

【Ambassador Suzuki】

It is my great honour to celebrate the conferral of Decoration of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star upon you, Mr. Nripendra Misra, for your distinguished services. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the ceremony today needs to be restricted in various ways, but our gratefulness to you is boundless. I'm pleased to personally confer this Decoration upon you. The Decoration that you wear today, is in recognition of your enduring contribution towards strengthening the economic relationship between Japan and India.

Mr. Misra, you earnestly dedicated yourself to attaining even more profound economic relations between our two countries as Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister of India from 2014 to 2019. As Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, you made an enormous contribution to several successful high-level visits between the two countries. During your tenure, three visits by the Indian Prime Minister and two visits by the Japanese Prime Minister were conducted. Far-reaching progress was made in various areas of bilateral cooperation through each of these visits. You made commitments to these successful visits and tirelessly dedicated yourself toward the materialization of the current strong Japan-India relationship.

Japan-India economic cooperation has traditionally been the robust area of cooperation between the two countries, and the number of Japanese companies operating in India has increased significantly during your tenure. Mr. Misra, you were fully aware of the vital importance of the economic relationship between our two countries and played a pivotal role in furthering the Japan-India economic relationship, particularly by boosting trade and investment. This was done with your assiduous role as a facilitator.

It gives me great joy to see that the achievements of Mr. Misra are complimented in the form of the Decoration by the Government of Japan. In recognition of his enduring contribution, kindly join me in giving him a big round of applause. Congratulations, Mr. Nripendra Misra.

**【Mr. Nripendra Misra】**

Excellency Ambassador and distinguished participants,

- India has been fortunate to have a friend like Japan on its walk through time and history. It is said that walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light. The bilateral relationship has a very long history that goes back to introduction of Buddhism in Japan. The “eye opening” ceremony of the Buddha statue at the Todai-Ji Temple in Nara, Japan by an Indian Monk in 752 AD is the landmark. It is a natural friendship in many ways. The two countries have thousands years of history and civilization, cultures of the two countries were anchored in pursuit of inner peace, meditation, self control and penance, societies with a stress on the community rather than individualism.
- It has been my privilege to have been on this walk of friendship. In my early innings in the Ministry of Finance, Government of India, I was in charge of the desk of multi-lateral financial institutions. The role of Japan was always constructive with emphasis on developing economies.
- As Principal Secretary to Prime Minister of India, I had opportunities to work closely with Japanese professionals.
- PM Modi’s visit to Tokyo in 2014 for the 9th India-Japan Annual Bilateral Summit, led to a qualitative shift in our relations when the relationship was elevated to ‘Special Strategic and Global Partnership’.
- Japan has today emerged as one of India’s most trusted partners.
- Over the last few years, this partnership has seen great advances, be it in the economic arena or strategic sphere. The evolving geopolitical situation, with the focus shifting decisively towards the region and a deeper understanding of the complementarities between our two countries, has further enhanced our partnership. The momentum in ties has been sustained by regular interactions at the leadership-level.
- This is reflected in our shared vision for a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region. India’s vision for the region, as articulated by PM Modi in 2018 and Japan’s concept of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP).
- India and Japan are also continuing to enhance our ability to work with other partners in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.
- Our economic cooperation has increased substantially over the last 6 years. India’s economic engagement with Japan continues to be a central pillar of our Special Strategic and Global Partnership. We value Japan’s role and continued commitment in our transformational journey.

- Our linkages are symbiotic and mutually beneficial, beginning with the iconic Delhi Metro to areas such as capacity building, infrastructure, Digital Partnership, etc. Japan's contribution towards India's economic growth and infrastructure modernisation is immense. The ongoing Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) project is one such transformative endeavour.
- We have seen an increase in Japanese FDI in India in the last few years; Japan has emerged as one of our largest investors. Number of Japanese companies has also risen to more than 1,450 compared to around 1,000 in 2013. Many Japanese companies are active in the Japanese Industrial Townships (JIT), which have been set up with state-of-the-art infrastructure for dedicated use of Japanese companies.
- Cooperation in the area of Skill Development has gained prominence in recent years, with Japanese companies having set up 17 Japan-India Institute of Manufacturing (JIM) and 7 Japanese Endowed Courses (JEC) to skill Indian youth in Japanese work culture and manufacturing processes.
- Subsequent to the implementation of Technical Internship Training Program, wherein technical resouces undergo internship in Japan, earlier this year, both countries signed the Agreement on Specified Skill Workers (SSW). It is an important step forward. This agreement would help Japan to tap into India's considerable talent to meet its requirement of skilled workers and also lead to greater people-to-people interaction.
- We have to look at ways to revive economic growth. Further deepening of our economic partnership can play an important role as we rejuvenate our respective economies.
- Indo-Japanese friendship is true and deep, standing by each other in difficult times. A Japanese proverb aptly captures "A real friend is one who walks in when the rest of the world walks out".
- I and my family members are grateful for the honour bestowed on me by the Government of Japan. I thank, Excellency, the Ambassador of Japan and his colleagues for working out the ceremony in Delhi.

Nripendra Misra