



India Japan Ties

This editorial is based on [“Japan is recasting its national security vision in face of an aggressive China. India must inject strategic content into ties during 2+2 dialogue”](#) which was published in The Indian Express on 06/09/2022. It talks about the upcoming 2+2 dialogue between India and Japan and traces the path ahead.

For Prelims: Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, Dharma Guardian, Malabar, MILAN, Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC), Vostok 2022, Sea of Japan, India's Act East Policy, South Kuril Island

For Mains: Current State of India's Relations with Japan, Challenges for India and Japan in the Indo-Pacific, India's Stand on Vostok 2022.

The friendship between [India and Japan](#) has a long history rooted in spiritual affinity and strong cultural and civilizational ties. **Indian culture, filtered through Buddhism**, has had a great impact on Japanese culture, and this is the source of the Japanese people's sense of closeness to India.

Bilateral ties have been singularly free of any kind of dispute – **ideological or territorial**. **India -Japan peace treaty** was one of the first peace treaties Japan signed after [World War II](#).

Even though India and Japan have exchanged defense ideas for almost two decades and declared a shared interest in **keeping the Indo-Pacific open and free, as partners in the [Quadrilateral Security Dialogue](#)** along with the US and Australia, their bilateral cooperation is still lacking. **US-China interference in the Indo-Pacific** prevented both sides from implementing their desired strategic objectives.

What is the State of India's Relations with Japan?

- **Defense Ties: India-Japan Defence and Security partnership** has evolved over the years from bilateral and multilateral exercises including [Dharma Guardian](#) and [Malabar](#) respectively. And welcoming the participation of Japan for the first time in exercise [MILAN](#).
 - **Tri-Service Exchanges** between Japan and India have been institutionalized completing the triad. Coast Guards have had regular annual exchanges since 2006. Including, **Japan and India Vision 2025 Special Strategic and Global Partnership** - working together for peace and prosperity of the indo-pacific region and the world.
- **Economic Ties:** A test of the reliability of Japan as a friend was witnessed in **1991** when Japan was among the few countries that **bailed India out of the [balance of payment crisis](#)**.
 - In recent years, the economic relationship between Japan and India has steadily expanded and deepened. The volume of trade between the two countries has increased. **Japan was the 12th largest trading partner for India in 2020**.
 - Also, direct investment from Japan to India has increased, and Japan was the **4th largest**

investor in India in FY2020.

- **Health-Care:** In view of the similarities and synergies between the goals and objectives of **India's AYUSHMAN Bharat Programme** and **Japan's AHWIN**, both sides had been consulting with each other to identify projects to build the narrative of AHWIN for AYUSHMAN Bharat.
- **Investment and ODA:** India has been the largest recipient of the Japanese **Official Development Assistance(ODA)** Loan for the past decades. **Delhi Metro** is one of the most successful examples of Japanese cooperation through the utilization of ODA.
 - India's **Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC)** project is funded by a soft loan provided by Japan International Cooperation Agency under **Special terms for economic partnership (STEP)**.
 - Besides, Japan and India had committed to build a **High-Speed Railways in India by introducing Japan's Shinkansen System**.
 - **India Japan Nuclear Deal 2016** will help India build the six nuclear reactors in southern India, increasing nuclear energy capacity ten-fold by 2032.

What are the Roadblock to Strengthen India-Japan Ties?

- **Rising China's Dominance:** China does not shy away from making efforts to block the rise of India and Japan, including by stepping up military pressure on them and **opposing their UN Security Council's permanent membership**.
- **Influence of China-America Rivalry:** The intensification of Chinese-American rivalry contributes to **disturbance of regional security in the Indo-Pacific**.
 - The region is militarised and an **arms race is taking place**, military exercises and manoeuvres are systematically occurring in disputed waters that ultimately **affects peace and prosperity for the region**, especially for countries like India and Japan.
- **Domestic Issues in Japan:** Japan is in the midst of a massive domestic debate over the **revision of its national security and defence strategies**, which has resulted in the assimilation of Japan's former Prime Minister **Shinzo Abe**.

What is Vostok 2022?

- **About:** The **Vostok 2022** is a **multilateral strategic and command exercise** scheduled to take place at seven firing ranges in the **Russian Far East and the Sea of Japan**, with over 50,000 troops and more than 5,000 weapons units taking part.
 - It will involve troops from several **ex-Soviet nations, China, India, Laos, Mongolia, Nicaragua and Syria**.
- **Japan's Objection:** Japan has objected to Russia's plan to hold the maritime component of Vostok-2022 close to Northern Territories- **Southern Kuril Islands, claimed by both Japan and Russia**.
- **Stand of India:** India abstained from sending its warships as part of the exercise, as it decided to stay **away from the maritime component of Vostok-2022** in order to avoid hurting the sensitivity of Japan.
 - However, India kept a balanced stand as the **Indian Army's contingent of the Gorkha Regiment is participating in the military drills**.

What Should be the Way Forward?

- **Curbing the Hegemony in India-Pacific:** India and Japan are required to transform their military strategy and build on the common interest in **preventing the rise of a securing hegemony in the Indo-Pacific (US and China)**.
- **Putting Hands Together for Digital Empowerment:** With a view to enhancing digital infrastructure through promotion of joint projects for digital transformation, India and Japan can shake hands for digital infrastructure cooperation in various fields like **5G, Open RAN, Telecom Network Security, submarine cable systems**, and **Quantum Communications**.
- **Strengthening India's Act East Policy:** **India has always placed the 'Indo-Pacific' at the heart of its engagement** with the countries of Southeast and East Asia. For deriving effective

solutions to contemporary challenges, **India's Act East Policy** must be strengthened.

- Japan also endeavours to cooperate in supporting strategic connectivity linking **South Asia to Southeast Asia** through the synergy between "**Act East**" policy and "**Partnership for Quality Infrastructure**."
- **Knowledge Exchange for Disaster Risk Reduction:** India can benefit from Japan's **disaster management** experience in developing disaster risk reduction policies and measures in disaster-prone areas.
- **Towards Multipolar Asia:** By reshaping their Asian strategic landscape, India and Japan has the potential to catalyse their emergence as world powers, and **march towards a open and secure Indo-Pacific**.

Drishti Mains Question

"Though India and Japan have shared interest in keeping the Indo-Pacific open and free, their bilateral cooperation is still lacking." Comment

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Consider the following countries: (2018)

1. Australia
2. Canada
3. China
4. India
5. Japan
6. USA

Which of the above are among the 'free-trade partners' of ASEAN?

- (a)** 1, 2, 4 and 5
- (b)** 3, 4, 5 and 6
- (c)** 1, 3, 4 and 5
- (d)** 2, 3, 4 and 6

Ans: (c)

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