

**REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR OF INDIA TO JAPAN  
H.E. SHRI SIBI GEORGE ON THE OCCASION OF  
THE ONAM CELEBRATIONS AT THE EMBASSY, SEPT 4, 2023**

Good Evening everybody,

A very warm welcome to Embassy of India.

I extend my greetings to all Indians in Japan on the occasion of Onam festival.

Before I say few words on this occasion on the great festival of Onam, let me say a few words about two great events that we celebrate this week. The celebrations all across India and the world is still continuing. I recall the congratulatory message by Hon'ble Prime Minister of Japan His Excellency Fumio Kishida addressed to our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi congratulating India on this successful Moon Mission. Immediately after the successful Chandrayan Mission, our ISRO scientists have launched Aditya L1, the first space based Indian mission to study the Sun. The spacecraft shall be placed in a halo orbit around the Lagrange point 1 (L1) of the Sun-Earth system, which is about 1.5 million km from the Earth. This satellite will have the major advantage of continuously viewing the Sun without any eclipses. This will provide a greater advantage of observing the solar activities and its effect on space weather in real time. It is another proud movement for ISRO, Indian scientists and of course for every Indian in India and abroad. Let's join hands to congratulate ISRO and our scientists on these remarkable achievements. We will soon hold a special event to celebrate India's Space Program, its Moon and Sun Missions.

Dear Friends,

This week India is hosting the G 20 Summit in New Delhi. As we all are aware, India assumed the G20 Presidency on December 1, 2022 at a challenging time, when the world is

looking at the G20 with hope. The G20 brings together the 20 major economies of the world. They represent 85% of the global GDP, 75% of international trade and two-thirds of the world's population. So, this is a gathering of extraordinary importance. And one that in many ways, unparalleled in our history. We have organized over 220 meetings at various other levels, from Ministers and officials to domain experts, civil society and of course, the youth. G20 meetings were held not as a Delhi-centric set of events, but one that is celebrated across the width and breadth of our country. It enabled the world to know better the fullness of India's extraordinary diversity and rich heritage. In our embassy we have been organizing regular events to celebrate India's G 20 presidency to spread the message of G-20.

Let me quote from Hon'ble Prime Minister who said, I quote: "Before we complete our G20 Presidency, over 1 lakh delegates will have visited India. They have been going to different regions, witnessing our demography, democracy and diversity. They are also seeing how a fourth D, development, has been empowering the people over the last decade. There is a growing understanding that many of the solutions that the world needs are already being successfully implemented in our country, with speed and scale. Many positive impacts are coming out of India's G20 Presidency.

"The shift to a human-centric approach has begun globally and we are playing the role of a catalyst. The effort towards greater inclusion for the Global South, especially Africa in global affairs has gained momentum. India's G20 Presidency has also sowed the seeds of confidence in the countries of the so-called 'Third World'. They are gaining greater confidence to shape the direction of the world in the coming years on many issues such as climate change and global institutional reforms. We will move faster towards a more representative and inclusive order where

every voice is heard. Further, all this will happen with the cooperation of the developed countries, because today, they are acknowledging the potential of the Global South more than ever before and recognizing the aspirations of these countries as a force for the global good.” Unquote.

We look forward to a successful G 20 Summit this week. This would indeed be an important milestone in our journey to a developed country in this Amrit Kaal. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will host the Heads of G 20 countries and special invitee countries. We look forward to welcoming Prime Minister His Excellency Fumio Kishida in New Delhi. I am happy to mention that this is an occasion we celebrate our civilizational ethos of Vasudaiva Kutumbakam, One World, One Family, One Future.

Dear Friends,

The festival of Onam is again an occasion when we celebrate the spirit of Vasudaiva Kudumbakam that we are all proud of. It is also special occasion when we celebrate our history, our civilizational ethos, our family values. It is indeed a special occasion for the Indian community in Japan. I don't think that anyone in this audience or those of my Malayalee friends listening to us today needs to be told about the civilizational importance of Onam. But there is an audience out there whom we should reach out spreading the message of our rich cultural diversity and festivals like Onam. We have a responsibility to bring up our children and grandchildren realizing and appreciating the values of our festivals like Onam, the values of positivity, vibrancy, brotherhood and harmony. As citizens of India and proud Indians we also have a responsibility to tell the whole world about our rich culture and traditions.

Dear Friends,

As we celebrate this year as the India – Japan Year of Tourism, this is an occasion to look at the State of Kerala which is one of most beautiful touristic destinations of India. I invite all to include a visit to Kerala in their itinerary to India. Every small township and every village in Kerala have something unique to offer for visiting tourists. I recall my last visit to Kerala, when I visited Muzuris, modern day Kodungallur in Kerala, with my family. What a unique experience standing in that ancient land, where West met the East, where history was made. Where the world came to shop, where St. Thomas came to introduce Christianity, where the Cheraman Juma Mosque which was built in 629 CE, which makes it the first mosque in India. If Europeans had not come to Kerala, if Vasco de Gama had not landed in Kerala coast in 1498 CE the history of Europe and perhaps the history of the modern world would have been different.

Dear Friends,

Our Kerala has so many stories of amazing history. Lord Mahabali, whom we call with love Maveli, and whose festival of Onam we celebrate today, the stories of Lord Parasuram and Creation of Kerala and the history of Adi Shankaracharya born in Kerala in 8th century who consolidated the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta.

Every piece of land in Kerala has a history to say and something unique to offer. The art forms of Kathakali to the martial arts of Kalari Payattu all make this land unique. In fact, Kerala offers a full diverse tourism package with its back waters, mountains and valleys, tea gardens, landscapes, wildlife sanctuaries, rivers, beaches, and of course its variety cuisine. Every small township and every village God's Own Country has something unique to offer for visiting tourists, including the healing touch of Ayurveda. Let's invite our Japanese friends to include

Kerala in their itinerary to India, along with other sought-after destinations in India like the ancient city of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, Kevadia in Gujarat where the tallest statue of Sardar Vallabhai Patel stands, Goa, Agra and Jaipur, serene beauty of North East, the scenic splendor of Jammu & Kashmir, this list is endless and of course our one and only Himalayas.

Dear Friends,

Once again I wish each one of you a very happy Onam.

Thank you.

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