

India-Japan Relations

Topic: ‘Indo-Pacific in Turbulent Times: Challenges Before India and Japan’

Speakers’: Dr Anurag Tripathi; Dr Anil Joseph Pinto; Prof PM Soundar Rajan; Mr Maruo Katsumasa; Dr Prakash Panneerselvam

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Key Takeaways

Centre for East Asian Studies (CEAS) Christ University, in collaboration with the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), held a seminar on India-Japan relations on 12 April 2023. Dr Anurag Tripathi, initiated the session by delivering the welcome address.

The Guest of Honour, Dr Anil Joseph Pinto, addressed the gathering and stated how this was a historic step for Christ University to hold the first India-Japan relations conference on campus. He spoke on how Japan has been an integral part of India's society for an extended period and that the connections go as far as the 8th century AD. In modern history, there has been a stronger connection between India and Japan, even during pre-colonial times, which remained strong even after independence.

Japan, along with Germany, is a country that India has had remarkably positive relations with over the decades. The importance of India-Japan ties lies in the deep connection, shared cultural heritages, and connections being built in various areas. In the end, he spoke about how this seminar was necessary for the University as an institution that thinks of the future and teaches students how to look at the future of society, the world, and themselves.

Prof. PM Soundar Rajan, NIAS, gave the introductory remarks. He began with the seminar's title and how the 'Turbulence' in the Indo-Pacific should necessarily be mitigated before it becomes a 'Tsunami.' He spoke majorly on the idea of a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific', the pioneer strategy of Japan. Being India's nearest technological superpower, it becomes essential for India to maintain close ties with Japan, especially in the context of the emerging security concern regarding semiconductor production. Though India has a facility in Chandigarh to increase reliability and security, it has not been able to service and satisfy the needs for rapid technological advancement fully. With the onset of the 5G network, the demand for advanced semiconductors has become increasingly important. He highlights that the Government of India can work with Japan on commercial terms, which will benefit both countries.

Mr Maruo Katsumasa, the Deputy Consul-General of the Consulate-General of Japan, Bengaluru, gave the keynote address. He highlighted the bilateral cooperation policies and strategies between India and Japan, such as the 2+2 Meeting and Space dialogue, investment, and collaborations in healthcare, environment, IT, and manufacturing. He further highlighted the various partnerships and agreements that Japan and India have signed to strengthen relations and Japan's heavy investments in India to help with its technological growth. In addition, India also has taken measures to integrate Japan into Indian society, such as promoting the Japanese language in education and tourism.

He noted the coincidence of Japan taking up the presidency of G7 while India is taking up the presidency of G20. In light of the Russian aggression in Ukraine, he acknowledged the attempts by the Prime Ministers of both countries to maintain international order based on the rule of law and their shared responsibility to ensure it.

He then spoke on Japan's spearheaded 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' (FOIP) strategy. He highlighted the four new pillars in the new FOIP plan, announced in Delhi during his state visit to India:

1. The principles for peace and rules for prosperity.
2. Addressing challenges in an Indo-Pacific way.
3. Multi-layered connectivity.
4. Extending efforts for security and safe use of the "Sea" to the "Air."

Finally, he concluded his address by highlighting some of the territorial conflicts of Japan, such as the Takeshima Islands dispute with South Korea, the Kuril Islands and Hokkaido dispute with Russia, and the Senkaku Islands dispute with China.

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