

# Indian Prime Minister’s Visit Special

## Mutual cooperation bolsters ties across various sectors

**SANJAY KUMAR VERMA**  
AMBASSADOR OF INDIA TO JAPAN



2022 marks two milestones: the 70th anniversary of the establishment of India-Japan diplomatic relations and 75th anniversary of India’s independence. In the past seven decades, our two nations have elevated the bilateral relationship to a “special strategic and global partnership.”

The recent meeting between our prime ministers in March in New Delhi highlighted the vast canvas of our partnership, expanding across all conceivable domains of diplomatic interactions. During the meeting, our leaders emphasized their commitment to working in tandem toward a peaceful, stable and prosperous world built on a rules-based international order. They also reaffirmed their common vision for a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific. The meeting also highlighted our shared commitment to the economic security and prosperity of our peoples through a robust framework of economic cooperation; tackling the issue of climate change through the India-Japan Clean Energy Partnership; cooperation toward reliable, resilient and efficient supply chains in the region; promotion of industrial cooperation; and focus on infrastructure development. In this context, the announcement of the shared intention to realize ¥5 trillion in public and private investment as well as financing from Japan to India in the next five years, holds great significance.

Japan is India’s key partner in the realization of our vision of “SAGAR — Security

and Growth for All in the Region.” Our convergent stand on the Indo-Pacific is quintessential to creating a rule-based order to enhance peace and security in the region. We look forward to working with Japan on the trade, connectivity and maritime transport pillar of the “Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative” of India to implement concrete initiatives. Our third-country cooperation holds immense strategic importance. The recent announcement of the “Japan-India Initiative for Sustainable Development of the Northeastern Region of India” paves the way for further contributions to economic development and enhanced connectivity in the region.

As key partners under “the Quad,” India and Japan are cementing their partnership in critical areas, such as COVID-19 responses, maritime security, counterterrorism, cybersecurity, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and more. The upcoming visit of Honorable Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi to Japan to participate in the Quad leaders’ summit will demonstrate our resolute commitment to the objectives of the Quad.

With a vision to be a \$5 trillion economy, India is building a strong foundation of manufacturing, services, agriculture and digital technology infrastructure. India’s economic engagement with Japan continues to be a central pillar of our special strategic and global partnership. We value Japan’s role in India’s transformational journey across all domains. The establishment of the “Japan-India Industrial Competitiveness Partnership” allows us to further promote industrial cooperation between the two countries, including in the areas of micro, small and medium enterprises, manufacturing and supply chains. With India implementing a host of structural and regulatory reforms that have led



Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi

to significant improvement in ease of doing business, we hope that Japanese companies will benefit from opportunities created by these reforms. Efforts are underway to synergize India’s demographic dividend and Japan’s capital and technology to realize the true potential of the India-Japan economic partnership for a prosperous future.

We see Japan as a trusted partner of India as reflected through our decades-long partnership, which has strengthened significantly in the past few years. We see huge potential for India and Japan to combine their strengths and competitiveness to coinnovate, cocreate and coproduce. Some key sectors for India-Japan collaboration include infrastructure development; automotive and mobility; electronic system design and manufacturing; new and renewable energy, including green hydrogen and ammonia; the food industry; health care; research and development; startups; steel; and new emerging and strategic technologies.



The Ganges River flows past Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh state. EMBASSY OF INDIA

Growing cooperation under the Japan-India Digital Partnership through promotion of joint projects for digital transformation, cooperation for skill development initiatives, and collaboration on the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies are encouraging signs of flourishing ties in technology. Our countries also have robust cooperation in the field of information and communication technology. Further opportunities for cooperation exist in such strategic areas as 5G and “Beyond 5G,” Open RAN (radio access networks), telecom network security, submarine cable systems, quantum communications and nanotechnology. We would like to work with Japan for international norm-setting in the areas of critical and emerging technologies.

Defense and security cooperation has emerged as one of the most important pillars of our bilateral partnership and an

important factor in ensuring peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. The momentum in our defense and security partnership has been sustained despite the pandemic through various dialogue mechanisms, high-level exchanges and exercises between the two sides. Defense and security ties were further cemented with the recent operationalization of the Agreement Concerning Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services. We look forward to further enhancing our defense equipment and technology cooperation.

India-Japan cooperation on thematic international issues, including reforms to the United Nations to make it better reflect contemporary realities, is a key dimension of our partnership. As India emerged as one of the major suppliers of vaccines and critical pharmaceutical products globally during the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan’s support in the initial days of the crisis, as well as its cooperation in vaccine manu-

facturing, demonstrated our shared commitment to taking on global challenges together. We also look forward to Japan’s cooperation as we assume the chair of the Group of 20 in 2023.

People-to-people ties between India and Japan remain the bedrock of our partnership. From Buddhism to the growing popularity of yoga and ayurveda, Indian traditions and practices for the holistic well-being of society have always found their ways into the hearts of our Japanese friends. Measures such as the implementation of the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers plan, operationalization of the Specified Skilled Worker system and expansion of Japan-India Institutes for Manufacturing and Japanese Endowed Courses would add to momentum to people-to-people ties.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere wishes for the prosperity of the people of Japan and for the continued strengthening of the India-Japan partnership.

Heartiest Welcome to H.E. Narendra Damodardas Modi,  
Prime Minister of India



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## Modi’s method: ‘Love all, serve all’

**RYUKO HIRA**  
CHAIRMAN OF THE INDIAN COMMERCE  
AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION JAPAN



Even in the severe situation posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, India has proved that the country is resilient, contrary to many negative predictions.

In numbers alone, India’s achievement in the effort to control the pandemic is overwhelming.

More than 960 million people have been vaccinated against the virus across 327,000 centers serviced by more than a million health workers. More than 64% of its nearly 1.4 billion people have received two doses through nearly 14 million vaccination sessions, 73% of them in rural and hard-to-reach areas. India has administered more than 1.53 billion doses, more than the combined total achieved by the United States, Brazil, Indonesia and Japan; only China has higher numbers (according to data available as of March). The speed of administering those doses has been impressive — from 100 million to 1 billion from April to November 2021 — an average of 3.75 million doses daily (United Nations Development Program, April 2022). A key factor in India’s success is Cowin, a digital platform initiated by the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is a cloud-based system that facilitates registration, immunizations and appointments while issuing digital vaccine certificates. The COVID-19 pandemic has also reaffirmed the importance of India’s health-sector infrastructure.

In 2014, India had 387 medical colleges. In the past seven years, this number has gone up to 596, for an increase of 54%. In the same year, there were around 82,000 undergraduate and postgraduate medical seats. This number has since jumped to around 148,000 seats, an increase of about 80%. In 2014 again, there were only seven All India Institutes of Medical Sciences in the country. Now the number of AIIMS approved stands at 22. At the same time, Modi has implemented various reforms to

make medical education more transparent. Regulations for setting up medical colleges and hospitals have been liberalized.

In the coming years, India is envisioned as being the go-to destination for affordable high-quality medical care. India has many assets and resources needed to become a global medical hub.

Today, the world has also taken note of Indian practices that further enhance wellness, including yoga, ayurveda and meditation.

The problem of India’s doctor shortage is well-known, but there hadn’t been enough efforts to address this problem.

I would say Modi has had such excellent courage in leading India into better shape in this battle also, based on his firm faith in the Indian philosophy of Sanatana Dharma. History shows that fighting against vested interests and toward transformation has often brought on tragedies — like those that befell the Kennedy brothers and Mahatma Gandhi, to name a few.

“Perhaps vested interests also did not let previous governments take the right decisions. And, access to medical education remained an issue. Ever since we have taken office, our government has worked to address this gap,” Modi said in January.

Along with the medical field, many varied reforms were brought in, and India is leading the world in the field of technological advancement. In just the past four years, the number of Unified Payments Interface transactions has grown by over 70 times. Rupees 110 Lakh crore (about \$135 billion) are being spent on a National Infrastructure Pipeline. India is also actively working to ensure every village has high-speed internet connectivity.

Why does Modi have such unwavering faith in his mission? I am convinced that is because he has a deep understanding of the ancient Indian philosophy of Sanatana Dharma, with strong faith in the teachings of the Indian saints, such as Swami Vivekananda and Sathya Sai Baba.

Sai Baba repeatedly emphasized the axiom of “Love all, serve all” through affordable and yet excellent medical service, especially for the underprivileged.

Recalling Vivekananda’s iconic 1893 speech at the World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago, which beautifully demonstrated the salience of Indian culture, Modi said in January: “The spirit of his speech has the potential to create a more just, prosperous, and inclusive planet.

“He was a life devoted to national regeneration. He has motivated many youngsters to work towards nation-building. Let us keep working together to fulfill the dreams he had for our nation.”

Since Buddhism was introduced from India to Japan in the sixth century, Indian philosophy and culture have been deeply cultivated in Japan.

Since then India and Japan have created a strong and resilient mutually complementary relationship of culture, economics and politics with each other.

“Okakura Tenshin is the symbol of Asianism. In his book, ‘Ideals of the East,’ the very first sentence, this is one important thing I want to tell you. The very first sentence is ‘Asia is one.’ Okakura invited Swami Vivekananda to Japan and also sent him a check of 300 rupees. He came to Calcutta and met Swami Vivekananda on first February 1902 and both went to Bodh Gaya together,” Modi said in 2015.

Established in 1921, the Indian Commerce and Industry Association Japan serves as an apex body for friendship, goodwill, economic and cultural exchanges and mutual understanding between India and Japan.

With profound gratitude to The Japan Times and its readers, I offer my hearty welcome to Modi and the members of his delegation to Japan.

*This content was compiled in collaboration with the embassy. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the newspaper.*



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