

**Embassy of India
Tokyo

**REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR SIBI GEORGE ON THE OCCASION OF
THE REPUBLIC DAY CELEBRATIONS OF INDIA IN JAPAN,**

JANUARY 26, 2023

My fellow citizens, Dear Children, Friends of India,

On the occasion of the Republic day of India, I extend greetings to all Indians and all friends of India in Japan. Let's join our 1.4 billion brothers and sisters in India and millions of Indian Diaspora abroad and billions of our friends across the world to celebrate this occasion.

Dear Friends,

This year's Republic Day is of special significance as it comes during the 75th anniversary of India's independence which we celebrate as Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, which we conclude on August 15 this year. In Japan's context, it comes when we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries, which we conclude on April 28 this year.

For each one of us, Indians, it is an occasion to remember and pay home to our freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives to win us freedom and our soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice to defend our freedom and secure our borders.

For our Embassy here in Tokyo, this is an occasion to visualize what we propose to do in coming year. As our Rashtrapati ji said, our nation is witnessing a significant transformation at all fronts. Today we are the largest democracy in the world, today we are the 5th largest economy in the world. With over 1.4 billion people we are the most populous country in the world. We are 1/6th of the total population of the world. This year we hold the Presidency of G-20 which is the most important plurilateral organization of our times. As our Prime Minister said we are currently in the Amrit Kaal, a journey towards a developed country by 2047, India at 100.

Dear Friends,

In the Amrit Kaal journey our beloved motherland to become a developed country, it is the responsibility of our Embassy to join hands with our Indian Diaspora here in Japan and work towards further strengthening our bilateral relations for the benefit of our country. Today we have an excellent relationship with Japan. A Special Strategic and Global Partnership. In recent years our relationship which was significantly a G to G relationship has transformed into a B to B relationship and now a strategic relationship. We are making steady progress in further strengthening this partnership.

To mention one example, currently India and Japan are holding their first - ever joint fighter jet exercise, "Veer Guardian", at Hayakuri Airbase. I acknowledge the presence here today of some of our senior Air Force officers celebrating our Republic Day. 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 today. Our Embassy has a forward looking Roadmap to further strengthen this partnership at all levels.

Our relationship with Japan is a partnership not only between governments and officials, it is a partnership involving several stakeholders; business establishments, industry and commercial chambers, industry groups, science and technology establishments, 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 coming weeks and months, I look forward to work with each of these stakeholders to take our relationship, our Special Strategic and Global Partnership forward.

Dear Friends,

In coming weeks and months, we will have regular high-level visits and meetings. We will continue to take steps to make Japan a key partner in our Aatmanirbhar Bharat and in our 3 Ts project – Trade, Technology and Tourism. We will continue to celebrate India in Japan as part of Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav and our 70th anniversary celebrations. We have a lot of work to do. We will continue to promote India in Japan, including our Ayurveda and our yoga. In coming weeks and months, together we will organize many events, together we will take many initiatives.

As you are aware, the Embassy has in recent weeks set up three digital outreach platforms ICN, IPN, IBN. ICN (Indian Cultural Network) as a platform to highlight our cultural diversity and art forms and to recognize and promote the artistic skills within our diaspora and among our Japanese friends. IPN (Indian Professionals Network) as a platform to learn from the expertise and experiences of our distinguished professionals here and imbibe the best practices. IBN (Indian Business Network) as platform to showcase India's economic and scientific transformation and to highlight the billion opportunities that India offers for business partnership. Similarly, in order to promote Indian culture and our rich literary heritage, we have launched a Thematic Library project. I invite you to join these initiatives.

We will celebrate all festivals of India in Japan. We will also celebrate the lives and contributions of each one of our national heroes. As Indians we have so much to celebrate, so many national heroes to remember and pay homage to. Just to give you an idea, let me just mention how important is this week for us. On January 21, we remembered and paid homage to Rash Bihari Bose, on January 23 we paid homage to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, tomorrow January 27 we will remember the contributions of Justice Radhabinod Pal and on January 30 we will pay homage to our Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi.

Dear Friends,

I invite you all to join us in celebrating India in Japan. Indian Embassy in Tokyo is a Home Away from Home for all our Indian Diaspora. All are always welcome to visit the Embassy. I seek your feedback and ideas to further strengthen our engagement with Japan and also to contribute in our Amrit Kaal journey to be a developed country by 2047. Let me conclude by thanking our children who are here to sing national anthem and patriotic songs. I also congratulate the children who won our weekly quiz competitions. Once again, I wish you a very happy Republic Day.

Thank you.
