STUDY NOTES · BASIC CONCEPT

Emerging areas of India Japan cooperation

International Relations

26 Jan 2018

WHAT HAPPENED RECENTLY?

India and Japan have significantly strengthened their cooperation across critical minerals, artificial intelligence (AI), and defense, following a strategic dialogue held on January 16, 2026. The discussions, which took place in Tokyo (with some reports also mentioning New Delhi) between India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, focused on enhancing economic security, building resilient supply chains, and deepening strategic coordination amidst global uncertainties.

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AREAS OF COOPERATION

Critical Minerals

Both nations have agreed to convene a joint working group on critical minerals in early 2026 to advance collaboration, particularly on rare earth elements. A bilateral economic security initiative will also foster dialogue between their private sectors to identify challenges in critical minerals and energy.

This will be followed by an economic security dialogue in the first half of 2026, led by India's foreign secretary and a Japanese vice minister, to bolster public-private cooperation. This builds on a 2023 Memorandum of Cooperation between India's Ministry of Mines and Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) covering exploration, processing, and environmental standards. An existing example of this partnership is Toyota Tsusho's rare earth venture in Andhra Pradesh, Toyotsu Rare Earths India.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

A new AI Dialogue, spearheaded by officials from the foreign ministries of both countries, has been launched to provide a coordinated push for engagement in artificial intelligence. As part of the "Japan-India AI Cooperation Initiative," a "Japan-India AI Strategic Dialogue" will be established to facilitate research partnerships, academic exchanges, and technological collaboration.

Japan intends to invite 500 skilled AI professionals from India by 2030 to promote joint research and innovation. India is also set to host an AI Impact Summit in the coming month, with Japan indicating its contribution.

Defense Ties

Defense cooperation was a key aspect of the strategic dialogue. The transfer of technology for the Unicorn stealth antenna system to the Indian Navy by Japan was highlighted as a significant project. The defense relationship between India and Japan has been on an upward trajectory, marked by regular high-level visits and dialogues, including the 2+2 Ministerial Level Dialogue.

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Key agreements in the Past

Defence Equipment and Technology Cooperation and the Security of Classified Military Information (2015), along with the Reciprocal Provisions of Supplies and Services (2020), have further solidified these ties. Both countries also engage in joint military exercises like Dharma Guardian (Army) and JIMEX (Navy), and participate in multilateral exercises such as MALABAR and MILAN. The nations aim to enhance interoperability and synergy between their defense forces and advance shared maritime security goals in the Indo-Pacific region.