India Japan Civil Nuclear Agreement

What is the issue?

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Recently, the Japanese Parliament (Diet) has endorsed the controversial Japan-India civil nuclear cooperation agreement that will allow the nation's firms to export nuclear materials and technology to India for nonmilitary use.

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Why the Diet resisted?

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- The ruling coalition of Japan voted for the pact, while opposition forces voted against it.
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- The pact has been a source of contention because India is neither a signatory of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) nor of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.
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- Opposition also argued that the accord will **damage the credibility of the NPT** system and help India acquire nuclear technology and materials.
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- There was also **political resistance** in Japan against a nuclear deal with India, particularly after the disaster at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant in 2011.
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- Opposition have said that exports of nuclear technology may not be profitable for nation firms.
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- The last stage of negotiations was keenly watched due to a **"nullification clause".**
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- The clause states that an Indian action in violation could be viewed as a serious departure from the prevailing situation and Japan might exercise its right to terminate nuclear cooperation.
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How the agreement is significant for India?

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- India signed a landmark nuclear deal with the US in 2008, clearing the path for the country to source nuclear power plants and technology from international markets.
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- But with **Japanese companies in possession of critical technologies,** an accord with Japan was pivotal for India.
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- The deal is significant as it will help guarantee Japan's continued support to India's civil nuclear programme.
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- Under the agreement, Japanese firms may supply nuclear materials, equipment and technologies to India for "peaceful and non-explosive purposes."
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- The companies may also provide support services for designing, building and operating reactors.
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- The deal is also likely to **revitalise Japanese nuclear majors** that are yet to recover from the setback of the Fukushima accident.
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- The nuclear issue in many ways was a constraint. It was preventing India and Japan from engaging in a more robust and wide spectrum manner.
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- The deal will bring Japan into the Indian nuclear market where France and Russia have already have a strong presence.
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- In the face of surging power demand due to rapid economic and population growth, India is seeking to build more nuclear reactors.
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- India currently has 5.7 gigawatts (GW) of nuclear power generation capacity.
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- India's Department of Atomic Energy's target is to have 63GW of nuclear power capacity by 2032.
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- Also, New Delhi aims to boost nuclear power generation nationwide so that it

accounts for nearly 25% of all electricity in the country by 2050.
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What is the need for Nuclear Power in India?

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- The cost of coal power would be some 30 to 50 per cent higher in coming days.
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- Then there is a threat of climate change and the concern for environmental pollution.
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- The hydro power is unevenly distributed across months.
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- Solar power is available only when the sun is shining unless it is stored in some way.
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- Thus, to provide power when the sun is not shining, a balancing power is needed.
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- In India, more than 70% of petroleum products are based on imports.
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- India’s known extractable coal reserves will run out in about 40 years.
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- For India, renewable energy is inevitable and nuclear option should be retained as an insurance.
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- Nuclear power also helps diversify the system and adds to energy security.
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