

India & Japan to boost def ties, hold drill in '18

Japan Def Min In Delhi A Day Before Chinese Counterpart

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India and Japan have decided to further expand their defence ties, with more bilateral combat exercises, military exchanges and top-level visits as well as collaboration in maritime security and defence production, with an eye firmly on an aggressive and expansionist China.

Towards this end, India and Japan will hold their first-ever joint Army exercise in the domain of counter-terrorism later this year, while cranking up the level of ongoing naval exercises and interactions, including those in the areas of anti-submarine warfare and mine coun-



Defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman and her Japanese counterpart Itsunori Onodera exchange mementos at South Block in New Delhi on Monday

ter-measures.

This was decided at the annual defence ministerial dialogue, with the delegations being led by Nirmala Sitharaman and her Japanese counterpart Itsunori Onodera, in New Delhi on Monday. While the Indian defence minister will visit Japan next year, the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) chief of staff will come here this November. The IAF chief, in turn, will visit Japan in December to

discuss ways to strengthen cooperation between the two air forces.

The India-Japan meeting came a day before Chinese defence minister General Wei Fenghe begins his visit here from August 21 to 24. With China continuing to strong-arm its neighbours on territorial and maritime sovereignty claims in South and East China Seas, India and Japan discussed the current security situation in the Indo-Pacific region, which also included developments in the Korean Peninsula.

"The two ministers stressed the need to ensure peace and stability in the Indian and Pacific Oceans as part of the larger Indo-Pacific region. They also reaffirmed they have shared interests in expanding cooperation in the maritime security domain, said an official.

India and Japan also decided to enhance cooperative research in defence equipment and technology.