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PRESS RELEASE

“Japan sees India as the most trustworthy partner and highly appreciates India’s principled and consistent approach to international challenges”

New Delhi, 6th February, 2018

Ananta Aspen Centre organized a session on **“India and Japan: Towards A Higher Stage”** supported by The Nippon Foundation. **H.E. Mr. Kenji Hiramatsu, Ambassador of Japan to India** spoke at the session which was chaired by **Mr. B J Panda, Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha.**

Mr. B J Panda, stated that **“there is an increasing understanding in the world that democracies need to cooperate and work together.”** India is repositioning itself as an economic power and is looking for partners who are mutually beneficial for each other. He expressed that the relationship between India and Japan is second to none in order of preferences and it goes beyond the meetings between the heads of states. Moreover, he pointed to the challenges that remain in the fields of economic co-operation and growing sea linkages. However these challenges are reducing.

Ambassador Hiramatsu stated that Japan and India are entering into a new phase of **“Special Strategic and Global partnership”**. He mentioned that the September 2017 visit of Prime Minister Abe to Gujarat was not only historic but a quantum leap in the relationship between the two countries. He shared the 5 significant achievements of India Japan partnership: the Convergence of strategies (Japan and India have agreed to work together to achieve a “Free Open Prosperous Indo Pacific”), High Speed Railways, Civil Nuclear Cooperation, Fundamental upgrading of economic relations (increase in Japanese FDI under the Japan-India Investment Partnership) and people to people exchanges . He also declared the five focus areas for future projects:

1. Defense and security cooperation
2. Strategic Connectivity including India’s North East Region
3. Cooperation in “Make in India”
4. Environment cooperation
5. Japanese Language Education

The other areas of increasing cooperation are startups, sanitation and health, science and technology, intellectual exchanges and sports exchanges. Japan – India- USA Trilateral dialogues and quadrilateral with Australia and USA are significant to India-Japan relations.

The session established that the focus should be on democracies working together and increasing understanding between them and that **‘rapid growth in the bilateral relations will have an enormous impact on both the countries.’**

About Ananta Aspen Centre:

Engaging India, Nurturing Change

Ananta Aspen Centre is an educational and policy studies organisation based in New Delhi. It focusses on values based leadership and open dialogue on challenges facing Indian society to help foster its transformation. The Centre engages civil society, business, governments and other key stakeholders to share ideas and bring a wide range of perspectives on issues important to India’s development, foreign policy, strategic affairs and national security. Ananta Aspen Centre is an independent non-profit organization registered under the Indian Trusts Act and under 12A and 80G of the Income Tax Act.

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