

Embassy of India
Tokyo

Remarks by Ambassador of India to Japan H.E. Mr. Sibi George at
International House (June 20, 2023)

- Dr Yuichi Hosoya, ...
- Thank you, Very happy to join.
- Very happy to see so many of you who are involved in India Japan relations
- Greetings from the largest populated country, 1/6th of the population, 1.4 billion, largest democracy...G 20 Chair...
- My topic is India – Japan in Indo-Pacific. I see many masters sitting here. I look forward to a fruitful exchange of views.
- I would like to structure my remarks as follows: India – Japan bilateral relations today; Indo-Japan special strategic and global partnership and Indo- Pacific in this context; I have distributed a map of the region.

India – Japan

- India and Japan friendship has a long history, rooted in spiritual affinity and strong cultural and civilizational ties.
- India is the land where Buddhism was born and spread across the globe including to Japan.
- We have Mahakal, so there is Daikokuten in Japan. I am told Saraswati (Benzaiten), is the most revered deity in Japan, after the Buddha.
- In contemporary times, prominent Indians associated with Japan were Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, JRD Tata, Rash Bihari Bose, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and of course Justice Radha Binod Pal.

- When we look at the history of India's foreign policy, we can divide it into four phases; 1947 to 1971 one of idealism and non-alignment; 1972 to 1991 one of realism; 1992 to 2014 pragmatism and 2014 onwards one of realpolitik, one of positive assertive behavior.
 - In each of the earlier phases Japan was indeed there as a global economic power, but our engagement was limited.
 - We always made some right noises and engagement, highlighting our spiritual affinity and strong cultural and civilizational ties, separate Treaty of Peace, gifting of an elephant, focus on ODA and economic engagement like the Maruti – Suzuki automobile revolution, these are important, but there was nothing major in strategic or global in the real sense of these terms.
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- India Japan relations began to gradually change in August 2000 with the visit of PM Mori (President Clinton visited India in March 2000) when a Global Partnership was established.
 - Then came PM Vajpayee visit to Japan in 2001, I was part of the team as the Desk Officer for Japan.
 - Then PM Koizumi visit in 2004, Annual summits. In 2007, PM Abe spoke at Indian Parliament, he referred to 'Confluence of two seas' which continues to resonate every day.
 - It gradually became a partnership, a global partnership, a strategic partnership, a strategic and global partnership and in 2014 it was made a Special Strategic and Global Partnership. It was established in 2014 under PM Modi and PM Abe later reinforced under the leadership of PM Modi and PM Kishida. It is indeed special, special bilateral, special strategic and special global.
 - In my over twenty years in service, I have seen India Japan relationship evolve from what significantly was a G to G relationship with ODA at the heart of it, into a very much move B

to B relationship. The ODA part is still very important, G to G is indispensable, but now there is a sort of maturing of the relationship, with economic and strategic partnership very much at the heart of this relationship.

- First and foremost, we have a very comprehensive multi-layered architecture of dialogue. We have over eighty dialogue mechanisms. Japan is the only country with which India have an Annual Summit and 2+2. With no other country we have such engagement. For Japan, India is the only country with which it has an established annual summit. Strategic Dialogue at EAM level, RM level talks, NSA level talks;
- Multiple platforms of engagement: India-Japan Act East Forum; India-Japan Investment Promotion Partnership; Japan-India Start-Up Hub; IT Corridor Project; Japan-India Institutes for Manufacturing; Development of smart islands in India; Japan India Industrial Competitiveness Partnership (IJICP); Japan India Clean Energy Partnership; India Japan Parliamentary Friendship League; Industrial Competitiveness Partnership, Act East Forum focusing on North East. Each of these needs to be talked about.
- Plurilateral and multilateral level: Quad Summit; Quad Foreign Ministers, Quad Senior Officers, Supply Chain Resilience Initiative, India-Japan Dialogue on Africa; India - Japan Dialogue on ASEAN, Asia-Africa Economic Corridor, G- 4. G-20. Each of these need to be talked about.
- MoUs and Agreements: Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA); Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy; Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services between Armed Forces; Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA).

- Let's look at the Joint Statements, Vision Documents, Fact Sheets and of course the speeches that PM Modi and the leadership of our two countries delivered including the speech by PM Kishida in New Delhi in March.
- Political, Defence and Security Partnership;
- Global Partnership for Peace and Security in the Region and the World;
- Civil Nuclear Energy;
- Partnership for Prosperity;
- Exploring Science, Inspiring Innovation, Developing Technology, Connecting People;
- Leading for the future.
- A joint statement of March 2022 issued during the visit of PM Kishida captioned 'Partnership for a Peaceful, Stable and Prosperous Post Covid World' reaffirmed the Special Strategic and Global Partnership. It called for:
 - (i) Partnership for A Free and Open Indo-Pacific underpinned by Inclusiveness and Rules-based order; and
 - (ii) Partnership for Sustainable Growth in a post-COVID World.
- What was for many years a very bilateral relationship, in many ways a very narrow bilateral relationship has transformed into a deep strategic partnership in the real sense of the term.
- It was a mutually beneficial partnership. Let me mention one example. How Japanese technology has played an important role in economic transformation of India. Suzuki 40 years back, 40% of market is with it; Delhi metro 20 years ago; No Shinkansen...
- But at bilateral we need to go a long way. There is sufficient policy framework in place for both countries to act on. Covid 19

was an eye opener and it is time for us to act and grab the opportunities. We have realized need for diversification of supply chains. India is a billion opportunities.

- What I look forward is a quantum leap in our relationship. Not 1400 Japanese companies, we need to make it 15,000/- Not 40 thousand Indians, talents need to move in...More students, more engagement with think tanks and scholars....Critical and Emerging technologies, Semi conductors...

Indo – Pacific

- When we talk about Special Strategic and Global partnership we come across a series of geopolitical terms and acronyms and geopolitical construct – Indo-Pacific being the most important. This covers, Importance of Indian Ocean for India as a maritime nation; Transformation of India's Look East into Act East: SAGAR; Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (IPOI), QUAD, Indo- Pacific Economic Partnership, FOIP. In his FOIP speech in Delhi, PM Kishida spoke about India as an indispensable partner.
- 60% of world population is in Indo Pacific, 63% of world GDP is in Indo-Pacific, 50% world marine trade is there, 20 of the 33 megacities in the world is in Indo Pacific.
- Today, 90% of India's trade by volume and 90% of our oil imports take place through sea. We have coastline of 7500 km, 1200 islands and 2.4 million square kilometers of Exclusive Economic Zone. The Indian ocean bears two-thirds of the world's oil shipments, one-third of its bulk cargo, and half of its container traffic. Over three-fourths of its traffic goes to other regions of the world. The vast Indian Ocean Region hosts over 40 states and nearly 40 per cent of the world's population. India has been shaped in more ways by the seas around us.

- The geopolitical focus of the world has now shifted to Indo-Pacific. The center of gravity for India's foreign policy has shifted to the East. EAM said, Indo-Pacific is not tomorrow's forecast, it is yesterday's reality.
- Developments in Indian ocean has a direct impact on Japan, for its security and economy. Similarly, developments in Indo-pacific has a direct impact on India's security and economy. I was Ambassador in Kuwait....sea lanes...
- Seas are no longer benign medium; globalization has increased the vulnerability of the oceans. For India the biggest terror attack that it faced came through sea. Japan also faces several challenges through sea.
- If you look at the east of India, many of our major partners, economic partners are in the East. Starting with our immediate neighbors like Bangladesh and Myanmar to South East Asia, ASEAN, Japan and Korea, Australia and even the US.
- Our Act East now extends to Pacific Islands. In his address at the FIPIC summit in Jaipur in 2015 PM Modi said, the world may see you as Small Islands with modest populations. I see you as Large Ocean States with vast potential. Some of you have Exclusive Economic Zones that are larger than the landmass and Exclusive Economic Zone of India taken together.
- PM Modi said in address in Mauritius in 2018, "To me, the blue chakra or wheel in India's national flag represents the potential of the 'blue revolution', or the 'ocean economy'. PM Modi went on to elaborate his concept of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR), starting with its maritime neighbors.

- Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore said, “Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high, where knowledge is free, Where the world has not been broken up into fragments, By narrow domestic walls. Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.”. In his famous Shangri La Dialogue address in 2019, PM Modi evoked same sentiments when he said, “When the oceans are open, the seas are secure, countries are connected, the rule of law prevails and the region is stable, nations, small and large, prosper as sovereign countries.”
- In his address at the East Asia Summit in Bangkok in 2019, PM Modi stated the Indo-Pacific Oceans’ Initiative (IPOI). There is growing space for cooperation between IPOI of India and Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) of Japan. IPOI proposes cooperation in seven areas/pillars viz:
 - (i) Maritime Ecology,
 - (ii) Maritime Security,
 - (iii) Marine Resources,
 - (iv) Capacity Building and Resource Sharing,
 - (v) Disaster Risk Reduction and Management,
 - (vi) Science, Technology and Academic Cooperation,
 - (vii) Trade, Connectivity and Maritime Transport
- Japan is an important partner in Quad. There has been a steady improvement in our bilateral relationship with each of the Quad members. This has contributed in building further trust with each of these countries and within Quad.
- Four countries have their own interests in the Indo pacific region but there is a lot of convergences. There are many issues of the world like maritime security, terrorism, connectivity, supply chain resilience, we can have a long list. Not a single country can deal with these issues alone, no two countries can do it together, also

multilateral bodies like the UN doesn't have the clout to do it. Two cannot do it, 193 cannot do it. So, four like-minded countries which share many common values are joining hands to do it. The Quad's positive and constructive agenda include Covid 19 vaccines, critical and emerging technologies, climate action, infrastructure coordination, cyber security, space and education.
