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## India-Japan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue

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### Why in News

India and Japan recently held **13<sup>th</sup> India-Japan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue** in which inter-alia both countries agreed to sign a **Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC)** in the field of **cybersecurity** that will promote cooperation in key areas such as **5G network**, Critical Information Infrastructure, **Internet of Things (IoT)** and **Artificial Intelligence**.

### Key Points

- **Cyber Security MoC**
  - It will enhance **cooperation in areas of mutual interest**, which include **capacity building** in the area of cyberspace, protection of **critical infrastructure**, sharing information on cybersecurity, developing joint mechanisms for practical cooperation to **mitigate cyber threats** etc.
  - **Significance:** It will attract stakeholders in the Indian 5G sector as it gets ready to open up for international operators.
    - This becomes even more important since it is possible that the **Chinese companies are not allowed to participate in the 5G** arena in India due to recent **Indo-China tensions**, increasing **cybersecurity threat due to Chinese cyber-attacks** and **hybrid data warfare** by China.
    - Japan is upgrading its cybersecurity as it has been repeatedly hit by **cyberattacks** this year.
    - Also, **Covid-19 pandemic** has made countries, companies and institutions dependent on digital technology more than ever before.
- The dialogue emphasized a strong partnership between the two countries in overcoming **challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic**.

With Covid-19 and **trade tensions between China and the United States** are threatening supply chains, Japan has mooted the **Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) as a trilateral approach** to trade, with India and Australia as the key-partners.

- **The importance of the Indo-pacific region** was discussed.
  - Japan and India both have similarities in their respective Indo-Pacific visions, that are based on rule of law and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.
  - Both Japan and India need to counter the increasing Chinese aggression in the region.
  - India launched **the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)** at the **East Asia Summit** in November 2019.
  - It focuses on seven central pillars conceived around Maritime Security, Maritime Ecology, Maritime Resources, Capacity Building and Resource Sharing, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, Science, Technology and Academic Cooperation, and Trade Connectivity and Maritime Transport.
- The issue of **abduction of Japanese nationals by North Korea** was also raised on which India promised to extend support for closure.

Abductions of Japanese citizens from Japan by agents of the North Korean government took place from **1977 to 1983**. Although only 17 Japanese are officially recognized by the Japanese government as having been abducted, there may have been hundreds of victims.

- **Other Recent Developments Between India and Japan**

- Recently, India and Japan signed a **logistics agreement** that will allow armed forces of both sides to coordinate closely in services and supplies. The agreement is known as **the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)**.
- In 2019, India and Japan held the first-ever ministerial-level **2+2 dialogue**. This dialogue involves the Defence and Foreign Ministers on both sides and is seen as an endorsement of the special strategic partnership between **India and Japan**.
- Both countries are also part of the **Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD)**.
- Recently, it has been reported that the second Ministerial meeting of Quad countries will be held in Japan.
- A **“India-Japan Digital Partnership” (I-JDP)** was launched during the visit of the Prime Minister of India to Japan in October 2018, furthering existing areas of cooperation as well as new initiatives within the scope of cooperation in S&T/ICT, focusing more on **“Digital ICT Technologies”**.
- **In 2014**, India and Japan upgraded their relationship to **'Special Strategic and Global Partnership'**.
- The **India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** that came into force in August 2011 covers trade in goods, services, movement of natural persons, investments, Intellectual Property Rights, custom procedures and other trade related issues.
- India and Japan defence forces organize a series of **bilateral exercises namely, JIMEX, SHINYUU Maitri, and Dharma Guardian**. Both countries also participate in **Malabar exercise with the USA**.

## Way Forward

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- India needs sophisticated technology from Japan, so more collaboration and cooperation can prove beneficial to both nations.
- There is a huge potential with respect to **Make in India**. Joint ventures could be created by merging Japanese digital technology with Indian raw materials and labour.
- Closer cooperation is the best measure to **combat China's** growing role in Asia and Indo-Pacific, in **physical as well as digital space**.

**Source: TH**