

Brief Embassy Report on Bilateral Relations – ITJ Division, DGCI&S, Kolkata.

India – Australia Bilateral Relations

A. Introduction

1. The India-Australia bilateral relationship is underpinned by shared values of a pluralistic, Westminster-style democracies, Commonwealth traditions, expanding economic engagement and increasing high level interaction. The longstanding people-to-people ties, ever increasing Indian students coming to Australia for higher education, growing tourism, and sporting links, especially Cricket and Hockey, have played a significant role in further strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries. In recent years, India-Australia relationship has charted a whole new trajectory of transformational growth. Bilateral cooperation has seen exponential growth in existing frameworks of cooperation and further expanded across a wide spectrum of new area as opening up new possibilities, both at bilateral as well as global level.
2. The Indian community in Australia continues to grow and importance, with the population of about 9.76,000 (Census 2021). After England, India is the second largest migrant group in Australia. There is a constant flow of students and tourists from India. The growing significance of the community is reflected in the large-scale celebration of Indian festivals in Australia. The number of Indian students currently enrolled for studying in Australia is estimated at around 118,869 (July2023), making Indian students the second largest cohort of foreign students in Australia. Under the New Colombo Plan of Australian Government, Australian under graduates have studied and completed internships in India.

B. Commercial Relations (Trade and Foreign Investment) – Recent facts & figures

3. India is Australia's sixth largest trading partner. As a trading country partner of India, and as per latest compiled and available statistics with DGCI&S, India's exports to Australia during April'23-February'24 have been recorded at 7.47 billion US Dollar and India's imports from Australia during the same reference period stands at 14.95 billion US Dollar. India's imports from Australia were significantly high in 2022-23.

Export-Import statistics as per India's Ministry of Commerce data bank from 2019-20 to 2023-24 are as follows

Export-Import statistics from 2019-20 to 2023-24

(US Dollar Billion)

Year	Total trade	Import	Export
2019-20	12.63	9.78	2.85
2020-21	12.29	8.25	4.04
2021-22	25.04	16.76	8.28
2022-23	25.96	19.01	6.95
2023-24 (April'23- February'24)	22.42	14.95	7.47

(Source: Department of Commerce, India)

3. India's main exports to Australia are refined petroleum, medicaments (incl. veterinary), pearls & gems, jewellery, made-up textile articles, while India's major imports are coal, confidential items of trade, copper ores & concentrates, natural gas, non-ferrous waste & scrap, ferrous waste & scrap and education related services.
4. The India-Australia economic relationship has grown significantly in recent years. As part of its efforts to develop strong economic relationship with India, the Australian Government commissioned the India Economic Strategy to 2035 to define a pathway for Australia to unlock opportunities offered by Indian Economic growth. The paper was released in July 2018. An update to the India Economic Strategy was released in April 2022. CIM Shri Piyush Goyal released the CII Australia Economic Strategy Report in December 2020. The report gives a macro-overview of Australia, reviews Australia's business environment, highlights market opportunities in Australia for Indian products and delineates investment and cooperation opportunities in 12 focus sectors and 8 emerging sectors.
5. **The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement ("Ind Aus ECTA")** was signed on 2 April by CIM Hon. Shri Piyush Goyal and former Australian Trade and Tourism Minister Hon. Dan Tehan in a virtual ceremony, in the presence of PM Modi and former PM Hon. Scott Morrison. CIM Shri Piyush Goyal visited Australia from 5-8 April 2022 after the signing of ECTA.

C. Other Major Areas of Cooperation :

- India and Australia have signed multiple Agreements/ MoUs covering areas such as Education, Tourism, Defence Production, Environment, Industrial research, Development & Innovation, Space, Renewable Energy, Civil Aviation, and Cooperation in Geology/Mining.
- India and Australia also co-operate in various multilateral fora. Australia supports India's candidature in an expanded UN Security Council. Both India and Australia are members of the Commonwealth, IORA, ASEAN Regional Forum, Asia Pacific Partnership on Climate and Clean Development, International Solar Alliance, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, Indo-Pacific Economic Framework and have participated in the East Asia Summits. Both countries have also been cooperating as members of the Five Interested Parties (FIP) in the WTO context. Australia supports India's membership in the APEC. In 2008, Australia became an Observer in SAARC.
- The 18th India-Australia Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) was held on 11 March 2023 in New Delhi. The meeting was co-chaired by CIM Shri Piyush Goyal and Hon. Minister for Trade and Tourism Don Farrell.
- MoU on Technical Cooperation for Australia-India Water Security Initiative (AIWASI) was approved by Union Cabinet in June 2022.

- Australia has given market access for export of pomegranate fruits (8 September 2020) and pomegranate arils in July 2022. During the 1st Annual Summit on 10 March 2023, both PMs welcomed the finalization of market access for Australian Hass avocados to India and Indian okra to Australia.

Source: Prepared based on MEA's October, 2023 Report.