

The Japan Times

Independence Day of India

Closer engagement with Japan bears fruit

Cooperation on global issues, shared democratic values, bilateral economic and scientific ties help powers bring prosperity, stability to Asia

Hemant Krishan Singh
AMBASSADOR OF INDIA TO JAPAN

On the happy occasion of the Independence Day of India, I extend my cordial greetings to Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko as well as to the government and friendly people of Japan.

I also felicitate my fellow citizens and persons of Indian origin living in Japan.

The political, social and economic foundations of India's liberal democracy have steadily grown in strength and maturity over the past six decades. Indeed, the progressive institutions of India's open and inclusive society are now widely recognized as the standard-bearers for anchoring stability and managing diversity through democratic processes. The twin goals of social equity and economic efficiency have been successfully pursued by placing the entire spectrum of individual rights at the center of India's development process. As Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh observed in his address to the Japanese Diet in December 2006:

"Never before have over a billion people tried to banish

poverty and modernize their society and economy within the framework of a plural functioning democracy."

India and Japan enjoy civilizational affinities and shared democratic values. These bonds provide the basis for mutual goodwill amongst our peoples and underpin the bipartisan political support in both countries for the advancement of bilateral relations.

The transformation of India-Japan relations is continuing apace. When they met in the margins of the recent G-20 Summit, our leaders reaffirmed their commitment to deepen and diversify these relations. Prime Minister Singh is looking forward to his visit to Japan later this year for the Annual Bilateral Summit, which will impart further momentum to the India-Japan Strategic and Global Partnership forged in 2006.

We are also looking forward to the forthcoming visit of Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada to India for the fourth annual Strategic Dialogue. The 2+2 Security Dialogue between our countries has been successfully launched in July this year. Bilateral dialogues on energy, high technology trade and civil nuclear cooperation are contributing meaningfully to ties.

Despite the global economic downturn, India's economy has



Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh



President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil

continued to grow briskly on the strength of domestic demand, savings, investment and enterprise. We are confident that this trend will accelerate and India's economy will return to its even higher growth trajectory of recent years in 2010. India is now a major contributor to Asian and global economic growth and is playing a constructive role as an important member of G-20.

Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) remains crucial for the ongoing expansion of India's economic infrastructure, which will benefit greatly from flagship project the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) and Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC). Trade and investment relations between India and Japan are also rapidly intensifying. India's economic

dynamism and youthful vibrancy provide ample opportunities for mutually beneficial economic relations between our countries through the 21st century. We are both committed to finalizing the India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement this year, which will synergize our respective strengths and provide further impetus to economic engagement.

India and Japan are working together to develop an open and inclusive architecture for regional integration in Asia, which brings stability and prosperity to our region. Cooperation on vital global issues of counterterrorism, maritime security, disarmament, climate change and U.N. reform is being reinforced.

With the growth of economic, scientific and academic ties, people-to-people exchanges between our countries are intensifying. Chairs of Indian studies are being established at the University of Tokyo and Ryukoku University in Kyoto. The Indian Chambers of Commerce (ICCJ), Tokyo is actively engaged in deepening socioeconomic linkages. With its ample facilities, the Indian Cultural Centre of the Embassy of India will play an ever increasing role of projecting India's soft power in years ahead.

I am confident that the coming year will see the further enhancement of friendship between India and Japan. We look forward to working closely with the Japanese government, business and industry and the public at large to realize the common desire of our two great peoples for universal peace and progress.

2010 Commonwealth Games come to Delhi from Oct. 3-14

Since the start of the new millennium, there has been a kind of awakening for sports in India's government and nongovernment sectors. Corporations are willing to invest in sports and support athletes.

The bar in certain disciplines, particularly in shooting, weightlifting, wrestling, boxing, badminton and tennis, has been sufficiently raised to help stars win laurels in international competitions. This sudden rise in sporting standards and culture has caused widespread surprise worldwide. India is now on the march trying to adhere to the Olympic slogan of "Faster, Higher and Stronger."

In the last Commonwealth Games, in Melbourne, Australia, in 2006, India shocked all, including its ardent admirers, by winning 22 gold medals, 17 silvers and 11 bronzes (a total of 50 medals).

The Delhi 2010 Commonwealth Games will make India the second Asian country to host the sporting extravaganza, which will see about 6,000 participants from 71 countries and 4,000 officials. The first was Malaysia in 1998, when it was held in Kuala Lumpur.

In Delhi, all six 1982 Asian Games-created stadiums — Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, National Stadium (Dhyan Chand), Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, Talkatora Indoor Stadium, Talkatora Stadium, Cycling Velodrome and Karni Singh Shooting Ranges — are being modernized with ultramodern features.



High hopes: Indian boxer and three-time world champion Mary Kom carries the Commonwealth Games baton, which contains a message to the athletes from Queen Elizabeth II, in Amritsar, India, on June 25. AP

Tradition in Action



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India independence day

Farsighted leadership increases presence

Yoshiro Mori
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-INDIA ASSOCIATION

I feel very privileged to convey the warmest congratulations, on the occasion of the 63rd anniversary of Independence Day in India, to the people and government of India on behalf of all the members of the Japan-India Association and on my behalf as its chairman.



It is my great pleasure to note that the past year has witnessed an accelerated development of the Japan-India relationship in all aspects. I would like to stress that our cordial relationship has been reinforced in the true spirit of "The Strategic Global Partnership between Japan and India."

I am gratified to mention that, pushed by the stable and efficient government and an ever vibrant economy, India's presence and her importance in international politics and the global economy have increased tremendously under the far-sighted leadership of Dr. Manmohan Singh, the prime minister of India. In

spite of the change of prime minister in Japan from Yukio Hatoyama to Naoto Kan, we continue to enjoy our already excellent relations.

In our bilateral relations, I am happy to note that two big projects between our countries, namely the construction of the Delhi-Mumbai Dedicated Freight Corridor and the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, have entered the stage of implementation and that other Japanese ODA projects in India, including urban subway system construction projects in Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata in addition to Delhi, are all on the right track. Also noteworthy is the increase of Japanese direct investment to India that resulted, in 2009, in the presence of around 630 Japanese companies all over India.

I witnessed all these positive developments when I visited Japanese factories and Japanese business communities in Chennai and Delhi in early March this year.

It is expected also under the leaderships of Prime Ministers Kan and Singh that the protracted negotiations for the conclusion of the Japan-India Economic Partnership

Agreement will be crowned with successful conclusion by the time of the visit of Prime Minister Singh sometime later this year.

Since June, the long-awaited negotiations have finally started to conclude in a bilateral agreement for cooperation on civil nuclear energy. The contribution of proven Japanese technology and equipment in this sector will be great and bring very positive results both to India's economic growth and the fight against global warming.

The number of Indian IT engineers and other businesspeople who visit and stay in Japan has been increasing. They reside and constitute Indian communities in Japan in such places as Nishi-Kasai in eastern Tokyo in addition to Yokohama and Kobe. Indian

restaurants are mushrooming in major cities in Japan.

It is also my pleasure to note that cooperation between Japan and India in the fields of science and technology is gaining further momentum. Cultural exchanges between the two countries are expanding and deepening. For instance, Namaste India, a big-scale cultural and popular event organized in Yoyogi Park, Tokyo, is expecting this year many more than the 150,000 visitors who enjoyed the event toward the end of September last year.

The promised project to launch a new Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, is ongoing with the assistance of the Japan International Cooperation Agency and Japanese universities.

Our two countries, on the multilateral front, are destined to cooperate jointly to contribute to the global community for the solution of such global problems as nuclear disarmament, the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the prevention of climate change and the reform of the United Nations Security Council. The Japan-India Association, with a history of 107 years, renews its determination to make the utmost efforts for further betterment of our very important relationship.

On this auspicious occasion, let me pray that the excellent Japan-India relationship brings more happiness to our two peoples and that the two nations contribute to the peace and prosperity of the international community at large.

Prosperous bilateral relationship emerges from shared interests

Yasuo Fukuda
VICE PRESIDENT, JAPAN-INDIA PARLIAMENTARIANS' FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE

On behalf of the Japan-India Parliamentarians' Friendship League, I would like to convey my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the 63rd anniversary of India's Independence Day.



Japan and India have continued to enjoy friendly relations founded on a long history of exchanges. We share strategic interests and uphold

common values such as democracy, human rights, rule of law and a market economy.

It gives me great pleasure to note that the relationship between Japan and India has been consolidated under the Japan-India Strategic and Global Partnership. In this regard, the successful visit by then Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama to India in December 2009 has moved our relationship to a new stage. Political and security cooperation has been further deepened and strengthened including through the Japan-India 2 + 2 Dialogue, which was agreed upon at the Annual Summit in December 2009.

Economic relations are also expanding at a rapid pace. Total trade volume between the two countries has doubled in the past five years and foreign direct investment (FDI) from Japan to India has increased tenfold over the past several years.

As the vice president of the Japan-India Parliamentarians' Friendship League, I would like to express my enduring commitment to actively contributing to the further strengthening of our partnership.

I send my best wishes to the people of India for their further prosperity and for the continued development of our cordial relationship.

Sea link brings ease to Mumbai

It rises out of the blue-gray waters with its two main towers disappearing into the low-slung monsoon clouds and stretches for 5.6 km to connect two busy points of India's financial hub Mumbai across the Arabian Sea. India's first open-sea bridge, the Rajiv Gandhi Bandra-Worli Sea Link is a cable-held engineering marvel that heralds a new era in infrastructure consolidation in the country.

Ten years in the making, the bridge, which was inaugurated recently, has used nearly 40,000 tons of steel, 90,000 tons of concrete, weighs 270,000 tons and cost \$327 million. The high-speed, open, eight-lane carriageway, which is 9 meters above the

surface of the water, rests on two main towers, each equivalent to a 43-story building, and 180 steel piers to weather the rough waves.

The two main towers connecting the cables that hold up the bridge rise in a gigantic but perfect "Namaste," the traditional Indian greeting. It also has two cable bridges, one 500 meters long on the northern side and another 350 meters long on the southern side, to allow the passage of fishing boats below.

The bridge — which was conceived way back in 1963 — encompasses some of the most modern security systems, including electronic "eyes" on the top and underneath. The project involved some



Engineering marvel: Completed in 2009, the Rajiv Gandhi Bandra-Worli Sea Link is India's first open-sea bridge, connecting two busy points of Mumbai and cutting commuting time. EMBASSY OF INDIA

3,000 professionals from 11 countries, including China, Egypt, Singapore, Thailand, and even Serbia and Switzerland.

Beyond the figures and the technical expertise, however, is the sheer ease that it has brought to the lives of millions of Mumbaiers, as the residents of the city are known, by cutting down driving time.

The 8-km distance between suburban Bandra and Worli, in the central part of the city, which used to take 60 to 90 minutes to cover during the morning and evening rush hours, can now be completed in a flat six to eight minutes.

The BWSL Chief Engineer S.M. Sabnis of the Maharashtra State Road Development Corp. (MSRDC) said, "we have done our best and are happy that everybody has liked it. It has been a tremendous morale-booster for my entire team."

By passing 23 signals that commuters have to presently endure, it is a new alternative to the existing Mahim Causeway, where daily traffic volume had exceeded 1.4 million vehicles, leading to massive traffic snarls, especially during rush hours.

Sabnis said that the new link between the southern island city and the northwest suburbs would last for over a century with proper maintenance.

Authorities hope to see some 150,000 vehicles use the sea link each day for a toll around 100 rupees per trip (about \$2), depending on the size of the automobile.

He said it could withstand earthquakes of very high intensity and stormy gales of over 125 kph, the maximum on this stretch of the Konkan coast.

Regardless of the toll, residents are thrilled with the latest infrastructure wonder that curves 1 km away from shore and cuts out so much of their drudgery.

Even the highest recorded waves of 6 meters would not disturb traffic movement on the carriageway, Sabnis explained.

"I was born in the city and have seen it grow and develop in the past four decades. The bridge has completely floored me: the beautiful approaches on both sides, the majesty of this great city zooming past. ... It is most impressive," added investment consultant Nigam R. Pandya.

Sabnis and his team are now focused on completing the remaining 20 percent of the work on the second four-lane carriageway. "Then, traffic movement will be greatly enhanced on all the eight lanes that make up the bridge," he said.

With information provided by the Embassy of India.



Dialogue: Indian Ambassador Hemant Krishan Singh gives a speech at the Japan-India Nuclear Energy Cooperation Forum, held at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo on March 29 and organized by the International Friendship Exchange Council. THE INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP EXCHANGE COUNCIL

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India independence day

Economic potential grows for business communities

Hiramasa Yonekura
CHAIRMAN, NIPPON KEIDANREN

On behalf of Nippon Keidanren, I would like to offer my sincere congratulations on the occasion of India's 63rd Independence Day.

Expectations are running high for Asia to realize its growth potential and play a leading role in achieving the sustainable growth of the global economy. India is increasing its position as one of the world's major emerging economies, weathering the worst global economic crisis in our time and showing robust economic growth, estimated to reach 8 percent for 2010, on the back of strong domestic demand. In recent years, trade and invest-

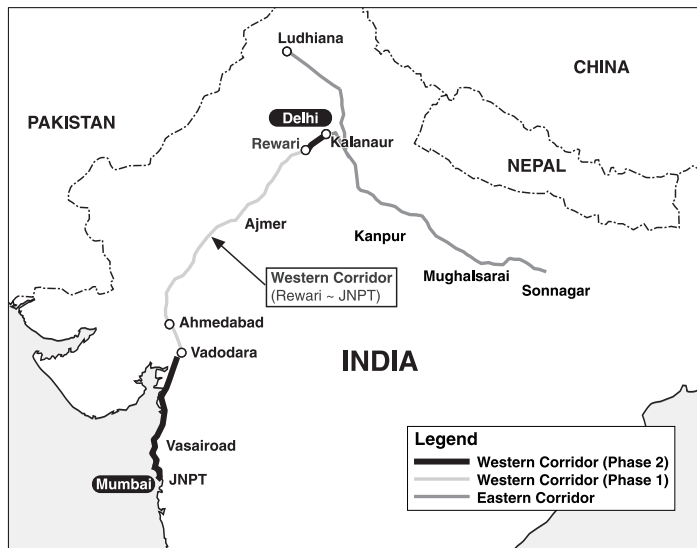


ment between India and Japan have been growing remarkably. The number of Japanese companies doing business in India reached 627 last year.

The potential of the economic cooperation between India and Japan continues to grow. At the summit meeting held last year, then Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh discussed moving forward with India-Japan joint development initiatives, such as the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) Project and the construction of the Western Corridor under the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) Project. We the Japanese business community will continue to provide full support for these collaborations, which we believe will contribute to the economic development of the Asian region as a whole.

As the public and private sectors of India and Japan work together to build a stronger bilateral economic relationship, an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) will be an essential foundation. The Indian and Japanese business communities have been advocating EPAs and sincerely hope that the governments will agree at the next India-Japan summit to conclude the EPA.

The ties between the Indian and Japanese business communities have continued to strengthen over recent years. At the Japan-India Business Leaders Forum, which began in 2007 based on the proposal from Prime Minister Singh, we meet to exchange views on how to enhance our bilateral economic relationship. Added to this is the Asian Business Summit, which was launched



this year for promoting cooperation among the Asian business communities. The first meeting of the summit, hosted by Nippon Keidanren, was held in Tokyo this past March, bringing together the leaders of 13 economic organizations from Asian countries, including the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

There will be more opportunities in the future for cooperation between India and Japan, which share the values of

democracy and a free market economy. I am convinced that by working more closely together in a broader range of areas, the two countries will be able to make significant contributions to the further development of Asian economies. We the Japanese business community will continue our vigorous efforts to strengthen our relationship with India and unleash the full potential of bilateral economic cooperation.

Progress boosts world economy

Nobuo Ohashi
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-INDIA BUSINESS COOPERATION COMMITTEE

On behalf of the Japan-India Business Cooperation Committee (JIBCC), it is my pleasure to extend my most sincere congratulations to the people of India on the occasion of the 63rd anniversary of India's independence.



We hold your country in high esteem for having built a modern, unified nation under a democratic system of government, based on a long history of civilization, embracing 1.1 billion people of diverse ethnic identities and of different religions over a vast expanse of land.

The second Singh Cabinet took office after the ruling party's success in the general elections held from April to May last year. Under the strong framework of the Singh administration, economic liberalization policies are being promoted and the nation is gradually overcoming the negative influ-

ence of the Lehman crisis and the European financial crisis that erupted in May. India's economic growth rate for this fiscal year is forecast at 8.5 percent, a 1.1 percent increase over the previous year. The Japanese business community is very encouraged to see India standing alongside China as a driver behind both the Asian and the world economy.

Turning to Japan-India relations, the Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama visited India at the end of December last year. At the end of April this year, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Masayuki Naoshima visited India and engaged in discussions with Indian leaders about the Japan-India Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor Project and cooperation in the field of nuclear power.

Government negotiations to create a Japan-India EPA have been held 13 times to date, and the prime ministers of our two countries pledged at the end of last year that they would reach an agreement at the time of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Japan this year.

On behalf of the Japanese business community, I would like to express my strong hope that an effective agreement will be reached by the end of the year.

Foundational work for the launch of the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor Project is advancing steadily. When Minister Naoshima visited India, an agreement was reached with the related Indian organizations that the four Japanese consortiums involved in the joint projects to build eco-friendly cities along the industrial corridor would conduct feasibility studies in four cities. The Japanese business community looks forward to participating actively in the project, as it has in the past, in cooperation with the Japanese government.

In closing, we trust that India will sustain its remarkable progress under its policies to further increase economic openness. The JIBCC will assiduously advance its efforts to ensure that economic exchange will continue to enhance the ties between our two nations and peoples.

Japanese aid allows development of freight infrastructure

On July 26, the government of India and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) signed a Japanese Official Development Assistance loan agreement for the Dedicated Freight Corridor Project (Phase 2) with a total limit of ¥1.616 billion. The Special Terms for Economic Partnership (STEP) is applied and advanced Japanese technology will be utilized for the project.

(STEP is a scheme created to promote development assistance with a distinct Japanese profile through technology transfer, utilizing advanced Japanese technology and knowhow, to developing countries).

In this second phase of the DFC Project, a total of 552 km of a rail corridor for freight traffic (Dadri to Rewari and Vadodara to Mumbai), which is part of the Western Corridor between Delhi and Mumbai (approximately 1,500 km), will be

constructed. It follows the first phase of the DFC Project, which constructed a dedicated freight corridor between Rewari and Vadodara. Under the DFC Project, a dedicated freight railway line will be constructed with fully automated signals and communication systems and locomotives capable of providing high-speed, high-capacity freight transportation. By catering to the rapid growth in freight volume, this project will make a far-reaching contribution toward India's economic development. The loan will be allocated to the engagement of engineering services consultants to undertake a review of the basic design and tender preparation.

Since economic reforms began in 1991, India's economy has achieved an annual growth rate of between 5 percent and 8 percent, bringing great attention to India as one of the BRIC countries, which are known for remarkable

economic growth (the other BRICs being Brazil, Russia and China). India has shown signs of a quick recovery from the world economic crisis, maintaining a steady, high rate of growth, estimated at 7 percent in 2009.

Along with this rapid development, the volume of freight traffic has increased by 15 percent per annum, stretching the existing rail lines to the limits of their carrying capacity. The development and upgrading of the railway system with exclusive corridors for freight transportation between important growth centers within the country is, therefore, a pressing agenda for India if India is to sustain such high rates of economic growth. In order to enable mass transportation along the trunk railways, the Indian government is expanding routes, introducing high-speed freight trains and improving access to port facilities as part of its 10th (2002 to 2007) and 11th (2007 to 2012) Five-Year Plans.

In light of the growth policy of the Indian government, then Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi made a joint statement during a visit to India in 2005 regarding the Japanese government's intention to look into the possibility

of supporting the Western DFC Project through Japanese ODA loans. After the declaration, sustained support has been provided to the Indian government for the formulation and implementation of the project.

In May 2006, JICA performed a development study for project formation. In October 2009, an engineering service loan of ¥2.6 billion was provided for the Phase 1 section, and in March 2010, a loan of ¥90.3 billion was provided for construction of the Phase 1 section.

The DFC Project is an important part of the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) initiative, which is a flagship Japanese-Indian collaborative project for comprehensive infrastructure development. The DMIC has been conceptualized to eventually become India's largest industrial belt by linking the industrial parks and harbors of the six states between Delhi and Mumbai in order to promote foreign exports and direct investment, particularly those from Japan. Under the DMIC initiative, plans are also being developed to create industrial parks and logistics hubs with well-developed infrastructure extending up to 150 km on both sides of the Western DFC Corridor.

In addition to being the larg-

est consumer in the country, the National Capital Region around Delhi is making progress in manufacturing, commerce and agriculture. The western coastline of India, centered around Mumbai, is home to several prosperous deep-water ports, and container traffic between these parts and the interior regions is expected to increase rapidly as industrial areas continue to develop.

Since more than 250 Japanese companies are located in the area around the Western DFC Corridor, such improvements to alleviate the transportation problems impeding business are expected to be beneficial not only to Indian, but also to the many Japanese businesses that have a stake here.

Furthermore, the total amount of ODA loans allocated to the DFC Project is expected to be among the largest ever not only to India but also in the world, and it is hoped that the cooperative implementation of the DFC Project by Japan and India will become a new symbol of partnership between the two countries.

With information provided by the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

India remains a major destination for investment

Ryuko Hira
HONORARY PRESIDENT, IMAY & ICCJ-TOKYO

On behalf of the members of the Indian Merchants Association of Yokohama (IMAY) and the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Japan, Tokyo (ICCJ), I convey our heartfelt felicitations on the 63rd anniversary of the Independence Day of India.



Although IMAY was established 89 years ago we could now establish ICCJ with the support of the Embassy of India in Tokyo. With its launch, the long felt need of Indian enterprises operating in Japan for having their own comprehensive and professional apex chamber of commerce has finally been realized.

ICCJ Tokyo has been supplementing efforts of the Indian Embassy to promote India-Japan economic engagement and aims to provide support, guidance and offer consultancy and advisory services to interested parties to enable them to exploit fully the potential for business between Japan and India.

Signing a memorandum with the Confederation of Indian In-

dustry (CII) for the exchange of information on economic and commercial matters and the successful campaign for investment for the megaproject Indian Highways Infrastructure Program are some of the major achievements of ICCJ during the year.

According to a recent survey covering 620 Japanese manufacturing companies, India remains the second-favorite investment destination for Japanese companies after China. Fifty-eight percent of the companies surveyed wanted to do business with India in the medium term. The survey reflects Japanese companies' mounting

interests in Indian businesses, especially in sectors such as automobiles, IT, infrastructure, steel, power and pharmaceuticals. Hence, there will be a surge in bilateral trade, investment and business opportunities between these two leading economies of Asia.

I recall the president of India's message on the eve of the 60th anniversary of our Independence Day: "As we watch the tricolor unfurl tomorrow morning, let us all hold our heads high with pride and confidence and look ahead with optimism toward a better and brighter future for our great nation." Jai hind!

Jai Hind!
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India independence day

Annual festival aids Japan-India exchange

A wonderland of Indian culture will appear in Yoyogi Park in Tokyo in September during the 18th Namaste India Festival.

The festival was inaugurated in 1993 by the Japan-India Business Cooperation Committee (JIBCC) in collaboration with the Asian Club Foundation.

"For the expansion of bilateral economic exchanges, Japanese businesspeople have to know more about the culture of the partner country. That was the idea of the original organizer," said Tokio Hasegawa, director of Mithila Museum in Niigata Prefecture, who has supported the event since it began.

As Japan-India economic interaction has progressed, the annual festival has developed into one of Japan's largest Indi-

an cultural events, having changed its venue from Sumida Ward City Hall to Tsukiji Honganji Temple to Yoyogi Park. Last year, over 140,000 people showed up for the event.

Today, the festival is organized by the Executive Committee for Namaste India Festival, with support from the Embassy of India in Japan, the India Government Tourist Office in Tokyo, the nonprofit organization Society to Promote India-Japan Cultural Relations, Mithila Museum and many other organizations and businesses in India and Japan.

Aiming to provide visitors with opportunities to learn and experience the diverse nature of Indian culture, the festival includes traditional dance, music, lectures and films, while al-

lowing visitors a chance to wear a sari, practice yoga, or experience "ayurveda" massages and treatments, and "mehndi" (traditional Indian body art). There will also be an art exhibition, book fairs, bazaars, tea corners and Indian food at the festival.

Booths will be set up for groups that are associated with India, such as the Japan-India Association, the Government of India Ministry of Tourism, Air India, Bank of India, the State Bank of India and other sponsoring corporations, as well as companies that have established themselves in India. A lottery will be held with various prizes provided by the sponsors, including round-trip tickets to India.

This year, the event space is

30 percent larger than last year, according to Hasegawa, who says the extra space will mainly be to provide various lectures and workshops.

Among the highlights is the presentation of folk art. This year, five folk artists will travel from India and show the creative process of bamboo crafts, pottery and painting. Large statues more than 4 meters high will be created during the festival. In the Elephant Square, which was popular last year, children can have fun with bamboo elephants.

"At Mithila Museum, located in a mountainous, snowy, remote area of Niigata Prefecture, we have collected a number of Indian folk art and have invited Indian artists as artists in residence," Hasegawa

said. "I believe that this collection and the relationships we have made over the years have enabled us to organize such art programs (for the festival)."

Another attraction are the various stage performances, including dances ranging from those in Indian movies to classical, and traditional music played on the sitar and vina. As the festival has grown, so has the competition for those wishing to perform at the event, which enhances the quality of the performances, according to Hasegawa. This year, around 200 artists, both Japanese who are learning Indian culture and Indian artists dispatched by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, will perform, including



Summer wonderland: More than 140,000 people attend the Namaste India Festival in Yoyogi Park in 2009. NPO SOCIETY TO PROMOTE INDIA-JAPAN CULTURAL RELATIONS / MITHILA MUSEUM

Indian "enka" singer Chada, who is making another appearance.

From the aspect of cultural exchange, the festival also presents a traditional "taiko"

performance by Japanese children and ethnic culture of the Ainu.

"Namaste India Festival provides exposure to a different culture," Hasegawa said.

Namaste India Festival 2010 takes place Sept. 25-26 at the Yoyogi Park in Shibuya Ward, Tokyo. For more information, visit www.indofestival.com

Green policies revive 'golden fiber'

Once associated with dowdy sacks for the cement, sugar and fertilizer industries, the \$1 billion Indian jute industry is getting an image makeover thanks to better designed goods made with this "golden fiber," rising environmental concern and new marketing strategies.

In India, cultivation of jute has been ongoing for several millenniums. But organized development of the industry started in the 17th century and the first mill was established in 1855 at Rishra, near Kolkata.

A wide range of everyday products is available today made with jute, of which India is not just the largest producer, accounting for 60 percent of world output, but also consumer and exporter.

Such merchandise, which is also making its way to discerning markets in the U.S. and Europe, includes table mats, coasters, cushion covers, curtains, doormats, belts, and even school bags carried by millions of children.

"There are so many attrac-



Fashionable: Natural jute has become a trendy material.

tive items made of jute. It's so fashionable today. And the best part is that it is eco-friendly, reusable," said Atri Bhattacharya, secretary of the Jute Manufacturers Development Council, one of the several organizations promoted by the government to help the industry.

Designers and traders in jute goods said that, in bags alone, the offerings today include not just the traditional jute-based sacks but also

clutch bags, party bags, laundry bags, rucksacks, gunny bags, totes, shopping bags and wine bags.

The merchandise is available across the country, including at upscale stores.

These, the retailers said, also cater to the tastes of well-heeled shoppers.

With information provided by the Embassy of India.

(Advertisement)

Stability leads to remarkable growth

Yog Kapoor
OWNER, INDIAN RESTAURANT CHAIN SAMRAT

On this happy occasion, we celebrate the Independence Day of India. Aug. 15 is a great historical day in the world and offers homage to the father of the nation, the great Mahatma Gandhi, who used to say that violence produces only violence, destruction and poverty.

Mahatma Gandhi cannot be regarded merely as a figure of the past as his thoughts hold very true in the contemporary world. Today the world is passing through an "eclipse" that is violence, threat and hunger for nuclear weapons, world financial crises and stress, which is created by human beings themselves.

But the sunshine will come again if the whole world should work together to bring peace. Let's live peacefully and let's live with others with peace and prosperity in this beautiful world.

The world should not forget Hiroshima, which was destroyed in 1945. The result was destruction and destruction only.

Now nobody wants another Hiroshima in this beautiful world.

India has been displaying remarkable economic growth since the Congress party of Dr. Manmohan Singh and Sonia Gandhi has led a very stable government.



Japan should promote an economic alliance and security cooperation with India and strengthen the bilateral relationship from a strategic perspective.

India has an attractive economic market for advanced nations. Investors do not have to worry about their investment because India has a big population, second to China in the world. India has never taken its manufacturing or factories out of the country since it's a huge country full of natural resources, where the domestic demand is so strong

and people have the consumption power, also. In India, the saturation point and "bubble" will not burst for a few decades to come.

The number of Japanese companies that have advanced into India has tripled in the past few years. It is important for Japan to implement its economic assistance for large-scale projects and to accelerate its negotiations for an economic partnership with a trustworthy nation like India to play constructive roles that fit its new status as a major power.

Trading with India is a healthy trade, not an overly dependent trade.

Japan has advanced technology and India has great manpower and spending power, too. I think if Japan and India work together, the day is not far away when East Asia will be drastically changed for peace and prosperity for the world.



Fun time: Traditional Indian dance (above) and bamboo elephants (below) are among the Namaste India Festival's many attractions.



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