

**Remarks by Ambassador of India to Japan H.E. Shri Sibi George on
India Space Sector: Surging Ahead, November 22, 2023**

Hon'ble Chairman, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Dr S. Somanath;
Mr. Shantanu Bhatawdekar, Scientific Secretary, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO);

Mr. Jun Kazeki, Director-General, National Space Policy Secretariat, Cabinet Office of Government of Japan;

Mr. Hiroshi Yamakawa, President, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA);

Dr. Soichi Noguchi and Dr Naoko Yamazaki, Former Astronauts JAXA;

Members of Academia, Media, Indian Community, Students, Scientists and Researchers, Business Community, Start-ups and audience joining us virtually

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to today's marquee event on the achievements of Indian Space Program and exciting possibilities on our bilateral cooperation with Japan in the field of space sciences and related policy areas. I am truly delighted by the presence of eminent Indian and Japanese dignitaries amongst us to give their perspectives in the area of Space sciences.

2. Friends, India and Japan share 'Special Strategic and Global Partnership' and our friendship has a long history rooted in spiritual affinity and strong cultural and civilizational ties. The relations have matured over the years to cover a wide range of areas of cooperation including political, defense and security, economic, science and technology, education, cultural and people to people exchange. There is growing strategic convergence between the two countries. India-Japan S&T cooperation is also formally anchored in the 1985 Intergovernmental Agreement, which has laid the foundation for multifaceted cooperation across various domains. The landscape of collaboration has included diverse areas such as digital partnership, agriculture, information, space, science & technology and many more.

3. From the launch of the first Indian satellite Aryabhata in 1975 to the Chandrayaan-3 mission to the Moon, India has established itself among the leading spacefaring Nations, under the leadership of ISRO's Indian Space Program - ably supported by Private and Public sector industries. The Indian Space sector is today at an inflection point with Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s role transitioning from the one entirely driving the Space Sector ecosystem to the one continuing to explore the deep space, pursue research and assuming the role of a mentor, enabling and handholding of the new era startups bringing in fresh breath of innovation and collaboration in the sector. India's recent success with Chandrayaan- 3 Moon mission

and Aditya-L1, solar mission have excited the global scientific community and has brought to the fore, collaborations of ISRO and JAXA for the next phase of their Moon mission, thereby promoting our ties with Japan. Such collaborative projects are a testament to successful match-making of India's rich repository of human resources and Japanese technology, which feeds into the synergies and present market opportunities for capital investment, so as to further enhance the scope of research and development.

4. India's successful landing on the Moon also raises hopes for our bilateral and multilateral engagements. The LUPEX – or Lunar Polar Exploration -- a joint mission with Japan to study lunar water resources has received a filip. The project seeks to send a probe to the south pole region at latitudes over 80 degrees south in fiscal 2025. The U.S. plans to send astronauts to the moon as early as 2025 through its Artemis program, the first manned mission since the Apollo program. Japan is participating, and India in June signed the Artemis Accords, a U.S.-led space development agreement, signaling an intent to strengthen cooperation.

5. Friends, we are also proud to see that a large number of women scientists that have contributed to the success of Chandrayaan-3 and India's space programme in general. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has always encouraged science and innovation. In the last 9 years, a series of reforms have been ushered which have made research and innovation easier. The burgeoning landscape has generated a remarkable surge in the number of space startups, demonstrating exponential growth from just a single entity in 2014 to more than 190 startups in 2023. This is complemented by the private investments into private players, which has seen more than USD 200 million till now with USD 119 million funding in 2022 alone. I may also mention here that the presence of a skilled workforce tailored to aerospace and aviation projects is pivotal. These industries demand precision, necessitating individuals with specialised skills and knowledge. Recognising this challenge, our government has proactively initiated measures to bridge the skill gap.

6. The Government of India firmly believes that in an era defined by rapid technological advancements and the quest for innovation, India's scientists stand as shining beacons of knowledge, dedication and expertise. Their analytical prowess, combined with a fervent commitment to inquiry and exploration, has constantly propelled the nation into the forefront of global scientific achievements. The naming of two points on the moon as Tiranga Point (footprint of Chandrayaan-2) and ShivShakti Point (Chandrayaan-3's landing spot) capture beautifully the essence of our past while embracing the spirit of modernity. These names are more than just titles. They establish a thread that intricately links our millennia-old heritage with our scientific ambitions.

The success of Chandrayaan-3 is one of the greatest testimonies to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's clarion call of "*Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan.*" In line with unequivocal focus on Science and Technology, I am happy to announce that my Embassy has decided to celebrate the next year as 'India-Japan year of Science and Technology exchanges'.

7. Friends, the people of New India have marched ahead with confidence their hearts brimming with joy and pride, and have resolved to rededicate themselves to build Bharat into a Developed Nation by 2047.

8. Thank you and a Good Evening!
