



## The Big Picture: India - Japan 2+2

India and Japan held the **first-ever ministerial-level 2+2 dialogue** in New Delhi, recently. 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 nations share a **common vision of a free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific region** in which the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity are ensured.
- The dialogue **enhanced the strategic depth of bilateral security and defence cooperation** between both nations and acknowledges emerging security challenges.

### Defence Cooperation

**History-** Indo-Japanese strategic cooperation has been growing since the 2+2 dialogues at the **defence and foreign secretariat levels in 2010**.

- These 2+2 **ministerial-level dialogues** between the defence and foreign ministries are the outcome of the Vision statement which Indian and Japanese Prime Ministers had put forward after the [13<sup>th</sup> summit in 2018](#).

### Key Points

- The dialogue welcomed the significant progress made in the negotiations of **Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)**.
- It appreciated the **existing exchange programs** between the defence educational and research institutions.
- It acknowledged the trilateral cooperation with the US in the form of [MALABAR exercises](#).
  - Japan hosted the Malabar 2019 which is a very significant achievement in itself because Japan has never hosted this trilateral naval exercise in the past.
- It also recognised the significance of [Quadrilateral Security Dialogue \(QUAD\)](#).
  - This dialogue focused on maritime dimensions and maritime security.
- All three defence forces, as well as the coastguard, has had **joint bilateral exercises with Japan (SHINYUU Maitri, Dharma Guardian and JIMEX)**.
- India-Japan relations have a congruence of not only defence interests but also of their foreign policy.

### Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement

- It allows both navies to access each other's military bases for logistical purposes (India will be able to access the Japanese naval base in Djibouti and the Japanese navy can dock at the Indian naval base at Andaman and Nicobar).
- ACSA will enable **food and logistics interoperability** between the two countries.

### Challenges to Strategic Cooperation

## ▪ **Constitutional Restrictions**

- Japan has been **constitutionally constrained** on the defence trade.
- Under the leadership of PM Abe, Japan has been making sincere efforts to come out of the stranglehold and be a significant player in the defence trade but despite being the longest-serving PM, Shinzo Abe has not been able to come over these constitutional checks.
- Japanese constitution did not allow the Japanese navy to participate in the **Combined Task Force (CTF) 150** and restricted the participation to the tankers only which provided fuel to the ships.

## **Principle of Ittaika**

- It is the **most significant legal prohibition to any coalition building effort** under Japan's interpretation of **Article 9 of their Constitution** which sincerely aspires for **international peace based on justice and order**. This principle mandates that the self defence forces cannot join a combined command-and-control structure if partner militaries have **different rules on "use of force"** (i.e., the employment of military capabilities in response to security conflict).

**Article 51 in the Constitution of India** promotes international peace and security. In order to do so, the **State shall endeavour to:**

- promote international peace and security;
- maintain just and honourable relations between nations;
- foster respect for international law and treaty obligations in the dealings of organised peoples with one another; and
- encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration.

## **Combined Task Force 150 (Maritime Security Operations and Counter-Terrorism)**

- It is a part of the **Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)** which is a multinational naval partnership, which exists to promote security, stability and prosperity across international waters encompassing some of the world's most important shipping lanes.

## **Resisting China's Emerging Unipolarity**

- Chinese assertion of power in the oceans is something which brings India and Japan on the same page. The growing congruence of the views is propelling the two countries to take up a closer understanding of strategic issues.
  - Both countries are opposed to the **idea of unipolarity being asserted by China** time and again.
  - Both of them look forward to making the **Indo-pacific multipolar, free, open and inclusive**.
- The **QUAD, which** includes USA and Australia apart from India and Japan, was initiated with the motive **to make Asia multipolar** and to challenge the emerging unipolarity due to China's policies.
- **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership**
  - Both India and Japan have not joined the **RCEP** yet.

## **Other Areas of Cooperation**

- **Developmental Cooperation** between the two countries is two dimensional-
  - **Inside India-** Infrastructure development in the regions like **north-east**.
  - **Outside India-** Development partnerships with **neighbouring countries** like **Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and even Africa**.
- **Regional and International Affairs**
  - It exchanged views on the **[recent developments in the South China Sea](#)**.
  - It reaffirmed the **importance of freedom of navigation and overflight, unimpeded**

**lawful commerce and peaceful resolution of disputes** with full respect for legal and diplomatic processes in accordance with the universally recognized principles of international law.

- It condemned the growing threat of terrorism and acknowledged that it constituted a major threat to peace and security in the region.

## Way Forward

- India needs **sophisticated weapons and technology from Japan** so more collaboration and cooperation can prove beneficial to both nations.
- India aspires for **US-2 Amphibious Aircraft** from Japan and **is ready for its 30% manufacturing** in the country, it needs to build consensus with Japan in this direction.

### Note: US-2 Amphibious Aircraft

- It can land on **either land or water**. It is operated as a **short takeoff and landing aircraft (STOL)** Search and Rescue Amphibian by Japan's Ministry of Defense.
- Japan has been very cooperative in India's **Make in India** initiative so it will not be surprising to see the Japanese armament industry setting up manufacturing units in India.
- **Technological Collaborations:** There is huge potential as far as Make in India and defence deals are concerned.
  - Joint ventures could be created by merging **Japanese technology** with **Indian raw materials and labour**.
- The India Japan 2+2 dialogue gives a whole new direction to **India's Act East Policy** because it brings into focus mutual concerns about China's push for unipolarity.
- Closer cooperation is the best measure to combat China's growing role in Asia and Indo-Pacific.

Further strengthening of bilateral cooperation is in the mutual interest of both countries and would also help in furthering the cause of peace, security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region.