

# India continues moving toward bright, prosperous future

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Hon. President of ICCJ

On behalf of all members of the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Japan, I convey our greetings for the Independence Day of India.

When freedom was finally achieved 64 years ago, millions in our country looked forward to great things, to great achievements and to India taking its place among the nations of the world as a leader and exemplar. Much has been done and achieved in the past six decades, especially for the masses, that was unthinkable in the years before independence. But not all the hopes with which we embarked on our career as a free nation have been realized.

The vision of India becoming a developed country in 2020 is on schedule. Our people shall rise well above the present poverty and contribute more productively to their country because of their own improved health, education and self-esteem.

With time and effort, as every Indian is in

the process of being empowered to make use of their life and opportunities, I am convinced "the best is yet to be."

From time immemorial to the present, Global Indians have made a silent but substantial contribution to the making of the world. The many information technology and other professionals from India have left important footprints on the evolution of the global IT industry. One wonders whether the world's IT boom and the creation of tech markets would have been possible without the Indian content! The invaluable efforts of Indian corporations have allowed the reengineering and reinvention of India's place in the competent global economy. AtclorMital, the world's largest steelmaker, and Tata Motors, which encompasses the globally favored brands Jaguar and Land Rover, are the most prominent examples of a myriad of acquisitions and joint ventures between the world's best corporations and Indian conglomerates that have set the stage for the globalization of the Indian economy.

This talented, confident, cosmopolitan and globally mobile wave of Indian integration in the academic and economic spheres illustrates the timeless soft power of India, its ability to influence other cultures through the benign attractiveness of its social and cultural models. Global Indians are a boon for shaping the destiny of a well-integrated economic world.



Ryuko Hira

## India-Japan relationship

India-Japan relations have undergone a significant and qualitative shift in recent years. There is huge potential for further enhancing our economic and commercial ties. Japan can particularly take advantage of India's huge and growing domestic market and its vast resources, particularly its human resources.

The India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) was signed on Feb. 16, 2011, in Tokyo, and came into force on Aug. 1. It is one of the most comprehensive agreements of its kind concluded by India, in that it covers more than 90 percent of bilateral trade, a vast gamut of services, rules of origin, investment, intellectual property rights, customs and other trade-related issues. It is India's third CEPA after Singapore and South Korea and is in line with India's larger vision of an East Asia partnership.

Under CEPA, Japan has scrapped import duties on 87 percent of tariff lines to India with immediate effect. A large number of these items are of export interest to India. With the implementation of the agreement, India is likely to gain greater market access in Japan in various sectors including textiles and garments, pharmaceuticals, marine products, tea, jewelry, and organic and inorganic chemicals. India will scrap tariffs on 17.4 percent of tariff lines with immediate effect and on another 66.32 percent over a period of 10 years. Tariffs

on many goods of export interest to Japan, such as automotive equipment, steel products, peaches and persimmons, will be scrapped in India over the next five to 10 years.

Currently India accounts for just over 1 percent of Japan's textile and garment imports worth \$33 billion, while pharmaceuticals from India constitute a miniscule 0.09 percent of Japan's \$16 billion-plus import market. With the enactment of CEPA, Indian exporters of textiles and garments and pharmaceuticals are likely to do much better. Current bilateral trade between India and Japan is around \$12.6 billion and is expected to double to \$25 billion by 2014.

Japan currently ranks sixth in cumulative foreign direct investment flows into India. Japanese companies have made actual investments of \$4.63 billion (4 percent of total FDI inflows into India in U.S. dollars) between April 2000 and November 2010. The sectors attracting Japanese investment are automobile industry, electrical equipment, trading, service sector (financial and nonfinancial) and telecommunications. CEPA will provide a more stable, predictable and conducive business and investment environment for Japanese companies.

India and Japan have launched an Energy Dialogue to promote cooperation in the energy sector in a comprehensive manner. The areas of cooperation include oil and natural gas, coal, electric power, renewable energy sources, energy efficiency and other relevant sectors.

India and Japan have also decided to exchange views of respective nuclear energy policy under the Energy Dialogue. In June 2010, the two sides commenced negotiations on an Inter-Governmental Agreement for Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy. The talks on civil nuclear cooperation have slowed down to some extent due to the impact of the Fukushima accident. Both countries are undergoing a review of the safety standards on the operation of nuclear reactors.

## Indian hands-on assistance

In the wake of the devastation caused by the magnitude-9 earthquake and the subsequent tsunami on March 11 in northeastern and eastern Japan, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh made a statement in the Indian Parliament on March 14 expressing India's full solidarity with the people of Japan. Relief material consisting of 25,000 blankets, 10,000 bottles of mineral water and 10 tons of high-energy biscuits were sent to Japan. A 46-member Indian Relief and Rehabilitation Team from the National Disaster Management Authority was dispatched to Japan. The highly specialized team carried out relief operations in the coastal town of Onagawacho, Miyagi Prefecture, which was directly struck by tsunami waves. Their work has been much appreciated by the Japanese authorities, local people and the Japanese media.

The Indian community continues to fer-

ently pray for the victims and the earliest recovery of all evacuees. The saying of Indian sage Sri Sathya Sai Baba "Hands that help are holier than lips that pray" was put to practice when hundreds of volunteers from the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organization, in cooperation with the Japan Coast Guard, organized extensive deliveries of lifeline supplies to over 100,000 evacuees, which continues to date by permanent bases of Sai Volunteers operating on a daily basis in the affected areas. ISKON and other Indian institutions have been doing commendable work by weekly volunteer visits to serve evacuees with delicious Indian curries. Noteworthy is the noble service of donating cars in good condition, clothing and other necessities on an ongoing weekly basis by the renowned spiritual organization Universal Brotherhood, based in Yokohama.

The Indian silk merchants established their first trade offices in Yokohama in 1892. We fondly recall the year 1921 when the Shadan Hojin Indian Merchants Association of Yokohama was established; today it is called the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and serves the growing community of 25,000 Indians in Japan. As the apex body of Indian interests in Japan, ICCJ commemorates its 90th founding anniversary this year. We renew our pledge of dedicated commitment to foster Indo-Japanese economic engagement.

We deeply appreciate the valued support of The Daily Yomiuri and its readers.