

## Nikkei and Financial Times headline sponsor the 2024 FT Nikkei UK Ekiden, bringing iconic Japanese relay racing to the UK

12 March 2024 – Speaking at the Japan Society at Nomura International on 11 March, Julia Longbottom CMG, Britain’s Ambassador to Japan, announced the creation of the UK’s inaugural “ekiden” running relay race, sponsored by the Nikkei Inc. and FT.

The inaugural UK race will take place on 24 June and will follow an iconic route from Oxford to Windsor along the Thames Path. The race takes place in the same year that Japan’s Hakone Ekiden, the most prominent race on the sport’s calendar, celebrated its centenary in January.

Longbottom said: “I have the privilege of announcing that the partnership of the FT and Nikkei have agreed to sponsor the [UK ekiden], so it will be called the FT Nikkei UK Ekiden. We hope it will be something that will last long into the future and help deepen the ties between Japan and the UK”.

The ekiden tradition traces its roots back hundreds of years to a time when runners relayed important messages and goods between stations along predetermined routes. The word “ekiden” means “station” and “convey or to tell.” Today, ekiden has evolved into a popular relay race format in Japan that emphasises teamwork, endurance, and camaraderie.

Anna Dingley, founder of the UK Ekiden, said: “This event not only introduces the iconic ekiden format to the UK, but also represents a unique opportunity to bring together a wide spectrum of people, companies, universities and charities involved in UK-Japan communities, to showcase the spirit of teamwork and collaboration”.

Tsuyoshi Hasebe, President & CEO at Nikkei Inc., said: “The FT Nikkei UK Ekiden embodies the spirit of unity and shared success that characterises the close cooperation between Nikkei and the FT, and between Japan and the UK. It's an honour for Nikkei to be a part of an historic event that will bridge distances through the universal language of sport”.

John Ridding, FT CEO said: “The FT has been part of Nikkei Inc. since 2015. In the spirit of cooperation and the success of our global alliance, we’re delighted to support this uniquely Japanese event as it debuts in the UK. It’s a wonderful opportunity to cement ties between our countries and cultures”.

The UK Ekiden will feature 21 teams of 10 runners. The participating teams will be composed of runners from corporates, universities, and UK Japan-related organisations, each reflecting different aspects of the UK-Japan relationship.

For more information, please visit <http://www.ukekiden.com>.

For press inquiries, please contact: [info@ukekiden.com](mailto:info@ukekiden.com).

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#### **About Nikkei**

Nikkei Inc. is a world-renowned media brand for Asian news, respected for quality journalism and for being a trusted provider of business news and information. Founded as a market news provider in Japan in 1876, Nikkei has grown into one of the world’s largest media corporations, with 37 foreign editorial bureaus and approximately 1,500 journalists worldwide. Nikkei acquired the UK-based Financial Times in 2015. Our combined digital and print circulation totals about 2.3 million, and we are continually deploying new technologies to increase our readership.

#### **Contact**

Public Relations Office

Nikkei Inc.

[pr@nex.nikkei.co.jp](mailto:pr@nex.nikkei.co.jp)

<https://www.nikkei.co.jp/nikkeiinfo/en/>