

**Speech by Ambassador Nagma M. Mallick at the
75 years - India–Japan Cricket Match
22nd September 2026**

Your Excellency Mr. Kazuhiro Fujii, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs,

The representatives of the Japan Cricket Association,

The representatives of the Board of Control for Cricket in India,

The representatives of Suzuki,

Dear players, coaches and officials,

Dear cricket lovers,

It was a joy to be present at the inaugural event of the year-long celebration of 75 years of diplomatic relations between India and Japan that will light up all of 2027.

For my cricket-loving Indian compatriots, this must rank as the best-possible inauguration of any commemoration! For our Japanese friends, I hope that this match brought you closer to the passion that unites all your friends in India, north or south, east or west.

Seventy-five years of friendship is a real milestone. Over the decades, India and Japan have built a relationship of trust and shared values founded upon a strong people-to-people friendship.

Our governments are deeply committed to this relationship which we term a Special Strategic and Global Partnership. Our peoples' sentiments are the foundation upon which this partnership rests. Japan and the Japanese are liked and admired in India. And I venture to say that India and Indians are liked and appreciated in Japan. It is fitting then that the first event to celebrate an important milestone in this relationship is a sport that is very much of the people.

I was in Nagoya last weekend for the Opening Ceremony of the Asian Games. The spirit shown by the thousands of athletes there - determined, disciplined and resilient – attests to the uplifting and uniting power of sports. I know that today's match too has exemplified the sporting spirit and will reinforce the friendship between the people of India and Japan.

Over the course of the next year, we will celebrate this 75-year milestone in a myriad ways – with dance and music, business events, equestrian displays, spring celebrations, food festivals, textile exhibitions and many many other initiatives.

But today it was the people's celebration with cricket!

I thank the Board of Control for Cricket in India or the BCCI, and the Japan Cricket Association or the JCA, for making this match possible.

I thank also Suzuki for supporting this special event.

Dear players, thank you for the thrilling moments you gave us today and thank you for bringing India and Japan closer together.

Dear cricket lovers, dear friends of India and Japan, thank you for turning up in the rain today, thank you for your commitment!

And let's keep celebrating together.
