

**Speech by Ambassador Nagma M. Mallick
at the Seminar organised by ASEAN One Group
25 May 2026**

Mr. Fukushiro Nukaga, former Speaker of the House of Representatives,
Ms. Vandana Gurnani, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment
of the Government of India

Mr. Masashi Maeda, Chairman of the Board of Directors of JBIC

Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon.

It is a pleasure to welcome all of you to this important seminar on India - Japan cooperation in human resource development and mobility. I would like to congratulate ASEAN Group and all partner organizations for bringing together policymakers, industry leaders, educational institutions, and stakeholders from both countries to discuss one of the most important pillars of our partnership - **people-to-people connectivity**.

I would also like to warmly acknowledge the distinguished dignitaries and speakers joining us today. In particular, I welcome Mr. Fukushiro Nukaga, Former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr. Masashi Maeda, Chairman of the Board of Directors of JBIC, Ms. Vandana Gurnani, Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment of India, Professor Kenzo Fujisue and Ms. Satsuki Katayama.

India and Japan today stand at an important juncture in their bilateral relationship. Our Special Strategic and Global Partnership has expanded significantly in recent years, encompassing economic security, technology, infrastructure, semiconductors, clean energy, digital innovation, and resilient supply chains. An important element of this partnership is in **human capital** - the ability of our people to work together, innovate together, and grow together.

Japan is facing demographic challenges and labor shortages across several sectors, including nursing care, manufacturing, logistics, construction, hospitality, and information technology. At the same time, India possesses one of the world's youngest and most dynamic workforces, with immense strengths in engineering, digital technologies, healthcare, manufacturing, and services. This creates a natural complementarity between our two countries.

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India today is globally recognized as a hub of talent, innovation, and leadership. More than one-third of Fortune 500 companies have Indian-origin leaders in senior management or leadership positions, reflecting the global trust in Indian talent, adaptability, and technical capabilities. Indian professionals today contribute significantly to the growth of leading economies across the world.

We have already seen remarkable success stories of India-Japan cooperation. Suzuki's partnership with India is one of the finest examples of long-term industrial collaboration. Over the past four decades, Suzuki not only transformed India's automobile sector but also contributed significantly to manufacturing ecosystems, skill development, supply chains, and employment generation in India. Today, this partnership stands as a symbol of mutual trust, localization, and shared growth.

India is not merely a supplier of manpower. India is a partner in innovation, skills, and long-term growth. Indian professionals are increasingly contributing across the world as engineers, researchers, healthcare workers, digital experts, entrepreneurs, and business leaders. We are happy to see growing recognition in Japan of the value that Indian talent can bring to Japanese society and industry.

In this context, initiatives such as Japanese language training combined with vocational education in Assam, Meghalaya, and Nagaland are highly encouraging. Efforts to connect Japanese companies with institutions such as IIT Kanpur, IIT Guwahati, IIT Delhi, Savitribai Phule Pune University, and the University of Mumbai represent a forward-looking approach that aligns education, skills, and industry needs.

The Government of India attaches high importance to skill development and international workforce mobility. Through programs such as Skill India, Digital India, Startup India, and initiatives focused on global skilling partnerships, India is preparing its youth for opportunities in emerging sectors worldwide. We are also working closely with Japan under frameworks such as the Specified Skilled Worker system and other skill mobility initiatives to ensure smoother pathways for skilled mobility.

As reflected in the "Action Plan for Japan-India Human Resource Exchange and Cooperation", both countries have set "an aspirational target of the exchange of more than 500,000 personnel in both directions in the next five years, including 50,000 skilled personnel and potential talents from India to Japan."

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The Action Plan also emphasizes:

“Promoting Japanese language education in India, as well as bi-directional cultural, educational and grass-roots exchanges as investment for the future.”

Importantly, it recognizes the need for:

“Strengthening points of contact between Japanese companies and Indian students.”

At the same time, it is important that this partnership is built not only on economic considerations, but also on mutual respect, cultural understanding, and long-term integration. Foreign professionals who come to Japan should feel welcomed, valued, and supported in building fulfilling lives here. People-to-people exchanges deepen trust between nations in ways that governments alone cannot achieve.

As we look ahead, there are several areas where our cooperation can be strengthened further.

There is a need for continued engagement between India and Japan to ensure that existing Action Plans and frameworks on skill development and human-resource mobility remain at the forefront of our bilateral agenda. Sustained momentum and close coordination between governments, industry, and educational institutions will be essential.

We also encourage more Japanese companies, business associations, and delegations to directly engage with Indian universities, technical institutes, and skill-development centres. Such partnerships can create stronger pathways for recruitment, internships, industry-oriented training, and long-term collaboration.

Another important priority is the expansion of certified Japanese language training infrastructure in India. Increasing access to quality language education will help prepare a larger pool of skilled and job-ready Indian professionals who can contribute effectively to Japanese industry and society.

Of course, human resource cooperation is only one aspect of our cooperation. As Japanese companies increasingly explore opportunities in India, they will find a rapidly growing economy, a vibrant startup ecosystem, world-class digital public infrastructure, strong manufacturing ambitions, and a government

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committed to improving ease of doing business and strengthening industrial partnerships.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am confident that today's discussions will generate valuable ideas and practical pathways for strengthening this important dimension of India-Japan cooperation. I once again thank the organizers for this initiative and wish the seminar every success.

Thank you very much.
