

Mr. N. K. Singh, Chairman, FRBM Review Committee,

H. E. Mr. Rajiv Pratap Rudy,

Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship,

H. E. Mr. Piyush Goyal,

Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Power,

H. E. Mr. Najeeb Jung, The Lieutenant Governor of Delhi,

Dr. Arvind Panagariya, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for joining us this evening to celebrate the conferment of the Order of Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star by His Majesty the Emperor of Japan on Mr. N. K. Singh, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to strengthening relations and promoting mutual understanding between Japan and India.

While it may be a little out of place for me to introduce a person so well known as Mr. NK Singh, for the sake of formality, I am honored to say a few words describing his

distinguished career and contributions:

Mr. Singh joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1964.

He was posted to the Embassy of India, Tokyo, as Minister in charge of Economic and Commercial Affairs, from 1981 to 1985.

Although neither Japan nor India necessarily showed considerable interest in enhancing the economic ties with one another at that time, Mr. Singh actively engaged in and contributed significantly to expanding the economic relations between the two countries.

During that time, Maruti Udyog Limited was incorporated with Suzuki Motor Corporation. They established Maruti Suzuki India Limited, which counts today as the most successful example of a joint venture between Indian and Japanese Industries.

At the Japan-India Symposium rounds held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan from 2003 to 2007, Mr. Singh played

a leading role and emphasized and advocated the potential and importance of cooperation between Japan and India.

Mr. Singh has also continued participating in the Japan-India-US Track 2 Strategic Dialogue, which started in 2006. His broad and in-depth expertise in economy immensely contributed to the discussion from early on. Nowadays, the cooperation among three countries has developed at government level leading to the first Trilateral dialogue among Foreign Ministers held for the first time in 2015.

Mr. Singh has been actively involved in the re-establishment of Nalanda University. My wife and I attended the first convocation of Nalanda University held in Rajgir, Bihar, on 27 August this year. One Japanese student was among the 12 graduating students of the first batch. I believe this university has extraordinary potential to develop and expand further as a centre of knowledge not only for East Asia Summit

countries but also all around the world.

Mr. Singh is a member of the Senior Advisory Board of International High-Speed Rail Association. We are extremely grateful for his efforts to institute Japan's high speed rail system as the international standard. Prime Minister Modi's decision to introduce Japan's High Speed Railways technologies (the Shinkansen system) to Mumbai-Ahmedabad route is a symbol of the current close relationship between Japan and India.

On a personal note, I am very grateful for Mr. Singh for the support he has given me since my arrival in India. He has kindly introduced many impressive people to me and has helped me integrate to society and life in Delhi.

Once again I would like to congratulate Mr. NK Singh on this well-deserved honour, and wish him the best of health and happiness, while anticipating his further contribution to the

vibrant bilateral relationship between our two countries.

Thank you very much.