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JAPAN

Digest

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Japan highly concerned with Chinese Coast Guard law

Japan is [highly concerned](#) as the 25th session of the Standing Committee of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC) adopted a new Chinese Coast Guard law. The [19th article](#) of the draft allows the Coast Guard to "take all necessary measures, including the use of weapons, when national sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction are being illegally infringed upon by foreign organizations or individuals at sea". It also permits the Chinese Coast Guard to take down structures built by foreign countries on areas claimed by China. Japan has expressed concern that the law [should not be employed in a way that violates international law](#). Japan's National Security Council is discussing ways to strengthen Tokyo's defensive posture around the Senkaku Islands.

Sri Lanka walks back on the East Container Terminal commitment

Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa has [confirmed](#) that Sri Lanka does not have any intention to sell or lease any section of East Container Terminal (ECT) to foreign countries, and the operations will be solely conducted by Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA). This comes after port trade unions protest in Sri Lanka. Following this development, Japan has expressed regret over the [unilateral decision](#) while India has urged that all sides should continue to abide by existing understandings and commitments. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in May 2019 between Sri Lanka, India and Japan to develop the ECT. While Sri Lanka retains 100 percent ownership, a joint-ventured Terminal Operations Company with 51

percent stake for Sri Lanka and 49 percent for India and Japan was agreed upon. Earlier, Sri Lanka has suspended the Japan backed Light Railway Track (LRT) project.

Japan opposes G7 expansion

The UK is hosting G-7 leaders' summit in June. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has also invited Australia, India and South Korea. Tokyo has reportedly expressed reservations on Prime Minister Boris Johnson's bid to invite Australia, India and South Korea to the G7 foreign ministers meeting, and sign a joint Open Societies Charter. Japan has argued that the focus must be on rebuilding the G7 after the pandemic instead of institutionalising invited guests. Additionally, France, Italy and Germany have articulated apprehensions that the UK is reshaping G-7 by back door expansion. Japan is certainly uncomfortable in sharing the high-table with South Korea given the historical baggage in their bilateral relations. But it also allegedly does not want Australia and India, as indicated by some that Tokyo wants to be the [only Asian country in the exclusive club](#). Following Brexit, it is important for the UK to bolster relations with the Asia-Pacific powers. Meanwhile, some Europeans argue that the [focus on the Asia-Pacific](#) reduces the importance of other regions like Latin America or Africa.

India-Japan push for "Specified Skilled Worker"

On January 18, India and Japan signed a [Memorandum of Cooperation](#) on a Basic Framework for Partnership for Proper Operation of the System Pertaining to "Specified Skilled Worker". The aim is to

set up a framework for information sharing and consultation to facilitate mobility of workers and skilled professionals who have the required qualification and language proficiency. Those who qualify as specified skilled worker can stay and work in Japan up to five years. 14 sectors have been identified including nursing care, material processing industry, industrial machinery manufacturing industry, electric and electronic information related industry, construction, shipbuilding and ship-related industry, automobile maintenance, aviation, lodging, building cleaning, agriculture, fisheries, food and beverages manufacturing industry and food service industry.

India-Japan advance cooperation in ICT

On January 15, India and Japan signed a [Memorandum of Cooperation](#) on Information and Communication Technologies. The aim is to advance development of technologies related to 5G, telecom security, submarine optical fibre cable, spectrum management and smart cities. Union Minister for Communication, Electronics and Information Technology, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad underscored the opportunities India presents for Japanese investors in the field of 5G, Internet of Things, and digital health technologies. He argued that owing to PLI and SPECS, India attracted investments in electronics manufacturing, and further encouraged Japanese electronics industry to invest in India.

India-Japan Act East Forum

The fifth India-Japan Act East Forum was held on January 28 where both sides

discussed issues of mutual interest including connectivity, hydropower, sustainable development, and skill development. Opportunities in healthcare, agro-industries and SMEs, and people-to-people exchanges were explored. Japan is a key partner in developing India's strategic Northeast region. Japan's ongoing ODA projects amount to more than [₹1,600 crore](#). Tokyo accords great importance to the advancement of this region drawing from its historical ties.

Advancing India-Japan-Russia cooperation

Advancing India's Act Far East policy, the first [India-Japan-Russia track II](#) trilateral meeting was held virtually on January 20. The aim is to explore opportunities for cooperation in economic projects in the Russian Far East. Russia prioritises the development of Far East, and has set up advanced special economic zones, and special free port regime for Vladivostok. India is keen to operationalise the Chennai-Vladivostok corridor, connecting to the Arctic. It has energy interests in the region. India has declared a \$1bn credit line during the Vladivostok Summit. Meanwhile, Japan in 2016 at the Eastern Economic Forum, expressed interest to work in partnership with Russia to develop the Far East.

Sea Dragon 2021 in Guam

Indian Navy participated in the multinational anti-submarine warfare exercise, called the [Sea Dragon 2021](#), together with its counterparts from the US, Japan, Australia, and Canada.