

## Japan

You might have heard about famous Japanese brands such as Sony, Panasonic, Canon, Suzuki, Honda, Toyota, Mazda. They have a reputation for making high-technology products. Japan has very few natural resources and imports most of its raw materials. Even then it progressed rapidly after the end of the Second World War. Japan became a member of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1964. In 2017, it is the third largest economy in the world. It is the only Asian member of the G-7. It is the eleventh most populous nation in the world.

Japan is the only nation that suffered the destruction caused by nuclear bombs. It is the second largest contributor to the regular budget of the UN, contributing almost 10 per cent of the total. Japan has a security alliance with the US since 1951. As per Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, "the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes." Although Japan's military expenditure is only one per cent of its GDP, it is the seventh largest in the world.

Keeping all this in mind, do you think Japan can effectively function as an alternative centre of power?

Also find out about major agreements signed during high-level bilateral visits between the two nations in the recent past.



ASIMO, the world's most advanced humanoid robot, walking with a person while holding hand

Credit: <http://asimo.honda.com>

## South Korea

The Korean peninsula was divided into South Korea (Republic of Korea) and North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) at the end of the Second World War along the 38th Parallel. The Korean War during 1950-53 and dynamics of the Cold War era further intensified the rivalries between the two sides. Both the Koreas finally became Members of the UN on 17 September 1991.

Meanwhile, South Korea emerged as a centre of power in Asia. Between the 1960s and the 1980s, it rapidly developed into an economic power, which is termed as 'Miracle on the Han River'. Signalling its all-round development, South Korea became a Member of the OECD in 1996. In 2017, its economy is the eleventh largest in the world and its military expenditure is the tenth largest.

According to the Human Development Report 2016, the HDI rank of South Korea is 18. The major factors responsible for its high human development include 'successful land reforms, rural development, extensive human resources development and rapid equitable economic growth.' Other factors are export orientation, strong redistribution policies, public infrastructure development, effective institutions and governance.

The South Korean brands such as Samsung, LG and Hyundai have become renowned in India. Numerous agreements between India and South Korea signify their growing commercial and cultural ties. Find out about major agreements signed in the recent past.



Skyline of Seoul city near the Han River

Credit: <http://english.seoul.go.kr>