

**Remarks by Ambassador Sibi George
at “India-Japan Partnership : Nagaland”
at Embassy of India, Tokyo, 16 February 2024**

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Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests,

A very Good evening to you all !!

I am delighted to be part of this Seminar to discuss the profound partnership between India and Japan, and the exciting opportunities that lie ahead, in collaboration between Japan and the beautiful state of Nagaland, in the North East of India.

Dear Friends,

India and Japan friendship has a long history, rooted in spiritual affinity and strong cultural and civilizational ties. Today, our relationship is based on the strong foundation of shared values such as democracy, freedom, and respect for rule of law. In recent years, India - Japan relationship has transformed into Special Strategic and Global partnership launched in 2014 under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi and the former Prime Minister Late Mr. Shinzo Abe. This special partnership

continued to flourish under the leadership of former Prime Minister His Excellency Suga and under current Prime Minister His Excellency KISHIDA Fumio. This year we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the establishment of India - Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership.

Dear Friends,

We are today discussing one of the unique characters of this relationship focusing on North East. Today we are focusing on Nagaland, this is part of a series of events that we organize on India - Japan collaboration in North East. The North East region is a gateway to India's ancient cultural relationships with East and South East Asia. It binds India with some of its most important neighbours. Growth and prosperity of North East of India is key to building a Self-Reliant India. I am delighted to share that almost every one of the eight north-eastern states in India is growing in double digits with further enormous potential to expand in various diverse areas including organic food and renewable energy. I am sure that this region will play a crucial role in fulfilling India's target of becoming a developed country in our Amrit Kaal journey to India @ 100.

Japan is working with India closely for the economic development of the North East. We have set up the India-Japan Act East Forum, which takes up projects for economic modernization of the North East. The range of projects taken up is quite diverse and includes improvement of National Highways in Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura; hydropower in Meghalaya; biodiversity conservation and forest management in Sikkim, Nagaland, Tripura and Meghalaya; and water supply and sanitation in Assam. Upskilling of human resources in the North East is also a part of the initiative. Be it the cluster-based approach for development of agro-industrial hubs, organic farming or development of the immense tourism potential through

connectivity projects or the massive investments in building social and physical infrastructure in the region, sustained efforts are being made by the Government to increase the growth and development of the region. These efforts are also aimed at improving the ease of doing business through active investment promotion which will, in turn, revitalize the demand and supply chains to unlock newer business opportunities. In these developmental agenda of North East, Japan is an important partner for India. I am confident that in coming months and years India - Japan collaboration in our North East will continue to progress. I invite Japanese companies to engage more actively in North East.

Friends,

Nagaland, with its rich cultural heritage and exquisitely picturesque landscapes, lush and verdant flora, is a land that represents unimaginable beauty, moulded perfectly for a breath taking experience. Natural beauty in its varied forms is one of the major assets of the State. Lush green vegetation having interesting flora and fauna, deep valleys with glistening streams, natural lakes, hill agriculture and pleasant climate throughout the year are unique natural features of the state. Nagaland offers a unique and authentic experience for visitors, with its vibrant festivals, traditional crafts, and stunning natural beauty. It is a land of charm, diverse in landscape, culture and offers opportunities for eco-rural adventure, medical and wellness tourism. It is an ideal place for trekking, rock climbing, jungle camping and offers limitless exploration possibilities in its lush sub-tropical rain forests which are also a treasure trove of a plethora of medicinal plants.

It is also popularly known as the 'land of festivals and every tribal festival is celebrated with pomp and gaiety, adorned with rich and colorful traditional attires. Hornbill Festival of Nagaland, celebrated each year in De-

ember to promote the state's cultural heritage, attracts a flock of domestic and foreign tourists.

Friends,

Nagaland is predominantly an agrarian economy with more than 70% of its population depending on agriculture & allied activities for their livelihood. It is the 7th largest producer of rubber and coffee in India, where it has seen a good rise of production over the recent years. The State's agro-climatic conditions favour agriculture, horticulture and forestry, offering immense potential for collaborations in these areas. Its mountainous topography and perennial streams, huge open space makes it a potential area for green energy generation projects. Nagaland with its rich biodiversity, good rainfall and fertile soil, large untapped mineral resources like oil, gas, coal, limestone and magnetite etc. presents a myriad of opportunities for investment and business collaborations. We have some excellent presentations on Nagaland coming up. I thank H.E. Mr. Temjen Imna Along, Hon'ble Minister for Tourism and Higher Education, Government of Nagaland for joining us today. I also thank JETRO for its support in the event and Mr. Kazuya Nakajo, Executive Vice President for joining us.

Friends,

I would like to convey my sincere thanks to all the participants for joining us today, and hope that the partnerships that will emerge from this seminar hold immense potential for fostering economic growth, promoting sustainable development, and enhancing people-to-people ties between Japan and India including in our beautiful State of Nagaland.

Thank you.
