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## Japan hails India-Pakistan CBMs

By P.S. Suryanarayana

**SINGAPORE, DEC. 2.** Japan today welcomed the latest moves by India and Pakistan to resume air links between the two and also allow overflights across their respective air space.

Tokyo, which has been closely monitoring the new developments on the India-Pakistan diplomatic front, had earlier hailed their ceasefire accord.

The Japanese Foreign Ministry said in Tokyo today that it "highly evaluates a series of confidence-building measures" that the two South Asian neighbours had recently taken.

Japan hoped that "these positive developments will improve further the India-Pakistan relations and promote mutual understanding between the peoples of both the countries".

Japan's interactive relations with India and Pakistan nose-dived following their nuclear-weapons testing in 1998, but it later eased the economic sanctions imposed on the two countries.

While the reversal of the sanctions took place in the context of the contributions that both India and Pakistan made towards the global "war on terrorism,"

Japan has been watching their moves to enhance economic links with them.

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# India, Japan launch strategic dialogue

By C. Raja Mohan

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NEW DELHI, APRIL 18. After cautiously probing each other for years about building a political partnership, India and Japan have finally cleared the ground for a substantive strategic dialogue.

Following an intensive round of consultations in Tokyo this week, the National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra, has laid the foundation for a strategic dialogue with Japan.

India and Japan engage a number of countries on strategic issues, but have found the establishment of a similar framework between themselves somewhat elusive.

During her visit to India in January, the Foreign Minister of Japan, Yoriko Kawaguchi, had dwelled on the importance of building on the many shared political interests between the two countries and expanding bilateral defence cooperation.

Mr. Mishra is in Japan at the invitation of Ms. Kawaguchi. Among the other leaders that Mr. Mishra has had talks are the Minister in charge of the Japanese Defence Agency, Shigeru Ishiba, and the Chief Cabinet Secretary, Yasuo Fukuda.

In his address to the Japanese Institute for International Affairs, Mr. Mishra said, "with our shared values and complementarities we can together make a major impact virtually everywhere".

Among the areas of convergence between the two countries listed by Mr. Mishra are combating international terrorism, cooperation in the United Nations, and the development of advanced technologies. Mr. Mishra regretted the slow pace of economic cooperation between India and Japan. He pointed to the fact that Sino-Indian trade, now at \$ 5 billions was 30 per cent more than the Indo-Japanese trade.

In the past Japanese political interest in India was too narrowly focused on the tensions between New Delhi and Islamabad and nuclear proliferation.

Urging the Japanese not to look at India through the prism of South Asia and the Pakistan factor, Mr. Mishra said, "it would be an error not to recognise that India has broken free of these limiting confines".

Recalling the tensions between India and Japan after the May 1998 nuclear tests, Mr. Mishra said, "our security concerns, which prompted that decision, are much better understood today. Perhaps you could also view it differently now, in the light of developments in your own neighbourhood". Mr. Mishra was referring to the clandestine nuclear and missile cooperation between North Korea and Pakistan which has severely undermined the security environment of Japan. But the main emphasis of Mr. Mishra was on the future and the urgency of translating the common strategic outlook between India and Japan into "concrete action".

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India's relations with Japan are back on track

# Beyond the nuclear muddle

India's relations with Japan were again in focus in India when the foreign minister of Japan, Yoriko Kawaguchi, visited India between January 7 and 9. This was in response to the visit to Japan of India's minister of external affairs, Jaswant Singh, about a year ago.

Japan has always been an important factor in India's external relations, especially since the mid-Sixties of the last century. The substance of this relationship was, of course, economic and technological. Japan has been a major donor of developmental aid (the top donor in the decade of the Nineties of the last century), and among the top trading partners and foreign investors in the Indian economy. It is particularly important to note that these investments have helped in developing the infrastructural sector of the Indian economy in terms of shipping, ports, roads, bridges and transportation. Japan has also been prompt in sending assistance for disaster management of crises like the Gujarat earthquake in 2000.

During the freedom struggle, the Indian public rejoined in the Japanese naval victory over the Russian navy in 1907 as an expression of Asian resurgence. Whatever the clinical value-judgments of Japan may be during World War II, large sections of Indian public opinion appreciated Japan's support to Subhash Chandra Bose's military campaign against the British by the creation of the Indian National Army; the dissenting opinion of the Indian judge on the war crimes tribunal against the Japanese accused, made a positive impact on Japanese public opinion. Justice Radha Binod Pal is still remembered by old timers in Japan for his having refused to join the judges from west European countries in his decision. Going beyond all this is the age-old cultural and religious links between India and Japan through the catalyst of Buddhism.

Whatever the long-term context of Indo-Japanese relations as detailed above may be, Kawaguchi's visit resulted in determining a new basis for Indo-Japanese cooperation and a new terms of reference in bilateral relations between the two countries.

Kawaguchi visited India in a political and strategic context of twin dimensions. First, Japan over the last two decades has moved away from its politically insular orientations in external relations and has shown an inclination to assume political and strategic responsibilities as one of the important powers of the world, which Japan undoubtedly is. Second, Japan is agreeable to take on a more activist role in economic development and political stabilization of the Asian region, particularly southeast Asia and south Asia. Japan is also rapidly adjusting to the changing power equations in international politics

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after the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

India discerns the following ingredients in Japan's foreign and security policies:

Japan accepts its importance and role as a major Asian power and as a global economic power.

Japan's foreign policy objective is to maintain Japan's territorial integrity and safety and to sustain Japan's economic well-being and prosperity.

Japan considers the establishment of a stable political and security environment in Asia and the Asia Pacific region as an important factor to meet the first two objectives.

the maintenance of security arrangements between Japan and the United States of America are the twin factors on which Japan's foreign and strategic policies are based.

In a defence policy paper of Japan's Self Defence Agency, the government policy on foreign relations was explained as follows: "On the diplomatic front, it is essential for Japan to take steps to prevent or resolve international disputes and confrontations, achieve economic development, promote arms control and disarmament and deepen mutual understanding and mutual confidence. This is necessary to create an increasingly stable security envi-

ronment, it advised that no purpose would be served by her visit to Pakistan at this point of time. India appreciated her accepting its advice in the matter.

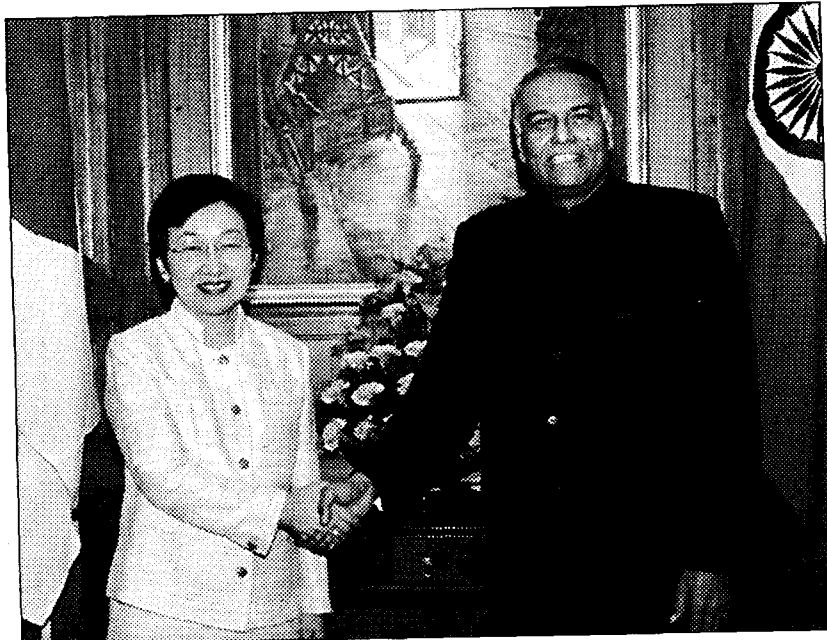
Kawaguchi's visit removed the last of the misunderstandings between Japan and India about India's nuclear weapons tests conducted in the summer of 1998. While there is no change in the basic policies of India and Japan on non-proliferation issues, it was significant that during Kawaguchi's discussions, it was agreed that India and Japan should give primary attention to developing bilateral economic and technological cooperation and in forging political understanding to deal with the fundamental issues affecting security. There was also agreement on sustaining, consolidating and increasing Indo-Japanese economic cooperation.

Kawaguchi also exchanged views with Indian leaders on developments related to negotiations to resolve the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka. She informed her Indian counterparts about missions being undertaken by Yasushi Akashi to help galvanize the economic dimensions of negotiations between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Sri Lankan government, being brokered by the Norwegian government. India appreciated being kept informed about Japan's interest and involvement in these negotiations.

India, however, cautioned Kawaguchi that a solution to the ethnic problem is going to be a complex and long process and that too many external involvements may only result in one side or the other in the ethnic conflict exploiting such involvement to its advantage. India also appreciated the political and security concerns of Japan, related to the northern sector of the Asia Pacific region. North Korea's threats to revive its missile and nuclear capacities, the security and strategic controversies related to Taiwan, the complex relations with China, were factors affecting Japan's external relations. It is to be noted that that India shares Japan's concerns in these matters.

There was complete agreement on strengthening the UN, on working together to counter international terrorism and on the importance of strengthening the principles of democracy, good governance, human rights and international politics. India was supportive of Japan providing economic assistance to Sri Lanka, including its Tamil regions to galvanize the process of reconciliation between Tamils and the Sinhalese. India also took note of more activist orientations in Japan's foreign and defence policies.

The discussions with Kawaguchi provided insights into the impact of Japanese policies in south and southeast Asia. Kawaguchi's visit signalled the end of some distances which had developed between India and Japan between 1998 and 1999 because of India's nuclear tests. The visit generally has brought Indo-Japanese relations back on track.



Japan is willing to establish a network of bilateral and multi-lateral relations with all countries in the world, particularly with countries in Asia, to further the objectives of stability and security for the states in this region.

Japan is willing to make contributions in terms of investment, economic and technological assistance for these purposes.

Japan is firmly opposed to the proliferation of all categories of weapons of mass-destruction.

There is an increasing willingness in Japan to be active in finding solutions to crises and situations of conflict. It is in this context that Japan is an active member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and its security fora. The Japanese perception is that the present state of international relations is far from being in a security environment that ensures true peace, free from threats of armed conflicts. The Japanese policy response to this situation is that Japan must take appropriate steps through diplomatic initiatives in stabilizing international relations by laying foundations for security through domestic political stability and enhancing self-reliance in defence capacities. This self-reliance and

**Kawaguchi's visit cleared the last of the misunderstandings between India and Japan regarding India's 1998 nuclear weapons tests**

environment. The strengthening of Japan-US security arrangements is an anchor of Japanese foreign policy. Increasing bilateral cooperation with other countries and actively promoting regional cooperation in Asia, a global cooperation through the United Nations, are the constituent elements of Japan's foreign policy."

Kawaguchi had high-level discussions in India with the prime minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and Yashwant Sinha, and the national security advisor to the prime minister, Brajesh Mishra. As part of an effort to persuade India and Pakistan to re-start their dialogue, Kawaguchi wished to visit Pakistan before coming to India. While India appreciated her inten-