

# India, Japan to develop infrastructure in Indo-Pacific region with eye on China

[thestatesman.com/india/eye-china-india-japan-develop-infrastructure-indo-pacific-region-1502617897.html](https://www.thestatesman.com/india/eye-china-india-japan-develop-infrastructure-indo-pacific-region-1502617897.html)

April 5, 2018



In what is seen as an attempt to counter the challenge posed by China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), India and Japan are working relentlessly to give shape to their joint project, the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC), aimed at developing quality infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific region.

At an interactive session with FICCI's Forum of Parliamentarians' Council on Wednesday night, Japanese Ambassador to India Kenji Hiramatsu said the two countries share the principles that connectivity infrastructure projects should be implemented "in an open, transparent and non-exclusive manner based on international standards and responsible debt-financing practices, while ensuring respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, the rule of law and environment".

The comments assume significance as India has firmly opposed China's ambitious BRI project while Japan has expressed reservations about it. India had boycotted the BRI Summit convened by China in May last year, arguing that its flagship project, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), runs through the Indian territory in Jammu and Kashmir illegally occupied by Pakistan.

Since then, India and Japan have made considerable progress on the AAGC, linking Africa with India and other countries of South-east Asia through rail, road and sea projects. The project was also discussed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe during their summit in India in September last year.

Hiramatsu said India and Japan were also enhancing connectivity within India. As a prime example in this regard, the two countries launched the 'Act East Forum' to advance economic development, including connectivity in India's North Eastern region as well as to foster people-to-people exchanges.

The Japanese envoy said the two countries were now working day and night to fulfil the potential, address the challenges, and further deepen and strengthen partnership in various areas.

In the field of defence and security cooperation, he said the two countries have begun technical discussions for future research collaboration in the areas of robotics and unmanned ground vehicles. "In the future, we will witness expanded joint exercises and cooperation, not only in the maritime domain but also in such areas as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, peacekeeping operations and counter-terrorism," he added.

Hiramatsu said the two countries were also working to strengthen cooperation in expanding maritime domain awareness in the Indo-Pacific region. He said Japan's readiness to provide its state-of-the-art US-2 amphibian aircrafts has been appreciated by the Government of India as symbolising the high-degree of trust between the two countries.