

India-Japan Annual Summit 2026, Expanding Strategic Partnership

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India-Japan Annual Summit 2026 Latest News

- The Indian PM and his Japanese counterpart (Sanae Takaichi) held the **16th** India-Japan Annual Summit (in **New Delhi**), elevating bilateral ties through a comprehensive package of agreements.
- The summit assumes significance amid growing geopolitical uncertainties in the **Indo-Pacific**, intensifying great-power competition, and the need for resilient global supply chains.

Why the Summit is Significant

- This marks PM Sanae Takaichi's **first** visit to India.
- Reinforces the India-Japan **Special Strategic and Global Partnership** at a time of increasing geopolitical instability.
- Aligns with Japan's evolving Free and Open Indo-Pacific (**FOIP**) strategy and India's vision for a free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific.

- Deepens cooperation in **emerging technologies**, defence manufacturing and economic resilience.

Key Outcomes of the Summit

- **Economic security becomes the new pillar of partnership:**
 - India and Japan issued a Joint Declaration on Economic Security, providing a roadmap for project-based collaboration in semiconductors, critical minerals, AI, ICT, etc.
 - The initiative aims to **reduce vulnerabilities** arising from geopolitical disruptions and overdependence on concentrated supply chains.
- **Strong push for AI cooperation:**
 - Both countries elevated their AI partnership into a strategic R&D partnership.
 - **Major initiatives include:** Joint roadmap covering the entire AI technology stack.
 - **Collaboration between:**
 - IndiaAI Mission and Japan's GENIAC initiative.
 - IIT Bombay, BharatGen and Japan's National Institute of Informatics on Large Language Models (LLMs).
 - SarvamAI and Preferred Networks for foundation models.
 - **Focus on:** Safe, secure and trustworthy AI; computing infrastructure; joint research; and business-to-business collaboration.
 - **Significance:** Combines Japan's precision manufacturing with India's software and digital capabilities, strengthening global AI innovation.
- **Defence cooperation enters a new phase:**
 - The summit witnessed the **first** India-Japan defence co-development project.
 - **Key development:** Joint development of the Naval Radio Antenna "**UNICORN**", strengthening defence technology collaboration, maritime security, etc.
 - Japan's recent relaxation of defence export restrictions also creates opportunities for greater defence collaboration with India.
- **Major economic commitments:**
 - Japan announced an investment of **10 trillion yen** in India over the next decade.
 - Plan to double the number of Japanese companies operating in India.
 - The summit also operationalised the Next Generation Mobility Partnership (**NGMP**) covering railways, automobiles, aviation, shipbuilding, ports, logistics, and urban development.
 - This supports India's vision of "**Make in India for the World.**"

Sector-wise Agreements

- **Energy security and resilience:** Cooperation in strategic petroleum reserves, maritime energy transport, and joint investments in energy supply chain resilience.
- **Critical minerals and batteries:** MoUs signed on critical mineral exploration, battery technologies, and sustainable battery supply chains for EVs, renewable energy and semiconductor manufacturing.
- **Healthcare:**

- Partnership expanded to pharmaceuticals, medical devices, **biotechnology**, APIs (Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients), and Key Starting Materials (KSMs).
- **Objective:** Strengthen trusted pharmaceutical supply chains and contribute to global health security.
- **Bioenergy:**
 - Launch of the India–Japan Cooperative Biogas for Growth (**CBG**) **Initiative**, with a target to establish 1,000 biogas and organic fertiliser plants across India using dairy cooperative networks.
 - Supports **circular economy**, waste-to-wealth, clean energy, and sustainable agriculture.
- **Research and innovation:** Institutional partnerships include: C-CAMP–RIKEN and NCBS–RIKEN, with focus on life sciences, biotechnology, neuroscience, healthcare, agriculture, environment, and deep-tech innovation.
- **Digital infrastructure:** Cooperation between the National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) and the Japan Network Information Center (JPNIC) to focus on IPv6 adoption, internet governance, cybersecurity, etc.
- **Financial cooperation:** Framework established between the International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) and the Japan Financial Services Agency (JFSA). **Focus:** FinTech, RegTech, and financial market regulation.

Geostrategic Importance of the Summit

- **Japan’s Indo-Pacific strategy:**
 - Japan’s outreach is driven by growing **Chinese** military **assertiveness**, economic coercion, and perceived reduction in US regional engagement.
 - Its **updated** FOIP strategy prioritises economic infrastructure for the AI era, supply chain resilience, security cooperation, rule-based regional order, etc.
 - India occupies a **central position** in this strategy.
- **Japan’s internal balancing:**
 - Japan is simultaneously strengthening domestic capabilities through:
 - **Record defence spending** (targeting 2% of GDP)
 - Relaxation of arms export restrictions
 - Expanded Official Security Assistance (OSA)
 - Cybersecurity and intelligence reforms
 - These measures complement its growing strategic engagement with Indo-Pacific partners.

India-Japan Relations

- **Overview:**
 - Ever since the establishment of diplomatic relations (in **1952**), the two countries have enjoyed cordial relations. For example, the Indian PM referred to the Japanese PM as ‘**younger sister**’ at the 16th annual summit.
 - **Evolution of relations:** “Global Partnership between Japan and India” (2000), “Global and Strategic Partnership” (2006), and “Special Strategic and Global Partnership” (2014).
 - Since **2005**, Japan-India annual summit meetings have been held in respective capitals.

- The two nations conduct regular military drills (e.g., Malabar and **Dharma Guardian**), engage in regular **2+2 Ministerial Dialogues**, and are core members of the **Quad** alliance.
- Japan is among India's **largest investors**, with a bilateral trade volume exceeding \$27.5 billion.
- India remains the largest recipient of Japan's Official Development Assistance (**ODA**), which funds key metro, railway, and connectivity projects across India.
- **Challenges:**
 - The most prominent issue is a **trade imbalance** heavily skewed in Japan's favor.
 - **Divergent strategic priorities**—such as India's adherence to strategic autonomy and differing regional security concerns—sometimes limit seamless alignment on global issues like Russia sanctions.
- **Strategic significance for India:**
 - Strengthens resilient supply chains under the **China+1 strategy**.
 - Supports Atmanirbhar Bharat and advanced manufacturing.
 - Enhances semiconductor ecosystem and critical technology capabilities.
 - Boosts defence **indigenisation** through co-development.
 - Improves maritime security in the Indo-Pacific.
 - Expands cooperation in clean energy, biotechnology and digital governance.
 - Reinforces a rules-based international order through **convergence** of democratic values.

Conclusion

- The 16th India-Japan Annual Summit marks a decisive shift from a traditional economic partnership to a comprehensive strategic partnership.
- As geopolitical competition intensifies in the Indo-Pacific, the two countries are positioning themselves as **trusted partners** committed to a rules-based international order.

Source: IE | PIB

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