

INDIA-JAPAN DEFENCE COLLABORATION: EMPHASIS ON DEFENCE EXERCISES AND DEFENCE TECHNOLOGY

SIMRAN WALIA

INTRODUCTION

India and Japan share similar views on regional security, economic development, and strategic objectives. Their partnership has grown into a strategic relationship and both nations collaborate on a variety of topics, such as investments, technology, security, defense, and commerce. The Indo-Pacific region has become a global focus of attention in the current geopolitical context, with Japan and India leading the charge to preserve stability in the area. The Indian and West Pacific Oceans meet in the Indo-Pacific region. With important marine lanes and commercial routes like the Malacca Strait, this area is among the world's most important economic hubs. Approximately 60 per cent of global maritime traffic passes through the region, which is home to nine of the ten busiest ports in the world. India and Japan are natural allies in preserving regional peace and stability because of their shared views on the rules-based system.

Ms **Simran Walia** is a Research Analyst at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA), New Delhi.

Japan's pacifist nature due to Article 9 of its Constitution has made the nation focus more on balance of power dynamics and, at times, hedging tactics too, to be able to secure the nation from an adversary.¹ However, in recent times, Japan has been trying to move away from its pacifist nature which is explicitly evident in the revised National Security Strategy (NSS) document of 2022 and its Defence White Papers of 2023 and 2024.

Japan-India security cooperation was still in its infancy when the 2013 NSS was introduced. This collaboration took off after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe took office. Tokyo's and Delhi's security cooperation has steadily improved since then. Several historic agreements have been signed, such as the 2021 Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA), the 2022 Memorandum of Cooperation in the Field of Cyber Security, and the 2015 Agreements Concerning the Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology and Security Measures for the Protection of Classified Military Information. The two governments' commitment to "a peaceful, open, equitable, stable, and rule-based" Indo-Pacific and their goal to build high-quality infrastructure to improve connectivity in the area were stated in the 2015 "Japan and India Vision 2025."

The year 2019 marked a noteworthy turning point in the bilateral security and defence relations between Japan and India. Both countries hosted the 2+2 foreign and defence ministers' meeting; Japan was India's second engagement partner of this kind, following the US. India and Japan signed the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) in 2020 to promote the mutual supply of logistical goods and services between the Indian Army and Japan's Self-Defence Forces (SDFs).² India and Japan are better equipped to work together to strengthen defence connections throughout the Indo-Pacific region and the world, thanks to the logistical support

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1. 'The Constitution of Japan, Prime Minister's Office of Japan', https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html. Accessed on February 8, 2025.
 2. Abhijnan Rej, "India and Japan Sign Military Logistics Agreement for All to See", *The Diplomat*, September 12, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/09/india-and-japan-sign-military-logistics-agreement-for-all-to-see/>. Accessed on February 10, 2025.

of the ACSA. The main goal of the second 2+2 ministerial discussion between the two countries, which took place in Japan in 2022, was to strengthen security cooperation between them. This included collaboration on developing technologies and military and defence drills.

As part of the rules-based international order, the joint statement of the third India-Japan 2+2 dialogue held in August 2024, upholds the two nations' shared strategic vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific that is inclusive, peaceful, prosperous, and resilient, and in which no nation attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo.³

A shared commitment to multilateralism and supporting the rules-based system is the basis of the expanding defence ties between Japan and India in the Indo-Pacific region. To protect regional stability and counter China's assertiveness, both countries have actively participated in forums such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and have sought to create alliances with other like-minded countries. The QUAD developed the Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) to enhance situational awareness and foster collaboration in maritime security throughout the Indo-Pacific region.

In the revised 2022 NSS, Japan's security cooperation with India is mentioned in two contexts: deepening the QUAD cooperation to promote a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), and as part of improving cooperation with partner countries to develop "a multilayered network among its ally and like-minded countries." In addition, Tokyo states in the 2022 NSS that it aims to "promote training and exercises as well as defence equipment and technology cooperation while deepening bilateral and multilateral defence exchanges including service-to-service exchange in a broad range of fields, including maritime security and cyber security."⁴

3. Lalit Kapur, "India-Japan 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue Marks Modest Progress", *Policy Brief*, Delhi Policy Group, August 24, 2024, <https://www.delhipolicygroup.org/publication/policy-briefs/india-japan-22-ministerial-dialogue-marks-modest-progress.html>. Accessed on February 10, 2025.

4. Aditi Singh. "India-Japan Ties: Boosting Cooperation in Indo-Pacific Defence", *Invest India*, May 9, 2023, <https://www.investindia.gov.in/team-india-blogs/india-japan-ties-boosting-cooperation-indo-pacific-defence>. Accessed on February 11, 2025.

DEFENCE EXERCISES BETWEEN INDIA AND JAPAN

Both countries engage with each other on high-level joint defence exercises with all three Services: ground, air and navy.

Ground Defence Exercise: Dharma Guardian

In November 2018, the Counter-Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School (CIJWS) in Vairengte, Mizoram, northeast India, hosted the inaugural Dharma Guardian Exercise.⁵ The exercise's overall objective of improving interoperability between the forces of India and Japan has not changed, but, in recent years, it has grown more complex and helped to improve mutual understanding and respect for each other's military customs and traditions. This has improved familiarisation between Indian and Japanese Army personnel. This is crucial if the two nations are to work together on any combined operation in the Indo-Pacific, like the American and Indian militaries did following the 2004 tsunami. The exercise's most recent iteration took place in March 2024 at the Mahajan field firing ranges in Rajasthan, a state in western India.⁶ The Indian Army and the Japanese Ground Self-Defence Force conducted this exercise for the fifth time. The exercise, which alternately took place in Japan and India, is a demonstration of the two nations' increased strategic collaboration and bilateral security.

The exercise aims to "enhance the combined capabilities to execute joint operations in a semi-urban environment under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter" in addition to fostering military cooperation. The maintenance of peace, the breaches of peace, and the acts of aggression are all covered under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Many factors are at play in the Indo-Pacific region, such as North Korea's threats to use military force against its neighbours' and China's aggressive actions. China has also used force against India and in the South and East China Seas.

"High degree of physical fitness, joint planning, joint tactical drills and basics of special arms skills" are among the key areas of

5. Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, "India-Japan 'Dharma Guardian' Exercise", Observer Research Foundation, March 27, 2024, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/india-japan-dharma-guardian-exercise>. Accessed on February 11, 2025.

6. Ibid.

emphasis for Dharma Guardian. The long-term interests of both nations may benefit from the personal ties formed during such military exchanges. The other goal is to create a shared awareness, if not a common one, of the risks listed in both nations' official political and strategic papers. This will essentially improve the general tone and tenor of India-Japan defence cooperation, contributing to the ongoing improvement of the two countries' bilateral relationship. The security cooperation between India and Japan has been growing yearly. This exemplifies the kind of military operations and strategic discussions that both nations' political leadership have established.

This is a significant advancement for Japan because not very long ago, such bilateral exercises would have been unthinkable. Collaboration between the Japan Self-Defence Forces and other nations in the region, particularly in the Indo-Pacific, has been growing. Furthermore, there has been a significant rise in Japan's defence expenditure recently. Tokyo authorised defence spending of ¥7.95 trillion (US\$ 55.9 billion) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. This represents a significant increase from FY 2023 of 16.5 per cent, or US\$ 7.92 billion.⁷ Furthermore, Japan has announced that it will spend approximately US\$ 302 billion on defence over the next five years, concluding in FY 2027.

Given that the Indian forces have extensive experience in counter-insurgency, Japan's Ground Self-Defence Force (JGSDF) may learn a great deal from India in this area. One novel idea that was recently demonstrated in these drills was the employment of eagles for surveillance and anti-drone operations. India is knowledgeable in these fields. It has previously experienced numerous acts of terror, including the 2008 Mumbai attacks. New Delhi might also highlight its "Make in India" and "Atmanirbhar Bharat" (Self-Reliant India) programmes during the joint drills. India has accomplished this by displaying guns and equipment at the most recent drills.

7. Rupakjyoti Borah, "Exercise Dharma Guardian Concludes: What it Means for India and Japan", *Japan Forward*, March 14, 2024, <https://japan-forward.com/exercise-dharma-guardian-concludes-what-it-means-for-india-and-japan/>. Accessed on February 12, 2025.

Air Defence Exercises

India and Japan launched “Veer Guardian-2023” in January 2023, comprising the Indian Air Force and the Japan Air Self-Defence Force, as a gesture to strengthen military cooperation in the air domain. The first-ever air exercise between Japan and India took place from January 12–26, 2023. The Indian Air Force and Japanese Air Self-Defence Force conducted joint exercises for the first time. The Veer Guardian 2023 exercise was conducted at Japan’s Hyakuri Air Base. Sukhoi-30MKI Squadron Leader Avni Chaturvedi headed the Indian side.⁸ Four Su-30 MKI, two C-17, and one IL-78 aircraft from India participated in the exercise, while four F-2s (a Japanese version of the F-16 fighter manufactured in the United States) and four F-15s represented Japan.

The goal of the air exercise is to improve both sides’ cooperation in air defence. The bilateral air exercise will involve “the conduct of various aerial combat drills between the two air forces ... multi-domain air combat missions in a complex environment and will exchange best practices,” according to a statement from the Indian Ministry of Defence. The exercise “will strengthen the long-standing bond of friendship and enhance the avenues of defence cooperation between the two air forces,” the statement continued. The exercise aligns with the goal of the free and open Indo-Pacific vision, devoid of coercion, which Japan and India have articulated on several occasions, notably during the summit between Prime Ministers Narendra Modi of India and Fumio Kishida of Japan in 2022.

New Delhi and Tokyo are now on the same strategic page because of their fears about Chinese aggressiveness, Beijing’s expanding presence in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and its potential to disrupt supply networks. This has been especially true over the past three years, while China and India have been engaged in a border dispute in Galwan, Ladakh. The India-Japan relationship is expected to continue and pick up steam, despite their disagreements on a few subjects, such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine, due to China. This

8. “Su-30MKI Squadron Leader Avni Chaturvedi, 1st Women Fighter Pilot to Lead Air Exercise with Japan”, ANI News, January 7, 2023, <https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/su-30mki-squadron-leader-avni-chaturvedi-1st-women-fighter-pilot-to-lead-air-exercise-with-japan20230107181751/>. Accessed on February 12, 2025.

will involve collaboration on matters about supply chains, economic security, and defence and security. India and Japan have increased the frequency of yearly military drills, as well as their security and political consultations.

The Japan Air Self-Defence Force (JASDF) and the Indian Air Force (IAF) also participate in a bilateral military exercise called Shinyuu Maitri. The goals of the exercise are to: improve communication and coordination between the two air forces; increase defence collaboration between the two nations, and provide the IAF the ability to operate in a variety of global contexts.

One C-17 Globemaster III aircraft was used by the IAF contingent to participate in the exercise in 2023. The exercise was divided into two phases: the IAF's C-17 and the JASDF C-2 transport aircraft conducted flying drills in the second phase, and discussions on transport operations and tactical manoeuvring took place in the first.⁹ Through interaction and study of each other's operational philosophies and best practices, the respective subject matter experts are allowed to benefit from this process. Additionally, the exercise will improve the two air forces' mutual comprehension and interoperability.

Another step toward strengthening defence cooperation between the two nations and enabling the IAF to function in a variety of global contexts was Exercise Shinyuu Maitri 2023. This exercise is taking place concurrently with the IAF's heavy lift transport aircraft fleet participating in Exercise Cobra Warrior in the UK and Exercise Desert Flag VIII in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The JASDF team also participated in India's first multilateral air force exercise, 'Tarang Shakti' in 2024.

Navy Defence Exercises

The Japan-India Maritime Exercise (JIMEX) is a bilateral naval exercise that takes place between the two nations' navies to increase maritime security cooperation between India and Japan. In June 2024, the JMSDF sponsored the eighth iteration of the Japan-India Maritime

9. "IAF's C-17 Globemaster III Takes Part in India-Japan Military Exercise Shinyuu Maitri", *The Print*, March 1, 2023, <https://theprint.in/india/iafs-c-17-globemaster-iii-takes-part-in-india-japan-military-exercise-shinyuu-maitri/1409813/>. Accessed on February 13, 2025.

Exercise (JIMEX-24) at Yokosuka, Japan.¹⁰ The Japanese ship JS *Yugiri* and the Indian Navy's INS *Shivalik* took part.

JIMEX-24 includes phases for both the sea and the harbour. By improving communication between sailors from the two navies, the harbour phase seeks to strengthen relationships. During the sea phase, the key goals are to improve interoperability through multi-domain operations and test war-fighting skills. The objectives of the exercise are to reinforce common commitments to maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region, promote operational engagements, and help participants learn from one another's best practices.

The exercise provided the Indian Navy and JMSDF with a stage on which to conduct intricate drills, showcasing their proficiency and collaboration in every facet of maritime warfare. The exercises covered a broad range of scenarios and tactical manoeuvres and were carried out in the air, sub-surface, and surface domains. The exercise was made even more realistic and intricate by the participation of a submarine, fighter aircraft, and maritime patrol aircraft.

The success of the drill also attests to the expanding strategic alliance between Japan and India. The naval cooperation exhibited by the two maritime states that share a commitment to the rules-based international order and security concerns, serves to strengthen their shared goals of preserving peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. The exercise shows both navies' commitment to upholding a safe and open maritime environment and their readiness and ability to handle changing security concerns.

Malabar Exercise

In 1992, the Malabar Exercise began as a bilateral exercise involving only the United States and India. It was earlier conducted irregularly, but after the US entered the international war on terror, it gained attention again and was carried out regularly. Exercise Malabar, which included Singapore, Japan, and Australia, relocated to the

10. "Indian Navy's Indigenous Stealth Frigate INS *Shivalik* Arrives in Japan to Take Part in JIMEX 24", *The Hindu*, June 11, 2024, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Visakhapatnam/indian-navys-indigenous-stealth-frigate-ins-shivalik-arrives-in-japan-to-take-part-in-jimex-24/article68277506.ece>. Accessed on February 13, 2025.

Bay of Bengal after the first Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) in 2007.

China expressed disapproval of the 2007 Malabar Exercise due to its location and expansion. After meeting with the foreign minister of China in 2008, Australia's involvement in the exercise was discontinued by then-Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. Australia's decision to leave this crucial QUAD component undoubtedly irritated India. Later, Australia attempted to rejoin the exercise, but India allegedly always rejected its attempts.

Australia's desire to return to the exercise was reaffirmed by Kevin Andrews, the country's defence minister at the time, in 2015, during a visit to India. However, there was to be no invitation. Japan began participating in the exercise in 2015, and Tokyo unsuccessfully advocated for Australia's inclusion in 2018 as well. Despite the formation of a bilateral exercise between Australia and India in 2015 called AUSINDEX and India's participation in the significant multilateral Exercise Kakadu, which was led by Australia, Australia's attempts to rejoin Malabar were consistently rejected.

China's opinion of the exercise and the QUAD was influenced by Australia's decision to withdraw from it and India's subsequent refusal to permit it to rejoin. During a period of substantial economic coercion from China in 2020, Australia returned to the exercise, and it has participated annually in each of the three iterations thereafter. Notably, the 2020 exercise took place in the Bay of Bengal, where it was conducted immediately before China's initial protest. Since then, it has taken place in the East China Sea, the Philippine Sea, and currently off the coast of Australia.

Off the coast of Sydney in 2023, the fleets of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States began the 27th iteration of the Malabar Naval Exercise.¹¹ This was the first time the exercise, which started as a bilateral naval drill between the Indian and American militaries in 1992, was held in Australia. The extent, intricacy, and sophistication of the manoeuvres carried out by the partner fleets have all increased

11. "Australia Hosts Multilateral Malabar Exercise, Bolsters Ties with India, Japan, U.S.," Indo-Pacific Defence Forum, August 27, 2023, <https://ipdefenseforum.com/2023/08/australia-hosts-multilateral-malabar-exercise-bolsters-ties-with-india-japan-u-s/>. Accessed on February 13, 2025.

significantly in the previous thirty years with the Malabar series. This is a reflection of the now four participating countries' increased self-assurance and feeling of purpose.

The Indo-Pacific region's security situation is deteriorating, with China and North Korea presenting the biggest threats. This is the backdrop against which the 2023 Malabar Exercise took place. On their shared border, India and China are still embroiled in combat. Japan continues to be concerned about North Korea's missile and nuclear danger. Indeed, "North Korea's military activities pose an even more grave and imminent threat to Japan's national security than ever before," according to the 2023 Japanese Defence White Paper.

"China's current external stance, military activities, and other activities have become a matter of serious concern for Japan and the international community, and present an unprecedented and the greatest strategic challenge," the recently released 2024 White Paper stated, voicing concerns about China's threats as well. Given the rapidly changing strategic picture facing the region, all four QUAD/Malabar partners have a shared perspective of the kind of Indo-Pacific region they wish to see. This has resulted in a deeper comprehension of the strategic intent behind their contacts as well as how they want to improve operational effectiveness through military operations like Malabar 2023.

The JMSDF released a press release outlining the goals of the Malabar 2023 Exercise, which included enhancing the JMSDF's "tactical capabilities" and enhancing interoperability with the navies of the four participating nations. Sending a message of shared purpose to dissuade China is one of the main goals of these drills. It is possible that this goal is being achieved. Another essential goal is to see if the four fleets are considerably improving coordination and collaboration, although this is still something that will only truly be determined in the case of a crisis or conflict.

In order to support the preparation and integration of advanced warfare tactics by the allies and partners to secure a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), the Australian, Indian, Japanese, and US naval forces wrapped up Exercise Malabar 2024 in mid-October with drills in the Bay of Bengal. Eight ships and 12 planes participated

in the exercise's 28th iteration, which integrated training in the air, information, sub-surface, and surface domains.¹² Initially, a bilateral exercise between the United States and India in 1992, Malabar has expanded in scope and complexity to include Australia and Japan. All four of the QUAD partnership's member countries took part for the sixth time.

DEFENCE TECHNOLOGY COLLABORATION BETWEEN INDIA AND JAPAN

The loosening of Japan's arms export policy and the ongoing reorientation of its post-war security posture are closely related to the 'Make in India' campaign. Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's April 2014 announcement of the Three Principles on Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology is one example of how this is happening. Since then, India and Japan have been involved in extensive discussions over the possibility of obtaining Japanese defence technology as well as the development and manufacturing of defence equipment jointly.

Japan and India, two of the biggest economies in Asia, have strategically invested in their armed forces. While Japan is ranked tenth in the world for military spending, India is the fourth largest military spender. Japan has demonstrated its commitment to enhancing its military capabilities by pledging to increase its spending on the armed forces over the coming years. As a sign of their cooperation, the two nations have announced several cooperative initiatives in a range of dual-use technological domains, including robots, intelligence systems, and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs). It has also been discussed that Japan and India should work together on cyber security, especially 5G technology. This emphasises how important collaboration is between these two strong countries.

To gain access to cutting-edge technologies, in the 2+2 dialogue held in August 2024, Japan and India have decided to expand their defence-industrial cooperation. With intentions to shortly

12. "At Malabar 2024, Quad Nations Promote Maritime Order for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific", Indo-Pacific Defense Forum, October 25, 2024, <https://ipdefenseforum.com/2024/10/at-malabar-2024-quad-nations-promote-maritime-order-for-a-free-and-open-indo-pacific/>. Accessed on February 15, 2025.

sign associated accords, it involves transferring the unmarked Unified Complex Radio Antenna (UNICORN) for Indian warships and related technologies. In reaction to China's assertive efforts in the Indo-Pacific region, both nations have also agreed to enhance military interoperability through cooperative combat exercises and collaboration in the space and cyber domains. The Japanese technique lowers radar signature and evades opposing forces by combining several warship antennae into a single horn-shaped structure.

In November 2024, India and Japan signed a Memorandum of Implementation for the co-development of UNICORN masts, significantly strengthening their bilateral defence ties.¹³ This decision is a result of growing maritime security cooperation and heightened attention to both countries' naval capabilities. This pact has the Indo-Pacific region at its core, underscoring Tokyo's and New Delhi's increasing strategic congruence of regional goals. Originally created for sophisticated navy operations, the UNICORN mast technology helps achieve the vital objective of stealth in maritime surveillance.¹⁴

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Bilateral military drills between India and Japan have played a significant role in the two countries' growing recognition as important regional strategic players by other nations, whether in East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), or the Persian Gulf. One of the main pillars supporting the development of regional diplomacy is increased defence cooperation through joint military exercises. The regional politics of power balance are directly reflected in joint military exercises. The shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific strategy between Japan and India is coherent. However, there are no indications that Tokyo or Delhi plan to transform this alliance-like relationship into a formal partnership with a shared commitment to collective defence.

Japan's post-war national security strategy has reached a turning point with the implementation of these new measures. But, as others

13. Ritu Sharma, "India, Japan to Develop 'Stealth Antenna System' For Indian Navy Warships; Ink Memorandum of Intent", *Eurasian Times*, November 17, 2024, https://www.eurasiantimes.com/india-japan-ink-agreement-to/#google_vignette. Accessed on February 16, 2025.

14. *Ibid.*

have noted, putting this into practice will require resolving some challenging problems. Resources comprise one. The new spending plans' financing will be extremely difficult to achieve and will require ongoing domestic support, particularly if they call for tax increases and spending reductions.

The second question is whether and to what extent Japan's security is enhanced by the new military posture, as opposed to being put at greater risk. Tokyo may be perceived as a threat by its neighbours despite its insistent claims of having only peaceful goals and the largest military build-up since World War II. Beijing has already expressed dissatisfaction with the new NSS, highlighting in particular how China is described as "an unprecedented strategic challenge." Japan's new policies have been blamed by North Korea and Russia for raising security dangers in the area.

India's bilateral Joint Military Exercises (JMEs) with Japan show how New Delhi's naval engagement with Tokyo is becoming more frequent and prominent, which strengthens capacity-building and regional security ties. When combined, they strengthen the Indian Ocean, which serves as the centre of the Indo-Pacific area's much-needed regional balance of power. While the IOR may be the centre of India's interests, its presence also guarantees a calm periphery. India's involvement in JMEs with Japan and other countries in Southeast Asia has helped in achieving Asia's wider stability objectives.

The persistent positive communication and diverse cooperation between Japan and India during their respective G20 and G7 Presidency in 2023 has especially helped to highlight the issues and goals of the Global South. The expanded breadth and significance of multi-layered talks between the two countries is shown by the deeper collaboration discussed through the Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Dialogue, Maritime Affairs Dialogue, Space Dialogue, and Cyber Dialogue.

The world's geopolitical, geoeconomic, and geostrategic activity now centres on the crowded Indo-Pacific, allowing for quick changes in the balance of power in the region. In the Indo-Pacific, Tokyo and New Delhi are crucial actors at a moment when the region is dealing with significant changes in its geopolitical landscape. Proactive military cooperation programmes and other peace-time endeavours

are crucial to guaranteeing Japan and India a stable strategic future in the light of these uncertainties.

Their common values and principles of democracy, freedom, and respect for the rule of law serve to further reinforce the significance of the India-Japan alliance in ensuring an inclusive, rules-based, free, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region. This is why collaboration within multilateral and plurilateral frameworks—such as the QUAD—will only intensify in the future. This includes strengthening Japan-Indian defence equipment and technology cooperation.

As both nations work to secure and solidify their maritime borders and take a more active part in Asia's regional balancing, the development and implementation of the Japan-India defence partnership and policy is going to be leveraged as a vital tool and a promising foundation for securing regional security priorities and order. Through defence cooperation initiatives that leverage collaboration to boost interoperability and confidence-building, Tokyo and New Delhi have greatly increased the overall net security of the Indo-Pacific region.