

**Speech by Ambassador Nagma M. Mallick at Republic Day Reception
26 January 2026**

- Your Excellency Mr. Iwao Horii, Hon'ble State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan,
- Your Excellency Ms. Kimi Onoda, the Minister for Economic Security and the Cool Japan Strategy,
- Governors and Speakers from Prefectures,
- Members of the Diet,
- Senior colleagues from the Government of Japan,
- Ambassadors and colleagues from the Diplomatic Corps,
- Industry leaders, friends from the media and academia
- My fellow-citizens,
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Namaskar and welcome to our celebration of the 77th Republic Day of India.

Our Republic Day marks the coming into force of our Constitution in January 1950 – a cherished document that enshrines the principles of democracy, justice, liberty, equality and fraternity for a nation of over 1.4 billion people.

Today, India stands tall as the world's largest democracy, an engine of global growth, and an innovation-driven economy. We are proud that our hard-working farmers have made us self-sufficient in food, especially in food-grain production – we are the world's largest producer of rice and dairy, and the second-largest producer of wheat and tea in the world among a score of other such records. I think we can be justly proud also of our Digital Public Infrastructure that has enabled the widespread financial inclusion of our people. I will touch upon just a couple of our grand digital projects: the Aadhar: every citizen of India has a unique identification number that enables every sort of digital transaction. Quick digital banking, the leakage-free disbursement of welfare payments and other services from the government to the citizens, and enhanced tax compliance are among its many benefits; UPI, the United Payments Interface, a digital payment system that has no service charge and can be used interoperably between all Indian banks that is today used by nearly every Indian. India also has a vibrant StartUp ecosystem that has, among its achievements, produced 123 unicorns. India is also moving steadily towards the widespread adoption of clean energy, with 40% of our total energy at present coming from

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renewable sources. Listing these achievements, how can I forget to mention our many artisans who continue to produce our traditional crafts like this piece of hand-woven magic that I wear today! India's growth is increasingly integrated with global value chains, and we seek partnerships that are long-term, trusted and mutually beneficial.

Japan has been, and will continue to be, one of our most important partners in this journey.

Excellencies, and Friends,

India and Japan share a close relationship that is both deeply rooted in the past and looks to the future, is anchored in civilizational links and also celebrates shared democratic values, with a strong convergence of strategic and economic interests.

Our relationship has matured into a Special Strategic and Global Partnership, reflecting not only bilateral priorities, but also our shared commitment to peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

The year gone by, as years past, was marked by high-level visits and joint initiatives that demonstrated this partnership. Our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Japan in August last year for the 15th India-Japan Annual Summit.

The visit produced forward-looking outcomes, which include a Joint Vision for the Next Decade, strengthened defence and security cooperation, the commitment of 10 trillion Yen in private investment from Japan to India, and a Human Resource Exchange and Cooperation Initiative that targets exchanges of 500,000 people over five years, with particular emphasis on skilled mobility from India to Japan. Importantly, the leaders also launched the India-Japan Economic Security Initiative, focusing on cooperation in critical sectors such as semiconductors, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, critical minerals, and clean energy. Our joint endeavours in these sectors aims to ensure our citizens' welfare, national resilience and global stability.

Friends,

The Summit was followed by sustained engagements in recent months: Prime Minister Modi and H.E. Ms. Sanae Takaichi, the Prime Minister of Japan, met on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Johannesburg last November.

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More recently, H.E. Mr. Toshimitsu Motegi, the Foreign Minister of Japan, visited India and held the latest round of our Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue, reviewing our bilateral cooperation - from defence and security to investment, innovation and people-to-people ties. Minister Motegi also met with Prime Minister Modi. We look forward to high level participation from Japan at our AI Impact Summit that will be held in New Delhi next month.

The engagement between our business and finance communities continued apace. The big 3 banks of Japan made important new investments in Indian banks and financial institutions reflecting mutual trust between Japanese investors and Indian regulators. Business ties developed in a new direction with the visit to India last month of aerospace-related companies from the crucial SME sector of Japan.

Our civilizational relationship continues to be of value to both our peoples. Our shared Buddhist heritage, our common practices of meditation, holistic healing, and our commitment to non-invasive medical systems like Ayurveda- all of these knit us closer together.

Excellencies,

The year 2027 will mark 75 years of diplomatic relations between India and Japan. The world has seen many changes in these 75 years - in geopolitics, technology and culture. Our friendship with Japan has only deepened with the years. I thank the Government and the people of Japan for their steadfast support and friendship.

We will work closely with our Japanese friends to ensure that this milestone next year celebrates our past and present and also becomes a launching-pad for the next phase of our partnership.

We are fond of saying that India is a young nation but an old civilization. Today, we present a Kathak dance performance by one of the most eminent dancers of India, Shri Rajendra Gangani. Kathak is the classical dance of North India that began over 2,000 years ago with travelling story-tellers called Kathakaars who told their stories from the Hindu epics with the help of dance and music. This dance was then made more dazzling in the royal courts of North India with the addition of fast footwork, pirouettes, and music from Persia and Central Asia. Shri Gangani has been conferred with all the important dance awards in

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India. His troupe will perform at the Ino Hall tomorrow and at Kyoto and Kobe later this week.

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of my colleagues at the Embassy who have worked hard to make this reception possible and on my own behalf, I thank you once again for sharing our joy in celebrating the 77th Republic Day of India.

Arigatou gozaimasu.
