

**Speech by Ambassador Nagma M. Mallick at the 25th Anniversary of
Okinawa-India Friendship Association (OIFA)
31 August 2026**

Mr. Moritake Tomikawa, President, Okinawa-India Friendship Association,
Mr. Keiichi Inamine, Advisor, OIFA
Members of OIFA,
Representatives of the Government of Okinawa,
Business Leaders,
Friends of India,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Konbonwa. Good evening.

It is an honour to join you all today as we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Okinawa-India Friendship Association.

Allow me, at the outset, to extend my heartfelt congratulations to President Tomikawa, the founding members, past office-bearers and every member of OIFA for this remarkable achievement. For a quarter of a century, OIFA has worked tirelessly to strengthen the bonds between India and Okinawa through cultural exchanges, business engagement, educational initiatives and people-to-people contacts. I thank you all for your invaluable contribution to strengthening India-Japan relations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

India and Japan today share one of the world's most trusted and comprehensive partnerships. Our Special Strategic and Global Partnership has grown from strength to strength over the past two decades. Today, we cooperate across an extraordinarily wide spectrum of sectors.

Underlying all these areas is something far more valuable- trust. Our partnership rests upon shared democratic values, respect for the rule of law, commitment to a Free, Open and Inclusive Indo-Pacific, and a common belief that international cooperation must promote peace, stability and shared prosperity.

Our gathering today comes at a significant moment in the history of India-Japan relations. Last month, Prime Minister H.E. Ms. Sanae Takaichi paid her first official visit to India for the 16th India-Japan Annual Summit. The visit marked another historic milestone in our bilateral relationship. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Takaichi reaffirmed that India and Japan are not merely partners- they are trusted friends with a shared strategic vision for the future. One of the defining messages from the Summit was that a strong India and a strong Japan are in each other's interests.

The Summit produced significant outcomes, including a Joint Declaration on Economic Security, a Joint Statement on Artificial Intelligence and Energy Resilience, collaboration in various areas including defence and maritime security, resilient supply chains, semiconductors, artificial intelligence, clean energy, digital technologies, mobility of skilled talent and innovation, batteries and pharmaceuticals, apart from 129 agreements between Japanese and Indian companies, representing approximately two trillion yen in investment commitments.

These achievements demonstrate the extraordinary confidence that our governments and our businesses have in each other's future. Prime Minister Modi aptly observed during the Summit that mutual trust is the biggest currency in today's world; and it is available in plenty between India and Japan. I believe that this trust will continue to guide India and Japan as we work together to address the challenges and opportunities of the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

Last week, we had the pleasure of having our Commerce Minister Mr. Piyush Goyal visit Japan with a huge business delegation. A week before that, we had the pleasure of hosting Defence Minister of Japan HE Shinjiro Koizumi in India.

All these are but different facets signifying the importance that both countries attach to this relationship.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe Okinawa has a unique and important role to play in the future of India-Japan relations. Historically, the Ryukyu Kingdom served as an

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important maritime bridge linking Japan with Asia through trade, culture and human interaction. India too has been a great maritime civilisation for thousands of years. The seas that connect our nations have never been barriers; they have been highways of commerce, ideas, culture and friendship.

Today, as the Indo-Pacific emerges as the centre of global growth, Okinawa occupies an important strategic and economic position. India and Okinawa already enjoy warm and steadily expanding ties. The Embassy has been delighted to support Indian cultural performances including Yoga celebrations, educational exchanges and business outreach activities here in Okinawa. We have also seen growing interest among Okinawan universities, research institutions and businesses in engaging with India.

Together, we have the opportunity to build meaningful partnerships that benefit both sides. I encourage greater collaboration between our universities, research institutions, chambers of commerce, local governments and young entrepreneurs. The Embassy of India stands ready to facilitate such partnerships.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

India today is undergoing an extraordinary transformation. We are among the fastest-growing major economies in the world. Driven by innovation, digital public infrastructure, ambitious manufacturing initiatives, a young and skilled workforce, and a rapidly expanding start-up ecosystem, India offers immense opportunities for collaboration. Japanese companies have been trusted partners in India's development for decades.

I warmly invite businesses from Okinawa - particularly small and medium enterprises- to explore India's growing opportunities in manufacturing, healthcare, tourism, food processing, renewable energy, information technology and the blue economy. I am equally confident that more Indian businesses, researchers, students and tourists will discover the unique strengths and rich culture of Okinawa.

Friends,

The coming year offers another historic opportunity. 2027 will mark the

75th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Japan. During the recent Annual Summit, our two Prime Ministers agreed to celebrate 2027 as the “India-Japan Year of Shared Horizons.” This will not simply be a celebration of our shared past. It will be an opportunity to define our shared future. I sincerely hope that the Okinawa-India Friendship Association will play a leading role in these commemorations. The Embassy would be delighted to work closely with OIFA, the Okinawa Prefectural Government, universities, cultural institutions and the business community to organise commemorative events.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is a beautiful Okinawan expression- Yuimaru. It speaks of mutual support, community and the strength that comes from working together. I believe that spirit perfectly captures the essence of India-Japan friendship.

As we celebrate OIFA’s Silver Jubilee today, let us also look ahead with confidence. May the next twenty-five years witness deeper business partnerships, stronger educational exchanges, greater tourism, richer cultural interactions and even closer friendships between the people of India and Okinawa.

Once again, I congratulate the Okinawa-India Friendship Association on this remarkable milestone. I thank every member of OIFA for your dedication, your friendship and your enduring commitment to bringing our peoples closer together. The Embassy of India remains your steadfast partner. Together, let us continue to build a relationship rooted in trust, inspired by shared values and dedicated to peace, prosperity and the well-being of our peoples.

Thank you.

Dōmo arigatō gozaimashita.