

It is my great pleasure to be here today to congratulate you all on the successful completion of the very first “Teachers’ Training Course - A”, which is being offered to future Japanese language teachers, by the Japanese Language Teachers’ Training Centre.

It was just two and half months ago that this Centre was inaugurated by H.E. General V.K. Singh, Hon’ble Minister of State, Ministry of External Affairs, and myself, together with many other dignitaries from both India and Japan. It was the first concrete result of the great collaboration between Japan and India, initiated by our two inspiring Prime Ministers, to expand Japanese language education in India. I remember applauding you, the very first batch of trainees, for your enthusiasm to become Japanese language teachers.

Today, I would like to take this opportunity to offer my felicitations to all of you, who have completed the course successfully. You have earned the distinction of being the first

batch of this Teachers' Training Course - A. It is my hope that you will consistently keep honing your Japanese language abilities even after the completion of your training, and will eventually become excellent Japanese language teachers.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the Japanese language experts, who trained all of you, for their efforts, as well as to MEA and Japan Foundation, among other authorities concerned, both in Japan and India, for working continuously towards the further development of this project.

As I explained in July, alongside the steady increase in the number of Japanese companies in India every year, these Japanese companies are becoming indispensable partners for India to promote the "Make in India" initiative, and these companies require skilled Indian workers who can speak Japanese language. There is thus a growing need for qualified Japanese language teachers who can teach Japanese language at higher education institutions, to the future Indian manpower for those companies.

In my capacity as the Ambassador of Japan, I am committed to making all possible efforts to expand employment opportunities

in the future for Japanese language teachers, in cooperation with JETRO, JCCII, FICCI, CII, and other authorities concerned, both in India and Japan. I have also instructed the Japanese Consulates General in Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai and Bengaluru to offer their help in all possible ways, in this regard.

When I visit the higher education institutions in different states, I often receive requests to establish or expand Japanese language courses and to send qualified Japanese language teachers. I am happy to see that some of those institutions have already begun to take concrete steps to start Japanese language courses. We are therefore convinced that we are on the right track, and will keep making all possible efforts to expand Japanese language education in India.

I hope all of you will support this collaborative project of India and Japan, by becoming qualified Japanese language teachers, and by promoting true closeness and understanding between the people of the two countries.

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