



ORGANISED BY:
NIHONGO KAIWA KYOOKAI SOCIETY

日本インド学生会議 30TH INDIA-JAPAN STUDENTS' CONFERENCE REPORT TOKYO, JAPAN 2026



30TH INDIA-JAPAN STUDENTS' CONFERENCE

TOKYO, JAPAN

2026

ACTIVITY REPORT

ORGANISED BY



NIHONGO KAIWA KYOOKAI SOCIETY

***“ Life is not what one lived, but what one remembers
and how one remembers it in order to recount it. ”***

Gabriel García Márquez

Table of Contents

	Page No.
Message from the Chief Patron of Nihongo Kaiwa Kyookai Society	01
Message from the Founder Member of the Japan India Students' Conference	02
Message from the President of Nihongo Kaiwa Kyookai Society	03
Message from the Students' Conference <i>Dosokai</i>	04
Message from the Student President of Japan	05
Message from the Student Vice President of Japan	06
Message from the Student President of India	07
Message from the Student Communicator of India	08
Message from the Team Leads of Academics, Cultural, and Press Teams	09-11
The Schedule of 30th India-Japan Students' Conference	12
The Theme of the Conference	13-15
Group Discussion Overview of Subcommittees 1, 2, 3 and 4	16-22
Event Reports	23-61
Home Visit Experiences	62-66
Personal Diary Entries	67-80
Archival Gallery	81-86

भारतीय राजदूत, टोक्यो
Ambassador of India
Tokyo



2-2-11, Kudan Minami
Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 102 0074



MESSAGE

It is with pleasure that I extend my warm greetings and best wishes to the participants and organisers of the 30th India-Japan Students' Conference, held from 20 to 31 August 2026.

The enduring friendship between India and Japan is enriched by the strong bonds between our young people, and platforms such as the India-Japan Students' Conference play a valuable role in fostering greater understanding, dialogue and mutual appreciation. I was pleased to have the opportunity to meet the student participants during their visit to the Embassy of India in Japan on 21 August 2026 and to hear about their experiences and perspectives. I commend the organisers and participants for their commitment to sustaining this longstanding initiative of academic and cultural exchange.

I am confident that the India-Japan Students' Conference will continue to inspire successive generations of students and serve as a meaningful bridge between our two countries. I wish the Conference every success in its future editions and hope that its participants will carry forward the spirit of friendship, cooperation and shared learning that lies at the heart of India-Japan relations.

(Nagma M. Mallick)

Tokyo
September 30, 2026

Message from the Chief Patron of Nihongo Kaiwa Kyookai Society

Kazuko Nigam

I am very happy that this year we have completed the 30th India–Japan Student Conference.

For the last 30 years, this conference has given students from India and Japan an opportunity to meet, learn from each other and become friends.

In the past, the conference was held for two years in India and then one year in Japan. Because of this, fewer Indian students had the opportunity to visit Japan.

From this year, we have changed the system. The conference will now be held alternately in India and Japan every year. I am very happy about this. I hope more Indian students will now get the opportunity to visit Japan.

When this conference started 30 years ago, the students who participated were young. Today, many of them are in their 50s or older. They are working in different fields and many are holding responsible positions.

The students who participated in more recent conferences are also now moving forward in their careers and lives.

It is important that these former students remain connected with each other and with the conference. For this reason, we started the Alumni Association (IJSC Dosokai) . I am very happy that the alumni are now taking an active part in organizing and supporting the conference.

I hope that more students who participated in the conference in the past will join the Alumni Association and take part in its activities.

I would also like to thank all the JISC members of the 30th conference for their hard work and cooperation. I would especially like to thank Nagahama Sensei, who took care of our students and supported them during their stay in Japan.

For the students, this conference can be a life-changing opportunity. I hope they will share their experience with their friends and others, so that more students can learn about the conference and get this opportunity.

The conference has continued for 30 years because many people have supported it. I hope that with the help of the students, alumni and everyone involved, we can continue it for many more years.

Message from the Founder of the Japan India Students' Conference

Hiroko Nagahama

The Indo-Japan Student Conference has a long history spanning over 30 years. There is no other student programme between Japan and India that has continued for such a long time. I still clearly remember the opening ceremony of the very first event held in Kolkata. Back when we started, everything was a very new and unfamiliar experience for us. It was a time when having your own computer was far from normal. I imagine this is something that the 30th batch would find hard to believe.

Back then, the modes of communication between India and Japan mainly included fax, international phone calls, and international mail, which were not only expensive but also time-consuming. Under all these circumstances, naturally, communication was kept to a minimum. Nevertheless, despite all the limitations in communicating with one another, the students pressed on with their preparations, working towards the event date. Looking back, it seems to me that during those days, when people would meet face-to-face, discuss matters, and work by hand, taking the time to prepare things thoroughly, there were certain precious things that we seem to have lost amidst all this convenience.

The support we have received from the Consulate-General of Japan in Kolkata since the very first event has been largely due to the dedicated efforts of Ms. Kazuko Nigam, who has consistently devoted herself to Japanese-language education and cultural promotion. Many of you will know that Ms. Nigam continues to be a central figure and plays a prominent part in the activities of the Nihongo Kyokai Kaiwa Society (NKKS). She continues to play a vital role, not only in ensuring the continued success of the Indo-Japan Cultural Festival, but also as a teacher of Japanese language and ikebana, with heart and a lot of dedication.

Although the activities of IJSC and JISC have been student-led in each academic year, the past 30 years have been made possible thanks to the support of so many people. Over these 30 years, we have had many meaningful encounters, but also some sad farewells. Of course, there are bonds that have continued strongly from the very first group to this very day, and they have become my greatest treasures. Although we have also lost people from whom I wish I could have learnt more, they continue to live in my memories even to this day.

To everyone who has taken part in IJSC and JISC, from the first group through the 30th, I hope you will continue to serve as alumni and pass down and share the history of IJSC and JISC. I hope you will understand that our activities are not sustained by any one group alone, and I look forward to continuing our activities beyond this point. This programme is designed to nurture students so that valuable insights are gained through dialogue across the two countries, which will help foster good relations between the two countries and across the globe. I sincerely hope that you all uphold this objective.

All our activities began in Kolkata. It has now been 30 years since the proposal put forward by the three founders on the Japanese side was graciously accepted by NKKS.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of the former Consul-General, to everyone at NKKS, and to each and every person with whom I have had the privilege of forming a connection over the years.

Message from the President of Nihongo Kaiwa Kyookai Society

Babli Chowdhury

This year we celebrated another milestone in our NKKS calendar, the 30th India-Japan Students' Conference. It was held in Tokyo, Japan from the 21st of August to 31st of August. 13 Indian students put in a lot of hard work to prepare themselves for the table discussions that were lined up for this academic and cultural exchange with 8 Japanese participants.

To boost the morale of the participants, the Honourable Consul General of Japan in Kolkata, Mr. Ishikawa Yoshihisa, kindly invited the students to a grand send-off dinner and interacted with the students and wished them a fruitful and memorable 12-day stay in Japan.

The conference has been a huge success not only in terms of presentations and discussions, but also in fostering friendship and cultural ties between the Indian and Japanese youth. I am sure that this student exchange program will provide a global outlook and open newer horizons for scientific, cultural and academic exposure to all the participants.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Kazuko Nigam Sensei and Ms. Nagahama Hiroko Sensei, all our members, past and present, whose vision has matured remarkably and will undoubtedly continue to grow in the future.

Otsukaresama deshita.

Message from the Students' Conference Dosokai

**Core Team,
Dosokai**

A very heartfelt congratulations on successfully completing the 30th edition of the India Japan Students' Conference in Tokyo, Japan.

To take an idea that begins with planning and preparation in India and carry it all the way to Japan, while simultaneously coordinating, adapting, and conducting the conference across borders, is no small feat. From the countless hours of preparation to the challenges that inevitably come with organising an international conference, every one of you have contributed in making this milestone edition of the conference a memorable one. The opportunity to travel to Japan and experience the conference there is an achievement in itself, but more importantly, it is a testament to the dedication, perseverance, and teamwork that brought you to that point.

We, here at the Dōsōkai, are truly delighted to see the 30th Students' Conference come to fruition and are immensely proud of everything you have accomplished. We hope that your time in Tokyo, the friendships you formed, the people you met, and the experiences you shared have given you a deeper understanding of Japan and India, while also leaving you with perspectives and memories that will stay with you long after the conference has ended.

Very well done, and congratulations once again on completing the conference!

お疲れ様でした！

Message from the Student President of Japan

Yuzuki Hosoi

I am very pleased to have successfully concluded the 30th Japan-India Students' Conference and to share this activity report with you.

This year, the Japan-India Students' Conference reached the significant milestone of its 30th term. Since its establishment in 1996, the Conference has continued for 30 years thanks to the many people who built and sustained its activities, the professors and mentors who supported us, and the companies, organizations, and host institutions that provided support and cooperation. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all of them.

For the 30th JISC, we had 21 participants: eight Japanese and thirteen Indian students. This is by no means a large number. Yet I believe that the accumulation of these small connections is what will shape Japan-India relations in the years to come. Every year, around twenty students travel between Japan and India, spend approximately two weeks together, and form friendships that can last a lifetime. Perhaps one day, the students of the 30th term will also become people who connect Japan and India in their own fields and communities, just as our predecessors have done. I feel truly fortunate to have witnessed a part of that process.

Under this year's theme, "Working Beyond Borders: Japanese and Indian Youth Perspective on Coexistence and Careers," we explored how young people in both nations envision the societies they want to build and how they wish to work as cross-border collaboration increases. To drive deeper insights, we narrowed each subcommittee's focus, added preparatory study sessions, and introduced new field visits directly linked to our themes. Additionally, JISC established a new recruitment initiative in Delhi to bring a broader range of perspectives into our discussions. Given the fundamental challenges of cross-cultural coordination, ranging from dietary preferences and language barriers to navigating different daily customs, our executive team worked closely across borders to ensure a seamless eleven days.

During the program in Japan, participants engaged in a rich cultural exchange. The itinerary combined popular activities, such as purchasing Welcome PASMO cards, collecting goshuin stamps, riding the Enoden train, and trying gachagacha machines, with visits to real-life locations featured in the film *Your Name*. Alongside these highlights, students navigated meaningful cultural differences, whether adapting to Japanese hot spring customs or accommodating vegetarian dietary needs. Through these daily interactions, initial formality quickly gave way to genuine companionship. What began as a structured, duty-driven conference evolved into lasting personal friendships across national borders, reflecting the true spirit of Japan-India student exchange.

To everyone who supported and contributed to the success of this program, the Japan-India Student Conference (JISC) extends its heartfelt gratitude.

Message from the Student Vice President of Japan

Yoshimi Saito

In the 30th Japan-India Students Conference (JISC), I served as the Vice President and a member of the Finance Team. In the 29th JISC, I was a member of the Planning Team. Since the 29th conference was held in India and the 30th conference was held in Japan, I was able to experience the conference from both the Indian and Japanese sides over these two years.

As the 30th conference was held in Japan, I had many responsibilities as a host country member. I was involved in many parts of the preparation and management, such as arranging accommodation and transportation, contacting companies and organizations that we visited, communicating with sponsors, managing the conference budget, visiting and greeting organizations that supported us, and preparing for the opening and closing ceremonies.

To be honest, preparing for the 30th conference was much harder than the 29th conference in India. As Japan side students, we had to think about and arrange many things by ourselves so that the Indian members could feel comfortable and have a meaningful 11 days in Japan. At the same time, we had more freedom to make decisions by ourselves. This also meant more responsibility, but I really enjoyed it. When the conference was finally over, I felt a great sense of achievement.

Our theme was “Working Across Borders,” and we were able to choose companies and organizations that matched the topics of each subcommittee. It was a valuable experience to listen to people working in companies and local communities, and then think and discuss together with both Indian and Japanese students. During the subcommittee discussions, everyone actively shared their ideas, which made the discussions very meaningful.

Most of all, I was happy to see everyone smiling during the 11 days. Watching fireworks together and having meals together are some of my favorite memories. Although there were many difficult moments during the preparation, seeing everyone enjoying their time in Japan made me feel that all our hard work was worth it.

Through my two years in the 29th and 30th JISC, I learned that even when people have different countries and cultures, we can become closer by thinking, working, and laughing together. I will always treasure the people I met and everything I learned through this experience.

Message from the Student President of India

Aditya Prasad

I am really honored to have been selected as the President of the Indian Delegation of the 30th IJSC. This was my second time participating in the IJSC and first time overseas as a Leader. Although overwhelming, the whole experience helped me grow as a person and made me face challenges which otherwise I wouldn't have faced if not for this role. I want to extend my gratitude to Nigam Sensei and other Senseis from NKKS for putting their faith in me. I would also like to thank the Dosokai members who were like a guiding light for me throughout the conference. A special thanks to Tamalika Di who was the coordinator for the conference. Her constant guidance and cooperation made things easier to deal with. I'd also like to thank my Parents for sending me overseas for this conference. It would not have been possible without their support. Along with them, I'd also like to thank Utsa, my friend from last year's IJSC, who helped see through some tough situations and come to a conclusion.

During the 11 days of the conference, I made friends, uncountable memories and learnt a lot as an individual. I would say, I got a really supportive and responsible team which made my work as a president easier. The Japan side received us well and we were able to successfully carry out the entire conference. It was so memorable for both the teams that by the closing ceremony, we all were in tears, knowing that it was coming to an end. Every site visit, every group discussion, every meal we shared, felt like a family gathering. I would like to thank Yuzuki San and her team for taking good care of us and dealing with the issues and problems we faced together. This conference was truly a once in a lifetime event for me which will have a lasting impact on me as a person and my career.

To the future faces of this position, my recommendation would be to be mindful of each decision you make. I expect this conference to grow further and become more diverse which will bring its own set of challenges. The Dosokai and the Coordinator are there to help you. It will be easy to make decisions if you think well for your team. But do not forget to enjoy the little fun moments during the conference because at the end of the day, those are the moments you will look back to and cherish. The role of a President surely asks for a lot of accountability but do not forget to enjoy the work and the fun moments which come along during the conference.

Message from the Student Communicator of India

Anurag Das

I am truly grateful to serve as the Student Communicator of the Indian team for the 30th edition of the India-Japan Students' Conference. This was my second time participating in the conference and my first time being assigned a responsibility as big as the communicator. I honestly was more nervous than excited when I was given this opportunity, but throughout the entirety of the conference, I have grown to like this role and the responsibilities associated with it. As I look back on the conference, it still feels surreal to me that we were in Japan for 12 days, and how much it has affected me for better or for worse, helping me grow and experience things that I never even imagined doing before. This time, 10 students from Kolkata were joined by 2 students from Chennai and 1 from Delhi as we travelled to Tokyo. We were greeted by a contingent of 8 Japanese students selected from different parts of the country.

I would also like to thank Nigam Sensei, Partha Sensei, the entirety of NKKS and the Dosokai for entrusting me with the duties of the Communicator. I am sincerely grateful for their unwavering guidance, patience, and encouragement at every turn.

A special note of appreciation goes to Yuzuki-san, the Japanese Student President, and the entire Japanese organizing committee. Bridging geographical distances and managing complex logistics across Japan is no small feat, yet their tireless dedication and thoughtful preparation gave us an experience we will cherish for years. The warmth and genuine *omotenashi* extended to our team left an indelible mark on all of us.

I am equally grateful to Aditya-san, the Indian Student President, whose steady leadership and clear vision anchored our delegation throughout the conference. Collaborating closely with him and the other team leads made facing every challenge a shared, rewarding effort. To my fellow teammates: thank you for your boundless energy, your openness, and your constant support. This conference was a success because of each one of you, and I couldn't be prouder of what we built together.

To the next Communicator stepping into these shoes: welcome the unpredictable moments with an open mind. The responsibility is demanding, but the personal growth and perspectives you gain are unmatched. Back your team, lean on their strengths, and savour every single step.

Message from Academics Team Lead

Ranjabati Chattopadhyay

At the 30th Japan India Students' Conference, I had the privilege of serving as the Vice-President of the Academics Team. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity. Although, at the beginning, I was not entirely sure what the position would demand of me, I gradually realised that being part of the Academics Team meant much more than keeping track of sessions and documenting discussions. It required me to be attentive to everything that was being discussed and try to understand the larger socio-political and intellectual implications of our conversations.

A significant part of our work involved maintaining the academic documentation of the conference and working towards the final report. We also had to carefully go through official academic material before it was circulated. This meant being attentive to every detail, checking information, proofreading, and making sure that what went out represented the conference accurately. It was a responsibility that often-required patience and precision, but it also taught me how important it is to complete work carefully and on time.

As a team, we were fortunate to have people who were extremely helpful, hardworking and determined. There was a lot to keep track of, and there were certainly moments when the workload felt overwhelming, but everyone was willing to step in and help. As the lead, it was genuinely a pleasure to work with the team and collaborate with each of them. Seeing everyone take responsibility for their work and contribute towards the larger goal was one of the most rewarding parts of the experience.

To the future Academic Leads and members of the Academics Team, I would simply say, stay rooted in what you are doing. Keep your head calm, take the work one step at a time, and learn to navigate the pressure. There will be a lot of work, but never forget to enjoy yourself amidst it. JISC is not simply a pen-and-paper conference. It is also a cultural exchange, an opportunity to meet people, understand different perspectives and experience Japan beyond the research you have come to conduct.

Most importantly, make the most of the experience while you are there. The conference passes much faster than you expect.

I am incredibly grateful to have been a part of the 30th JISC. It has challenged me, taught me responsibility and, above all, changed the way I look at the world and I will carry that with me all my life.

Message from the Cultural Team Lead

Senjuti Mazumder

Being the Cultural Head of the 30th India-Japan Students' Conference has been one of the most meaningful responsibilities I have taken on. For me, culture has never been only about what we perform on a stage. It lives in our stories, music, languages, traditions and even the games we grow up playing. Culture becomes meaningful when it is shared, understood and experienced together, and this thought shaped my approach throughout the conference.

For our cultural presentation, "Cultural Echoes of India," we wanted to create a journey through India rather than simply a collection of performances. We brought together Rabindra Sangeet, poetry, Odissi, Carnatic music, Kathak, Tamil storytelling, Garba and Dandiya, and a folktale from Mizoram, allowing different regions, languages and artistic traditions to find a place within one programme. We also wanted our Japanese friends to understand the stories behind what they were seeing. Preparing, explaining and translating our traditions became a cultural exchange in themselves.

Our exchange went beyond the stage through activities such as Pallanguzhi, a traditional Tamil game, Housie and other informal games. We found simple and joyful ways to introduce pieces of everyday Indian culture while learning about our Japanese counterparts in return. These moments reminded me that cultural exchange does not always need a formal presentation; sometimes, it happens through laughter, curiosity and simply sitting together. I was incredibly grateful to work with my Cultural Team - Anurag Das, Tushnee Chatterjee, Srivaishnavi Ramakrishnan and Dwija Maheshwaran. Each brought their own strengths, ideas and energy, and I could not have asked for a better group to share this responsibility with. From rehearsals and scripting to performances, activities and last-minute changes, we learnt to depend on one another and grow together.

I would also like to thank Aditya Prasad, our President, and Anurag Das, our Communicator and a member of our team, for their constant support. I am especially thankful to Aditya, Anurag, Kimaya and Soham for taking responsibility for the Japanese translations and helping make our presentation accessible to everyone. My heartfelt gratitude goes to NKKS, Nigam-Sensei and the Dōsōkai for their guidance, trust and encouragement. Their support gave us the confidence to explore our ideas while carrying the responsibility of representing India with sincerity and pride.

Looking back, I will remember the rehearsals, conversations, laughter, nervous moments and the happiness of watching everything come together. I began this journey hoping to share a piece of India's essence, and I leave feeling that we also created a little more understanding between India and Japan. For me, that is what this conference was truly about, sharing culture, creating connections and carrying these memories with us long after the stage is empty.

Message from the Press Team Lead

Saanvi Mitra

A picture is worth a thousand words and we had many. Memories captured in snapshots and clips, official cameras flashing at us for group photos and candid moments that we clicked with or for each other were all a part and parcel of our subcommittee's work. In the 30th IJSC I had the opportunity to participate in and lead the press team and as someone coming from a background of and looking forward to entering the field of social media and advertisement, this was the greatest of opportunities!

With a small team consisting of Aditya Prasad, the President of the Indian delegation, Amrita Guha and me, it was a slow but steady collaborative endeavour to bring together the social media posts. Our work started earlier than most of the other teams, with a digital drawing by Amrita of a Japanese and an Indian bowing to each other with the Senso-ji Temple on one side and the Esplanade Metropolitan building on the other, creating a bridge between the two cultures. Having spent an unbelievable amount of time pouring into the details of which building to choose and what colour the background should be, the meetings then moved on to member introductions. The best aspect of being a part of this team and working on introducing each and every member of this delegation is that we got to know everyone a little more personally a little earlier than others. Like a teaser trailer reserved just for us.

Finally, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to NKKS, Dosokai, and Nigam Sensei for giving me this wonderful opportunity to engage and learn in ways I never imagined for myself. Our President, Aditya, had been the best support both in and out of this team managing his own responsibilities and shouldering the tasks from the press team that had been delegated to him. Above all, I thank my team as well as the entire Indian delegation which has cooperated with the team from the very beginning, helping us out in more ways than one. From shopping on the streets of Shinjuku to performing in the opening ceremony and visiting the Suzuki factory or listening to the ever-inspiring interaction with the embassy in Tokyo, these are but a few of the innumerable moments scattered throughout this conference. I would gladly relive these days over and over again, making more friendships as we go along.

The Schedule of the 30th India-Japan Students' Conference

Date	Day	Event
20 th August 2026	Thursday	Arrival of Team India in Japan
21 st August 2026	Friday	Meiji Jingu Shrine
		Embassy of India
		Cultural Exchange
		Opening Ceremony
		Social Dinner
22 nd August 2026	Saturday	Group Discussion 1
		Group Discussion 2
		Sightseeing at Shinjuku
23 rd August 2026	Sunday	Group Discussion 3
		Kimono Dressing Experience
		Roppongi Hills Bon Odori
24 th August 2026	Monday	Sightseeing at Kamakura
		Yokohama India Center
		Fireworks Festival
25 th August 2026	Tuesday	Group Discussion 4
		Visit to Nishikasai
		Sightseeing
26 th August 2026	Wednesday	Group Discussion 5
		Sightseeing at Akihabara and Asakusa
27 th August 2026	Thursday	Gotokuji Shrine and Jimbocho
		Yasukuni Shrine
		Keio University
28 th August 2026	Friday	Onwards to Hamamatsu City
		Visit to Suzuki Factory and Museum
		Hamamatsu City Hall
29 th August 2026	Saturday	Hamamatsu International Cultural Exchange Center
		Sightseeing at Hamamatsu
		Return to Tokyo
30 th August 2026	Sunday	Group Discussion 6
		Home Visit
31 st August 2026	Monday	Group Discussion 7
		Final Presentation
		Closing Ceremony
		Sayonara Party
01 st September 2026	Tuesday	Departure from Haneda Airport

The Theme of the Conference

Theme: Beyond Borders: Japanese and Indian Youth Perspectives on Coexistence and Careers

1. Overview and Objectives of the Theme

The globalization of education and employment has created greater opportunities for people to study and build careers across national borders. As a result, career development is increasingly shaped by experiences in multiple countries and societies rather than within the boundaries of a single nation. However, pursuing employment abroad also involves a variety of challenges, ranging from differences in institutional structures and workplace cultures to language barriers and the conditions of everyday life.

Choosing where to work is influenced by a number of factors, beginning with the information and perceptions individuals have about different countries. These factors continue to play a role during the recruitment process, where language requirements, selection procedures, and opportunities to interact with prospective employers can shape the possibilities available to applicants. Once employment begins, workplace evaluation systems, communication practices, visa and residency regulations, and living conditions may further influence an individual's experience and decisions about remaining in the country or seeking opportunities elsewhere. In particular, the movement of human resources between Japan and India can involve gaps between expectations and actual experiences, partly as a result of differences in access to information and institutional systems.

This Conference seeks to examine career development across borders as a continuous process, considering the different factors that influence individuals before, during, and after employment. Particular attention will be given to the relationship between “working” and “living,” as career formation is shaped not only by workplace experiences but also by the wider social and living environment. By bringing together perspectives from Japan and India, the Conference aims to develop a broader understanding of these interconnected experiences and challenges.

2. Structure of the Subcommittees

The Conference will be organized around the main theme, “Beyond Borders: Japanese and Indian Youth Perspectives on Coexistence and Careers,” with several subcommittees designed to explore different aspects of working and living across national borders. The subcommittees will bring together students from Japan and India with varied academic interests and backgrounds, encouraging them to develop their discussions through dialogue, collaboration, and joint activities.

The subcommittees will examine the social conditions, environments, and values that shape the experiences of young people living and working internationally. Each group will

approach its topic from both Japanese and Indian perspectives, while combining academic discussion with opportunities for practical learning. Fieldwork, interviews, and other interactive activities will therefore form an important part of the Conference alongside theoretical exploration.

The Theme is divided into the following four subcommittees:

- 1. Workplace Environment**
- 2. Career Development**
- 3. Local Communities**
- 4. Culture**

Subcommittee 1: Workplace Environment

The experience of working in a foreign country is shaped by the ways organizations operate and communicate. Systems of workflow management and employee evaluation, for example, can affect both how comfortably people work and whether they choose to remain in an organization. At the same time, workplace experiences may vary considerably depending on differences in organizational structures, industries, and the support provided to employees.

- Use of languages in the workplace (Japanese, English, etc.)
- Organizational structures, including seniority systems and decision-making processes
- Differences in employee support and acceptance systems across companies
- Factors that encourage employee retention and circumstances that may lead to resignation

Subcommittee 2: Career Development

Cross-border career development is not limited to the period after an individual begins working abroad. It starts with decisions about education and career paths, continues through the recruitment process, and develops further through experiences in the workplace. The information available about different countries, as well as the expectations formed around them, can influence career choices from the outset. Later, recruitment practices and language requirements may determine the opportunities individuals are able to access.

Experiences after entering the workforce can also reshape perceptions of one's career and future. Depending on these experiences and on available career opportunities, individuals may consider changing jobs, returning to their home country, or pursuing employment in another country.

- Formation of information and expectations during career selections
- Changes in career perceptions before and after coming to Japan
- Comparisons with other countries (such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Dubai, and Canada)

Subcommittee 3: Local Communities

The decision to continue working in a foreign country is influenced not only by conditions within the workplace but also by the experience of everyday life. Practical matters such as housing, administrative procedures, and living costs can shape people's ability to settle into a new environment. At the same time, cultural and social factors—including food practices, religious backgrounds, relationships with local communities, and experiences of social isolation—can have a significant impact on people's sense of comfort and belonging.

Understanding these aspects is therefore essential when considering how living environments affect people's willingness and ability to continue working in a particular country.

- Accommodation of food cultures and religious practices (vegetarianism, halal, etc.)
- Relationships with local communities and issues of social isolation
- The impact of living environments on continued employment

Subcommittee 4: Culture

Living and working in a foreign environment requires navigating the foundational cultural values and daily norms that govern social interactions. Beyond structural or institutional frameworks, cross-cultural integration is deeply experienced through everyday practices such as religious traditions, dietary habits, and social etiquette. While differences in these domains can initially present barriers to mutual understanding, recognizing underlying commonalities and shared values can foster deeper intercultural connections.

At the same time, the transition into a new society highlights how personal identities interact with unfamiliar social expectations and community customs. Understanding how individuals and host communities navigate dietary accommodation, religious participation, and interpersonal communication is vital to moving beyond surface-level coexistence toward meaningful inclusion and mutual adaptation.

- Cultural similarities and dissimilarities across religious practices, beliefs, and traditional customs
- Dietary preferences, food habits, and the role of hospitality in cross-cultural engagement
- Everyday social etiquette, interpersonal communication styles, and workplace norms
- Identifying shared cultural values (such as respect, gratitude, and community) as pathways for mutual adaptation and meaningful coexistence

Group Discussion Overview of Subcommittees 1, 2, 3, and 4

Subcommittee 1: Workplace Environment

Name	Position	Institution/Major
Aditya Prasad	President - India Side	Sister Nivedita University, Bachelors in Computer Science Engineering
Anurag Das	Communicator - India Side	Jadavpur University, Bachelors in Civil Engineering
Kimaya Thakkar	Academics Team Member	St. Xavier's University, Bachelors in Management Studies
Yuzuki Hosoi	President - Japan Side	Keio University, Faculty of Law, Department of Law
Yuka Majima	International Liaison	Soka University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Economics

Topic: “Analysis on Inclusion and Long term Career of Indian Professionals in Japanese Workplace”

The Workplace Environment Subcommittee was formed under this year’s conference theme, “Working Beyond Borders” Our aim was to examine how Indian professionals experience and integrate into Japanese workplaces. The subcommittee comprised Yuzuki Hosoi, Yuka Majima, Aditya Prasad, Anurag Das and Kimaya Thakkar. The group focused on communication, language barriers, workplace culture, career development, employee support and long-term retention.

PRE-CONFERENCE STAGE

During the pre-conference stage, the subcommittee identified communication styles, cross-cultural integration, career mobility, employee support infrastructure, and social and community anchors as key areas influencing workplace integration. The members conducted literature reviews and developed a questionnaire and interview framework covering career motivations, recruitment, workplace environments, support systems, living conditions and future mobility. The initial hypothesis examined whether differences in communication, scheduling and task execution could create workplace friction. Plans for interviews, company visits and field research were also developed.

DURING THE CONFERENCE

During the conference, the subcommittee conducted seven group discussions, interviews and field visits across Tokyo, Yokohama and Hamamatsu. Discussions examined language,

communication, workplace expectations, scheduling, age, gender and professional fields, gradually refining the research question. Interviews with Indian professionals at Honda, Yanmar, Rakuten and other workplaces provided contrasting perspectives on communication, workplace support, adaptation, job satisfaction and career mobility. Field visits to Suzuki Motor Corporation, Tokyo International School, HICE, YOKE and the Yokohama India Centre provided further insights into workplace practices, language learning, cultural inclusion and community support. The final discussions consolidated these findings and case studies before the presentation was prepared and rehearsed.

FINAL OUTCOMES

The research showed that creating a supportive environment for Indian professionals requires attention to communication, workplace expectations, cross-cultural understanding, effective onboarding, career development, employee support and everyday inclusion. The interviews indicated that language proficiency and understanding Japanese workplace etiquette can reduce communication difficulties, while supportive colleagues and structured guidance can help employees adapt. At the same time, limited career growth, communication difficulties and differences in workplace expectations can influence decisions to seek other opportunities. Suzuki Motor Corporation provided an important example of supportive workplace practices through substantial onboarding and training, guidance from colleagues, flexibility to change departments, clear work processes, opportunities for career growth, employee inclusion and a supportive organisational culture. Its provision of Indian food also demonstrated how cultural familiarity can create comfort and encourage interaction. HICE's cultural training and practical Japanese-language education further highlighted the importance of support beyond the workplace. Based on these findings, the subcommittee identified the need to make communication and workplace expectations clearer, strengthen cross-cultural understanding, provide effective onboarding and training, create opportunities for career development and mobility, build stronger employee support systems, connect existing support networks, and make successful practices more consistent across workplaces. The group concluded that Japan already offers several strong factors that can support an Indian professional including stable work environments, professional opportunities, employee development, community support and opportunities for long term growth and that strengthening these areas can help make Japan a more welcoming and sustainable career environment for Indian professionals.

Subcommittee 2: Career Development

Name	Position	Institution/Major
Soham Dutta	Academics Team Member	Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology, Bachelors in Computer Science Engineering
Tushnee Chatterjee	Cultural Team Member	Jadavpur University, Masters in Geography

Sangbad Mazumder	Academics Team Member	Sister Nivedita University, Bachelors in Computer Science Engineering
Srivaishnavi Ramakrishnan	Cultural Team Member	National Institute of Fashion Technology, Chennai Bachelors in Leather Design
Saki Takikawa	Domestic Liaison	Soka University, Faculty of Economics, Department of Economics
Hideto Seki	Finance Bureau	Meiji University, Faculty of Political Science & Economics, Department of Regional Administration

Topic: “Indian student's expectations towards Japanese higher education, employment, and long-term settlement”

PRE-CONFERENCE STAGE

The Career Development Subcommittee focused on understanding the expectations and challenges faced by Indian students in pursuing higher education, employment and long term careers in Japan. In line with the conference theme “Working Beyond Borders” the group examined the transition from education to employment and identified factors such as career readiness, internships, exchange programmes, university industry collaboration, workplace culture, language, communication, and opportunities for professional growth. The group planned surveys and discussions to understand students' perceptions and identify gaps between Indian university education and the expectations of Japanese employers.

DURING THE CONFERENCE

During the conference the group analysed the information gathered through surveys, research, and discussions. The Indian and Japanese members exchanged perspectives on Japanese higher education, recruitment practices, workplace expectations, and long term career development. Particular attention was given to the importance of practical experiences such as internships, research opportunities, exchange programmes and industry collaboration in preparing students for international careers. The group also discussed challenges related to language and intercultural communication, transparent career progression, workplace integration and professional development. Throughout the process, the members worked collaboratively to refine their findings and develop ideas for the final presentation. As the members came from different academic and cultural backgrounds, the discussions provided diverse perspectives on Japan India career cooperation. Communication between the Indian

and Japanese members was further facilitated through language support within the group, helping ensure that ideas and opinions could be shared and understood effectively.

FINAL OUTCOMES

At the conclusion of the conference, the group presented its findings on the journey from education to employment and long-term career development. The research highlighted the importance of creating clearer pathways connecting Indian universities, Japanese higher education institutions and Japanese companies. The group proposed that stronger opportunities for internships, exchange programmes, industry collaboration, career guidance and intercultural preparation could contribute to better career readiness and workplace integration. The collaborative experience also strengthened the members' understanding of the opportunities and challenges involved in building sustainable Japan India professional connections. Working together throughout the conference enabled the members to develop their research, communication, leadership, and teamwork skills while gaining a broader perspective on international career development.

Subcommittee 3: Local Communities

Name	Position	Institution/Major
Ranjabati Chattopadhyay	Vice President - Academics Team	Jadavpur University, Bachelors in English
Amrita Guha	Press Team Member	Jadavpur University, Masters in English
Zorinsangi Bawlchhim	Academics Team Member	Delhi University, Bachelor in Psychology
Yoshimi Saito	Vice President - Japan Side	Tsuda University, Faculty of Policy Studies, Department of Policy Studies
Ririko Yuya	International Liaison - Japan Side	Keio University, Faculty of Law, Department of Political Science

Topic: “Sense of Belonging in Local Communities: The Role of Formal and Informal Support Systems”

The subcommittee focused on understanding how foreign residents experience local communities in Japan, with particular attention to their sense of belonging and the role played by formal and informal support systems. The research explored whether and how institutional

support, community relationships and everyday interactions shape foreign residents' experiences of belonging within local communities.

PRE-CONFERENCE STAGE

During the pre-conference stage, the subcommittee established its research direction by focusing on the relationship between sense of belonging and two forms of support: formal support systems provided through institutions and policies, and informal support systems developed through everyday interactions and relationships within local communities. The members developed their research question and hypothesis, examining whether foreign residents who had access to both formal and informal support systems would experience a stronger sense of belonging than those who received support through only one of these areas.

The group conducted preliminary research to understand the demographic and social backgrounds of foreign residents and the different forms of support available to them. Semi-structured interview questions and survey questions were developed around access to formal support, experiences of informal support, community interactions, social participation, cultural and social challenges, and feelings of belonging. Plans for field research were also developed, with the members preparing to interview, interact with and engage with foreign residents and local community members. The Google Forms were circulated and responsibilities were divided among the members.

CONFERENCE STAGE

During the conference, the subcommittee conducted surveys, semi-structured interviews, field visits and direct interactions with foreign residents and local community members. These interactions allowed the members to explore differences in demographic backgrounds and experiences, while examining how individuals accessed and experienced both formal and informal forms of support.

The members particularly focused on understanding whether formal support systems such as government policies, institutional services and organised assistance contributed to foreign residents' sense of belonging, and how these compared with informal support received through friendships, neighbours, colleagues and everyday community interactions.

The survey findings, interviews and field experiences were then discussed and compared. This helped the group identify patterns in how different forms of support influenced foreign residents' experiences of community, connection and belonging.

FINAL OUTCOMES

For the final presentation, the subcommittee consolidated its survey results, interview findings and fieldwork observations. The findings did not fully support the initial hypothesis. While access to both formal and informal support systems was associated with a stronger sense of belonging, the research indicated that **informal support systems played a more**

significant role in helping foreign residents feel that they belonged to their local communities.

Formal support systems, including government policies and institutional services, were found to provide important assistance and create structures through which foreign residents could access information and support. However, these systems alone did not appear to generate the same sense of belonging as informal relationships and everyday interactions. Connections with local residents, colleagues, neighbours and other members of the community often played a more direct role in creating feelings of connection, acceptance and belonging.

At the same time, the research showed that formal and informal support systems should not be understood as completely separate. Formal systems can provide the foundation and opportunities for support, while informal relationships can help transform those opportunities into meaningful social connections. When both forms of support are present, foreign residents can experience a stronger sense of inclusion and belonging. While these systems remain important, everyday human relationships and informal community connections play a particularly significant role in helping foreign residents feel connected, included and that they belong.

Subcommittee 4: Culture

Name	Position	Institution/Major
Senjuti Mazumder	Vice President - Cultural Team	Jadavpur University, Masters in English
Saanvi Mitra	Vice President - Press Team	Jadavpur University, Masters in English
Dwija Maheshwaran	Cultural Team Member	SRMIST Vadapalani City Campus, Bachelors in Computer Science Engineering
Ayaka Matsui	Academic Planning & Public Relation	Kindai University, Faculty of International Studies, Department of Global Studies
Chiharu Imai	Domestic Liaison	Akita International University, Faculty of International Liberal Arts, Department of Global Studies

Topic: “Understanding Cultural Similarities and Dissimilarities across Religion, Etiquette and Food Habits”

Subcommittee 4, Culture, comprised Chiharu Imai and Ayaka Matsui from the Japanese team, and Dwija M., Saanvi Mitra and Senjuti Mazumder from the Indian team. The

subcommittee focused on understanding cultural similarities and differences between India and Japan through religion, food culture and everyday etiquette, while exploring how shared values could contribute to meaningful coexistence.

PRE-CONFERENCE STAGE

During the pre-conference stage, the subcommittee established its research direction by identifying religion, food culture and everyday etiquette as three areas through which cultural differences are experienced in daily life. The members developed their research question and hypothesis, focusing on whether cultural differences could become opportunities for intercultural understanding rather than simply barriers. The group also conducted preliminary research and developed surveys and interview questions covering religious practices, food and hospitality, communication styles, workplace etiquette, cultural barriers and shared values. Plans for field research were also developed, with visits to religious institutions, restaurants, universities, companies, schools and cultural organisations. The Google forms were circulated and proper division of work was done.

CONFERENCE STAGE

During the conference, the subcommittee conducted its planned surveys, interviews and field research across Tokyo, Yokohama and Hamamatsu. Members gathered perspectives from students, foreign residents, educators, companies, cultural organisations, restaurants and religious institutions. Field visits included Hie Shrine, ISKCON Temple, Indian restaurants, Keio University, Suzuki Motor Corporation, Hamamatsu City Hall, HICE and the Yokohama India Centre, among others. These interactions helped the members examine religious participation, dietary practices, communication styles, workplace integration, cultural adaptation and community inclusion. The survey findings and field experiences were then discussed and compared, allowing the group to identify common themes such as language and communication barriers, differences in social expectations, the importance of institutional support, and the role of shared values such as respect, hospitality, gratitude and community.

FINAL OUTCOMES

For the final presentation, the subcommittee consolidated its survey results, interview findings and fieldwork observations. Case studies from the organisations and institutions visited were also included in the final presentation. Survey responses were organised into statistical data, tables and graphs to clearly present the findings.

The research indicated that intercultural barriers extend beyond language, with communication styles, social expectations, cultural familiarity and everyday practices also influencing interactions. At the same time, shared values and sustained opportunities for interaction were found to create possibilities for greater understanding and inclusion. The subcommittee's research ultimately highlighted the importance of mutual adaptation that suggested meaningful coexistence requires not only individuals to understand another culture, but also institutions and communities to create spaces where people from different backgrounds can communicate, participate and belong.

EVENT REPORTS

Kolkata Team's Arrival in Tokyo | 20th August, 2026

Soham Dutta

On 19th August, the Indian delegation embarked on its journey to Japan for the 30th India-Japan Students' Conference. We travelled from Kolkata via Singapore, where we had a short layover before our connecting flight to Haneda. After reaching Singapore early in the morning, we had only about an hour and a half to transfer to the other terminal. Despite the rush, we successfully boarded our flight to Tokyo. The excitement of finally visiting Japan kept us awake throughout the journey. At around 3:45 p.m., we arrived at Haneda Airport. After completing the immigration formalities and collecting our luggage, we met Yoshimi-san and two other Japanese delegates, who were waiting to welcome us. They warmly greeted us and provided each member with a welcome SUICA card and SIM card, making us feel welcome from the very beginning. After taking a few photographs together, the Indian delegation was divided into three groups, each accompanied by Japanese members, and we travelled to the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center. Upon arrival, we were warmly welcomed by the Japanese delegates who had gathered there. We received our ID cards and food coupons before proceeding to our respective rooms. After settling in and having dinner, the Indian delegation gathered together to discuss the following day's opening ceremony. Members from Chennai and Delhi also joined the discussion, allowing the entire Indian team to prepare together. Although we were exhausted after travelling almost the entire day with very little sleep, the excitement of finally being in Japan kept our spirits high. We eventually retired for the night, eagerly looking forward to the conference and the experiences that awaited us.

Chennai Team's Arrival in Japan | 20th August, 2026

Srivaishnavi Ramakrishnan

On the 19th of August, the Chennai team began our journey to Japan, travelling from Chennai to Mumbai and then from Mumbai to Haneda Airport. After completing the check-in process at Chennai, we travelled to Mumbai and arrived earlier than expected. Although we had started our day very early and were already tired, the excitement of finally travelling to Japan made the journey enjoyable.

After spending some time at Mumbai Airport, we boarded our Air India flight to Haneda at 4:15 p.m. The nine-hour journey initially felt difficult as we were already exhausted and were not sure how we would manage such a long flight.

However, during the flight, we met Yuya San, a Japanese student who was seated beside us. Meeting him became one of the most memorable parts of our journey. He was around our age

and was pursuing a business major. He was very friendly and confident while speaking in English, and we had several interesting conversations during the flight.

After reaching Haneda Airport, Yuya San continued to help us even after we completed immigration and customs. Since the airport was huge and unfamiliar to us, his guidance was extremely helpful. He showed us where to go, helped us with our luggage and stayed with us until we were done. Even though it was early in the morning, he patiently stayed with us until around 6:00 a.m. His kindness gave us our first real impression of Japanese hospitality. After collecting our SIM cards, we met the Japanese members, who helped us with our SUICA cards and other arrangements.

Since we could not check in immediately at the National Olympic Memorial Youth Center, we kept our luggage safely and went out to explore Tokyo. We travelled by train towards Tokyo Skytree, and even the train journey felt like a cultural experience. The trains and stations were very quiet and orderly, and the streets were extremely clean. I was also surprised by how much attention was given to design in everyday surroundings. A beautifully designed drain cover caught my attention and made me realize that even ordinary objects can have thoughtful design.

We visited Tokyo Skytree, explored the nearby stores and vending machines, and took photographs together. We also had our first Japanese meal, including ramen and gyoza, with Hideto Seki San. Even though we were tired from the long journey, exploring Tokyo with our Japanese friends made our first day in Japan truly memorable.

Delhi Team's Arrival in Japan | 20th August, 2026

Zorinsangi Bawlchhim

The participant, Zorinsangi Bawlchhim, departed from New Delhi for Tokyo on August 19, 2026. This marked the first time that JISC had recruited a participant from Delhi, with her being the sole representative from the city. She travelled from New Delhi to Tokyo Haneda Airport Terminal 3 alongside JISC Japan President, Ms Yuzuki Hosoi, who accompanied her throughout the journey. The flight arrived at 5:55 a.m. on a sunny Wednesday morning. Upon arrival, she completed the immigration process smoothly and without difficulty. During her time at the airport, she interacted with several individuals and exchanged contact information with some of those she met, providing an early opportunity for informal intercultural exchange. After immigration came the very first meeting with her fellow members - the Chennai team, who had arrived a few hours earlier, along with several Japanese JISC members who had been waiting at the airport. She freshened up with the Chennai team before travelling by metro to the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center, where the participants kept their luggage. Following this, she visited Tokyo Skytree with the Chennai team, accompanied by members of the Japanese team. The visit provided an opportunity for the participants to begin interacting informally and experiencing Tokyo together before the official conference programme began.

Visit to Meiji Jingu Shrine | 21st August, 2026

Ranjabati Chattopadhyay

21 August 2026 marked the official first day of the 30th India-Japan Students' Conference. The day began with a visit to Meiji Jingu Shrine, a Shinto shrine in Tokyo dedicated to Emperor Meiji and Empress Shoken. Established in 1920, the shrine is surrounded by a vast expanse of forest and has long been an important place of worship and remembrance.

The morning began rather hurriedly, with a quick breakfast and the excitement of trying different Japanese food for the first time. Some dishes were enjoyed, while others were met with less enthusiasm, but the unfamiliarity itself made the meal enjoyable. Dressed in saris and suits, as the group was scheduled to visit the Embassy later that morning, they set out for Meiji Jingu.

As soon as they entered the shrine grounds, the hurried pace of the morning seemed to fade. The towering trees and quiet pathways offered a sense of calm that felt almost removed from the energy of Tokyo city. It was a serene beginning to the conference, giving everyone a chance to slow down, settle in and take a breath before the busy days ahead.

The visit also offered their first opportunity to experience several Japanese Shinto traditions. They learned the ritual of cleansing themselves at the *temizuya* before approaching the shrine and later learned how to pray in the traditional Japanese manner—bowing, clapping twice, offering their prayers and bowing once more. They wrote down wishes for health and well-being, and hung them alongside the wishes of other visitors. They also tried *omikuji*, the traditional fortune slips, and received their own *goshuincho* (stamp-book for Shrines).

As they explored the shrine, taking photographs and admiring its architecture, the visit became a gentle introduction to Japan itself—a moment of quiet reflection and shared discovery, and a memorable first experience of a Japanese shrine.

Embassy Visit | 21st August, 2026

Aditya Prasad

After the visit to the Meiji Jingu shrine, we went to the Indian Embassy in Tokyo. We were received by Nagahama Sensei alongside Mr. Sankha from the Embassy. After a short wait in the conference room, Her Excellency Nagma Mallick Madam welcomed us and congratulated us for the 30th edition of the conference.

The India Side President then briefed her about the purpose and history of the conference which was followed by a brief introduction from both Indian and Japanese delegations. In the meantime, we were served *samosas* and tea which was usual to the Indian members, but was a new experience to the Japanese team members. Madam Ambassador led the conversation by talking about her experience in Japan and encouraged the Indian students to strengthen the bonds between the two countries. She discussed the cultural similarities between the two

countries and also mentioned how the two governments are planning to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of Japan-India diplomatic relations in the year 2027. She also encouraged the students to pursue higher education in Japan and talked highly of the infrastructure and the facilities provided in the Japanese Universities.

As the discussions carried on, she asked the Indian team to introduce Indian festivals and cultures to the Japan team to further deepen the bonding between themselves. After a short discussion, we had the opportunity to ask questions to Her Excellency. Everybody showed keen interest and asked questions about careers in Japan, what her journey was like, etc. In the beginning, the Japanese delegation was not asking as many questions, which Madam Ambassador pointed out. She specifically encouraged the women in the team to be more vocal and expressive, after which, there was more participation from both the teams.

Towards the end of the session, Madam Ambassador wished us all the best for the conference after which we had a short photo session. Mr. Sankha showed us around the Embassy building after we left the conference room. There was a dedicated space on the ground floor to showcase different cultures from different states of India under the One District One Product (ODOP) program. Everyone spent a few minutes exploring the different goods on showcase after which we left to go back to Olympic Center for the Cultural Exchange and Opening Ceremony.

Cultural Exchange | 21st August, 2026

Anurag Das

Cultural exchange serves as a bridge between two distinct cultures, allowing people to understand each other's traditions by experiencing them together. We held our own cultural exchange event during the first official day of the conference. After having lunch, we all gathered in Room 513 of the Center building, preparing for the different activities we had planned for the exchange.

It started with the Japanese team making us try the art of *Shodō*, also known as Japanese calligraphy. We were divided into groups so that everyone got the chance to experience it. All of us tried to write different things, ranging from our favorite words to difficult kanji and even the Japanese translation of our names. The Japanese team really helped us a lot and showed us the correct way to write.

Following that, from the Indian side, we had them experience the traditional yet commonly prevalent games of Ludo and Pallanguzhi. They were quite intrigued by the mechanics of the latter. Finally, to end the event, we arranged a game of Housie, also known as Bingo or Tambola in India. It's a popular game where players need to scratch off numbers from their pre-printed tickets, which are handed out to them, and the first person to scratch all the numbers is given the ultimate prize.

Aditya-san hosted the game in a goofy manner. After a long round of playing, it was Zorinsangi-san who shouted "Bingo", signaling her win. The cultural exchange finally came to an end, but it set the stage for the ultimate cultural program: the opening ceremony.

Opening Ceremony | 21st August, 2026

Senjuti Mazumder

The Opening Ceremony of the 30th India-Japan Students' Conference was held on 21st August 2026 at the National Olympic Youth Centre in Tokyo, marking the beginning of the days of cultural exchange, learning and friendship. The ceremony was anchored by Yuka Majima, whose warm and graceful hosting guided the proceedings.

Yuzuki Hosoi, President of the Japanese team, formally opened the ceremony and welcomed the participants. This was followed by a speech by Aditya Prasad, the President of the Indian Team. A representative of the OB/OG group, Ms. Tomoko Hishinuma, then addressed the gathering, followed by speeches by Mr. Supratik Sil Roy and Mr. Deepro Banerjee, two of the core members of the students' conference *dosokai*. A guest speaker shared a few words with the participants, after which Ms. Hiroko Nagahama, one of the founders of the India-Japan Students' Conference, warmly welcomed the participants and shared her wishes for a meaningful conference.

The Indian team was then invited onto the stage to introduce themselves, followed by the Japanese team. It was a lovely moment to see both teams together and put faces to the people with whom they would be spending the coming days. As a gesture of friendship, the Indian team presented small gift bags to the Japanese members. One of the most special moments for the Cultural Team was presenting a traditional Indian painting to Nagahama Sensei.

Tushnee Chatterjee, a member of the team, had beautifully hand-painted an artwork depicting Lord Krishna fighting the demon bird *Bakasura*. It was incredibly meaningful to share something so personal and rooted in Indian artistic tradition. Nagahama Sensei reciprocated this gesture by presenting the team with beautiful pieces of traditional Japanese calligraphy, preserved in laminated cards, which they were delighted to receive.

The cultural segment then began with the presentation, "Cultural Echoes of India." Seeing the programme that had been discussed, rehearsed and shaped over the previous weeks finally come alive was a particularly proud moment for the Indian team. Beginning with Rabindra Sangeet and Tagore's poetry, the presentation travelled through Odissi, Carnatic music, Kathak, Tamil storytelling, and the vibrant traditions of Garba and Dandiya, followed by a folktale from Mizoram. The team wanted the presentation to be more than a series of performances; they wanted it to tell stories and offer the Japanese team a glimpse into the diversity of India. The ceremony concluded with everyone coming together for group photographs. Looking back, the Opening Ceremony was more than the formal beginning of the conference. It was the first real coming together of the two teams, and the beginning of the friendships, conversations and memories that would shape the days ahead. It was the first page of their shared journey.

Social Dinner | 21st August, 2026

Amrita Guha

Following the formal opening ceremony, the congregation headed to the Dashi Lab Cafe, located within the Central Building. This would be the venue for a vibrant evening social dinner, a chance for the present students and the visiting guests to interact.

The rare opportunity sparked immediate conversation, and formal barriers quickly dissolved as alumni, invited guests, Japanese hosts, and Indian visitors mingled effortlessly. The resulting conversations were deeply insightful, spanning shared memories, academic aspirations, and reflections on life in Japan and India.

The buffet table presented a thoughtful spread of traditional Japanese fare. Guests filled their plates with steamed rice, aromatic curry, boiled pumpkin, cabbage, crisp bean sprouts, fried tofu and kinpira gobo (braised burdock root). Alongside the main dishes, visitors could shave their own fresh bonito flakes and select their preferred paste to instantly brew a personalized bowl of miso soup. Several curious Indians members rose to this challenge. Meanwhile, Vaishnavi-san introduced thattai, a crisp and savoury fried cracker from South India, which the Japanese hosts received with genuine delight.

From the main courses down to the beverages, the flavours of Japanese cuisine remained light and exceptionally subtle, contrasting sharply with the richer palates the Indian members were used to.

Ultimately, the dinner provided a vital space for cross-cultural exchange outside of structured meetings and group discussions, allowing participants to connect on a more personal level. It proved that significant insights and lasting connections can emerge from the simple act of sharing a meal.

First General Discussion - Subcommittee 1 | 22nd August, 2026

Kimaya Thakkar

The first Group Discussion of the conference started on 22 August at 8:30 a.m. Our Subcommittee, “Workplace Environment” consisted of five members:- Yuzuki Hosoi, Yuka Majima, Aditya Prasad, Anurag Das, and Kimaya Thakkar. Looking forward to our first GD, we sat down with our laptops and explored the hypothesis that we discussed during the online meetings held previously: “Indian employees will report higher stress from Japanese-style rigid scheduling, while Japanese employees will report higher frustration from perceived unpredictability in Indian task completion, and this bidirectional friction will be strongest in mid-level coordination roles rather than at senior leadership levels, where both sides have already adapted through experience.” We discussed various aspects of workplace culture and practices in India and Japan, including language barriers, gender roles, one on one meetings, college company collaborations, hybrid work, and the need for skilled workers. The Indian

and Japanese delegations actively exchanged their workplace ethics, experiences, and cultural perspectives, creating an open and engaging discussion. The session helped us understand how differences in communication, scheduling, work practices, and expectations can influence collaboration between Indian and Japanese employees.

First General Discussion - Subcommittee 2 | 22nd August, 2026

Soham Dutta

The first Group Discussion session of the 30th India-Japan Students' Conference was held on 22nd August 2026 at the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center in Tokyo. The session began at 9:00 A.M. JST and continued for approximately three hours. The Indian and Japanese participants had already been divided into four groups according to their respective subcommittees. During the session, members of each subcommittee came together to discuss the surveys and data collected so far, sharing their findings and exchanging perspectives. The groups also discussed the direction of their upcoming discussions, plans for field research, and the aspects that needed to be explored further. Considerable attention was also given to how the information gathered through surveys and field research could eventually be organised and incorporated into the final presentation. Alongside the academic discussions, the session also provided an opportunity for the Indian and Japanese members to interact more informally. As part of the customary exchange of snacks, the Indian side shared chocolates from India, while the Japanese side offered various local snacks. This added a friendly and relaxed atmosphere to the discussion. Overall, the first Group Discussion served as an important starting point for the subcommittees to organise their ideas, understand each member's perspectives, and establish a clear direction for the research and discussions that would follow.

First General Discussion - Subcommittee 3 | 22nd August, 2026

Zorinsangi Bawlchhim

The first session was conducted in the morning and focused primarily on planning and preparation for the upcoming fieldwork and final presentation. The members worked on outlining the locations to be visited, the scheduled dates, and the potential research activities to be undertaken at each site. They also created an outline for the final presentation, identifying the major topics and sections to be covered. Roles and topics were assigned to individual members and colour-coded in a shared document to clearly indicate each member's responsibilities. The members also prepared interview scripts tailored to different groups, with separate question structures for foreign residents, companies, associations, local governments, and schools. A video was recorded for inclusion in the final presentation, and the members agreed to collect photographs and video footage during the fieldwork to supplement the research findings and contribute to the development of the final presentation. Alongside these research and preparation activities, the members made an interesting cultural observation. It was noted that the Coca-Cola available in Japan differs in taste from the version available in India, providing a small but interesting example of differences in everyday consumer experiences across the two countries.

First General Discussion - Subcommittee 4 | 22nd August, 2026

Senjuti Mazumder

The first Group Discussion session focused on establishing the direction of Subcommittee 4: Culture. Members discussed understanding cultural differences and similarities between India and Japan through food culture, religion and everyday habits. The group considered how these areas could create cultural barriers, but also provide opportunities for shared understanding and coexistence. Members discussed examining both Indian and Japanese perspectives through surveys, interviews and field research. Ideas for survey questions and possible fieldwork locations were exchanged. The discussion helped members refine their research focus and identify the importance of exploring cultural differences alongside shared values and experiences. The session provided a clear foundation for the research that followed.

Second General Discussion - Subcommittee 1 | 22nd August, 2026

Kimaya Thakkar

We had our second Group Discussion at 1:00 p.m. on the same day, following our lunch break. We resumed our discussions and continued exploring the hypothesis in greater depth. Building on what we had discussed in the first GD, we tried to connect the hypothesis with a clear research question and looked at how we could structure our research. We also explored different factors that could influence workplace experiences, including age, gender, language and communication preferences, and differences across professional fields. We discussed possible groups and respondents for our research, looking at areas such as IT, technology, and finance, along with different age groups and workplace positions. We also spoke about preferences such as the use of English and how communication can affect workplace interactions. By the end of the three-hour discussion, we had a much stronger base for our research and were better prepared for the following day. We left the session with more clarity, confidence, and a good amount of knowledge to build on for the next stage of the conference.

Second General Discussion - Subcommittee 2 | 22nd August, 2026

Sangbad Mazumder

The second subcommittee meeting on 22nd August picked up from where the first one was adjourned. The discussions primarily focused on how to improve our data collection methods to further improve the quality of our final data analysis, devising some small improvements to the questionnaires we had previously designed. Outside of that, we had deep discussions regarding the differences between the Japanese and Indian education systems, which left all of us with better insights about our topic as a whole and set a great foundation for our future subcommittee meetings.

Second General Discussion - Subcommittee 3 | 22nd August, 2026

Zorinsangi Bawlchhim

The second session was held after a lunch break and continued the research and preparation work, with greater emphasis on the field visit sites. The members reviewed the planned destinations and focused on understanding the sites in greater detail to better prepare for the fieldwork and ensure a smooth and effective data collection process. Information necessary for future data collection sessions was also compiled. Interview scripts were prepared for specific field visit sites, as well as for an online session with the CEO of Job Is Well, Mr. Eisuke Shigetoku. Plans were also made for a field visit to Shimura Catholic Church. As this field visit would take place during the second subcommittee meeting slot, quick preparations were made for a short presentation on the work completed so that it could be shared with fellow conference members. The team presented the detailed plan for the fieldwork and the structure for the final presentation. The work completed during the first session was also reported, including the interview scripts and research on Indian communities in Nishikasai, Hamamatsu, and Yokohama. The team then took up questions and suggestions from Subcommittees 1, 2, and 4 regarding the methodology and potential research gaps.

Second General Discussion - Subcommittee 4 | 22nd August, 2026

Senjuti Mazumder

The second Group Discussion session focused on developing the research plan and preparing for fieldwork. Members finalised plans to collect 20+ survey responses from Indian and Japanese participants and conduct interviews with Japanese nationals and Indian residents in Japan. The group discussed visits to shrines, Indian restaurants, universities, companies and international organisations to examine religion, food culture and social etiquette. Hie Shrine, HICE, Suzuki Motor Corporation, Global Indian International School and other locations were included in the fieldwork plan. Members also prepared questions concerning religious customs, dietary practices, workplace communication and multicultural coexistence, linking field findings to policy recommendations. The members also started creating the final presentation with the data they already had gathered in the online sessions.

Sightseeing at Shinjuku | 22nd August, 2026

Srivaishnavi Ramakrishnan

In the evening, I went with the group to Shinjuku, and it turned out to be one of the most memorable nights of my trip. It had rained heavily earlier, but that did not stop us from going out. Since it was my first time visiting Shinjuku, I was really excited to finally experience the place that I had seen so many times in pictures and videos.

Shinjuku Station was extremely huge and slightly confusing, but I enjoyed exploring it with everyone. We eagerly collected stamps while walking around with our umbrellas, which made the experience even more fun. As soon as we stepped outside, I was amazed by the

bright and flashy lights surrounding us. The entire place felt almost unreal and reminded me of scenes I had seen in anime. Seeing it in real life felt like a dream come true, and everyone was excited to take pictures, especially at the famous crossings.

One thing that particularly caught my attention was how clean and orderly everything was. Even after such heavy rain, I could not see water clogging on the roads. The crossings were also well maintained and organised despite the large number of people. It made me appreciate the care given to public spaces in Japan.

We then went to Don Quijote, where I found myself confused about what to buy because almost everything looked so cute and interesting. We also visited a 100-yen shop and explored the surrounding areas. We got to see the famous Yakuza spot and several places that looked familiar from anime, making the experience even more exciting.

We ended the night at Komeda Coffee, where we sat together, relaxed and talked about the day. Looking back, the combination of the rain, city lights, exploring an unfamiliar place with everyone and experiencing Tokyo at night made it feel like a truly magical evening that I will remember for a long time.

Third General Discussion - Subcommittee 1 | 23rd August, 2026

Anurag Das

The third GD session was held on Sunday, 23rd August. The main agenda for that session was to present our current research situation. We started making the PowerPoint at the beginning, highlighting the research topics we had discussed until then. It was primarily focused on our research question and initial hypothesis. We differentiated between the workplace cultures of both the Indian and Japanese companies and also how those affect the employees of each nation working in their counterpart's company. We also started to slowly modify and move away from our initial hypothesis at this point. Finally, we presented our PPT in front of the other subcommittees and also held a short Q&A session.

Third General Discussion - Subcommittee 2 | 23rd August, 2026

Srivaishnavi Ramakrishnan

On August 23rd, 2026, we had our third Career Development Subcommittee meeting from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. We began the session with a short presentation giving an overview of our topic. We also explained our problem statement, expected outcomes, methodology and the policies that we would be working on together as a team.

After the presentation, we started working on the questionnaire that would be used for our research. We decided to divide our target audience into three groups so that we could understand different perspectives and experiences related to studying and working in Japan.

The three groups were:

- i) Japanese students who are currently studying at Japanese universities and working in Japanese organisations.
- ii) Indian students who are currently studying at Japanese universities and working in Japanese organisations.
- iii) Indian students who aspire to study and work in Japan.

By including these three groups, we hoped to understand the differences in their experiences, expectations and challenges. This would also help us collect a wider range of responses and make our research more meaningful.

Third General Discussion - Subcommittee 3 | 23rd August, 2026

Zorinsangi Bawlchhim

The members met early in the morning and travelled by metro and bus to Shimura Catholic Church in Itabashi Ward, northern Tokyo. The church is a Catholic parish established in 1967 and is notable for its English-language Mass as well as its Japanese services, making it part of Tokyo's wider religious infrastructure for an international population. Upon arrival, the members were given a warm welcome by the church members. Individuals from different demographic backgrounds were interviewed using a semi-structured interview format. Two of the individuals interviewed were foreign residents who had settled in Japan from India and the Philippines. The members also interviewed an elderly Japanese local who enthusiastically expressed support for foreign residents living in Japan. These interviews provided the team with different perspectives on the experiences of foreign residents and their relationship with the local community. The members briefly joined the English-language Mass at 10:00 a.m. before heading for breakfast. After returning to the church, each member interviewed separate individuals from different backgrounds, allowing for a wider range of perspectives to be collected. Following the interviews, the members expressed their gratitude and said goodbye to the church members before departing. The members then proceeded to join the other subcommittee members for a yukata dressing experience.

Third General Discussion - Subcommittee 4 | 23rd August, 2026

Dwija Maheshwaran

Subcommittee 4 focused on working on getting their final presentation blueprint down, while actively preparing for a presentation to showcase their progress to the rest of the members in the very same Group Discussion. The short presentation covered three main areas- an overview of the project, the updated field visit plans and the overall goal they aim to achieve through their research. The other members asked good questions that made the members review their work, such as- Why Shrines specifically for the field visits? Why particularly food, religion and social etiquette as the three main pillars? The session helped the team coordinate, work on improvement and efficiently work towards the final presentation.

Yukata Wearing Experience | 23rd August, 2026

Tushnee Chatterjee

During the IJSC conference one of the most significant cultural exchange activities had to be the Yukata wearing experience. The Indian team had the wonderful opportunity to visit Mrs. Kitazume San's house in Nakai, Shinjuku City. This visit was an extremely memorable and enriching one as it allowed both the men and women of the Indian delegation to engage and interact with Japanese culture in a much more personal and profound manner.

Upon our arrival, Kitazume San welcomed us to her house and showed us the traditional Japanese attire also known as the "Yukata". She helped us to put it on and told us about the different and intricate details in the clothing and what each colour and pattern signifies. She also styled the hair of all the female members and decorated the updos with beautiful Japanese ornaments creating hairstyles that complimented the attire. She also kindly helped the male members of the team wear their Yukata, allowing everyone, regardless of gender, to participate in the traditional experience. Dressed in traditional Japanese clothing, we got more acquainted with the "Japanese way of life" and we got a clear notion of how hospitable and meticulous Japanese people are.

The atmosphere of her house in whole was very warm and welcoming. We were treated to absolutely delicious Japanese cookies and shaved ice! We had a gala time chatting and having fun while learning about Japanese culture in such a casual environment. We also clicked several pictures in the traditional clothing in so many different poses while holding the Japanese fan also known as the "Uchiwa".

During our visit, we also had the privilege of meeting Mr. Kitazume, who previously served as the Japanese Ambassador to Qatar. The meeting was yet another memorable one as we were able to learn a lot about his life as a diplomat and the duties he carried out while proudly serving his nation. Apart from their professional lives, Mr. and Mrs. Kitazume had been through a wide ranging experience, having visited many destinations around the globe. During our conversation, Kitazume san also shared various tales about their journey abroad which also gave us an insight into diverse societies around the world and cross culture interactions.

Overall, the visit to Kitazume san's house and meeting her family was much more than just a cultural exchange. It was also an incredible opportunity to communicate, learn and to understand each other, as it created a personal connection between the Indian participants and Japanese society. We learned to appreciate the Japanese traditions as this experience gave us a chance to interact with the Japanese host via direct participation rather than observation alone. The warmth and generosity extended to us made the experience particularly memorable as it undoubtedly strengthened the spirit of friendship and cultural exchange that lies at the heart of IJSC conference.

Roppongi Hills Bon Odori | 23rd August, 2026

Soham Dutta

On 23rd August, following the enjoyable cultural experience of wearing yukata, the Indian delegation had the opportunity to experience another quintessential Japanese summer tradition, the Bon Odori at Roppongi Hills. Bon Odori is a traditional Japanese folk dance associated with Obon, a summer period traditionally dedicated to honouring and remembering one's ancestors. The dance is generally performed in a circle around a central yagura, accompanied by traditional music, creating an atmosphere where people of all ages can participate together. The Roppongi Hills Bon Odori is a relatively modern celebration of this tradition, having been held for almost two decades in the heart of Tokyo. The festival brings together traditional Japanese dance, music, food, and community activities, allowing visitors to experience Japanese summer culture in the middle of one of Tokyo's most vibrant urban districts. The festival also features food and entertainment stalls, making it more than just a dance event. Our journey to the festival was not entirely straightforward, as the weather had turned rainy that evening. Due to the bad weather, we arrived later than planned and were initially worried that we might miss Bon Odori altogether. However, we were fortunate enough to reach the venue just in time for the final dance. Despite the rain and our delayed arrival, we did not want to miss the opportunity and immediately joined the dancers around the yagura. What followed became one of the most enjoyable experiences of the day. Having already learned about Japanese culture through the yukata experience, participating in the Bon Odori allowed us to experience it more directly. We followed the movements of the dancers, gradually getting into the rhythm, and enjoyed dancing alongside people from Japan as well as participants and visitors from different countries. The atmosphere was lively and welcoming, and the shared enjoyment of the dance made cultural differences feel almost insignificant. For us, it was not simply about learning the steps correctly, but about becoming part of the celebration, even if only for a short while. After the dance concluded, we spent some time taking photographs and capturing the memories of the evening. We then explored the various festival stalls and tried several of the foods available. From the lively atmosphere of the stalls to the variety of flavours and festival-style dishes, the food became another memorable part of the experience. Although our visit was shortened by the rain and our late arrival, being able to participate in even the final Bon Odori dance made the evening especially memorable. The experience gave us a chance to enjoy Japanese summer culture not merely as spectators, but as participants, sharing music, dance, food, and laughter with people from different backgrounds.

Sightseeing at Kamakura | 24th August, 2026

Sangbad Mazumder

One morning during our exchange program, our student delegation took a trip out to Kamakura, a coastal city just south of Tokyo. While it is a quiet seaside town today, Kamakura served as Japan's political capital during the medieval era under the Minamoto shogunate, making it the historic birthplace of samurai military rule.

Our first stop was Hasedera Temple, terraced into the wooded slopes of Mount Kannon. The grounds were landscaped with traditional carp ponds, stone walking paths, and beautifully maintained gardens. Inside the main hall stands the temple's centerpiece: an eleven-headed statue of Kannon, the goddess of mercy. Standing over nine meters tall, it was carved out of a single camphor log and finished in gold leaf. To add to it all, the beautiful path upto the temple decorated with stone statues and the temple's upper terrace offering a clear view out across the water at Sagami Bay started off the morning beautifully.

From Hasedera, we took a short bus ride over to Kotoku-in to see the Great Buddha, also referred to as a *Daibutsu*. Cast from bronze in the thirteenth century, it is one of the most recognizable historic landmarks in Japan. The statue originally sat inside a massive wooden temple hall, but natural disasters including a major tsunami in the late 1400s eventually washed the building away. The statue itself remained intact and has sat open to the elements ever since. Some of the team also headed inside the statue to witness the hollow insides of the ancient engineering marvel.

After this, we headed into central Kamakura to visit Tsurugaoka Hachimangu. Founded by Minamoto no Yoritomo to honour the patron god of warriors, this Shinto complex felt completely different from the quiet Buddhist grounds we had seen earlier. We walked along the paths crossing the central lotus ponds and headed up the wide stone stairs to the main vermilion shrine, which directly overlooks the town's main boulevard.

We made our last stop at Komachi-dori, the busy shopping street running parallel to the shrine approach. Grabbing street snacks and trying out local food gave everyone a chance to chat, and take in the neighbourhood atmosphere before we headed out in the early afternoon while also getting a chance to indulge in the beautiful sight of the road lined nearly with the various stores.

Yokohama India Center | 24th August, 2026

Aditya Prasad

After Kamakura, everybody arrived at Yokohama for their visit to the Yokohama India Centre. There, Mr. Nalin Advani, the Chairman of the Yokohama India Centre was joined by representatives from different companies who work in collaboration with the organization. After a brief introduction from everyone, Mr. Tomio Isogai, the Director and Executive Advisor of YIC, started the exchange meeting. To begin the session, Dr. Tatsuya Hikiji from Ferris University delivered a short presentation about their university. Following that, Mr.

Nalin Advani presented a brief history of entrepreneurship in Yokohama. He elaborated how Yokohama was the first international trading port for Japan opened in 1859. He even mentioned that Yokohama shares a formal “sister-city” relation with Mumbai for over six decades. Mr. Kazutada Kobayashi led the session with his presentation on “Difference of Corporate Culture among India and Japan”. In between the presentations, everyone was asking questions regarding their respective subcommittees. To end the first half of the session, Mr. Kuppuswamy Senthilkuma presented a short presentation on his company SunWells Solutions Co. Ltd. After a short break, we came back to the seminar room for a quick Open Discussion after which we went to the India Fountain at the Yamashita Park for a Group picture. After returning from the fountain, we had a short discussion when Mr. Nalin advised us to stay back in Yokohama till late as the Hanabi festival was about to happen in the evening. Since the schedule was free after the YIC visit, the team decided to wait and experience the Hanabi festival.

Yokohama City Hall | 24th August, 2026

Zorinsangi Bawlchhim

Exchange Meeting with Yokohama India Centre and Yokohama Association for International Communications and Exchanges On 24 August 2026, the members of the 30th Japan–India Student Conference (JISC) attended an exchange meeting with the Yokohama India Centre (YIC) at the Kanagawa Global Business Center. The meeting provided an opportunity to learn about Yokohama’s history, its relationship with India, and the experiences of Indian and other foreign professionals in Japan. The session began with opening remarks by Mr. Tomio Isogai, Director and Executive Advisor of YIC, followed by remarks from Ms. Yuzuki Hosoi, President of JISC, who thanked the Centre for hosting the conference members. The presentations began with Mr. Advani Nalin, Chairman of YIC, who spoke on “A Short History of Entrepreneurship in Yokohama.” He did a wonderful job of connecting the history of Yokohama to the broader themes of the India–Japan Student Conference. His use of personal anecdotes made the presentation more engaging and helped the members understand the city’s history and international connections. This was followed by Mr. Kazutada Kobayashi, Director and Executive Advisor of YIC, who discussed Japanese and Indian corporate cultures, including differences in communication, workplace expectations and employment practices. The final presentation, “Building Long-Term Careers and Stronger India–Japan Connections,” was delivered by Mr. Kuppuswamy Senthilkumar, Manager of the Recruitment Department at SunWells Solutions Co., Ltd. The session focused on building sustainable careers in Japan and highlighted the importance of Japanese language skills, communication, trust, professional development and adapting to workplace practices. The formal YIC meeting concluded with an open discussion and group photograph. Following the meeting, the members visited the Indian Water Tower with YIC members, where Mr. Nalin explained the significance of the monument and its connection to the Indian community in Yokohama. The members also visited the fountain before returning to the venue for the second session of the day with YOKE (Yokohama Association for International Communications and Exchanges). During the YOKE session, the members watched a video

and listened to a presentation introducing the organisation's work in supporting foreign residents and promoting multicultural coexistence in Yokohama. The presentation covered initiatives such as Japanese Language Learning Support and Community Outreach Programmes, which provide language education, consultation and community-based support while encouraging interaction between foreign residents and local communities. The members learned how YOKE works with foreign residents, volunteers, organisations and local stakeholders to understand community needs and strengthen existing support systems. The session was particularly relevant to the Local Communities Subcommittee, as it provided a practical example of how formal support structures can help foreign residents navigate life in Japan while also creating opportunities for meaningful community interaction. Overall, the YIC and YOKE sessions allowed the members to view the India–Japan relationship from both historical and contemporary perspectives. The day connected the history of Yokohama and its Indian community with present-day efforts towards professional integration, international exchange and multicultural coexistence.

Fireworks Festival | 24th August, 2026

Anurag Das

Fireworks, throughout the world, are always associated with moments of celebration and happiness. Be it a large display on New Year's Eve or a modest wedding occasion, fireworks have the power to move our hearts. In Japan, however, fireworks carry a distinct cultural meaning. *Hanabi Taikai*, as these fireworks festivals are locally called, represents a deeply symbolic summer tradition rooted in honoring the dead, warding off evil spirits, and celebrating the ephemeral beauty of life. It embodies *mono no aware*, which is a Japanese term describing a gentle sadness and appreciation of things that are transient and temporary. The fireworks shine brightly for a few seconds before fading away, mirroring life itself. The modern festival began in 1733 on the banks of the Sumida River near Asakusa in Tokyo. Every year during the summer months of July and August, millions of people gather across Japan to watch the fireworks display. They wear lightweight kimono, also known as yukata, and eat traditional foods like yakisoba, takoyaki, and kakigori from the yatai stalls set up near the celebrations. The fact that we were able to see the fireworks was a matter of sheer luck and the stars aligning in our favor. The Japanese team was already looking for fireworks festivals they could show us, but all of them were scheduled before we landed in Japan. However, during our visit to the Yokohama India Center, we learned from the officials there that a *hanabi taikai* was scheduled to happen that very evening. It was the Minato Mirai festival, held over a massive waterfront and featuring around 18,000 fireworks launched over 45 minutes. When we first reached the venue, it was packed with people wearing yukata and waiting for the fireworks to start. As the first round of fireworks went off, the entire sky was covered with bright lights, mirroring the joyous smiles on the faces of everyone watching. It was the first time for the Indian members to experience such a display. Everyone was enjoying the moment, taking pictures and videos, with some of us – including me - even sharing it with friends and family back home via video call. With each round of fireworks, the excitement and anticipation grew alongside a slight sense of sadness that it was slowly

coming to an end. A wave of nostalgia came over me as I compared the *hanabi* to the firecrackers we lit during Diwali back in India. It felt as though I was back home, experiencing Diwali all over again. Eventually, the moment arrived when the final round of fireworks began to erupt. Some of us started leaving the venue early to avoid the rush at the stations once the display was over. In the end, I can confidently say that everyone will carry very fond memories of this experience throughout their life.

Fourth General Discussion - Subcommittee 1 | 25th August, 2026

Anurag Das

The fourth GD session was held on Tuesday, 25th August. Everyone was a bit tired and recovering from the previous day's Kamakura and Yokohama trip. The main agenda for the session was to start our final presentation work and also prepare questions for the interviews that we were scheduled to hold. Keeping our subcommittee topic in mind, we had decided to interview currently employed Indian workers in Japanese companies. We had prepared questions for them ranging from their workplace experience to their relationship with their colleagues and bosses, along with their mental health condition because of living alone in a foreign country away from family and friends.

Fourth General Discussion - Subcommittee 2 | 25th August, 2026

Tushnee Chatterjee

On 25th August 2026, GD 4 of the Career Development Subcommittee was conducted from 8:30 AM to 11:30 AM. The three hour long discussion primarily focused on finalising the structure and direction of our upcoming final presentation. We collectively reviewed the presentation draft, discussed the key points and arguments and we also decided on what other research findings should be incorporated. This was followed by the next step of deciding the appropriate content of each slide. Particular attention was given in maintaining a logical flow between the research question, hypothesis, problem statement, methodology, questionnaire findings, expected outcomes and final predictions. The discussion helped us organize our ideas effectively and allowed us to allocate content across slides and establish a clear framework for the final presentation.

Fourth General Discussion - Subcommittee 3 | 25th August, 2026

Amrita Guha

During the fourth group discussion, Subcommittee 3 members prepared for the scheduled interview with Eisuke Shigetoku, CEO of the organisation JobIsWell. After compiling the questionnaire for Shigetoku-san, the team finalised the interview questions for that afternoon's visit to Tokyo International Public School in Nishikasai. Additionally, members reviewed and documented transcriptions from the interviews conducted at the Shimura Catholic Church to begin compiling the official reports. Finally, they developed and updated the presentation slides for the segments on informal support systems and formal associations,

while also conducting introductory research on Hamamatsu in preparation for their upcoming visit to the city.

Fourth General Discussion - Subcommittee 4 | 25th August, 2026

Dwija Maheshwaran

Subcommittee 4 conducted field visits to attain various insights for our research. The members visited Downtown B's- a homely Indian restaurant run by Tamil owner Bonnie, who shared his experience living in Japan on the topic of Language and Food. He talked about how he had to adapt Indian cuisine to suit the Japanese palate while preserving its authenticity. The members also visited Hie Shrine, where they surveyed foreigners about their experiences with Japanese Shrines and cultural aspects. The majority of them identified as atheist, to which the members asked all of them- "What drew you to Shrines?". These field visits helped them understand how religion, food and cultural practices can serve as bridges between various cultures and provided valuable insights for the statistics and our final presentation.

Tokyo International Public School | 25th August, 2026

Ranjabati Chattopadhyay

During the 30th India-Japan Students' Conference, the group had the opportunity to visit Tokyo International Public School (TIPS) in Nishi-Kasai, Edogawa. Located in an area known for its sizable Indian community, TIPS is an English-medium institution that combines Montessori education in the early years with the Cambridge curriculum as students progress through primary and lower-secondary education. The school's approach places considerable emphasis on learning through exploration, activity and individual development rather than putting children under pressure to learn at a pace that may not suit them.

What made the visit particularly interesting was learning about the story behind the institution. The group heard from the school's leadership about the dream of creating an educational space in Japan and the process of turning that dream into a functioning institution. What began as an idea gradually grew through collaboration, perseverance and the willingness to invite others to contribute to the effort.

TIPS primarily uses English as its medium of instruction and brings together children from different backgrounds. Its Montessori programme for younger children focuses on developing literacy, numeracy, social skills, confidence and sensory-motor abilities through guided activities and play. As children grow older, they move into the Cambridge Primary and Lower Secondary programmes, giving the school an educational structure that combines interactive early learning with a more formal international curriculum. The most memorable part of the visit was getting to participate in some of the preschool activities themselves.

The visit also became a lesson in entrepreneurship and adaptation. It showed the group how a foreign resident could identify a need, create an institution around it and gradually build a community that extends beyond one nationality. The presence of Japanese students alongside children from international backgrounds reflected the idea of acceptance and exchange that such an institution can foster.

At the same time, the group felt that the school could become even more inclusive by incorporating greater disability awareness into its educational environment. Although there were no students with disabilities at present, introducing basic sign-language education, accessible communication methods and disability-inclusive activities could help children develop a stronger understanding of different ways of communicating and learning.

Overall, the visit was both warm and inspiring. It was a chance to meet children, experience their learning environment and, more importantly, understand the courage and persistence involved in building an institution in a new country.

Visit to Nishi-Kasai and ISKCON Temple | 25th August, 2026

Kimaya Thakkar

On 25 August, following our visit to TIPS, Mr. Kondo accompanied the delegation to Nishi-Kasai, popularly known as Tokyo's "Little India." Although brief, the visit provided valuable insight into one of Japan's largest Indian communities. The area around Nishi-Kasai Station is home to approximately 5,000 Indian residents, while the broader Edogawa Ward has a population of more than 8,700 Indians, making it an important cultural hub for the Indian diaspora in Tokyo.

We walked through the neighbourhood and observed the residential areas where many Indian families live, along with shops selling Indian groceries, spices, sweets, and other everyday products. We visited TMVS Foods, a well known Indian grocery store that stocked a wide range of familiar Indian food items and spices. We also interacted with members of the local Indian community, who welcomed us warmly. The visit highlighted how Indian culture has been preserved and integrated into Japanese society while allowing the community to maintain a strong connection to its roots.

After exploring Nishi-Kasai, we travelled by bus to the ISKCON Temple, where we were warmly received by both a Japanese priest and an Indian priest. The peaceful and welcoming atmosphere of the temple immediately created a sense of comfort and spirituality.

The Japanese priest introduced us to the philosophical foundations of Hinduism, explaining the concepts of reincarnation, karma, and moksha. He described how the body is temporary, while the soul is eternal and continues through the cycle of birth and rebirth until liberation. He also spoke about the Bhagavad Gita, explaining that it consists of 700 verses across 18 chapters and serves as a guide for leading a meaningful life. Narrating the story of the

Mahabharata, he explained how Lord Krishna delivered the Gita to Prince Arjuna when he hesitated to fight his own family, teaching him about duty, truth, and self-realization.

The Indian priest then explained the significance of the deities worshipped in the temple. At the centre were Radha and Lord Krishna, representing divine love and spiritual unity. To their right were Subhadra and Balarama, Lord Krishna's sister and elder brother. On the left were Sri Sri Nitai-Gaurasundara, the joint deities of Lord Nityananda and Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who are worshipped in Gaudiya Vaishnavism for bestowing supreme mercy and divine love. He explained that Lord Nityananda is regarded as an avatar of Lord Balarama and represents eternal bliss and spiritual strength, while Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is regarded as an incarnation of Lord Krishna who appeared with a golden complexion. Their raised hands symbolize complete surrender to the Supreme.

The priest also briefly explained the roles of Lord Vishnu, Lord Brahma, and Lord Shiva within Hindu philosophy. This discussion was especially meaningful for the Indian delegation, many of whom had grown up hearing these stories, while the Japanese delegation listened with great curiosity and interest.

The visit concluded with an interactive question-and-answer session, during which participants from both delegations asked thoughtful questions about Hindu beliefs and practices. We were then offered prasad in the form of *halwa*, marking a peaceful conclusion to the visit. Overall, the visit to Nishi-Kasai and the ISKCON Temple was a memorable cultural and spiritual experience that strengthened mutual understanding and appreciation between the Indian and Japanese delegations.

Sightseeing - TeamLabs | 25th August, 2026

Senjuti Mazumder

Ever since I was selected for the conference, Saanvi and I had carried teamLab Planets in our hearts as a little dream, a place we hoped would become part of our Tokyo story. On 25th August, Saki-san and Ayaka-san finally made that dream come true by taking us there. All four of us seemed to have entered into a dream universe as soon as we stepped in through the gates.

We entered at 7:30, but for the next three hours, I completely lost track of time. I walked through water with koi shimmering beneath my feet, disappeared into the Infinite Crystal Universe, wandered among floating flowers, and stepped into gardens of light and moss.

We laughed like children, ran from one wonder to another, and even turned our drawings into matching little magnets. I left with more than a souvenir and I carried home a tiny piece of a dream Saanvi and I had imagined together.

Sightseeing - Ichiran Ramen | 25th August, 2026

Anurag Das

After we visited the ISKCON temple, we had free time in the evening. Our group, consisting of Yuzuki-san, Dwija-san, and me, went to the Shinjuku area for sightseeing. At first, we went to the Ichiran ramen shop to make a reservation for dinner. Dwija-san opted out due to her vegetarian diet. Then we went to the nearby Don Quijote for shopping. All of us bought a lot of souvenirs for our friends and family back home. After that, Yuzuki-san and I went to Ichiran for dinner, and Dwija-san went to the nearby Book-Off to look for some books. We had to wait in line for a few minutes before entering the shop. Ichiran Ramen was the inspiration for the famous Ichiraku Ramen in the anime *Naruto*, a show I grew up with. Both of us ordered the same Classic Tonkotsu Ramen (Pork), and it was my first time trying authentic Japanese ramen. The ramen was really tasty, especially the rich broth. Afterwards, Yuzuki-san and I went to Yodobashi Camera as I wanted to buy a Fujifilm disposable camera. We then met up with Dwija-san and returned to the Olympic Center. On our way back, we stopped at the FamilyMart opposite Sangubashi Station, where Dwija-san bought her dinner and I also tried the claw arcade machine, though without success.

Sightseeing - Odaiba | 25th August, 2026

Aditya Prasad

I was joined by Yuka & Srivaishnavi to Odaiba after we ended our official visits for the day. We changed multiple lines to reach Odaiba from Nishikasai, so much so that it was confusing for Yuka herself to guide us through to the destination. Although chaotic, it was a fun experience jumping from one subway to another. On our way to Odaiba, we saw Tokyo Disneyland from the Train. Upon reaching, three of us were running from the station to the DiverCity Tokyo Plaza because we were running late for the final show of the Unicorn Gundam for the day. We reached just in time to see the 9:30PM show which was 4 minutes long but the journey to the show was more interesting and fun. The Gundam, which was set to be removed on 1st September, became one of the most memorable moments of the conference for me. After that we went to McDonald's to have our dinner and then came back to Olympic Centre before midnight.

Sightseeing - Sushi | 25th August, 2026

Amrita Guha

While the rest of our friends departed for their chosen locations, our group set off for a memorable sushi dinner. Along the way, we stopped at Funabori Tower, treating ourselves to a breathtaking panoramic view of the Tokyo skyline.

Our anticipation was running high as we arrived at Kura Sushi, a popular sushi restaurant nearby, and our expectations were not let down. We feasted on a selection of nigiri, gunkan and tempura, but the true highlight was the ordering system. Once we had queued up our chosen dishes on a digital tablet, it wasn't long before a specialised conveyor belt delivered it personally to our table! Remarkably, this extensive, high-tech feast cost less than 1500 per person. It was a uniquely captivating dining experience that we would not have traded for anything else.

Fifth General Discussion - Subcommittee 1 | 26th August, 2026

Aditya Prasad

In the 5th Group discussion, we discussed further about the Workplace systems of both India and Japan, but this time, keeping in mind the notes and experiences we have gathered from the various visits in the previous days. One of the new insights we got was from the Tokyo International School in Nishikasai after we interviewed one of the Teachers over there. We also contacted and planned a few special interviews for our case studies which were later used to conclude our findings as per the discussions made so far. We also made a basic structure of the presentation.

Fifth General Discussion - Subcommittee 2 | 26th August, 2026

Srivaishnavi Ramakrishnan

In Group Discussion 5, the Career Development Subcommittee mainly focused on analysing the data we had collected earlier. We started creating graphs to make the information easier to understand and to get a clearer idea of the statistical results from our responses.

We also prepared a set of questions that we planned to ask Indian employees working at Suzuki during our company visit in Hamamatsu. This helped us organise our thoughts and decide what kind of information we wanted to learn from their personal experiences of working in Japan.

Along with this, we looked at the likelihood of Indian students staying in Japan for more than five years based on the responses collected through Google Forms. We also did some background research about Suzuki and discussed why we had chosen Suzuki as one of our interview points. This helped us understand the company better and connect our questions to the topic we were researching.

Overall, this discussion helped us organise the data we had collected and prepare better for our upcoming company visit and interviews.

Fifth General Discussion - Subcommittee 3 | 26th August, 2026

Amrita Guha

In the fifth group discussion, Subcommittee 3 conducted an insightful interview with the CEO of JobIsWell. The members learned from Shigetoku-san about the cultural struggles foreign residents face and how his organisation provides essential daily integration support. They then focused on processing data from recent field activities, reviewing and finalising the data to be included from the visits to Tokyo International Public School and the ISKCON temple in Nishikasai. The final presentation slides were updated to incorporate these latest findings. Finally, the members initiated introductory background research on Suzuki Motor Corporation to prepare for the conference's upcoming visit to its headquarters.

Fifth General Discussion - Subcommittee 4 | 26th August, 2026

Saanvi Mitra

On 26th August, the fourth subcommittee sat down for the fifth group discussion with the agenda of compiling all the data we had collected thus far, mainly focusing on the data we had collected from the presentations and Q & A session at the Yokohama India Centre. The group went through all the notes taken down during the session and took apart all the unnecessary information to build a case study out of the contexts and insights we had gained from the four presentations as well as the speeches including the one from YOKE. By the end of this group discussion, we had managed to extract data and case study material separately to use in our final presentation.

Sightseeing at Akihabara and Asakusa | 26th August, 2026

Sangbad Mazumder

During the afternoon of 26th August, our delegation spent a morning exploring two contrasting districts in Tokyo: Akihabara and Asakusa. Visiting them back-to-back offered an interesting perspective on how modern urban subcultures and older Edo-period traditions sit side-by-side within the same city.

We started our morning in Akihabara, widely known as Tokyo's center for electronics, gaming, and anime culture. Stepping out into the district, the streets were lined with multi-story department stores, specialized hobby shops, and electronic retailers. Our larger group was split into smaller groups based on our subcommittees and each spent most of the time browsing through different stores, checking out local merchandise, gadgets, and collectibles. Even for those of us who were not deeply into gaming or anime, walking through the vibrant retail spaces gave us a clear sense of how modern consumer tech and pop culture drive commercial life in Tokyo.

Later in the morning, we took the train over to Asakusa, one of the city's older downtown neighbourhoods that preserves much of Tokyo's historic character. The contrast was

immediately noticeable to everyone. Moving from Akihabara's modern storefronts to Asakusa's traditional streets felt like stepping into an entirely different era. We spent our time roaming through the area at an unhurried pace, taking in the sights around Senso-ji, Tokyo's oldest temple complex.

Walking along the approach, we passed through the iconic Kaminarimon gate with its massive red paper lantern and drifted through the crowds along Nakamise-dori. The pedestrian street was packed with small traditional shops selling local snacks, crafts, and souvenirs, which made wandering around lively and engaging. Seeing the temple courtyards, the incense burners, and the steady stream of visitors gave us a feel for how historic neighborhoods in Tokyo continue to function as everyday gathering spots.

Covering both districts in a single morning was a simple but memorable experience. Transitioning from the energetic, modern shopping hubs of Akihabara to the relaxed, historic streetscapes of Asakusa showed us two distinct facets of Tokyo's urban identity in just a few hours.

Kabuki Theatre | 26th August, 2026

Dwija Maheshwaran

As part of our cultural exchange activities, an enthusiastic group of 6 students participated in watching a performance of Kabuki - a traditional Japanese dance-drama at Kabuki-za in Ginza. It was titled "Three Dances on Snow, the Moon and Cherry Blossoms". Everyone was very excited to experience a truly unique art form. The performance was showcased using three seasonal themed sets- reflecting the appreciation of beauty. In the first scene, the actor depicted the spirit of the cherry blossom. The second describes the songs of "Matsumushi" (Pine cricket) under the moon in autumn, and the third dance evokes a snowman or "Yuki Daruma" to complete the set with a scene of winter.

Every single one of us were particularly fascinated by the showmanship and elaborate costumes of Kabuki. We found the performance engaging due to the traditional music, expressive dance and impressive stage lighting. We, the Indian members were able to find similarities between Kabuki and the traditional South Indian artform of Kathakali and reflected on our own cultural heritage. Despite visual differences, both cultures interestingly utilize storytelling, movements, costumes and music to preserve tradition and express cultural values. We felt encouraged to share our perspectives with one another, making the visit a meaningful part of our cultural exchange. After the performance, we were able to try out traditional Japanese sweets and snacks at the metro station nearby, such as Golden Plum Candy.

We found this experience to be deeply memorable and enriching as this was a first for even the Japanese members. This gave us the opportunity to appreciate traditional Japanese artistic expression and performing arts in a modern setting. The crowd that attended showed us just how valued Kabuki is even today.

Gotoku-ji Shrine | 27th August, 2026

Anurag Das

On the morning of 27th August, after breakfast at the Fuji Café at the Olympic Center, we visited the Gōtoku-ji shrine a few kilometers away. Taking the Odakyu Line from the nearby Sangubashi Station, we got off at Gotokuji Station, from where the shrine was just a 15-minute walk. The historic temple was built in the late 15th century and has stood the test of time. It is a Buddhist monastery and is famously known as the “cat temple” due to the presence of numerous *maneki-neko* (lucky cat) figurines all over the grounds. We arrived early in the morning when the crowd was very small and got ample time to roam around the vicinity. At first, we paid our respects by lighting incense sticks. Afterwards, everyone started taking photos of the shrine, especially the cute *maneki-neko* dolls which were so nicely presented on the shelves. It is said that the figurines bring good luck to their owners. Some of the members also went to collect the *goshuin* and *omikujis* in the nearby office, and some even bought small *maneki-neko* souvenirs for themselves. The shrine precincts also contained a large burial ground where several tombs were kept, including those of the former feudal lords who once governed the territory. Since we were short on time, all of us gathered near the exit of the shrine for a group photo and then departed for our next destination.

Jimbocho Book Town | 27th August, 2026

Ranjabati Chattopadhyay

Jimbocho Book Town is one of the city’s oldest and most distinctive literary neighbourhoods in the heart of Tokyo. In 2025, Time Out Magazine named Jimbocho the world’s coolest neighbourhood, recognising its unique combination of old bookshops, *kissaten*-s, restaurants and its enduring literary culture.

Walking through Jimbocho, one can see generations of readers continuing to browse its shelves. Elderly people, in particular, seemed to be a familiar presence in the bookshops. Many of the smaller stores also reflected the personal interests of their owners, with some specialising in particular genres or subjects. Alongside the books, there were little souvenirs and charms, as well as cafés and places to eat, making it easy to spend time simply wandering through the neighbourhood.

For the group, perhaps the most striking part was the sheer abundance of books. In the middle of Tokyo, a city so often associated with speed, technology and modernity, finding an entire neighbourhood devoted to books felt like a breath of fresh air. The quiet streets, rows of bookshelves and the sight of people still taking their time to browse created a sense of warmth and continuity.

It was, in its own quiet way, a magnificent sight: an almost 150-year-old neighbourhood where books are not merely sold, but remain part of the everyday life of the city.

Yasukuni Shrine | 27th August, 2026

Senjuti Mazumder

From the historic book town of Jimbochō, the group proceeded to another important site in Tokyo's historical landscape, the Yasukuni Shrine. We reached the shrine at around 1 p.m., and as soon as we entered its expansive grounds, the bustle of the city seemed to recede. The quiet pathways, towering trees and solemn atmosphere created an immediate sense of peace. While exploring the premises, the members observed the bronze monument of Ōmura Masujirō and later drew *omikuji* for themselves.

We then proceeded to the meeting hall, where we were welcomed by priest Umio Otsuka san and served tea. He spoke about the history, traditions and significance of Yasukuni Shrine, giving the members an opportunity to understand the site beyond what could be gathered from books or observation alone. The members then asked questions prepared by their respective subcommittees, making the interaction particularly valuable for their ongoing research and fieldwork.

We were then subsequently guided to the main prayer hall. After washing our hands and removing our shoes, we formed three lines and carefully followed the prescribed rituals of prayer and offering. We were also offered *omiki*, sacred sake, as part of the traditional ritual. Returning to the meeting room, the members continued their discussion before taking group photographs. They then visited the monument dedicated to Indian jurist Radhabinod Pal, carefully observing its inscriptions and historical significance.

As the group finally stepped out of the shrine premises, rain began to fall gently over Tokyo. After a day spent engaging with history, ritual and memory, the unexpected rain provided a quiet, almost poetic conclusion to our visit.

Keio University | 27th August, 2026

Dwija Maheshwaran

All the Indian and Japanese members visited Keio University, Mita Campus, where a member of the India-themed club NEXT, guided us around the beautiful campus and introduced us to it. They explored an exhibition showcasing the university's history and cultural heritage. It included dioramas of old dormitories, manuscripts and old textbooks from the late 1800s, various historical artefacts and old timetables. More displays such as a showcase of a traditional uniform and photographs depicting the Mita Campus before the Great Kanto Earthquake were also there.

The members were then divided into their respective subcommittees and interacted with Japanese members from Keio university's NEXT club. Some of them shared their past experiences visiting India and spoke about their unexplained interests in India and their curiosities towards the country's cultural depth. During discussions on food, the students shared experiences of eating momos when they missed food from home.

The visit provided all the members with an inspirational opportunity to learn more about various perspectives on India while engaging in meaningful cultural exchange. The conversations helped recognize diverse ways in which Japanese students connect with and perceive India, making it a very insightful experience.

Tokyo to Hamamatsu Journey and Suzuki Factory | 28th August, 2026

Saanvi Mitra

One of the first things that comes to mind when thinking of Japan is the Shinkansen, or bullet train. From waking up at dawn and catching the 7:10am train to the paper ticket being swallowed up by the ticket machine, it was an experience for the books. After several eventful days in Japan, we were finally able to experience the Shinkansen as we travelled towards Hamamatsu for another phase of our fieldwork. Although changing stations and ensuring that we caught the correct train was somewhat hectic, we were thrilled when we finally boarded. Waiting at the platform, the distinct high-pitched sound of the approaching bullet trains was a thrill of its own! With a *konbini* breakfast in hand, we settled into the journey while carrying and helping one another with our large suitcases.

There is a popular Japanese saying that Fuji-san decides when it wishes to reveal itself and oh how fortunate we were to grace our eyes with the most splendid sight of Mt Fuji from the window of the Shinkansen as it appeared majestically across the surrounding fields and towns. The most breathtaking view is something only a lucky few get to experience and perhaps we even felt a bit special knowing that Fuji-san chose us!

Upon reaching Hamamatsu, we continued by bus towards the Suzuki factory, travelling along the coastline. Before we were taken on a tour of the huge space inside, we were given a brief overview on the models manufactured in that factory.

The visit provided us with an insightful understanding of the relationship between automation and human labour in modern automobile manufacturing. Observing the various stages of production demonstrated how advanced machinery and human workers operate together to manufacture vehicles efficiently.

We also had the opportunity to conduct an on-the-spot interview with a Suzuki employee, who explained how the company employs translators to facilitate communication with foreign workers and visitors. They also discussed Suzuki's efforts towards inclusivity, including designing automated systems that can be operated by individuals of different heights and physical strengths.

The factory visit concluded with an observation of vehicles undergoing final inspection before emerging from the production line. It was truly an interesting experience to understand how machinery and human labour could come together for contemporary manufacturing of the products and the ways in which they complement each other for a smooth functioning of the final product.

Suzuki Museum and Lunch at Suzuki Cafeteria | 28th August, 2026

Aditya Prasad

While travelling to Hamamatsu, a small team missed the first Shinkansen which resulted in a delayed arrival to the destination. The team which reached Hamamatsu late missed out on the Suzuki factory visit. However, they left their luggage at the Hotel and reached the Suzuki Plaza before the team which went to the factory visit. This allowed the second team to explore the Suzuki Plaza for a longer period of time. Before the factory visit team arrived, the team who was already at the Suzuki Plaza were shown a short film about the manufacturing and assembly line at the factory. After the movie, the team saw a diorama of the whole assembly process with some interactive machines. One of such machines had a short video showing the history of Suzuki's first Alto car, which ended with a small *gatcha* ball carrying a mini toy car of the first ever Alto car as a souvenir. After this, there was another movie showcasing the expansion of Suzuki across the world and the history of Suzuki in certain countries. Once the movie ended, there was a section of all the showcased countries where some cultural icons from each country were showcased. By the time the second team was exploring this floor, the other team joined them after the factory visit. Both the teams altogether explored the second floor, which had all the bikes and cars made by Suzuki since the beginning of the company. One of such cars on display was signed by Elton John. Along with the production ready models, there were futuristic concept cars also on display. There was a section where one could experience flying a fighter jet, while another section had the entire Hamamatsu city mapped out on the floor. While everyone was exploring the museum by themselves, some Suzuki Employees joined the team, guiding them through the models and discussing what the students like about Suzuki. After the plaza visit, everyone went to the Suzuki headquarters across the street to have their lunch in the employee cafeteria before heading to the seminar room for the group discussions. In the cafeteria, everyone was served Suzuki's signature vegetarian curry which was delicious and everybody enjoyed it. After the lunch was over, everyone expressed gratitude for their lunches and headed to the seminar room for the group discussions.

Meeting with Suzuki Employees | 28th August, 2026

Amrita Guha

Conducted on-site in Hamamatsu as part of the conference research, the Indian delegation met with and interviewed both Japanese and Indian employees at Suzuki Motor Corporation. The session opened with a brief overview of Suzuki's business relations with India, highlighting a long history of mutual economic partnership. Following this introductory briefing, each subcommittee engaged in dedicated discussions with the employees. The employees shared insights into Suzuki's corporate policies and detailed what it is like to live in Japan, with a particular focus on the experiences of foreign residents. After 30 minutes of discussion, the subcommittees reconvened to present a summary of their key findings.

From Subcommittee 1, “Workplace Development”, Kimaya-san presented their findings on international employee retention. The discussion highlighted the distinct differences in workplace cultures between India and Japan, noting that exposure to global work dynamics is crucial for Indian employees integrating into the company.

Next, Sangbad-san from Subcommittee 2, “Career Development”, emphasised the critical importance of learning the Japanese language. Employees noted that language proficiency is essential not just for professional growth, but for navigating daily life in a foreign country. The session also addressed individual career pathing strategies within Japan.

As the speaker from Subcommittee 3, “Local Communities,” Arin-san outlined the formal and informal support systems available to foreign residents, specifically those provided by Suzuki. To ease the transition, the company offers four months of Japanese language training, access to subsidised dormitories equipped with kitchens and canteens, and assistance with obtaining local driving lessons.

Finally, Saanvi-san from Subcommittee 4, “Culture”, recounted their discussion on cultural adaptation. The group explored how Suzuki fosters inclusivity by accommodating cultural differences in workplace etiquette and dietary restrictions. For instance, to address the historic shortage of vegetarian options in Japan, corporate cafeterias have expanded their menus to offer a wider variety of meals tailored to diverse dietary needs.

Hamamatsu City Hall | 28th August, 2026

Tushnee Chatterjee

On 28th August, 2026 our team travelled to Hamamatsu from Tokyo where we participated in an informative interactive session with the representatives from the City of Hamamatsu at the Hamamatsu City Hall, as a part of the educational activity of the 30th India Japan Student Conference. The session provided us with valuable insights into the city’s historical significance, socioeconomic development, demographic composition, industrial growth, globalization, and its growing cooperation with India.

Hamamatsu, located in Shizuoka Prefecture is Japan’s one of the primary manufacturing areas and has a population of about 774,000, of whom there are currently about 665 Indian residents in the city, making up about 4% of the total population. This is also seen as a marked rise considering the figure of about 300 Indians four years ago. This quick growth portrays that there’s an increasing number of Indians in Hamamatsu which also signifies the city’s endeavour to build a more inclusive international community. It was also discussed that Hamamatsu offers various kinds of support, such as help desks, Japanese learning classes for non-natives and aid with the regulations, in order to help the foreign residents get easily integrated.

This city has witnessed a strong industrial heritage due to the fact that there were approximately 30,000 small and medium sized enterprises in Hamamatsu. Traditionally this city was known for its cotton textile industry, but later on it has gradually become a center for automobiles, instruments and the lumber industry. It was during our visit that we came to know about how firms like Suzuki play an extremely important role in bridging the link between Japan and India in terms of industrialization. It would also be important to note that this city is extremely popular for its unique cultural and culinary identity which includes Unagi, Gyoza, Eel and Mandarin.

The most important part of the discussion was that of the increasing involvement of India in Hamamatsu. This includes activities such as international business development, entry assistance and new business development, startup and innovation activities alongside recruitment. In this respect, Hamamatsu has started collaborating with major Indian organizations which includes Infosys, T-Hub from Telangana and cooperative bodies from the IITs. The city has also started holding marketing conferences and is currently providing business matching activities by inviting Indian startups.

Another important point that was highlighted during the session was that of the cultural exchanges and cross culture activities that take place in the city which includes the Hamamatsu India festival. Hamamatsu as a city shows how cooperation in economics can be improved through people to people connections.

As a gesture of appreciation and cultural exchange, the Hamamatsu representatives also presented us with several local goods, including the traditional Hamamatsu cloth, symbolizing the city's warmth and the importance it places on its relationship with India. Overall, the interaction was one of the most significant educational activities of this conference that in no doubt deepened our understanding of regional development, international cooperation and the growing India Japan relationship.

Hamamatsu International Cultural Center (HICE) | 29th August, 2026

Soham Dutta

As part of our visit to Hamamatsu, we had the opportunity to visit the Hamamatsu International Cultural Centre (HICE) and learn about its efforts towards promoting multicultural coexistence within the local community. The visit included an approximately two hour discussion session, during which we were introduced to the organisation, its activities, and the importance of creating an inclusive society where people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds can live and participate together.

The session began with a presentation by the HICE representatives, who explained the organisation's various initiatives and the role it plays in supporting foreign residents in Hamamatsu. We learned that Hamamatsu is home to a diverse international population, making multiculturalism an important aspect of everyday community life. HICE works as a bridge between Japanese residents and people from different countries by providing

multilingual information and consultation services, supporting foreign residents in their daily lives, and organising activities that encourage intercultural understanding and interaction.

The presentation also helped us understand that multiculturalism goes beyond simply celebrating different cultures. It involves ensuring that people from different backgrounds have access to information, support, and opportunities to participate equally in society. The discussion gave us valuable insight into the challenges that can arise due to differences in language, culture, and social systems, as well as the efforts required to address them.

Following the presentation, we had an interactive question and answer session. The Indian delegates asked several questions to clarify their understanding of HICE's activities and its approach towards multicultural coexistence. We also raised questions related to our respective subcommittee themes, connecting the discussion at HICE with the broader topics being explored during the India-Japan Students' Conference. The representatives responded to our questions and provided practical perspectives based on their experiences.

The visit was an insightful learning experience for us. It allowed us to look beyond cultural exchange as a short term activity and understand how multicultural coexistence can be incorporated into the everyday functioning of a community. The session at HICE gave us several perspectives that could further contribute to our discussions and subcommittee work throughout the conference.

Sightseeing at Hamamatsu City | 29th August, 2026

Srivaishnavi Ramakrishnan

Hamamatsu City, known for its cotton textile industry and its connection with music, manufacturing and timber, was one of the places I really enjoyed visiting during our trip. Located in Shizuoka Prefecture, away from the busy surroundings of Tokyo, Hamamatsu had a very different and peaceful atmosphere. The people were very welcoming and kind, which made our short stay even more pleasant.

On August 29, 2026, after having a wonderful breakfast at Centurion Hotel Hamamatsu, we got ready and left for HICE (Hamamatsu International Community Center). We had a discussion there as part of our conference activities. It was a good opportunity to interact, exchange ideas and learn more about the local community and the different initiatives carried out there. The discussion also helped us understand more about Hamamatsu and its connection with the international community.

After the discussion, we went to Hamamatsu Castle. The castle is a traditional Japanese castle with a lot of historical significance. We explored the castle and went inside to see the different exhibits. Learning about its history while actually being there made the visit more interesting. The surroundings were also very peaceful, and we took some photographs together.

After visiting Hamamatsu Castle, we went to Motoshirochō Tōshō-gū, a Shinto shrine located in Hamamatsu. The shrine had a very calm and peaceful atmosphere, surrounded by greenery.

Spending some time in such a quiet place felt refreshing. We walked around, observed the traditional architecture and enjoyed the surroundings.

Later, we visited a small local bakery, and then after lunch, we headed back to Tokyo by Shinkansen. The journey was another memorable experience. Although our visit to Hamamatsu was short, it allowed me to experience a quieter side of Japan and gave me many new memories to take back with me.

Sixth General Discussion - Subcommittee 1 | 30th August, 2026

Aditya Prasad

In the 6th Group discussion, we sat one last time to discuss and decide all the points we will keep in the final presentation as it was the penultimate discussion session before the final presentation. We framed case studies from our field visit at Suzuki, our interviews with current Yanmar and Honda Employees and one of the Presentations from Yokohama India Center Visit. Along with that, we had two different google form responses from two individuals (one of which has given up their Indian Passport and acquired Japanese citizenship) and we discussed which ones to keep for the final presentation.

Sixth General Discussion - Subcommittee 2 | 30th August, 2026

Sangbad Mazumder

The second-to-last group discussion of our subcommittee was held on the morning of 30th August. As the time to the final presentation grew shorter, our meeting was primarily focused on analysing the data collected from our various questionnaires to draw the needed conclusions for our report. We spent our time identifying the outliers in the data and recognizing the common trends noticeable across the data. At the same time, we also worked on the final presentation by filling it with the results of our analysis as we got them.

Sixth General Discussion - Subcommittee 3 | 30th August, 2026

Amrita Guha

In the sixth group discussion, Subcommittee 3 compiled and analysed the newly gathered information from their fieldwork in Hamamatsu. Turning their attention to the final stages of the project, members began drafting the official speech for the final presentation day. The team then updated and edited the presentation slides to integrate their latest findings. Finally, the members engaged in a critical discussion regarding the systemic gaps identified in the current forms of support available to foreign residents in Japan. Focusing specifically on language barriers and lack of official formal support, they formulated viable recommendations to put forth in their final report, the final presentation being near completion.

Sixth General Discussion - Subcommittee 4 | 30th August, 2026

Saanvi Mitra

On 30th August, the fourth subcommittee came together for their sixth group discussion. By this time our final presentation draft had been created and the main work left was to organize all insights collected into quantitative data as well as separate case studies. We had previously done fieldwork (apart from the common field visits) to the Hie Inari shrine and downtown B's Kitchen. This discussion compiled the interviews taken by each member of the subcommittee into points and statistics that we could put in our presentation as qualitative and quantitative data. The group successfully translated each conversation and assembled the presentation as a draft which would be polished and finalised in the upcoming days.

Seventh General Discussion - Subcommittee 1 | 31st August, 2026

Aditya Prasad

In the 7th and final Group Discussion session, we prepared and rehearsed the final presentation. We distributed the slides amongst ourselves and prepared accordingly for the final presentation later that day.

Seventh General Discussion - Subcommittee 2 | 31st August, 2026

Tushnee Chatterjee

On 31 August 2026, GD 7 was conducted, which was also our final group discussion of the Career Development Subcommittee, held from 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon. This three hour long session focused on finalising and refining our final presentation. We incorporated the final findings, emerging trends supported by the relevant statistical data into the PPT, ensuring that the content was accurate, coherent and well structured. The speech for the presentation was also prepared and coordinated among the team members. Towards the end of the GD, we conducted a complete group rehearsal, going through every slide, presentation segment and the corresponding speech. The final run through helped us improve our coordination, timing, delivery and overall confidence before the final presentation.

Seventh General Discussion - Subcommittee 3 | 31st August, 2026

Ranjabati Chattopadhyay

The seventh Group Discussion of Subcommittee 3 (Local Communities) was all about the final preparations for the presentation. The team made the last brush-ups to the PPT and speech, ran through the entire presentation together, timed it, and made the necessary final changes. They also planned their outfits, with some already dressed and others quickly changing before they settled down together.

There was a mixture of nervousness and excitement. After weeks of extensive research, conversations and interactions, this was finally the day to share their work with everyone. At the same time, the GD carried a bittersweet feeling—it was the last time they would work and research together as a team for the conference. It was, above all, a wonderful team effort, built on hard work, punctuality and genuine commitment from every member.

Seventh General Discussion - Subcommittee 4 | 31st August, 2026

Senjuti Mazumder

The seventh and final Group Discussion session was held shortly before the Closing Ceremony and focused on preparing the final presentation. Members worked together to incorporate all interview findings, survey results and case studies, ensuring that the research was represented comprehensively. Survey data was organised into statistics, tables and graphs to make the findings clear and accessible. Once the presentation was completed, the slides were divided among the members, with each member preparing their own section and script. The group then conducted a full rehearsal before the Closing Ceremony, carefully checking the flow, timing and coordination of the presentation to ensure that it remained within the allotted time.

Final Presentation | 31st August, 2026

Ranjabati Chattopadhyay

The final presentation marked the culmination of ten days of research, conversations, company visits and shared experiences. On the day of the presentation, most of the members skipped lunch, busy preparing themselves and going over their research one last time. Devices were checked, outfits were arranged, presentations were reviewed, and everyone made sure that nothing had been left behind. The group arrived at the venue just in time. Soon, the guests began arriving, and the presentation began.

The four subcommittees presented their findings in succession: Workplace Environment, Career Development, Local Communities and Culture. Each presentation reflected extensive research and careful preparation. The Workplace Environment subcommittee examined how Indian employees adjust to Japanese workplaces and, equally, how Japanese companies adapt to the needs of foreign employees. Their research looked at the small but significant negotiations of workplace culture—who adjusts, who compromises, and what helps both sides work together. For Indian employees, understanding Japanese work ethics and *kuuki wo yomu*, or “reading the room”, emerged as important aspects of adaptation. At the same time, companies need to recognise employees’ interests and needs to encourage longer-term engagement.

The Career Development subcommittee focused on Indian students hoping to build careers in Japan and the difficulties they encounter when entering Japanese companies. Among the

issues discussed was the gap between broad academic backgrounds often preferred by Japanese companies and the specialised technical roles demanded by many jobs, particularly in engineering. Differences in educational structures between India and Japan can therefore create additional challenges for young professionals.

Local Communities explored how both formal and informal support systems help foreign residents develop a sense of belonging in Japan. Their research was strongly interaction-based, extending beyond the Indian community to include conversations with residents from the Philippines and other backgrounds. The Culture subcommittee examined similarities and differences across religion, etiquette and food habits, paying particular attention to how cultural practices can both connect and sometimes create misunderstandings.

All four subcommittees incorporated their company visits and the insights gathered through them, making the presentations rich, detailed and grounded in lived experiences. The audience remained engaged throughout, with questions, conversations and exchanges continuing after the presentations.

With the presentations completed, the conference officially came to an end. Certificates and gifts were presented to the Indian members, and the atmosphere quickly became emotional. There were hugs, photographs and tears as everyone realised that they would be leaving the following day. What had begun as a ten-day intellectual and cultural exchange had become something much more personal—a shared experience of learning, friendship and discovery. The final presentation was not simply an ending, but a celebration of everything the group had built together.

The Closing Ceremony | 31st August, 2026

Kimaya Thakkar

The Closing Ceremony commenced at 1:15 p.m. with the final presentations by the four subcommittees, a culmination of the academic discussions, research and fieldwork carried out throughout the conference. Each subcommittee presented its findings on their respective themes, followed by a Question and Answer session, allowing everyone to actively participate as well as engage with the presenters and discuss the issues further.

Subcommittee 1, Workplace Environment, focused on making Japan a more welcoming and supportive workplace for foreign workers, particularly Indians. Subcommittee 2, Career Development, examined recruitment and career growth opportunities in Japan. Subcommittee 3, Local Communities, explored daily life and community support for foreign residents. Subcommittee 4, Culture, discussed cultural differences and similarities between India and Japan. Each student presented his/her respective sections, bringing together research, data collected and first hand experiences gathered through fieldwork, institutional interactions and company visits throughout the conference. The presentations reflected not only the academic work carried out by the students but also the practical knowledge gained through their experiences and interactions over the preceding days.

Following the presentations, Mr. Tomio Isogai shared his feedback and reflections on the academic work. He particularly encouraged Subcommittee 1 to further explore the process and factors involved in obtaining promotions within Japanese companies. He also emphasised the immense value of the face to face interactions with government agencies, institutions and companies that the conference had provided. He encouraged everyone to cherish these experiences, highlighting that the exposure and knowledge gained through the conference were precious opportunities that would remain valuable throughout their lives.

Then a Recap video was made by the Japanese delegation especially for us. It made us emotional. After that Aditya, President of the Indian delegation, reflected on the journey of the conference and its significance. His speech became an emotional moment as he spoke about the experiences, friendships and memories created by both delegations throughout the programme.

The ceremony then proceeded with the distribution of certificates by Nagahama Sensei. The Japanese delegation also presented each member of the Indian delegation with a special souvenir; a Japanese name written in Kanji, thoughtfully selected according to their personality, making the gesture particularly personal and meaningful. The ceremony concluded with several group photographs, including photographs of the Indian and Japanese delegations together. As the final moments of the conference arrived, several members from both delegations became emotional, reflecting on the friendships, experiences and memories shared throughout the programme. With the conclusion of the ceremony, the conference formally came to an end, leaving behind an enriching academic experience and memories and connections that would remain with everyone long after returning home.

Sayonara Party | 31st August, 2026

Senjuti Mazumder

After the deeply emotional Closing Ceremony, the Indian and Japanese teams gathered for one final celebration, the Sayonara Party at Karaoke Manekineko in Shinjuku. The ceremony had made the reality of goodbye sink in, but the moment everyone entered the karaoke room, somehow, the sadness faded into laughter.

The room soon became a little world of its own, filled with music, dancing and wonderfully imperfect singing. Bohemian Rhapsody, Waka Waka, Blue Bird, Creep, Sugar, What Makes You Beautiful, Gurenge, Odoriko, I Can't Stop the Loneliness, Zankoku na Tenshi no Thesis, Peace Sign, Unravel, Bling-Bang-Bang-Born, Basket Case and Takaneko Hanakosan and many more became the soundtrack to their final night together. Pizzas, followed later by nuggets, fries and taiyaki, were shared between songs, while the all-you-can-get soft-drinks bar kept the celebrations going.

The evening became even more special as the members celebrated the upcoming birthdays of Aditya-san, President of the Indian team, and Anurag-san, Communicator. Their cake-cutting was followed by yet more singing, dancing and laughter. Eventually, the group stepped back into the glowing streets of Shinjuku for some final exploration. It was bittersweet to know

that this was their last night in Tokyo, but perhaps the best goodbyes are the ones spent laughing.

It was not quite a sayonara, just sweet longing until we meet again.

Kolkata Team's Departure from Tokyo | 01st September, 2026

Soham Dutta

The final morning in Japan arrived much sooner than we had expected. After twelve days filled with new experiences, friendships, laughter, and countless memories, it was finally time for the Indian delegation to begin its journey home. We woke up at around 4:00 a.m. and gathered our belongings, preparing to leave the National Olympics Memorial Youth Center. Even at that early hour, members of the Japanese delegation were there to help us with our luggage and guide us on our way to Haneda Airport.

As we travelled towards the airport, we found ourselves looking out of the windows and taking in the streets of Tokyo for what we knew would be the last time on this trip. The familiar roads around Sangubashi, the quiet early-morning streets, the buildings, and the scenery that had gradually become familiar to us over the past several days suddenly seemed much more precious. Places that we had passed without much thought earlier now carried memories of conversations, journeys, and moments shared with our Japanese friends.

Upon reaching Haneda Airport, we gathered together for one final group photograph. Standing there with our luggage and looking at one another, it slowly began to sink in that our time together had actually come to an end. The farewell was filled with mixed emotions. Some of us struggled to hold back tears, while others could not. As we waved our final goodbyes to the Japanese delegates, we made promises to meet again, hoping that this would not be the last time our paths crossed. The friendships we had formed during the conference had grown far beyond the boundaries of the twelve day programme.

We boarded our flight at around 8:30 a.m., carrying our luggage as well as a far heavier collection of memories. After reaching Singapore, we had a layover of nearly five hours. Although we were still emotional about leaving Japan, we decided to make the most of our time and explore the vast and fascinating Changi Airport. We visited some of its unique attractions, including the iconic Jewel waterfall and the Butterfly Garden, while also exploring the airport's shops. It became an unexpected final adventure before returning home. At around 7:40 p.m., we boarded our connecting flight to India. Although the journey was long and everyone was tired, sleep seemed difficult to find. As the aircraft travelled towards home, moments from the past twelve days kept replaying in our minds the first meeting with the Japanese delegates, cultural experiences, discussions, laughter, sightseeing, late-night conversations, and the many small moments that had gradually turned strangers into friends. When we finally reached India around midnight, our journey had physically come to an end. Yet, as we stepped off the plane, it was clear that the memories of Japan, the friendships we had formed, and the experiences of the 30th India-Japan Students Conference would remain with us long after the journey itself was over.

Chennai Team's Departure from Tokyo | 01st September, 2026

Srivaishnavi Ramakrishnan

The day we had to leave Japan and come back to India was honestly one of the hardest days for all of us. The Kolkata, Delhi and Chennai teams had our flights around the same time, so we were all leaving together. None of us really had the heart to leave. We had spent so many days together that saying goodbye to everyone suddenly felt very real.

We started our day at around 5 a.m. The morning breeze was so nice and peaceful, but at the same time, it felt a little sad because we knew that it was our last morning in Japan. We were all trying to act normal, but eventually everyone started crying. There were so many hugs, last-minute pictures and promises to stay in touch. Even though we knew we would meet again someday, leaving that moment felt extremely difficult.

For many of us, this was our first international trip. We thought that being in a completely new country might feel strange or uncomfortable, but Japan never really felt foreign to us. From the very beginning, we felt safe, welcomed and included. The people we met made us feel like we belonged there. That is why leaving felt less like leaving a country and more like leaving a home.

This trip gave us much more than we expected. We experienced new things, tried new food, visited new places and, most importantly, met people who became really special to us. We gained friendships, memories, confidence and so many stories that we will probably keep talking about for years.

It was a very emotional day, and honestly, words are not enough to explain how we felt. We came to Japan as a group of students, but we left with relationships that felt much deeper.

For us, Japan is not just a country anymore. It feels like a person in our family whom we will always miss, remember and carry in our hearts

Delhi Team's Departure from Tokyo | 01st September, 2026

Zorinsangi Bawlechim

On the night before departure, the members made the decision to leave the National Olympic Centre together and make their way to Haneda Airport as a group. At around 5:00 a.m., everyone set off, carrying and dragging their luggage through the early morning streets and onto the metro. It was also the final time they used their Suica cards, making the familiar journey to the airport feel a little more significant. Upon reaching Haneda Airport, the Japanese team was already there to see the Indian delegates off. The members collected their respective boarding passes and spent some time together before parting ways at security. As departure approached, members exchanged letters and small personal tokens, creating meaningful keepsakes from the two weeks they had spent together. The delegates then began separating according to their respective flights and destinations. The Kolkata team travelled

on Singapore Airlines from Terminal 3, while the Chennai team departed on Air India at 8:50 a.m. from Terminal 3. Zorinsangi from the India team travelled on IndiGo/JAL at 12:55 a.m. from Terminal 3, while Yuzuki Hosoi, who was returning to India to complete her foreign exchange programme at the University of Delhi, travelled on ANA at 11:10 a.m. from Terminal 2. After immigration, the Indian delegates themselves had to say their goodbyes as they parted ways for different cities across India. Each goodbye carried the same bittersweet feeling: happiness at having met and shared such a memorable experience, accompanied by the sadness of knowing that the group would no longer be together in the same place. Even after everyone had returned to India, the connection continued. Members shared updates in the JISC WhatsApp group as they landed safely and made their way home. Though the journey in Japan had come to an end, the messages served as a small reminder that the friendships and memories formed during the conference would continue beyond the departure from Japan.

HOME VISIT EXPERIENCES

Home Visit | Imai Family

Soham Dutta

As part of the home visit programme, we had the opportunity to spend a day with Chiharu Imai-san, Ririko Yuya-san, experiencing a glimpse of everyday Japanese life while also visiting Chiharu-san's grandparents. The visit was particularly meaningful as it allowed us to experience aspects of Japanese culture beyond the formal activities of the conference and understand the warmth and traditions of a Japanese family more closely.

Our day began with a visit to Noborito, an area closely associated with the world of Doraemon and the works of Fujiko F. Fujio. From the moment we arrived, the atmosphere felt special. The station, surrounding streets, buses, and various public spaces had references and designs connected to Doraemon and Fujiko F. Fujio's works. For many of us who had grown up watching Doraemon, seeing these familiar characters and elements in real life was deeply nostalgic. It almost felt as though we had travelled back to our childhood and were suddenly living inside the world that we had only known through television.

To make the experience even more memorable, Chiharu-san had managed to arrange tickets for the Fujiko F. Fujio Museum. The museum offered much more than just Doraemon. It introduced us to Fujiko F. Fujio's wider creative journey, including his earlier works, other animated characters, original illustrations, special stories, and various displays related to his career. We also had the opportunity to watch special screenings and explore the exhibits, making the visit both fascinating and emotional. For us, it was not simply a museum visit, but a chance to reconnect with a significant part of our childhood.

Afterwards, we travelled to Chiharu-san's grandparents' home, where we were warmly welcomed by her grandparents. From the moment we entered, their hospitality was evident.

They prepared and offered us a variety of authentic, home-style Japanese food, allowing us to experience flavours and dishes that are difficult to encounter in ordinary tourist settings. Over the meal, we also spoke about different aspects of Japanese culture, family life, and everyday experiences. Chiharu-san's grandfather particularly captured our attention as he shared stories about the various projects and activities he had worked on during his earlier years. Listening to his experiences gave us a personal glimpse into his life and the changing times he had witnessed. The conversation felt natural and intimate, and we greatly appreciated the opportunity to listen to these stories directly.

Later, we went to Kichijoji, where we spent some time exploring the neighbourhood, shopping for souvenirs and small gifts, and enjoying the atmosphere. We eventually had dinner together before concluding the day.

The home visit was a truly memorable experience because it gave us something beyond sightseeing a chance to experience Japanese family life, hospitality, food, nostalgia, and personal stories firsthand. It was one of those days where cultural exchange happened naturally through simple conversations, shared meals, and spending time together.

Home Visit | Takikawa Family

Saanvi Mitra, Sangbad Mazumder & Srivaishnavi R

The home visit day began with a small side trip to Kawagoe which is lovingly called “Little Edo”. After we had finished our group discussions, off we went to see the charm of this quaint little town. As we approached Ichibangai street, we could see the architecture of the buildings change and at some point, we were transported into the past with the open *yakitori* stalls and Bell Tower looming large above us. We began exploring from the Kawagoe Kumano Shrine and for the first time we got to learn about the Yatagarasu or the three-legged crow which is the shrine's emblem. By this time, Vaishnavi had spotted dango and we for one were surprised by the fact that not all dango looked like the emoji. We had our dango---one topped with caramel and almonds and another with soy and spices.

We walked forward to see the Bell Tower and also had the most delicious soba and Kawagoe sweet potato pudding. Next, we entered a coin ring workshop at I.BE LABO(川越店) and although we did not have time to make one, two of us purchased the ready-made pieces and the shopkeeper was generous enough to let us take our pick from their scrap material for free! We were getting late, so we ran to the Candy Alley and bought enough to give ourselves a sugar rush before we headed to Saki San's home.

At our host's residence, we were greeted warmly by the Takikawa family. After handing over some of the housewarming gifts to the family, we sat down for the full-course Japanese meal that the family had prepared for us. Our hosts had prepared special vegetarian takoyaki and karaage for us, alongside the regular non-vegetarian food dishes. What made the dinner truly special was them inviting us to cook the takoyaki together with much needed assistance.

Over the course of the delightful dinner that followed, we talked about the various similarities and the differences between our countries and cultures. Before leaving, we even got the opportunity to witness the Buddhist shrine in their home and gain insight into their system of worship. Finally, we were given some snacks from our hosts for the road, after which we bid them farewell, promising to return again someday. With that, we made our way back to NYC with full bellies and fuller hearts.

Home Visit- Hishinuma Family

Amrita Guha & Senjuti Mazumder

On the morning of August 30th, we set off with Ayaka-san for our highly anticipated home visit. Greeting us at the entrance of the Olympic Centre was Tomoko Hishinuma-san, our host, flanked by the two youngest of her four children. We found ourselves utterly charmed by their innocence and sweetness as we waited for our taxis.

Our first stop was Ootoya, where Hishinuma-san generously treated us to a spread of authentic Japanese fare. Over lunch, we got to know each other better as we presented her with gifts from home. Afterwards, we shopped for souvenirs at a supermarket, where Hishinuma-san introduced us to classic Japanese confections.

Soon after, Hishinuma-san's husband arrived to escort us to their stunningly elegant home. We were introduced to the two other children, who took us on a tour, eagerly showing us their favourite spaces. We were first taken to the main bedroom before the youngest pulled us towards the attic, where the second daughter showed us artwork she had made at school. The children then took us through their rooms and playroom, offering us drinks and even stopping to play with us. The youngest was especially adorable, jumping onto his bed to show us all his toys. Their eagerness to share their little world with us made the house feel wonderfully warm and lived-in. We then moved to the prayer room, where Hishinuma-san introduced us to proper tatami etiquette, showing us how to sit, bow, and perform some of the rituals. We continued downstairs to see the office and pantry, while learning about the children's daily routines. The younger ones walked to school, and with their holidays soon ending, we were shown their randoseru, the traditional leather backpacks carried by Japanese elementary-school children. Seeing their school bags, belongings, and artwork offered us a lovely glimpse into their everyday lives beyond the formalities of our conference. Eventually, it was time for dinner, where Hishinuma-san unveiled a feast of braised vegetables, teriyaki chicken, and okonomiyaki, which she showed us the process of making. We even got to add the toppings ourselves mayonnaise, bonito flakes, and seaweed. During dinner, we chatted with Hishinuma-san and her husband, swapping stories about the rhythms of daily life in Japan and India. We also had amazing snacks— Senjuti-san treated the group to traditional Bengali sweets, while Ayaka-san presented matcha wafer sticks from Hamamatsu. Before our departure, Hishinuma-san surprised us all with gifts of ingredients to make our own okonomiyaki. We were moved by the gesture, excited to take a piece of Japanese cuisine back home. Ultimately, this visit became one of the most cherished chapters of our journey. Beyond the beautiful sights of Tokyo, it was this intimate glimpse into a Japanese home— and the kindness of the Hishinuma family that left the deepest impression, bridging our two cultures in an unforgettable evening.

Home Visit | Majima Family

Aditya Prasad

My host for the home visit was Yuka Majima San from the Japan team. Along with me, she was hosting Anurag from the India team. After leaving NYC, we went to Matsuya to have our lunch after which we took the train to Fujisawa. From there, we boarded the Enoden line train to finally reach Shichirigahama Beach. There we spent a few hours, had fun and as it was getting dark, we finally went to Yuka San's home at Ookurayama Station. Before reaching her home, we went to her Grandparents' home where we received Muscat and Sushi made by Yuka's grandmother. It was a wholesome experience meeting her grandparents. After saying thanks and goodbye, we went to Yuka's house. There we received a very warm welcome. Personally, it felt like a home away from home. We sat together to make Takoyaki for dinner while also enjoying the sushi which we received from Yuka San's Grandmother. While making the food, we talked to Yuka San's siblings, played with her dog Conie, and

showed pictures of the conference so far to her parents. It almost felt like just another “adda” session back home. Yuka’s father played some Indian songs for us on the speaker to make the environment feel “close to home”. Everything they did felt so wholesome. Initially I was nervous about how the whole home visit would be but Yuka’s family never made me feel like I was in a new place. After making and eating the Takoyaki, Yuka San played some Piano for us. She even taught some to Anurag. Before my turn could come, there was another surprise for us. Since mine and Anurag’s birthday was around the corner, they decided to celebrate our birthdays together! It was truly heartwarming for me and it was something I will never forget. They decorated the house and we enjoyed the cake together. They even sang Happy Birthday for both of us as if we were a part of the Majima family. Before leaving, they gave us gifts and asked us to visit again. We said our thanks and goodbyes. Before returning to NYC, we went back to Yuka San’s Grandparents’ place to say final goodbyes and express gratitude for the food. It never felt like I was in a foreign country, in another person’s house. It felt like home.

Home Visit | Toyohara Family

Tushnee Chatterjee

On 30th August 2026, I had the opportunity to visit Toyohara san’s residence along with Ranjabati and Hideto Seki San who were fellow participants of the conference. The home visit was one of the most memorable experiences of our time in Japan, as it allowed us to have a first hand experience of Japanese family life, hospitality and culture in a deeply personal manner.

At 12 noon, we met Toyohara san at Lawson, located within the National Youth Centre. From there we began our journey to Koto city by rail, starting from Sangubashi station and travelling towards Kameido through central Tokyo. Upon reaching Koto city Ranjabati, Seki San and I stopped at a family restaurant for lunch. Toyohara san had to leave early to attend her four year old son Ten chan’s sumo wrestling match. After our lunch, Seki San guided us towards the sports arena where the match was taking place. On our way, we stopped at the Kameido Chuo Park where we spent some time fooling around, having fun and clicking several pictures together. We eventually reached the sports centre, where a children’s sumo wrestling competition was taking place. Watching Ten chan participate was incredibly adorable and heart warming. Seeing his enthusiasm and innocence made the event particularly memorable and it gave us a glimpse into the community oriented nature of Japanese culture.

After the match, we met with Toyohara san and went sightseeing around the Koto city. We saw the Tokyo Skytree, visited the Chosei in Temple, and explored the Fukagawa Edo Museum, which was an experience of a lifetime that made us feel like we were immersed in historical Japan and could understand the way of life of the locals who lived during the Edo period. After this, we took a stroll along the beautiful Sumida River and then went to Toyohara san’s home for dinner.

At her residence we were warmly welcomed by her husband and son. We spent time chatting, getting to know about each other, laughing and playing Mario video games together on the television. Dinner prepared by Toyohara san herself, was a wonderful spread of sashimi and oyakodon, accompanied by delicious beverages and fresh fruits.

As a token of appreciation, Ranjabati and I presented Toyohara san with some gifts we had brought from India. Ranjabati gifted her the famous Bengali book *Aam Aatir Bhepu* written by Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay while I gifted her a traditional Indian dupatta made out of modal silk. We then bid farewell and returned to the National Youth Centre, concluding a beautiful day filled with warmth and unforgettable memories.

Home Visit | Hosoi Family Kimaya Thakkar

On the 30th of August, Yuzuki Hosoi hosted Zorinsangi Bawlchhim and Kimaya Thakkar. We left after our GD and headed towards the Meiji Jingu Shrine. After exploring the beauty and peacefulness of the shrine and buying small prayer boards, we headed towards the exit, where we came across a Yosakoi dance performance at the Harajuku Omotesando Genki Matsuri Super Yosakoi Festival in Tokyo. The energetic performance added a pleasant and unexpected experience to our visit. We then went to Harajuku and Omotesando, a popular shopping area in Tokyo known for its cute and unique stores. Zorinsangi bought a bag, while Kimaya bought a pair of sneakers. After roaming through the streets, the three of us had ramen at AFURI. Kimaya was especially happy to find a vegetarian ramen option there. After eating to our fullest, we headed towards Shibuya.

Walking through the beautiful streets of Shibuya, we explored the malls and shops in the area. Zorinsangi bought a pair of Mizuno sports shoes. After sharing a few laughs, we headed towards Yuzuki's house, where we were warmly welcomed by her family. We spent time interacting with her family and watched Ponyo together. We also got to see Yuzuki's childhood pictures, which was a very wholesome and heartwarming moment. It was lovely to get a glimpse into her childhood and share such a personal moment together. Later, we went outside the house and lit small firecrackers, which was a lot of fun and added another memorable moment to the evening. We then came back inside and had sushi and beef for dinner. One of the most enjoyable parts was making the sushi ourselves and then sitting together to eat it. Sharing the table, talking, laughing, and enjoying the meal together made the evening feel warm and homely. Zorinsangi and Kimaya were especially grateful to Yuzuki and her family for welcoming us so warmly. They were very thoughtful and considerate in making sure we were comfortable and had a wonderful time. After dinner, we headed to the supermarket, where Yuzuki bought various things for us. Later, we headed towards the National Olympic Centre in her car, clicked a picture with everyone, and finally bid our goodbyes.

The day was a wonderful combination of exploring, food, cultural experiences, laughter, and friendship. From the peaceful surroundings of Meiji Jingu to the lively streets of Harajuku, Omotesando and Shibuya, and finally the warmth of Yuzuki's home, every part of the day became a special memory. It was a simple yet beautiful experience that we will remember fondly as one of the most wholesome days of our time in Japan.

Diary Entries

Amrita's Thoughts...

When I walked through the gates at the Kolkata international terminal, looking back at my mother waving through the glass, my first thought was: *I don't want to go.*

Going to Japan was a childhood dream. I was overjoyed to be selected for this conference—yet I was terrified. A million what-ifs had taken hold. After all, I was about to step into an unknown country. When I was little, I wanted to see the world because I believed people were kind and the world was beautiful. I couldn't bear the possibility of being proven wrong now.

By the time we landed, the fear had turned into excitement, but a nagging anxiety remained. *What if something goes wrong?*

And, well... things *did* go wrong.

Sometimes I was late. Sometimes I lost my things. Sometimes I myself was lost.

Somehow, though, it stopped mattering. Walking through the city streets, getting *omikuji* together, taking the metro, eating new food, playing around with gacha machines, browsing the shelves at *konbinis*, getting praised for my broken Japanese, watching fireworks by the bay— every experience felt sacred to me. Shinjuku, Kamakura, Yokohama, Hamamatsu: so many places I feel lucky just to get to say, *I've been there.*

Above all, I am grateful for the people. My teammates were always both fun and helpful, and no words can describe the immense kindness the Japanese team showed to us. We only spent a short time together— yet I sometimes forgot we were from different parts of the globe, because I always felt at home around them.

My favourite picture from the trip lacks the people who made it special, but it captures the exact moment I felt most grateful for them. It reminds me of sitting in the Shinkansen, eating snacks our Japanese friends bought for us, and being nudged awake by my friends just as the skies cleared, in a statistical improbability for late August, to reveal Mt. Fuji.

In the end, the younger me was right. People are kind, and the world is beautiful.



Saanvi's Thoughts...

It is hard to summarise these few days within a few hundred words just like it is difficult to write slam books summarizing your school friendships in just a few sentences. The report has told you about the fireworks, the festivals, the shrines, and the conference amongst a host of other activities. Here I am, with stories of people we met, the food we shared, and the conversations we had in the corridors of NYC. Outside Sukiya, the day we went to Shinjuku, I remember sharing pudding with Ayaka and Ririko from the same spoon, and suddenly we were friends.

The day we went to Jimbocho I had the opportunity to visit a Ukiyo-e art exhibition and got myself a small woodblock print postcard to bring back home. Side questing my way through the streets of Tokyo, on the day we were supposed to visit Nishikasai, I had such bad blisters that I couldn't walk, and I saw how Yuka ran around trying to get me blister patches, which she put on me while I sat down at a random station corner. Pork buns in Chinatown and screaming our lungs out while dancing at Bon Odori is something I knew I would love to experience with my friends, and how glad I was to be able to do so! I remember Sangubashi station not for the trains we had to catch but for the FamilyMart opposite it, which became our everyday pitstop to get *onigiri* or fried chicken. That *konbini* saw moments the conference room could never!

Maybe for someone reading this report to get a glimpse of Tokyo, these instances will be of lesser value than the Yokohama fireworks or Don Quijote visits, but for someone who cried at the closing ceremony (along with literally everyone else present), this is a promise that you will find yourself valuing these moments just as much!



Tushnee's Thoughts...

Some journeys are measured in miles, but I believe some are measured in memories, friendships, laughter and the smallest bits and pieces that alter the very course of what we are becoming. For me, the India Japan Students Conference wasn't a mere conference but a journey that transformed itself into an integral part of my life. Japan truly embraced me with

some experiences that I had only imagined before. Interacting with people from various walks of life, sharing food, stories, laughter and endless memories in a land that was an intricate fusion of culture, tradition, art, history and yet remained perpetually modern, these were not mere moments but chapters that became an unforgettable experience. Not just in a new country but amidst people who I'll forever hold very close to my heart.

This conference taught me to step beyond my comfort zone, understand perspectives different from my own, listen more openly and believe in the value of collaboration. It undoubtedly made me more confident, independent, patient and most importantly more appreciative of the world beyond what I had always known. Somewhere between the discussions, presentations, cultural experiences, photographs and those late night conversations, I found a new version of myself, one that was more curious, courageous and a lot more open hearted. But perhaps the greatest gift that IJSC could give was the people. I arrived in Japan knowing some faces and returned home carrying bonds that I truly hope will last a lifetime. Some of the people I met became some of the best friends I had ever made, and the bonds we created feel far bigger than the few days we spent together.

Now, when I look back, Japan feels less like a place I visited and more like a feeling I carry with me. IJSC did not just give me memories. It gave me a piece of myself I did not know I was looking for. All I can say is that I felt like I was in a fever dream.



Kimaya's Thoughts...

I would be lying if I said that this trip was simply “fun”. The 30th JISC-IJSC in Tokyo, Japan was a once in a lifetime experience and an honour to be a part of. It was a different and unique kind of fun, much like being handed an Xbox controller for the first time when you have never played a game before and being asked to navigate through an unfamiliar world, complete with challenges, opportunities, freedom, surprises, and moments of enjoyment. That is exactly how this conference felt to me a rollercoaster of emotions and experiences, each teaching me something new.

At the beginning, I was still learning how to navigate everything academically, socially, and personally. By the time I felt that I had finally learned to control the console, and was ready

to embark on the journey, there were already only a few days left. Yet, this made me realise that learning to navigate the challenges was itself part of the fun. The unfamiliarity, small difficulties, and unexpected situations eventually became some of the most memorable parts of the journey.

One such challenge was food. As a vegetarian who is comfortable eating eggs, finding suitable food was sometimes difficult. I often had to search for Indian restaurants and travel separately to find meals I could enjoy. However, even this became an unexpected adventure. It gave me opportunities to explore different parts of Japan, interact with fellow Indians, and try different foods out of curiosity. One of my favourite discoveries was the Rainbow Vegan Ramen at AFURI. I loved the broth, and the soft noodles made it even better. I was especially happy to discover a vegetarian ramen option in Japan.

Beyond food, I became fascinated by Japanese culture and its small details, particularly Daruma dolls and Maneki-neko. Exploring Tokyo, experiencing Japanese customs, and observing everyday life added another dimension to the journey.

The trip also offered several valuable academic, cultural, and institutional experiences. We had the honour of visiting the Embassy of India in Japan, the Yokohama India Centre, Hamamatsu City Hall, Tokyo International Public School, and Suzuki Company. Each visit offered a different perspective; diplomacy and India-Japan relations to education, local governance, community, culture, and spirituality. These experiences complemented the academic learning from the conference and made the journey much more meaningful.

Ultimately, this was much more than a conference or a sightseeing trip. It was a combination of academic learning, cultural exchange, exploration, friendships, challenges, and personal growth. Looking back, I realise that the most beautiful part was not knowing exactly what to expect, but learning to navigate the journey as it unfolded. Japan gave me memories I will carry for a lifetime and taught me to step outside my comfort zone, embrace the unfamiliar, and find joy even in the challenges along the way.



Soham's Thoughts...

I fell in love with Japan almost a decade ago. What began with an interest in its culture slowly became something much deeper learning about its customs, understanding the subtle and indirect ways of communication, and eventually, a few years ago, beginning to learn Japanese. For someone who had spent so long dreaming about visiting Japan, being given the opportunity to actually travel there for the 30th India-Japan Students' Conference felt almost unreal. Even now, it feels like a beautiful fever dream. The trip was not simply amazing; it was astonishing, immaculate, and beyond anything I had imagined. The conference introduced me to some of the kindest, most welcoming and genuinely fun people I could have asked to meet. The Japanese delegates quickly became friends with whom I could laugh, talk, explore and create memories that I know I will carry for years. And then there was Japan itself.

From the chaotic energy of Shibuya and Shinjuku to the quiet, peaceful streets of Sangubashi, every place seemed to have a different personality. Every view, every street, and even the air I breathed felt special. If I were forced to choose one day from the entire trip,

However, it would undoubtedly be the day we visited Kamakura and Yokohama. Kamakura was a place I had seen countless times online and had longed to experience myself. Riding the Enoden, seeing the mountains surrounding the peaceful coastline, and simply taking in the scenery felt surreal.

Later, Yokohama amazed me with its skyline and beautiful sea. With both Indian and Japanese friends, we explored Chinatown, ate together, laughed endlessly, played around, and took photographs that captured moments I wish I could somehow preserve forever. Then came the fireworks, hanabi. A small part of me had always dreamed of seeing Japanese fireworks. That evening, while watching the Yokohama fireworks light up the sky, my vision suddenly blurred with tears. I was not sad. I was simply overwhelmed because a dream I had carried for years had finally come true. Japan taught me more than I expected. It gave me friendships, memories, confidence, and countless moments of wonder.

I cannot forget a single day of this journey, and I know I will cherish every one of them for the rest of my life.



Srivaishnavi's Thoughts...

Even now, it still feels like a dream that the entire conference is over. Everything feels so surreal, and when I look back at these twelve days, I feel extremely grateful for everything I experienced, learned, and gained. 12 days and 21 new people, yet somehow, we bonded so quickly and created memories that felt like they belonged to a much longer journey.

Everything about Japan felt magical to me. From the very beginning, Japan felt like home. Not even once did I feel that I was almost 7,000 kilometres away from India. The air, the surroundings, the way people behaved, and even the way everything was organised felt so comfortable and welcoming. The rules and systems were designed in such a convenient and respectful way, keeping everyone in mind. I became so comfortable that I almost forgot I had to go back to India. I stopped checking the calendar and somehow, time just flew. Even though finding vegetarian food was sometimes a challenge, every meal I had was worth it and became a part of the experience. One thing I especially loved about Japan was how much attention was given to even the smallest details. The beautiful designs on drain covers, the *eki* stamps that we were always so curious to find, and so many other little things made me realise how much thought goes into everyday life there. I also got to visit Odaiba and see the Gundam statue in person, which was such an exciting moment, especially because I went with the most amazing people. This trip was truly a dream come true for me. I came to Japan expecting to learn about a new country, but I returned with friendships, memories, experiences, and a little piece of Japan that I know I will carry with me forever. Experiencing the culture up close, from wearing a kimono to watching Bon Odori and the beautiful Hanabi, made the journey even more meaningful. These moments helped me experience Japan beyond just visiting places and allowed me to feel a little closer to its culture and traditions. I really miss each and every part of this conference already. This chapter will always remain very close to my heart.

ほんとうにありがとうございます! じゃまたね!



Anurag's Thoughts...

It was during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 when I was sitting at home, crying after watching the movie *Your Name*. Fast forward to 2026, I was standing on the famous stairs from the movie one morning, feeling a sense of accomplishment at how far I had come. Japan as a country was never unknown to me. Be it its technological advancement or strong work ethic, Japan has always been a country that amazed me. But it was during the pandemic when I started watching anime, and that was what led me into the depths of its cultures and traditions. One of my main goals for participating in the conference was to visit Japan and experience its beauty firsthand. As the days went by, I gradually ticked off items from my bucket list. Visiting places like the Shibuya Crossing, Akihabara, Kamakura, and Shichirigahama Beach, along with eating Japanese foods like Ichiran ramen, takoyaki, sushi, and yakisoba, had always been a dream of mine. I was also lucky enough to experience the Japanese fireworks, *hanabi taikai*, and a Bon Odori festival in Roppongi Hills with my own eyes. Riding the Shinkansen and getting to see Mt. Fuji was a breathtaking experience. Slowly, it felt like everything I had watched in the anime and dramas was coming to life, and I was physically present there, absorbing it all. To cap it off, we even went to karaoke on the final day and sang a lot of popular songs. However, the most memorable part of this conference for me was the time I spent with everyone. I may visit Japan again someday, but it will never be with the same group of friends. The group discussion sessions, late-night *konbini* visits, sightseeing, *onsen*, eating together - I will miss everything. I am also really grateful to everyone for celebrating my birthday so many times in Japan; it is something very precious to me, and I will forever remember it. The way everyone helped and took care of each other during the conference was heartwarming to see. We will look back on all of this when we are older, hoping to relive those days once again. I hope everyone will cherish the memories of this trip throughout their lives.



Zorinsangi's Thoughts...

What a blessing it is to live a moment you once could only dream of.

This August, I had the immense privilege of representing Delhi (and, by extension, Mizoram, as my ethnic background is a huge part of my identity) as the sole Delhi participant at the 30th Japan–India Student Conference (JISC) in Japan.

My journey to JISC began with several stages of selection, and if I'm being honest, I never quite let myself believe that I would be selected. To make it through each stage and eventually find myself on a flight to Japan was surreal in a way I still find difficult to put into words. Throughout the process, even during my visa application, I was still in disbelief that I would actually be visiting Japan.

I had always been interested in anime, manga and other Japanese media while growing up. My sister, cousins and I were raised on Ghibli movies. I even cosplayed at a very young age, back in first grade. But as life went on, I could no longer invest as much time into those interests. So, in many ways, this opportunity felt like a dream to me. It was only when I got on the plane that I actually began to believe this was real.

To quote Sylvia Plath,

"I can never read all the books I want; I can never be all the people I want and live all the lives I want. I can never train myself in all the skills I want. And why do I want to? I want to live and feel all the shades, tones and variations of mental and physical experience possible in my life. And I am horribly limited."

I often find myself lingering on the limitations of my existence, spending far too much time trapped within a bubble of my own making.

And yet, for two weeks, I got to live one of those lives I once could only imagine.

For two weeks, I travelled, I learnt, I grew, and I lived alongside students from Japan and India. As a member of the Academic Team, I had the opportunity to head the Local Communities Subcommittee, where we explored how foreign residents experience community, support and belonging in Japan.

One of the highlights was visiting the Embassy of India in Japan, where we had the opportunity to meet Ms. Nagma Mallick, Ambassador of India to Japan. I was especially delighted to learn that she is also an alumna of the University of Delhi. Across Tokyo, Yokohama and Hamamatsu, we engaged with different communities and institutions, experiencing Japan in ways that I could never have through a classroom, a textbook or a tourist visit. Even in Yokohama, I had the time of my life listening to Mr. Advani Nalin, Chairman of the Yokohama India Centre, whose presentation connected different disciplines and perspectives in a way that left me genuinely inspired by the possibilities around me.

As a Psychology student, I particularly enjoyed the opportunity to learn about human connection. The conference gave me the chance to build friendships and professional relationships across cultures, while also forming meaningful connections within the Indian delegation. Even the academic work felt different. Writing reports, conducting interviews and learning to build rapport with people from different backgrounds allowed me to see Psychology outside the classroom. Concepts that I had once only studied became things I was able to observe and experience firsthand.

When I returned to Delhi, I came back with new perspectives, friendships across national boundaries, memories I will carry with me, and an overwhelming sense of gratitude.

I could never have imagined what those two weeks would hold when I first applied. Looking back, it still feels a little surreal that the person who once watched Ghibli movies and cosplayed in first grade eventually found herself boarding a plane to Japan.

This was an experience through which I was blessed with “immeasurably more than all I could ask or imagine.”



Dwija's Thoughts...

If I had to describe my entire journey with JISC 2026, all the way from the beginning to even this moment in just one word, I'd have to say- Overwhelming. I have felt a whirlwind of positive and only positive emotions. Even just a month before being selected, Japan was just a far-away childhood dream of mine that I had been planning for years, to be able to explore every nook and cranny of the country. The realization that I would be visiting this country did not set in even while I was on the flight, until we landed right as the sun rose, and that was when I saw it, and it dawned upon me- “The land of the rising sun”. It was such a surreal experience, stepping out of my comfort zone away from my parents, but I was incredibly hyped to be able to make the most out of this opportunity.

There were so many learning outcomes from this program for me, such as learning to handle money, having to make decisions on my own and interacting with people from various cultures with totally new perspectives. I got to understand myself and figure out truly how well I could handle unfamiliar situations independently.

I think even during the fleeting moments, I must have teared up while realizing how grateful I am to be able to travel all this way. Getting to meet such genuine people is something that I will truly cherish. The Japanese team was exceptionally helpful in every aspect of accommodating us and helping us out with so much.

At the same time, I could not help but wish that my family and friends back home in Chennai could also get to experience this incredible place, with such amazing people.

I could not have asked for a better first trip to Japan.

This picture I will hold dear to me, as it was taken the night I truly felt liberated and alive- after a newfound love for Kabuki and getting to finally play Taiko no Tatsujin- an arcade game that I had been dreaming of playing since I was 11 with the sweetest Chiharu-San.



Senjuti's Thoughts...

I think some journeys change you quietly. You return home, unpack your suitcase, and go back to ordinary life, only to realise that somewhere along the way, you have become a slightly different version of yourself. I went to Japan expecting to see a new country and I did not expect to find so many versions of myself there.

There was a version of me who stood beneath enormous *torii* gates, collecting *goshuin* stamps, one who wandered through shrines, fascinated by how centuries of history could exist peacefully beside a city that never seemed to stop moving. There was the dancer-self who performed in Japan and discovered that, for a few minutes, language was unnecessary because movement had already said everything.

And then there were the moments I could never have planned.

I experienced an earthquake in the middle of the night, danced at a Bon Odori festival, and somehow found myself in Yokohama on the exact day of a fireworks festival. I had always wanted to see Japanese hanabi, but every festival seemed to be over before we arrived. None of us even knew there would be one that evening. Then the sky lit up above Yokohama, and it felt almost like a gift from the universe, a little “you made it” after everything.

But my favourite memory is much smaller. It was the third day in Tokyo and it was raining heavily. I told Yuka San that I wanted to run in the rain, and she simply took my hand and ran with me. For those few minutes, there were no schedules, responsibilities or roles to play. We were just two little children running through the rain, laughing. I have only a video of that moment, but perhaps that is fitting. Some memories were never meant to be still.

Japan taught me independence, but more importantly, it taught me that independence does not mean doing everything alone. Sometimes it means knowing whose hand to reach for.

I chose this photograph because it holds one of my happiest memories from Tokyo, the first time all of us were together as a team. The Opening Ceremony is especially close to my heart because, with everyone's support, I got to share a little piece of India with Japan. But what I treasure most is seeing all of us here together and every face brings back a different moment, a different laugh, a different memory.

I came to Japan hoping to collect memories instead, I came back with people I will cherish forever. And now, thousands of kilometres away, I realise that what I miss most is not simply Japan, but the people who made it feel like home. This photograph is a little piece of that home that I get to keep forever.



Aditya's Thoughts...

The whole conference had so many moments to look back to but one specific day or event, which will always be close to my heart, will be the day we went to Hamamatsu. We were running late, with our luggage in hand, lost in the Shinjuku station. But after all of the chaos, we finally boarded the Shinkansen which we wanted to board. It was my first time on the bullet train and it was surely memorable. We were running late, but being late somehow turned in our favor because we were able to see Mt. Fuji rather clearly as compared to the members who were on time and boarded the early morning train. Although I did sleep through half of the journey, the best part of the day was yet to come. Upon reaching Suzuki Plaza, I was overwhelmed by the number of cars and bikes on display. One of such Cars was signed by Elton John himself. Just in case it was not enough, Suzuki made sure I enjoyed the visit as much as possible by giving me and all the other members a free toy car, modeled after the first ever Alto launched in 1979. It will be the best souvenir I brought back home from Japan. In the evening we went out to have Gyoza at a local izakaya and I cannot emphasize enough on how good the food was. It was enough to make me want to visit Hamamatsu once again. In the night after dinner, we came back to the hotel. Me and Yuka San were looking through the board games which were provided at the hotel for the guests to play in the lobby. She challenged me to a game of Othello, which I was new to. We played and as expected I lost, but not without a fight (she thrashed me in the match). When the game ended, other

members also came back from the restaurant. Some of them stayed back and some went to sleep. After the Othello match, I played chess with Sangbad and then Soham. We were surely not tired enough to sleep but we had to because the next day would start early. All in all, it was a chaotic, fun and memorable day which will always be close to my heart.



Sangbad's Thoughts...

Like a lot of people whose hearts have been captivated by Japanese culture, I too had a dream of visiting Japan for a very long time. Suffice to say, once I finally managed to glimpse the Tokyo skyline outside from our flight, everything else that came after felt like nothing short of a very beautiful lucid dream.

Seeing a genuine Shinto shrine or a *Torii* gate had been something I had imagined for a very long time, so it felt all the more surreal when we visited our very first shrine, the Meiji Jingu, and got to witness the tranquil nature of such a structure for the first time. Whether it was the great Tsurugaoka Hachiman-gu at Kamakura, or the smaller, less-known shrines we saw on the way to our destinations, each of them was just as mesmerizing as the rest.

Another thing that ended up being a highlight was the entire experience inside Yasukuni Shrine, as we not only got to meet the illustrious chief priest of the shrine, Umio Otsuka, who personally told us everything about the deep history behind the shrine and also his own inspiring career. We also got to experience a formal Shinto worship ceremony by entering the depths of the shrine, an experience not many get to experience even while visiting Japan.

And of course, the most memorable of them all were the people. The Japanese conference members were truly delightful and fun companions to have throughout my journey through the foreign land, introducing familiarity in places where there normally would've been none. Through their help and experience, the trip went from simply being memorable to genuinely priceless.

All in all, everything I have seen and experienced at this conference will stay with me throughout my life.



Ranjabati's Thoughts...

You never really know what will liberate you until you are looking back, already liberated. I could not believe, as I stood outside Jiyugaoka railway station at dawn, that I had made it this far from home. We were running on a busy schedule and little sleep, but I had managed to steal a couple of hours to visit Tomoe Gakuen, or what remains of it, which is nothing but a stone of remembrance, lovingly established by the alumna of Sosaku Kobayashi's school which was bombed to dust in the war.

The experience of infancy is irrecoverable once the mind is burdened with scientific evidence and theological explanations. However, as I walked down the streets of Jiyugaoka, I felt like my childhood was unfolding in front of me. I was standing where Tetsuko Kurowanagi's school used to be, about which I had read in *Totto Chan: A Little Girl at the Window*. Needless to say, I was overwhelmed with emotions.

I had flown to Tokyo, my mind *tabula rasa*, with no expectations other than that of pebble picking stories. And so I did. There is a certain charm in interacting with people without speaking a common language. The human species is connected in strange ways and while language has enhanced that connection, it has never been a barrier.

A pink haze had curled up over our lives for those two weeks. We do not know what force drove us, but after an entire day of work, we were always ready to explore yet another neon-lit alley. Japan's desserts quickly captured our attention and we ran in and out of the nearest *konbini* (convenience store) whenever we had a minute to spare to grab an ice cream or some chocolate. The sugar rush felt like a reward, but what I cherish most is the people who I shared these sweet treats with. We strike conversations over coffee all the time, but Tokyo gave me people who listened to me pouring my heart out while the ramen broth in front of us kept getting cold.

The fireworks over Tokyo Bay finally made me miss my city. I did not want to rush back home, but only held Kolkata a little closer against my heart. After all, the more I travel, the more I love the city that watched me grow before I stood before the world's blinding lights. It has been a while since I have left Tokyo, but I carry it with me everywhere, like a montage that never fades.





CONSUL GENERAL'S RESIDENCE



ARRIVAL AT TOKYO



OPENING CEREMONY



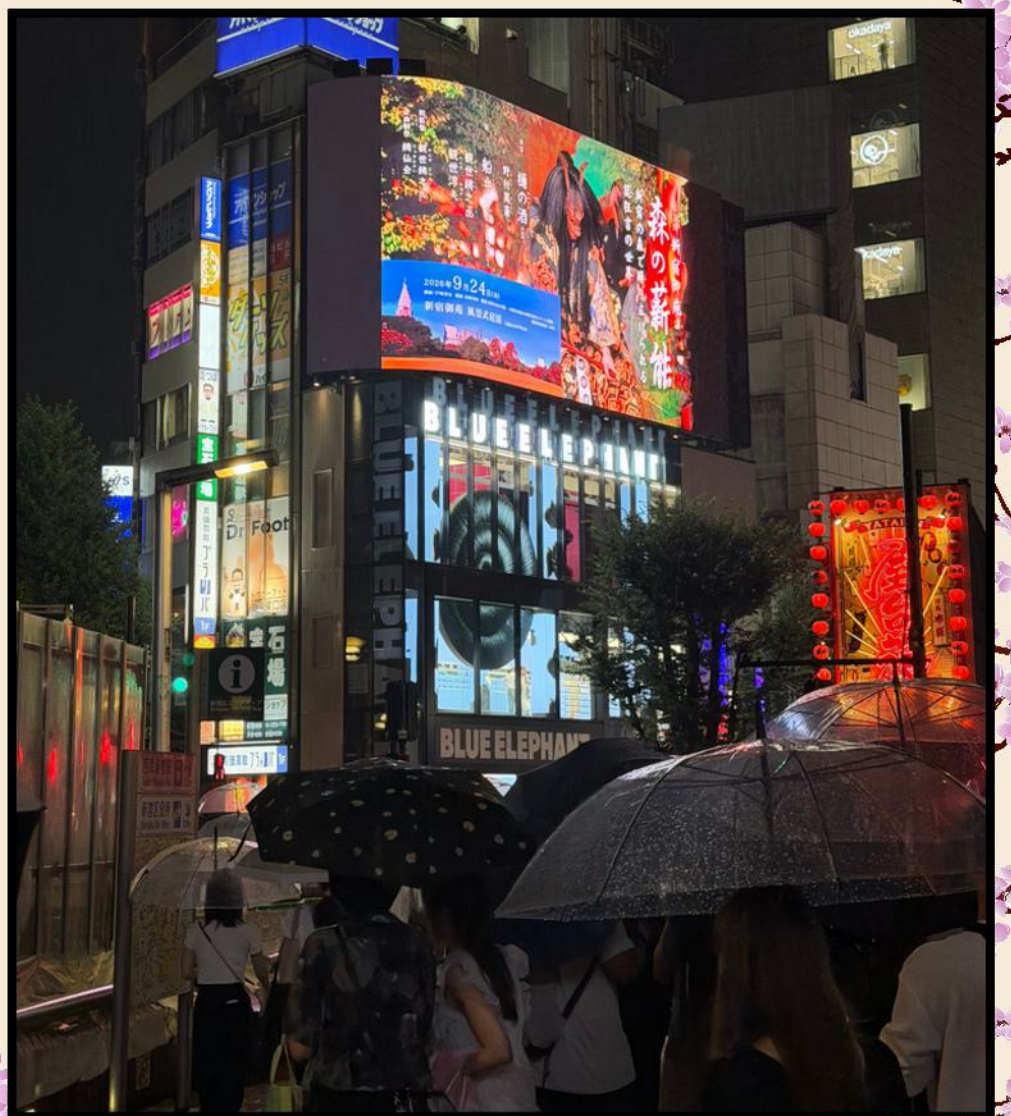
INDIAN EMBASSY



TRYING ON YUKATA



VISIT TO MEIJI JINGU



SHINJUKU



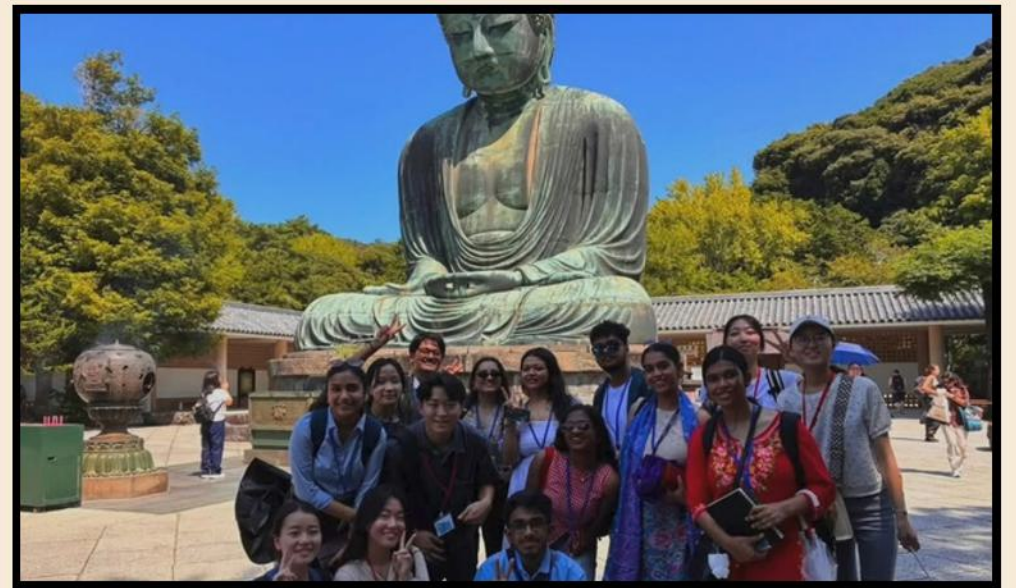
BON ODORI



FIREWORKS FESTIVAL



HASE-DERA TEMPLE, KAMAKURA



GREAT BUDDHA, KAMAKURA



ODAIBA GUNDAM



TEAMLABS



ICHIRAN RAMEN



CONVEYOR BELT SUSHI



AKIHABARA



SENSO-JI TEMPLE, ASAKUSA



GOTOKUJI SHRINE, SETAGAYA



KABUKI THEATRE



TOKYO SKYTREE

HOME VISITS



JOURNEY TO HAMAMATSU



HAMAMATSU CASTLE



MT. FUJI



RAKHI CELEBRATION

VISITS AND INTERVIEWS



YOKOHAMA INDIA CENTRE



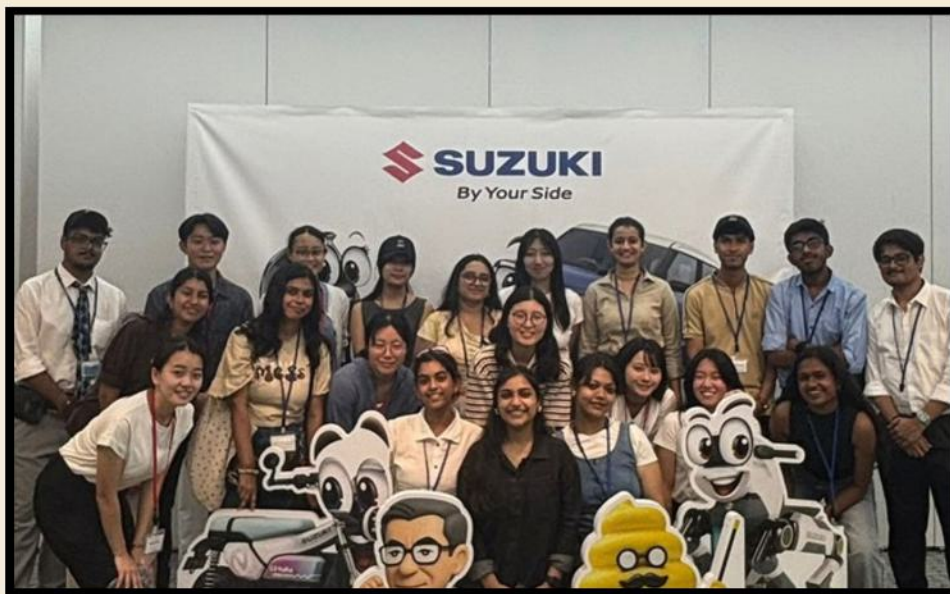
TOKYO INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOL



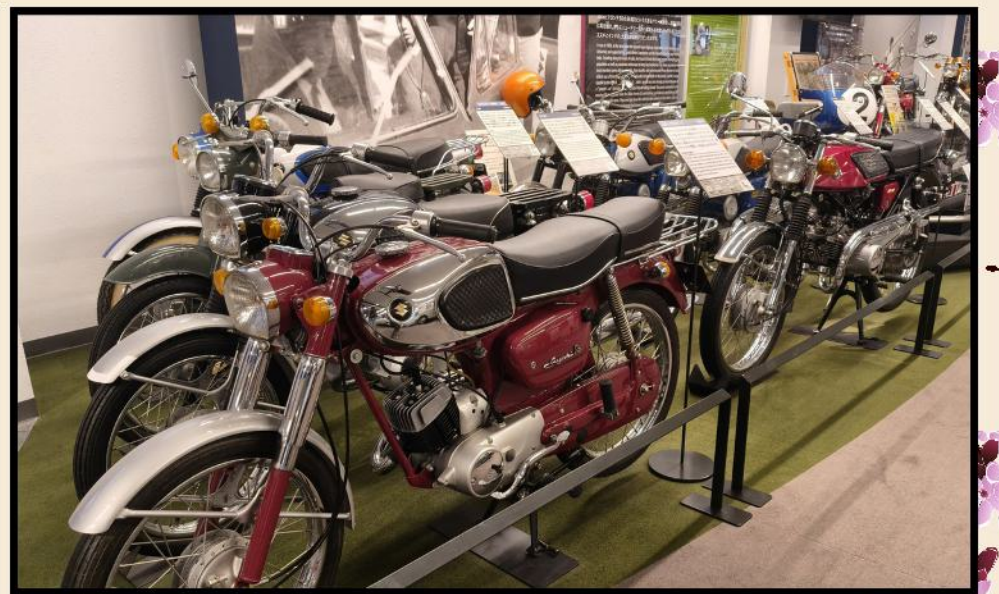
KEIO UNIVERSITY



YASUKUNI SHRINE



MEETING SUZUKI EMPLOYEES



SUZUKI MUSEUM



HICE



HAMAMATSU CITY HALL

FINAL PRESENTATIONS



1. WORKPLACE DEVELOPMENT



2. CAREER DEVELOPMENT



3. LOCAL COMMUNITIES



4. CULTURE



CLOSING CEREMONY



SAYONARA PARTY



SEND-OFF AT THE AIRPORT



Organised by:
NIHONGO KAIWA KYOOKAI SOCIETY