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THE TIMES OF INDIA

India, Japan set to take on OBOR

TNN | Sep 14, 2017, 04.00 AM IST

GANDHINAGAR/AHMEDABAD: India and Japan are quietly firming up plans to take their ties "beyond the bilateral" in the form of cooperation in building infrastructure and connectivity in third countries.

With an eye on China's OBOR, both the countries are looking to ensure that the summit provides an impetus to shared initiatives like Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC), Tokyo's participation in development of Chabahar port project and the commitment to ensuring "free and open Indo-Pacific".

Officials from the two countries are busy thrashing out the agenda for bilateral engagement on Thursday. After civil nuclear agreement came into effect earlier this year, there are no real outstanding issues left between the two countries and both believe it's time to take the special strategic partnership to another level. Civil nuclear cooperation and defence partnership, with Tokyo willing to supply military technology, are likely to emerge as strongest pillars of cooperation. Both countries believe Japan's generous financing and India's presence and goodwill it enjoys in parts of Africa can help improve connectivity between the two continents.