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मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

# JAPAN

## *Digest*

September 2024

- Japan gets new PM in Shigeru Ishiba
- Quad Summit held in US
- Japanese schoolboy killed in China in possible hate crime



## Japan gets new PM in Shigeru Ishiba

In a hard-fought leadership struggle among nine candidates from within Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Shigeru Ishiba, long considered a staunch critic of his own party, was [elected](#) to lead the LDP – and by extension Japan – on 27 September 2024. The unusually acrimonious contest saw Ishiba and his key challenger, arch-conservative Sanae Takaichi, proceed to an unprecedented second round of runoffs after receiving the largest share of votes from incumbent LDP members of the Diet as well as the general rank and file. In the first round, both candidates remained tied, with Takaichi maintaining a slim lead. It was only in the second round of votes that support from the moderate candidates nudged Ishiba past Takaichi to a 21-vote victory.

After the contest, Ishiba [announced](#) that he would seek to realise his campaign motto of 'protecting Japan'. He continued to claim that his proposal for an 'Asian NATO' involving key regional countries was a realistic scheme for regional security and deterrence, despite rejections from the US State Department and Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar. He also claimed to be committed to securing a 'more equal' mutual security treaty with the US, whereby the Japan Self-Defence Forces (JSDF) would set up a base in the US for training purposes, as well as deploy troops to US outposts such as Guam. Scholars have pointed out that such a move would clearly violate Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, which forbids mutual defence commitments. Domestically, he called for the Bank of Japan to reconsider its rapid hiking of

interest rates and [announced](#) that he would hold general elections to seek the mandate of Japanese voters on 27 October.

Ishiba [took over](#) from Prime Minister Fumio Kishida on 1 October, when the former vacated his post along with his Cabinet. Ishiba's Cabinet, which takes over on the same day, will include former Ground Self-Defence Forces general Gen Nakatani as Minister of Defence, former Minister of Defence Takeshi Iwaya as Minister of Foreign Affairs and former Chief Cabinet Secretary Katsunobu Kato as Finance Minister. Kishida's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi remains at his post. Newcomer Yoji Muto has secured a berth in the Cabinet as the new Minister for Economy, Trade and Industry.

Reactions from regional partners was immediate, with the South Korean government holding out hope for 'working together proactively for improving future-oriented ties'. China's President Xi Jinping [congratulated](#) Ishiba on 2 October and called on him to continue to 'follow the path of peaceful coexistence, friendship for all generations, mutually beneficial cooperation and common development'. The US, via Secretary of State Antony Blinken, [congratulated](#) Ishiba on his appointment, noting that '[w]e are excited to continue advancing our shared priorities for the benefit of our people and the world.' Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to X (formerly Twitter) to [offer](#) his congratulatory remarks, offering his fullest cooperation to 'further strengthen [the] India-Japan Special Strategic & Global Partnership and promote prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and beyond'.

## Quad Summit held in US

The leaders of India, Japan, Australia and the United States [met](#) in Wilmington, Delaware for the latest iteration of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) Leaders' Meeting on 22 September. Though initially scheduled to be held in India, a request from US President Joseph R. Biden led to the hosts swapping their turns, with India postponing hosting duties to 2025. The meeting was widely seen as the last significant foreign policy event on the calendars of both President Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who have both backed away from the prospect of re-election as leaders of their country.

Prime Minister Modi in his address thanked President Biden for his leadership role within the Quad, and noted the importance of the Quad leaders' coming together to discuss issues of global import. He reiterated that the Quad was an effort to achieve a free, open, inclusive and prosperous Indo-Pacific region and that it was here to stay. The four leaders [agreed](#) on their strong opposition to any attempt to forcibly alter the status quo in the East and South China Seas, while reiterating that the Quad grouping was not directed against any country. The leaders also declared a host of outcomes for the Summit, including a Quad Cancer Moonshot to research ways to eliminate cervical cancer, a Quad-at-Sea Observer Mission to enable observers from Quad navies to embark on each other's naval vessels, Quad Ports for Future Partnership to develop high-quality, future-ready ports across the Indo-Pacific and a Semiconductor Supply Chains Contingency Network memorandum of

cooperation in order to develop resilience in semiconductor supply chains, among other initiatives.

## Japanese schoolboy killed in China in possible hate crime

A 10-year-old Japanese boy on his way to school was [stabbed](#) in the abdomen by a 44-year-old Chinese man in the city of Shenzhen on 18 September, after which he was rushed to hospital. Unfortunately, the boy was unable to survive the stabbing and passed away on 19 September. The incident, the second such in the current year, have sparked fears of Japan-China relations nosediving as they raise concerns about the safety of Japanese – as well as other foreign – residents in China. Though Chinese authorities reportedly took the man into custody, they have refused to reveal the man's motives, indicating the possibility that the boy was deliberately targeted as a hate crime. This angle has gained some traction in the Japanese media due to the fact that 18 September marks the 93<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the deliberate sabotage of Manchurian railroad tracks by the Imperial Japanese Army's Kwantung garrison, an act which became the *casus belli* behind the Second Sino-Japanese War (1931-1945).

The Japanese government, through both Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi and then-Minister of Foreign Affairs Yoko Kamikawa, condemned the incident and called on Chinese authorities to tighten security around foreign residents. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while promising to enact swift justice against the perpetrator, minimised their concerns, claiming that the incident could have occurred in any country around the world.