

Republic Day of India Special

Promising future of stronger relations await

SANJAY KUMAR VERMA
AMBASSADOR OF INDIA

On the occasion of India's 71st Republic Day, I extend my warm greetings to Their Imperial Majesties, Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, the government and people of Japan. I also take this opportunity to convey my special greetings to the growing number of fellow Indians in Japan who are important stakeholders in the rapidly evolving special strategic and global partnership between India and Japan.

India and Japan are guided by shared values, including the heritage of Buddhism, democratic traditions and rule



bonds.

India aspires to become a \$5 trillion economy by 2025. This aspiration is backed by proactive policies and structural reforms, and has led to India's climb in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index.

of law in conduct of international relations. It is a special relationship that is global in its implications. Regular contacts at the highest and functional levels have furthered our

Today India is a favorable destination for foreign direct investment (FDI), which is reflected by \$318.64 billion of total FDI inflows in the last 6 years. Similarly, to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth to empower the people of India, various initiatives have been undertaken by the government.

"Startup India" has initiated a startup culture that has led India into becoming the third-largest startup ecosystem in the world. The Indian startup ecosystem goes beyond information technology — there are a significant number of startups in an array of sectors, which help in creating social public good.

Japan is a valued partner in India's economic transformation. The Japan Bank for International Cooperation has ranked India as the most promising overseas business development destination in its 2019 "Report on Overseas Business Development of Japanese Manufacturing Companies — Survey Results on Overseas Direct Investment 2019." Japan stands as the third-largest investor in India, with total direct investment of more than \$32

billion since 2000.

Today, Japan has a significant presence in virtually every flagship initiative of the government of India such as "Make in India" and "Skill India." We have been working together to build stronger ties in new areas such as health care, disaster risk reduction, digital technologies, cyberspace, outer space, electric vehicles and renewable energy. Strategic infrastructural initiatives such as major railway projects are symbols of our thriving partnership.

The progress of our strategic and defense cooperation can be seen in the first "two-plus-two" meeting at the defense and foreign ministers' level. India-Japan defense relations witnessed a positive trend in 2019, with the aim to promote peace in the Indo-Pacific region.

The growing exchanges between Japan's prefectures and India's states are indicative of a promising future for India-Japan relations. People-to-people contacts through parliamentarianism, tourism and cultural exchanges, including yoga and Ayurveda, are steadily rising.

Numerous summit meetings accelerate legislative exchanges

HIROYUKI HOSODA
PRESIDENT OF THE JAPAN-INDIA
PARLIAMENTARIANS' FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE



The Japan-India Parliamentarians' Friendship League would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to the people of India on the occasion of the 71st Republic Day of India.

Japan and India share strategic interests and universal values such as democracy and the rule of law, and maintain friendly relations founded on our long history of exchange. The year 2019 marked the fifth anniversary since the bilateral relationship was elevated to a special strategic and global partnership.

Prime ministers Shinzo Abe and Narendra Modi held summit meetings during the G20 Osaka summit in June; the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok in Sep-

tember and Association of Southeast Asian Nations-related summit meetings in Bangkok in November, confirming the close relationship between Japan and India for the realization of a free and open Indo-Pacific.

In November, Japan and India also held their first foreign and defense ministerial meeting ("two-plus-two"), and confirmed that they shared the vision of a free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific. Based on such close relations at the summit and ministerial levels, we have great expectations for the further expansion of collaboration on regional and global agendas alongside bilateral cooperation.

Legislative exchanges have accelerated. The Japan-India Parliamentarians' Friendship League remains strongly committed to strengthening our countries' relations in the conviction that further legislative exchange will give impetus to the bilateral relationship.

We would like to send our heartfelt wishes to the further prosperity of the people of India and for the continued development of cordial ties.

Playing a role in development of key social infrastructure, security

TAKASHI NIINO
PRESIDENT AND CEO, NEC CORP.



The Constitution of India came into force on Jan. 26, 1950. We are honored to have the opportunity to share this message on such a special day for India and extend our best

wishes for the country's success in the years ahead.

NEC began operating in India in the 1950s and has contributed to the country's development ever since by participating in the creation of key social infrastructure, including telecommunication networks and security systems.

One such example is India's national identification program, Aadhaar. NEC has

played an instrumental role in this project by providing a large-scale multimodal biometrics identification system that utilizes fingerprint, facial and iris recognition technologies.

India is more important than ever to NEC's global growth strategy.

The country's enormous potential for growth, its strategic location as a gateway to Middle Eastern and African markets, as well as its outstanding talent pool in information technology make India a logical choice for our pivot to the future.

Together with our more than 6,000 employees in the country, including researchers at NEC Laboratories India, NEC will continue addressing the social challenges facing India by providing innovative information and communications technology solutions to build a safe, secure, efficient and equal society for tomorrow.

Economic initiatives undertaken, new direct flight routes

MASAMI IJIMA
CHAIRMAN, THE JAPAN-INDIA BUSINESS
COOPERATION COMMITTEE



On behalf of the Japan-India Business Cooperation Committee (JIBCC), I would like to offer my warmest congratulations on the occasion of the 71st Republic Day of India.

As two of Asia's largest democracies, India and Japan have built amicable relations over a number of years. The countries have agreed to transform their special strategic and global partnership into a deep, broad-based, action-oriented

partnership. The two countries' cooperation and coordination in countless fields has created high expectations as we work toward peace and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region

and the world.

In addition to these developments, both countries have undertaken assertive initiatives to build stronger economic bilateral relations. The number of Japa-

nese companies in India reached 1,441 in October 2018. Furthermore, new direct flight routes between Japan and India have been launched. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's second administration has been formed and the government has attracted attention from all over the world for both its management as well as its economic policies. I strongly believe that the new administration is building both a stronger business environment and business relationship between Japan and India.

The JIBCC was established in 1966 to enhance mutual understanding and friend-

ship, and facilitate economic relations between Japan and India.

The committee will hold its 44th regular joint meeting in Delhi this March in cooperation with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. The JIBCC hopes to contribute to the further development of business between the two nations through these activities.

I will conclude my message by once again offering my congratulations on the 71st Republic Day of India, as well as my sincere wishes for India's increasing development and prosperity in the future.

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Republic Day of India Special

Further developing bilateral ties

TETSURO TOMITA AND NOBUYUKI HIRANO
CHAIRS OF KEIDANREN COMMITTEE ON SOUTH ASIA

On behalf of Keidanren, we wish to extend to the government and people of India our heartfelt congratulations on the 71st Republic Day of India.

India and Japan enjoy a long-standing diplomatic infrastructure, and our two nations have built close, mutually beneficial relations in various fields such as politics, diplomacy, economy and culture. The relationship has grown even stronger under the India-Japan special strategic and global partnership, while the number of Japanese companies' bases in India has surpassed 5,100.

According to the Doing Business report, an annual World Bank publication that



compares business environments in various countries, India's rank has gone up from 142nd in 2015 to 63rd in 2020. We regard this change as an accomplishment of the administration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in significantly improving the business environment in India, a development that we deeply respect.

Under these circumstances, we have high expectations that Modi will keep taking

influential leadership to further enhance the economic relations between the two countries by fostering economic partnerships under the free and open international economic order, promoting improvements in the business environment, strengthening cooperation in important fields and pursuing other important efforts.

Since 2007, Keidanren has joined with the Indian business community to hold the India-Japan Business Forum, where business leaders discuss various issues and compile a joint report for submission to the state leaders of both countries. We will contribute to further developing the India-Japan special strategic and global partnership by enhancing the two countries' business collaboration. We kindly ask for your continued support and cooperation in this endeavor.

Mutual support within strategic partnership

YOSHIRO MORI
CHAIRMAN, THE JAPAN-INDIA ASSOCIATION

On the occasion of the 71st Republic Day of India, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the government and the people of India on behalf of the Japan-India Association.

2020 has started with geopolitical and geoeconomic uncertainties, Iran-U.S. relations, nuclear issues linked to North Korea, and trade conflicts among major countries, to name a few. Although the government of Narendra Modi was strengthened after elections last spring



and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has become the longest serving prime minister in Japanese history, both leaders are confronted with difficult domestic and international issues.

However, Japan-India relations are developing smoothly due to the special strategic and global partnership, Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy and India's Act East policy.

While Japanese assistance for poverty alleviation, environmental protection and building infrastructure for multiple projects is widely promoted, our countries are also cooperating on establishing industrial corridors between India's metropolitan cities, shinkansen between Mumbai and Ahmedabad and connectivity-building in the northeast region.

This year marks 117 years since the foundation of The Japan-India Association. We are determined to fulfill our mission to serve both nations and wish for their mutual prosperity and the friendly development of people-to-people relations.

Transformation via strides in technology

RYUKO HIRA
CHAIRMAN, THE INDIAN COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION JAPAN



I have watched India's transformation for over 50 years. There is no precedent of size and content for India's global relevance and prominence. India has grown to become

the sixth-largest economy. In the seven decades since independence, hundreds of millions of people have been brought out of poverty reflecting the confidence of quantum leaps in the making of a "New India."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a visionary who has constantly implemented tough, but necessary, structural reforms that have made the road map to making India a leading global economy. As a director in several Japan-India institutions, I am convinced of India's vast entrepreneurial potential.

Rapid strides in technology will be the difference maker for India to truly become a global powerhouse.

The use of digital channels and digital usage now accounts for the majority of banking transactions in India.

The digital transformation should add

\$154 billion to India's gross domestic product by 2021. Digital products and services created through the use of technologies such as the cloud, "internet of things" and artificial intelligence have the potential to add \$957 billion to India's economy in the next decade.

A major transformation from rural to urban India provides vast potential for investments in building new urban infrastructure. Seventy percent of Indians live in rural areas. By 2050, it is believed that India's urban population will double to 800 million from 400 million in 2015.

India will still have 600 million people living in rural areas. Transforming the rural and urban economy through infrastructure is critical. Eighty percent of urban infra-

structure that will be needed in 2050 has yet to be built. The urban infrastructural gap in India is estimated to be beyond \$1 trillion.

This investment will require India to raise and blend new finance from the public and private sectors, providing huge opportunities for long-term funding to investors.

The dawn of the Reiwa Era holds the promise to fulfill the aspirations of an ambitious India. Established in 1921, the Indian Commerce and Industry Association Japan commences its centenary celebrations in February. The Indian Commerce and Industry Association Japan continues to serve as an apex body of India-Japan exchanges.

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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