

Sixth India Japan Intellectual Conclave
Speech by State Minister for Foreign Affairs HORII Iwao
held on February 27, 2026 at Shillong, State of Meghalaya, India

Distinguished Guests,

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I extend my congratulations on the convening of the Sixth India Japan Intellectual Conclave - KIZUNA. Since its beginning in 2021, this Conclave has steadily deepened in substance, expanded in participation, and yielded tangible outcomes in terms of Japan's concrete cooperation in Northeast India. I am pleased to see such progress.

As reaffirmed during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Japan last August, Japan remains firmly committed to the development of Northeast India. Furthermore, at the meeting between Foreign Minister MOTEGI and External Affairs Minister Jaishankar in January, the two ministers confirmed the importance of both the Intellectual Conclave and the Act East Forum as frameworks for enhancing connectivity between Northeast India and its surrounding areas.

Against the backdrop of these high-level exchanges, despite time constraints, I decided to visit Shillong to convey Japan's three concrete commitments to Northeast India. I must also confess that I was personally eager to see with my own eyes this land full of potential.

First, Japan will support connectivity linking Northeast India to the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. Northeast India is located in a pivotal geopolitical position as a gateway to Southeast Asia. When we view this region as part of a broader economic region encompassing Nepal, Bhutan, India, Bangladesh, and Southeast Asia, it possesses significant potential to serve as a powerful engine of growth.

Based on this perspective, and as part of Japan’s “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” initiative, we will work toward realizing the concept of an “Industrial Value Chain” connecting the Bay of Bengal and Northeast India. In concrete terms, in addition to the hard and soft connectivity assistance that Japan has been traditionally providing, we will promote private-sector investment. Through Japan–India cooperation in infrastructure development, including the improvement of road and railway networks, we will connect Northeast India to the sea and promote development of the region as a whole.

Indeed, Northeast India is a region where India’s “Act East” policy, promoted by Prime Minister Modi and Japan’s vision of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” are put into practice.

Second, the Government of Japan will support private-sector cooperation in the field of economic security, including semiconductors and clean energy. In Jagiroad, construction is underway for a semiconductor back-end processing facility. There, Japanese companies' involvement will be indispensable in both production and logistics. In addition, last year, JBIC and others decided to invest 60 billion yen in biofuel production using bamboo as a raw material. Japan will continue to support such Japan–India cooperation aimed at making Northeast India a hub for regional growth.

Third, Japan will promote people-to-people exchanges. I hear that many local governments and companies in Japan are paying close attention to the talented human resources of Northeast India. They are visiting this region one after another. If we could foster a mutually complementary circulation of human resources between Japan and India, it would be a win-win for both countries. For Japan, it would be a win to harness the talents of Northeast India to support Japan's economic growth and regional revitalization. For India, it would be a win to see skilled Indian professionals returning from Japan contribute to the country's development.

Allow me to conclude with a personal observation. This is my first visit to Northeast India. I am struck by the similarities between Japan and this region in its landscapes and lifestyles. It has given me a strong sense of affinity. At the same time, I keenly feel that there remains considerable untapped potential for further deepening relations between Japan and Northeast India.

The Intellectual Conclave brings together a wide range of participants to discuss how we could enhance connectivity of the region. Here, we have Members of Parliament from Northeast India, government officials and private-sector representatives from both Japan and India, as well as ambassadors from Southwest Asian countries. Furthermore, this Conclave is being held in a timely manner, as the general elections in Bangladesh was held recently. I am convinced that this year's Conclave has carried added significance.

I sincerely hope for the success of this Conclave and for new seeds of cooperation to emerge from these discussions.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.