

Speech by Ambassador Nagma M. Mallick on the Occasion of Utkal Divas
7 April 2026

Distinguished members of the Indian community, respected guests, and dear friends,
Namaskar and a very warm greeting to all of you on the auspicious occasion of Utkal Divas.

Today, as we celebrate the formation of Odisha, we are not merely commemorating a date in history, but honoring a civilization that has contributed richly to India's cultural, spiritual, and maritime heritage. For the Indian diaspora here in Japan, this occasion carries a deeper meaning—it is a reminder of how our regional identities beautifully strengthen our national identity, even as we live far from home.

2. Odisha, known for its ancient temples, vibrant art forms, and deep spiritual traditions, has historically been a land of openness and global connections. Its maritime history, especially the ancient trade links with Southeast Asia, reflects a spirit of outward engagement and cultural exchange. In many ways, this resonates strongly with Japan's own history as an island nation that has balanced tradition with global outreach.

3. There are striking similarities between Odisha and Japan that deserve reflection. Both share a profound respect for tradition and heritage. Just as Odisha is home to the magnificent Jagannath Temple and the world-renowned Rath Yatra, Japan preserves its spiritual ethos through Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples, with festivals that bind communities together in devotion and celebration.

4. Both Odisha and Japan are also deeply connected to nature. The people of Odisha revere rivers, forests, and the sea, much like the Japanese respect mountains, seasons, and natural harmony. This shared cultural sensitivity is reflected in everyday life—whether it is the simplicity of living, the importance of discipline, or the emphasis on community values.

5. Art and craftsmanship further bind these two cultures. Odisha's intricate Pattachitra paintings and handloom traditions find a parallel in Japan's exquisite craftsmanship—be it in kimono weaving, ceramics, or calligraphy. In both

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societies, art is not merely decorative but a way of life, passed down through generations with pride and precision.

6. As members of the Indian community in Japan, you embody these shared values. You are not only ambassadors of India but also bridges between two great civilizations. Your contribution in strengthening India-Japan relations—whether in business, academia, technology, or culture—is deeply appreciated.

7. On this occasion, it is also important to reflect on recent developments in India that directly impact our diaspora. The Union Budget has introduced several features beneficial for Non-Resident Indians. These include continued emphasis on ease of doing business, digitalization of financial services, and simplification of tax compliance frameworks. Measures to encourage investment, including in infrastructure and innovation sectors, open new opportunities for NRIs to contribute to India's growth story.

8. Additionally, policies aimed at enhancing remittance flows, improving access to banking services, and strengthening global mobility frameworks are designed to make engagement with India smoother and more rewarding for the diaspora. India's economic resilience and growth trajectory remain strong, and NRIs are key stakeholders in this journey.

9. As we celebrate Utkal Divas today, let us take pride not only in Odisha's glorious past but also in its dynamic present and promising future. Let us also celebrate the enduring friendship between India and Japan—two nations bound by shared values of peace, respect, and progress.

10. In closing, I would like to commend the Indian community in Japan for preserving our cultural heritage while contributing meaningfully to this wonderful country. You truly represent the spirit of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam"—the world is one family.

11. Let us continue to strengthen these bonds and work together for a brighter future.

12. Thank you, and once again, my heartfelt greetings on Utkal Divas.

Jai Hind.
