

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, Namaskar. I am Masafumi Shukuri, Chairman of the Japan Transport and Tourism Research Institute, called “JTTRI,” Chairman of the International High-Speed Rail Association, called “IHRA”, as well as Chairman of the Japan Maritime Center. I extend my heartfelt congratulations on the grand opening of the “4th India Japan Forum,” here in Delhi today.

My organization, JTTRI, is a think tank established in 1968 by the Japanese Government, industry and academia. We have proposed policy recommendations related to transport and tourism through comprehensive research and studies with our two overseas branches. In making research, we are constantly conscious of the crucial role that transport and tourism have to play in realizing the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific.”

First, as to India's manufacturing sector, like Maruti Suzuki for more than 40 years, Japan has maintained a cooperative relationship with India ahead of the other countries. Besides, various cooperation between Japan and India has been deepened in the field of transport and tourism. Today, I will talk about the possibility of further cooperation in the field of transport.

The shining example of Japan-India cooperation is “Delhi Metro.” It has grown to more than 400 kilometers, which is longer than today's subway network in Tokyo. People in Delhi can now travel safely, comfortably, punctually without worrying about traffic congestion. What is also important, the personnel of the Delhi Metro with Japanese know-how are now working for railway projects in the other Indian cities like Mumbai and in foreign countries like Indonesia and Bangladesh. Moreover, the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor between Delhi and Mumbai is also another important infrastructure project based on the Japan-India cooperation.

The Japanese High-Speed Rail, “Shinkansen,” since its opening for 61 years, has continued the high-speed and high-frequency operations at the world's highest level of safety and reliability with a record of zero fatality and one minute delay.

A high-speed rail based on the Japanese technology is now under construction between Mumbai and Ahmedabad with the cooperation between Japan and India. Almost every year since 2018, as the Chairman of the International High-Speed Rail Association, I have visited the construction sites to see the progress. Here, I would like to strongly emphasize the utmost importance of the introduction of “Shinkansen,” as a total system, to India.

In addition, both Japan and India have a vast coastline, facing large oceans, and are surrounded by many of the world's most important sea lines. It is apparent that our countries play a crucial role in global maritime trade at the very heart of the Indo-Pacific.

In fact, 99.6% of Japan's trade volume and 95 % of that of India, rely on maritime transport. Thus, both countries face the common challenge of ensuring secure maritime sea lines. To uphold "the rule of law" and "freedom of the seas" in the principle of "the Free and Open Indo-Pacific," it is getting more important that our two countries expand cooperation in the maritime field, bilaterally and with the other countries.

In this context, above all, the shipbuilding industry is becoming more important not only for a national economic development, but also for economic security. During World War II, Japan lost most of its shipbuilding capability, but, rose to the top of the global shipbuilding in 1956 with the efforts of the Government and the private sector. Since the 2000s, however, South Korea and China have overtaken Japan with the robust support of their governments. I still believe Japan's shipbuilding technologies remain among the most advanced in the world, and, last month, the Government of Japan decided to advance the efforts for the revival of Japanese shipbuilding industry, including the establishment of a fund for that purpose toward a fundamental improvement in shipbuilding capacity. I expect that, through possible cooperation between Japan and India, Japan's accumulated expertise can contribute greatly to the future growth of India's shipbuilding industry.

Considering the successful cases of Multi Suzuki and Delhi Metro, in which the Japanese know-how acquired through the transfer of technology has led to projects in a third country, I firmly believe that the continued and deepened cooperation in the field of transport including decarbonization, smart mobility with digital technologies, logistics, as well as railways and maritime affairs has a wide range of future possibilities of joint cooperation abroad and will surely shape the brilliant future with our two countries.

Dhanyawaad. Thank you for your kind attention.