

Welcome Speech by Ambassador of India to Japan H.E. Shri Sibi George for Hon'ble Chief Minister of Gujarat Shri Bhupendrabhai Patel on November 26, 2023

Good Evening and Welcome.

Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Bhupendrabhai Patel ji, Hon'ble Chief Secretary Shri Raj Kumar, Additional Chief Secretaries Shri Pankaj Joshi and Shri S.J. Haider, Other Members of the delegation accompanying Honorable Chief Minister, Members of Indian diaspora, Good Evening,

Before we start our welcome reception today, I would like to remind all present here about the importance of this day in our nations history. Today is the Constitution Day of India. It was on this day November 26, 1949, the Constituent Assembly of India formally adopted the Constitution of India in New Delhi. It is a day to salute all members of our Constituent Assembly including the father of the Constitution Babasaheb Ambedkar and also rededicate ourselves to the principles and values of our constitution. In our Embassy, this year, we celebrated this day by reading out the preamble of our constitution together.

Another anniversary that we observe today is a sad reminder of the Mumbai cross border terror attacks, which had taken place on this day in 2008. It is the anniversary of gruesome terrorist attacks in Mumbai that lasted three days in November 2008. 166 innocent people lost their life and 300 innocent people were injured. We feel the pain of those who lost their loved ones in this terrorist attacks from across the border. Today a grateful nation bows to its security personnel who valiantly fought the terrorists. We continue to face the menace of cross border terrorism. It is a day to rededicate ourselves in the fight against terrorism. I request all present here to rise and observe two minute silence in memory of the victims and the martyrs of the Mumbai attacks. ...thank you.

Dear Sir,

It is with great happiness that we welcome you to Japan and to the Embassy. It is an honor for any Ambassador posted anywhere in the world to welcome a senior leader of India to his country of accreditation. It becomes the proudest moment when one is joined by the Indian Diaspora

and the Friends of India. Sir, it is an honour for us to welcome you and your delegation to Japan.

Sir, Gujarat has a very special place in India – Japan relationship. Over a period of few years, our relationship has transformed from a G to G to B to B to a special strategic and global partnership entered into by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Mr. Abe in 2014. Now this partnership is reinforced by PM Modi and PM Kishida, who met three times this year. This year is particularly important with India heading G 20 and Japan heading G 7.

In this transformation in our relationship, our Indian diaspora in Japan, which is small but dynamic, have played an important role. Our diaspora here includes scientists, professors, artists, engineers, business persons, and our skilled and semi-skilled workers all contributing to the progress of the country where they live, at the same time not forgetting about their Indian routes. They always been with us to celebrate India and Indian festivals almost every day in Japan. They have contributed in our Aatmanirbhar Bharat and now in the march towards Amrit Kaal, next twenty-five years when India moves to become a developed country. This year we are celebrating the India Japan Year of Tourism with the theme Connecting Himalayas with Mount Fuji. The Statue of Unity in Kevadia has become a new attraction for many in Japan.

Sir, it has been one year since I assumed charge in Japan, during which I have been able to travel the length and breadth of Japan, covering several prefectures and major cities. What I have witnessed during these interactions is a real momentum, an overwhelming enthusiasm, a spirit of partnership towards building a relationship with India. What we should be able to do is to convert this momentum to concrete outcome. We have a long way to go. We need to have a quantum leap in our engagement. There are 1500 Japanese companies in India, my target is to make it 15,000. There are 1500 Indian students in various universities in Japan, our target is to make it 15,000. There are 40,000 Indian Diaspora in Japan, our target is to increase it to 400,000. What we need is a quantum leap. And in this journey, Gujarat plays a very important role, including the place where India's first bullet train will operate from 2027.

Sir, on behalf of the Indian Community in Japan, I welcome you to Japan.

Sir, I may I request you to kindly address this august gathering.

Thank you.
