

Remarks by Ambassador Suzuki at the Haryana Japan Dialogue,
on Monday, 1st June 2020

Shri Manohar Lal, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Haryana,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good Morning,

It is an honor for me to be able to participate in the Haryana Japan Dialogue today.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere respect to all the medical professionals - working day in and day out - in dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak. I also wish that the current situation would get settled as soon as possible.

Japan-India relations have never been stronger than they are now. The foundation for this solid relationship, indeed, lies in the vigorous economic activities led by the private sectors of our two countries. Japan has been the 3rd largest country in the world, in terms of accumulated Foreign Direct Investments (2000-2019) to India, after Mauritius and Singapore. The number of Japanese companies operating in India is also

steadily increasing.

In particular, since Maruti Suzuki began producing automobiles at the Gurgaon plant in 1983, numerous Japanese companies have advanced into Haryana, led by the automotive industry, and Haryana is now a hub of the automobile industry in North India. Presently, there are 393 Japanese companies established in Haryana, and it has become the state with the distinction of hosting the highest number of Japanese companies operating in India.

Also, as the standard of living scale in Gurugram is relatively higher, many Japanese expatriates are living in Gurugram with their families. In this way, Haryana has become the hub of business and lives of Japanese expatriates. Japan would therefore like to continue to maintain its close relationship with Haryana, and participate in further development of the state.

Currently, the world is still in an economic turmoil due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Under the current situation, India and Japan have maintained their close cooperation on the economic front, which existed solidly even before the crisis. Although the current situation in India remains

challenging, Japanese companies have resolved to contribute actively as one of the driving forces to support the further economic development of India.

Japanese companies are preparing for the resumption of business even in the lockdown situation, and, thanks to the support of Haryana government, many companies have already got approval for resuming operations of their factories in Haryana. Nevertheless, many Japanese companies are still facing some challenges in recommencing their business.

According to a recent survey conducted by JETRO in April, 80% of the Japanese companies are confronting a severe decline in sales, and 90% of them are facing a lot of problems with their supply chains.

The smooth restart of these companies' operations is indispensable for the Indian economy to reboot, as well as to attract foreign investment. We would like to cooperate with the Haryana Government for assisting the smooth business resumption of Japanese companies.

In order to attract foreign investment, support measures by the State Government are also imperative. I think it is highly desirable to send out a clear message to the foreign companies, including Japanese companies, to highlight the advantages of the state as a viable investment destination in

the post-COVID 19 era, with an attractive support package. Japanese companies are now looking for new production bases to diversify their supply chains, and I hope that Haryana will emerge as the preferred destination of investment by these companies. We also request Haryana Government to establish a substantially functional Japan Desk to facilitate the expansion of Japanese companies and improve the operating environment of Japanese companies which have already expanded their business.

Moreover, as a long-term concern, many Japanese companies in India have expressed their apprehensions concerning the investment ecosystem in a broad sense, including anxiety about the medical and healthcare services in India. We would like to continue to collaborate with the Haryana Government as well as the Central Government to improve the investment environment for Japanese companies.

I am determined to lead the Embassy to continue working with the Government and people of Haryana, and to foster an even closer relationship between us. Today, the representatives of JCCII, JETRO, and Japanese companies that are developing business in Haryana, are participating in this event. I hope this dialogue will be very fruitful, and

take this opportunity to offer my best wishes for its great success.

Thank you very much.