Japanese Prime Minister Reiterates Japan’s Support to India

Prime Minister of Japan Mr. Shinzo Abe made an official visit to India on January 25 to 27 this year as a chief guest of the Republic Day celebrations. He had a summit meeting with Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh.

The two Prime Ministers spoke about topics ranging from politics and security, economy and economic cooperation to people-to-people contacts and academic exchanges. Prime Minister Abe referred to the substantial progress being made in economic relations between Japan and India. He also mentioned that India’s development benefits Japan and assured that Japan would continue to support India’s infrastructure development and poverty reduction initiatives by utilising Official Development Assistance (ODA).

The two leaders signed the Japan-India Joint Statement to intensify the strategic and global partnership between the two countries. Some of the highlights of the statement are related to the Japan International Cooperation Agency’s (JICA’s) activities. These include the ODA loan for the Campus Development Project of the Indian Institute of Technology-Hyderabad, a grant aid to improve the Institute of Child Health and Hospital for Children in Chennai and expansion of the Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV) scheme.

They also highlighted the activities relate to women empowerment, some of which JICA has been working for:

Unlocking rural women’s potential

The ODA loans are extended through JICA to the Rajasthan Rural Water Supply and Fluorosis Mitigation Project (Nagaur), the Hogenakkal Water Supply and Fluorosis Mitigation Project (Phases 1 and 2) and the West Bengal Piped Water Supply Project (Purulia) in order to provide safe and adequate drinking water to people in rural areas.

In rural India, women are expected to collect water for the family’s daily needs. The projects will benefit 3 million women by reducing the burden of water collection and giving them an opportunity for education and to participate in productive economic activities.

Improving livelihood of women in forest areas

Exploitation of forest resources by people living on their fringes has led to large-scale deforestation. In the last two decades, JICA has supported the forestry sector in India. Improving livelihoods is the key to reducing the dependency of locals on forests. Self-Help Groups comprising 335,000 women were formed under the Joint Forest Management Committees. ODA loans have been extended to support income-generation activities by providing a total seed fund of $25.6 million.

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Recent Initiatives by **JICA to Strengthen Regional Connectivity** in South Asia and South East Asia

Regional integration within South Asia and between South Asia and ASEAN offers tremendous opportunities for economic growth, enhanced trade and development of the entire region.

The South Asian region has a total population of about 1.6 billion and has been pursuing economic deregulation and liberalisation. As a result of increased globalisation, the region’s economic growth has been rapid, with annual average GDP growth of 6% since 1980. However, intra-regional trade has been only about 5% of the region’s total trade, which is lower than that of other regions in the world.

Recent changes in the external environment (e.g., movement toward the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community, targeted for 2015) have strengthened the importance of the trade relationship between South Asia and ASEAN countries and led to recognition of the necessity of integrating South Asia with the larger regional economy.

Transport connectivity, through cross border infrastructure, is essential to facilitate smooth movement of goods and services across the region. A well-established transport network acts as a catalyst for growth of industry, trade and commerce and thereby promotes economic development and contributes to reduction of poverty.

**JICA Survey on Transport Infrastructure Development for Regional Connectivity**

Starting in August 2013, JICA conducted a study on transport infrastructure development for regional connectivity in four countries in South Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal) and two countries in Southeast Asia (Myanmar and Thailand) with the objective of assessing the current status of regional transport infrastructure in South and South East Asia and formulating JICA assistance programs for regional transport infrastructure development in and around South Asia.

In addition to focusing on ‘hard’ infrastructure components such as roads, railways, border facilities, and dry ports, the survey also covered ‘soft’ infrastructure such as international agreements, rules and regulations, and trade and customs systems and procedures, which play a major role in smooth cross border connectivity.

**Economic Growth & Trade Potential of the region**

The study highlighted that inter and intra regional trade is generally expected to grow substantially in the

**Potential opportunities from Regional Connectivity:**
- Movement of people and goods from/to North East Region to other parts of India via Bangladesh
- Access to Chittagong Port (Bangladesh) for India (North East Region)
- Access to Kolkata Port for Western Bangladesh
- Access to Mongla and Chittagong Ports in Bangladesh for Nepal and Bhutan
- Trade between Bangladesh and Bhutan and Nepal through India
- Bangladesh/India Trade with ASEAN to and/or through Myanmar
countries covered under the study. It is expected that these countries shall grow, in real terms, at an average annual rate of 5.4% up to 2030, which would make the region one of the most dynamic in the world. Under the study, the potential for regional/interrregional functional divisions as well as regional value chains were analysed.

Identification and Evaluation of International Economic Corridors (Road and Railway)

The survey adopted a comprehensive methodology to identify regional corridors to examine potential projects for JICA assistance. 11 regional road corridors and 6 regional railway corridors were shortlisted from a long list of 19 road and 14 railway corridors. The potential projects were then strategically assessed through a multi-criteria evaluation (including strategic importance, traffic and transit facilitation potential, environmental and social considerations) to help identify high- and medium-priority projects for JICA assistance. 45+ potential projects for JICA assistance were identified along the shortlisted corridors evaluated to identify Low, Medium, or High Priority

Soft Regional Transport Infrastructure

The survey team reviewed the initiatives undertaken by various regional and sub-regional organisations including SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation), BIMSTEC (The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economical Cooperation) as well as ADB’s SASEC (South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation) program to understand the status of soft transport infrastructure including road transport and transit agreements.

While such agreements have been discussed in the region for many years, not many country pairs have concluded effective agreements. Also, a regional road transport agreement is required to avoid transshipment between trucks and consensus needs to be built on transit charges amongst the various countries.

The survey highlighted the need to harmonise transport standards as diverse transport and design standards would become a major issue after conclusion of transport agreements. Border management is largely uncoordinated, not only between countries, but also within countries.

Some of the potential soft infrastructure projects identified under the study are improvement of border crossing points for regional connectivity between landlocked countries/areas and Bangladesh and pilot loading system.

Dissemination of Study Results through Seminar

The results of the study were shared with a wide range of stakeholders from all the study countries in seminars organized in New Delhi (January 16, 2014) and Guwahati (February 13, 2014).
Seminars on Transport Infrastructure Development for Regional Connectivity

As part of its commitment to growth and development in South and South-East Asia, JICA has implemented a study since August 2013 to assess the status of regional transport infrastructure in the region (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Myanmar and Thailand) and to identify possible future assistance JICA may offer for the development and strengthening of regional connectivity.

At the summit meeting in January, Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh and Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Shinzo Abe discussed the possibility of cooperation in building infrastructure that would enhance connectivity and regional integration between India and its neighbours. JICA organized a series of seminars in Delhi and Guwahati to showcase the result of the study and drive the agenda agreed upon by both Prime Ministers.

The final report including findings on transport infrastructure development for regional connectivity in and around the North-East of India was presented in second seminar in Guwahati. The seminar in Guwahati was attended by Government officials from Nepal, Bangladesh, Thailand & Bhutan the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, from India officials of the Ministry of Railways, the North-Eastern Council, Inland Waterways Authority of India, and the State Governments of North-Eastern Region. Officials from the Asian Development Bank, UN ESCAP and Research and Information System, among others, presented thoughts on the study.

The study identifies priority regional transport corridors that can contribute to the growth of the economy and trade in South Asia.

*For details of the study please refer to P2&3.

“There is tremendous potential for cross-border trade and commerce in India and its neighbours such as Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan and Nepal. This potential is being hampered by the lack of quality cross-border transport infrastructure. This study could form the basis of JICA’s funding of road and railway infrastructure in the region. Building road and rail infrastructure would contribute to the economic growth of the North-East of India as well as of the entire region.”

Shinya Ejima,
Chief Representative of JICA India,
Rs 1,267 Crore Loan for National Highway 82 (Gaya-Bihar Sharif) Upgradation

JICA signed a loan agreement with the Government of India, on January 30, 2014 providing 21,426 million Japanese yen (approximately Rs 1,267 crore) for the Bihar National Highway Improvement Project (Phase 2).

The funds will be used to upgrade National Highway 82 from Gaya to Bihar sharif in the state of Bihar covering a length of 92.93 km. The loan, which comes at concessional rate of 1.4%, carries a repayment period of 30 years with a grace period of 10 years.

Under the agreement, the funds will be used to widen the highway to four lanes and to construct three bypasses that circumvent congested areas. Expected to be completed by February 2019, the project will be executed by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways through the Bihar State Road Development Corporation.

Improving this trunk highway in South Bihar will eventually contribute to economic development and poverty alleviation in one of India’s poorest states showing remarkable economic growth during recent years. Moreover, the project can also promote tourism as it improves connectivity to various Buddhist historical sites.

JICA places great importance on the improvement of social and physical infrastructure in India. Bihar has the high potential but suffers due to lack of such infrastructure.

JICA Supports Renovation of Children’s Hospital in Chennai

JICA has signed the grant agreement with the Government of India on February 7, 2014 to provide aid of up to 1,495 million Japanese yen (approximately Rs 88.20 crore) for the construction of a new outpatient department (OPD) in the Institute of Child Health and Hospital (ICH) for Children, Chennai.

This project aims to improve health status in Tamil Nadu and the other Southern states and, especially, reach out to children in low-income groups. ICH is a top referral hospital in South India that offers free medical service to the poor.

Currently, ICH’s clinical functions are scattered across buildings. Besides, its overcrowded spaces are not suitable for providing quality care to the ever-growing number of patients.

The grant will be used to construct a new, user-friendly OPD building including basic medical equipment.

JICA believes that this assistance would help India achieve the Millennium Development Goals, particularly infant mortality rate and the under-five mortality rate.

JICA Extends Support to IIT Hyderabad

JICA signed an agreement with the Government of India on January 28, 2014 to provide 23,035 million Japanese Yen (Rs 1,336 crore approximately) of loan to build part of the newly-established Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Hyderabad, campus.

JICA has partnered with leading Japanese universities and companies to assist in the development of the newly-established IIT-Hyderabad. Since IITs attract the best and the brightest talent in India, such initiatives strengthen the partnership between the two countries.

The loan would be utilised to construct a permanent campus building and to procure high-end research equipment. Under the technical cooperation scheme, eminent professors from the University of Tokyo have been involved with the preparation of concept designs and architectural plans of some of the buildings covered under the loans.
Local News

Capacity Development Project for Non-Revenue Water in Goa

JICA and Goa’s Public Works Department (PWD) organised a final workshop of the JICA-assisted technical cooperation project, ‘Capacity Development Project for Non-Revenue Water (NRW) Reduction’.

NRW is water that has been produced and is ‘lost’ before it reaches the customer. Losses can be real (through leaks, sometimes also referred to as physical losses) or apparent (for example through theft or metering inaccuracies).

During the workshop, the project execution teams consisting of Japanese experts and PWD officials presented the details of activities undertaken and lessons learned.

The results reported in the workshop included a drastic reduction of NRW from 45% to 18% in a pilot area. A long-term NRW reduction plan for the entire state based on learnings of the project was also presented.

JICA has provided holistic support to the state of Goa in achieving its goal of 24x7 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) water supply. In addition to the technical cooperation project, JICA is supporting the PWD through a loan project amounting to 22.8 billion Japanese yen (approximately Rs 1,400 crore) for improvement of water supply and sewerage facilities, including treatment plants, pumping stations, a sewer collection network, a transmission and distribution network and sewerage treatment plants.

The state of Goa is aiming to become the first Indian state to achieve 24x7 water supply across all areas. NRW reduction is recognised as necessary to achieve this.

JICA Supports Bangalore Metro Project, 10-km Stretch Opened in February

JICA has extended a loan to the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation for construction of a metro system. The first loan agreement of 44,704 million Japanese Yen (approximately Rs 2,700 crore) for the project was signed in March 2006 followed by second loan agreement signed in June 2011 for 19,832 million Japanese Yen (approximately Rs 1,200 crore)

On February 28, 2014, the 10 km elevated stretch connecting the city’s northern and western suburbs (Peenya Industry to Sampiege Station) was inaugurated.

To mitigate congestion and promote regional economic growth, JICA has been supporting the construction of metros in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai. The transport sector accounts for 49% of total JICA assistance to India between 2003 and 2012.

Advanced Water Treatment Plant Inaugurated in Agra

JICA has extended financial assistance for construction of Advanced Water Treatment Plant having Moving Bed Bio Reactor process under Agra Water Supply Project at Sikandra, Agra to treat polluted Yamuna water to very high drinkable standards.

The 144 Million Litres per Day (MLD) plant was partly commissioned and inaugurated by the Chairman of the UP Jal Nigam on February 28, 2014. Currently, the plant is producing about 56 MLD of clean water and is expected to operate on full capacity by March end 2014.

Agra is experiencing a rapid increase in the demand for water. However, the supply has been affected by the low quality of water from the Yamuna River. JICA has provided holistic support to improve the required infrastructure for overall water supply availability and quality. The project, when completed, will improve the quality of life of residents in Agra.
JICA and Tamil Nadu Government Host Workshop on ‘Sustaining Forests and Livelihood Through Joint Forest Management’

JICA and Project Management Unit of Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Conservation & Greening Project (TBGP), Government of Tamil Nadu, organised a national workshop on ‘Sustaining Forests & Livelihood through Joint Forest Management (JFM)’ at Mahabalipuram. The workshop provided a platform to share best practices and experiences amongst 18 participating states, along with the issues and challenges being faced by the project executing agencies in strengthening the forestry sector as a whole.

JICA’s contribution to biodiversity conservation through protection and development of forests has been profound. Cumulatively, JICA has committed 214 billion Japanese yen (approximately Rs 12,000 crore) to 22 forestry projects in 12 states so far. JICA will continue its positive support for forestry sector projects in India.

In Tamil Nadu alone, JICA has extended a commitment of 31,971 million Japanese Yen (approximately Rs 190 crore) since 1997 to conserve the degradation of forests and restore the lives of people dependent on them. Also, special attention has been provided for the upliftment of women in the area through formation of Self-Help Groups.

Golden Jubilee for National JALMA Institute for Leprosy and Other Mycobacterial Diseases-Agra

Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad inaugurated the Golden Jubilee Symposium marking 50 years of the National JALMA Institute of Leprosy and Other Mycobacterial Diseases-Agra (JALMA Centre) on December 15, 2013.

“With the introduction of multi-drug treatment, leprosy cases have reduced from six million to less than three lakh,” Minister Azad said.

The symposium was attended by Taisuke Watanabe, Senior Representative, JICA India Office. JALMA Centre, a symbol of Indo-Japanese cooperation, serves people affected with leprosy and tuberculosis.

An agreement between the Government of India and the Japan Leprosy Mission for Asia in 1963 gave birth to the JALMA Centre in 1967. JICA’s cooperation with the

JICA Volunteer Coaches Participants of Para Judo Championship

Twenty-three year old Kei Teshigawara, a volunteer from JICA, coached visually and aurally challenged participants in judo for the recent Indian Blind and Para Judo Championship. The annual event, held in Delhi this year, promotes sports for the challenged. It is organized by the Indian Blind and Para Judo Association.

Teshigawara has been training the participants since August 2013 in Uttar Pradesh. He has been coaching visually and aurally challenged people as well as regular athletes in Lucknow, Agra, Saharanpur and nearby areas. He also teaches self-defence techniques to female school students.

Since 1965, JICA has sent Japanese volunteers to more than 85 countries; 180 Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers have been sent to India since 1966.

JALMA Centre began with the provision of medical and research equipment, such as an electron microscope, in 1966 and surgical equipment in 1967. From 1972 to 75, the Project for Leprosy Research was carried out and JICA dispatched 7 Japanese experts in four main components – clinical care for leprosy, rehabilitation, education and research.
Q Could you tell us about your background and elaborate on your initiative under this project?
A: I am a technical officer in forestry, (which is equivalent to the Indian Forest Service) of the Forestry Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Government of Japan, since 1981. With my academic background in forest zoology and international forest management, I have been engaged in various administrative issues, such as climate change, biodiversity conservation, research and extension, and national forest management. Here, I am stationed at dehradun, Uttarakhand, and work with the director, Forest education, MoEF, to strengthen the personnel training capacity in the forestry sector. Our project has been successful in developing training modules for state forest officers in the Plan-Do-Check-Action (PdCA) cycle. This ensures continuous fine-tuning of courses with systematic course monitoring. All these deliverables have been institutionalised by the MoEF, which will secure its sustainability.

Q What do you think are the challenges that the Indian forestry sector faces?
A: Since India is huge and diverse, promulgating administration itself is a challenge. Growing demand for land for farming, pasture, mining and large-scale cash crop plantation has eroded forests. Illegal tree cutting and poaching remain serious issues. In rural areas, the locals rely heavily on forests for their daily needs such as fuel and fodder. Although, the key agenda is to establish proper land planning and its enforcement, our project has touched upon issues of human resource development to strengthen the frontline staff's capacity to enforce legitimate administration. Involvement of local communities and exploring the economic value of forests were also discussed so that local communities can play a key role in balancing their livelihoods and sustainable forest management.

Q The seminar on ‘Strengthening Training on Forestry in India’ held on January 7 was successful and had participants from various state agencies. Could you outline the event?
A: Yes, the seminar was quite successful. The main objective was to disseminate project outputs. The faculty of the training institution of MoEF developed training modules and course monitoring systems. The future course of action after the completion of the project was also discussed.

Q Could you share your most memorable moments during your stay in India?
A: The most memorable were the reactions after the successful completion and stabilised coordination among the project members, and the continuing and strengthening of ties with Japan followed by appreciation for JICA, was heard from our Indian counterparts. I am very proud to have been associated with this project and wish that the strong ties we made in the forestry sector continue.

I was very happy to live and to work in Dehradun. I also got a chance to see the alpine forests of West Bengal, the deserts of Rajasthan, the Western Ghats, a fascinating ecosystem in Kerala, and several other places. I was touched by the hospitality of the locals as I interacted with them and sometimes even stayed and dined with them.

(Interviewed on March 6, 2014)