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INDIA

India and Japan: A new golden chapter in a mutually complementary relationship

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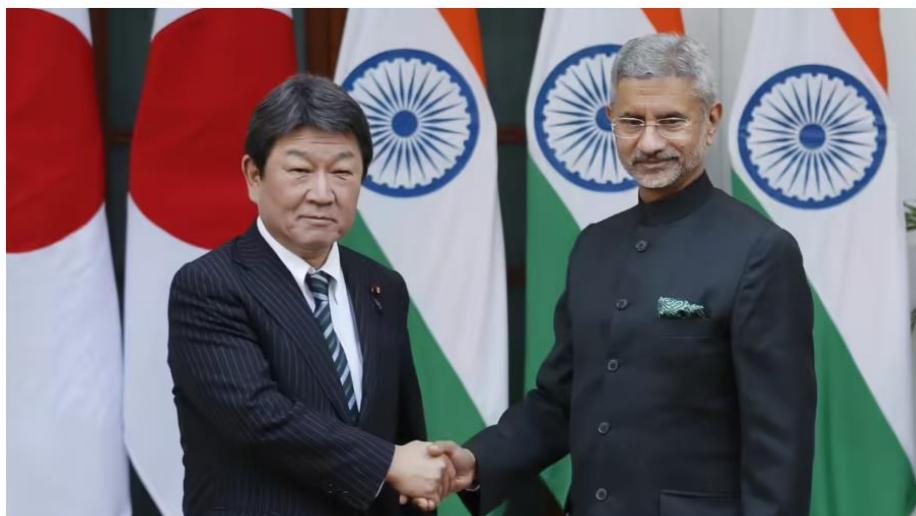


Toshimitsu Motegi

Minister of foreign affairs
of Japan

I will be visiting India from January 15 to 17. This will be my first visit in roughly six years since 2019, when I took part in the first Japan-India 2+2 Meeting in New Delhi as Japan's minister for foreign affairs. I am looking forward to once again experiencing the vibrant energy of today's India.

Now the world's most populous nation, India is rapidly strengthening its presence as a global power, underpinned by its robust economic growth. With its rich pool of science and engineering talent and startups driving innovation, India is shaping the future of the global economy. A survey among Japanese companies, conducted by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), has ranked India as the most promising destination for overseas business expansion for four consecutive years.



As the regional security environment grows increasingly severe and the international situation remains volatile, Japan and India, as leading democracies in Asia, are expected to play an even greater role in realising a free and open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). Together, we share a vital mission to ensure that this region and the world remains peaceful, stable, prosperous and open to all, grounded in the rule of law.

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As interest in and expectations for India continue to rise in Japan, Prime Minister Modi's visit to Japan last August came to fruition. The visit produced the Japan–India Joint Vision, setting the direction for bilateral cooperation over the next decade. In three key areas —security, including economic security; economy, investment and innovation; and people-to-people exchanges— both countries reaffirmed their commitment to building a mutually complementary relationship that leverages their respective strengths. Five leader's level outcome documents were announced, alongside 180 memoranda signed by our governments and private stakeholders. As Prime Minister Modi noted at the joint press conference, this marked the opening of a "new golden chapter." These initiatives will strengthen Japan–India ties and co-create economic and social values to resolve the challenges future generations will face.



Through this mutually complementary cooperation, Japan firmly supports a more developed, more prosperous, and stronger India. Japan is India's foremost partner in realising Viksit Bharat. Cooperation toward this end has already begun to take shape in concrete ways.

In the areas of defence equipment and technology, Japan and India are advancing discussions on the transfer of the Unified Complex Radio Antenna ("UNICORN"). Japanese firms in India are also expanding in strategic sectors such as semiconductors and batteries, building resilient supply chains for strategic materials.

As some Japanese companies have started to focus on manufacturing in India and exporting to Africa, the Japanese Government has launched the “Economic Region Initiative of Indian Ocean-Africa,” working with India to contribute to Africa’s regional integration and industrial development. As the flagship project of Japan-India cooperation, plans are underway to introduce the E10-series Shinkansen—currently under development in Japan—across the entire Mumbai-Ahmedabad corridor in the early 2030s. Our cooperation extends to outer space: through the Lunar Polar Exploration (LUPEX) mission, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will jointly explore the lunar south pole in search of water resources, with Japan providing the rocket and rover and India the lunar lander. To further expand such cooperation, Japan and India have also launched the LOTUS Programme (India-Japan Circulation of Talented Youths in Science), promoting joint research between leading universities in both countries.

Mutually complementary cooperation is also expanding at the grassroots level. The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme brings young people from overseas to Japan, where they engage in foreign-language education and international exchange to promote internationalisation at the local level. In the current fiscal year, 14 participants from India are visiting Japan as “grassroot diplomats.” Simultaneously, Japanese youth are serving as assistant Japanese-language instructors in Indian junior high and high schools through the NIHONGO Partners Programme, responding to a growing interest in the Japanese language.

Cultural and sporting exchanges are also crucial in shaping the future of Japan-India relations. To support the promotion and development of cricket, India’s national sport, I established a bipartisan Parliamentary League for Cricket in 2022. As its president, I am working on improving facilities, developing talent, and encouraging international exchange. Through such initiatives, we hope that people-to-people exchanges through sports will expand, further deepening mutual understanding and trust between our peoples.

To continue sharing the fruits of growth, it is essential to uphold a free and open international order based on the rule of law. This year marks the tenth anniversary since Japan first proposed FOIP. Over the past decade, we have gained support of many countries, including India, and worked together toward its realisation. We will continue to deepen cooperation so that our two nations grow stronger and more prosperous together. For my part, building on various frameworks established to date, I will continue pursuing the realisation of FOIP through what I call “vigorous diplomacy with a broad perspective.”

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2027 will mark the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and India. As we approach this historic milestone, we will deepen people-to-people ties and strengthen the friendship and cooperation between our two nations, long connected by deep historical and cultural ties. Together, let us open the next chapter of Japan–India relations.