

India agrees to long-term supply of rare earths for Japan

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Tokyo said Tuesday that India has agreed to provide a stable supply of rare earth minerals to Japan as the high-tech economy looks to diversify sources after a spat with key provider China.

India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who wound up his three-day visit to [Japan](#) on Tuesday, made the pledge during talks with the Japanese side on Monday, industry minister Akihiro Ohata said at a news conference.

"Prime Minister Singh told us that he will cooperate in long-term supply of [rare earth minerals](#)," Ohata said, according to a trade ministry official.

On Monday, Singh met Prime Minister Naoto Kan, Ohata and other Japanese officials and agreed to broadly cooperate in rare earth deals.

In a statement, the premiers "decided to explore the possibility of bilateral cooperation in development, recycling and re-use of [rare earths](#) and rare metals and in research and development of their industrial substitutes."

On Sunday, Ohata met China's commerce minister in Tokyo and urged Beijing to normalise rare earth exports after Japan said shipments were blocked during a diplomatic row sparked by the arrest of a Chinese trawlerman in disputed waters.

Japan's stockpile of rare earth minerals, used in the manufacture of high-

tech goods, could be exhausted by March or April without fresh imports from China, officials have said.

China, which controls more than 95 percent of the global market, has repeatedly denied it curbed exports in retaliation over the dispute, but all 31 Japanese companies handling the minerals have reported disruption to shipments.

Japanese Foreign Minister Seiichi Maehara said Tuesday that he wants to raise the issue if he meets his Chinese counterpart on the sidelines of a 16-nation Asian summit in Vietnam later this week.

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