

Japan's Foreign Minister writes: India and Japan, co-creators of new solutions

The friendship between Japan and India is built on a common foundation of long historical ties and democracy. As the world faces various challenges and stands at a turning point in history, Japan and India are expected to make a significant contribution to peace and stability.

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Japan Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

Today, I am visiting India for the first time since my appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs. As a member of the Japan-India Parliamentary Friendship Association and a long-time promoter of Japan-India relations, I am sincerely looking forward to feeling the vibrancy of India.

Japan and India have historical ties which date back to the introduction of Buddhism in the 6th century. My hometown, Shizuoka Prefecture, also has deep ties with India. For example, while Shizuoka is famous for its green tea, Tada Motokichi, who ran a tea business in Shizuoka in the 19th century, is said to have learned black tea production techniques in India, brought them back to Japan, and applied them to green tea production.

Japan and India, which forged such deep ties, launched the “Japan-India Special Strategic and Global Partnership” in 2014, and in the past decade have dramatically strengthened our relationship in wide-ranging areas. Through our past efforts, I am convinced that there are tangible possibilities for further cooperation in the future. Based on this conviction, I would like to broaden the scope of our bilateral relationship built up over the years, and further deepen our relationship in the following four areas by formulating concrete projects.

First, in the area of defence and security, my visit will include the third Japan-India Foreign and Defence Ministerial Meeting (“2+2”), the first such meeting in nearly two years. Cooperation in the security area has made remarkable progress in recent years, including joint exercises between the Japanese Self-Defense Forces and the Indian Armed Forces in all types of land, sea, and air forces, as well as efforts to promote defence equipment and technology cooperation. Through this “2+2” meeting, I would like to share our understanding of the strategic environment, and further promote various efforts. I look forward to fruitful discussions with Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Minister [Rajnath Singh](#).



Japan Foreign Minister Kamikawa Yoko

Second, in the economic area, we have made steady progress in specific projects including our flagship High-Speed Rail project, the development of the northeastern region, which Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) attaches great importance to, and the industrial value chain concept linking the northeastern region of India to the Bay of Bengal. In addition, our countries are firmly committed to achieving the 5-trillion-yen target of public and private investment and financing in five years, which was set by the leaders in 2022. Building on this track record of cooperation, we will continue to promote cooperation in new areas such as Green Transformation and Digital Transformation, as well as development of the investment and business environment, to take our relationship to the next stage.

Thirdly, ties between the people of Japan and India are the foundation of our bilateral relationship, and we would like to greatly expand the base of people-to-people exchange in the future. The extension of this year's "Japan-India Tourism Exchange Year" to fiscal year 2024 was announced on the occasion of the Japan-India Strategic Dialogue in March. From September to October, various events will be held intensively in India as "Japan Month", and similar events will be held in Tokyo as "India Month". We hope that these efforts will further promote mutual exchanges between our countries.

Fourth, I would like to work with India in the area of Women, Peace and Security (WPS), which the Japanese government has firmly promoted in recent years and which is also my lifework. WPS is based on the idea that society can be much closer to a more sustainable peace through the participation of women themselves in leadership positions in prevention as well as humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, while at the same time working to protect vulnerable groups such as women in times of crisis. India is one of the countries that has deployed many women in PKOs, and at the Japan-Australia-India-US (Quad) Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Tokyo last month, which I hosted and in which Minister Jaishankar also participated, we committed to contributing to and implementing the WPS Agenda, including its application to disaster risk reduction. We would like to consider how we can materialise cooperation with India on WPS.

In addition to these bilateral efforts, Japan and India are deepening cooperation globally, including through multilateral frameworks. At the Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting last month, we reaffirmed our opposition to any unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo by force or coercion, and our steadfast commitment toward the realisation of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP).

The friendship between Japan and India is a unique one, as it is built on a common foundation of long historical ties and democracy. As the world faces various challenges and stands at a turning point in history, Japan and India, as partners in "co-creating" new solutions, are expected to make a significant contribution to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. I sincerely hope that my visit to India will mark a new page in the Japan-India relationship and lead to the further deepening of our partnership.

The writer is the Foreign Minister of Japan