

Ireland-Japan relations reach important milestone in 2025

By Damien Cole

Ambassador of Ireland to Japan

Greetings to the readers of The Japan News on St. Patrick's Day 2025! Every year, Ireland's national day on March 17 is celebrated by 70 million people of Irish heritage and by our friends and partners around the world, including here in Japan.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to Minister Hildegard Naughton, Minister of State attending Cabinet with responsibility for Disability, who will represent the Government of Ireland at St. Patrick's Day events in Japan this year. During an intensive program, she will engage with political, economic and cultural counterparts and lead the 30th St. Patrick's Day Parade in Tokyo on Sunday, March 16.



Damien Cole

This annual festival is a time to reflect on the strong political, economic, cultural and academic media partnerships that have brought Ireland and Japan closer together. I extend my gratitude to all who have contributed to fostering these ties over the years.

Ireland and Japan's relationship reaches an important milestone in 2025 with the imminent completion of Ireland House in Yotsuya, Tokyo. This new hub will serve as a platform to promote Ireland as a top destination to live, work, study, visit and do business. Additionally, we are excited about Ireland's pavilion at the 2025 Osaka-Kansai Expo, which will highlight the power of creativity to connect people, showcasing Ireland's strengths in innovation, sustainability and cultural heritage to a global audience.

I am delighted that the vibrant and diverse program of the Tokyo Parade on Omotesando and the Green Ireland Festival in Yoyogi Park, combine to represent the oldest and largest annual St. Patrick's Day celebration in Asia.

Beyond Tokyo, lively community groups, marching bands, parades and the illumination of landmarks in green from Yokohama to Matsue and Sapporo to Kumamoto, will bring the Irish spirit to cities across Japan.

These events are a testament to the hard work and dedication of the Irish community, friends and volunteers who make them possible. Without a doubt, Japan is one of the best places in the world to celebrate St. Patrick's Day!

As a small, highly open trading economy with a strong global outlook, Ireland is committed to the value of an open and fair trading system. Free and fair trade brings economic opportunities, creates well-paid jobs, fosters innovation and builds economic resilience — essential for small states like Ireland to thrive and prosper.

Commitment to shared values and the rules-based international order makes Japan Ireland's most important partner in Asia. This is particularly true of economic

relations, and trade and investment. The benefits from our economic ties flow in both directions, to our mutual benefit. Two-way trade between Japan and Ireland now exceeds €22 billion. This is a result of the economic compatibility between Ireland and Japan in the fields of ICT, Life Sciences, Financial Services, Fintech and the Green Economy.

Foreign direct investment from Japanese companies into Ireland continues to grow. These investments come in the areas of semiconductors, technology services, financial services and medical technology. We welcome the fact that Japanese companies continue to establish and expand operations in Ireland.

Ireland and Japan share a deep commitment to international peace and security, and a rules-based multilateral system. Last month we marked the third anniversary of Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine. Ireland's message is clear — we stand in solidarity with Ukraine, now and in the future. We believe we have taken a principled position in the Middle East too. We firmly condemn the heinous terrorist attack by Hamas on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. We call for the return of all hostages to their families. In Gaza, it is vital that we do not see a resumption of hostilities, and that the massive scale-up of desperately needed



Above, Hildegard Naughton, Ireland's Minister of State attending Cabinet with responsibility for Disability; right, St. Patrick's Day Parade in Tokyo in 2024



humanitarian aid continues.

There are undoubtedly deep and complex challenges to navigate over the months and years ahead. But there are opportunities, too, if we approach these challenges in a constructive and collaborative fashion

and use our multilateral and international institutions to forge consensus and unleash potential. There is a famous Irish saying that reads "Ní héart go cur le chéile — There is no strength without unity."

Lá Fhéile Pádraig sona daoibh go léir!

Happy St. Patrick's Day from Team Ireland in Japan!



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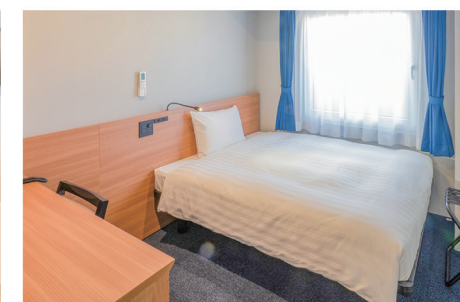
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