

**Speech by Ambassador Nagma M. Mallick at the Welcome Reception for
the New Chairman and Acting Chairman of the Japan-India
Association (JIA)
(June 18, 2026; Imperial Hotel, Tokyo)**

YE Mr. Fumio KISHIDA, former Prime Minister, and Chairman of the Japan India Association,

YE. Mr. Koichi HAGIUDA, Member of Parliament and Acting Chairman of the Japan India Association,

Mr. Yasutoshi Nishimura, Chairman of the Japan-India Parliamentary Friendship League,

Ambassador Keiichi ONO, my capable colleague

Ambassador Akitaka Saiki, President of the Japan India Association,

Distinguished Members of the Japan-India Association,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Namaste and Konbanwa,

It is a great honour to join you all today on this very special occasion as we bid farewell to one distinguished Chairman of the Japan-India Association and welcome another.

Let me begin by expressing my deepest appreciation to former Prime Minister Yoshihide SUGA for his leadership of the Japan-India Association. During his tenure, the Association continued to strengthen its role as one of the most important pillars of friendship between our two countries. We have valued Prime Minister Suga's steadfast support for India-Japan relations and his personal commitment to advancing cooperation between our peoples.

We have long appreciated Prime Minister SUGA's contribution to India-Japan relations. During his tenure as Prime Minister, India-Japan cooperation continued to expand across strategic, economic, technological and people-to-people domains. His vision helped sustain the momentum of our Special Strategic and Global Partnership during the challenging COVID period.

Today, I am greatly delighted to welcome former Prime Minister Mr. Fumio KISHIDA as the new Chairman of the Japan-India Association.

Check Against Delivery

Your Excellency, you have played a pivotal role in shaping Japan's engagement with India. During your tenure as Prime Minister, India-Japan relations reached new heights, marked by intensified political dialogue, deeper economic cooperation, growing security collaboration and enhanced cooperation in emerging technologies. We recall that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi attended the G-7 Summit held in Hiroshima under your leadership.

It is gratifying that the Japan-India Association is in such capable hands. With your extensive experience, international perspective and deep understanding of India, I am confident that the Association will continue to flourish and make an even greater contribution to strengthening bilateral ties.

I would also like to welcome Mr. Koichi HAGIUDA, Member of Parliament and Acting Chairman of the Japan India Association. I have had the good fortune having met him earlier and I know him to be a votary of a stronger India-Japan relationship.

It is reassuring that successive former Prime Ministers of Japan have chosen to lead the Japan-India Association. It is a testament to the remarkable journey of our partnership- from historical friendship and cultural affinity to a truly global and strategic partnership.

The Japan-India Association, established in 1903, stands as one of the oldest and most respected bridges between our two countries. For over 120 years, the JIA has tirelessly promoted exchanges across politics, economics, culture, and education, embodying the spirit of friendship envisioned by its founders, Prime Minister Shigenobu Okuma and the father of Japanese capitalism Mr. Eiichi Shibusawa. Under the leadership of successive Chairmen- including distinguished figures like former Prime Ministers Yoshiro Mori, Shinzo Abe, and Yoshihide Suga- JIA has been at the forefront of strengthening these ties.

Today, as India and Japan work together to shape a free, open and prosperous Indo-Pacific, to make our supply chains more resilient, to advance innovation and technology, and to contribute to global peace and stability, the role of institutions such as the Japan-India Association becomes

even more important.

The Embassy of India greatly values its partnership with the Association. We look forward to working closely with Chairman Kishida and all members of the Association to expand further the horizons of India-Japan cooperation.

On behalf of the Government and people of India, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Prime Minister SUGA for his distinguished service and wish him continued good health and success in all his future endeavours.

I warmly congratulate Prime Minister KISHIDA on assuming the Chairmanship of the Japan-India Association and wish him every success in leading this eminent institution in the next stage of its onward journey.

Let us continue working together to make the friendship between India and Japan ever stronger in the years ahead.

Thank you.

Arigato Gozaimasu.
