

【Ambassador's remarks】

I have the honour to announce the conferral of this year's Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation upon Mrs. Amrita Mankad. I am pleased that your long-standing contributions and tireless efforts in deepening cultural understanding between Japan and India are officially recognized in the form of this Commendation. As I am leaving Delhi soon for my next assignment, I am delighted to have this happy occasion today to celebrate your great achievement along with my best friends.

Mrs. Mankad,

You have dedicated your life towards the promotion of Ikebana in India for the last four decades.

You joined Ikebana International in early 1980s and founded Delhi Chapter of the Ohara School of Ikebana in 1990, where you served as the President. You played an instrumental role in promoting the teaching of the Ohara style of Ikebana to younger generations in India, enhancing cultural exchanges between the two countries since then.

You have also been a great supporter of our Embassy's cultural events including the national day reception held earlier this year by putting mesmerizing flower arrangements on display, where we celebrated His Majesty the Emperor's Birthday and the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and India.

Mrs. Mankad,

Your activities go beyond India. You have been involved in international Ikebana activities over 30 years in your career. You were successfully elected as a board member of Philippines Ikebana International in Manila, and became a member of the London Ohara Chapter in 2000s. Your activities covering the world, including Asia, North America and Europe, have further deepened understanding of Japanese culture among peoples in many parts of the world. The friendship you have nurtured during your time abroad has grown now to bear beautiful blossoms everywhere.

Among others, I must touch upon your contributions in social philanthropic activities. You have been involved in NGO activities that support disabled children and orphans. Following the tragic incident that occurred at a chemical

plant in Bhopal in the mid-1980s, you wasted no time in offering flower therapy to the victims who were severely affected by the chemical spillage in order to alleviate the physical impacts on their bodies. You have also explored the way to use therapeutic effects of Ikebana for the benefit of cancer patients. I extend my heartfelt commendation to you for the work you have done in maximizing the healing potentials of Ikebana in various meaningful ways.

Mrs. Mankad,

It is my earnest hope that, as an outstanding leader who has made numerous accomplishments in the past, you will continue to keep your work going, further contributing towards the augmentation of the bilateral relations between Japan and India.

In celebration of her outstanding achievements, I would like to request everyone here to kindly join me in giving her a big round of applause.

Congratulations, Amrita san.