



**JANASANYOG, ASSAM  
CHIEF MINISTER'S PUBLIC RELATIONS CELL, DISPUR**

**PRESS RELEASE**

Press Release No. 116/2021.

**Strong cooperation with Japan makes difference to the development of Assam: Dr. S. Jaishankar**

**Sonowal requests Japanese companies to investment in Assam**

Dispur, February 15: External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar said that Assam has long been the bridge between India and the countries of the world to the east of India. The state acted as the natural arteries which have facilitated the flow of people, goods, ideas not just South East Asia but far in Korea and Japan. Valleys of Brahmaputra and Barak have acted as central gateway to that process.

Speaking at the Act East Policy and India Japan Cooperation in North East India with Special focus on Assam at Srimanta Sankaradeva International auditorium here today in presence of Japanese Ambassador to India Satoshi Suzuki, Dr. Jaishankar said that though the birth of nation states after the exit of the British disrupted the process connectivity, the Act East Policy enunciated by Prime Minister Modi augured the potential to restore the connectivity to entail increased people to people, trade and other relations with countries on India's east particularly ASEAN countries. Delivering his speech on on the future of Assam, the future of India and the Future of Asia- he highlighted that a sound foreign policy can contribute directly to the progress of the nation, region and of a state.

Stressing that a strong cooperation with Japan has made a difference to India, specifically to the development of Assam, he said that the Act East Policy must begin by giving the necessary attention and resources to the states in the East and North-East. The Union Minister also said that the Act East Policy is an effort to create infrastructure of connectivity within Assam and North East and beyond to connect the region with India's South East Asian countries, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Japan by roads, seas and airs. This has been done to expedite economic activities between Assam and other North Eastern states with ASEAN countries and beyond.

Dr. Jaishankar said that more connected Assam will amount to more energetic Assam, more contributory Assam and obviously more employed Assam. The minister said that Assam at present is the recipient of several connectivity projects to stimulate economic flow leading to strategic cooperation. With regard to cultural and physical aspects for the closer ties between different geographic entities of the ASEAN and beyond, role of Assam as a spring board needs to be realised, the minister added.

Dr. Jaishankar said that India shares closer and cordial relations with Japan. With every reciprocal visit between the two countries the warmth and friendship between India and Japan increase. The minister observed that the world has changed profoundly over the last few decades. The New focal points of businesses, demands, consumption have given rise to dictate

the mutual interactions of the bilateral relations. The prominent among these is the ability to harness the international partnership of growth and development.

Reiterating Modi government's emphasis for the development of Assam, Dr. Jaishankar said that the government at the centre is constantly encouraging closer ties between Assam and other international states. Speaking on the relations between India with Japan, the Union Minister said that closer India Japan relations have important place in the closer economic and social infrastructure. Speaking on the aspects of the bilateral ties on different sectors, which made a huge success, Dr. Jaishankar said that the Suzuki-Maruti joint venture project and Delhi metro project hold immense significance. Today the bullet train project from Ahmedabad to Mumbai holds similar importance, the minister exhorted.

Dr. Jaishankar also said that the two countries have been collaborating to advance the skills sets and training. He also said that the current agenda contemplates industrial town ship, training institutes, languages centres etc. He also said that during the tenure of Modi government, Japanese Foreign Direct investment has increased phenomenally. This economic cooperation has assumed strategic character.

Stating that conferring of Padma Bibhusan on former Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Dr. Jaishankar said that Indo-Japan relationship in the last decade is one of the natural and close as the award was symbolic to closer ties between the two countries.

Speaking on the importance of Assam with regard to Act East Policy, Dr. Jaishankar said that Assam has long been the fulcrum of the North East India. This potential can make it a centre of all opportunities that this State will have with its neighbours like ASEAN countries, Myanmar, Japan etc. The minister said that Assam can play a crucial role in transport, power, energy and movement of people etc. Speaking on the Brahmaputra and its potential to make Assam an epicentre of trade and commerce, the Union Minister said that works are going on in full swing to connect Assam to Bay of Bengal through Brahmaputra as well as other major ports of the neighbouring countries. He also said that government of India is working to develop Eastern Water way connectivity grid with the help of the world bank. Work is underway in Dhubri and Karimganj to make use of that.

Stating that surface transport is the pivotal area in Assam, Dr. Jaishankar reiterated on Centre's importance to stimulate and bolster Assam's access and reach to other countries by improving infrastructure of surface transport. India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral highway is at an advanced stage. If this is done districts of Assam will develop the ability to transport their goods in different parts of its neighbours. Even flight services can be started from the state to bring in more Japanese tourists to Kaziranga.

The Union Minister also spoke on Dhubri Phulabari bridge over the Brahmaputra and Japan's loan of Rs. 1600 to the project. Regarding Guwahati Water Supply Project the minister said that he along with the Japanese Envoy and Guwahati Development Minister Siddhartha Bhattacharya visited the project site and said that the project would be inaugurated by next year. He also spoke on collaborative programme with Japan on Guwahati Sewage project in South Guwahati, internship programme between India Japan, agriculture, fishery, food processing to enable Indian talents to access to Japan's expertise.

Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal speaking on the occasion termed the day historic in the development journey of Assam and the north-east of India. He said that he felt happy to

welcome External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar, Ambassador of Japan Satoshi Suzuki to Assam. He said that the duo's presence in Assam would give a renewed push to Act East Policy and India-Japan cooperation in the North East which according to him would give a fillip to investment and trade relations of Japan with Assam and the entire North Eastern Region of India.

Thanking Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Sonowal said under his leadership Assam has reached out to the counties of the Far East, especially with Japan and South Korea. In fact, Japan was one of the focus countries during the State's maiden Global Investors' Summit – Advantage Assam held in Guwahati in 2018.

The Chief Minister also said that all these years though Japan has been a great trade and investment partner for India unfortunately there is no single Japanese company present in Assam or even in other North Eastern States. Again, while Japan's bilateral trade with India has grown significantly over the years, there is hardly any trade between Assam and Japan, barring export of tea. He, however, said that the Government of Japan has been helping Assam in a multitude of state's infrastructure projects in the urban civic amenities sector like water supply and sewerage, for which he expressed his profound thankfulness. He also reiterated that there are still tremendous potentialities available in Assam for investment, which will be mutually beneficial for both Assam and Japan.

Japanese Envoy Satoshi Suzuki while speaking on the occasion, thanked India for its long good and friendly relations with Japan. He said Japan would not have been in a position to get out of the ashes of the destructions caused by the second world war without the help from India. Reiterating Japan's economic cooperation with India, Suzuki said that his country is also eager to deepen ties with Assam. Speaking on the similarity of between Japan and Assam, Suzuki said Assam is famous for its cocoon, muga silk, tea etc as the two geographical entities can work to boost the mutual interests of the both. Stating that economic development of Assam and North East is crucial for India to become 5 trillion dollar economy, Suzuki said that there are several areas where both Japan and Assam can collaborate for the mutual benefits of the both the geographical entities. Speaking on the proposed Dhubri-Phulbari bridge, Suzuki said that his country is pleased to be associated with the project as much as with other projects related to drinking water and sewerage in Guwahati. He also said that Japan has brought its technology to complete the drinking water project soon so that people of Guwahati get clean water. The envoy also said that Japan is willing to partner with Assam to train its human resources to enable them to create job opportunities in Japan.

Minister Health and Family Welfare, Finance etc Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma while speaking on the occasion termed it a historic occasion and said that a new chapter is laid in the relations between Japan and Assam. Taking in to consideration of the verdant natural resources of the state, Assam can be play a crucial role in taking Indo-Japan relations altogether to a great height.

Industry and Commerce Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary also spoke on the occasion. Guwahati Development Minister Siddhartha Bhattacharya and a host of other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

SD/ February 15, 2021.