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Indo-Japan Strategic Partnership

What is the issue?

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- India & Japan currently have a “Special Strategic and Global Partnership”.
- New Delhi accords this status to no other partner.
- However, it largely falls short of a full fledged alliance.

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Why did India confer such a status?

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- **Geopolitics** - The rise of China and doubts about USA’s commitments in Asia has pushed both the countries towards this relationship.
- **Economic Aspect** - Japan is investing heavily in Indian projects.
- The two countries are also working on a joint infrastructure development and connectivity drive traversing the Indian Ocean.
- Their projects span from Myanmar to Sri Lanka to Iran and encompass the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor.
- **Defence** - Indo-Japan joint naval exercises are being regularly organised together with the U.S. Navy.
- Major arms deals like the ShinMaywa US-2i amphibious aircraft are on the cards.
- Japanese investments in the strategically places like the Andaman & Nicobar

Islands is also likely to help India enhance its security sentinals.

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How is this different from an alliance?

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- Alliances have lacked their relevance in the post-cold war era and strategic partnerships have increasingly become the norm.

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- **Lacking commitment** - Unlike alliances, strategic partnerships don't demand commitments to a partner's disputes with other countries.

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- New Delhi does not take a strong position on Japan's territorial disputes with China and Russia.

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- Likewise, Tokyo does not openly side with India in its quarrels with China and Pakistan.

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- Strategic partnership involves countries retaining their unconstrained diplomatic flexibility while continuing political engagement & economic cooperation.

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- **Collaborative Approach** - It also involves regular high-level interactions over a range of activities whereas an alliance is usually more pronounced in for defense & economy.

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- India and Japan are not only moving forward on economic and defence cooperation but are also cooperating on issues such as civil nuclear energy and UN reform.

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- It is also essential in the present times where states find themselves interdependent, even if their relationship is characterised by strategic tension.

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- e.g. India might confront China at Doklam but it also wants Chinese investment.

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Source: The Hindu

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