



From Japan to the Northwest

News From the Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle



Our monthly newsletter, "From Japan to the Northwest," is intended to share important and interesting information related to Japan, our region, and the Consulate's activities.

You can find [past issues of the newsletter here](#).



Credit: Toyama Prefecture Tourism Website

Welcome to the April 2025 edition of From Japan to the Northwest!

In this edition, we cover the opening of Expo 2025 in Osaka, Japan's response to the U.S.-levied tariffs, and a meeting between Prime Minister Ishiba and NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte. Locally, the Consulate participated in the Seattle Cherry Blossom & Japanese Cultural Festival and Sakura-Con, and DCG Sumi was featured in an article in the *North American Post*. Be sure to read to the end for links to video recaps and full articles!

We will continue a **once-a-month publication schedule** to bring you the most important news from Japan and our region. Please be sure to **follow us on social media by clicking the icons below** for more frequent updates on local Japan-related events and the Consulate's activities.



1. Expo 2025 Osaka

The Expo is Officially Open!



Credit: Prime Minister's Office of Japan

Visit to the Venue of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan



Credit: Prime Minister's Office of Japan

On April 5, 2025, Prime Minister Ishiba observed the test run of Expo 2025, Osaka, Kansai, Japan, in Osaka City, Osaka Prefecture.

The Prime Minister held a discussion with participants of the “World CatchBall Project” held on the 4th and observed the Czechia Pavilion.

Afterwards, the Prime Minister took the stage at “Mynavi TGC in EXPO 2025” and delivered remarks. He then visited the “Future City” Pavilion and met with Mr. YOSHIMURA Hirofumi, Governor of Osaka. Finally, he spoke to the press regarding his visit to the venue of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan and other matters.

Opening Ceremony of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan



Credit: Prime Minister's Office of Japan

On April 12, 2025, Prime Minister Ishiba attended the opening ceremony of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, held in Osaka City, Osaka Prefecture, in the gracious presence of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress and Their Imperial Highnesses Crown Prince and Crown Princess Akishino.

The Prime Minister delivered an address at the opening ceremony in his capacity as Honorary Chairperson of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. Following the opening ceremony, he visited the Osaka Healthcare Pavilion, met with the Thematic Project Producers of the Expo, and then held a meeting with Mr. Dimitri Kerkentzes, Secretary General, Bureau International des Expositions (BIE). Finally, in the gracious presence of Their Imperial Highnesses Crown Prince and Crown Princess

Akishino, the Prime Minister attended a reception held in Osaka City and delivered remarks.

2. Japan's Response to U.S. Tariffs

Press Conference by Prime Minister ISHIBA Shigeru regarding Tariff Measures of the United States and Other Matters

Following U.S. President Trump's announcement of new tariffs—24% on Japanese goods and 25% on automobiles—citing exaggerated claims about Japan's rice tariffs, Prime Minister Ishiba laid out a comprehensive response addressing both economic and diplomatic dimensions.

The Prime Minister criticized the U.S. tariffs as unilateral, regrettable, and potentially in violation of World Trade Organization (WTO) rules and the Japan-U.S. Trade Agreement. He highlighted Japan's significant investment in the U.S., especially by automobile companies (\$61.6 billion, 2.3 million jobs). He clarified that most imported rice is tariff-free or subject to a lower tariff (341 yen/kg), not 700% as claimed by President Trump. Japan has used various diplomatic channels to urge the U.S. to reconsider the measures and remains open to direct communication between leaders if necessary.

As a short term solution, 1,000 locations will be set up to support affected small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and businesses, especially in the auto sector. There will also be relaxed loan conditions from the Japan Finance Corporation and expanded insurance support via Nippon Export and Investment Insurance (NEXI).

Prime Minister Ishiba met with Liberal Democratic Party Policy Chief Itsunori Onodera to coordinate a government-party response. Ministers and officials will be dispatched to key regions of Japan while a ministerial meeting will be held to ensure swift, unified action. Prime Minister Ishiba committed to protecting Japan's economy and industries through strong domestic support and persistent diplomatic engagement, while keeping open the option of direct dialogue with President Trump.

Japan-U.S. Summit Telephone Talk

On April 7th, Mr. ISHIBA Shigeru, Prime Minister of Japan, held a summit telephone talk with the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President of the United States of America. The overview of the talk is as follows.

Prime Minister Ishiba confirmed with President Trump that, building on the outcomes of the Japan-U.S. Summit Meeting in February, the two leaders would further develop

the overall Japan-U.S. relations and cooperate with each other to realize a free and open Indo-Pacific.

On economy, Prime Minister Ishiba stated that Japan has been the world's largest investor in the U.S. for five consecutive years, expressed strong concerns that the tariff measures by the U.S. could weaken investment capacity among Japanese companies, and conveyed his view that the two countries should pursue ways to promote broader cooperation that benefits both Japan and the United States in a mutual manner, including enhancement of investment, rather than imposing tariffs, and urged a reconsideration of the measures. The two leaders confirmed that they will continue to have candid and constructive discussions.

Comprehensive Response Headquarters for U.S. Tariff Measures



Credit: Prime Minister's Office of Japan

The first meeting of the Comprehensive Response Headquarters for U.S. Tariff Measures was held on April 8, 2025. Prime Minister Ishiba emphasized Japan's deep concern over the unilateral trade restrictions imposed by the U.S., highlighting their serious impact on Japan-U.S. economic relations, the global economy, and the multilateral trading system.

Ishiba called the new tariffs, including reciprocal ones, regrettable and possibly inconsistent with WTO rules and the Japan-U.S. Trade Agreement. He stressed the importance of the automobile, steel, and aluminum industries to Japan's economy and warned of broader industrial impacts.

Prime Minister Ishiba asked the ministers to examine all U.S. tariff measures and analyze their impact on Japan while continuing to urge the U.S. to reconsider. Prime Minister Ishiba confirmed he had a phone call with President Trump, where both sides agreed to maintain constructive discussions. Finally, he asked the ministers to maintain and expand support measures, including financial assistance for domestic industries hit by the tariffs.

Ishiba called for a unified, government-wide response, urging ministers to collaborate closely across agencies to protect Japan's economy and engage in ongoing diplomatic efforts.

3. Japan and NATO Relations

Meeting between Prime Minister Ishiba and NATO Secretary General Rutte



Credit: Prime Minister's Office of Japan

Prime Minister Ishiba met with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte during his visit to Japan. The meeting lasted 45 minutes, followed by a joint press conference and an 85-minute working dinner. Foreign Minister Iwaya and Defense Minister Nakatani also participated. A joint statement was issued.

Prime Minister Ishiba welcomed Secretary General Rutte's first visit to the Indo-Pacific and emphasized the inseparable link between Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific security. Both leaders agreed on the growing importance of cooperation between NATO and Indo-Pacific partners, particularly Japan. The Secretary

General expressed his intent to deepen NATO-Japan ties, especially in defense industry collaboration.

The Prime Minister stated a strong NATO also benefits Japan and praised Secretary General Rutte's leadership. Both parties agreed the Japan-NATO partnership is strategically vital, and committed to enhancing cooperation in the defense industry, cybersecurity, maritime security, strategic communications, and interoperability.

On the topic of global security, they discussed Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its cooperation with North Korea and the importance of diplomacy for lasting peace in Ukraine. Prime Minister Ishiba also emphasized Japan's support for Ukraine and the Secretary General spoke of NATO's appreciation of that support.

On the topic of east Asia, the two parties shared concern over North Korea's missile and cyber activities, including cryptocurrency theft and how it funds weapons programs. Secretary General Rutte voiced support to Japan's call for resolving the North Korean abductions issue. Both sides stressed the need for like-minded nations to coordinate responses to evolving regional security threats, particularly involving Russia and North Korea.

The meeting marked a step forward in Japan-NATO strategic cooperation, with both sides pledging closer coordination on defense, security, and global peace efforts.

4. Consulate News & Activities

[Seattle Cherry Blossom & Japanese Cultural Festival](#)



Credit: Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle

Check out our recap of the 2025 [Seattle Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival](#) — three days of cultural performances, interactive activities, and community fun at [Seattle Center](#)!

<https://youtu.be/UOggyGLw4PE?si=ajz0mTr2h2tr8pY5>

[Sakura-Con 2025](#)



Credit: Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle

At Sakura-Con 2025, our opening ceremony skit brought big laughs by showing the difference between kowai (scary) and kawaii (cute)—with a samurai caught in the middle of the mix!

<https://youtu.be/ZqMtrIWEUgU>

Video courtesy of Sakura-Con and 71 Productions

Deputy Consul General Junichi Sumi's Interview

On April 25, an interview article featuring Deputy Consul General Sumi was published in the *North American Post*. This is the English version of the interview that originally appeared in the March issue of *SoySource*. Check out both versions of the article at the links below!

North American Post interview (English): <https://napost.com/2025/interview-04252025/>

Original *SoySource* interview (Japanese): <https://soysource.net/interview/interview-02282025/>

Thank you for reading this issue of "From Japan to the Northwest." That's all for this month's newsletter. Until next month!

Sincerely,
Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle

View [past issues of "From Japan to the Northwest" here.](#)

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