

India, Japan sign key pact between defence forces

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India and Japan have signed a key agreement for reciprocal provision of supplies and services between their defence forces, which is expected to drive closer military cooperation and contribute to regional security.

The Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) between Japan's Self-Defense Forces and India's armed forces was signed by Japanese ambassador Satoshi Suzuki and defence secretary Ajay Kumar in New Delhi.

Key Highlights

- The agreement is expected to facilitate "smooth and prompt provision of supplies and services" between the two sides, promote closer cooperation between the Self-Defense Forces of Japan and India's armed forces, and enable them to actively contribute to international peace and security, the statement said.
- It had earlier been expected the pact would be signed during a summit between Abe and Modi this year. However, the holding of the summit has been thrown into doubt by Abe's decision last month to step down on health grounds.
- The agreement will cover the reciprocal provision of supplies and services during joint exercises and training missions, UN peacekeeping operations, humanitarian relief

operations, operations to cope with disasters in the territory of both parties or a third country, and evacuation of nationals of India and Japan from overseas in exigencies.

- The supplies and services covered by the pact include food, water, transportation, including airlift, petroleum, clothing, communications and medical services, use of facilities, spares and components, and repair and maintenance services.
- The agreement will remain in force for 10 years and will be automatically extended for periods of 10 years unless one of the parties decides to end it. India has similar agreements with the US, Australia, France, Oman and Singapore.
- Abe, Japan's longest serving prime minister, listed actions taken by India and Japan for realising the vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific and the elevation of the special strategic and global partnership between the two countries among the key achievements in bilateral relations.
- According to a readout from Japan's foreign ministry, the two leaders made it clear that the change of leadership in Japan wouldn't affect the overall arc of bilateral relations.

SOURCE: *Hindustan Times*