

**Embassy of India
Tokyo

**Remarks of Ambassador Sibi George the event on Bihar
Celebration Event on December 19, 2022**

Ladies & Gentlemen! A very good evening to you all.

It is a pleasure to see such a huge gathering for the Bihar State facilitation event. The State facilitation events have been curated by the Embassy of India Japan & Vivekananda Cultural centre Tokyo , to celebrate India's enchanting diversity, with our Japanese friends.

Bihar is a state in eastern India. It was the 2nd largest state by population in 2019, 12th largest by area , and 14th largest by GDP in 2021. In Ancient and Classical India, the area that is now Bihar was considered the centre of political and cultural power and as a haven of learning. From Magadha arose India's first empire, the Maurya empire, as well as one of the world's most widely adhered-to religions: Buddhism.

Bihar is not only a resource rich state in terms of economic potential, but has been one of the richest state in terms of cultural & geographical diversity. Bihar is home to two UNESCO World Heritage Sites- the mahabodhi Temple & Nalanda , as well as many other ancient monuments. It is for the same reason that Bihar

continues to be one of the top performers as a tourist destination for foreigners.

The state of Bihar is not only the “Heart of India”, but also represents the spiritual and religious ties which ushered in the long, deep and wide-ranging relationships between India & Japan. The civilizations of India and Japan were first connected through Buddhism, which was born in Bihar. Historic documents record that, as early as 8th century, an Indian Monk reached Japan after a long and difficult journey crossing the Himalayan mountains, deserts and sea. This Buddhist high priest, whose name is Bodhisena, assumed the role of Master of Ceremony for the consecrating ceremony of the Great Buddha at the Todaiji Temple in Nara Prefecture in 752. Continuing the spiritual relations between India and Japan, the “Vishwa Shanti Stupa” at Rajgir, was built in the 20th century by a Japanese Monk- Nichidatsu Fuji.

Bihar is thus the source of genesis for the historical relations between India and Japan. Bihar also offers a lot of potential for economic development . We urge our Japanese friends to look towards Bihar as their spiritual “sister state” and explore all possible avenues of economic exchanges and people to people exchanges between Japan & Bihar.

Thank You.