

Should Japan join China-led AIIB to strengthen India ties?

Japanese academic joins calls for Tokyo to join Delhi in supporting the bank

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Despite India's persistent skepticism of China's Belt and Road Initiative, illustrated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's absence from the summit earlier this year, the country participates in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) established by China. India does so, writes Japanese academic Takashi Shiraishi, because it acknowledges it is a truly multilateral organization, as seen by the diverse membership which includes Britain, Germany, France, Italy and Canada.

In an [editorial](#) for the Yomiuri Shimbun, Shiraishi writes that joining AIIB is one approach Japan could take to strengthen cooperation with India:

In Asia, there is great demand for infrastructure investment. Both Indian Ocean rim countries and Southeast Asian countries want as much such money as possible to become available to them through a multilateral mechanism.

Japan should consider taking part in the AIIB provided that the institution meets certain conditions regarding fairness and transparency in its selection process and lending and funding projects.

The acknowledgement of AIIB's role in providing much-needed infrastructure funding need not take away from the promotion of the Japan and India-led Asia-Africa Growth corridor, Shiraishi adds. The focus of the AAGC should be to expand value changes beyond Southeast Asia to South Asia and Africa, by improving energy infrastructure and logistics of the growth corridor.

Along with the United States, Japan has consistently expressed concerns about the AIIB's transparency, as well as China's influence in the institution. The infrastructure bank was initially proposed by China in 2013 and formally established in 2014. Pressure increased for Japan to join in 2015, when the UK, France, Germany and Italy all jumped on board, but Japan instead stood ground with the US in pushing to establish the Trans-Pacific Partnership as an institutional regime to counter China's influence.

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