

Md Nahiyán Shajid Khan

EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF EMERGING DEFENCE COOPERATION BETWEEN BANGLADESH-JAPAN: AN OVERVIEW

Abstract

This study analyses the emerging strategic defense partnership between Bangladesh and Japan, focusing on its impact on regional stability and military modernisation in the Indo-Pacific. Initially centred on economic cooperation, the relationship has evolved into a strategic security partnership, particularly after the elevation of ties during the official visit of Bangladesh's leadership to Japan in April 2023. Japan's inclusion of Bangladesh in its Official Security Assistance framework in August 2023 marks a significant shift in Tokyo's Indo-Pacific strategy, aligning with Bangladesh's shared vision for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific". The research identifies four key areas of defense cooperation: enhancing maritime security, supporting the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, joint military training, and technology transfer agreements. These developments are assessed in relation to Bangladesh's Forces Goal 2030, which prioritises modernisation and diversification of defense procurement away from longstanding dependence on Chinese military supplies. However, structural challenges hinder growth, including reliance on Chinese military equipment, regional instability due to Myanmar's civil war, deteriorating Bangladesh-India defense relations, and Japan's evolving defense export regulations. Despite these challenges, the study concludes that Bangladesh-Japan defense cooperation is poised to strengthen as a fundamental element for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific, while acknowledging the limitations posed by Bangladesh's status as a small state and the need for strategic autonomy in a multipolar environment.

Keywords: Maritime Security, Military Modernisation, Official Security Assistance, Strategic Partnership

1. Introduction

On February 10, 1972, Bangladesh and Japan established diplomatic relations after Japan recognised the former. Since then, Japan has been a crucial partner in Bangladesh's development in trade, commerce, infrastructure, technology, and other areas. Both countries have signed seven bilateral treaties and agreements and completed over 30 high-level visits and exchanges.¹ The year 2022 marked a

Md Nahiyán Shajid Khan is Research Officer, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS). His e-mail address is: nahiyankhan@biiss.org

significant milestone as they celebrated 50 years of bilateral relations. Since 1972, Japan has provided nearly US\$ 25 billion in economic and development assistance, of which about US\$ 9 billion has been overseas development assistance (ODA) to Bangladesh.² Over the years, bilateral relations have gradually evolved from one dominated by humanitarian assistance and economic ties to one increasingly shaped by strategic and cultural cooperation. During the high-level official visit in April 2023, the bilateral ties were elevated from a “comprehensive” to a “strategic” partnership.³ Under Japan’s newly launched Official Security Assistance (OSA) initiative, Japan seeks to provide military assistance to like-minded countries in support of regional peace and stability.⁴ Under this programme, Bangladesh has already received nearly US\$ 4 million in support.⁵ The joint declaration of April 2023 also proposed the transfer of defense equipment and technology. Among the eight agreements signed in that year, a defence dimension was added for the first time. The fourth document is a memorandum on defence cooperation between the governments of the two countries to promote and strengthen cooperation in defence dialogue, exchange of visits, education, training, courses, seminars, workshops, and technology transfer.⁶

When Bangladesh joined Japan’s Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt (BIG-B) initiative in 2014, this signalled Japan’s ambition to achieve a greater geopolitical presence in the Indo-Pacific. Positioned as a bridge between South and Southeast Asia, Bangladesh offers both economic connectivity and security potential. The convergence between Bangladesh’s Indo-Pacific Outlook (IPO) and Japan’s Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) vision is rooted in shared commitments to democracy, market-based economies, regional stability, and a rules-based international order.⁷ Defence cooperation between Bangladesh and Japan is therefore emerging as an important pillar in sustaining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific. Bangladesh is striving to modernise its Army, Navy, and Air Force through the implementation of the “Forces Goal 2030” initiative.⁸ Additionally, it is actively seeking to enhance collaboration in other areas. Concurrently, Japan has eased its restrictions on the export of defence equipment, potentially opening avenues for

accessed December 19, 2024, <https://www.bd.emb-japan.go.jp/en/bilateral/jbrelation.html>.

² “Japan’s Official Security Assistance to Bangladesh: New Horizon in Defense Cooperation,” The KRF Center for Bangladesh and Global Affairs, accessed February 14, 2024. <https://www.cbgabd.org/2024/02/14/japans-official-security-assistance-to-bangladesh-new-horizon-in-defense-cooperation/>.

³ The KRF Center, “Japan’s Official Security Assistance”.

⁴ “Official Security Assistance (OSA),” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, accessed December 12, 2023. https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/ipc/page4e_001366.html.

⁵ Kumer, “Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh”.

⁶ “Japan-Bangladesh Signed 8 Agreements Including Metro Rail, Defense Cooperation,” accessed June 23, 2024, <https://albd.org/articles/news/40740/Japan-Bangladesh-signed-8-agreements-including-metro-rail>.

⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Official Security Assistance (OSA)”.

⁸ “Law Minister: Govt Plans to Modernize Air Force, Navy,” *Dhaka Tribune*, July 4, 2023, <https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/285961/law-minister-govt-plans-to-modernize-air-force>.

Bangladesh to access advanced defence technologies.⁹ Following these agreements, Japan included Bangladesh in the OSA in August 2023, along with the Philippines, Fiji, and Malaysia.¹⁰ This decision was announced by Japanese Ambassador Iwama Kiminori, who emphasised the importance of strengthening defence cooperation with the Bangladesh Armed Forces and related organisations. Japan has pledged to provide defence aid to Bangladesh, including military surveillance equipment and patrol boats for the Bangladesh Navy.¹¹ This assistance is expected to strengthen the country's capabilities for monitoring and surveillance, disaster relief, and maritime security in the Bay of Bengal and the wider Indo-Pacific region. The evolving Bangladesh-Japan defence partnership underscores the increasing salience of multilateral and bilateral security frameworks in managing great-power dynamics and promoting regional stability in the Indo-Pacific. It is worth mentioning that Bangladesh is strategically located at the intersection of South and Southeast Asia—two strategic subregions of the Indo-Pacific theatre. The country's significance is further enhanced by its proximity to the Bay of Bengal (BoB) and the contested China-India border. As a result, developments in southern Asia—whether diplomatic or strategic—are likely to exert consequential effects on Japan's FOIP policy. This geographic centrality positions Bangladesh as an increasingly important actor in the evolving strategic landscape of the Indo-Pacific.

Since its independence, Bangladesh has supported and favoured a rule-based international order through its contributions to UN peacekeeping operations and active participation in global forums such as the United Nations (UN). Regionally, it plays an important role in initiatives including the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). Japan, sharing a similar worldview, perceives Bangladesh as a like-minded state with the potential to assume a greater role in regional affairs. Despite their geographic and developmental differences, both states exhibit significant similarities in their foreign policy orientations—prioritising peace, multilateralism, and collaborative development efforts. Both nations prioritise maintaining peaceful and non-cooperative development. Japan's pacifist constitution and Bangladesh's guiding principle of making friends with all reflect a shared commitment to resolving disputes through peaceful means and contributing to global stability.

⁹ Takahashi Kosuke, "Japan Eases Rules on Lethal Weapon Exports," *The Diplomat*, December 29, 2023, <https://thediplomat.com/2023/12/japan-eases-rules-on-lethal-weapon-exports/>.

¹⁰ Asif Muztaba Hassan, "Japan Deepens Defense Ties with Bangladesh," *The Diplomat*, October 03, 2023, <https://thediplomat.com/2023/10/japan-deepens-defense-ties-with-bangladesh/>.

¹¹ "Signing and Exchange of Notes for Official Security Assistance (OSA) to the People's Republic of Bangladesh," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Last modified November 15, 2023, https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/pressle_000484.html.

The foreign policies of both countries are grounded in multilateralism and adherence to international law. Bangladesh's participation in the UN, Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) parallels Japan's engagement with the UN, G7, and various regional organisations, underscoring their mutual support for a rule-based international system. Both states also employ diplomacy that emphasises development. Japan's extensive ODA framework and Bangladesh's emphasis on South-South cooperation indicate a shared understanding between the two nations that sustained economic advancement fosters peace and reciprocal advantages. Besides, both countries maintain strategically balanced relationships with major powers. Japan carefully manages its security alliance with the United States (US) while maintaining strong economic ties with China. Bangladesh similarly engages with India, China, Japan, and Western partners, consistently prioritising national interests. Japan's use of technological and cultural influence to advance human security and soft power complements Bangladesh's engagement in peacekeeping, climate diplomacy, and cultural outreach. Together, these approaches reflect a shared inclination towards pragmatic and moderate foreign policy behaviour.

Consequently, Bangladesh and Japan maintain peace-oriented and development-focused foreign policy agendas that facilitate global cooperation and stability. Japan remains a major source of economic assistance to Bangladesh, and its diplomatic support in international forums continues to be of strategic value to Bangladesh. In recent years, Bangladesh has diversified its defense procurement with partners such as Turkey, the United Kingdom (UK), and France, reducing its heavy reliance on China.¹² Within this broader diversification strategy, Bangladesh has shown increasing interest in expanding defence cooperation with Japan—creating new opportunities for comprehensive security engagement. Deepening ties are therefore mutually beneficial as both countries enter the next phase of their evolving bilateral relationship.

Against this backdrop, this article explores the question: “How could Japan-Bangladesh defence cooperation contribute to strengthening defence capabilities of Bangladesh?” The study seeks to identify the potential areas of cooperation. The research employs a qualitative approach, drawing primarily on secondary data through desk-based research. A thematic analysis of existing literature is conducted to identify relevant patterns and trends. Data are sourced from digital repositories, library archives, and official statistical databases to ensure the reliability and validity of findings. Although publicly available information on Bangladesh–Japan security relations remains limited, the study maximises the use of official, semi-official, and academic sources to construct a comprehensive analytical account.

¹² “China Remains Wary of Bangladesh Diversifying Its Defense Supplies,” *The Print*, May 11, 2020, <https://theprint.in/world/china-remains-wary-of-bangladesh-diversifying-its-defense-supplies/951013/>.

The paper is organised into several thematic sections to facilitate an in-depth understanding of the evolving contours of Japan's foreign and defence policy and its implications for Bangladesh. The introduction outlines the study's background, objectives, and significance within the broader strategic evolution of the Indo-Pacific and Japan's assertive diplomatic posture under the FOIP vision. The literature review (section 2) evaluates scholarly work, policy analyses, and strategic documents pertaining to Japan's shifting military strategy, regional security frameworks, and Bangladesh's foreign policy trajectory, identifying key gaps this study seeks to fill. Section 3 on Japan's resurgence and defence collaboration under FOIP examines Tokyo's transition from a strictly pacifist posture to a more proactive regional role, highlighting its alliances, security dialogues, and capacity-building initiatives that contribute to a stable and rules-based regional environment. The subsequent section (section 4) assesses the prospects for Bangladesh–Japan defence cooperation, including maritime security, capacity-building, disaster management, and defence technology collaboration, while section 5 analyses the underlying barriers. Finally, the conclusion (section 6) synthesises the findings, illustrating how enhanced defence cooperation between Bangladesh and Japan could advance regional peace, security, and sustainable development under the FOIP framework.

2. Review of Literature and Strategic Context

The bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Japan originate from Japan's early and steadfast support for Bangladesh's independence. Japan recognised the new state on 10 February 1972 and formalised diplomatic relations soon after, with both countries establishing embassies the same year. Bangladesh continues to acknowledge Japan's early diplomatic support and solidarity expressed by the Japanese public during its formative years. Over time, reciprocal goodwill has produced a stable and respectful partnership, and the bilateral relationship has progressed consistently. Japan has subsequently played a vital role in Bangladesh's development, contributing to infrastructure projects—spanning roads, bridges, power generation, and water and sanitation—alongside poverty alleviation and human-resources initiatives. Japan has also supported Bangladesh during natural disasters and provided significant assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic, including budget support loans and 4.5 million vaccine doses in 2021.¹³ As a result, the country has evolved into one of Bangladesh's most trusted long-term strategic and development partners.

By and large, Japan's developmental contribution is accompanied by durable political and strategic engagement. Akon et al. (2021) underlines the longevity of

¹³ "Japan-Bangladesh Relations," Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh, accessed June 23, 2025, <https://www.bd.emb-japan.go.jp/en/bilateral/overview.html>.

the partnership since 1972 and Japan's consistent commitment to promoting peace and prosperity through aid, loans, and technical cooperation.¹⁴ A major milestone was the launch of the Big-B Initiative in 2014, which, as Dutta (2016) explains, aims to integrate Bangladesh into global supply chains and strengthen interregional connectivity between South and Southeast Asia. Dutta further observes that Big-B rests on three pillars—industrial and trade development, energy enhancement, and improved economic connectivity—leveraging Bangladesh's strategic location. Although highlighting the initiative's benefits, the author also draws attention to the operational challenges and evolving geostrategic implications of Bangladesh–Japan relations.¹⁵

Japan's foreign-policy evolution has simultaneously added new layers to the partnership. In this aspect, Dutta argues that Japan's shift away from strict economism has allowed it to elevate its international profile and adopt a more proactive approach to regional peacebuilding.¹⁶ He explained that Tokyo has prioritised relationships with countries capable of contributing to stability in South and Southeast Asia, which have become increasingly central to its diplomatic agenda. Alam and Akon (2023) interprets this shift as a confidence-building measure whereby Japan enhances mutual understanding through capacity-building partnerships, bilateral exercises, and defence-technology cooperation with states including Bangladesh, Malaysia, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, and others through bilateral exercises and defensive equipment technological operations.¹⁷ Extending this analysis, Hossain (2022) examines Japan–Bangladesh relations through the lens of the FOIP. strategy, arguing that Japan's growing industrial and strategic interests are reflected in Big-B, which they characterise as a broader strategic project rather than solely an economic one.¹⁸ For Bangladesh, these initiatives offer opportunities to draw on Japanese technological expertise and development experience.

A further strand of emerging literature highlights the maritime dimension of the partnership. Hossain (2023) identifies Bangladesh's growing attraction as a maritime nation with potential for shipbuilding, given its competitive labour

¹⁴ Md Saifullah Akon, Debasish Nandy, and Alik Naha, "Japan's Shifting Foreign Policy to South Asia: Issues and Challenges," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 1, no. 01 (2021): 223–248.

¹⁵ Gaurav Dutta, "Japan and the BIG-B Plan for Bangladesh: An Assessment," National Maritime Foundation, Last modified October 21, 2016, https://www.academia.edu/29553108/Japan_and_the_BIG_B_Plan_for_Bangladesh_An_Assessment.

¹⁶ Dutta, "Japan and the BIG-B".

¹⁷ Md Jahangir Alam and Md Saifullah Akon, "Japan-Bangladesh Geo-Economic Cooperation: The Lens of Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) for Peace, Stability and Prosperity," *Asian Review of Political Economy* 2, no. 01 (2023).

¹⁸ Delwar Hossain, "Bangladesh-Japan Relations: Past, Present and Future," *Journal of Bangladesh and Global Affairs* 1, no. 02 (2022): 65–97.

costs and advantageous coastal geography.¹⁹ Similarly, Raj notes that Japan's heavy reliance on maritime routes through Asia has led to heightened concern about piracy and terrorism in the Straits of Malacca and the wider Bay of Bengal, prompting greater engagement by the Japan Coast Guard in the Indian Ocean region. These perspectives collectively underscore the maritime security rationale underpinning Tokyo's expanding involvement in South Asia.²⁰ Recent developments in Japan's OSA framework further illustrate the deepening security dimension of Japan–Bangladesh relations. Japan has committed ¥575 million in OSA support to Bangladesh's armed forces, aimed at strengthening the Bangladesh Navy's monitoring, surveillance, and disaster-response capabilities in the BoB. This initiative aligns with Japan's broader effort to reinforce the defence architecture of partner states and reduce their dependence on any single supplier—particularly significant given China's substantial investment footprint in Bangladesh. Domingo (2023) similarly reports Japan's decision to provide patrol boats to Bangladesh, making Dhaka the second recipient of defence equipment under OSA. These assets are intended to enhance maritime surveillance and humanitarian-assistance capacity while contributing to the maintenance of maritime security across the Indo-Pacific region. Given Bangladesh's longstanding non-aligned posture, Japanese support—both developmental and security-oriented—adds strategic diversification to Dhaka's external partnerships.²¹

Japan's growing interest in South Asia is also a response to evolving geopolitical dynamics. Historically, Japan regarded South Asia as less strategically salient than Southeast Asia or its alliance obligations with the US. However, the articulation of the FOIP vision by former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2014 prompted a reassessment of policy priorities, with Japan intensifying engagement with South Asian states—referred to as “Southwest Asia” in its diplomatic framing. Tokyo has already developed a robust partnership with India through the “Global and Strategic Partnership”. As Bangladesh emerges as a strategically important actor, Japan has renewed its focus on cultivating deeper ties with Dhaka to ensure reciprocal benefits and to navigate the shifting Indo-Pacific security environment. Hasan (2023)²² provides further insight into how OSA is reshaping regional

¹⁹ Hossain, “Bangladesh-Japan Relations”.

²⁰ Andrin Raj, “Japan's Initiatives in Security Cooperation in the Straits of Malacca on Maritime Security and in Southeast Asia: Piracy and Maritime Terrorism,” Japan Institute for International Affairs (JIIA), Last modified February 03, 2009, https://www2.jiia.or.jp/pdf/fellow_report/090331-Andrin_Raj.pdf.

²¹ Juster Domingo, “Japan Hands Bangladesh \$3.8M Patrol Boat Grant for Maritime Defense,” The Defense Post, Last modified November 23, 2023, <https://www.thedefensepost.com/2023/11/23/japan-bangladesh-defense-grant/>.

²² Asif Muztaba Hasan, “Japan brings Bangladesh into the fold of a New Security Framework,” East Asia Forum, Last modified November 18, 2023, <https://eastasiaforum.org/2023/11/18/japan-brings-bangladesh-into-the-folds-of-new-security-framework/>.

security cooperation. He argues that Japan's engagement with Bangladesh—alongside Malaysia, the Philippines, and Fiji—reflects Tokyo's aim of countering China's expanding economic presence while supporting regional capacity building. Bangladesh's inclusion in OSA followed the Japanese ambassador's visit to Dhaka, after which Bangladesh incorporated Japan into its list of prospective defence suppliers. This development is strategically significant given that, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), approximately 74 per cent of Bangladesh's military imports come from China.²³ Enhancing Bangladesh's naval readiness for disaster relief and maritime monitoring is also aligned with Japan's efforts to counter the so-called "string of pearls" strategy in the Indian Ocean. Japan's cooperation additionally supports Bangladesh's ambition to develop a sustainable blue economy and improve marine resource management. Overall, Japan–Bangladesh relations have expanded beyond a government-to-government framework to encompass people-to-people, business-to-business, and increasingly defence-to-defence ties.

Regular exchanges between the armed forces further illustrate the strengthening security relationship.²⁴ A 27-member delegation from the National Defence College (NDC) of Bangladesh visited Japan from 24–30 September 2023 as part of their overseas study tour; the high official from Air Force also visited Japan in the same year; and the then Chief of Naval Staff, attended the International Fleet Review 2022 and the 18th Western Pacific Naval Symposium in Japan from 4–10 November 2022. In April 2023, the then Chief of Army Staff formally congratulated General Yoshida Yoshihide on his appointment as Chief of Staff of the Japan Self-Defence Forces and extended an invitation to visit Bangladesh. These frequent exchanges, nevertheless, underscore growing institutional connectivity between the two defence establishments. The study reveals that while existing literature has predominantly focused on Japan's developmental role and economic diplomacy, academic engagement with Bangladesh–Japan defence cooperation remains relatively limited. This paper, therefore, seeks to address this gap by analysing the expansion of security collaboration under the OSA framework and assessing its implications for Bangladesh's evolving strategic posture.

3. Japan's Resurgence and Defence Engagements under FOIP

The 1947 constitution's most innovative addition was Article 9, which declares that "the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the

²³ "Bangladesh 25th among Top Arms-Importing Nations: SIPRI," *New Age*, March 13, 2023, <https://www.newagebd.net/article/196761/bangladesh-25th-among-top-arms-importing-nation-sipri>.

²⁴ Information collected from the Armed Forces Division (AFD), Ministry of Defense, Bangladesh.

nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.”²⁵ It was against this constitutional backdrop that the Japan Self-Defence Force (JSDF) was established in 1954.²⁶ During the 1970s, Japan pursued limited military development, and in the post-Cold War era, it increasingly participated in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKOs). Since 2014, under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Japan championed a more assertive security posture, notably endorsing the concept of “collective self-defence”—the use of force to assist an ally when Japan’s own security is perceived to be threatened. In September 2019, the constitutional revision occurred in the Diet. In August 2016, Japan articulated the FOIP concept²⁷ which was later refined in subsequent policy statements as a strategy to “foster regional stability and prosperity.” Japan initially set out three pillars: first, the promotion and establishment of the rule of law, freedom of navigation, and free trade; second, the pursuit of economic prosperity (e.g., improving connectivity); and third, the commitment to peace and stability.

In 2023, Prime Minister Kishida announced “The Future of the Indo-Pacific: Japan’s New Plan for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific,”²⁸ in which FOIP was updated to four pillars: (i) Principles for Peace and Rules for Prosperity; (ii) Addressing Challenges in an Indo-Pacific Way; (iii) Multi-layered Connectivity; and (iv) Extending Efforts for Security and Safe Use of the “Sea” to the Air”. Japan under this initiative planned to “enhancing defense cooperation and exchanges with countries in the Indo-Pacific region.”²⁹ In South Asia, Japan’s security engagement is visible in its deepening collaboration with India—including trilateral and multilateral exercises such as Shinyuu Maitri, Malabar and Daruma Guardian—and through institutional mechanisms such as the Japan-India Ministerial “2+2” meeting. Japan also conducts defence cooperation with the US, Australia, the UK, France, Russia and Indonesia, and implements capacity building programmes with states such as Sri Lanka (for example, air-rescue training for the Sri Lankan Air Force). JSDF port calls and aircraft visits in countries across the Indian Ocean region—including Sri Lanka, Pakistan, the Maldives, and Bangladesh—further demonstrate Japan’s efforts to sustain a secure maritime environment.³⁰ To broaden these partnerships, Japan introduced the OSA mechanism.³¹ Similar to the ODA, this programme aims to

²⁵ Council on Foreign Relations, “Japan’s Postwar Constitution,” accessed December 08, 2024, <https://www.cfr.org/japan-constitution/japans-postwar-constitution>.

²⁶ Council on Foreign Relations, “Japan’s Postwar Constitution”.

²⁷ “Japan’s Efforts for a ‘Free and Open Indo-Pacific,’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, accessed December 08, 2024, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/100496992.pdf>.

²⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Japan’s Efforts”.

²⁹ “New Plan for a ‘Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP),’” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Last modified March 2023, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/100477660.pdf>.

³⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “New Plan”.

³¹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Official Security Assistance (OSA)”.

allow Japan to provide defence supplies to partner states for strengthening security and deterrence capabilities for international peace and security.³² The 2022 National Security Strategy (NSS) anchored this shift, explicitly recommending policy measures to enable the transfer of defence equipment and technology to partner countries and proposing amendments to the Three Principles on Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology to facilitate such transfers, including support to states facing aggression.³³ Japan's Three Principles on Arms Exports and Their Related Policy Guidelines came into effect in 1967.³⁴ Originally, it restricted defence exports to the Communist bloc, to countries under UN Security Council arms embargoes and to states involved in or likely to be involved in international conflict.³⁵

In 2014, Tokyo significantly relaxed these constraints, replacing the previous blanket prohibitions with a more nuanced framework: categories of prohibited transfers, cases where transfers may be permitted, and provisions requiring robust safeguards against unauthorised re-export or extra-purpose use. This revision marked a major shift in Japan's approach to defence exports and opened the way for more active security cooperation with partner states. Under the revised framework, Japan reframed its export criteria: transfers remain prohibited where they would contravene Japan's international obligations (for example, under the Chemical Weapons Convention or other relevant treaties) or UN Security Council resolutions, or where they would be destined for parties to an armed conflict.³⁶ Conversely, transfers are permissible where they demonstrably contribute to the promotion of peace and international cooperation, provided that the recipient government gives prior consent and that adequate controls are in place to prevent extra-purpose use or onward transfers. Guided by these principles, and within the OSA architecture, Japan now pursues cooperation with partner states on activities designed to uphold peace, stability, and the rule of law — including maritime and aerial monitoring and surveillance, counter-terrorism, and counter-piracy efforts. The OSA also covers humanitarian assistance and disaster-relief cooperation, encompassing search and rescue, medical support, transportation of relief supplies and capacity-building for participation in UN peacekeeping operations.³⁷

³² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "Official Security Assistance (OSA)".

³³ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *National Security Strategy of Japan* (Tokyo: Government of Japan, 2022), https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/nsp/page1we_000081.html.

³⁴ "The Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Last modified December 5, 2023, https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/nsp/page1we_000083.html.

³⁵ "MOFA: Japan's Policies on the Control of Arms Exports," Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, accessed June 18, 2025, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/un/disarmament/policy/index.html>.

³⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "MOFA: Japan's Policies on the Control of Arms Exports".

³⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "MOFA: Japan's Policies on the Control of Arms Exports".

Japan's updated FOIP has engaged Tokyo in a wide range of cooperative initiatives with diverse international partners.³⁸ Under Pillar One—Principles for Peace and Rules for Prosperity—Japan provides diplomatic and practical support for peace processes (for example, in Mindanao) and has extended assistance in response to crises such as the war in Ukraine. Japan has assisted the UN Triangular Partnership Programme for peacekeepers' capacity building with 8.8 billion yen and has dispatched 291 SDF personnel as trainers in engineering and medical training to Asian or African zones.³⁹ Under pillar two—Addressing Challenges in an Indo-Pacific Way—Japan promotes bilateral and multilateral cooperation on shared threats, providing capacity-building and measures to prevent the malicious exploitation of emerging technologies and to combat terror finance. For example, Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) Counter-Terrorism Tabletop exercises, Cybercrime Dialogues, trilateral Consultations on Counterterrorism, Japan UNODC Strategic Policy Dialogue, etc.⁴⁰

Under the fourth Pillar—Extending Efforts for Security and the Safe Use of the “Sea” to the “Air”—Japan seeks to promote exchanges of expertise and ideas while extending domain awareness into the aerial space.⁴¹ The country advances this objective through regional and international fora, for example, the Asia Security Summit, the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM), and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF) and Contribution to the Indo Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA). Japan also supports the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) and bilaterally engages with the UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme.⁴² Japan finances institutions that underpin maritime order, such as the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), and International Seabed Authority (ISA) and invests in capability building for maritime law enforcement across the region. This assistance ranges from the provision of patrol vessels and mechanical apparatus, assisting maritime transit infrastructure, enhancing initiatives to cultivate human resources, and establishing networks.⁴³ Japan also encourages adherence to the Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA) and supports training for coast-guard

³⁸ “Free and Open Indo-Pacific,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, accessed December 08, 2024, https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/page25e_000278.html; “Diplomatic Bluebook 2019,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, accessed July 18, 2025, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/2019/html/chapter1/c0102.html#sf01>.

³⁹ “Achieving the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” Vision,” Japan Ministry of Defense, accessed December 08, 2024, https://www.mod.go.jp/en/d_act/exc/india_pacific/india_pacific-en.html.

⁴⁰ Japan Ministry of Defense, “Achieving the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” Vision”.

⁴¹ Japan Ministry of Defense, “Achieving the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” Vision”.

⁴² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “New Plan”.

⁴³ Japan Ministry of Defense, “Achieving the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” Vision”.

personnel, mostly delivered in Japan, to strengthen regional capabilities against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and other maritime crimes.

Japan actively coordinates with foreign coast-guard agencies through multilateral meetings and fora—for example, the Coast Guard Global Summit, the North Pacific Coast Guard Forum and the Heads of Asian Coast Guard Agencies Meeting—and through bilateral heads-of-agency exchanges.⁴⁴ Japan contributes to regional maritime security by supplying technical systems such as radars, data-analysis tools and communications equipment. To date, Japan has concluded defence-equipment and technology transfer agreements with a number of partner countries—noteable examples include the transfer of TC-90 aircraft to the Philippines (2017), provision of UH-1H components (2019), and agreements to transfer vigilance and control radars (2020).⁴⁵ Japan undertakes a range of cooperative initiatives aimed at strengthening maritime security in partner countries, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Japan’s Bilateral and Regional Maritime Security Engagements⁴⁶

Partner Country/ Region	Cooperation Projects	Focus Areas
Sri Lanka	Japan–Sri Lanka Air Rescue Cooperation Project	Air rescue operations and emergency response
ASEAN	Japan–ASEAN Ship Rider Cooperation Program	Maritime law enforcement, capacity building, and joint patrolling
The Philippines	Japan–Philippines Vessel Maintenance Cooperation Project	Maritime vessel maintenance and operational capacity enhancement
	Japan–Philippines Aviation Medicine Cooperation Project	Aviation safety and medical support systems

⁴⁴ Japan Ministry of Defense, “Achieving the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” Vision”.

⁴⁵ Japan Ministry of Defense, “Achieving the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” Vision”.

⁴⁶ Japan Ministry of Defense, “Achieving the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)” Vision”.

Vietnam	Japan–Vietnam Underwater Medicine Cooperation Project	Diver health and underwater medical response
	Japan–Vietnam Air Rescue Cooperation Project	Airborne search and rescue capacity building
	Japan–Vietnam Underwater UXO Clearance Cooperation Project	Clearance of unexploded ordnance (UXO) in maritime zones

Japan has sustained extensive collaboration with various stakeholders for capacity building for Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA). Examples include participation in the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA), the provision of MDA-related equipment and materials via the Office of Defence Acquisition (ODA), and the development of personnel for vessel traffic service (VTS) in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region. Japan believes that, alongside fostering defence cooperation and exchanges with like-minded states, the IPR Defence Force should be considered a crucial partners. Japan has engaged in bilateral exercises with the navies of prominent Indo-Pacific nations, including Japan, the United States, India, and Australia; participated in multilateral exercises such as Malabar; conducted bilateral exercises with Australia (Trident), India (JIMEX), and France (Oguri Verny); and facilitated goodwill exercises and ship rider cooperation programs with ASEAN and Pacific Island countries, among other initiatives.

In line with the FOIP doctrine, the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force has consistently contributed to the maintenance of a maritime order that is free, open, sustainable, and grounded in the rule of law. Japan undertakes goodwill, bilateral, and multilateral naval exercises with a wide range of partners—including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) states, the US, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, and Thailand—as part of its broader strategy to promote interoperability and maritime security. Recognising that domain awareness extends beyond the sea, Japan has advanced an air-domain awareness (ADA) agenda to ensure the secure and stable management of airspace alongside maritime areas. Practical manifestations of this agenda include transfers of warning and control radars, radar training for partner air forces (for example, training provided by the ASDF to Philippine personnel), and expert exchanges on surveillance and warning systems. Collectively, these initiatives illustrate Japan’s substantive evolution in military and security cooperation, characterised by growing engagement with partner governments. Given the longstanding and reliable partnership between Japan and Bangladesh, there is a strong prospect that such cooperation will materially enhance Bangladesh’s security capacities.

4. Bangladesh-Japan Potential for Defence Cooperation

Bangladesh and Japan have recently elevated their defence partnership through the signing and exchange of notes for ¥575 million in OSA grant aid in 2023. Established in the same year, OSA represents a significant new framework of cooperation designed to support the armed forces and relevant organisations of partner states.⁴⁷ It aims to deepen security collaboration, strengthen conducive security environments, and contribute to international peace and stability by enhancing the security and deterrence capacities of recipient states through the provision of equipment, supplies, and infrastructure development.

In 2023, Bangladesh and Japan established several agreements, including a Joint Statement on Strategic Partnership and a Memorandum on Defence Cooperation, targeting areas like cybersecurity and maritime cooperation. Bangladesh's defence modernisation under Forces Goal 2030—including its effort to diversify arms procurement away from heavy dependence on China aligns with Japan's support in advanced maritime surveillance and monitoring systems. The anticipated Agreement on the Exchange of Armaments and Defence Technology is expected to further facilitate technological collaboration in unmanned systems, artificial intelligence, and research and development. These initiatives collectively support Bangladesh's Defence Economic Zone project, focusing on defence industry development, cost-effective procurement, and long-term strategic autonomy. Japan's engagement reinforces Bangladesh's broader military modernisation goals and contributes to Dhaka's pursuit of balanced strategic relations within an evolving multipolar Indo-Pacific security landscape.

4.1 *Maritime Cooperation*

Japan will supply patrol boats to Bangladesh, designating the country as the second recipient of defense equipment under Tokyo's new security assistance framework. This move reflects Japan's growing strategic interest in the BoB, a maritime corridor of increasing relevance for Tokyo's energy security and commercial flows. These patrol vessels will significantly enhance the Bangladesh Navy's capabilities in monitoring, surveillance, and disaster-response operations—tasks that are central to maintaining maritime security in the Bay of Bengal and the wider Indo-Pacific region. Bangladesh's designation as a "Strategic Partner" highlights its geopolitical importance for Japan. The enhancement of the Bangladesh Navy's monitoring, surveillance, and disaster relief capabilities, which are crucial for these missions in the BoB, is vital. This programme facilitates the provision

⁴⁷ Japan Ministry of Defense, "Achieving the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" Vision".

of patrol boats to the Bangladeshi Navy, anticipated to augment its capabilities in monitoring, surveillance, and disaster relief, while also contributing to the maintenance and enhancement of maritime security in the BoB and the broader Indo-Pacific region. Japan and Bangladesh are also expected to conclude a defence procurement agreement, which will further institutionalise maritime cooperation.

A key element of the cooperation is capacity building in the maritime domain. Japan has extended financial and technical support to Bangladesh to enhance its maritime enforcement capabilities. Japan has provided Bangladesh with superior patrol vessels and technology to efficiently monitor and secure its maritime borders through its ODA programmes. These tools are essential for augmenting Bangladesh's ability to address illegal fishing, smuggling, and piracy. Japan has enhanced maritime safety in Bangladesh by developing port infrastructure and navigational systems. The Matarbari Deep-sea Port, funded by Japan, exemplifies this collaboration. This project boosts Bangladesh's commercial capability and strengthens its strategic importance in the Indo-Pacific region. Bangladesh and Japan participate collaboratively in international forums to tackle maritime security issues. Both nations engage in regional initiatives, like the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and ASEAN-led frameworks, to foster cooperative endeavors in marine governance. Their collaboration encompasses capacity-building initiatives for smaller regional states, promoting a unified strategy to address maritime security issues.

4.2 Cooperation for UNPKO

Bangladesh and Japan have intensified cooperation in UN peacekeeping through joint training initiatives designed to strengthen both operational readiness and technical capacity. Japan's assistance includes financing training institutions and programmes that develop key competencies in areas such as engineering, disaster response, and medical support—skills vital to contemporary multidimensional peacekeeping missions. Japan's sophisticated technological expertise enhances Bangladesh's substantial operational proficiency in peacekeeping. Japan has enabled the transfer of equipment and technology to improve the effectiveness and safety of Bangladeshi peacekeeping forces. This encompasses communication devices, vehicles, and logistical instruments that facilitate the effective operation of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in intricate and frequently perilous settings. Both nations strongly push for the reform of UN peacekeeping to tackle modern concerns.⁴⁸ Bangladesh and Japan have collaborated through institutions like the

⁴⁸ Matsushiro Horiguchi, *Making a Bridge between Japan and Bangladesh: Collected Essays & Speeches of H.E. Mr. Matsushiro Horiguchi* (Dhaka: Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh, 2006), 05.

UN Peacekeeping Ministerial Meeting to advance policies that guarantee the sustainability and efficacy of peacekeeping missions. Their collaborative promotion of enhanced preventative diplomacy and sustainable development underscores their unified vision for peacebuilding.

4.3 *Training and Exercise*

Bangladesh-Japan military collaboration possesses considerable potential for expansion. Numerous potentials exist to broaden joint exercises to encompass a wider array of security concerns, including cyber defense, counter-terrorism, and counter-piracy operations. The two nations may also investigate collaboration in emerging technologies, including unmanned aerial systems (UAS) and artificial intelligence (AI) for defense purposes. Enhanced integration of their armed forces via joint training programs and exercises would improve interoperability between the two nations, facilitating more effective contributions to multilateral peacekeeping and humanitarian missions. Furthermore, both nations might collaborate to enhance regional maritime security, a shared issue given the strategic significance of water routes in the Indo-Pacific. The collaboration between Bangladesh and Japan in military personnel training and exercises highlights the increasing significance of defense alliances in maintaining regional stability. This collaboration enhances the military capabilities of both nations, augments their capacity to address natural and anthropogenic disasters, and supports global peacekeeping initiatives. The alliance promotes operational readiness and maintains the overarching objective of regional stability and security in a complex, linked global context.

4.4 *Transfer of Defence Equipment and Technology*

Japan's strategic position in the BoB renders it a crucial participant in regional maritime security. As a prominent maritime power, Japan can furnish Bangladesh with sophisticated maritime defense apparatus to augment its capacity to monitor and safeguard its maritime boundaries efficiently. This encompasses patrol boats, surveillance vessels, radar devices, and communication apparatus. Japan's proficiency in disaster management and humanitarian aid can be imparted to Bangladesh to improve its disaster response capabilities. Search and rescue apparatus, including helicopters, rescue vessels, life-saving drones, and communication devices, can be supplied to assist Bangladesh during catastrophes. Intelligence and monitoring are essential for bolstering national security. Japan can supply sophisticated surveillance technology to enhance intelligence-gathering capabilities for military defense and law enforcement objectives. Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), including drones, can be utilised for border surveillance, counter-terrorism efforts, and the monitoring of illegal activities. Surveillance satellites can assist Bangladesh in monitoring

maritime activity, identifying potential security risks, and collecting intelligence in remote regions.

Japan can supply logistical support equipment, including military transport trucks, field hospitals, and medical supplies, to assist peacekeeping efforts. Personal protection equipment (PPE) and armored vehicles can safeguard Bangladeshi peacekeepers assigned to combat zones. Japan's proficiency in cyber defense and counter-terrorism strategies can aid Bangladesh in fortifying its defenses in nascent domains. Cybersecurity measures, such as firewalls, intrusion detection systems, and encryption technologies, can secure vital infrastructure and protect sensitive information. Counter-terrorism apparatus, including explosive detecting instruments, biometric identification technologies, and counter-terrorism training, can assist Bangladesh in identifying and thwarting terrorist activities, safeguarding civilians, and enhancing international counter-terrorism initiatives.

5. Bangladesh-Japan Defence Cooperation: Structural Obstacles and Strategic Constraints

The 2023 Memorandum of Cooperation and the anticipated 2025 Agreement on the Exchange of Armaments and Defence Technology mark substantive progress in Bangladesh-Japan defence relations. Yet, despite these formal advances, several entrenched structural and geopolitical challenges continue to circumscribe the depth and pace of bilateral security cooperation. These constraints arise from Bangladesh's historical defence procurement patterns, its strategic hedging behaviour, evolving regional insecurities, shifting political alignments, and Japan's regulatory restrictions on defence exports. Collectively, they illuminate the complex strategic environment within which bilateral defence cooperation must operate.

A primary impediment is Bangladesh's enduring dependence on Chinese military hardware, which remains deeply ingrained in the country's defence architecture. Between 2019 to 2023, China accounted for approximately 72 per cent of Bangladesh's arms imports and constituted over 70 per cent of its overall defence procurement.⁴⁹ This supremacy arises from both institutional familiarity and the integration of logistical ecosystems that Japan has failed to emulate. Japan, despite its growing interest in defence cooperation, has not yet been able to offer comparable systems integration or compatible supply-chain networks. As a result, replacing Chinese-origin equipment with Japanese alternatives poses high transition costs.

⁴⁹ Raheed Ejaz, "Japan Keen on Defence Agreement with Bangladesh, what Dhaka Stands to Gain," *Prothom Alo*, September 28, 2025, <https://en.prothomalo.com/bangladesh/6b6cbmxydc>.

A second structural constraint emerges from Bangladesh's strategic identity as a hedging state, endeavouring to maintain favourable relations with major powers such as China, India, the United States, and Russia, constraining the extent and exclusivity of bilateral defence agreements with Japan. This balancing strategy limits Bangladesh's willingness to enter exclusive or far-reaching defence agreements with Japan, especially when such arrangements may be perceived (particularly by Beijing) as tacit alignment with the objectives of the QUAD.⁵⁰ Japan's expanding security posture under the FOIP framework, while appealing in economic and developmental terms, can therefore generate diplomatic sensitivities for Bangladesh, compelling it to calibrate the scope of cooperation to avoid antagonising other partners.

A third obstacle arises from the destabilising regional security environment generated by the Myanmar civil war. This has resulted in transnational military intrusions, airspace infringements, and spillover threats that compel the nation to allocate additional resources to border security rather than expanding its defensive capabilities.⁵¹ These developments have compelled Bangladesh to divert attention and resources toward immediate border management and internal security pressures. Under such conditions, expanding or diversifying defence cooperation with external partners—including Japan—becomes secondary to addressing urgent operational requirements along the Myanmar border.

A fourth complexity stems from the deterioration of Bangladesh–India defence relations under the current government, a development that indirectly affects Japan's strategic calculations. India is a central pillar of the QUAD and a key proponent of Japan's Indo-Pacific vision. Strained Dhaka–Delhi relations reduce opportunities for trilateral or minilateral coordination and weaken the broader strategic alignment that Japan seeks to foster in South Asia. The resulting vacuum has provided China with greater room to consolidate influence in Bangladesh's defence and infrastructure sectors.

Finally, Japan's evolving regulations regarding the export of defence technology, which emphasise the restriction of advanced military-related technologies to prevent unauthorised re-exportation or domestic production beyond Japan's oversight, establish bureaucratic and legal obstacles that may hinder the anticipated technology transfer and collaborative research outlined in bilateral

⁵⁰ Baker McKenzie, "Japanese Government to Introduce New Advanced Technology Transfer Regulations," Global Sanctions and Export Controls Blog, Last modified April 30, 2024, <https://sanctionsnews.bakermckenzie.com/japanese-government-to-introduce-new-advanced-technology-transfer-regulations/>.

⁵¹ "Crisis at the Bangladesh-Myanmar Border: A Looming Regional Challenge," *The Diplomat*, February 05, 2024.

agreements. These multifaceted issues—Bangladesh's vulnerabilities as a small state, its historical procurement patterns in defence, the necessity to safeguard its regional interests, and the imperative to ensure its own security—indicate that although Bangladesh-Japan defence cooperation will persist in its expansion, the velocity and profundity of that growth will be constrained by Bangladesh's strategic position within South Asia.⁵²

6. Conclusion

The shift from economic and development-centric collaborations to strategic and security-focused alliances is illustrated by the progression of Bangladesh-Japan defence cooperation, marking a pivotal moment in bilateral relations. This relationship signifies a mutual commitment to advancing peace, maintaining regional stability, and addressing emerging security challenges in the Indo-Pacific and beyond, grounded in reciprocal respect and aligned interests. Bangladesh is an essential partner in Japan's goal of a FOIP owing to its strategic position at the confluence of South and Southeast Asia and its access to the BoB. Japan acknowledges Bangladesh's growing importance in regional security dynamics by including it in the OSA framework, a facet of this strategy. Japan's proactive strategy to enhance marine security in the Bay of Bengal, an essential route for global trade, is highlighted by the provision of defence apparatus, such as patrol vessels, and assistance for disaster relief and monitoring systems.

Moreover, Japan's focus on technology assistance and capacity enhancement aligns with Bangladesh's "Forces Goal 2030," which aims to modernise its military capabilities throughout the Army, Navy, and Air Force. The operational readiness of the Bangladeshi armed forces has been enhanced by collaborative military training, joint exercises, and the transfer of defence equipment, which have also promoted interoperability between the two nations. Bangladesh has significantly contributed to global peacekeeping missions, enhancing its self-reliance in defence while supporting these initiatives. The defence collaboration between the two nations goes beyond traditional security, incorporating disaster management, cyber security, and marine governance. The strategic and economic connections of their alliance are exemplified by Japan's backing of infrastructure development, notably the Matarbari Deep-sea Port. These efforts ensure that Bangladesh remains a secure and stable hub for commerce and connectivity, thereby reinforcing its role as a link between South and Southeast Asia.

⁵² Nahid Aktar, "Bangladesh's Hedging Behavior with Major Powers and the Question of Joining the Quad," *EU Academic Research* 11, no. 12 (2024): 1356–1368.

Although Bangladesh–Japan defense cooperation is likely to deepen in the coming years, the trajectory of this partnership will continue to be shaped by several enduring structural constraints. Bangladesh's longstanding dependence on Chinese military platforms limits the pace at which procurement diversification and technology collaboration with Japan can advance. Regional instability, particularly the persistent conflict in Myanmar, diverts strategic attention and resources toward immediate security pressures along the border, thereby complicating broader defense modernization efforts. Strained Bangladesh–India defense relations further narrow the strategic space for trilateral or minilateral cooperation involving Japan, given India's central role in the Indo-Pacific security architecture. Moreover, Japan's evolving defense export regulations introduce additional procedural hurdles for technology transfer and co-development initiatives. Together, these factors indicate that while the bilateral partnership holds significant potential for contributing to Indo-Pacific stability, its future evolution will remain calibrated by Bangladesh's geopolitical vulnerabilities, its need to maintain strategic autonomy, and the structural complexities inherent in its regional environment.

To uphold its non-alignment policy, Bangladesh must equilibrate its defence partnerships and diversify its suppliers to avoid excessive reliance on a single country. To ensure its security policies align with domestic and international standards, Japan must employ careful diplomacy to manage its constitutional limitations on military involvement. A strong platform for overcoming potential difficulties is built on a foundation of trust and common goals, despite these problems. The evolving nature of the Bangladesh–Japan partnership is evident in the prospects for enhanced cooperation in fields such as sophisticated technologies, cyber defence, and counterterrorism. This remains true moving forward. Regional stability can be enhanced by augmenting joint exercises and capacity-building initiatives, while continuous dialogue ensures that their defence strategy corresponds with overarching geopolitical goals. The Bangladesh–Japan defence collaboration is a progressive and advantageous alliance in a rapidly changing global security environment. This collaboration exemplifies strategic relationships based on shared principles and mutual interests as the Indo-Pacific region faces increasing challenges. By enhancing their bilateral relationship, both nations can significantly contribute to the peace, stability, and prosperity of the area and beyond.