

**Speech by Ambassador Nagma M. Mallick at the Screening of
Ramayana: The Legend of Prince Rama
House of Representatives, Tokyo
14 July 2026**

H.E. Mr. Hirobumi Niki, State Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare,
Mr. Yasutoshi Nishimura, Chairman, Japan-India Parliamentary Friendship
League

Mr. Fukushima Nukaga, Member of House of Representative,
Mr. Atsushi Matsuo and Mr Kenji Yoshi, Executive and Assistant Producers of
TEM Production

Esteemed Members of the Diet,
Distinguished guests from the business community,

It is an honour to be here this evening - in the precincts of Japan's House of Representatives - for the screening of *Ramayana: The Legend of Prince Rama*. In screening this remarkable cultural treasure here, the HoR recognizes the beating heart of India **and** Japanese artistry and the dedication and love of India of a remarkable few Japanese individuals - Mr. Atsushi Matsuo and Mr. Kenji Yoshi, among others.

Before the film begins, I would like to share briefly what the Ramayana means to India - because to understand this story is, in many ways, to understand India itself.

The Ramayana is not merely a literary epic. It is the moral and spiritual foundation upon which much of Indian civilisation rests. Composed by the sage Valmiki more than two thousand years ago, it has shaped India's values, its art, its sense of governance and its deepest understanding of what it means to live a righteous life. Rama - who chose exile over the compromise of truth; Sita - whose grace and courage have inspired generations; Hanuman - the embodiment of selfless devotion. These are not mythological figures. They are living ideals that Indians carry into their families, their professions and their public conduct every single day.

The Ramayana teaches that power must be exercised with restraint; that alliances should be built on trust and mutual respect, not calculation; and

that even in conflict, dignity must be preserved. These instincts run deep in India's approach to the world today. When Prime Minister Modi speaks of India as *Vishwabandhu* - a friend to all - or when India champions *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* -the world is one family - these impulses draw directly from the civilisational tradition that the Ramayana represents. To understand this story is to understand something essential about how India thinks and how India engages with the world.

This huge epic with its timeless message of Good triumphing over Evil, selfless love and devotion to duty has made a home in Asian hearts far beyond India's borders. It shaped the cultures of Thailand, Indonesia and Cambodia, and through Buddhism - which journeyed from India to Japan - its values of loyalty, honour, selfless duty and inner discipline found a home here as well. The fact that this film was conceived as an India-Japan co-production is therefore no coincidence. It is a recognition of a shared moral imagination between our two peoples that predates modern diplomacy by many centuries.

Ramayana: The Legend of Prince Rama is a landmark - the first major animated feature produced jointly by India and Japan. It rendered India's best-loved story in the distinctive visual language of Japanese animation, demonstrating that India and Japan do not merely admire each other from a distance. They can create together. I understand that Japanese artists laboured for years to study the style of dress and lively facial features and the flora and fauna of India of that period millennia ago. My salute to them all.

Prime Minister Modi has personally underscored the significance of this film. At the G7 Summit in Hiroshima in May 2023, he took time to meet the film's producers - Shri Atsushi Matsuo and Shri Kenji Yoshida - a meeting that reflected the importance he attaches to the cultural dimension of the India-Japan partnership. And then PM Modi spoke about it in his monthly radio address to the nation, Mann Ki baat, reaching an audience of hundreds of millions. Very few cultural works receive such direct and personal support from a head of government. It is a measure of this film's significance to the bilateral story.

India and Japan share a Special Strategic and Global Partnership - built on strategic convergence, economic complementarity and people-to-people bonds. But beneath all of this lies something more vital: a civilisational affinity rooted in Buddhism, and the Indic civilization in shared aesthetic

sensibilities, and in values that both our cultures hold dear.

As the lights dim this evening, I invite you to receive this story with an open heart - not only as entertainment, but as a window into India's soul. The Ramayana has endured for millennia because its truths are inexhaustible. In this particular telling - shaped by Japanese artistry and Indian spirit - those truths find a new and beautiful expression.

I hope that when you leave this hall tonight, you carry with you not only the memory of a remarkable film, but a deeper sense of India - of what she values, how she sees the world, and why she regards Japan as one of her most cherished friends.

Thank you. Dhanyavaad. Arigato gozaimasu
