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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

# JAPAN

## *Digest*

May 2025

- Japanese defence minister visits Sri Lanka, India
- Japan government orders survey of outlying islands
- Government survey shows Japanese vulnerable to misinformation



## Japanese defence minister visits Sri Lanka, India

Japanese Minister of Defence Gen Nakatani embarked on a three-day tour of key South Asian countries between 3-5 May 2025, with Sri Lanka and India being the chosen destinations. On 4 May, Nakatani [arrived](#) in Colombo for a meeting with Sri Lankan defence officials. He called on Sri Lankan Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya for a 30-minute meeting where both sides assessed the progress made in defence cooperation since the signing of the 2019 Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Cooperation and Exchange. Commitments to keep expanding the relationship to contribute to the Free and Open Indo-Pacific were also exchanged.

Later, during a meeting with the Deputy Minister of Defence, Major General Aruna Jayasekara (Retd), Nakatani sought to secure Sri Lanka's understanding of the 'serious concerns' felt by Japan 'regarding unilateral attempts to change the status quo' in the East and South China Seas. Both sides agreed to enhance tri-service cooperation in order to 'elevate' bilateral defence ties, with specific policies such as greater participation of Sri Lankan ground forces in disaster management exercises organised by the Ground Self-Defence Forces (GSDF), joint participation in seminars on the Law of the Sea during port calls by Maritime Self-Defence Forces (MSDF) vessels and the expansion of operational knowledge-sharing on air rescue and medical airlift by the Air Self-Defence Forces (ASDF). A commitment to improving personnel exchanges were another key outcome of the meeting.

On 5 May, Nakatani [arrived](#) in New Delhi for a meeting with Raksha Mantri Rajnath

Singh, followed by a working lunch where both sides exchanged views on a variety of issues. In light of the heinous Pakistan-supported terror attack on tourists in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir, Nakatani [expressed](#) his sincere condolences for the lives lost in the attack, and expressed Japan's firm commitment against terrorism in cooperation with India. He expressed the expectation that 'related countries' would 'act with responsibility for the peace and stability of South Asia'. Raksha Mantri mentioned that Pakistan's policies of state-supported terror would not be countenanced, and a 'unified stand against terrorism and the state-supported actions that perpetuate it'.

Following this exchange, both sides expressed the importance of joint cooperation in ensuring a Free and Open Indo-Pacific in light of the deteriorating international environment. Both sides agreed to 'create a large synergy in the Indo-Pacific region', which Nakatani proposed be carried out under a new rubric called the India-Japan (Japan-India) Defence cooperation in the Indo-Pacific (IJDIP/JIDIP). He proposed that both sides engage in discussions in the near future to substantiate and operationalise this concept, which was met with agreement from the Indian side. In particular, the two sides proposed to set up a 'comprehensive and integrated' dialogue framework between the three services on both sides, expand the scope and frequency of bilateral exercises such as Dharma Guardian and to collaborate on naval cooperation in particular with the aim of sea-lane security. South East Asia was proposed as a promising site for deepening India-Japan collaboration.

From the Indian side, Raksha Mantri outlined India's progress in indigenising its defence industry and pointed to the potential of collaboration with Japan on new areas of co-production including tank engines and aero engines. Niche domains such as artificial intelligence and automation were also identified as promising areas.

### **Japan government orders survey of outlying islands**

On 7 May, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* [reported](#) that the government of Japan was planning to launch a comprehensive survey of remote and outlying islands situated on the maritime borders of the archipelago in order to ascertain their geological status and take steps to preserve them if necessary. The survey, expected to commence this fiscal year and last until fiscal 2028, aims to use laser-based survey methods to develop a 'topographical matching system' expected to come online next year. In addition, aerial photography, traditionally conducted every ten years, will now be conducted every five years. The focus of the survey will be to gain insight into the degree and rapidity of erosion in the outlying islands, so as to ensure that further degradation could be halted. This is important as Japan's boundaries, being totally maritime in nature, depend on the existence of distinct geographical features such as islands or reefs for the demarcation of its exclusive economic zone (EEZ). The Cabinet Office and the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan are expected to take the lead on the survey.

As reported by the newspaper, the survey is expected to focus on islands in the East China Sea near Nagasaki prefecture as well

as islands in the Sea of Okhotsk near Hokkaido, which are at risk of significant erosion while continuing to serve as key fishing sites. According to it, the genesis of the new survey is the result produced by the 2023 decadal survey, which saw 11 geographical features lose the designation of 'island' under international law.

### **Government survey shows Japanese vulnerable to misinformation**

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) [released](#) the results of its first ever [survey](#) of Japanese attitudes towards and practices against misinformation on 13 May, with the disappointing result that around a half of Japanese citizens ended up falling prey to at least one out of 15 pieces of misinformation presented to them during the survey. Around 47.7 percent of the respondents answered that they believed the misinformation circulated over social media networks, with one in four choosing to actively spread the misinformation forward via sharing with family and friends. 27.1 percent revealed they did so because they found the misinformation 'surprising', while around 20 percent claimed it was 'interesting' and potentially 'useful'. When asked about their awareness of media and information literacy, 90 percent said they had heard of it but were not taking any efforts to inculcate it into their lifestyle.

During the press conference revealing the results, MIC Minister Seiichiro Murakami told the press that the results indicated the 'importance of measures to enhance (media) literacy'. He urged people to heed guidance issued by his ministry to verify sources and fact-check contents circulating on social media.