

JAPAN

Digest

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15th India-Japan Summit Meeting

India's Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi [travelled](#) to Tokyo for the fifteenth edition of the bilateral summit meeting between him and his Japanese counterpart, Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, on 29 August. The summit, held after a hiatus due to extenuating domestic circumstances in both India and Japan, [saw](#) the signing of 13 government-to-government memoranda of understanding and 170 business-to-business agreements. The summit also resulted in the release of a joint statement and a founding vision document mapping the continuation of bilateral ties.

During the summit meeting, both sides agreed to take relations forward across a wide range of fields, while expressing satisfaction over the current state of ties. Both sides agreed to 'build a mutually complementary relationship that co-creates the socio-economic values needed to resolve the challenges that future generations will face'.

In the security domain, the two leaders largely stuck to reviewing current developments such as the ongoing revision process for the 2008 India-Japan Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation and the progress made in coordinating the transfer of the UNICORN mast system to the Indian Navy. However, a joint declaration was released post-summit, which, while treading covered ground, did point to boosting cooperation in areas such as nuclear-biological-chemical warfare countermeasures and track 1.5 dialogues between think tanks from both sides.

On the economic front, the two sides set an ambitious 10 trillion Japanese yen target for private investment to India on the back of the signal successes achieved by the previous target of five trillion yen set in 2022. They welcomed the launch of new partnership mechanisms on AI and digital technologies as well as the signing of an understanding on a Joint Crediting Mechanism, and committed to the early and smooth completion of the high-speed rail project underway in India.

Acknowledging room for improvement, both leaders agree to urge greater people-to-people exchange, especially human resource exchange 'leveraging the capabilities of highly skilled professionals and other Indian human resources for Japan's economic growth and regional revitalization, and enabling Indians who have learned advanced and specialized technologies in Japan to return to their home country and contribute to India's development'. As such, both sides agreed to promote the exchange of 500,000 citizens from both countries over the next five years, with 50,000 skilled human resources from India expected to be sent to Japan. The two leaders concluded by reaffirming the importance of the Quad and the Free and Open Indo-Pacific concept.

Aside from his official schedule, Prime Minister Modi also [interacted](#) with governors from several Japanese prefectures, and travelled with Prime Minister Ishiba to the north-eastern prefecture of Miyagi via the high-speed Shinkansen to [visit](#) a semiconductor manufacturing plant on 30 August.

Japan organises TICAD9 in Yokohama

Japan organised the ninth edition of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in the port city of Yokohama on 20 August. The conference saw the materialisation of several initiatives that were speculated to be announced there, with key initiatives such as a corridor linking Africa's interior with the Indian Ocean region. Leaders and plenipotentiaries from 49 nations, as well as several international organisations, participated in the proceedings.

In his inaugural address, Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba [announced](#) that Japan would seek to assist in the creation of an 'Indian Ocean-Africa economic zone initiative', which would see Japanese companies based in India and West Asia to use it as a springboard to access markets in Africa. To that end, Japan would help develop ports in Mombasa and Mumbai to enable smoother entry and greater volume. Backing the idea of an African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA), Ishiba promised loans of up to 5.5 billion US dollars in coordination with the African Development Bank to provide debt relief to African nations. In order to [facilitate](#) diversification of supply chains while boosting Africa's resource extraction industry, Japan would also invest in developing further the Nacala Corridor, which runs through central African countries rich in critical minerals. Further, he stated Japan's aim to train around 30,000 artificial intelligence exports from across Africa over the next three years.

The two-day conference concluded with the [release](#) of the Yokohama Declaration, a document that saw Japan commit to wide-ranging human resource development, capacity-building and infrastructure investment.

Japan-ROK Summit Meeting

Republic of Korea (ROK) President Lee Jae Myung [visited](#) Tokyo on 23 August for a bilateral summit with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, which saw the [release](#) of a joint statement after a gap of 17 years. The two sides also put out a joint press release after the meeting, indicating a frank discussion over their differences as well as commonalities. Prime Minister Ishiba thanked President Lee for choosing Japan as his first overseas destination after the latter's election in May, and urged the continuation of the shuttle diplomacy put in place by both of their predecessors. After a 'candid discussion' on various issues, the two sides agreed to develop ties in a future-oriented and stable manner. Trilateral cooperation with the United States of America was also emphasised, while the importance of cooperation on 'finding solutions to common social and economic issues', such as population decline and food security, was reiterated. In the region security arena, the ROK and Japan expressed concern over the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)'s activities and supported each other's impending chairship of the Asia Pacific Economic Conference (APEC) and the China-Japan-ROK Trilateral Summit, respectively.