

## 《China-Japan ties may see Silk Road lift》

Xi tells leader of Tokyo's ruling party that initiative may foster cooperation

The Belt and Road Initiative can become an "experimental field" for China and Japan to achieve mutually beneficial cooperation and common development, President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday at a meeting in Beijing with a representative of the Japanese government.

Liberal Democratic Party Secretary-General Toshihiro Nikai came to China to represent the Japanese government at the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, which ended on Monday.

Xi said that Japan has clearly stated its endorsement of the Belt and Road Initiative, according to a Foreign Ministry news release.

Japan is welcome to talk with China about cooperation within the framework of the initiative, Xi said on Monday.

China and Japan, both being major economies, have common interests in promoting economic globalization and promoting free trade, Xi said.

Nikai expressed his gratitude to Xi for the meeting, congratulated him on China's success in holding the forum, and said Japan and China need to cooperate.

Former Japanese prime minister Yukio Hatoyama messaged on Twitter on Sunday that the initiative "eyes peace and prosperity" and that he feels that "Japan is somehow lagging behind", the country's Sankei Shimbun newspaper reported.

Lyu Yaodong, a Japanese diplomacy researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said the initiative has been accepted by the global community and embracing it would showcase Japan's support for regional cooperation.

Reuters reported that Japanese officials have indicated a readiness to join the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, given that Nikai told reporters on Monday that "the key would be how quickly Japan can decide to participate".

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Monday he could be open to joining the AIIB if questions surrounding its projects' environmental impacts and other issues were resolved, Japan's Kyodo News reported.

Lyu said being part of the initiative and the bank would be a new way to improve ties with China, though it remained to be seen whether Japan would take further action in that regard.

Xi told Nikai that the two countries are facing new opportunities as well as prominent challenges in their relationship.

Both countries should think deeply about the crux of the problems that make it difficult to improve their ties, and take measures to change the situation, Xi said.

It is hoped that Japan will work with China to eliminate such disturbances and promote development of China-Japan relations in the right direction, Xi said.

Lyu said Tokyo has dredged up a range of troubles this year on historical issues and one-China policy, which "has worsened, not eased, the problems between the two countries".

Tokyo should break from its previous pattern of trying to contain China at international meetings and "seek progress bit by bit by showing due sincerity", Lyu said.

