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Foundation Day Edition

AKARI 明かり



Autumn Maples with Poem Slips, Tosa Mitsuoki 1675
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भारतीय प्रबंध संस्थान बेंगलूर
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT
BANGALORE

MIJSC
Mizuho India Japan Study Centre

Chairperson's Message

Dear Friends,

As MIJSC marks its **8th Foundation Day**, we step into a new season of activities with renewed energy and purpose. The past few months have been significant for India–Japan relations, underscored by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Japan, where new investments and people-to-people exchanges were pledged to strengthen the partnership. Among the many outcomes, a few stand out for their scale and promise: the commitment of 10 trillion yen in private Japanese investments in India, and the facilitation of 500,000 personnel exchanges between the two countries, over the next five years, including the dispatch of 50,000 skilled and semi-skilled Indians to Japan. Also worth noting is the launch of the India Japan AI initiative and the Digital Partnership 2.0 . There will thus be many opportunities for our professionals to get actively engaged in the growing business relationship between the two countries.

At MIJSC, our mission is to enhance and accelerate our partnership through activities that will implement the vision of the two governments for closer cooperation.

In last year's Foundation Day note, I had highlighted the relative lack of scholarship on Japan in India compared to the West, where *Japanologists* play a significant role in promoting awareness and understanding of Japan. MIJSC lays high priority on promoting such scholarship. This special Foundation Day edition brings together MIJSC's activities and engagements of the past two months. We urge students, scholars, academics, business persons and civil society to come forward and join with MIJSC to study and learn about Japanese culture, business and contemporary society.

We remain deeply grateful for the support of our partners and community, whose collaboration makes our progress possible.

Warm regards,

Prof. Jaideep Sarkar

Chairperson, Mizuho India Japan Study Centre

Indian Institute of Management Bangalore

Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

On the occasion of MIJSC's 8th Foundation Day, we are pleased to share this edition of our newsletter, covering the Centre's activities and engagements over the past two months. From engaging with industry leaders and government delegations to hosting thought-provoking lectures, webinars, and certification programs. Each activity reflects our commitment to deepening the India–Japan partnership across academia, industry, and society.

In this edition, we invite you to relive these moments with us as you'll find:

- **Enhancing Collaborative Research:** Introducing Kizuna Sabha...
- **Academic Initiatives:** The LMP program and its activities...
- **Societal Bonds:** Learnings from our webinars...
- **Interaction with Japanese Industry and Government bodies..**
- **Cultural Crossroads:** Where Japanese tradition meets global influence, revealing the shifts, stories, and spirit of a nation in transition.
- **Business Crossroads:** A dedicated space that explores trends in Japan's economy and society, spotlighting emerging risks and opportunities for India-Japan partnerships...

As you navigate through this newsletter, we hope the stories inspire you, the facts intrigue you, and the shared experiences resonate with you.

Warm Regards,

Saideep Rathnam

Chief Operating Officer,
Mizuho India-Japan Study Centre
Indian Institute of Management Bangalore

1. Enhancing Collaborative Research– Kizuna Sabha

To strengthen the study of Japan and deepen academic enquiry on India–Japan relations, MIJSC launched Kizuna Sabha — a forum dedicated to research dialogue and scholarship. In just a short time, the initiative has gained strong momentum, drawing rigorously researched papers from across India. Covering themes of economics, society, culture, technology, and policy, the platform is emerging as a space where fresh perspectives meet analytical depth.

Why This Matters Now

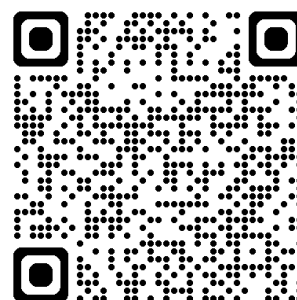
With India and Japan's relationship evolving rapidly across multiple dimensions — from strategic partnerships to technological collaboration — there's never been a more crucial time for serious academic engagement. Kizuna Sabha fills a real gap by providing a structured yet flexible platform for emerging scholars to contribute meaningfully to this conversation.

Some notable contributions include:

- **Cross-National Perspectives on Indigenous Technical Knowledge and Sustainable Agriculture in the Agro-Écologies of India and Japan**
M. Mohan Raj and M. Sakthivel
A comparative study of India's *Panchagavya* and Japan's *Satoyama* practices, offering lessons for sustainable farming amidst climate challenges.
- **Career Mobility and Cross-Cultural Adaptation of Early-Career Indian Professionals in Japan**
Ramjan Ali
An exploration of migration pathways, workplace integration, and the realities faced by young Indian professionals in Japan.
- **Defence Technology and Arms Collaboration: A New Frontier in India–Japan Relations**
Soumya Ranjan
An analysis of emerging collaborations, including the US-2 aircraft and robotics R&D, framing technology diplomacy as a new pillar of bilateral ties.
- **Bridging Traditions and Sustainability: Religious Tourism in Katra (India) and Kyoto (Japan)**
Srijon Kumar Saikia and Dr. Deep Jyoti Gurung
A comparative study on how pilgrimage towns balance heritage, governance, and sustainability.
- **Renegotiating the India–Japan Trade Agreement: A CGE-Based Assessment**
Himanshu Jaiswal
A data-driven evaluation of CEPA, showing how selective liberalization can revive stagnant trade flows and enhance competitiveness.

Alongside these full-length papers, Kizuna Sabha also features Insight Notes on emerging themes, making it a growing resource for students, scholars, and practitioners interested in India–Japan studies.

We invite you to explore the published works on the **Kizuna Sabha website** — and to contribute your own research to this expanding body of scholarship.



2. Strengthening Academic Initiatives - Lean Manufacturing Practices Program

Lean Manufacturing in Education: From Classroom to Shop Floor

What does it take to make an engineering graduate truly “industry ready”? This question shaped MIJSC’s webinar on lean manufacturing, held in partnership with Acadnet Technologies on 1st August 2025.

Prof. M. M. Ananth, a pioneer in academic–industry engagement, set the tone by underscoring the widening gap between what classrooms teach and what shop floors demand. From there, the conversation unfolded into a candid exchange between academia and industry.

Mr. Saideep Rathnam, COO of MIJSC, outlined how the Lean Manufacturing Practices program aims to give students more than just technical knowledge — it prepares them to think like engineers who can problem-solve in real time. Industry voices like Mr. Mahesh Bhirangi and Mr. Sanjay Khanna brought the shop-floor perspective, pointing out that the biggest challenge is not lack of intelligence but the shock of moving from theory to practice.

The discussion was not abstract. It touched on concrete hurdles: resistance within academic structures, students’ limited exposure to live problems, and the difficulty of sustaining programs once the first wave of enthusiasm fades. Yet solutions also emerged — phased adoption, deeper partnerships with industry, and embedding lean methods into the DNA of engineering curricula.

About the LMP Program at MIJSC, IIMB

The Lean Manufacturing Practices (LMP) program at MIJSC is inspired by the **Visionary Learning Community of India (VLCI)**, which bridges industry and academia to drive Lean Transformation. It trains engineering faculty, who in turn transfer these skills to students, creating a multiplier effect. By connecting SMEs, colleges, faculty, and students, the program builds a pipeline of change leaders. LMP aligns academic learning with real-world manufacturing needs to support sustainable industrial growth through practical Lean methodologies.

The LMP program has trained over **180 faculty** members across **42 colleges**, spanning **5 states** in India. Its structured rollout is building Lean capabilities in engineering education with growing national impact.

Unique Pedagogy: Hybrid Learning That Translates Knowledge into Skills

The LMP program follows a distinctive hybrid model that blends online learning with real-world application:

- **Step 1: Build Foundational Knowledge** Participants engage with curated MOOCs through platforms like SWAYAM and IIMBx, reinforced by interactive sessions with industry experts for continuous conceptual clarity.
- **Step 2: Apply Through Field Immersion** Assignments require participants to visit factories, gather on-ground data, and observe real manufacturing environments. MIJSC actively facilitates these industry visits to ensure hands-on learning and skill development.

2. Strengthening Academic Initiatives - Lean Manufacturing Practices Program

Lean Manufacturing Practices (LMP) Certification Ceremony – Batch 2

The second batch of the Lean Manufacturing Practices (LMP) Certification Program for engineering college faculty culminated in a certification ceremony at IIM Bangalore on August 01, 2025 earning formal recognition as **Lean Experts**.

The ceremony brought together academic leaders and industry veterans. Chief Guest Mr. Ramdas Baliga, Managing Director, Toshiba Software India Pvt. Ltd., was joined by Prof. Dinesh Kumar (Interim Director, IIMB), Prof. Rishikesh T. Krishnan (former Director, IIMB), Prof. Jayadev (Dean, Administration), and industry experts Mr. Neelesh Chougule, Mr. Subodh Korde, and Mr. Narayan Vakil.



Chief Guest Mr. Ramdas Baliga

Setting the stage, Mr. Saideep Rathnam, COO of MIJSC, traced the roots of Lean in India, beginning with Prof. Shoji Shiba's collaboration with Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam under the Visionary Leaders for Manufacturing Program. He congratulated the graduating faculty and stressed the critical role of Lean in driving India's competitiveness.

In his keynote, Mr. Baliga connected the dots between Lean in manufacturing and Agile in IT. He highlighted how AI and ML are reshaping industry practices, urging faculty to equip students with both theoretical foundations and industry-relevant skills. His message was clear: faculty are enablers of transformation and must stay ahead of technological shifts to prepare future-ready graduates.

The event closed with the presentation of certificates, shields, and trophies, followed by a look ahead at MIJSC's upcoming initiatives — from a Lean Manufacturing Transformation Program for industry to Japanese language courses and a specialized Lean–Agile track for IT faculty.

The day marked more than a certification milestone; it reinforced MIJSC's role in bridging academia and industry, and in shaping the next generation of India's manufacturing and technology leaders.



3. Promoting Societal Bonds - A glimpse of our Webinars and Seminar

In the spirit of continuous learning, our webinar series brought together thought leaders, industry experts, and curious minds to exchange ideas, spark conversations, and explore emerging trends. Each session served as a bridge, connecting knowledge with real-world insights to empower our community.

Accelerating Societal Demographics: Learning from Japan's Challenges of Navigating Business Longevity

On **31 July 2025**, MIJSC hosted a timely webinar titled “*Accelerating Societal Demographics: Learning from Japan's Challenges of Navigating Business Longevity*.” The session featured **Professor Hiroshi Ono**, a leading scholar of human capital and labor markets at **Hitotsubashi University Business School**, Tokyo. With decades of research on demographics, work, and society, Prof. Ono has been at the forefront of analyzing how aging populations reshape economies and institutions.



In his talk, Prof. Ono painted a vivid picture of Japan’s demographic journey. The country’s population peaked in 2005 and has been declining since, while life expectancy has stretched beyond 85 years. By 2050, nearly 40 percent of Japanese citizens will be over 65 — a transformation that is altering not just healthcare and pensions, but also consumer behavior, corporate succession, and labor markets. He illustrated the shift with everyday examples: convenience stores redesigning operations for elderly customers, and the adult diaper market now outselling baby diapers.

But what makes this discussion so relevant is that Japan is not an outlier. As Professor Ono emphasized, the same currents are emerging elsewhere, including India. While India as a whole still enjoys population growth, many of its states tell a different story. Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Himachal Pradesh, and Punjab have long reported fertility rates below the replacement level of 2.1. Nagaland has already crossed a symbolic threshold, becoming the first state to record an absolute decline in population between two censuses. These regions are on the same trajectory Japan faced decades earlier: an aging workforce, a rising old-age dependency burden, and growing stress on healthcare and pension systems.

The Lean Transplant: Challenges of Japanese Management Practices in India

On **19 August 2025**, MIJSC hosted the webinar “*The Lean Transplant: Challenges of Japanese Management Practices in India*” at IIMB. The event drew a full house on campus, a sign of the deep curiosity around Japanese management methods and their place in India’s evolving industrial landscape.

The speaker, **Professor Takahiro Sato** of Kobe University, joined us in person for this session. A specialist in emerging markets with over 34 years of research into India’s post-liberalization economy, Prof. Sato brought academic rigor, field insights, and a deep familiarity with both cultures. The discussion was moderated by our COO, **Mr. Saideep Rathnam**, a Lean expert and industry veteran with 47 years of experience. Mr. Rathnam went beyond facilitation — he enriched the conversation by drawing on his own career of implementing Lean practices in Indian factories, offering a practitioner’s counterpoint to Prof. Sato’s research.

Prof. Sato highlighted the core cultural divide: Japan’s membership-based model expects multi-skilled employees, while India relies on specialized roles. His survey of 40 Japanese firms in India showed HR practices such as job rotation, teamwork, and on-the-job training improved productivity by up to 70%, but advanced production systems struggled without a mature workforce. He recommended starting small, with 5S principles— Sort, Set in order, Shine, Standardize, Sustain to build safe and efficient workplaces, before gradually introducing more complex systems.

The discussion came alive with anecdotes. One told of an Indian babysitter who meticulously cared for a child but left spilled milk on the floor, insisting, “I am a babysitter, not a cleaner.” Another contrasted two Japanese MDs in India — one who picked up garbage on the shop floor to embody 5S, and another who refused, fearing he would be reduced to “the garbage picker” in the eyes of his staff. Both stories highlighted the cultural frictions of transplanting lean principles.

By the close of the session, one message was clear: Japanese management practices can thrive in India, but only with patience, cultural sensitivity, and leadership willing to adapt. With Prof. Sato’s scholarship and Mr. Rathnam’s lived experience, the session offered both intellectual depth and practical wisdom — a combination that left the packed room with plenty to reflect on.



4. Interaction with Japanese Industry and Government Bodies..

The past two **months** have brought fresh energy to MIJSC's role as a bridge between India and Japan. On **8 July 2025**, we welcomed senior leaders from **Shimizu Corporation**, one of Japan's oldest yet most forward-looking construction firms. The delegation included **Mr. Hiroyuki Fujimoto** (Senior Director, Design Division), **Mr. Wataru Kurihara** (Director, Global Design Division), and **Mr. Koichi Takahashi** (Design Manager, Global Design Division), along with the India leadership team — **Mr. Usui Kazutoshi** (Managing Director & CEO), **Mr. Rajiv Duggal** (Deputy Managing Director & COO), and **Mr. Akash Karak** (CMO & Design Head). Their discussions with us went beyond design and engineering — they explored how sustainability can be embedded into the built environment, with India and Japan learning from each other's strengths.

In August, the focus turned to academia and innovation. On **11 August 2025**, a high-level delegation from **Nagoya University**, the **City of Nagoya**, and the **Chubu Science and Technology Center** engaged with MIJSC. The delegation included **Dr. Akiko Ito** (Associate Professor, Nagoya University), **Mr. Chihiro Nakagawa** (Director, Domestic and International Industrial & Commercial Properties Division, Economic Affairs Bureau, City of Nagoya), and **Mrs. Suzuka Taki** (GNI Center Secretariat, Public Foundation of Chubu Science and Technology Center). Their conversations with MIJSC centered on collaborative research, knowledge exchange, and how regional ecosystems in India and Japan can work together to accelerate innovation.



Leaders from Shimizu Corporation

Senior representatives from Nagoya University, the City of Nagoya, and the Chubu Science and Technology Center



5. Cultural Crossroads—Stories from Japan’s Societal Interaction

The Sacred Daruma Doll: A Thousand-Year Bridge Between India and Japan

In a moment steeped in symbolism, Prime Minister Narendra Modi received a Daruma doll from Rev. Seishi Hirose, Chief Priest of Shorinzan Daruma-ji Temple, during his recent visit to Japan. To many in Japan, the Daruma is a talisman of resilience and good fortune. To India, it represents something deeper: the enduring civilizational connection that began over a millennium ago with Bodhidharma, the monk from Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, who carried the seeds of Zen Buddhism to Japan.



Photo Credits: X / @PMO

The gesture resonated well beyond ceremony. It reminded both nations that their partnership is not merely transactional or contemporary, but rooted in a shared spiritual and cultural heritage. In a geopolitical climate where economic and security cooperation often dominate headlines, the Daruma exchange reframed the narrative: India and Japan are bound not only by strategy but by history, faith, and ideas that have traveled across centuries.

As Modi placed the doll in his hands, it became more than a gift. It was a reaffirmation that today’s high-speed trains, semiconductor alliances, and investment flows are part of a continuum — one where cultural bridges remain the most enduring foundation of India–Japan ties.

When Fiction Fuels Fear: Anime, Tsunami, and Public Imagination

On 30 July 2025, Japan braced itself as an earthquake off Russia’s Kamchatka Peninsula sent tremors across the Pacific. Tsunami warnings flashed across the northern coast, only to be lifted hours later. But the greater swell was not in the ocean — it was online.



Photo Credits: Wikimedia

A 1999 manga, *Watashi ga Mita Mirai* (*The Future I Saw*), suddenly returned to public memory. Its creator, Ryo Tatsuki, claimed to dream of disasters before they happened. One of her visions? A tsunami striking Japan in July 2025. For weeks, readers had been whispering about it; some even postponed travel, uneasy about coincidences between ink and reality. When the quake struck, speculation surged — had the manga foretold the disaster?

The Japan Meteorological Agency was quick to intervene: earthquakes cannot be predicted by comics or dreams. Yet the frenzy revealed something profound. In a country where earthquakes are a lived memory, imagination often runs ahead of science. Stories — whether in anime, manga, or folklore — give shape to fear when certainty is elusive.

For societies like India, equally vulnerable to natural disasters, the lesson is clear: preparedness is not just about technology. It is also about listening to the stories people believe, and weaving science into them.

6. Business Crossroads - Insights from Japan Inc.

A quick take on key business news from Japan, with a twist. We highlight what matters and why it could be interesting for entrepreneurs, investors, and researchers. No fluff, just insights worth thinking about.

India–Japan 2.0: Investment, Talent, and Security for a New Era

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's August 2025 visit to Japan has reset the trajectory of India–Japan relations. Moving away from the decades-old development aid framework, the two nations unveiled a bold investment- and talent-driven agenda that redefines the partnership for a new era of global competition.

The headline announcement was staggering: **¥10 trillion (\$68 billion) in private Japanese investment in India over the next decade.** This is not only double Japan's previous commitment but also a symbolic departure from its ODA-led role in India's growth. Instead of just financing infrastructure, the focus now shifts to powering innovation, scaling small and medium enterprises, and enabling startups under the shared vision of "*Make in India, Make for the World.*" For Japanese firms, the bet reflects confidence in India as a manufacturing hub and as a partner in diversifying supply chains beyond China. For India, it is a crucial endorsement that fuels both capital inflows and technology transfer.

Yet money alone does not define this new chapter. **Human capital emerged as the second major pillar**, with both leaders committing to facilitate 500,000 personnel exchanges over five years. Within that, 50,000 skilled Indians will contribute directly to Japan's economy in critical sectors ranging from engineering to healthcare. For a country grappling with acute labor shortages and demographic decline, the infusion of Indian talent offers immediate relief and long-term innovation capacity. For India, it creates pathways for global careers while deepening the "talent bridge" that increasingly underpins bilateral cooperation.

The **third pillar was strategic and security cooperation.** By updating the Joint Declaration on Security, Modi and Ishiba institutionalized annual dialogues between national security advisers and broadened collaboration into emerging domains such as cyber, space, AI, and maritime surveillance. This expansion reflects both countries' shared concerns about regional security challenges and their commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. It also signals that defense and technology partnerships are no longer peripheral to the economic agenda — they are central to building resilience in a turbulent world.

Taken together, these outcomes amount to more than incremental progress. They represent a structural reset: from aid to investment, from projects to people, from bilateral exchanges to global strategic alignment. For businesses, the message is opportunity; for policymakers, it is convergence; and for both nations, it is a partnership entering its most ambitious decade yet.



Photo Credits: X / PMO India

From Cow Dung to Clean Mobility: Suzuki's India Strategy

Suzuki Motor is taking a distinctly Indian route to decarbonisation. Already India's largest passenger car-maker, the Japanese automaker is now investing in vehicles that run on high-blend bioethanol while simultaneously turning cattle manure into biogas through partnerships with rural dairy cooperatives. This "multi-pathway" approach is a pragmatic response to India's diverse mobility landscape, where infrastructure gaps make an all-electric shift unrealistic in the near term.



Photo Credits: Maruti Suzuki/Chairman

By powering its popular CNG vehicles with biogas, Suzuki is tapping into a rural resource while boosting farmer incomes and aligning with India's energy self-reliance agenda. The company is also scaling electric mobility, having recently dispatched its first e-Vitara from Gujarat in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. For Suzuki, India now accounts for nearly 40% of global revenue, making it both a testbed and a proving ground. The broader lesson is clear: sustainability in emerging markets will not follow a single technological pathway but a blend of solutions rooted in local realities. Suzuki's strategy could well become a model for other Japan–India industrial partnerships.

Japan Looks to India for Tech Talent

Japan is turning decisively to India to fill its critical shortage of technical talent. Through the newly formalised LOTUS Programme, 300 Indian graduate and post-doctoral researchers have joined Japanese universities and labs this year, with ambitions to scale to 3,000 annually. Research spans fields from semiconductors and materials science to biotechnology and quantum technologies, reflecting Japan's push to future-proof its economy.

Private recruiters such as Zenken are complementing this effort, matching thousands of Indian engineering graduates with jobs in Japanese firms, supported by intensive language training. For India, this represents a dual gain: exposure for young researchers to world-class facilities and expanded career pathways in Japan. For Japan, it is about securing intellectual capital as demographic decline shrinks its domestic talent pool. Unlike earlier migration flows directed to the US or Europe, this corridor is strategically framed as part of bilateral cooperation. If expanded successfully, it could reshape the innovation ecosystem in both countries, creating a pipeline of talent that is as important to India–Japan relations as trade and investment.



Photo Credits: jst.go.jp

Microsoft Joins Hands with India, Japan to Crack Fraud Ring

A joint operation by Japan's National Police Agency and India's Central Bureau of Investigation, supported by Microsoft's Digital Crimes Unit, has dismantled a fraud syndicate in India that scammed around 200 Japanese victims out of ¥180 million. The group posed as Microsoft representatives, tricking people into paying for fake virus removals — a variation of global “tech support scams.”

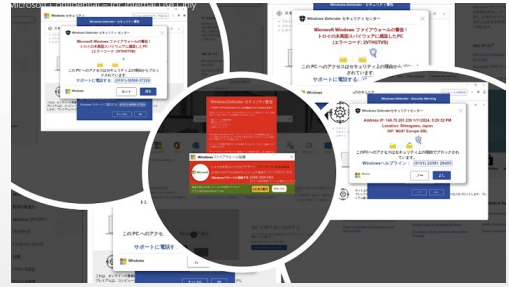


Photo Credits: hack-

The case is notable not just for the arrests but for the process: private-sector expertise and cross-border cooperation proved central. Microsoft's forensic analysis, supported by the Japan Cybercrime Control Center, traced fraudulent websites and accounts back to India, enabling authorities to act. For Japan, cyber fraud is a growing concern as generative AI erodes the language barrier that once shielded its citizens. For India, the case underscores its responsibility as both a tech hub and a source of global cyber enforcement collaboration. The success points to a larger lesson: securing digital trust in an interconnected world will require seamless partnerships between governments and companies across borders.

Legacy Tech Finds a New Home in India

India and Japan are turning to legacy technologies as tools of economic security. Under a plan by JETRO and the Confederation of Indian Industry, production of older but still essential technologies — from semiconductors and LCD panels to compressors and solar equipment — will shift to India. While not cutting-edge, these technologies remain indispensable in EVs, home appliances, and energy systems. For Japan, moving production addresses the challenge of competing against cheap Chinese goods while safeguarding supply chains.



Photo Credits: Flickr/Danny Coo

For India, it accelerates “Make in India” ambitions by absorbing proven technologies and scaling them with cost competitiveness. Some Japanese companies are already acting: a storage battery maker is set to sign a joint production pact, while another has broken ground on a compressor plant in Tamil Nadu. In an era when economic resilience is as critical as innovation, this quiet transfer of legacy technology could redefine India–Japan industrial collaboration. It is not about the newest chips, but about ensuring reliable foundations for industries that power everyday life.

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