

India-Japan Relations: Strategic, Economic & Cultural Partnership

August 29, 2025 • vajiramandravi.com



India-Japan Relations Latest News

- PM Modi is traveling to Japan on August 29-30, 2025, for the 15th India-Japan Annual Summit, his first with PM Shigeru Ishiba.
- This marks PM Modi's eighth Japan visit. He last attended the Annual Summit in 2018, though he visited Japan for multilateral events like the G20 Osaka (2019) and G7 Hiroshima (2023).
- From Japan, the Prime Minister will travel to China for the Heads of State Council meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Tianjin.

India-Japan Ties: Old Partnership, Shared Vision

- India and Japan share one of India's oldest **Annual Summit-level mechanisms**, alongside Russia.
- Their ties were elevated progressively — **Global Partnership (2000)**, **Strategic and Global Partnership (2006)**, and **Special Strategic and Global Partnership (2014)**.

- Summits between former PM Shinzo Abe and PM Narendra Modi provided a strong strategic edge to the relationship.

Alignment in the Indo-Pacific

- India's Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) align with Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) vision.
- Japan leads the connectivity pillar of IPOI and remains India's largest Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) donor.

Multilateral Cooperation

- Beyond bilateral ties, both countries collaborate in Quad, International Solar Alliance (ISA), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), and the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI).

Different Aspects of India-Japan Cooperation

- As two leading Asian democracies and among the world's top five economies, their cooperation is underpinned by civilisational ties and converging global perspectives.

Defence and Security

- India and Japan have strengthened defence ties through key agreements such as:
 - the Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation (2008),
 - MoU on Defence Cooperation and Exchanges (2014),
 - Information Protection Agreement (2015), and
 - the Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services Agreement (2020).
- They also co-developed the **UNICORN naval mast** (2024).
- Regular joint exercises include **Malabar, Milan, JIMEX, Dharma Guardian, and Coast Guard cooperation**, with 2024-25 witnessing the participation of service chiefs from both countries.
- Dialogue mechanisms such as **Defence Ministers' meetings** and **Joint Service Staff Talks** have consolidated trust.
- Both sides are considering an upgrade to the 2008 framework in light of the evolving security environment.

Trade and Investment

- Bilateral trade **reached \$22.8 billion in 2023-24** and \$21 billion in Apr-Jan 2024-25.
- India mainly exports chemicals, vehicles, aluminium, seafood, while imports from Japan include machinery, steel, copper, and reactors.
- **Japan is India's 5th-largest FDI source** with cumulative investment of \$43.2 billion up to Dec 2024.
- Around 1,400 Japanese companies with 5,000 establishments operate in India, while over 100 Indian firms are present in Japan.
- Emerging areas of focus include semiconductors, AI, clean energy, startups, and supply chain resilience.

- Leaders are expected to launch a **new economic security initiative**, revise the investment target from 5 trillion yen to 7–10 trillion yen, and expand digital and energy partnerships.

Development and Infrastructure Cooperation

- Japan has been **India's largest ODA donor since 1958**, disbursing JPY 580 billion (\$4.5 billion) in 2023-24.
- The flagship **Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail project** exemplifies Japan's technology transfer and skill-building support.
- Both countries are considering a wider mobility partnership in railways, roads, and bridges.

Multilateral and Regional Cooperation

- India and Japan coordinate closely through the Quad with the US and Australia to ensure a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific.
- They are also working on diversifying supply chains under the **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI)**.
- Discussions will also cover the future of Quad in the context of US policy shifts under the Trump administration.

People-to-People, Culture and Education

- The 2023-24 Year of Tourism Exchange, themed “**Connecting Himalayas with Mount Fuji**”, highlighted cultural bonds.
- Education ties are strong, with 665 academic partnerships and initiatives such as Edu-Connect, Universities Forum, and Skill Connect (2023) linking Indian talent with Japanese employers.
- Japanese language learning in India and Indian studies in Japan are expanding.
- The Indian diaspora in Japan numbers around 54,000, mainly IT professionals and engineers.
- Both sides are exploring cooperation on addressing Japan's ageing population and skilling Indian youth, along with state-to-prefecture level partnerships.

Conclusion

- India's diplomacy in Asia is entering a decisive phase.
- While relations with the US face trade strains and ties with China and Pakistan remain tense, partnership with Japan and other Indo-Pacific nations offers a pathway to greater strategic autonomy.

Source: IE | IE

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