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MARKET STATS		BlackRock Opportunity	33,291	10,369	29,250.00	64.93	7.41 12.25	1Y 24.63 3Y 19.45	Regulatory disclaimers, click here.	

# Shinzo Abe's re-election can spell big gains for India-Japan alliance

BY DIPANJAN ROY CHAUDHURY, ET BUREAU | UPDATED: OCT 30, 2017, 01.29 AM IST

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NEW DELHI: Shinzo Abe's re-election in Japan will not only ensure continuity in India-Japan strategic and economic partnerships that have been on an upswing, but also boost New Delhi's Indo-Pacific outreach stretching from the Pacific region to the coast of Eastern Africa in the backdrop of China's expansionist strategy.

Japan, trying to develop as a "normal" nation under Abe by reorienting its pacifist constitution, is emerging as Delhi's partner in the Indo-Pacific region under its own 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy', aiming to provide a viable alternative to China's One Belt and One Road (OBOR) initiative that has been marked by expansionist and non-transparent goals. India's [Act East Policy](#) could synergise with Japan's strategy to stabilise the vast Indo-Pacific region.

A key takeaway from Abe's visit for the 12th Indo-Japan annual Summit in Gandhinagar ahead of the snap polls in Japan was a memorandum of understanding to create an 'India Japan Act East Forum', with an eye on marrying India's Act East Policy with Japan's Free and Open Asia Pacific strategy in the backdrop of China's OBOR. The forum aims to enhance connectivity and promote developmental projects in the north-eastern Region of India in an efficient and effective manner to smoothly connect the rest of the country with Southeast Asia.

Japan, with historical connection to India's Northeast, is among a handful of countries that have been allowed to have a presence in the eight landlocked states in the region, which is India's gateway to [Asean](#) via land corridors.

Shinzo Abe's re-election would further help cement ties between the two nations and between the two PMs who share excellent chemistry, according to Indian and Japanese officials. This in turn will open up more avenues and opportunities of partnership, while taking forward ongoing projects and initiatives, they said.

Delhi hopes that Japan would be able to expand defence partnership with India as Tokyo strives to modify its pacifist approach to international relations. Japan is keen to expand its infrastructure projects in Southeast Asia amid China's OBOR and, along with India, is exploring to develop projects in the Asean region.

This is part of an [Indo-Japan corridor](#) conceived last year for the Indo-Pacific region. It will extend to Eastern Africa under the Asia Africa Growth Corridor — an initiative that would provide an alternative to China's OBOR project.

India and Japan have agreed that improving connectivity between Asia and Africa is vital to achieving prosperity of the entire region. They decided to seek synergy between India's Act East Policy and Japan's 'Expanded Partnership for Quality Infrastructure', by closely coordinating, bilaterally and with other partners, for better regional integration and improved connectivity as well as industrial networks based on the principles of mutual consultation and trust.

Abe's victory would also see Tokyo intensifying joint projects with Delhi across South Asian states in India's periphery — in Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Bangladesh, and those in the Bay of Bengal region.



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Speaking at a seminar here last Thursday, foreign secretary [S Jaishankar](#) spoke about Indo-Japan collaboration in the Bay of Bengal and Asia-Pacific regions. He said both countries were “mirror images” of each other in terms of potentials and have clear areas of convergence in the Asian humanitarian and strategic architecture.

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