

Address by Ambassador Kenji Hiramatsu

“Inauguration of the first Japanese Language Teachers’ Training Course” 23 July, 2018

- H.E. General V.K. Singh, Hon’ble Minister of State,
Ministry of External Affairs of India,
- Prof. M. Jagadesh Kumar, Vice Chancellor, JNU,
- Mr. Tomoyuki Sakurai, Executive Vice President of
Japan Foundation,
- Distinguished Guests, and all the teachers who are
taking this course,

It is my great pleasure and honour to be a part of this auspicious occasion to inaugurate the Japanese Language Teachers’ Training Centre today.

This wonderful project is the first concrete result of the great collaboration between Japan and India, initiated by our two prime ministers to expand Japanese language education in India.

In 2017, both Prime Ministers agreed to establish Japanese language certificate courses at 100 higher

educational institutions in India, as well as to train 1,000 Japanese language teachers, over the next five years.

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs, General V.K Singh and Foreign Secretary, Mr. Gokhale, Mr. Verma, Joint Secretary and Mr. Chawla, Advisor and their team for their leadership and support to make this Training Centre a reality.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the efforts made by MHRD, UGC, JNU, Japan Foundation including the newly arrived Japanese language expert, as well as other authorities concerned in both Japan and India, for working diligently towards the realization of this cherished project. My special thanks go to JNU for providing the venue for the Centre.

The number of Japanese language learners in India is approximately 24,000. Demand for learning Japanese language is growing significantly along with the ever

growing Japan-India friendship and the increasing employment opportunities in Japanese companies.

The number of Japanese companies is increasing every year, and is now about 4 times the number as 10 years ago. The Japanese companies are becoming indispensable partners for India to promote the “Make in India” initiative of Prime Minister Modi. And these companies require Indians who can speak Japanese language, in order to act as bridges between their Indian subsidiaries and headquarters in Japan.

Increase in the number of Indians who speak Japanese language is subsequently expected to significantly encourage many more Japanese companies to seriously consider moving into the Indian market.

Whenever I visit higher education institutions in different states, I receive requests to establish or expand Japanese language courses and to send qualified Japanese language teachers.

I can feel first- hands that the number of Indians who are interested in Japan and want to learn Japanese language is steadily increasing. But the number of Japanese language teachers is still too small vis-à-vis the number of potential learners. The centre will certainly contribute to address this reality.

In my capacity as the Ambassador of Japan to India, I am committed to making all possible efforts to expand employment opportunities in the future for the Japanese language teachers after they complete the course from this centre, in cooperation with the Japanese and Indian guests who are present here today.

I would like to praise the first batch of trainees for their enthusiasm to become Japanese language teachers. I hope they will become excellent Japanese language teachers after finishing the 3 months course and serve as bridges of friendship between Japan and India.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate my commitment for the success of the centre and sincerely wish that the active engagement of these Japanese language teachers will lead to further expansion of the deep and excellent relationship between Japan and India and promote true closeness and understanding.

END