

Indian prime minister's visit

A landmark year for relations with Japan

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AMBASSADOR OF INDIA

I was happy to learn that The Japan Times is bringing out this special supplement on the occasion of the visit of the Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh to Japan for a bilateral summit meeting with the Prime Minister H.E. Shinzo Abe. The strategic and global partnership that was launched by the same two leaders in 2006 marked the beginning of a qualitative transformation of our relationship. With the return of Prime Minister Abe, the two leaders will have an opportunity to take their vision of India-Japan relations to a new high.

Fifteen centuries of civilizational contacts between India and Japan have fostered close affinities based on our shared Asian heritage. Both countries are natural partners in Asia and, indeed, in the world, with shared values as democracies, wedded to the rule of law and a global vision of peace and prosperity of mankind. It has

been 60 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries; an anniversary which was celebrated on a countrywide scale last year. These 60 years have been marked by an issue-free cordiality and warmth of sentiment that permeates from the leadership of the two countries to the common people. There is strong bipartisan support for the strengthening of bilateral relations across political parties in both countries, which finds an echo in the positive perceptions among the citizens.

The historical progress of our relations is marked by several milestones such as India being the first ever recipient country of Japanese official development assistance (ODA) in the late 1950s, to its graduation in the 21st century as not only the largest recipient of Japanese yen loans, but also a growing destination for Japanese investment. Japan has partnered India in its priority areas of economic development, such as building infrastructure. The completed Delhi Metro is a flagship example of successful cooperation, which is now being followed with similar projects in other leading metropolitan cities of Chennai, Benga-



Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh

luru and Mumbai. The Western Dedicated Freight Corridor, the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor and the Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor are all exciting projects that have the potential to transform the landscape of India and cement economic ties

between our countries.

The annual Prime Ministerial-level Summits that have taken place since 2006 have resulted in the establishment of a sophisticated architecture of engagement across diverse spheres with new areas and subjects for dia-

logue being added to the agenda each year. These dialogue mechanisms, led by ministers and senior officials, have ensured that we are able to sensitize each other to issues of pertinence to us at the national, regional and global level. Importantly, it has also helped us to cooperate in the multilateral forums such as the U.N., G-20 and EAS process. It is not only the two governments that have sought each other out; there is now close coordination between industry in the two countries as well as leading think tanks that have established a vibrant exchange of views between themselves.

The complementarities between the two countries are self-evident. India's emerging and buoyant economy, young population, low cost of production and burgeoning market combine well with Japan's technical prowess and manufacturing skills. India provides excellent opportunities for Japanese companies that are looking for new areas for investments and markets. In terms of trade, Japan offers a sophisticated market for textiles, marine and agricultural products, IT services, pharmaceuticals, etc., while India is an important export destination

for Japanese auto components, high-end technology and capital goods. With the signing of the comprehensive economic agreement in February 2011, which is to remove duties on 94 percent of products over the next 10 years, economic relations between the two countries are bound on a trajectory of growth.

This summit meeting between Prime Minister Singh and Prime Minister Abe will provide another opportunity to reiterate their commitment to the further strengthening of relations. We are also looking forward to the announced visit to India by Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, who have honored us by accepting our invitation to visit India.

2013 is going to be a landmark year for India-Japan relations.

Singh and 'the new India'

Yoshiro Mori
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-INDIA
ASSOCIATION, FORMER PRIME
MINISTER OF JAPAN

On behalf of the Japan-India Association, which has worked for 110 years for the benefit of Japan-India relations, I extend our most heartfelt welcome to H.E. Dr. Manmohan Singh, prime minister of India, who is paying an official visit to Japan through May 30.



The two countries began their close relationship through Buddhism and expanded it via diplomatic, economic and cultural exchanges. As then prime minister of Japan, I inaugurated the Japan-India Global Partnership with then Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee in August 2000, and since then the bilateral relationship has not only developed for mutual benefit but also evolved

Japan as prime minister of India. The role Dr. Singh has played in deepening the bilateral relations is extremely significant. We sincerely hope his visit to Japan may further promote the amicable relationship between Japan and India.

We, again, welcome the visit by Dr. Singh deeply from our heart and wish that the friendly relationship between Japan and India may continue to grow.

Text by the Japan-India
Parliamentarians' Friendship
League

The time is ripe for Dr. Singh's official visit, his fifth as prime minister of India

The Japan-India Parliamentary Friendship League would like to extend a heartfelt welcome to H.E. Dr. Manmohan Singh, prime minister of India.

Japan and India have enjoyed an amicable relationship based on a long history of exchanges. In recent years, the strategic and global partnership formed between the two countries, which share universal values of democracy, human rights and rule of law, has further been reinforced by a series of frequent and active high-level exchanges. Since 2005, prime ministers of Japan and India have been vis-

iting each other almost every year. We believe being able to welcome Prime Minister Singh again to Japan is the proof of close relations between us.

On the political level, we already saw active exchanges taking place. This year, we already had the honor of welcoming H.E. Kapil Sibal, minister of communications and information technology, H.E. Salman Khurshid, minister of external affairs, H.E. Milind Deora, minister of state in the Ministry of Communications and IT and Ministry of Shipping, and H.E. Anand Sharma, Minister of Commerce and Industry

and Minister of Textiles. Many Japanese Cabinet ministers visited India, including H.E. Taro Aso, deputy prime minister and minister of finance. Also, various inter-governmental dialogues took place this year. In January, we had the first Indo-Japan Dialogue on Maritime Security Cooperation. In March, the seventh Japan-India Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue took place and Japan-U.S.-India Talks occurred in May.

The fields of politics, security and economy are not the only places where we observed active exchanges. Last year, Japan and

India celebrated the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations. Various commemorative events were held in both countries and further promoted heart-to-heart exchange between people of Japan and India. Moreover, as we understand, both governments are now making a joint effort to realize the visit of the Emperor and Empress to India by the end of this year.

With Japan-India relations deepening at all levels, we must say it is such an appropriate time to welcome Dr. Singh to Japan.

This is the fifth time for Dr. Singh to pay an official visit to

Brief profile of Prime Minister Singh

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was born on Sept. 26, 1932, in a village in the Punjab Province of undivided India. Dr. Singh completed his matriculation examinations at Punjab University in 1948. His academic career took him from Punjab to the University of Cambridge, where he earned a first-class honors degree in economics in 1957.

Dr. Singh followed this with a D.Phil. in economics from Nuffield College, University of Oxford, in 1962. His 1964 book, "India's Export Trends and Prospects for Self-Sustained Growth," was an early critique of India's inward-oriented trade policy.

In 1971, Dr. Singh joined the government of India as an economic adviser in the Commerce Ministry. This was soon followed by his appointment as chief economic adviser in the Ministry of Finance in 1972. Among the many government positions that Dr. Singh has occupied are secretary in the Ministry of Finance, deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, governor of the Reserve Bank of India, adviser to the prime minister and chairman of the University Grants Commission.

In what was to become the turning point in the economic history of independent India, Dr. Singh spent five years between 1991 and 1996 as the country's finance minister. His role in ushering in a comprehensive policy of economic reforms is recognized worldwide.

Dr. Singh and his wife, Gursharan Kaur, have three daughters.

into cooperation in global issues such as reform of the U.N. Security Council. Now, the prime ministers of the two countries meet every year, alternating between New Delhi and Tokyo, with both countries labeling the bilateral relationship as a strategic global partnership.

Dr. Singh saved India from a foreign currency crisis in the early 1990s when he was the finance minister, beginning economic reforms and laying the foundation for "the new India," which is now a large, emerging economy. Dr. Singh expressed great gratitude to Japan for swiftly providing financial aid to India at the time of the foreign currency crisis, as well as contributing to India's nation-building and its human resources development through official development assistance (ODA) since 1958. We now enjoy an extremely friendly bilateral relationship, and I believe we owe it to Dr. Singh's consistently amicable feelings toward Japan.

Last year, there were many successful events, both in Japan and in India, marking the 60th anniversary of Japan-India diplomatic relations. This year should be the starting point of the next 10 years, and marks the 110th anniversary of the Japan-India Association. Dr. Singh's visit to Japan this time will take the strategic global partnership to a higher level and strongly show our friendly bilateral relationship to nationals of the two countries and the world.

The Japan-India Association will collaborate with the International Friendship Exchange Council and the Japan-India Parliamentary Friendship League to organize a conference in which Dr. Singh will give a lecture. The conference also serves as one of the events commemorating the 110th anniversary of the Japan-India Association.

I hope for much to be achieved during Dr. Singh's visit to Japan this time and for the continued development of the bilateral relationship in the future.