and facilities to make merit of the national motto

for any state or international organization that needs it in these pandemic times.

This is why Panama never closed the canal nor its humanitarian hub to help the region. During this pandemic, Panama has gone from being quarantined to currently being open and operating as a transit hub for those traveling by air to the rest of the region.

Our friendship with Japan formally began with the establishment of diplomatic relations on Jan. 15, 1904. United by the Pacific Ocean, we currently have nine bilateral agreements and wish to further increase and strengthen our alliance because in the end it is not the quantity but the effectiveness of these documents and the reciprocity between us that is fundamental.

Unfortunately, this year we could not hold our beloved golf tournament with our Japanese friends and shipping users, many of whom have trusted and sup-

ported Panama over many years. Panama today boasts 60% of the flagging of Japanese ships. The attention and service shown to such users, clients and friends is important to us. While we will not have a celebration party in Tokyo nor a maritime golf tournament this year, we will resume such activities when the situation improves globally.

We are sure that as Panamanians, we carry the party in our hearts, and we hope that The Japan Times readers can also enjoy and share in a series of videos that the Panamanian National Government has created. We will announce details on the embassy's website and social media platforms, so please stay connected with our embassy.

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



A bulk carrier is pulled by a tugboat through the Panama Canal. The canal uses a system of locks that function as water elevators, raising the ships from sea level.

PANAMA CANAL  
AUTHORITY

The Panama Canal is an 82-km-long artificial waterway that connects the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. It opened in 1914 and is the second-busiest international commerce canal in the world. PANAMA CANAL AUTHORITY

## Congratulations on the Anniversary of the Independence of the Republic of Panama

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