

India Independence Day Special

Special synergetic partnership expands

SIBI GEORGE
AMBASSADOR OF INDIA



On the occasion of the 76th anniversary of India's independence, I extend warm greetings to Their Majesties Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako, the government and people of

Japan, and to the members of the Indian community and friends of India in Japan.

Since gaining independence in 1947, India has transformed from a nascent democracy into a vibrant, pluralistic society and one of the world's fastest-growing economies. In the realm of technology and innovation, India has made significant strides. Our information technology industry is recognized globally, and our digital initiatives are revolutionizing governance and delivering services to the remotest corners of our country. Achievements in space exploration have placed India among the leading nations in space technology.

We have also made significant strides in social development, with improvements in literacy, life expectancy and gender equality.

On the global stage, India has emerged as a responsible and constructive actor. Its commitment to a rules-based international order and leadership in addressing global challenges such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic have cemented its reputation as a reliable and constructive partner. Under its presidency of the Group of 20 leading rich and developing countries, India has endeavored to promote global cooperation on issues of critical importance while keeping the needs of the Global South at the forefront of its efforts.

Our relationship with Japan, deeply rooted in shared values and mutual respect, has been instrumental in India's

Prime Minister Narendra Modi poses with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the G7 summit in Hiroshima.



developmental journey. The special strategic and global partnership between our nations has grown stronger over the years, covering cooperation in a wide array of sectors. The recent high-level exchanges between our countries have added new dimensions to this partnership. The visits by Prime Minister H.E. Fumio Kishida to India in March and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Japan for the Hiroshima G7 summit of major industrial nations have solidified our ties.

Our partnership extends beyond bilateral ties, contributing to the shaping of the global order. The synergy between India's "Act East" policy and Japan's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" vision underscores our commitment to a rules-based international order. We are working together with a positive and practical agenda in "the Quad" framework. Both countries are also chairing two prominent global groupings—the

G20 and the G7 — this year.

Reflecting the robust economic ties between our nations, we aim for \$5 trillion in investment from Japan to India over five years through 2027, which will boost the presence of Japanese companies in India and contribute to our economic growth. Our bilateral trade has reached a significant milestone, touching \$22 billion.

Our collaboration on high-speed rail, infrastructure development, critical and emerging technologies, establishing resilient supply chains and more, can significantly accelerate India's development trajectory.

The year 2023 is significant as it marks the India-Japan Year of Tourism Exchanges, with the theme of "Connecting Himalayas with Mount Fuji" fostering deeper people-to-people connections. We are also committed to enhancing cooperation in human resources and critical and emerging technologies, leveraging Japan's techno-

logical prowess and India's growing digital economy.

As we look toward Amrit Kaal, the lead-up to the centenary of our independence in 2047, we envision an inclusive, technologically advanced, and globally influential India. We are harnessing technology, innovation and our young demographics to realize this vision. The special strategic and global partnership between India and Japan, rooted in mutual respect and shared interests, will be instrumental in shaping this future.

On this special day, I thank the people and the government of Japan for their steadfast support and friendship on India's journey so far. As we move forward, I am confident that our partnership will only grow deeper, contributing not only to the prosperity of our countries, but also to fostering peace and stability in the region and the world at large.



President Droupadi Murmu
EMBASSY OF INDIA



Prime Minister Narendra Modi
EMBASSY OF INDIA



Above: A statue of Buddha sits in Dajikyo Buddhist Temple, Bodhi Gaya, Bihar. Left: Prime Minister Narendra Modi poses with dignitaries during the unveiling of the Mahatma Gandhi statue in Hiroshima.

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India Independence Day Special

Bilateral activity growing fast

YOSHIIHIDE SUGA
CHAIRPERSON, THE JAPAN-INDIA
ASSOCIATION



On the occasion of the 77th Independence Day of the Republic 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. Since its foundation in 1963 by former Prime Minister Shigenobu Okuma and Eiichi Shibusawa, who is often dubbed the "father of Japanese capitalism," the JIA has always been at the forefront of the friendly relations between Japan and India. After India became independent in August 1947, it extended friendship and helped us return to the international community. With the end of the Cold War in 1989 and India's subsequent redirection of foreign policy and the commencement of drastic economic liberalization, the Japan-India relationship gained substantial momentum.

In 2000, after the vicissitudes, Prime Minister Yoshino Mori, who later served as chairperson of the JIA until May 2022, made an official visit to India, and then launched the Japan-India global partnership. The relationship was further upgraded to a special strategic and global partnership by then-Prime Minister Shinzo

Abe and his counterpart Narendra Modi when the latter visited Tokyo in 2014. Today our cooperation is expanding rapidly, thanks to the accelerated and mutual efforts of the governments, peoples and business communities of both countries. We faced tremendous hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic, but even during those difficult years our ties stood firm. I take pride in the fact that Japan provided assistance to India while I was prime minister to help our Indian friends deal with the spread of the pandemic there. We are working toward a free and open Indo-Pacific with their shared vision and commitment to promote peace and prosperity in the region and beyond.

In summit-level meetings, our leaders have affirmed to keep working together on addressing various global challenges, such as peace and stability, climate change and clean energy. The participation of Modi in the Group of Seven summit of major industrial nations in Hiroshima in May contributed to producing key outcomes there. The upcoming G20 summit of leading rich and developing countries in New Delhi in September will be another significant opportunity, which I believe will see India play a major role as its chair in bringing a positive impact on global issues that demand immediate and effective measures.

Our bilateral relationship is also expanding dramatically in economic cooperation, trade and investment. Among the series of flagship projects underway in India, one such example is

the shinkansen project for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-speed Railway corridor. Japanese investment has become even more visible in other commercial sectors, too. People-to-people contacts, including cultural exchanges, scholarship, youth exchange programs, tourism and local government initiatives to establish direct contact, are now becoming active. When I visited India as the JIA chairperson in early July this year, I visited a construction site of the Mumbai Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Project, which is our bilateral flagship project. In Delhi, I had a chance to exchange views with members of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Confederation of Indian Industry. I was deeply impressed with energy embodied by Indian people from the political and business sectors and people's aspirations.

At a meeting with Modi, we concurred on the importance of fostering the business environment there so that Japanese companies can further contribute to India's economic development and on the point that people-to-people exchanges are the foundation of our bilateral relations. Through my visit, I firmly believe that India will be on a trajectory for an exponential development in the coming years. It is my sincere wish that the 77th anniversary of India's independence will mark another significant milestone both for India and the Japan-India relationship. The JIA is deeply committed to further contributing to our ever-expanding relationship.



Left: Krishna Temple in Hampi, Karnataka state, is part of a group of Hindu monuments comprising a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the city. Right: Depicting independence leader Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Statue of Unity is the world's tallest statue. PHOTOGRAPHY BY INDIA



Shared values foster business opportunities

TATSUO YASUNAGA
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-INDIA BUSINESS
COOPERATION COMMITTEE



On behalf of the Japan-India Business Cooperation Committee, it is my utmost pleasure to offer heartfelt congratulations on the historic commemoration of India's 76th Independence

Day anniversary.

The cordial relations that India and Japan have fostered over the years is indeed a testament to our shared fundamental values of freedom, democracy, human rights and the sanctity of law. Under our special strategic global partnership banner, our countries have relentlessly worked toward strengthening our relationship. The current year holds great significance as India presides over the Group of 20 leading rich

and developing countries and Japan undertakes the presidency of the Group of Seven major industrial nations, reflecting both nations' pivotal leadership roles during these challenging international scenarios.

Established in 1966, the JIBCC aims to enhance mutual understanding, foster friendship and enable prosperous economic relations between India and Japan. The establishment of the committee was prompted by a visit to India led by Tadashi Adachi, who was then-chairman of the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This development led the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the JCCI to also establish committees.

The JIBCC held its inaugural joint meeting in 1967, and since then, we've held joint meetings fostering the ever-strengthening bond between our wonderful nations. In February, the committee convened its 46th joint meeting with the FICCI in New Delhi, marking the first summit in five years following COVID-19. The vibrant theme of

"India-Japan Cooperation on a Sustainable Society for Future Generations" encouraged fruitful discussions and prompted a joint declaration. We once again recognized the vital role direct communication between Japan and India plays, particularly its significant contribution to global economic development through intensified industry-centric economic exchanges. With a record population of over 1.42 billion this year, India is set to surpass China as having the world's largest population. This places India firmly as a colossal market that continues to offer abundant business opportunities courtesy of its booming population. We are fully committed and eager to harness these prospects to the maximum, especially via fresh ventures into realms such as building a decarbonized society and stimulating digital transformation via industrial collaboration.

To conclude, I extend my hearty congratulations on India's Independence Day and express my hopes for India's ongoing development and prosperity in the future.

'Mind-heart balance' anchors our potential

RYUKO HIRA
CHAIRMAN, THE INDIAN COMMERCE
AND INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION JAPAN



The Indian Independence Day is the occasion when we can witness India's "Vikas Bhi, Virasat Bhi" (Technology of mind as well as culture of heart).

Today, India is among the top five economies in the world, having the third-largest startup ecosystem. With a high competitive edge in areas such as digital technology and 5G, there were 89.5 million digital transactions in the country. India reportedly accounted for 46% of global real-time payments in 2022.

This year, India is hosting the presidency of The Group of 20 economies with a theme outlined by India's fundamental ideology: "One Earth, One Family, One Future."

At the United Nations' ninth International Day of Yoga on June 21, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "The coming together of more than 180 countries on India's call is historic."

Yoga is becoming an integral part of people's lives worldwide as they look to learn from India's sustainable lifestyle.

This year the theme of Yoga Day is yoga for the welfare of all in the form of "One World-One Family." This theme emphasizes the spirit of yoga, which unites and

takes everyone along.

In his message, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres reminded everyone that in a dangerous and divided world, the benefits of this ancient practice are particularly precious.

Curiosity as well as faith in India's culture, heritage, past and legacy are continuously growing.

Balancing the technology of the mind, as well as the culture of the heart is very critical since it is often said that when the balance between these two is lost, civilization is to perish.

Therefore, Modi emphasized the significance of tapping the spiritual wisdom of India to prevent the egoistic movement of the mind from overwhelming the heart.

Modi said: "Our religious scriptures, including the Gita, started resonating in every household again. The mind of India

once again experienced a stirring. These scriptures gave rise to family traditions, and new generations started connecting with our sacred texts, becoming the torchbearers of future generations."

The Indian Commerce and Industry Association Japan serves as an apex body to provide support, guidance and consultancy advisory services to fully develop the economic and investment potential between Japan and India.

While felicitating India's independence and freedom, on behalf of all ICJ members, I convey our deepest appreciation to all who have contributed to India's cause and to the readers of The Japan Times.

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



Left: Traditional houseboats float off Alappuzha in Kerala state. Right: Havlock Island is part of the Andaman Island chain. PHOTOGRAPHY BY INDIA



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15th August
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INDIA 15th August INDEPENDENCE DAY

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