

**Embassy of India
Tokyo

**Remarks by H.E. Mr. Sibi George, Ambassador of India to Japan at the JIA
Event: India – Japan Indispensable Partnership – Vision for 2047_
July 18, 2023**

Good morning.

Your Excellency Ambassador Saiki, President of Japan-India Association, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to join you today at this Breakfast meeting. Thank you JIA for hosting.

2. Most of you present here today are connected with India - Japan relations. Many of you have contributed in building this relationship. Some of you have spent several years 'Connecting Himalayas with Mount Fuji'. Most of you are aware of the connect between Daikokutan (Lord Shiva), Saraswati (Benzaiten), Ganesha (Kangiten). And also the connect with the land of Lord Buddha. Hence I do not wish to talk at length about the civilizational and cultural linkages between our two countries. Instead, I would like to focus on our topic for today: India – Japan Indispensable Partnership – Vision for 2047. Today, I will cover a few points that I think are not normally paid attention by an international audience.

3. Before I do that, let me say something very important, that is to thank JIA. I recall the successful visit of delegation led by Chairman of JIA, former Prime Minister His Excellency Suga to India last week. It was indeed a very successful visit, accompanied by Members of Parliament and a high level business delegation. I thank JIA for the initiative. I thank Ambassador Saiki for the initiative. The delegation I am told was able to address many issues of interest and concern. I am confident that in coming weeks and months we will be able to address the issues raised. The visit of Prime Minister Suga and the delegation has generated a new momentum in our business engagement. Thank you Ambassador.

Dear Friends,

4. The topic India – Japan Indispensable Partnership – Vision for 2047 has two parts, 'Indispensable partnership'. These are the words of Hon'ble Prime Minister of Japan HE Kishida in his address on New FOIP in New Delhi. FOIP as we all know, Free and Open Indo-Pacific. Indo-Pacific today is the most important geopolitical construct. Each time, we refer to Indo-Pacific what comes

to mind is the historic address at Indian Parliament by former Prime Minister His Excellency Abe on 'Confluence of Two Seas'- Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean. His words continue to resonate every day when our two countries continue to work for stability and freedom in Indo-Pacific and beyond. I recall the address by HE Foreign Minister Hayashi at the breakfast meeting here on 22nd May, the next day after the Hiroshima Summit, when he gave his vision of our indispensable partnership.

5. Indo-Pacific and IPOI (Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative) that India launched are all essential elements of our Special Strategic and Global Partnership that we entered into 2014 under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Abe and now reinforced under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Kishida. Let me quote Foreign Minister Hayashi said in his speech in London last month. He said, and I quote: In pursuing a FOIP, it is extremely important to reinforce our partnership with India, which holds this year's G20 Presidency as well as being the world's largest democracy and a partner with shared fundamental values and strategic interests." Unquote.

6. The IPOI comprises of seven thematic areas that cover a wide spectrum of issues spanning the 'security-development-capacity building' continuum in diverse areas spanning security, safety, resource development, science and technology, resilient infrastructure, connectivity and marine environment-ecology. There are so many terms that we are familiar with IORA, SAGAR, Act East, FIPIC, IPEF, G 4, and of course QUAD which has India, Japan, Australia and the US.

Dear Friends,

7. We live in a very challenging times. Oceans are no more benign. The safety and security of the sea lanes are crucial for the stability and prosperity of the region. Let me quote from the speech by Hon'ble Prime Minister Modi at the joint session of the US Congress last month. He said and I quote: "The dark clouds of coercion and confrontation are casting their shadow in the Indo-Pacific. The stability of the region has become one of the central concerns of our partnership. We share a vision of a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific, connected by secure seas, defined by international law, free from domination, and anchored in ASEAN centrality. A region where all nations, small and large, are free and fearless in their choices, where progress is not suffocated by impossible burdens of debt, where connectivity is not leveraged for strategic purposes, where all nations are lifted by the high tide of shared prosperity. Our vision does not seek to contain or exclude, but to build a cooperative region of peace and prosperity. We work through regional institutions and with our partners from within the region and beyond. Of this, QUAD has emerged as a major force of good for the region." Unquote.

8. India and Japan are indispensable partners in this journey to transform our Indo-Pacific into region where all nations, small and large, are free and fearless in their choices. In his famous Shangri La Dialogue address in 2019, PM Modi ji evoked same sentiments when he said, “When the oceans are open, the seas are secure, countries are connected, the rule of law prevails and the region is stable, nations, small and large, prosper as sovereign countries.” This is our vision for future, Vision for 2047. It is not one of unipolar or bipolar world, it is one of multipolar world, where we all co-exist and flourish in peace not as super powers but as super partners, where we all meet the SDG targets.

Dear Friends,

9. India has a clear Vision for 2047. In his address at the Independence Day celebrations, when India celebrated its 75th anniversary of independence, Prime Minister Modi spoke about AmritKaal, a journey to the 100th anniversary of India’s independence. A 25-year period journey, India at 100 in 2047. What is Amrit Kaal? What is India’s vision 2047? Prime Minister spoke about Panch Pran (five resolves) of Amrit Kaal - Goal of a developed India, to remove any trace of colonial mindset, take pride in our roots, unity, and sense of duty among citizens. In her first budget of the Amrit Kaal period, Finance Minister Madam Nirmala Seetharaman ji mentioned seven priority areas on which the government will focus - inclusive development, reaching the last mile, infrastructure and investment, unleashing the potential, green growth, youth power, and financial sector, terming them as ‘saptarishis’ or seven great sages, these seven focus areas will propel India toward a brighter future.

10. In his address at the UNGA in September last year, External Affairs Minister Dr. Jaishankar ji highlighted the agenda of New India for our centenary which will be achieved through the five pledges, elaborating what each of the pledges meant for the world: One, we are resolved to make India a developed country in the next 25 years. For the world, that creates more capacities for global good. Two, we will liberate ourselves from a colonial mindset. Externally, this means reformed multilateralism and more contemporary global governance. Three, our rich civilizational heritage will be a source of pride and of strength. This includes care and concern for the environment, so ingrained in our traditional ethos. Four, we will promote greater unity and solidarity. This expresses a coming together on global issues, such as terrorism, pandemics or the environment. And five, we will instill consciousness of duties and responsibilities. This applies to nations, as much as it does to citizens. These five pledges affirm our age-old outlook that sees the world as one family. We believe that national good and global good can be entirely in harmony. This is the conviction that prompted us to chose the theme for G 20 Presidency, Vasudaiva Kutumbakam, World is One Family, - One Earth, One Family, One Future.

11. Even as we meet our own development targets, India offers partnerships to our brothers and sisters in Asia, in Africa and Latin America. And we do so based on their needs and their priorities. It is this conviction that led us to supply vaccines to over a 100 nations. Similarly, our evacuation operations in HADR (Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief) situations always had room for other nationals in distress. Today, that focus is on green growth, better connectivity, digital delivery and accessible health. Our solidarity is not just in words; you can see them in 700 development projects that India does across the world.

Dear Friends,

12. In this journey of India @100, India in 2047, I see Japan as an indispensable partner. Taking this message of our Indispensable Partnership and Vision 2047 to every corner of Japan and seek the active participation of all our stakeholders in this Amrit Kaal journey. Who are these stakeholders in our AmritKaal journey? Political leaders, not only at national level but also at prefecture level and city levels, our parliamentarians both at national and prefecture level each one of them is a partner in our Amritkaal journey, our Ministries and Agencies, various governmental institutes and organisations not only at national level but also at prefecture and city levels, our scholars, strategists and think tanks again not just in Tokyo but in all major cities, our business leaders not only at big business but also small and medium enterprises spread across Japan, strategists and think tanks, media houses and TV channels not only at national level but also at prefecture level, scientists not only Nobel laureates, but also scientists and scholars all across japan, universities and research institutes and last but not the least people to people connect. Anyone who likes Bollywood and watched RRR is a stakeholder. Every yoga teacher is a stakeholder so is the yoga practitioners, every student who studies about Justice Pal and Mahatma Gandhi are stakeholders so is their teachers and schools. While talking about Mahatma Gandhi, I invite you all to visit the statue of Mahatma Gandhi that Prime Minister Modi unveiled in Hiroshima. And of course, the role that Indian diaspora in japan can play to expand our sphere of engagement is huge. The success of our Amrit Kaal journey, our journey to realize Vision 1947 depends on our engagement with these stakeholders, each one of them. And I am happy to state that we are in the right direction.

Dear Friends,

13. Let's look at our engagement this year alone. Prime Minister Kishida visited India in March, Prime Minister Modi visited Japan in May, for the Hiroshima Summit. PM Kishida will now visit New Delhi again for the G 20 Summit. We had two rounds of QUAD meetings, at Foreign Ministers level in New Delhi in March and at Summit level in Hiroshima, next QUAD Summit will

be held in New Delhi. India's Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance, IT, Railways, Environment, Health visited Japan this year, we also had Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu and Odisha, we had delegations from many of our State Governments of India including Gujrat, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. And from Japan, we had the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Environment, Education, all visited, so is Governor of Tokyo and other prefectural leadership. We will again have visits of Foreign Minister, METI Minister and Finance Minister. Similar is the kind of exchanges at the official level. We have over seventy dialogue mechanisms at official level which are held regularly.

14. Now let me mention the strategic and defence engagement. In November India participated in the Malabar Exercise, Indian Chief of Naval Staff was in Japan, in January we had the Veer Guardian and the Dharma Guardian the Airforce and Army exercises, with participation of Sukhoi 30 aircraft, there have been six ship visits from Japan to India including rounds of JIMEX, now we look forward to the next round of Veer Guardian and Dharma Guardian in India next year. We are in discussions in defence technology and equipment. We need to make more progress there.

Dear Friends,

15. It has been seven months since I assumed charge in Japan. With the easing of restrictions on COVID 19 pandemic, I have been able to travel the length and breadth of Japan, covering several prefectures and major cities. I am happy to share that in the last six months, I have been able to travel to 23 prefectures of Japan and interact with Governors, Assembly Speakers, Business Chambers, Universities, Media Houses and a large number of people from all sections of society.

16. What we have witnessed during these interactions is a real momentum, an overwhelming enthusiasm, a spirit of partnership towards building a relationship with India. Wherever I went, I came across a large number of stakeholders, companies, big, medium and small eager to look at India. There is more coverage of India in Japanese media both national and local, Indeed, there is a real momentum. What we should be able to do is to convert this momentum to concrete outcome.

17. Today, in Japan one could see an overwhelming appreciation for India's economic growth story. India's emergence as the fifth largest economy overtaking the United Kingdom last year received a lot of local attention. Its growth rate of over 7% and its march to become the fourth largest economy is watched with keen interest. Similarly, India's emergence as the largest populated country overtaking China has been noted. The fact that over 60 percent of its population is less than 30 years of age and the contributions this talent pool can make for India's growth is well appreciated. India's steady progress it makes in infrastructure, digital transformation, skill development, all have been welcomed and appreciated. I was so happy to see scientists and

businessmen talk about India's scientific achievements. Its digital transformation, its space program. Last week India launched Chandrayan 3, a mission to Moon, I received so many congratulatory messages from our Japanese friends, particularly business and scientists.

18. India's effective handling of G 20 presidency with over 200 events spread across India, with its One Family, One Earth, One World message indeed has an impact. Each one of Japanese friends who attended the G 20 meetings in India, whether it is G to G or B to B they all returned with a great appreciation of India's growth story and its cultural diversity. India has transformed. And in this transformation journey Japan is a major partner. Mumbai-Ahmedabad Shinkansen High-Speed Rail project is a symbol of our partnership. Once completed it will revolutionize the way people travel in India, fostering greater economic growth and regional connectivity. Speaking about connectivity, I need to mention the North East, which is an important area of engagement between India and Japan.

Dear Friends,

19. Looking ahead to realize our Vision 2047, let me make a few observations:

First: We need to maintain the momentum in our political and strategic engagement, bilateral and plurilateral, through QUAD, through G 4, through Indo-Pacific. We need to build our defence cooperation and defence technology cooperation. We need to build our prefecture cooperation and city cooperation and parliamentary exchanges.

Second: There are around 1500 Japanese companies in India today. These are 1500 success stories. These success stories need to reach every corner of Japan. These success stories should inspire 15000 Japanese companies to move to India. Our Embassy has set an ambitious target to reach out to 15000 companies in various prefectures of Japan to tell them the Japanese success story in India. We have recently launched a SMEs facilitation center at the Embassy.

Third: I am told that a survey by JBIC has found India as the most favored destination in the medium term and long term engagement for Japanese companies. We should be able to take this message to every corner of Japan. We need to generate awareness about the Japan Industrial Townships in India. Here again we are engaged in an ambitious action plan working with JETRO to reach out to every prefecture in Japan, including to reach out to small and medium scale enterprises.

Forth: We have an impressive framework with several MoUs and platforms in place, but it is time to avail the facilities offered under this framework to reduce

trade barriers and promote greater market access. Our bilateral trade is stuck at US \$ 20 billion, too less a target for the 3rd and 5th largest economy to achieve.

Fifth: You very rarely find any two countries with over sixty annual G to G dialogue mechanisms and scores of track 1.5, track 2 and business engagement mechanisms. Let's have more think tank and media engagements. Let's get the India – Japan partnership story announced from every rooftop.

Sixth: India's young talent pool, its skilled workers are an asset for Japan's economic growth. We need to generate awareness in India for the demand in Japan and be able to connect the dots. We also need to have student exchanges, I would like to have not 1500 students in Japan, 150,000 students in Japan. We are launching an India-Japan EduConnect and India – Japan Skill Connect platforms.

Seventh: With stable macroeconomic fundamentals, and a visionary global outlook, India is focused on creating a sustainable, digitally driven, innovation centric economy. India is a land of billion opportunities today. Japan should not miss this opportunity. Japanese companies should focus on manufacturing in India, make in India and Make for the World. We must explore new areas of cooperation, and we are already working with Japan on some of these, such as green and sustainable technologies, including renewable energy, electric mobility, energy storage, semiconductors, defence technology, pharma sector etc.

Eighth: Connecting Himalayas with Mount Fuji. Lets have more tourists travel to each other country. I see that a visit to India is in the wish list of many Japanese friends. Its my responsibility to move it from 'wish list' to 'to do list'.

Dear Friends,

20. I can go on and on. But I will stop here. What we need is a last mile connectivity to convert the momentum into concrete outcome. Looking ahead I am confident that we will be able to achieve our set targets in coming months. Let me repeat, what we need is a quantum leap. I am confident that under the leadership of His Excellency former Prime Minister Suga and President Ambassador Saiki JIA will continue to play a major role in realizing our roadmap. JIA is among our most important partners in our new journey Connecting Himalayas with Mount Fuji. Japan is an indispensable partner in India's vision 2047, it is not a vision to be a super power, it's a vision to be super partners. Once again I thank JIA for inviting me today.

Thank you and Good Morning.
