

# India, Japan will work to strengthen 'peacetime cooperation': Jaishankar

The External Affairs Minister says 'for us, the challenge is that we work every day in every possible way to strengthen our cooperation, whether it's in economics, supply chains, digital domain or critical technologies and also in maritime security'

July 28, 2023 08:58 pm | Updated 09:05 pm IST - NEW DELHI



SUHASINI HAIDAR

COMMENTS

SHARE

 READ LATER



India and Japan would rather work to strengthen their “peacetime cooperation,” said External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on July 28, side-stepping a question about how the two countries would cooperate in case of a **conflict in the Taiwan straits**, or between **India and China at the Line of Actual Control**. Speaking at a think tank event in Delhi along with **visiting Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi**, the External Affairs Minister said the two countries were “natural partners” in facing the challenges of a “future world order”.

## **Editorial | Tightrope walk: on the India and Japan relationship**

“It is actually the peacetime cooperation, which is when you are tested,” said Mr. Jaishankar, in response to a question from Japanese newspaper *Nikkei* about what kind of “wartime cooperation” could be expected from India in case of a war in the Taiwan straits, in a reference to any possible Chinese military action against Taiwan. “I would say for us, the challenge is that **we work every day in every possible way to strengthen our cooperation**, whether it’s in economics, supply chains, digital domain or critical technologies and also in maritime security,” he expanded, adding that by strengthening “peace, stability and security” in the region, India and Japan could ensure that “many of the worst fears” would not be realised.

To a question on what Japan’s reaction to a conflict on the India-China border conflict or in the Indo-Pacific would be, however, Mr. Hayashi was more direct.

“We are already doing some cooperation in the security sphere, such as in January,” he said, referring to **India-Japan military and maritime exercises** that included the first-ever joint fighter exercise in January this year, and added that strong bilateral ties and more people-to-people cooperation would increase stability in the region. “On top of that there is defence cooperation, and that will be working against any of those scenarios in the future,” he said.

## **Also Read | India-Japan Army exercise ‘Dharma Guardian’ gets under way**

During heightened U.S.-China tensions in the Taiwan straits after U.S. Speaker **Nancy Pelosi’s visit to Taipei** in August 2022, India had issued its own statement urging “restraint”, but had not joined the Quad partners U.S., Japan and Australia Foreign



“diplomatically” and bilaterally, indicating India’s preference for a less strategic posture within the Quad.

## Editorial | **Elusive consensus: On transparency and the state of India-China ties**

### ‘Exemplar moderniser’

In his address to the two-day India-Japan Forum organised by the Ananta Centre and the Ministry of External Affairs in Delhi which included diplomats, academics and businesspersons, Mr. Jaishankar praised Japan for being an “exemplar moderniser” that is a role model for India. He also credited Japan with several industrial “revolutions” in India including the introduction of the Maruti-Suzuki collaboration for a passenger car, Metro rail services in various Indian cities, and high-speed rail projects like the under-construction, but much-delayed Mumbai-Ahmedabad Shikansen project.

### Also Read | **Japan to train 1,000 Indian engineers before transfer of bullet train tech**

Mr. Jaishankar met Mr. Hayashi on July 27 night and held the 15th annual India-Japan Foreign Ministers’ Strategic Dialogue where the two sides recommitted to a 5-Trillion Yen target for Japanese investment in India during 2022-2027.

Speaking at the Forum on July 28 morning, Mr. Hayashi said Japan’s new Indo-Pacific policy, unveiled by Prime Minister Fumio Kishida this year, **also had a special focus on ties with India**, including projects in third countries like Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. The Japanese Foreign Minister was in India as part of a six-nation tour to South Asia and Africa, and is travelling to Sri Lanka and Maldives followed by South Africa, Uganda, and Ethiopia. He said Japan was keen to align its G-7 presidency goals with that of India’s G-20 priorities including the need to involve the Global South.

“Unless we keenly listen to the voices of the “Global South” and show our commitment to cooperation on urgent issues facing these countries, our appeal for upholding the free and open international order based on the rule of law may sound like a mere slogan,” Mr. Hayashi said.