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Prime Minister's Cabinet News



Prime Minister Abe Attends Japan-EU and G20 Summits

From July 6th to July 8th, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe participated in two different international summits, the Japan-EU Summit and the G20 Summit.

The Japan-EU summit focused on two agreements, the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement and the Strategic Partnership Agreement. Prime Minister Abe expressed that "the EPA is a comprehensive, high-level and balanced agreement that will further contribute to encouraging international trade and investment, will be of great benefit for Japanese and EU citizens, and will serve as a model for economic order of the 21st century on the basis of free and fair rules." The Strategic Partnership Agreement strengthens EU-Japan relations and collaboration to effectively meet international challenges.

At the G20 Summit, Prime Minister Abe participated in multiple discussion sessions, including leading the first discussion, "Economic Growth and Trade". This year's theme was "Shaping an Interconnected World" and the main topics were creating economic growth, fighting global climate change, countering terrorism, and promoting women's empowerment. Prime Minister Abe reaffirmed his support for all of these causes, and participated in an event to launch the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative. At the summit, it was also decided that Japan will be the G20 Presidency for 2019.

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Greetings from Consul Masatoshi Sato

Although two months have passed since I assumed the position of the Head of the Consular Office of Japan in Anchorage, let me take this opportunity to introduce myself.



For the past two months, I have already been enjoying Alaska's natural beauty. I have also discovered the people of Alaska to be welcoming and friendly. At the same time, my wife and I are hoping that we will be able to survive the winter in Alaska because we are too accustomed to warm weather; we were in Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean for nearly three years before coming here. I was Minister-Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Japan in Trinidad and Tobago; I was also accredited to Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Guyana and Suriname. I wonder how many of these countries you happen to know.

I'm pleased to learn that Alaska and Japan have enjoyed cordial relations for many years. Now, the Government of Japan considers the Alaska-Japan partnership as having growing strategic importance in the light of recent developments in Asia and the Pacific such as ballistic missile launches by North Korea, and China's show of strength in East and South China Seas. I truly look forward to working closely with you to maintain and even strengthening further the Alaska-Japan partnership.

Masatoshi Sato (Mr.)
Head of Office
Consular Office of Japan in Anchorage

Cultural Notes: Tanabata



Tanabata festival in Sendai, the central city of the Tohoku region (NTV)

One of Japan's traditional festivals is the Tanabata (i), or Star Festival. The origin of Tanabata traces back to the legend of Altair, the Cowherd Star, and Vega, the Weaver Star, two lovers separated by the Milky Way. They could only meet once a year, on the 7th day of the 7th lunar month.

Tanabata is typically celebrated on July 7. Some areas of Japan celebrate Tanabata on August 7 since it is closer to the 7th day of the 7th month on the lunar calendar.

Most celebrations involve writing wishes on narrow strips of paper called *tanzaku* (i), which are then attached to bamboo branches. The cities of Sendai in the Miyagi prefecture and Hinataoka in the Kanagawa prefecture are particularly famous for their large, colorful Tanabata decorations.

Japanese Summer Festival



Please join the Consular Office of Japan in Anchorage and the Japan-Alaska Association for the 2017 Japanese Summer Festival on Saturday, August 5th at the University of Alaska Anchorage Cuddy Hall. Come celebrate Japanese culture, food, dance, and more!

For more information, visit the [Japan-Alaska Association Facebook page](#).

2017 JET Departure Luncheon



On Friday, July 28, the Consular Office of Japan held its pre-departure luncheon for the 2017 JET Program participants. This year, six Alaskans went to Japan. Four participants are Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) who will teach English in schools throughout Japan, and two participants are Coordinators for International Relations (CIRs) who will work with local Japanese government to promote internationalization.

We interviewed the JET participants about their interest in Japan, and what they hope to achieve during and after the JET program. You can read the full interviews on our website through the link below.

[Read Full Interview](#)