

**REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR SIBI GEORGE ON THE OCCASION OF THE
INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS OF INDIA IN JAPAN**

AUG 15, 2024

My fellow citizens, Friends of India,

On the occasion of the independence day of India, I extend my greetings to all Indians in Japan. Let's join our 1.4 billion brothers and sisters in India and millions of Indian Diaspora abroad and billions of our friends across the world to celebrate this occasion.

Dear Friends,

As Hon'ble Rashtrapati ji said today we are in the Amrit Kaal journey our beloved motherland to become a developed country by 2047, when we celebrate the 100th anniversary of our independence. For our Embassy here in Tokyo, and each one of us present here today, this is an occasion to visualize what we propose to do in coming years to contribute to that Amrit Kaal journey. We are proud that our nation is witnessing a significant transformation in all fronts. Today we are the largest democracy in the world and the 5th largest economy in the world. With over 1.4 billion people we are the most populous country in the world.

Today we have an excellent relationship with Japan. A Special Strategic and Global Partnership. This year we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of this Special Partnership. Today, India - Japan partnership within the bilateral and plurilateral framework like the QUAD is key to stability and freedom in Indo-Pacific which faces several challenges.

Dear Friends,

2023 has been a year of bilateral high-level exchanges. We had the visits from India of Hon'ble Prime Minister for the G 7 Summit in Hiroshima, External Affairs Minister, Finance Minister, Environment Minister, Railways and IT Minister, Health Minister to mention a few. Similarly, we had from Japan visits of Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, twice, METI Minister, Environment Minister, Finance Minister, Health Minister, to mention a few. We recall the unveiling of the statue of Mahatma Gandhi by Hon'ble Prime Minister in Hiroshima.

This year too we have made good progress. We had the visit of External Affairs Minister twice to Japan. Last month he unveiled the bust of Mahatma Gandhi at Edogawa in Tokyo at the park which has now been renamed as Gandhi Park. This month we had the visit of Speaker of the Diet visiting India. Next week we will have the visit of Foreign and Defence Minister of Japan to India for the 2+2 dialogue. We have a number of high-level visits including Hon'ble Prime Minister planned this year.

Dear Friends,

It has been eighteen months since I assumed charge in Japan, during which I have been able to travel the length and breadth of Japan, covering all 47 prefectures and major cities. What I have witnessed during these interactions is a real momentum, an overwhelming enthusiasm, a spirit of partnership towards building a relationship with India. Wherever I went, I came across a large number of stakeholders, companies, big, medium and small eager to look at India. There is more coverage of India in Japanese media both national and local, indeed, there is a real momentum. What we should be able to do is to convert this momentum to concrete outcome. We have a long way to go. We need to have a quantum leap in our engagement. Let me repeat what I have been saying. There are 1500 Japanese companies in India, my target is to make it 15,000. There are 1500 Indian students in various universities in Japan, my target is to make it 15,000. There are 40,000 Indian Diaspora in Japan, our target is to increase it to 400,000. What we need is a quantum leap.

We will continue to take steps to make Japan a key partner in our Aatmanirbhar Bharat and in our 3 Ts project - Trade, Technology and Tourism. We will continue to celebrate India in Japan every day. As Indians we have so much to celebrate, so many national heroes to remember and pay homage to. We will celebrate all festivals of India in Japan. We will also celebrate the contributions of all our national heroes. We will continue to promote India in Japan, including our Ayurveda and our Yoga. This year we are celebrating India - Japan Year of Tourism 2.0, with the theme Connecting Himalayas with Mount Fuji. I am happy to note that the three outreach platforms ICN, IPN, IBN that we set up is contributing in promoting India in Japan. Similarly, our Thematic Library project continues to be active. I invite you to join these initiatives.

Dear Friends,

I invite you all to join us in celebrating India in Japan. Indian Embassy in Tokyo is a Home Away from Home for all our Indian Diaspora. All are always welcome to visit the Embassy Let me conclude by thanking our children who are here to sing our national anthem and patriotic songs.

I thank you for joining us today. Once again I wish you a very happy Independence Day. Jai Hind, Jai Hind, Jai Hind.