

Why Takaichi's Visit to India Matters for Indo-Pacific Stability

By Ipsa Sahu



The [recent visit](#) of the Japanese Prime Minister, Sanae Takaichi, to India was the first official visit since assuming office and the second in-person meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is a [continuation of joint efforts](#) towards the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership, which provided the setting for the Japan-India Annual Summit. The summit demonstrated a growing partnership that extends beyond economic cooperation, encompassing issue-based cooperation across maritime security, defence interoperability, and energy resilience.

The summit took place amid ongoing regional security pressures in the South China Sea, with repeated instances of China's coercive acts and disruptions in global energy supply due to the West Asia energy crisis. The launch of a new [Indo-Pacific maritime surveillance architecture](#) during the recent Quad Foreign Ministers' meetings provides direction for regional security, establishing functionality among like-minded states. In this broader context, the India-Japan summit is essential for shared solutions through partnership across three interconnected facets of an increasingly contested Indo-Pacific: maritime security architecture, defence cooperation, and an energy-resilient supply chain network.

Maritime Architecture Building Blocks

The Indo-Pacific maritime security domain is comprised of institutions such as the ASEAN Regional Forum and the Indian Ocean Rim Association, but they have limited capacity to coordinate the policy and functional aspects of maritime governance. The Indo-Pacific doesn't need more regional mechanisms; it needs a coordinated response from like-minded states to counter any unilateral changes in the region. It is the foundation of the [Indo-Pacific Maritime Surveillance Collaboration \(IPMSC\)](#), where information sharing builds on the coordinated surveillance framework across SLOCs to sustain interoperability among the Quad nations. Furthermore, it is in the direction of issue-based cooperation, supporting the functionality of surveillance policies aimed at securing the Indo-Pacific maritime theatre.

While such initiatives position India and Japan with complementary capabilities, their policy implementation remains a collaborative effort. Through its [Security and Growth for All in the Region \(SAGAR\)](#) and [Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions \(MAHASAGAR\)](#) frameworks, India has broadened its normative structure over a decade, providing institutional reach across the Indian Ocean. It is complemented by the regional maritime security hub, the [Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region \(IFC-IOR\)](#), established by India, which already supports Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA). Fostering multilateral security, Japan has further [institutionalised MDA by deploying liaison officers](#) to the IFC-IOR. Similarly, Japan's expertise in advanced surveillance technologies such as [satellite enabled maritime domain awareness with ALOS-4 \(or Daichi-4\)](#) thereby strengthens Japan's capability for vessel monitoring irrespective of weather conditions. However, translating the shared threat perception into credible deterrence amid China's aggressive stance in the Indian Ocean requires building defence interoperability alongside maritime awareness to maintain a rules-based order in the region.

Closing the Defence Gap

Maritime surveillance is insufficient without proper coordination of the defence sector of both nations. India and Japan's partnership is well developed in terms of naval exercises and defence dialogues; however, a gap persists within the defence-industrial cooperation that supports maritime interoperability. Since taking office, Takaichi has moved toward strengthening and securing Japan's defence footprint. Through Reciprocal Access agreements with neighbouring countries such as [Australia](#) and [the Philippines](#), Japan is looking to take a more active operational role within the region. From deploying the Japanese Self-Defence Forces to the first island chain and updating its Free and Open

Indo-Pacific framework, Japan has moved beyond its role as a passive security watcher in the maritime domain.

The India-Japan summit reaffirmed regular 2+2 defence minister dialogue, which further boosted the institutionalisation of defence policy coordination. This is also reflected in the advanced defence-industrial cooperation between India and Japan, [enhancing India's warship communications](#), with the first co-development of defence equipment through the Unified Complex Radio Antenna (UNICORN) project. This signals a shift in defence cooperation from procurement to co-development. India's naval bases across the littoral states from Sabang to Duqm, combined with its goodwill port call diplomacy, provided Japan with operational leverage through [the India-Japan Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement \(ACSA\)](#) to find its missing Western anchor. Furthermore, it demonstrates convergence of complementary strengths to build defence readiness. However, a sustainable defence capability requires a steady energy supply chain network underpinning maritime operational resilience in the contested waters of the Indo-Pacific.

Moving towards Energy Resilience

The ripple effect of energy shocks from West Asia has raised concerns about the vulnerability of the energy supply chain network to affecting maritime trade. Tokyo is among the energy importers, mainly crude oil and LNG, post the Fukushima disaster, switching from nuclear power to fossil fuels, showcasing an already limited domestic energy resource. Therefore, any disruption to the energy sources is directly linked to Japan's economy. Faced with such challenges, Japan is rebalancing its energy portfolio through supplier diversification and strategic investments.

Japan's largest power generation company, JERA, made a 20 year long term investment with the [US for LNG procurement](#), while maintaining its arrangement with [Qatar Energy despite war-linked energy obstacles](#). This underscores Japan's supplier diversification strategy, which is also adopted in the Joint Statement on Energy Resilience to improve preparedness of stockpiles and crude oil reserves to mitigate any future disruptions. Recognising the future of the energy transition, India and Japan reiterated the need for advanced collaboration on clean energy and critical minerals exploration to strengthen renewable energy systems. Similarly, India's Production Linked Incentive for solar manufacturing and ambition of becoming a [producer and exporter of green hydrogen](#) have positioned it as a pillar of support to Japan's industrial innovation and technology, signalling Indo-Pacific energy resilience.

The Indo-Pacific competition is inevitable for regional nations like Japan and India – navigating this complexity requires maintenance of a secure and stable maritime order. The evolution of their partnership from traditional trade and aid to a convergence of Indo-Pacific vision signals a deeper geopolitical alignment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. While the 2+2 ministerial dialogue institutionalises coordination at the level of maritime interoperability, several structural challenges remain. The summit bridged a few aspects of maritime security, defence and energy resilience through a partnership oriented towards working on shared vulnerabilities. The true benchmark of the India-Japan partnership goes beyond the signing of Memorandums of Understanding. Both democracies remain committed to the shared imperative of a resilient Indo-Pacific, while actively pursuing a renewed strategic agenda grounded in a regional resilience network.

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