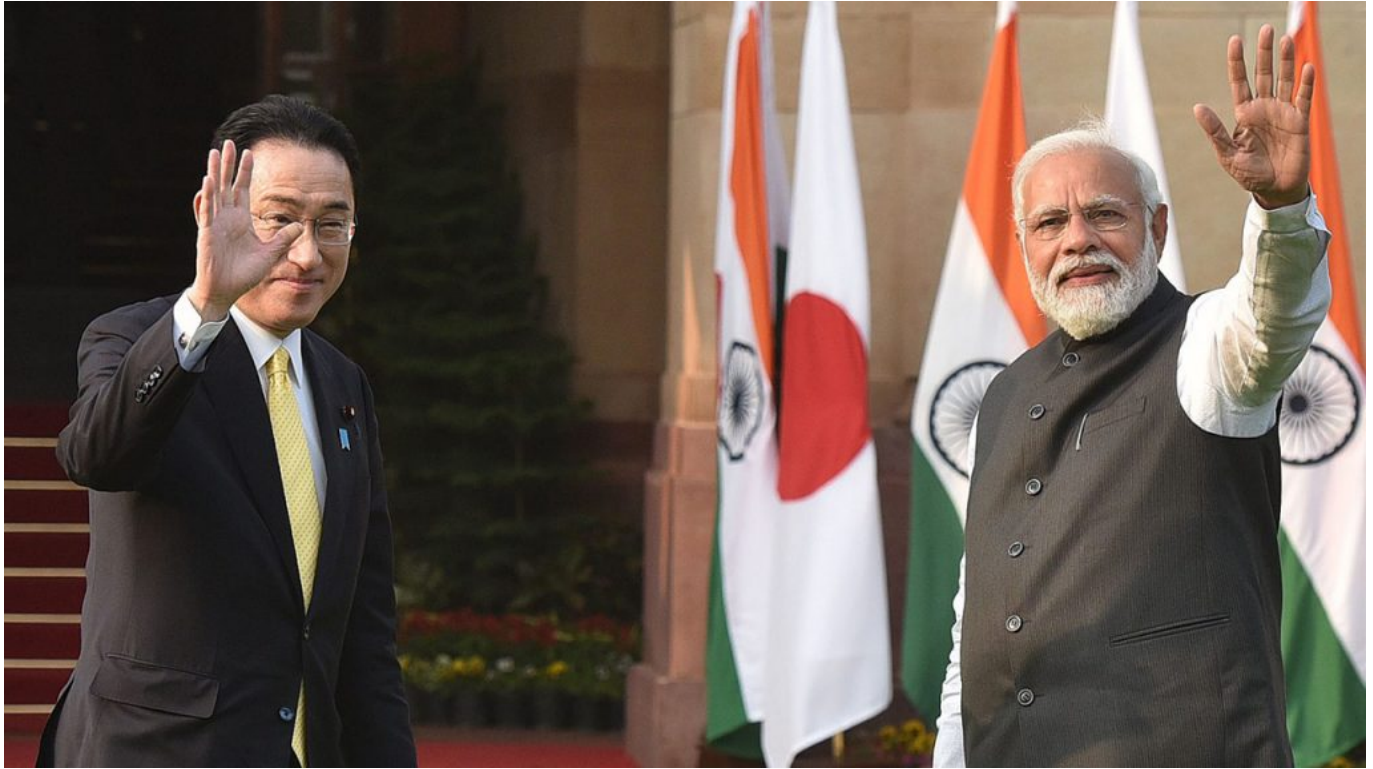


# India and Japan Relationship and the Geopolitical Issues

written by iasexam.com | 22/03/2023



**Context** - With the Indian prime minister Mr. Modi set to visit **Hiroshima as a G-7** special invitee in May and India to later on host Mr. Xi and Mr. Putin at the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, India walks a tightrope balancing on geopolitical issues even at the behest of its partner Japan.

Since 2006, the prime ministers of India and Japan have exchanged visits for their “annual summit”, i.e. the **India-Japan special strategic and global partnership (IJSSGP)**, India-Japan relations have strengthened over decades.

## **Recent Developments in India- Japan Relations**

- The recent quick official visit of the Japan Prime Minister Fumio Kishida was not due the IJSSGP but his focus **on two areas**:
  1. Coordinate the **G-20 and G-7 agendas on food and energy security issues arising out of the ongoing Ukraine conflict**
  2. Unveil Japan’s **\$ 75 billion plan for a free and open indo- pacific (FOIP)** to work with countries in the region on avoiding debt traps, enhancing maritime security, air security and building infrastructure.
- The Japanese prime minister emphasized the need for a global consensus including that of India in tackling challenges from China and Russia , as Japan is aligned to the western powers.

- Japan directly calls out for Russian aggression but did not directly call out China
- As per the FOIP plan Japan considers India as an “**indispensable partner**” and it is concerned with the Chinese activities in its neighborhood i.e. the east china sea.

## Points of Cooperation between India and Japan

India and Japan have close ties and are part of multilateral and bilateral cooperation (**QUAD**).

### 1. Defense Relations

- India and Japan have developed bilateral and multilateral exercises like **Dharma Guardian** and **Malabar** respectively and the recent exercise **MILAN**, a trilateral exercise with involvement of coast guards.
- The Japan- India vision 2025 special strategic and global partnership for strengthening peace and prosperity in the Indo- Pacific.
- The pushback against China’s aggression in its neighborhood and an end to the Ukraine war are both common goals of India and Japan.

### 1. Economic Relations

- Both have joint collaborations that include the Japanese loan for the much delayed “**Bullet Train**” Project.
- India’s **western dedicated freight corridor** funded by Japan
- To build **high speed railways** and introduce the **Shinkansen system** in India.
- The **India Japan nuclear deal 2016** to build nuclear reactors in southern India
- Plan on infrastructural projects to **link Bangladesh and India’s north east**.
- Both are presidents of the **G-7 and G-20** and have a lot to gain from synchronizing priorities by ensuring Global south growth and prosperity from the summits.

## Point of conflict between India and Japan

- Unlike India, Japan is a part of the U. S alliance. It has joined sanctions against Russia while India has abstained.
- India is vocal about its concern over China’s activities along the **Line of Actual control (LAC)** but has not directly criticized China’s actions in the South China Sea, Taiwan straits, etc.

## Way forward

With the ongoing dynamic and ever changing geopolitics in the international system and need for prioritizing the national interest, India faces difficulty in keeping a balancing role with its strategic and diplomatic partners like Japan. Hence India and Japan need to develop a common goal amidst the rising hegemony of the US and China conflict in the Indo pacific.