

# NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

## India-Japan summit highly successful; 75 years of ties to be celebrated next year: MEA

**NEW DELHI, JUL 03:** As Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi concluded her official visit to India on Friday, the Ministry of External Affairs said it reaffirmed the commitment of the two sides to nurture a partnership pivotal to the shared growth and prosperity of both countries.

The India-Japan partnership is also an anchor for promoting peace, prosperity and stability in the Indo-Pacific and beyond, the MEA said, and asserted that the 16th India-Japan annual summit here was "highly successful".

"A memorable visit concludes, advancing India-Japan partnership towards shared horizons. PM Takaichi Sanae of Japan departs from India following the highly successful 16th India-Japan annual summit. She was seen off by Minister of State Jitendra Singh," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal posted on X.

He also shared some photos of the send-off in Delhi. Takaichi visited the coun-



try at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, from July 1 to 3 for the 16th India-Japan annual summit.

The two leaders held talks at the Hyderabad House here on Thursday to strengthen bilateral cooperation.

India and Japan unveiled a raft of landmark initiatives, including an economic partnership framework, a defence pact to co-develop military hardware and steps to enhance energy ties to tackle oil shocks, as Prime Minister

Modi held summit talks with his Japanese counterpart Takaichi, focusing on enhancing mutual trust to effectively navigate global uncertainties.

"The visit reaffirmed the commitment of both sides to nurture a partnership pivotal to the shared growth and prosperity of both countries and an anchor for promoting peace, prosperity and stability in the Indo-Pacific and beyond," Jaiswal posted.

The Japanese prime minister was on Thursday morn-

ing accorded a warm ceremonial welcome at the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Prime Minister Modi was present on the occasion.

This was Takaichi's first official visit to India.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Thursday told reporters at a briefing that overall the visit was "extremely successful", and cited the "exceptional breadth and depth" in the outcomes of the summit.

He also said the two leaders talked about the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries next year, adding that 2027 will be commemorated as the India-Japan Year of Shared Horizons.

Jaiswal in a post on X on Thursday said, "Taking forward a partnership anchored in trust, shared values and strategic convergence".

On Wednesday, the MEA said that the visit marked an "important step" in taking forward the Special Strategic and Global Partnership between India and Japan.

## Saxena initiates skill training prog

**LEH, JULY 03:** In a first-of-its-kind initiative to enhance employability and create sustainable livelihood opportunities for the youth of Ladakh, LG Vinai Kumar Saxena today initiated a unique employment-linked skill training programme for Ladakhi youth.

As part of it, 36 shortlisted youth (34 girls and 2 boys) from all seven districts of Ladakh are set to undergo the skill training programmes at the GMR Varalakshmi Centre for Empowerment & Livelihoods (CEL) in New Delhi, starting in the first week of July.

The initiative, conceived by Saxena himself, aims at providing the Ladakhi youth with ample exposure, equipping them with market-oriented skills aligned with industry requirements while creating pathways for gainful employment in the organised sectors.

The initiative holds more significance as most of these candidates are stepping out of Ladakh for the first time.

The selection of 34 girls out of the total 36 candidates is aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for empowering women through skill development. These 36 candidates were today flagged off from Leh to New Delhi by Saxena.

The selected candidates include 2 from Leh, 7 each from Kargil and Drass, 6 from Zaskar, 8 from Sham, 5 from Nubra and 01 from Changthang districts. They



will undergo two to three months of intensive residential training in high-demand sectors—Advanced Computing and Data Visualisation, Cargo and Logistics Associate, Customer Service Associate, Customer Service Executive, Beauty and Spa, Business Banking Associate, Food Production and Service, and Front Office Associate.

The UT administration is facilitating the transportation of the trainees from Ladakh to New Delhi to enable their participation in the programme. The entire residential training, including boarding, lodging and training costs, is being funded by GMR under their CSR initiative, ensuring that financial constraints do not become a barrier to quality skill development for the youth.

Upon successful completion of the programme, all trainees will receive placement assistance through the foundation's extensive net-

work of industry partners such as Schneider Electric, Voltas, CELBI, Relaxo, etc. This would significantly enhance their prospects for sustainable employment. In the second batch, another 50 students from Ladakh would be sent for vocational training.

Saxena, calling the youth of Ladakh its greatest strength, said that empowering them with industry-relevant skills is one of the most meaningful investments towards building a bright future of Ladakh.

"Our priority is to ensure that the youth of Ladakh are not only educated but also equipped with practical skills that match the evolving needs of industry and the modern economy. By providing quality, employment-linked training and facilitating placement opportunities, the Administration is creating pathways for sustainable livelihoods, promoting self-reliance and building a

skilled, confident and future-ready workforce that will contribute to Ladakh's long-term development," he said.

Students, going for the training, expressed their happiness at getting the opportunity, mentioning that it would help them to inculcate requisite skills and make them future-ready and employable in different sectors. They thanked the Lieutenant Governor for providing them with this unique opportunity.

The LG thanked the Chairman of GMR Group, Shri GM Rao, for volunteering to bear the entire cost of boarding, lodging and training for this skill development program for these Ladakhi youth, and said this reflected the foundation's commitment to society at large. The curriculum gives nearly 65% of its focus to practical, hands-on learning, so trainees can build workplace competencies and industry-ready skills.

## Canada advances Alberta pipeline to Pacific Coast to expand oil exports beyond US

**TORONTO, JULY 3:** Canada moved Thursday to advance a new pipeline from Alberta to the Pacific Coast as Prime Minister Mark Carney seeks to reduce the country's dependence on the United States as its main oil customer, while trying to ease separatist tensions in the energy-rich province without abandoning environmental protections on British Columbia's northern coast.

Carney and Alberta Premier Danielle Smith unveiled a proposed route through southern British Columbia, saying the project would open more Canadian oil to Asian markets while preserving a ban on oil tankers off northern British Columbia.

"The best route for a new pipeline is one that goes through one that already exists south through the Trans Mountain corridor, to our Pacific Coast, the gateway to the world's fastest growing markets," Carney said in Calgary.

Carney has set a goal for Canada to double its non-US exports in the next decade and has said a pipeline can reduce the price discount on current oil sales to US markets.



Smith wants Alberta to double oil production to eight million barrels per day over the next 10 to 15 years.

"The world is asking Canada to step up and provide stable, democratic and reliable energy supply that countries around the world are looking for," Smith said.

"This is not just another energy project. It's a nation-building project that will unlock wealth and opportunity."

Smith said Pembina Pipeline Corporation would be involved as a partner with government. She said what the share of the private sector stake will be remains to be seen.

Smith has long complained that Carney's predecessor, Justin Trudeau, hindered the province's energy

industry and fuelled separatist sentiment.

Alberta is holding a public vote in the fall on whether to hold a referendum on leaving Canada.

British Columbia and some First Nations are against a pipeline through northern British Columbia.

"The tanker ban will remain in place. We will be protecting the northern coast of British Columbia," Carney said earlier in Vancouver.

Carney also said Thursday he will compensate British Columbia for environmental risks if a pipeline is built in the southern part of the province.

A previous memorandum of understanding Ottawa and Alberta included an adjustment of an oil tanker ban off parts of the British Co-

lumbia coast, but British Columbia Premier David Eby also said Thursday he secured a commitment to keep the northern tanker ban in place, protecting the province's pristine northern coast.

"It ensures that the northern tanker ban remains in place," Eby said.

Trudeau opposed a pipeline that could cross northern British Columbia and the Great Bear Rainforest. He approved one pipeline from Alberta to the British Columbia southern coast, the Trans Mountain pipeline, but rejected the Northern Gateway project amid opposition from environmentalists and Indigenous communities.

Since the Trans Mountain expansion opened through the BC southern coast in 2024, roughly two-thirds to three-quarters of the crude shipped from Canada's Pacific Coast has gone to Asia, helping Canada reduce its dependence on the US market.

The US still buys most of Canada's crude.

Alberta holds one of the world's largest proven oil reserves, and Canada is seeking greater access to Asian markets. (AP)

## 40 killed after bus falls into ravine in Pak's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

**PESHAWAR, JULY 3:** At least 40 people, including women and children, were killed when a bus they were travelling in fell into a ravine in northwest Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Friday, officials said.

The incident took place when the Peshawar-bound bus entered Dera Ismail Khan district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province after crossing Balochistan's Sherani district.

Officials said eight people have been rescued and sent to hospital. It is suspected that the brakes of the bus failed, and it skidded off the road while navigating a tough bend in the mountainous



area. However, an investigation has been initiated to examine the cause, officials said.

Road accidents are common and often fatal in the mountainous regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa be-

cause of a combination of factors like treacherous terrain, extreme weather, and frequent traffic violations.

## Far-right Alternative for Germany is buoyant as it eyes a slice of power in regional elections

**ERLIN, JULY 3:** The far-right Alternative for Germany is in a buoyant mood as it holds a convention this weekend. It is capitalising on the unpopularity of a government that's trying to reform the sluggish economy, and eyeing promising prospects of power in an eastern region this fall.

Yet the anti-migration nationalist party is as polarising as ever. Its meeting is expected to draw tens of thousands of protesters to the eastern city of Erfurt.

Alternative for Germany, or AfD, is meeting to elect its leaders, which German parties do every two years. It will aim to put on a show of unity as it extends the terms of Alice Weidel and Tino Chrupalla, who have run the party together for four years.

In last year's national election, AfD achieved the best showing by a far-right party since World War II. Its second-place finish left it as the biggest opposition party nationally and the strongest political force in Germany's formerly communist east. Its support has since climbed above the 20.8 per cent it won then, with recent assessments putting it in first place.

Weidel said recently that



"2026 is a year of destiny for AfD." Mainstream parties say they won't work with it, a stance often known as a "fire-wall."

But it hopes to win 40 per cent of the vote or more in a state election Sept. 6 in the eastern region of Saxony-Anhalt. That could put it on course for an absolute majority or in a position where it might try to attract defectors, paving the way for its first state governor.

Another eastern state election follows two weeks later in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, and AfD is optimistic there too.

"AfD is standing before the gates of power, to some extent," said Albrecht von Lucke, a political expert who edits the magazine Blatter

fur deutsche und internationale Politik.

AfD's first head of a county administration was elected in 2023 in Thuringia, the state where Erfurt is located. No more have followed since, as enough voters rallied around mainstream candidates to prevent a repeat.

But leading a state administration would be a far bigger prize. Germany's 16 states have extensive powers, for example, in running the education system and in overseeing security matters.

Opponents worry about the prospect of AfD replacing large numbers of civil servants if it governs Saxony-Anhalt, and about the possibility of confidential information ending up in far-right circles or even Russia.

"An AfD interior minister would be a security risk," Gregor Maier, Thuringia's centre-left interior minister, told ARD television.

AfD rejects concerns about it running a state government. "We will prove that we can do it better, and that is exactly what the old parties are afraid of," Chrupalla said this week at a rally in Berlin.

Von Lucke, however, said it would be "a huge challenge" for the party to show it can govern Saxony-Anhalt well, with internal conflicts likely. "A lot speaks for this not succeeding," he said.

"It is unrealistic always just to lament decline, mope and wait for a big bang," he said at an industry meeting recently. "There isn't going to be one. We are in a reform process... and we are moving forward in this process."

"We want to show that solutions are possible from the political centre of this country, that we also recognise the problems correctly," he added.

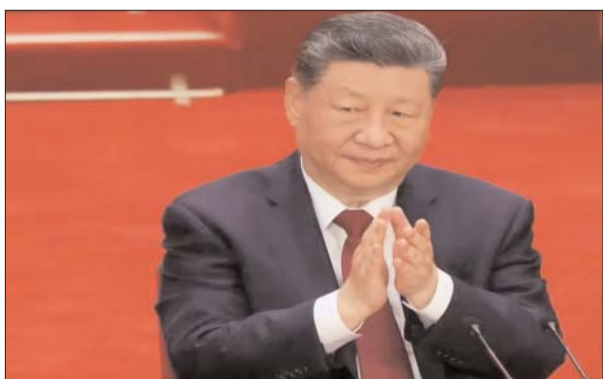
But AfD has long become adept at harnessing discontent with issues well beyond its signature theme of curbing migration, which powered its rise in the mid-2010s.

## India-Japan ties should not target third party: China

**BEIJING, JULY 3:** China said on Friday that bilateral cooperation between countries should not target any third party or undermine the interests of another nation, a day after India and Japan unveiled a raft of landmark initiatives during Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's visit to Delhi. History

"Cooperation between countries should be conducive to enhancing the understanding and trust among regional countries and safeguarding peace and stability in the region," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun told a media briefing here.

He was replying to a question on cooperation between India and Japan on critical minerals to boost resilience in the supply chains after talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Japanese premier. "Such cooperation



should not target any third party or harm the interests of any third party, still less be used as an excuse to patch up exclusive small groupings and stoke division and confrontation," Guo said. "It is the common responsibility of all countries to keep the global industrial and supply chains safe and stable. All parties should champion openness and cooperation and play a constructive role in the process," he added.

After summit talks between Modi and Takaichi, India and Japan on Thurs-

day unveiled a raft of landmark initiatives, including an economic partnership framework, a defence pact to co-develop military hardware and steps to enhance energy ties to tackle oil shocks.

They also expressed "serious concern" at the situation in the East China Sea and South China Sea, and opposed unilateral actions that endanger freedom of navigation as well as attempts to change the status quo by force, according to a joint statement. The Japanese Prime

Minister's visit to India was keenly watched by Beijing as relations between Japan and China have deteriorated to their lowest level in years after Takaichi's remarks in November, 2025 that Japan could respond if China attacked Taiwan.

China views Taiwan, a self-governed island, as a renegade province which should be brought into its fold by force if necessary. Her comments drew a furious response from China.

China tightened exports of rare earth minerals to Japan, the US, India and several countries to use them as leverage to expand its trade interests.

China accounts for about 70 per cent of global rare earth mining and nearly 90 per cent of its processing. The minerals are critical for manufacturing electronics, automobiles, wind energy, defence equipment and a host of modern gadgets. (PTI)