

## Ambassador's Address at the 75th Republic Day of India

Tokyo, 26th January 2024

Excellencies; Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen,

A very warm welcome to all.

Thank you for joining me today to celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> Republic Day of India. As Ambassador of India to Japan, I bring to you greeting from more than 1.4 billion people of India. And I welcome each one of you Excellencies, Friends of India and Indian community.

I thank H.E. Mr. SUGA Yoshihide, Former Prime Minister and Chairman, Japan-India Association, our Guest of Honor, State Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Yoshifume Tsuruga, State Minister of Foreign Affairs HE Mr. Kiyoto Tsuruga, Hon'ble Governor of Yamanashi, Leaders of Political Parties HE Mr. Natsuo Yamaguchi, Hon'ble State Ministers, Special Advisors, Parliamentary Vice-Ministers, former Ministers for joining me in our celebrations. Despite their busy schedule on the Opening Day of the Diet Session they have found time to join us which is reflective of their personal commitment to India - Japan partnership. Thank you Excellencies.

Republic Day of India commemorates the date on which the Constitution of India came into effect on January 26, 1950. The constitution is the framework within which India over the last seventy-five years thriving as a democracy and today emerged as the largest democracy of the world, fifth largest and one of the fastest growing economy of the world.

Excellencies, 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 Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi and the former Prime Minister Late Mr. Shinzo Abe. The prophetic words 'confluence of two seas' by Late Prime Minister Abe continue to resonate when we work towards a free, open and rule based Indo-Pacific.

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. Today, India - Japan partnership within the bilateral and plurilateral framework like the QUAD is key to stability and freedom in Indo-Pacific which faces several challenges including unilateral attempts to change the status quo.

Dear Friends,

2023 has been a special year in India Japan relationship, as India and Japan served as the Chair of G20 and G7 respectively. There have been hundreds of delegations from all across the world visited India to participate in the over two hundred G 20 related meetings held all over India.

Each of these delegations including those from Japan returned with one message. India has transformed. India has changed. Some of our friends, including Japanese friends used to say, India needs to become more business friendly. Dear Friends, let me tell you this, India has changed. It is a New India. Its infrastructure has changed, its vision has changed, its business environment has changed. Its digital transformation is significant. Today it is world's fastest growing economy and land of billion opportunities. The world is coming to

India, investing in India. I invite our Japanese friends to grab this opportunity.

Excellencies, Dear Friends,

In my last one year in Japan, I had the honor of visiting over forty prefectures of Japan. What I experienced all across Japan was an overwhelming momentum for India – Japan relationship. To further this momentum and bring our peoples closer, we started several initiatives, such as Skill connect, youth connect and Small and manufacturing Enterprises cell among others.

Dear Friends,

Japan is among our most trusted and valued partners, in India's journey towards Amrit Kaal, a 25-year period journey to India at 100 in 2047. Our defence and security cooperation is reaching new heights. Economic partnership and infrastructure development is the cornerstone of our strategic relations, symbolized by landmark projects such as High Speed Rail, City Metros, freight corridors and roads and ports developments.

Our relationship with Japan is a partnership not only between governments and officials, it is a partnership involving several stakeholders; business & industry groups, science and technology establishment, universities, think tanks, academicians, scholars, media houses, artists, students, innovation and research organizations, museums, libraries, Yoga and Ayurveda practitioners and above all our vibrant people to people contacts.

I would like to recall the contributions of the vibrant Indian diaspora in Japan in building our excellent bilateral relations.

In 2024, in coming weeks and months, I look forward to work with each one you to take our relationship, our Special Strategic and Global Partnership forward.

Once again, I thank the dignitaries, distinguished guests and all for joining me in this celebrations.

Thank you.

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