

FRIENDSHIP2.0 PROJECT

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CONTENTS

1. PR of Japan Desk's Activity at NAGOYA CONNECT	P2	7. Seeking Collaboration between IITH and Japanese Companies	P5
2. Held 1st Joint Coordination Committee Meeting	P2	8. Monitoring Academic Progress of the FRIENDSHIP Scholarship Students in Japan	P5
3. Had Post-Doctoral Career Lectures @ IIT BHU Varanasi	P3	9. A Collaborative Activity with Joint Research Grant Support	P5
4. Held 1st Japan Desk Steering Committee Meeting	P3	10. Pre-Announcement for FRIENDSHIP 2.0 Scholarship and Research Grant 2023	P6
5. Supporting FRIENDSHIP Alumni to Promote India-Japan Collaboration	P4	11. Upcoming Activities	P7
6. Looking for the Opportunities of Collaboration between IITH and Japanese Universities	P4		



Japan Desk launched the portal site to promote collaboration between IITH and Japan. Please click the link below and scan the QR in right for more details. <https://www.iith.ac.in/japandesk/>



1. PR of Japan Desk's Activity at NAGOYA CONNECT (May 2022)

NAGOYA CONNECT, an innovation promotion and exchange program organized by Nagoya City and Venture Café Tokyo, was held on 27th May. Ms. OKAWA Serena, project member and responsible for supporting Japan Desk Operation (Alumni Association Activity/Event Management/Industrial Collaboration) from the FRIENDSHIP 2.0 Project (hereinafter referred to as the Project), participated as a panelist for one of the sessions. She introduced an overview of the project as well as the services provided by Japan Desk at the Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IITH) to approximately 90 audiences who attended the session offline or online. Participation to the event was made possible by Mr. TANJI Daisuke, an activist involved in various activities connecting India and Japan, who is also a project-lead of NAGOYA CONNECT.

Due to the effects of COVID-19, Ms.Okawa participated remotely, however, she received feedback that some of the audience showed their interests in IITH and gave highly positive comments towards the project following the event. The project team will continue to actively participate in future opportunities to promote IITH, the project, and the Japan Desk.



(Fig1: The top page of NAGOYA CONNECT)



(Fig2: The website of NAGOYA CONNECT)

【Please click the links below】

[Click here for the recording of the event](#) [Click here for the event's page](#)

2. Held 1st Joint Coordination Committee Meeting (June 2022)



(Fig3: 1st JCC)

The first Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) meeting was held online on 2nd June. From the Indian side, President. Murty B.S., Project Director, Prof. Tarun Kanti Panda, Project Manager, Prof. K.V.L. Subramaniam and Prof. Saptarshi Majumdar who are members of Japan Desk Task Force, and Ms. Pranitha Avvaru who is a staff of Japan Desk, have attended, while the Japanese side was represented by the Embassy of Japan in India, JICA Headquarters, JICA India Office, and nine project members.

At this JCC, Prof. Panda reported the progress and achievement of the project from December 2021 to April 2022, and Mr.SAITO Kunitoshi, a team leader of the project, and Ms. KASAI Chikako, deputy team leader of the project, reported on the project activities to be implemented from May to December. In addition, President MIKI Chitoshi from Tokyo City University, a project member, gave advice with a wide range of perspectives on how the project can contribute not only to the social needs of the two countries but also to human resource development and value creation consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in building a sustainable academic research collaboration network between IITH and the Japanese academic and industrial institutions. During the Q&A session, participants exchanged opinions on long-term trainee programs, degree requirements, and planning events that would further promote collaboration between IITH and Japanese companies through the Japan Desk. The second JCC is scheduled for this November.

3. Had Post-Doctoral Career Lectures@IIT BHU Varanasi (June 2022)

Dr. Mahendra K. Pal, a 1st batch scholar of the FRIENDSHIP scholarship of phase 1¹ and a founder of the Alumni Association of JICA FRIENDSHIP, obtained a Ph.D. in Engineering from the University of Tokyo in 2015 and continued his research as a postdoctoral fellow at the National Institute for Earth Science and Disaster Prevention (NIED) from 2016. After Dr. Mahendra returned to India in 2021 as an Asst. Prof. in the Department of Civil Engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology (BHU) Varanasi ("IIT Varanasi"), he continued to collaborate with bosses and colleagues during the post-doctoral period, contributing to the India-Japan academic collaboration.

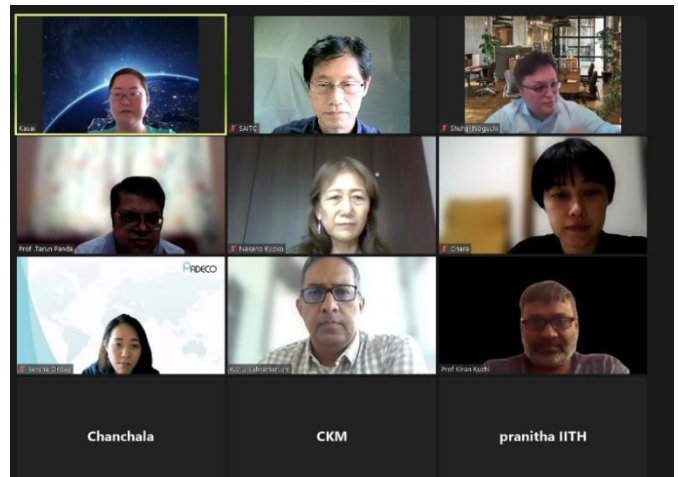
Since his post-doctoral career model has been of interest at IIT Varanasi, he asked the project team to give a talk to doctoral students about the opportunities for post-doctoral research in Japan. In response to this, Dr. NAKANO Kyoko, who is in charge of higher education in the project, gave an online lecture to the students, seated in the seminar room at IIT Varanasi, on 3rd June. The content of the lecture was general information on the postdoctoral situation in Japan and how to apply for project-based postdoctoral positions; however, the students asked several realistic questions such as how to write a good email, making it clear that they are seriously considering their postdoctoral careers. Dr. Sai Chandra Teja, another first-generation FRIENDSHIP student who has once worked as a researcher for a Japanese company, participated as a commentator and offered advice based on his own experience. Such collaboration is truly a great experience for the alumni association as well as for the expansion of the India-Japan academic collaboration. This is exactly what the project aims to achieve.

The project team is ready to provide FRIENDSHIP scholarship participants with career support and will continue to offer information necessary for those who wish to obtain a position as a post-doctoral researcher.

4. Held 1st Japan Desk Steering Committee Meeting (June 2022)

The first Japan Desk Steering Committee meeting was held on 16th June. The Japan Desk Steering Committee is an organization to sustain and develops the partnership between IITH and Japan by managing the progress of the Japan Desk activities. The Japan Desk Steering Committee is headed by President Murty, chaired by Prof. Panda as a project manager, and consists of five professors in charge of Japan Desk task forces, staff and the project team members.

At the first meeting, the Japan Desk's objectives, roadmap, organizational structure, main activities led by the task force, and action plan preparation were discussed and its' operational plans including the topics mentioned above were agreed. The task forces lead activities of the Japan Desk from now on, and each task force will report the progress and achievements of each activity at the 2nd Japan Desk Steering Committee Meeting to be held in September this year.



(Fig 4: 1st Japan Desk Steering Committee)

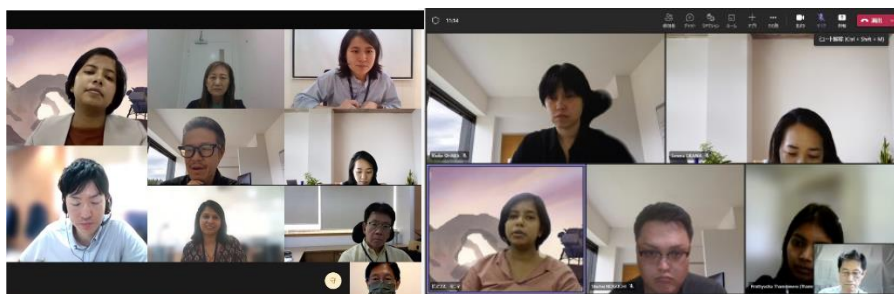
¹ Phase1 is a previous phase of The Project for Future Researchers at IITH to Enhance Network Development with Scholarship of Japan in the Republic of India, which was implemented by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) since 2012 with the aim of promoting industry-academia collaboration between Japan and India.

5. Supporting FRIENDSHIP Alumni to Promote India-Japan Collaboration

There are some cases that the project team is consulted by alumni working in Japanese companies and the project supported them as the Japan Desk. Dr. Tanima Biswas, a first FRIENDSHIP alumni currently working for a Japanese company, has always cooperated with the project in workshops conducted by the Japan Desk. She consulted the project regarding the marketing of her new product in India. The project team arranged an online meeting to get advice from JETRO and connected her to the JETRO Bengaluru Office and New Delhi Office, and there she was able to get a lot of concrete and useful advice from them. We would like to appreciate JETRO for their support.

Afterward, the project team arranged another online meeting between Dr. Tanima and Ms. Prathyusha Thammineni, an IITH alumni who works for Suzuki Motor Corporation, which is conducting CSR activities in India, to brainstorm ideas for social contribution in India through her company's products that came up during the previous meeting.

The project team will continue to support FRIENDSHIP alumni through the Japan Desk to promote India-Japan collaboration in this way.

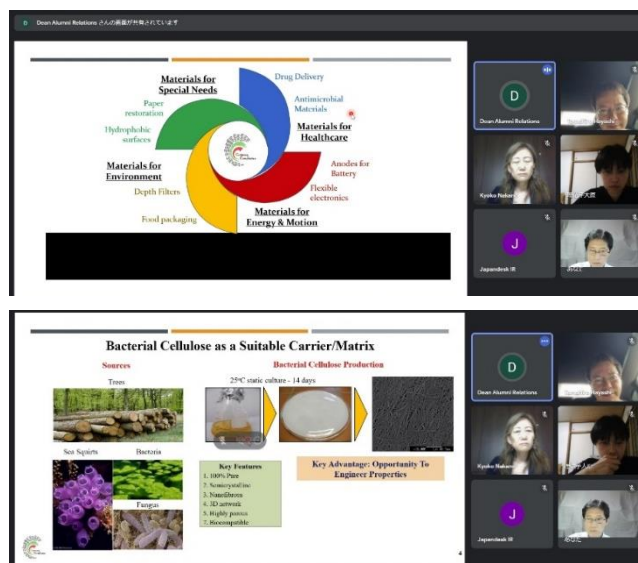


(Fig 5: Online meetings with alumni)

6. Looking for the Opportunities of Collaboration between IITH and Japanese Universities

The purpose of the project is to strengthen collaboration between IITH and Japanese universities through FRIENDSHIP scholarships and joint research programs. Therefore, the Japan Desk connected Assoc. Professor. HAYASHI Tomohiro, a supervisor of a doctoral student of the FRIENDSHIP scholarship at Tokyo Institute of Technology, with Assoc. Professor. Mudrika Khandelwa who had been a supervisor of his master's program at IITH.

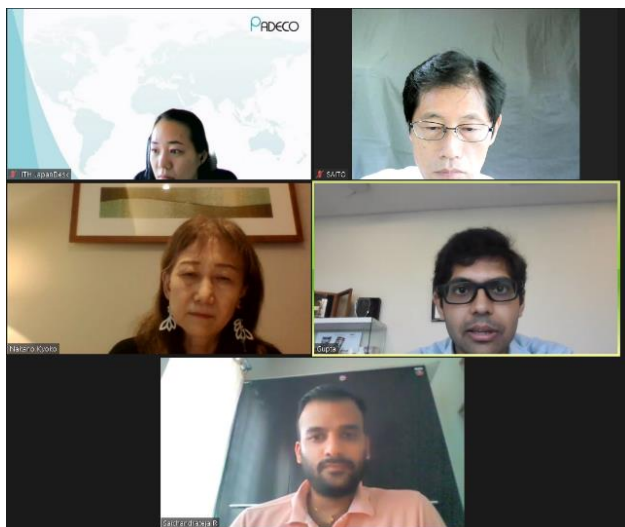
After exchanging information on each other's research fields through the Japan Desk, the online meeting was held on 22nd June. They confirmed that the research areas of Assoc. Prof. Hayashi, who is strong in material analysis, and Assoc, Prof. Mudrika, who is researching cellulose modification and its application in medicine, are complementary. They will keep discussing specific collaboration possibilities in the future and will consider using the scholarship program and research grant program of FRIENDSHIP 2.0. The Japan Desk will continue to actively support collaboration between IITH and Japanese universities.



(Fig6: Meeting between Assoc. Prof. Mudrika and Assoc. Prof. Hayashi)

7. Seeking Collaboration between IITH and Japanese Companies

FRIENDSHIP alumni Dr. Shivam Gupta, who works for Kyoto-based Pharma Foods International Co., Ltd., approached us to explore collaboration with IITH, and we started by holding an online meeting with Dr. Shivam and the project team on 20th June. The company is engaged in the development and production of functional materials that help maintain good health and improve the quality of life, drug development, and product sales. At the meeting, we learned that there is a need to collaborate with researchers to develop



(Fig7: Meeting with Dr. Shivam in the middle right)

models to analyze huge amounts of experimental data on antibodies and immunology using artificial intelligence and machine learning techniques for future business expansion. The project team explained joint research grant program with Japanese companies.

After that, Dr. Shivam's explanation at the company generated interest in the project, and on 21st July, project team leader Mr. Saito visited the company to explain the details of the project and joint research grant. As a result, the company showed strong interest in the project, and we are now moving forward with matching researchers from IITH. The company also commented that they hope to utilize the joint research as a foothold for recruiting human resources from IITH.

We intend to continue our efforts to promote collaboration between IITH and Japanese companies by utilizing the FRIENDSHIP network that has been established till today.

8. Monitoring Academic Progress of the FRIENDSHIP Scholarship Students in Japan

The monitoring was carried out for 42 students who are currently studying in Japan during Phase 1 of the project (January 2012 - December 2020). In particular, the project is monitoring 19 students who are expected to complete their degrees this September.

The project had meetings with the students who have concerns about their degree completion and discussed with their supervisors ways to enable them to complete their degrees on time. Meanwhile, some students have already decided on their careers such as employment with Japanese companies, appointment as assistant professors in their host laboratories, or post-doctoral positions overseas.

It is expected that FRIENDSHIP students will continue to play an important role to connect Japan and India. The project team will conduct the academic progress monitoring for other students as well.

9. A Collaborative Activity with Joint Research Grant Support

Several international collaborations are underway between IITH and the National Institute for Materials Science (NIMS). As one of them, a research team was formed by matching Prof. Shourya Dutta Gupta from IITH, and Dr. FUDOUZI Hiroshi from NIMS and joint research started around autumn of last year. Also, with the financial support of this grant, they are accelerating collaboration for a full-scale joint experiment at NIMS.

This research team aims to create an innovative new type of photonic materials by combining the photonic rubber (Fig. 8) developed by NIMS with nano-quantum dots, photonic analysis technique, and optical simulation on the IITH side. For the joint research that makes the best use of the strengths of both parties, it is important for the professor and his graduate students on the IITH side to stay at NIMS and proceed with joint experiments. In this March, Dr. Fudouzi provided photonic rubber to Prof. Gupta based on the MEA (Material Evaluation Contract) in order to actually handle the existing photonic rubber as a

preliminary step. They also anticipate that by actually handling the materials, they will be able to more concretely implement the experimental design on the desk and inspire new ideas.

In addition to this photonic rubber, they are also paying attention to the bandpass filter function that introduces transmitted wavelengths into the forbidden band due to the recently developed sandwich structure (Fig. 9). Their research team is preparing for an experiment that combines elastic deformation of photonic rubber with a sandwich structure. Although the effects of the new coronavirus hinder visits to Japan, they hope that joint experiments can begin at NIMS as soon as possible.

(This article was contributed by NIMS)

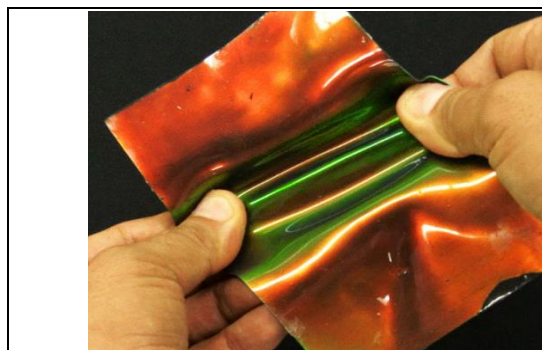


Fig.8 Photonic rubber: Color change from red to green by stretching

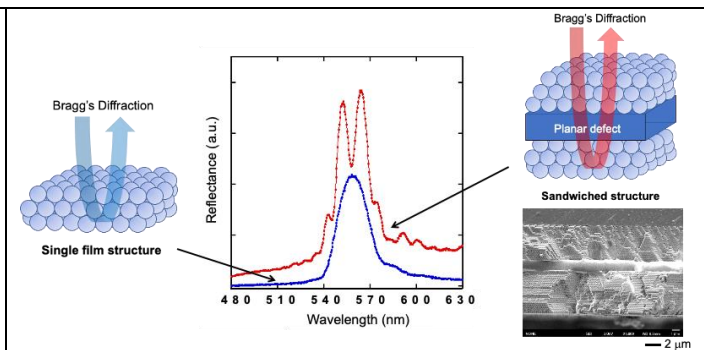


Fig.9 Optical band pass filter (Transmitting region by introducing a plane defect)

10. Pre-Announcement for the FRIENDSHIP 2.0 Scholarship and Research Grant 2023 (2nd Batch)

Pre-announcement of the FRIENDSHIP 2.0 Scholarship and Research Grant 2023 (2nd batch) has started since this July.

The Scholarship Program invites about 20 students, who are studying a master's course in the field of science and technology at IITH and desiring to apply for doctoral programs in Japan from October 2023. The project expects the FRIENDSHIP Scholarship students to be actors in strengthening the partnership between Japan and India through this program.

As for the Research Grant Program, IITH faculty members in the field of science and technology is a target, and 10 joint research with Japanese academic institutes and Japanese companies will be selected. This focuses more on the development of the achievement of the ongoing Research Grant Program 2022 (1st batch), self-sustaining of joint research and expansion of the network of the researchers.

For both programs, an information session will be held this August. Application guidelines (pre-announcement version) are available on the Japan Desk Portal. Please check the QR code below.

【Please click the links and scan QR codes for more information】

[FRIENDSHIP2.0 Scholarship Program](#)



[FRIENDSHIP2.0 Research Grant](#)



11. Upcoming Activities

The project team is going to conduct various activities to promote India-Japan collaboration, including Japan Desk events. The main activities planned are as follows. It would be appreciated if you could give us your cooperation and support.

- Baseline Study Report Preparation
- Detailed planning survey
- FRIENDSHIP2.0 Scholarship 2nd batch promotion activities
- FRIENDSHIP2.0 Collaborative Research Grant 2nd batch promotion activities
- Japan Desk Logo Contest (applications will be opened at the end of July)
- Orientation for 1st batch FRIENDSHIP 2.0 Scholarship participants
- Preparation for CEATEC

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