

Indo-Pacific will dominate Modi-Abe dialogue today

Will Announce Infra Projects in Asian Countries

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New Delhi: Inspired by the Wuhan summit, PM Narendra Modi and his Japanese counterpart, Shinzo Abe are set to hold one of their own on Sunday, closeted in Abe's Lake House in Yamanashi prefecture for almost an entire day with discussions centring around the Indo-Pacific.

Modi's two-day visit beginning Oct 28, his last before the general elections, will see the two leaders focusing on some of the biggest geopolitical issues of the moment. However, it will be Sunday's conversation that will be the most substantive. On top of their list is the Indo-Pacific. This is a geopolitical construct that has In-



dia and Japan as its biggest votaries and with the greatest convergence. For both countries the Indo-Pacific stretches from the eastern coast of Africa to the Pacific. But it is a policy that needs to be constantly fine-tuned.

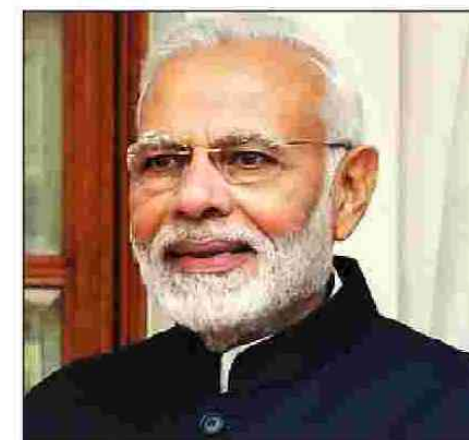
Both India and Japan have put Asean as the fulcrum of the Indo-Pacific. But it means both have to work much harder to convince the countries in the region that the Indo-Pacific is not an exclusive club set up with the US and Australia to dominate the region, which has been the core of Chinese diplomacy here.

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India and Japan will work in third countries and with them to fulfil Indo-Pacific goals of being inclusive and helpful. India and Japan will announce infrastructure projects in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

In Bangladesh, a set of roads and bridges being built separately by India and Japan will be synergised to become joint projects. In Sri Lanka an LNG terminal and port development in the north will also be linked by the two countries. And in Myanmar, transmission lines and housing projects in the troubled Rakhine province will be badged as an In-



do-Japan venture. Venturing further, the two countries will be collaborating on a cancer hospital in Kenya.

Greater clarity and a roadmap will dominate discussions between Modi and Abe this weekend. The Modi-Abe summit follows hot on the heels of the first visit by a Japanese PM to China in about seven years. The China-japan detente, like China-India thaw, is seen as a direct consequence of the disruption caused by US' China policy. Since the fundamentals of Chinese policy in the region has not actually changed, the warmed atmosphere among Asian powers may be temporary.