

## MESSAGE FROM CONSUL-GENERAL SASAYAMA TAKUYA

December 2022

We are now into December, and the end of the year is approaching. It is also the Holiday Season, which means various events are taking place in and around Toronto. I would like to begin by reporting on one related to the soccer World Cup held once every four years

### **Public Viewing Event at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre**

On Dec. 1, a public viewing of the World Cup games between Canada and Morocco and between Japan and Spain was held at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (JCCC). I was given the opportunity to convey greetings to everyone at the start of the match between Japan and Spain. I borrowed the uniform of the Japanese national team to give my remarks. In this very important match, which decided the team that would make it through the qualifying rounds, Japan came up from behind to win against the powerhouse favourite Spain, a one-time World Cup champion. It was a match that turned the “tragedy of Doha” into “joy”.

Many families, some with soccer kids, were in attendance, and there were participants representing various communities other than Japan and Spain. It was a moment when we all became one through sports – a truly valuable experience.





The next World Cup will take place in North America. I also understand the number of participating countries will increase to 48. Canada has been announced as a host country with games in Toronto and Vancouver. Various preparations are already under way. I expect sports will grow even more exciting in four years' time.

### **Visit to Canada by Iwate Governor TASSO Takuya**

I have reported regularly on the Japanese cuisine (washoku) boom in Ontario and Toronto, as well as on the growing interest in Japanese food products. Iwate is among the prefectures in Japan that has been paying attention to such trends. Iwate Governor TASSO Takuya visited Canada from Dec. 11, starting in Toronto and also visiting Ottawa, Montreal and Vancouver, in order to promote his region's excellent food ingredients.

The CPTPP, in which Japan and Canada both take part, is already in force. There are items of which tariffs will be gradually reduced after the year of implementation. For example, Canadian tariffs on frozen beef imports from Japan will be eliminated in January 2023. On Dec. 12, I held a reception at my official residence with focus on the excellent products of Iwate Prefecture, particularly Iwate beef, rice known as Ginga no Shizuku (Droplets of Galaxy), apples, and the celebrated Nanbubijin (Southern Beauty) sake.

Guests included representatives of restaurants around Toronto that are already using such products from Iwate, as well as other industry representatives and those who were considering purchasing these products in the future. All were asked to sample the food.

Though the December weather was cold, the atmosphere in the official residence was full of heated energy, not to mention the aroma of various food in the air. The guests were delighted by the wonderful ingredients, and the Governor expressed appreciation to everyone using food products from Iwate, also approaching those who were considering using them in the future. I feel it was a tremendously significant and well-received event.

The Government of Canada recently released its new Indo-Pacific Policy, which emphasized strengthening ties with Japan. I hope that initiatives like this will not only promote Iwate food products in Canada, but also strengthen greater Japan-Canada relations.

The fourth year of Reiwa is coming to an end. This year started with the spread of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, resulting in Ontario returning to lockdown a number of times. The situation gradually improved, however, and by October Japan was also easing its border measures. I would like to thank everyone who took the time to read this monthly report over the past year. The Consulate-General of Japan would like to continue next year to share pertinent information that comes to our attention and do so from a variety of perspectives, such as how it might affect your actions. We would like this way to convey to you the “now” of Toronto and Ontario.

I wish you a pleasant Holiday Season and a very happy New Year.



