

**Embassy of India
Tokyo

**Remarks by Ambassador Sibi George Event on “India –
Japan : Connectivity & Development in North East,
February 2, 2023**

Hon’ble Minister of State for External Affairs and Education
Shri Raj Kumar Ranjan Singh,

Your Excellency, Ambassador Kenji Hirmatsu, former
Ambassador of Japan to India

Mr. Ito Teruyuki, DG South Asia Department, JICA

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Evening to all of you,

It gives me a great pleasure to address you all today and welcome you all to today’s event, which is part of a special series of events that the Embassy is organizing focusing on the North East of India. Today’s discussions focus on “India – Japan: Connectivity & Development in North East”.

We have remarks by our Hon’ble Minister of State for External Affairs and Education Shri Rajkumar Ranjan Singh. I express my sincere thanks to Hon’ble Minister for his remarks despite his very busy schedule. I also thank His Excellency Ambassador Kenji Hirmatsu, former Ambassador

of Japan to India who has agreed to share his experiences in the North East. I also thank Mr. Ito Teruyuki, DG South Asia Department, JICA for his presence and remarks. I thank the political wing for taking the initiative to organize this important event today.

I have a personal connect with the North East. I began my career in Meghalaya as Assistant Commissioner of the District of Shillong. It is there that I spent considerable time learning about State administration as part of my District attachment some twenty-five years back. The serene beauty of the hills of Meghalaya remains fresh in my mind even after half a century. The taste of great food of Meghalaya still is fresh in my mind.

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 Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi and the former Prime Minister Late Mr. Shinzo Abe. 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. During his visit in March 2022, both India and Japan reaffirmed our Special Strategic and Global Partnership between Japan and India and set a forward looking

roadmap for us to realize the full potential in our bilateral relationship.

We are today discussing one of the unique characters of this relationship. It is the work that India and Japan have done together and continue to do together in the North East. We have been collaborating with Japan closely for the economic development of the North East. We have set up the India-Japan Act East Forum, which takes up projects for economic modernization of the North East. The range of projects taken up is quite diverse and includes improvement of National Highways in Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura; hydropower in Meghalaya; biodiversity conservation and forest management in Sikkim, Nagaland, Tripura and Meghalaya; and water supply and sanitation in Assam. Upskilling of human resources in the North East is also a part of the initiative.

Let me be a bit more specific.

I am happy to note that under the Act East Forum, India and Japan are collaborating on a wide range of projects aimed at improving the socio-economic development and environmental conservation of the North Eastern region of India. The projects are focused on various sectors, including connectivity, new and renewable energy, forest management and biodiversity conservation, urban development, healthcare, and skill development.

- In the connectivity sector, six projects are underway to improve National Highways in the region and to construct a

new four-lane Brahmaputra river bridge, which will be India's longest river bridge.

- In the new and renewable energy sector, a project to renovate and modernize a Hydroelectric Power Station Stage in Meghalaya is ongoing.

- In the forest management and biodiversity conservation sector, partnerships with the forest department in Sikkim, Nagaland, Tripura, and Meghalaya have been initiated.

- Two urban development projects in Guwahati for water supply and sewerage are in various stages of implementation.

- In healthcare, the Assam Health System Strengthening Project is underway, aimed at developing public medical institutions and capacity development of medical personnel.

- In the skill development sector, efforts are being made to set up skill centers and promote Japanese language education in the region, and to provide a pathway for young, skilled talent from the region to seek employment in Japan.

Dear Friends,

The North East region is a gateway to India's ancient cultural relationships with East and South East Asia. It binds India with some of its most important neighbours. It also connects us, and our neighbours, directly to one of the most economically dynamic and politically significant countries in the Indo-Pacific. Growth and prosperity of

North East of India is key to building a Self-Reliant India. I am delighted to share that almost every one of the eight north-eastern states in India is growing in double digits with further enormous potential to expand in various diverse areas including organic food and renewable energy. I am sure that this region will play a crucial role in fulfilling India's target of becoming a developed country in our Amrit Kaal journey to India @ 100.

Be it the cluster-based approach for development of agro-industrial hubs, organic farming or development of the immense tourism potential through connectivity projects or the massive investments in building social and physical infrastructure in the region, sustained efforts are being made by the Government to increase the growth and development of the region. These efforts are also aimed at improving the ease of doing business through active investment promotion which will, in turn, revitalize the demand and supply chains to unlock newer business opportunities. In these developmental agenda of North East, Japan is and will continue to be an important partner for India. I am confident that in coming months and years India - Japan collaboration in our North East will continue to progress. I invite Japanese companies to engage more actively in North East.

In this regard, I am happy to announce that the Embassy is setting up a special Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Corner in our premises to assist Japanese companies to engage with India. I thank the Commerce Wing of the Embassy for this initiative.

Once again I thank Hon'ble Minister Shri Rajkumar Ranjan, His Excellency Ambassador Kenji Hirmatsu and DG Mr. Ito Teruyuki for joining us. I look forward to fruitful discussions today.

Thank you.
