

India independence day

Strong links with Japan essential for peace, stability

Deepa Gopalan Wadhwa
AMBASSADOR OF INDIA

On the occasion of the 67th Independence Day of India, I extend my greetings to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, as well as to the government and the friendly people of Japan. I call on my fellow Indian citizens and persons of Indian origin living in Japan to celebrate this important anniversary by rededicating themselves to the lofty principles on which our country was founded.

India chose to be a secular democracy at its re-birth as an independent nation because these tenets were a natural extension of our millenniums-old ethos of accommodation, inclusiveness and harmony. The manner in which we have kept the flame of democracy burning has few parallels in the developing world. Our democracy has also provided in recent years a resilient base for rapid economic growth with stability in a globalized world.

Adherence to the rule of law has made India a reliable partner for long-term economic cooperation.

The friendship between India and Japan has a long history rooted in spiritual affinity and the modern nation-states have carried on the positive legacy of the old association, which has been strengthened by shared values of belief in democracy, individual freedom and the rule of law. India is the largest democracy in Asia and Japan the most prosperous. In the emerging world in which the responsibility of ensuring order and stability will, to a large extent, fall on the world's leading democracies, our common commitment to democratic values offer a strong basis for close partnership.

India's relations with Japan are singularly free of any kind of dispute — ideological, cultural or territorial. It is unique and one of mutual respect manifest in generous gestures and sentiments of standing by each other at times of need. Japan's importance as a major industrial power remains undiminished. India's importance in the emerging architecture of the world economy is

being acknowledged worldwide. Strong India-Japan ties are essential for economic development, as well as world peace and stability, especially in the Indo-Pacific region.

Thus, an examination of today's changed circumstances, the transformation that has taken place in India, the challenges and opportunities that have been thrown up by a multi-polar world order and the advent of globalization, and the wide areas of convergence, complementarities and synergies between our two countries makes it amply clear that the time for imparting new content and fresh dynamism to our old relationship is at hand. India's dynamic economy, youthful demographics, ample labor force and large market combine well with Japan's technological, manufacturing and financial prowess.

It is the recognition of the mutual advantage in enhancing and widening the ambit of the bilateral relationship that has driven Indo-Japan ties in the past decade and a half. The



President of India Pranab Mukherjee

turning point was the historic visit of Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori to India in August 2000 to launch the Japan-India Global Partnership in the 21st Century. His farsighted initiative and vision not only provided a forward momentum in the bilateral ties, but also showed us the way for deepening our engagement in diverse spheres. There has been a steady advance since to a Global and Strategic Partner-



Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh

ship entered into by Prime Ministers Dr. Manmohan Singh and Shinzo Abe in 2006. This was a defining moment in our bilateral ties, catapulting the relationship to a new level.

Since the launch of the global and strategic partnership, bilateral relations have been guided by annual summits between the two prime ministers held in New Delhi and Tokyo. This has helped not only in sustaining the

momentum but also providing the necessary direction for the future.

In May, we had a landmark visit by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to Japan for the annual summit. His interaction with Prime Minister Abe and the top political leadership of Japan reflected our mutual desire to further strengthen our bond of friendship in the days ahead. The two leaders shared their vision in a joint statement aptly titled "Strengthening the Strategic and Global Partnership between India and Japan beyond the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations."

The joint statement covered the entire gamut of our ever-diversifying bilateral relations, with a particular focus on economic ties. It highlighted Japan's deepening involvement in India's infrastructural development, including metro rail projects in New Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai and Mumbai. In addition, Japan is involved in the implementation of two other flagship projects — the Delhi-Mumbai

Freight Corridor and Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor and the planning for the newly announced Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor project.

India is honored and privileged to receive Their Imperial Majesties the Emperor and Empress on a state visit later this year. This will be a momentous occasion, and we propose to leave no stones unturned in ensuring a memorable and productive visit for Their Imperial Majesties.

We greatly value our friendship with Japan. We wish to work with our Japanese friends on the basis of mutual respect and mutual benefit to realize the untapped potential for cooperation. We seek to forge bonds between our two countries that will encompass political and strategic ties, ensure a sustaining and symbiotic economic engagement and, most importantly, build bridges of understanding and mutual appreciation between our people, and especially, our tomorrow — our youth.

Today, the stakes for India and

Japan go much beyond the bilateral. Close cooperation between Japan and India will indubitably ensure that this century is the century of Asia, and contribute to the emergence of a multi-polar world that is peaceful and stable, equitable and prosperous. In this context, I quote the words of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh during his visit to Tokyo in May: "... the success of our partnership is vital for the prosperity of our people and indispensable for a future of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region."

I am confident that the coming year will see the further deepening of the ties of friendship between India and Japan. We look forward to working closely with the Japanese government, business and industry and the public at large to realize the common desire of our two great peoples for peace, progress and prosperity. We believe the future is full of promises and accordingly dedicate this year's Independence Day celebrations here to the steady blossoming of our relations.

More great events ahead in memorable year for India-Japan ties



Strategic, global partners: Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe hold summit talks in Tokyo on May 29. EMBASSY OF INDIA

Yoshiro Mori
CHAIRMAN, THE JAPAN-INDIA
ASSOCIATION

On the occasion of the 67th Independence Day of India, I am greatly honored to convey my heartfelt congratulations to the government and people of India as chairman of The Japan-India Association. This year is an auspicious one for the association, too, because it marks the 110th anniversary of the establishment of the association since its inception in 1903. We are very much appreciative of the consis-



tent support to us from the government and people of India, which has enabled us to commemorate this anniversary.

The last 67 years through today are the history of India building a nation and developing its economy, and the same is true for Japan, which means both nations have taken similar tracks in the east and west of Asia. During these years, both nations have cultivated friendly and cooperative relations through mutual respect, helping each other when one of the nations was having a hard time. And now both nations are taking leading roles in the world politically and economically.

During my official visit as in-

cumbent prime minister in August 2000, I signed with Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee the declaration of the "Global Partnership between Japan and India in the 21st Century." This privileged relationship was developed in 2006 to the level of "Strategic and Global Partnership" by our successors. Our partnership has steadily grown, no matter who has taken the reins of our respective governments, and both nations have deepened and widened the cooperation to deal with such global issues as reform of the U.N. Security Council, prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, piracy in the international society.

My foregoing visit was the first time in 10 years for an incumbent Japanese prime minister. Our relations have now become so close that the prime minis-

ters of Japan and India visit each other every year, and each time they meet, they advance new cooperative relations.

A lot of cooperative projects between Japan and India have been progressing. I am particularly pleased that what are called the flagship projects, namely the construction of the Delhi-Mumbai Dedicated Freight Corridor and the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, have steadily moved forward.

India continues to be the largest Japanese ODA (official development assistance) recipient and engages itself, in cooperation with Japan, in infrastructure building such as electricity and transportation systems, poverty alleviation, development of human resources, environment protection projects.

With the very successful Delhi Metro project through the cooperation between Japan and India, whose working length has now reached 190 km, the plan for construction of Metro Line systems based on the same concept are under way now in Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai and Hyderabad.

Japanese direct investment has been on the rise in an accelerated way. The number of Japanese companies settled in India has hit 926 as of October 2012, which is up 96 from the same period of the previous year. The number of Japanese nationals in India are also growing, and it surpasses 7,000. On the other hand, more than 20,000 Indian people have settled down in Japan and some Indian businesses have ventured into

the Marunouchi area, the very business center of Tokyo, in addition to other traditional areas of Osaka, Kobe and Yokohama.

Furthermore Their Imperial Majesties the Emperor and Empress for the first time in our history are going to pay a State Visit to India later this year. I am convinced that this year, through the Imperial visit, will turn out to be a memorable year for both our countries.

I would like, on this auspicious occasion, to pray from the bottom of my heart that the already excellent Japan-India relationship will be further reinforced in the coming years and that our two great nations will contribute to the peace and prosperity of the international community at large.