Indo-Japan diplomacy on countering China

What is the issue?

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A strong Indo-Japanese partnership can help counter China, which aspires to become a hegemonic power in the region.

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Where does their interests lie?

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- Japan serves as India’s most important partner across the Indian Ocean neighbourhood in the past decade.
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- It has set aside the serious differences in the years following the 1998 nuclear tests and has promoted nuclear energy cooperation with India.
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- Both countries also recently issued strategic guidance to their respective militaries to strengthen communication to build trust and understanding.
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How do they ensure co-operation with China?

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- India and Japan closely cooperate on their relationship with China, including on measures to see that tensions with China do not get out of control.
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- China and Japan also agreed to cooperate on maritime search and rescue missions, to set up a military hotline and commence dialogue between their militaries.
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- This could avoid escalating tensions across disputed maritime boundaries in the East China Sea.
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- There has been a measure of congruence in the approach of India and Japan,

to maintain peace and tranquillity across their respective land and maritime boundaries with China.
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- However, both of them have been challenged by Chinese territorial claims, actions and ambitions, together with China's quest to become a hegemonic power in Asia.
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What are the concerns with Chinese diplomacy?

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- China is committing itself primarily for infrastructure development in India's South Asian and Indian Ocean neighbourhood.
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- However, countries in the neighbourhood region become overly dependent on China, which made them to fall into a debt trap.
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- To avoid that, Myanmar recently cut down the size of Chinese investment in the strategic Kyaukpyu port, worried about walking into a debt trap.
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- Economists in Pakistan express unhappiness at what they see as Chinese exploitation in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.
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- Malaysia has also rejected Chinese offers of aid for a massive rail-road project.
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- Similar sentiments are now being voiced about Chinese aid across Africa and Central Asia.
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What should be done?

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- Japan has significant financial and technological resources to play a major role in developmental and infrastructure projects in Indo-Pacific countries.
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- Thus, India should therefore work in close cooperation with Japan on

economic development projects across the Indian Ocean region.
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- India should also engage with the US and EU to develop structures for multilateral investments across Asia and Africa.
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Source: Business Line

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