

India national day

India, Japan: partners in the new Asia

Hemant Krishan Singh
AMBASSADOR OF INDIA TO JAPAN

On the happy occasion of the 62nd anniversary of India's independence, I convey the greetings of the people of India to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, as well as to the government and friendly people of Japan. I also extend cordial greetings to my fellow citizens of India and persons of Indian origin living in Japan.

Japan is a major partner of India. The India-Japan Strategic and Global Partnership, which has been forged over the past three years, is based on the solid bedrock of shared



Hemant Krishan Singh
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democratic values, popular good will, economic complementarities and common strategic interests, making it a durable force for stability. As the new Asia emerges during the 21st century, India and Japan stand together in their determination to bring peace, progress and prosperity to their respective peoples, the region and the world.

The transformation of India-Japan relations to realize their true potential has long been the vision of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh.

Under his leadership, this process continues to be driven forward by annual summits and a supporting structure of high-level dialogue mechanisms designed to enhance bilateral relations across the board. The third Annual Strategic Dialogue between the foreign ministers of India and Japan was held in Tokyo this July, and marked further progress in advancing the established road map for realizing a Strategic and Global Partnership. The prime minister of Japan has been invited to visit India for this year's annual summit, at which several initiatives for enhanced cooperation and economic engagement will be concretized.

The general election held in India this April and May saw the people of India delivering a decisive mandate in support of the policies of economic growth with social equity that

have been steadfastly pursued by the government of Prime Minister Singh. Despite the global economic crisis, India's economy grew at a brisk 6.7 percent pace in 2008-09 and remains in robust health. We are confident that this trend will continue and our economy will return to its even higher growth trajectory of recent years by 2010. Economic reforms and deregulation have unleashed the vast entrepreneurial talent of our people, and increased the global competitiveness of our corporations. Ongoing programs prioritizing public health, education, rural upliftment and urban renewal, combined with the massive upgrading of infrastructure that is under way, will bring sustained inclusive growth and development to the over 1 billion people of India.

Given these positive trends



Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh



President of India Pratibha Devisingh Patil

in India's economy, India-Japan economic relations have continued to intensify. India became the largest recipient of Japanese FDI in Asia during 2008-09. Together, we can

synergize our respective strengths and provide a much needed impetus to the global economy.

2009 has been yet another landmark year for India's presence in Japan. The new building of the Embassy of India, located in the sylvan surroundings of Tokyo's Chidorigafuchi, is a fitting symbol of our expanding bilateral relations. With its ample facilities, the embassy will be better able to partner our Japanese friends and members of the In-

dian community in promoting economic, social and cultural ties between our two countries.

I am confident that the coming year will see the further enhancement of close bonds 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, progress and prosperity.

Bilateral ties can have global impact

Yoshiro Mori
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-INDIA ASSOCIATION

On the auspicious occasion of the 62nd anniversary of India's Independence Day, I have the honor to send my warmest congratulations to the people and government of India.

Thanks to its strong economic growth and vibrant democracy, India's future is bright and its international stature ever growing.

The last general election, successfully held in April and May this year, has proved that the "largest democracy in the world" smoothly functions. The participation of India in and its contribution to world summits such as the dialogue with G-8 leaders and the G-20 are recognized as indispensable for the management of world politics and economy.

As one of many Japanese friends of India, I welcome the ascendance of India in the world. The relationship between Japan and India continues to develop in a satisfactory manner.

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited Japan twice last year — the first to attend the Toyako G-8 summit and the second in a bilateral context, and enhanced further our excellent relationship. I expect that this year will see the visit of our prime minister to India as agreed upon in our Strategic and Global Partnership. Other visits of importance took place in both directions, at official levels and in the private sector.



A wide range of dialogue and cooperation have been organized in various fields: politico-security, trade and investment, energy and environment, culture, science and academic cooperation.

Japanese investment in India has been accelerated and there are 550 Japanese companies in India operating from 838 locations. India has become the largest recipient of Japan's official development assistance. The amount of ODA provided by Japan to India in fiscal 2008 amounted to ¥236 billion.

Many important projects have been implemented through Japan's cooperation in such areas as urban metro-traffic systems in big cities, power plants, reforestation, drinking water and sewage systems, better sanitary conditions and poverty alleviation, support for education, etc. Unprecedented major projects such as the construction of a dedicated freight corridor, and the industrial corridor between Delhi and Mumbai are well under way.

It is my sincere hope that our constructive relationship will contribute to resolving global issues such as the fight against the planet's warming, nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the reform of the United Nations Security Council and other international systems, and the fight against pandemics. Then the Japan-India relationship will become truly worthy of the name of a Global Strategic Partnership.

The Japan-India Association, with its historical heritage of 106 years and many well-intentioned members, is determined to endeavor for an even better relationship between the two peoples.



Concrete diplomacy: The new building of the Embassy of India in Tokyo's Chidorigafuchi — a combination of architectural elegance, advanced construction techniques and functionality. (Right) The auditorium of the new embassy



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Holy site: Pilgrims walk around the Dharmekh Stupa in Sarnath, where the Buddha is said to have preached his first sermon.

Shared values the foundation of strong, maturing relationship

Taro Nakayama
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 62nd anniversary of India's Independence Day.



It is a pleasure for me to note that the two countries sharing common values such as democracy, human rights, rule of law and market economy, have developed and are strengthening the Strategic and Global Partnership. The relationship between Japan and India is cemented through active exchanges, especially the annual visits by the prime ministers of both countries. The most recent achievement was the third Strategic Dialogue between the foreign ministers, which was

held in Tokyo in July, followed by the meeting between the two prime ministers on the margins of the G-8 summit in Italy. As president of the Japan-India Parliamentarians' Friendship League, I would like to express my continuing commitment to actively contribute to the further strengthening of our partnership. I send my best wishes to the people of India for their greater prosperity and for the continued development of our cordial relationship.

Fujio Mitarai
CHAIRMAN, NIPPON KEIDANREN (JAPAN
BUSINESS FEDERATION)

On behalf of Nippon Keidanren (the Japan Business Federation), I would like to offer my sincere congratulations on the occasion of India's 62nd Independence Day. Taking this opportunity, I sincerely wish the people of the great nation of India greater prosperity.



this EPA. I am confident that Japan and India will continue to enhance their international competitiveness by creating a business-friendly environment. The Japanese business community looks forward to supporting the transfer of technology and know-how on a commercial basis through ongoing direct investment in India.

It is also essential for Japan and India to work together on the problems facing us on a global level, chief among them the challenge of climate change. As debate continues on the nature of a post-Kyoto international framework for dealing with climate issues, it is imperative that the world's major emitting countries all take steps to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

A memorandum of understanding was signed by Nippon Keidanren, the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Confederation of Indian Industry last year with a view to strengthening cooperation to reduce emissions by making energy-saving technology more widely available, and promoting dialogue on clean energy policy. I am confident that the private sector can achieve substantial results in this regard.

Japan and India have many values in common, including a commitment to democracy and a free-trade economy. It is vital that we continue to take the initiative together on Asian economic integration as well as the problems we face on a global scale. The Japanese business community will do whatever it can to strengthen the relationship between Japan and India.

Power of the vote brings change to Indian politics

Yog Kapoor
OWNER, SAMRAT INDIAN RESTAURANT
CHAIN

For the first time in decades since the country's independence, Indians have come to know the power of their votes in a national election.



This year's general election, held in five phases between April 16 and May 13, resulted in a resounding victory for the Indian National Congress party of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and party president Sonia Gandhi. The party is a legacy of our great forefathers like Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru.

Ultimately, Indians came to realize that politics has become the big business next to show business in India. During the election campaign, the mass media played a very important role and television commercials emphasized that the public must use

their vote to choose the party that would be able to lead the country in the right direction for the future.

So through the power of their vote, the people elected the right party at the right time. Even the leaders of the Congress party must have been surprised that they would be able to form a government without having to rely on the support of the Communists who propped up the administration in parliament during its last term.

It raises the hope of political stability for at least the next five years and the introduction of economic reforms that had been blocked by left-wing parties.

We should close the chapter on difficult relations with other parties, and turn a new page in Indian politics and remove poverty from the country.

Millions of tourists from around the world visit India every year and the number is growing. Many come to trace the footsteps of independence leader Mahatma Gandhi, whose philosophy of nonviolence helped Indians overthrow 200 years of British colonial rule.

The Congress party made many election promises, including helping the agricul-

ture sector, and improving the road and rail networks, and promised to bring "change" to India. Mahatma Gandhi used to say that the villages are the heart of India. To fulfill all these dreams we need unity among all the parties so that they can work with the government.

India is a paradise for investors even during the world financial crisis. The Indian economy is rebounding and the strength of the recovery is increasing since the general election. Its rebound will be a stabilizing signal for the world economy.

Japan is a great, peace-loving country, with advanced technology. With the cooperation of Japan and other advanced nations, this region will become a veritable haven one day, with a population second only in size to China's.

So I hope that the Congress party will keep all its election promises, and make India a better place for future generations to live in peace, prosperity and unity.

All Indians, wherever we live on this planet, need to reveal this character once more and work together. We can carry forward as one nation and one people the legacy of our forefathers that we celebrate today.

Business eyes closer cooperation

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 62nd anniversary of India's independence.



We hold your country in high esteem for building 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.

First, I would like to offer my congratulations to Indian

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and his Cabinet for taking office for their second term after their success in the general election held from April to May this year. I believe this election victory shows the Indian people's strong approval of the first Singh administration's performance over the past five years. In this new term, the administration will have a stronger framework than in the past and the Japanese business community looks forward to seeing the further promotion of economic liberalization policies.

Turning to Japan-India relations, Prime Minister Singh visited our nation in October. Exchange declined slightly in the new year as India readied for its general election. I am encouraged, though, by the fact that dynamic exchange has resumed since the election.

Government negotiations to create a Japan-India Economic Partnership Agreement have been held 11 times to date and they will be resumed soon with an eye to resolving pending issues that remain between our two countries. On behalf of the business community, I would like to express my strong hope that an 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. 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 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.

Under the framework of

Against the background of this burgeoning economic relationship between our two countries, Nippon Keidanren hosted the second Japan-India Business Leaders Forum on the occasion of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh's visit to Japan in October. Discussions were held on greater cooperation to further consolidate and strengthen our relationship. It was agreed at the forum that speedy progress needs to be made toward concluding a Japan-India Economic Partnership Agreement that will provide the institutional infrastructure to ensure a strong foundation for business relations between our countries.

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Club forges people-to-people links as grass-roots ambassador

Kunna Dash
PRESIDENT, INDIA-JAPAN FRIENDSHIP CLUB, OSAKA

The India-Japan Friendship Club, Osaka, opened as a voluntary, nongovernmental, nonprofit organization in the name and style of the India-Japan Friendship Center in Koriyama City, Nara.

The inauguration of the India-Japan Friendship Center in Nara laid the foundations for strengthening the bilateral relationship between India and Japan, the two largest and most developed democracies in Asia.

From a wider perspective, the organization works at grass-roots levels as a tourist information and promotion center to harness friendship between the two countries through cultural amity, scientific and technological exchanges, linguistic expertise missions, resource management workshops, economic enhancement and alternative livelihood projects, etc., that explore the objectives of the center as an informal ambassador.

We also have a branch in Orissa, India, to boost friendship. We run the Chandra Sekhar Academy, a CBSE pattern coeducation English middle school with the Japanese language as an elective from elementary level in the city.

The India-Japan Friendship Club, Osaka, and the India-Japan Friendship Center, Orissa, are voluntary organizations that have joined hands to identify areas of convergence for mutual cooperation and brotherhood between the two countries in a constructive manner, contributing to the advancement of overall bilateral relations. They further reaffirm their determination to strengthen cooperation and coordination between India and Japan for comprehensive reforms at grass-roots levels.

We should use our best endeavors to facilitate ties between people, or people-to-people exchanges, which are of vital importance, in addition to political and economic relations. The Japanese and Indian people share ancient bonds, civilizations and a

proud heritage, and thus have huge potential to deepen their interaction.

Japan and India have articulated the shared conviction that this partnership must be based on the foundations of close people-to-people links to help elevate our friendly and cooperative ties to a higher level. Intuitive initiatives will contribute substantially to this noble objective.

To reduce the communication gap, schools and other educational institutions will introduce Japanese in Orissa and other states of India as a language link between the two countries. Besides education, we organize traditional and cultural programs to attract Indian and Japanese classical and folk artists to perform in both countries.

The India-Japan Friendship Center and India-Japan Friendship Club work as grass-roots ambassadors to foster and facilitate social elevation of people through innovative involvement in many fields, including education, technology, agriculture, export/import, forestry and fisheries, tourism and culture.

The organizations are also involved in benevolent works like homes for the elderly, orphanages, free boarding schools, safe drinking water and sanitation, health care, elementary education and adult literacy, poverty alleviation, women's empowerment, child welfare, including support for street children and the elimination of child labor, support for the disabled, preservation of the environment, and other kinds of social work that are deemed suitable to match the all-around growth and development of both countries and peoples.

These are the fundamental steps in promoting mutual understanding and appreciation of each other's cultures and civilizations.

We are hopeful that such initiatives will convey a picture of two dynamic and friendly countries, which are fast growing economies as well as knowledge and cultural hubs, and which have emerged as pillars of strength in Asia and the rest of the world.



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