

**Remarks by Ambassador Sibi George
at “India-Japan Partnership : North East – Meghalaya”
at Embassy of India, Tokyo, 18 April 2024**

Mr. D. Vijay Kumar, Commissioner & Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya, Planning, Investment Promotion & Sustainable Development Department

Mr. Yukihide Nakayama, Senior Director for Global Strategy (Southwest Asia), Planning Department, JETRO

Mr. Mike Donald Khyriem, Lead, Meghalaya, Invest India

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests,

A very Good evening to you all !!

It is my esteemed pleasure to welcome you all to this Seminar **India-Japan Partnership : North East – Meghalaya** focused on exploring potential collaborations between India and Japan, and the opportunities that lie ahead for mutually beneficial partnership between Japan and the state of Meghalaya, in the North East of India.

Dear Friends,

The enduring bond between India and Japan traces back to ancient times, characterized by a profound spiritual connection and rich cultural & civilizational ties. Today, our relations is based on shared principles of democracy, freedom, and reverence for the rule of law. In recent years, the dynamic relationship between India and Japan has evolved into a Special Strategic and Global partnership, initiated in 2014 under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi ji and the late former Prime Minister of Japan Mr. Shinzo Abe, which has since thrived.

Dear Friends,

The North East region, comprising of eight states, is emerging as a new frontier of India's growth. With an international borders of 5,182 kilometres with 5 countries, North East is a strategic location and the Gateway to Southeast Asia for India.

The region's geographical proximity to these dynamic markets, vast natural resources, young & dynamic work force, presents immense trade and investment opportunities, which Investors can leverage to establish strong trade networks, foster economic ties, and tap into the region's potential as a vibrant economic hub.

Friends,

Meghalaya, also known as the Abode of Clouds, falls in one of the richest biodiversity areas in the world. It is known for its steamy jungles and spellbinding cliffs, rushing rivers, unique cultures, delicious cuisines, windswept highlands, and lush, verdant valleys. Nature has blessed Meghalaya with abundant rainfall, sun-shine, virgin forests, high plateaus, tumbling waterfalls, crystal clear rivers, meandering stream-lets and above all with sturdy, intelligent and hospitable people. It is a land of vibrant cultures, lush landscapes, and its people are known for their resilience and warmth. From the misty Khasi and Jaintia Hills to the verdant Garo Hills, Meghalaya's beauty is as boundless as its potential.

Friends,

Meghalaya offers significant avenues for investment with abundant natural resources in terms of flora, fauna, forests, medicinal plants, minerals such as coal, limestone, quartz, feldspar, granite, industrial clay, sillimanite, and uranium. Meghalaya is also geographically rich in

minerals and has the potential for industrial setups based on these mineral resources.

Meghalaya with its skilled human resources, large English-speaking population, extensive mineral resources including coal and limestone, abundant agriculture and horticulture resources, and high hydro-power availability can be an ideal destination for investment for Japanese companies.

Friends,

Japan is a valuable partner for the economic development of the North East. We have set up the India-Japan Act East Forum, which takes up projects for economic modernization of the North East. The range of projects taken up is quite diverse and includes improvement of National Highways in Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura; hydropower in Meghalaya; biodiversity conservation and forest management in Sikkim, Nagaland, Tripura and Meghalaya; and water supply and sanitation in Assam. Be it the cluster-based approach for development of agro-industrial hubs, organic farming or development of the immense tourism potential through connectivity projects or the massive investments in building social and physical infrastructure in the region, sustained efforts are being made by the Government to increase the growth and development of the region. These efforts are also aimed at improving the ease of doing business through active investment promotion which will, in turn, revitalize the demand and supply chains to unlock newer business opportunities.

Friends,

The possibilities for collaboration between Japan and Meghalaya are limitless, whether it be in the fields of information technology, infrastructure development, agribusiness, food processing, horticulture, energy, cultural exchanges, education, skill development or tourism, there are ample avenues waiting to be explored. Japan's expertise in ad-

vanced technologies and Meghalaya's rich natural resources, geographical location, young & dynamic force can form the bedrock of a partnership that transcends geographical boundaries.

Friends,

In the developmental agenda of North East, Japan is an important partner for India. I am confident that in coming months and years India - Japan collaboration in our North East will continue to flourish. I extend a warm invitation to Japanese companies to engage more actively in North East, contributing to its progress and prosperity

Friends,

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the participants for their presence in today's seminar, and am hopeful that the connections forged during this Seminar will yield significant opportunities for driving economic growth, advancing sustainable development, and strengthening further relationship between Japan and India.

Thank you.
