

Argentina National Day Special

Bonds built on friendly cooperation

ALAN BERAUD
AMBASSADOR OF ARGENTINA



Today, May 25, Argentina celebrates its National Day and this year, Argentina and Japan are celebrating 120 years of friendship since diplomatic relations were established in 1898. It is a perfect

occasion for a double celebration.

Argentina and Japan have built a very strong relationship in the last two years after becoming strategic partners in November 2016 when Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Buenos Aires. This strategic partnership provided a new framework for deepening political, economic, trade and investment ties, in



addition to traditional, people-to-people connections. Last May, President Mauricio Macri reciprocated Abe's visit within six months, solidifying the intensity of our relationship.

The 120th anniversary of diplomatic relations has both countries committed to the defense of multilateralism and the inter-

national trade system. In addition to their own, Abe and Macri plan to attend each other's Group of 20 summits. Currently, Buenos Aires is preparing to host the next G-20 summit and the Osaka one will follow, as will several major international events that Argentina and Japan will or hope to host. Among them are this year's Summer Youth Olympics and Expo 2023 to be held in Buenos Aires, as well as Osaka's bid to lead Expo 2025.

For over 130 years, Argentina has been home to many Japanese who have contributed their cultural richness and values of respect, order and work to the forging of the Argentine spirit. The Argentine-Japanese community of around 54,000 is the third-largest in Latin America.

The reinforced relationship between both countries has resulted in significant achievements. A strengthened mechanism of politi-

cal consultations was agreed upon, the Japan External Trade Organization designated a permanent representative based in Argentina and new loans for the public sector are being granted by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation. In addition to this, a bilateral investment treaty is expected to be signed by the end of this year, while an agreement to avoid double taxation is being negotiated. Wagyu from Japan and fresh beef and lamb from Patagonia will also be available in our respective markets by the end of July.

This new stage in the bilateral relationship is accompanied by a regulatory framework that promotes the business environment for trade and investment in Argentina. The economy is growing at an annualized rate of around 3 percent, taxation is being reduced, public deficit and inflation are declining, while employment is robust and investment grew 11 percent last year.

Measures adopted domestically are being matched in the international arena. Argentina is reassuming a leading position in Latin America, strengthening the Mercosur (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay) regional market's links to the Pacific Alliance's Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru. Following talks with the EU, Mercosur is currently negotiating with Canada and South Korea on economic partnership agreements. Additionally, with support from Japan, Argentina is in the process of joining the Organisation for Economic Co-



Argentine President Mauricio Macri (second from left) and his wife Juliana Awada pose with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his wife Akie at a reception in Tokyo in May 2017. PRESIDENCY OF ARGENTINA

operation and Development.

Argentina offers a business opportunity for Japanese companies focusing on the domestic, regional and global markets. As our president said to Japanese business representatives during his visit to Japan last May: "It is difficult to find another country in the world with the potential for growth that Argentina has." In fact, during the last two years, the number of Japanese companies in Argentina went up 50 percent and Japanese investments reached \$1.3 billion last year. Business opportunities are brilliant, particularly in areas of high growth such as the food industry, automobile industry, shale oil and gas, and mining.

Argentina is also a leading tourist destination in Latin America, possessing incredible diversity. Twelve natural and cultural entities have been declared World Heritage sites. Argentina is ready to surprise readers and is ready to be visited and be loved.

We launched the celebration of the 120th

anniversary of our friendship with a special run of Fuerza Bruta Wal, an Argentine show that was adapted for Japan and enjoyed great success. Another cultural celebration was Argentine artist Leandro Erlich's exhibition "Seeing and Believing" at the Mori Art Museum that drew around 600,000 visitors; the second-largest exhibition in the museum's history. Selected tango performances, sports activities, cultural festivals and other celebration activities will also take place this year.

The 120th anniversary is an opportunity to not only celebrate our historic friendship, but to build a much brighter future in all areas of our partnership as we encourage Argentine and Japanese people to work together for the benefit of our two countries.

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

Bilateral business agreement in the works

KEN KOBAYASHI
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-ARGENTINA BUSINESS COOPERATION COMMITTEE



On behalf of the Japan-Argentina Business Cooperation Committee, I am delighted to extend my warmest congratulations to the people and government of Argentina as the country celebrates its

May Revolution Day.

This year marks the 120th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Argentina. Argentina has long been an important partner for Japan, and our countries have enjoyed an amicable

relationship. Economically, our ties remain important through the trade of various products, as well as investment in several sectors.

His Excellency Mauricio Macri, Argentina's president, has made a series of bold economic and trade reforms since taking office in December 2015, successfully restoring the country's access to international financial markets, and driving forward an open trade and investment policy. We think that the current vitalization of the Mercosur — Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — region's open trade policy, such as economic partnership agreement (EPA) negotiations with other countries and regions, reflects this initiative.

Our committee's recent activities include a meeting of the Japan-Argentina Joint Business Conference to commemorate Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to Argentina in November 2016, and a convening of the Japan-Argentina

Economic Forum in May 2017, to coincide with Macri's visit to Japan. On May 28, we will hold the 25th Japan-Argentina Joint Business Conference in Buenos Aires to commemorate our 120 years of diplomatic relations.

The theme of the conference will be "Present and Future," and among the main issues to be addressed are the Japan-Mercosur EPA and cooperation in promising sectors such as the "internet of things" and artificial intelligence resources, energy and agriculture. We will be issuing a joint statement at the conclusion of the conference.

This is an important year for Argentina, and I wish the country nothing but success as it prepares to host the G-20 summit for the first time. There is so much that Japan and Argentina are capable of achieving together, and as JABCC chairman, I pledge our utmost support to our South American friends.



Iguazu Falls, the world's biggest waterfall located on the border of Argentina and Brazil, is seen from Misiones province, Argentina. ARGENTINA TRAVEL, OFFICIAL TOURIST SITE



Top: At the annual Tango Festival in Buenos Aires in August, Argentinians and tourists alike enjoy performing and watching the country's most famous dance. Above: Barbecued meats known as asado are popular in Argentina. GOVERNMENT OF THE CITY OF BUENOS AIRES

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on the Anniversary of
Their National day

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