

Japan-India ties gets boost in security, technology push: Report

NEW DELHI, Feb 15 (IANS)

THE long-standing and resilient partnership between Japan and India is entering a new and dynamic phase, marked by deeper security collaboration and expanding cooperation in advanced technologies, according to a report.

The bilateral relationship, which has steadily strengthened over the years, is now witnessing renewed energy driven by shared strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region and growing people-to-people engagement.

A report by Japan Forward

highlights that cultural exchanges, rising Japanese investments in India, and collaboration in innovation and manufacturing are adding fresh momentum to ties.

Both countries share a common vision of ensuring a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific amid growing global uncertainties.

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Japan in August 2025, then Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba underscored the remarkable progress in bilateral relations over the past decade and emphasised strengthening

security cooperation.

"Japan and India, which share fundamental values, share the responsibility to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law in the Indo-Pacific region," he said.

"With the international situation becoming increasingly uncertain, Japan and India must join forces to ensure peace and stability in the region."

Both sides had reaffirmed their commitment to elevating the "Special Strategic and Global Partnership", with Ishiba highlighting successful collabora-

tion in investment, manufacturing, and technology. Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted: "The two leaders also agreed that Japan and India will build a complementary relationship in the future, leveraging each other's strengths and co-creating the social and economic values necessary to solve the challenges facing future generations."

In December 2025, Prime Minister Modi met current Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, where both leaders agreed to further advance the India-Japan Special Strategic Partnership.

Iranian official hints at N-compromise if US lifts sanctions

Potential Energy, Mining, Aircraft Deals On Table

Iran is pursuing a nuclear agreement with the US that delivers economic benefits for both sides, an Iranian diplomat was reported as saying on Sunday, days before a second round of talks between Tehran and Washington.

Iran and the US renewed negotiations earlier this month to tackle their decades-long dispute over Tehran's nuclear programme and avert a new military confrontation. The US has dispatched a second aircraft carrier to the region and is preparing for the possibility of a sustained military campaign if the talks do not succeed, US officials have said.

"For the sake of an agreement's durability, it is essential that the US also benefits in areas with high and quick economic returns," foreign ministry deputy director for economic diplomacy Hamid Ghanbari said, according to the semi-official Fars news agency.

Iran has threatened retaliation against any US attack but the official struck a conciliatory note on Sunday. "Common interests in the oil and gas fields, joint fields, mining investments, and even aircraft purchases are included in the negotiations," Ghanbari said, arguing that the 2015 nuclear pact with world powers had not secured US economic interests.

US secretary of state Marco Rubio, speaking at a news conference in Bratislava, said President Donald Trump had made it clear that he would prefer diplomacy and a negotiated settlement. "No one's ever been able to do a successful deal with Iran but we're going to try," Rubio said.

On Friday, a source said that a US delegation including envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner would meet Iranian officials in Geneva on Tuesday, a meeting later confirmed by a senior Iranian official on Sunday. "Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner will be travelling, I think they are travel-



Trump told Israeli PM Netanyahu in Dec that he would support Israeli strikes on Tehran's ballistic missile programme if the US and Iran could not reach a deal, CBS News reported on Sunday, citing two sources familiar with the matter

ling right now, to have important meetings and we'll see how that turns out," Rubio said, without giving any details.

Iran's deputy foreign minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi, meanwhile, signalled Tehran's readiness to compromise on its nuclear programme in return for sanctions relief, telling the BBC on Sunday that the ball was "in America's court to prove that they want to do a deal."

The senior official referred to the Iranian atomic chief's statement on Monday that the country could agree to dilute its most highly enriched uranium in exchange for the lifting of sanctions as an example of Iran's flexibility. However, he reiterated that Tehran would not accept zero uranium enrichment, a key sticking point in past negotiations, with Washington viewing enrichment inside Iran as a potential pathway to nuclear weapons. Iran denies seeking such weapons. REUTERS

Iran FM heads to Geneva for talks with US: Ministry

Iran's foreign minister Abbas Araghchi headed to Switzerland on Sunday for the second round of renewed nuclear talks with the US later this week, his ministry said. Araghchi "left Tehran for Geneva late Sunday heading a diplomatic and technical delegation to conduct the second round of nuclear talks and hold a number of diplomatic consultations," the ministry said. "Indirect Iran-US nuclear talks will be held on Tuesday with the mediation and good offices of Oman." AFP

In China's mountains, nuke revival takes shape

Satellite Imagery Of Secretive Facilities Reveals Beijing's Endeavours To Expand Its N-Arsenal

Chris Buckley & Agnes Chang

In the lush, misty valleys of southwest China, satellite imagery reveals the country's accelerating nuclear build-up, a force designed for a new age of superpower rivalry. One such valley is known as Zitong, in Sichuan Province, where engineers have been building new bunkers and ramparts. A new complex bristles with pipes, suggesting the facility handles highly hazardous materials.

Another valley is home to a double-fenced facility known as Pingtong, where experts believe China is making plutonium-packed cores of nuclear warheads. The main structure has been refurbished in recent years with new vents and heat exchangers. More construction is under way next to it.

Above the Pingtong facility entrance, a hallmark exhortation of China's leader, Xi

Jinping, appears in characters so large they are visible from space: "Stay true to the founding cause and always remember our mission." These are among several secretive nuclear-related facilities in Sichuan Province that have expanded and undergone upgrades in recent years.

China's build-up complicates efforts to revive global arms controls after the expiration of the final remaining nuclear arms treaty between the US and Russia. Washington argues that any successor agreements must also bind China, but Beijing has shown no interest. "The changes we see on the ground at these sites align with China's broader goals of becoming a global superpower. Nuclear weapons are an integral part of that," said Benny Babiarz, a geospatial intelligence expert who has analysed satellite images and other visual evidence of



China's build-up complicates efforts to revive global arms controls after the expiration of the final remaining nuclear arms treaty between the US & Russia

the sites and shared his findings with NYT.

He likened each nuclear location across China to a piece of a mosaic that, seen as a whole, shows a pattern of rapid growth. "There's been evolution at all of these sites, but broadly speaking, that change accelerated starting from 2019," he noted.

China had more than 600 nuclear warheads by the end

of 2024 and is on a track to have 1,000 by 2030, according to the Pentagon's latest annual estimate. China's stockpile is much smaller than the US and Russia, but its growth is still troublesome, said Matthew Sharp, a former US state department official.

The sites in Sichuan were built six decades ago as part of Mao Zedong's "Third Front,"

a project to shield China's nuclear weapons production labs and plants from strikes by the US or the Soviet Union. When China's tensions with Washington and Moscow subsided in the 1990s, many "Third Front" nuclear facilities closed or shrank. Sites like Pingtong and Zitong continued operating, but change in the years that followed was piecemeal, reflecting China's policy then of keeping a relatively small nuclear arsenal, said Babiarz.

That era of restraint faded from about seven years ago. The design of the Pingtong complex suggests that it is being used to make the pits of nuclear warheads — the metal core, usually containing plutonium — according to Babiarz. In Zitong, the new bunkers and ramparts are likely being used to test "high explosives," experts say, referring to the chemical compounds

that detonate to create the conditions for a chain reaction in nuclear materials. "You have a layer of high explosives and the shock wave at the same time implodes into the centre. This needs blast tests to perfect them," said Hui Zhang, a physicist who researches China's nuclear programs at Harvard University, who examined Babiarz's findings.

The complex includes an oval area about the size of 10 basketball courts. The objective of these upgrades remains a subject of debate. Zhang said satellite imagery alone offers limited information.

China wants to be "in the position where they believe they're immune from nuclear coercion by the US," said Michael S Chase, a former US deputy assistant secretary of defence for China. "I think they probably judge that could come into play in a conventional conflict over Taiwan." [see](#)

Chief student party leader 'Have no reason to

India, France to hold key dialogue to boost defence cooperation on Feb 17

NEW DELHI, Feb 15 (PTI)

DEFENCE Minister Rajnath Singh will hold talks with his French counterpart Catherine Vautrin in Bengaluru on February 17, with some key outcomes expected from the bilateral dialogue to boost defence cooperation. A defence cooperation agreement is expected to be renewed for another 10 years, with an MoU on joint venture for “manufacturing of Hammer missiles” likely to be signed at the meeting in the presence of both the ministers, the defence ministry here said on Sunday.

“The two ministers are also expected to witness the virtual

inauguration of the H125 Light Utility Helicopter Final Assembly of Tata Airbus by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron at Vemagal in Karnataka,” it said in a statement.

Singh will co-chair the sixth India-France Annual Defence Dialogue with Minister of the Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs of France, Catherine Vautrin in Bengaluru on February 17, the ministry said.

The meeting will review the entire gamut of bilateral defence cooperation, with a focus on expanding industrial collaboration, officials said.

An announcement is also expected with respect to reciprocal deployment of officers at the Indian Army and French Land Forces establishments, the defence ministry said.

Defence has traditionally formed an important pillar of the relationship between the two countries.

The “strong and enduring bilateral ties” were vividly reflected in 2024-2025 through a series of high-profile exchanges, the statement said. PM Modi was the Guest of Honour at the Bastille Day Parade in July 2023, before the French president graced the Republic Day Parade 2024 as the chief guest.

India reaffirms its strategic autonomy: Jaishankar amid US claims on Russian oil buys

India's energy decisions will be determined by availability, cost and risk considerations

MUNICH, Feb 15 (IANS)

AMID repeated assertions from the United States regarding New Delhi's purchases of Russian oil, India, reaffirming its "strategic autonomy", has conveyed a clear message on the global stage that its energy decisions will be determined by availability, cost, and risk considerations.

The remarks come against the backdrop of fresh US sanctions targeting Russia's oil sector and claims by President Donald



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar during a G-4 meeting of India, Germany, Japan and Brazil on the sidelines of the 62nd Munich Security Conference.

(PTI)

Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio that India has agreed to halt additional imports

of Russian crude.

Addressing the Munich
(Contd on page 5)

India set to host ~~Global AI Summit today~~

For India, the global summit underlines the nation's intent to not merely be a participant, but a key architect in shaping the rules, standards and opportunities of the AI age.



A BSF jawan stands guard at a bus stop, ahead of the AI Impact Summit 2026 in New Delhi on Sunday. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, Feb 15 (PTI)

INDIA is set to host the AI Impact Summit, a high-profile gathering of global leaders and industry heavyweights in

February 16-20, will bring together policymakers, industry leaders and technology innovators at a time when nations are racing to define their AI agenda. For India, the event is as much about signalling capability as it is about intent—showcasing its deep talent pool, expanding digital public infrastructure and growing startup ecosystem, while positioning itself as a key architect of responsible, scalable and inclusive AI solutions for the world. Artificial Intelligence or AI has moved well beyond research labs and boardroom buzzwords -- it is reshaping

healthcare delivery, transforming agriculture, recalibrating financial markets, redefining education systems and rewriting corporate strategy, even as it alters the very nature of work and, increasingly, everyday life. For India, the global summit

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For India, the global summit (Contd on page 5)

India 'very successful' emerging economy; right place to host AI summit: UN chief Guterres

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 15 (PTI)

INDIA is a "very successful" emerging economy with a bigger influence in global affairs, and is the "right place" to host the AI summit, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said.



In an exclusive interview with PTI at the UN Headquarters ahead of the India's AI Impact Summit 2026, Guterres underscored that Artificial Intelligence should benefit the entire world and not just be a privilege reserved for developed nations or two superpowers.

"I strongly congratulate India for organising this Summit. It's absolutely essential that AI develops itself to the benefit of everybody, everywhere and that countries in the Global South are part of the benefits of AI," he said.

The high-powered event being held from February 16 to 20 will be the first-ever AI summit hosted in the Global South and is anchored in the three guiding principles of "People, Planet and Progress".

Guterres, who will be travelling to India to attend the Summit, asserted "it would be totally unacceptable that AI would be just a privilege of the most developed countries or a division only between two superpowers", an apparent reference to the US and China. "It is absolutely essential that AI becomes a universal instrument for the benefit of humankind," Guterres said.

"The role of India, (which) is today a very successful emerging economy that is having a bigger and bigger role in not only the global economy but in its influence in global affairs. India is the right place to have this Summit and to make sure that AI (is) being discussed in depth, in all its enormous potential and also in all its risks, but that AI belongs to the whole world and not only to a few," he said.

From world leaders, including French President Emmanuel Macron, Brazilian (Contd on page 5)

'AI for All': India to roll out 7-Sutra roadmap

NEW DELHI, Feb 15 (IANS)

INDIA'S AI Governance Guidelines are anchored in seven 'Sutras' to ensure that AI serves as an enabler for inclusive development, economic growth, and global competitiveness, while effectively addressing risks to individuals and society through proportionate, evidence-based measures, according to an official explainer issued on Sunday.

Through this structured and forward-looking architecture, India aims to realise the vision of "AI for All," ensuring that the transformative potential of artificial intelligence contributes meaningfully to the national aspiration of Viksit Bharat by 2047, with benefits reaching every citizen in a safe, inclusive and sustainable



manner, the statement said.

The seven guiding sutras are Trust is the Foundation, People First, Innovation over Restraint, Fairness & Equity, Accountability, Understandable by Design, and Safety, Resilience & Sustainability.

By focusing on "AI for All", India seeks to combine sovereign capability with open innovation—leveraging pub-

lic digital infrastructure, indigenous model development, and affordable compute to drive productivity and inclusive growth. This approach aligns AI development with the broader aspiration of Viksit Bharat 2047, positioning AI as a catalyst for economic transformation, social empowerment, and strategic autonomy, the statement said.

India's achievements reflect

this deployment-first philosophy. Under the India AI Mission, over 38,000 GPUs have been onboarded through a subsidised national compute facility. AIKosh now hosts more than 9,500 datasets and 273 sectoral models, strengthening indigenous model development.

The National Supercomputing Mission has operationalised 40+ petaflop systems, including AIRAWAT and PARAM Siddhi-AI. India AI and Future Skills initiatives are supporting 500 PhDs, 5,000 postgraduates, and 8,000 undergraduates, while 570 AI Data Labs and 27 India AI labs across states are expanding grassroots innovation. With nearly 90 per cent of startups integrating AI in some form, India is embedding AI deeply into its innovation ecosystem.