

Republic Day of India

A relationship blessed with great potential

Hiroyuki Hosoda,
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-INDIA
PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP
LEAGUE

The Japan-India Parliamentary Friendship League would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to the people of India on the occasion of the 67th Republic Day of India.



India, the world's largest democracy, is one of the most important partners for Japan, as the two countries share universal values such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law, while maintaining friendly relations founded on a long history of exchange.

In December, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited India and held a Japan-India summit meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. After the meeting, the two leaders signed the "Japan and India Vision 2025 Special Strategic and Global Partnership: Working Together for Peace and Prosperity of the Indo-Pacific Re-

gion and the World." Additionally, various achievements such as introducing Japan's high-speed rail technology, namely the Shinkansen for Mumbai-Ahmedabad route, and an agreement on the cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy were announced.

Abe noted that the Japan-India relationship is blessed with the largest potential for development of any bilateral relationship anywhere in the world and that he intends to cooperate with Modi to transform the Japan-India relationship from a bud into a bloom in a new era of Japan-India relations. Based on the close relations at the top levels, I expect that exchanges between the two countries will be further expanded in wide-ranging fields and on various levels.

The Japan-India Parliamentary Friendship League remains strongly committed to contributing actively to the further deepening of our partnership and for further prosperity and continuing development of our cordial relationship.

Working together for increased development and prosperity

Masami Iijima
CHAIRMAN, THE JAPAN-INDIA BUSINESS
COOPERATION COMMITTEE



On behalf of the Japan-India Business Cooperation Committee (JIBCC), I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the 67th Republic Day of India.

As two of Asia's largest democracies, Japan and India have built extremely amicable relations based on common strategic interests and shared values.

In particular, the growing economic interest of each country has been of great significance. Direct investment into India reached ¥219.3 billion in 2014, and in October of the same year, there were 1,209 Japanese companies in India — figures our two prime ministers have resolved to double within five years.

In a survey published by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation in November India topped the list of medium and long-term promising countries for overseas businesses, indicating the excitement and

high expectations among Japanese businesspeople. I believe that the increase of Japanese involvement in India will serve as a driving force for the growth of Asia as a whole.

The JIBCC was established in 1966 to enhance mutual understanding and friendship and facilitate economic relations between Japan and India.

Significant events last year included an economic mission to Mumbai, Chennai, and Bangalore and a joint meeting with India-Japan Business Cooperation Committee and related events in Tokyo. At the meeting, we discussed the progress of cooperation in infrastructure, with a focus on the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor. We also examined challenges and prospects presented by "Make in India," an Indian government initiative.

To accelerate the strengthening of Japan-India economic ties, we are all committed to further vigorous action.

I conclude by once again by offering my congratulations on the occasion of the 67th Republic Day of India together with my very best wishes for India's increasing development and prosperity in the days and years ahead.

Joint cooperation to improve mutual business environment

Hiroaki Nakanishi and Takashi Shoda
CHAIRS OF KEIDANREN COMMITTEE
ON SOUTH ASIA



Nakanishi



Shoda

On behalf of Keidanren, we wish to extend to the government and people of India heartfelt congratulations on its 67th Republic Day.

Japan and India have cultivated an excellent and mutually beneficial relationship through the shuttle diplomacy of their leaders and the holding of the Japan-India Business Leaders Forum. On the economic front, Japan and India have steadily developed closer ties, with bilateral trade tripling and Japanese investment in India expanding eightfold over the past decade. The number of Japanese companies operating in India also increased to more than 1,200. It is expected that business exchanges will further expand, while capitalizing on the effect of the India-Japan Comprehen-

sive Economic Partnership Agreement that came into force in August 2011.

In particular, going forward, it will become even more important that Japan and India cooperate on the swift realization of relevant projects, such as the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor project that many Japanese companies are involved in, as well as on the improvement of infrastructure, including power supply, water treatment, roads and ports. Keidanren is convinced that the technological capabilities and know-how of Japanese companies can contribute to improving the

lives of people in India.

In this context, coinciding with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to India in December, the Japanese and Indian business communities held the Eighth Japan-India Business Leaders Forum in Delhi. At the forum, exchanges of views took place on improving the business environment and developing infrastructure in India, with a view to further strengthening economic ties. The forum compiled a joint report and submitted it to Abe and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Keidanren has high expectations the two leaders will exercise strong leadership to realize the proposals of the forum promptly and steadily. For their part, the business communities of the two nations will work closely to further develop the economies of Japan and India. We ask all relevant stakeholders for their continued support and cooperation.

Domestic reform, foreign policy initiatives spur domestic growth

Ryuko Hira
PRESIDENT OF ICIJ

The renewed glory, power and potential of India is testament to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's unprecedented landslide victory with a promise to materialize India's huge economic potential and transform India into a fully developed nation.

Will Modi succeed in this herculean task? World leaders have highly rated Modi's accomplishments since his inauguration 18 months ago. Newspaper polls by India Today and MINT reported his popularity at 57 and 79 percent in August. One of Modi's most commendable accomplishments is easing the fears of pessimism, criticism, discontent, downturn and economic stagnation in India's masses that existed before his election. Modi has won the trust of Indians, as well as of the world community, for a strong, disciplined and clean government that delivers. Doubling economic growth from 4 to nearly 8 percent and kick-starting stalled mega-infrastructure projects has won Modi's India

the status of world's "bright spot" from the International Monetary Fund.

Modi has made India more visible in external affairs with a dynamic, friendly approach to all nations. Modi's philosophy of "India is a friend to all nations" has immensely contributed to greater cooperation. Since being elected, Modi has made official visits to 30 countries and received presidential or prime ministers from 71. Modi has transformed India from a "balancing power" to a "leading power." Modi's consideration of neighbors first, followed by increased and active relations with the Middle East, Africa, central Asia and Pacific Islands, dubbed "Link West," is paying rich economic and strategic dividends. Modi continues to pursue unconventional out-of-the-box thinking for economic matters in foreign policy.

The global business community has hailed Modi's economic reforms and fiscal policies. In October 2014, petroleum subsidies were reduced to improve fiscal discipline. Substantial reforms to liberalize majority investments by foreign investors were implemented in insurance, defense, railway and real estate. In November 2014, the

Apprentices Act, allowing on-the-job training for young workers was enacted, greatly contributing to increased employment. Small-scale enterprises received much awaited labor law reform. Additionally, a substantial budget for infrastructure and public works was approved.

Japan's Indian population is 25,775, compared to 3 million in the U.S. and 1.5 million in the U.K. Japan has expressed great interest to increase human exchanges at all levels and important policy changes are being considered to encourage and enhance these.

Modi has placed great trust in Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, while Abe has high expectations of India's cooperation for Japan's economic and strategic needs. India-Japan relations have flourished in a new era of special and strategic global partnership.

Abe has expressed hope to

continue serving the nation until the 2020 Olympics. Modi's primary initiatives of "Make in India," "Smart City," "Clean India," "Digital India," "Skill India" and "Start up India" shall transform India and build greater trust and confidence of his leadership to pave the way for a second 5-year term of Modi government to fulfill India's potential and promise.

Republic Day is the most important day of India as it marks the birth of our nation as a republic.

Republic Day is a national festival celebrated across India, with the main Republic Day celebration taking place in New Delhi. A grand Republic Day parade is organized on this day and a special guest, normally a senior foreign dignitary, is invited to be the main guest. Abe and U.S. President Barack Obama had the honor in 2014 and 2015, respectively.

The ceremony begins in the morning of 26th January with the laying of a wreath at the Amar Jawan Jyothi at the India Gate by the prime minister to show gratitude to the martyrs who gave their lives for the country.

Soon after the president unfurls the national flag, the parade begins, led by war heroes, armed forces' members who have received gallantry awards, followed by young boys and girls who have won National Bravery Awards for that year lead the parade.

Soldiers from different armed forces, paramilitary units and police units march to the tune of a military band. A colourful flyby by helicopters and airplanes makes the ceremony most spectacular. Folk dances by cultural troupes and various performances by school children keep the audience spellbound.

A tableaux of Indian states depicting their culture follows the children. The procession lasts several hours and finally ends at Red Fort.

In the evening, at Raisina Hill, home to the president's residence, is illuminated. Celebrations last three days and end on the evening of Jan. 28 with the beating retreat ceremony by the armed forces.

Republic Day marks the birth of our nation. It is a great day for all of us for remembrance, thanksgiving and rejoicing. It is a day to remember and keep alive the fond memories of national heroes who have shed their blood for the freedom of India.

It is a day of national pledge to make India a truly developed nation. A great deal more remains to be done to achieve this goal. It is up to all to make the republic of India as world's most admired nation.



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe attend the Ganga Aarti, a ritual held on the banks of the Ganges River in Varanasi, India, on Dec. 12. KYODO

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