

**Remarks by Ambassador Sibi George
at “India-Japan Partnership : North East – Mizoram” Seminar
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Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests,

A very Good evening to you all !!

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this Seminar “India-Japan Partnership : North East – Mizoram” to celebrate and reflect on the growing cooperation between India and Japan, and to explore potential for collaboration for mutually beneficial partnership between Japan and Mizoram, beautiful and vibrant State in the North East of India.

Friends,

The North East region, comprising of eight states and with an international borders of more than 5000 kms with 5 countries, is a gateway to India’s ancient cultural relationships with East and South East Asia. It binds India with some of its most important neighbours.

The region is a kaleidoscope of rich cultural, linguistic, ecological and geographical diversity. It sits in the center of the world’s richest biodiversity hotspot with rare varieties of flora and fauna.

There are more varieties of orchids and medicinal plants in the region than anywhere in the world.

The region is also home to more than 220 diverse ethnic groups, each having their own distinctive social, cultural, and linguistic identity and is also known for its colourful fairs and festivals, which reflects the rich cultural heritage of the region.

Friends,

Today we are focusing on Mizoram, this is the sixth series of Seminars that we are organizing on India – Japan collaboration in North East.

Mizoram is a land of rolling hills, valleys, rivers and lakes and more than 84% of the state is covered with forests. Tucked away in the thickets of green on the southern tip of Northeast India, its is a nature lover's paradise, and has abundance of attractions for those who are interested in nature, culture and adventure.

Mizoram, with its lush landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and strategic location, holds immense potential for development and growth. Its rich biodiversity and favorable climate, offers tremendous opportunities for sustainable agriculture and horticulture. It has a large opportunity to set up different kinds of agro-based industries as about 87 % of the entire State is covered by forests. It has a rich tradition of handloom and handicrafts, renowned for their intricate designs and vibrant colours. It is known as the “Bamboo State of India” due to its abundant bamboo resources, which occupies 30% of the total land area of the State, and offers opportunities for investments in bamboo- based industries. It also has significant potential for hydro power generation due to its numerous

rivers and hilly terrain. Additionally, the strategic location of Mizoram provides access to neighbouring states and countries, opening up a broader consumer base.

Mizoram's scenic landscapes, rich cultural heritage, warm hospitality a rich blend of natural resources, skilled human capital. investor friendly policies with ease of doing business, and attractive incentives make Mizoram one of the favorite destination for investment.

We are going to have some excellent presentation on tourism and investment opportunities in the State.

Friends,

Japan and India share a bond that is built on shared values, economic partnership, and a commitment to peace and development. Relationship between our two countries has transformed into Special Strategic and Global partnership which was launched in 2014 and this year we are celebrating its 10th anniversary. Economic cooperation forms a cornerstone of our bilateral relationship. Japan has played a pivotal role in India's economic transformation and infrastructure development, standing as our fifth-largest investor and supporting key infrastructure projects.

In the developmental agenda of North East, Japan is an important partner for India. 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 As-

sam. Etc. Upskilling of human resources in the North East is also a part of the initiative.

The Government of India is committed to creating an enabling environment for foreign investments and partnerships in the Northeast region. The Act East Policy, along with various state-specific initiatives, is designed to facilitate and promote such collaborations. I am confident that in coming months and years, India - Japan collaboration in our North East will continue to progress.

Friends

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the participants for their presence in today's seminar, and am hopeful that this Seminar will yield significant opportunities for strengthening further collaborations and enhancing people-to-people ties between India and Japan.

Thank you.

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