

**High Commission of India**  
**CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA**  
**India-Australia Bilateral Relations**

**India - Australia bilateral relations**

**Overview**

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. Several commonalities, including strong, vibrant, secular and multicultural democracies, free press, independent judicial system and English language, serve as a foundation for a closer co-operation and multifaceted 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 areas opening up new possibilities, both at bilateral as well as global level.

With greater convergence of views on various international issues such as international terrorism and shared approach to rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region, the two great democracies of the region have expanded their bilateral relationship into global partnerships in plurilateral formats, including the Quad.

**Historical Perspective**

The **historical ties** between India and Australia started immediately following European settlement in Australia from 1788. All trade to and fro from the penal colony of New South Wales was controlled by the British East India Company through Kolkata. India and Australia established diplomatic relations in the pre-Independence period, with the establishment of India Trade Office in Sydney in 1941. The end of the Cold War and simultaneously India's decision to launch major economic reforms in 1991 provided the first positive move towards development of closer ties between the two nations. With the passage of time, the relationship gained momentum towards a strategic relationship, alongside the existing economic engagement.

**India-Australia Strategic Relationship**

Australia and India upgraded bilateral relationship from '**Strategic Partnership**' in 2009 to **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP)** in 2020. Over the years, an array of institutional mechanism has been put in place to promote bilateral co-operation. Bilateral mechanisms include high level visits, Annual Meetings of Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue, 2+2 Defence and Foreign Ministers' Dialogue, Joint Trade & Commerce Ministerial Commission, Defence Policy Talks, Australia-India Education Council, Defence Services Staff Talks, Energy Dialogue, JWGs on different issues etc.

**High-Level Exchanges**

**First Ever President Visit to Australia:** India's relations with Australia reached a new high with the first ever visit of the President of India H.E. Shri Ram Nath Kovind to Australia on

21-24 November 2018. President unveiled the statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Parramatta in New South Wales as part of the 150th Birth Anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi, and addressed a large gathering of Indian diaspora and local community. Five MoUs were exchanged during the visit. President's visit to Australia was preceded by the visit of then Governor General of Australia H.E. Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Ret'd), to India, in March 2018, to attend the founding conference of the International Solar Alliance.

**Prime Ministerial Visits:** The two-way Prime Ministerial visits in 2014 gave significant momentum to the bilateral relationship. Former Prime Minister Hon. Tony Abbott visited India on 4-5 September 2014. During the visit, four Agreements/ MoUs were signed. Prime Minister of India Hon. Shri Narendra Modi visited Australia for G20 Leaders' Summit at Brisbane in November 2014, followed by a bilateral visit from 16-18 November 2014. During the visit, Hon. PM Modi held wide-ranging talks with the then PM Hon. Tony Abbott and addressed a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament, the first by an Indian PM. "Framework for Security cooperation between India and Australia" and five other Agreements/MoUs on Social security, Tourism, Arts & Culture, Sentenced persons and combating Narcotics were signed on this occasion.

Former Prime Minister Hon. Malcolm Turnbull paid a State Visit to India from 9-12 April 2017. Six bilateral agreements/MoUs on Cooperation in combating International terrorism & transnational organized crime, Health and Medicine, Sports, Environment, Climate and Wildlife, Civil Aviation society and Space technology were signed during the visit.

Hon. PM Modi had telephonic conversations with then Australian PM Hon. Scott Morrison on 18 February 2021, 7 May 2021 and 15 September 2021. Hon. PM Modi held a bilateral meeting on 23 September 2021 with Hon. PM Morrison in Washington DC. The Prime Ministers also met on 1 November 2021 in Glasgow on the sidelines of CoP26 Climate Summit. Together with other leaders they jointly launched the 'Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS)' at the World Leaders Summit at COP26 on 2 November 2021.

**India-Australia Leaders' Summit:** Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi and the Hon. Scott Morrison MP, former Prime Minister of Australia held India-Australia Leaders' Virtual Summit on 4 June 2020 where the bilateral Strategic Partnership concluded in 2009 was elevated to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP). Apart from a Joint Statement on CSP, the Summit also delivered eight landmark agreements/MoUs in various fields, including Maritime Cooperation in Indo-Pacific, Defence, Cyber Security, Education, Mining, Water Resource Management etc. In order to pursue the CSP, Foreign and Defence Ministers of both countries agreed to meet in a '2+2' format biennially.

Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi and the Hon. Scott Morrison, former Prime Minister of Australia held the **2<sup>nd</sup> India-Australia Virtual Summit** on 21 March 2022. A Joint Statement was issued at the conclusion of the Summit. The list of outcomes and documents announced/signed include:

1. Establishment of Annual Summit between India and Australia;
2. Establishment of General Rawat India-Australia Young Defence Officers' Exchange Programme;
3. Return of 29 artefacts by Government of Australia;
4. MoU on Co-Investment in Australian Critical Minerals Projects between Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL), India and Critical Minerals Facilitation Office (CMFO), Australia;
5. Letter of Intent regarding Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement;
6. Letter of Arrangement between India and Australia for Educational Qualifications Recognition;

7. MoU for cooperation and collaboration on broadcasting between Prasar Bharati, India and Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), Australia;
8. Matching funds as Australia of the amount of AUD 10 million for Pacific Island Countries under Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS) and;
9. Matching funds as Australia of the amount of AUD 10 million for Pacific Island Countries under International Solar Alliance (ISA).

**Leaders' Meetings:** Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi met the Hon. Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister of Australia on the sidelines of the Quad Leaders' Summit on 24 May 2022 and congratulated Hon. Prime Minister Albanese for his election victory. Both leaders reviewed the multi-faceted cooperation under the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. Hon. PM Narendra Modi met Hon. PM Anthony Albanese on the sidelines of funeral of former Japanese PM Shinzo Abe in Tokyo on 27 September 2022. Shri Narendra Modi held a bilateral meeting with PM Anthony Albanese on 16 November 2022 on the sidelines of G20 in Bali, Indonesia.

**Quad Leaders' Summit:** The first-ever Quad Leaders' Virtual Summit held on 12 March 2021 saw the participation of Prime Ministers of India, Australia, Japan and President of USA. Hon. PM Modi participated in the first in-person Quad Leaders' Summit in Washington D.C on 24 September 2021, Prime Ministers of India, Australia, Japan and USA met in Tokyo for the Quad Leaders' Summit on 24 May 2022.

**First 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogue:** Former Foreign Minister Hon. Marise Payne and Minister for Defence Hon. Peter Dutton met Hon. External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and Hon. Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh on 11 September 2021 in New Delhi for the First India-Australia 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue. A Joint Statement was issued at the conclusion of the Dialogue.

**Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue:** Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue (FMFD), the central mechanism for advancing the bilateral agenda, is held annually, alternatively in India and Australia. Former Foreign Minister Hon. Julie Bishop visited India on 18-19 July 2017 for the 11<sup>th</sup> FMFD in New Delhi. External Affairs Minister Hon. Dr. S. Jaishankar and former Foreign Minister Hon. Marise Payne held the 12<sup>th</sup> FMFD and 1<sup>st</sup> Foreign Ministers' Cyber Framework Dialogue in Melbourne on 12 February 2022. External Affairs Minister Hon. Dr. S. Jaishankar and Foreign Minister Hon. Penny Wong held the 13<sup>th</sup> FMFD in Canberra on 10 October 2022 during which bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interests were discussed.

**Foreign Minister's visits/interactions:** Former Foreign Minister Hon. Marise Payne visited India on 8-9 January 2019 for Raisina Dialogue and again on 15-16 January 2020 for participation at Raisina Dialogue. External Affairs Minister (EAM) Hon. Dr. S Jaishankar met former Foreign Minister Hon. Marise Payne four times in 2019 - on 10 July 2019 on the side-lines of Commonwealth Foreign Ministerial Meeting in London; on 2 August 2019 on the side-lines of ASEAN related meetings in Bangkok; on 26 September 2019 on the side-lines of UNGA in New York and 23 November 2019 on the side-lines of the G20 Foreign Ministers meeting in Nagoya, Japan. Hon. EAM met then FM Hon. Marise Payne in Tokyo on 6-7 October 2020 for 2<sup>nd</sup> Quad Foreign Ministerial Meeting. They also participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quad Ministerial (Virtual) meeting on 18 February 2021. Hon. EAM held Virtual Bilateral Talks on 6 May 2021 with then FM Marise Payne on the sidelines of G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in London. Hon. EAM, France's Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Hon. Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian and then FM Hon. Marise Payne met in London for the first India-France-Australia Trilateral Ministerial Dialogue on 4 May 2021, on the sidelines of the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting. Hon. EAM met then FM Hon. Marise Payne on 22 September, 2021 in New York on sidelines of UNGA.

Hon. EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar congratulated Foreign Minister of Australia (AFM) Hon. Penny Wong on the election victory in a telecon on 21 May 2022, which was followed by their meeting on the sidelines of the Quad Leaders' Summit on 23 May 2022 in Tokyo. Hon. EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar held bilateral talks with AFM Hon. Penny Wong in Phnom Penh on 4 August 2022 on the sidelines of the ASEAN Ministers' Meeting and again met in New York on the sidelines of High Level week of UNGA for India-Australia-France Trilateral Dialogue, India-Australia-Indonesia Trilateral Dialogue and Quad Foreign Ministerial Meeting on 23 September 2022. Hon. EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Australia on 9-12 October 2022 and met AFM Hon. Penny Wong for 13<sup>th</sup> FMFD and also held meetings with Deputy Prime Minister & Defence Minister Hon. Richard Marles and Education Minister Hon. Jason Clare during the visit.

**Addresses by EAM and FM:** Hon. EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar participated in the Sydney Dialogue session on 19 November 2021 on "Democracies and Global Technology Governance" with then FM Hon. Marise Payne and Nick Clegg, VP, Facebook. On 6 September 2021, Hon. EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar delivered the annual JG Crawford Oration at the Australian National University. AFM Hon. Penny Wong addressed the Australia India Business Council (AIBC) International Business Summit on 25 August 2022 in Sydney. Hon. EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar and AFM Hon. Penny Wong virtually addressed the Australia India Leadership Dialogue (AILD), held in New Delhi on 6 September 2022.

**Other Recent Ministerial visits:** A number of high-level delegations at the Ministerial level visited Australia during the last four years. Minister of Health & Family Welfare Shri J. P. Nadda visited Australia on 18-21 February 2018 to participate in the Inaugural Meeting of the Global Digital Health Partnership in Canberra and International Digital Health Symposium in Sydney. Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Shri Suresh Prabhu visited Canberra and Sydney on 24-26 June 2018 for the 15<sup>th</sup> India-Australia Joint Ministerial Commission, which was held on 25 June 2018 in Canberra. Shri Prakash Javadekar, Minister for Human Resource Development visited Australia from June 28 to July 03, 2018 and participated in the Fourth meeting of Australia-India Education Council. Minister of State for Home Affairs Shri G. Kishan Reddy visited Melbourne on 7-8 November 2019 for attending 'No Money for Terror Ministerial Conference'. A high-level delegation led by Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Shri Raosaheb Patil Danve visited Australia from 14-21 December 2019 in pursuance of a collaborative project on consumer protection.

Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Coal and Mines Shri Pralhad Joshi visited Australia from 3-8 July 2022 and held meeting with Hon. Madeleine King, Minister for Resources and Minister for Northern Australia to strengthen cooperation in critical minerals. Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy Shri R. K. Singh visited Australia on 11-16 July 2022, including for participation at the Sydney Energy Forum and for bilateral meeting with Hon. Chris Bowen, Minister for Climate Change and Energy. Minister of State for External Affairs & Culture Mrs. Meenakshi Lekhi visited Australia on 7-9 August 2022 and met Hon. Tanya Plibersek, Minister for the Environment and Water. She attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vishwa Sadhbhavana: A Gesture of Goodwill event and released two books 'Modi@20; Dreams meet Delivery' and 'Heartfelt: The Legacy of Faith'. Minister for Education, Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Shri Dharmendra Pradhan co-chaired the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Australia India Education Council with Hon. Jason Clare, Minister for Education and held a virtual meeting with Hon. Brendan O'Connor, Minister for Skills and Training during his visit to Australia on 21-24 August 2022. Minister of State for Ministry of Home Affairs Shri Nityanand Rai visited Australia to participate at Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (APMCDRR) on 19 - 20 September 2022 in Brisbane and held a bilateral meeting with Senator the Hon. Murray Watt, Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Minister for Emergency Management. Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Jal

Shakti Minister visited Australia on 4-8 October 2022 for participation at 73<sup>rd</sup> IEC and 24<sup>th</sup> ICID Congress and held bilateral meeting with Hon. Tanya Plibersek, Minister for the Environment and Water. Shri Nitin Gadkari, Minister for Road Transport and Highways visited Sydney from 20-22 October 2022 and met with Senator the Hon. Jenny McAllister, Assistant Minister for Climate Change & Energy and Senator the Hon. Tim Ayres, Assistant Minister for Trade and Manufacturing and discussed opportunities to strengthen ties in infrastructure development.

Australia's Minister for Resources and Northern Australia Hon. Matt Canavan visited India on 26-29 August 2019. Australia's then Education Minister Hon. Dan Tehan led a delegation of senior leaders from the education sector to India from 19 - 21 November 2019 and held meeting with Minister for Human Resource Development Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'. He also co-chaired the 5<sup>th</sup> Australia-India Education Council meeting along with his Indian counterpart in New Delhi. Australia's then Trade Minister Simon Birmingham visited India on 24-27 February 2020 for 16<sup>th</sup> Joint Ministerial Commission with India's Commerce Minister. A large business delegation (more than 100 Australian businesses and organisations) accompanied Minister Birmingham as part of Australia-India Business Exchange, a multi-month programme of events. Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan had a virtual meeting with Australian Health Minister Greg Hunt on 14 July 2020 where they discussed bilateral health cooperation including Covid-19 management. On 11 September 2020, Shri Pralhad Joshi, Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Minister of Mines and Minister of Coal had a virtual meeting with Hon. Keith Pitt, then Minister for Resources, Australia. Hon. Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution Shri Piyush Goyal held a virtual meeting with Hon. Dan Tehan, Australia's former Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism on 9 April 2021. On 27 April 2021, Hon. Minister of Commerce and Industry, Shri Piyush Goyal held a trilateral ministerial video-conference with Hon. Dan Tehan, Australia's former Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism and Japan's Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Hon. Kajiyama Hiroshi and launched the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative. Former PM Hon. Tony Abbott visited India in August 2021 as Special Trade Envoy of then PM Morrison and again visited India in December 2021.

Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Hon. Richard Marles visited India on 20-22 June, 2022 and held bilateral meetings with Hon. Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh and Hon. EAM. Deputy Premier of Western Australia, Hon. Roger Cook led a 110 member strong business delegation to India on 12-19 July 2022. Premier of New South Wales Hon. Dominic Perrottet visited India on 27-29 July 2022 and opened the NSW trade office in Mumbai. Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hon. Tim Watts MP, visited India from 15-19 November 2022 and led a delegation to Bengaluru Tech Summit. He also participated in 'No Money For Terror' Conference held at New Delhi. He met MOS for External Affairs Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi; MOS for Entrepreneurship, Skill Development, Electronics & Technology Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar; and Information & Broadcasting Minister Shri Anurag Thakur.

**Recent Interactions on sidelines of Multilateral Forums:** Speaker Shri Om Birla and President of the Senator the Hon. Sue Lines met in Halifax, Canada on the sidelines of the 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference 23 August 2022. Minister of Women and Child Development Smt. Smriti Irani met with Australian Minister for Finance, Public Service and Women's Affairs Senator the Hon. Katy Gallagher on the sidelines of G20 Ministerial Conference on Women Empowerment in Bali on 25 August 2022. Minister of Education Shri Dharmendra Pradhan met Hon. Anne Aly, Minister for Early Childhood Education and Minister of Youth, Australia in Bali on 2 September. Speaker Shri Om Birla and Speaker Hon. Milton Dick met on the sidelines of G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit in Jakarta on 6 October 2022. Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman met Senator the

Hon. Dr. Jim Chalmers, Treasurer on the sidelines of IMF-WB Annual Meetings in Washington DC on 14 October 2022. Minister of Health and Family Welfare Dr. Mansukh Mandviya met Senator the Hon. Malarndirri McCarthy, Assistant Minister for Indigenous Health on the sidelines of 2<sup>nd</sup> G20 Health Ministers' meeting at Bali on 28 October 2022. Commerce and Industry Minister Shri Piyush Goyal held a virtual meeting with Trade Minister Hon. Don Farrell MP on 31 October 2022. Shri Bhupender Yadav, Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate changes co-chaired the negotiations on climate finance with Hon. Chris Bowen, Minister for Industry, Energy, and Emissions Reduction of Australia in COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh in November 2022. Raksha Minister Shri Rajnath Singh met Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Hon. Richard Marles MP at Siem Reap, Cambodia on the sidelines of the 9th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus) on 22nd November 2022.

### **Various Dialogue Mechanisms**

Various institutional dialogue mechanisms include Annual Meetings of Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue, Joint Trade & Commerce Ministerial Commission, India-Australia '2+2' Foreign Secretaries and Defence Secretaries Dialogue, Defence Policy Talks, Australia-India Education Council, Defence Services Staff Talks, Energy Dialogue, India-Australia-Japan Trilateral Dialogue, India-Australia-Indonesia Trilateral Dialogue, India-France-Australia Trilateral Dialogue, India-Australia Bilateral Dialogue on Global Cyber Issues, India-Australia Maritime Dialogue, India-Australia Economic Policy Dialogue, India-Australia Dialogue on Disarmament, Non-proliferation and Export Control as well as Joint Working Groups on Tourism, Counter-Terrorism, Water Resources, Agriculture, Skill Development etc.

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.

### **Bilateral Economic and Trade Relationship**

The India-Australia economic relationship has grown significantly in recent years. India's growing economic profile and commercial relevance to the Australian economy is recognized, both at the Federal and State level in Australia. 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.

**The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement ("IndAus 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 Hon. PM Modi and former PM Hon. Scott Morrison. Hon. CIM Shri Piyush Goyal visited Australia from 5-8 April 2022 after the signing of ECTA. The visit included engagements with Trade Minister

Hon. Dan Tehan, Hon. Jason Wood, Assistant Minister for Customs, Community Safety and Multicultural Affairs, Hon. Alex Hawke, Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Hon. Roger Cook, Deputy Premier of Western Australia and Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade, Tourism, Commerce and Science and Hon. Madeleine King, then Shadow Trade Minister. CIM also held meetings with Australian business & CEOs and the Indian community in Australia. Australian Parliament has ratified the agreement on 22 November 2022 and entered into force from 29 December 2022.

**India-Australia Joint Ministerial Commission: India-Australia Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC)** was established in 1989 to enable interaction at a government and business level on a range of trade and investment related issues. JMC meetings are held regularly. Hon. Minister of Commerce and Industry (CIM) Shri Piyush Goyal and former Trade and Tourism Minister Hon. Dan Tehan co-chaired the 17<sup>th</sup> India-Australia Joint Ministerial Commission meeting in New Delhi on 30 September 2021.

**Bilateral Trade:** India is 9<sup>th</sup> largest trading partner of Australia. During 2021, Bilateral trade in goods and services with India was US\$ 27.5 billion, with exports of goods and services worth US\$ 10.5 billion and imports of goods and services worth US\$ 17 billion; Balance of trade is in favour of Australia by US\$ 6.5 billion. India's merchandise exports to Australia grew 135% between 2019 and 2021. India's main exports to Australia are refined petroleum, medicaments (incl. veterinary), pearls & gems, jewellery, made-up textile articles, women's clothing (excl knitted), other textile clothing, manufactures of base metal, 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.

**India-Australia CEO Forum** is a mechanism for business from both nations to engage directly on ways to build the bilateral trade and investment relationship (It was established in 2011 and revitalised in November 2014). The Forum includes heads of Indian and Australian business from a broad range of sectors, including energy and resources, agribusiness, financial sector, telecommunications, IT, education and pharmaceuticals. The last meeting (CEO Dialogue) was held in Sydney in November 2018 during the visit of Hon. President of India to Australia. Hon. CIM launched the India-Australia Business Champions with then Trade and Tourism Minister Hon. Dan Tehan on 27 September 2021.

**Economic Policy Dialogue:** A two - member delegation led by Mr. Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Ayog visited Australia (Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne) from 29 April to 01 May 2019 for the 1<sup>st</sup> Treasury – NITI Ayog Economic Policy Dialogue. The 2nd NITI Ayog - Australian Treasury Dialogue was held virtually on 10 December 2020.

### **Civil Nuclear Cooperation**

A Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement between the two countries was signed in September 2014 during the visit of the Australian Prime Minister to India. The agreement came into force from 13 November 2015. The Australian Parliament passed the “Civil Nuclear Transfer to India Bill 2016” on 01 December, 2016 which allows that Uranium mining companies in Australia to fulfil contracts to supply Australian uranium to India for civil use with confidence that exports would not be hindered by domestic legal action challenging the consistency of the safeguards applied by the IAEA in India and Australia's international non-proliferation obligations. It also ensures that any future bilateral trade in other nuclear-related material or items for civil use will also be protected.

## **Defence Cooperation**

During PM Modi's visit to Australia in November 2014, both sides decided to extend defence cooperation to cover research, development and industry engagement and agreed to hold regular meetings at the level of the Defence Minister, conduct regular maritime exercises and convene regular service-to-service talks. Australian Defence Minister Hon. Kevin Andrews visited India on 1-3 September 2015 for bilateral talks.

CNS Admiral RK Dhowan visited Australia during 2-7 October 2015, attended Sea Power Conference 2015 in Sydney and signed a Technical Agreement on White Shipping Information Exchange. In October 2013, Australian Navy conducted an International Fleet Review in Sydney where Indian Navy's ship INS Sahyadri participated. Indian Coastguard Ship 'Sankalp' visited Port Darwin in the first week of December 2014 and two Indian ships, INS Satpura and INS Kamorta visited Fremantle Port, Perth, in the first week of June 2015 as a goodwill visit. Indian Naval Offshore Patrol vessel 'Sumitra' visited Sydney on 4-7 November 2016 and Darwin on 6-9 December 2016. The first-ever Bilateral Maritime Exercise, AUSINDEX 15, was conducted in Visakhapatnam and the Bay of Bengal in September 2015. Australian Naval ship HMAS Darwin participated in the International Fleet Review conducted off the coast of Vishakhapatnam on 4-8 February 2016. Chief of Royal Australian Navy, Vice Admiral Tim Barrett and a thirty-men military band participated in IFR 2016.

The second bilateral maritime exercise, AUSINDEX 2017 was conducted off the coast of Fremantle, Australia during 17-19 June 2017 in which three Indian Naval Ships, Shivalik, Kamorta and Jyoti participated. Vice-Admiral and Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Naval Command HCS Bisht also visited Australia during this period. AUSINDEX 2019 was held in April 2019 in Visakhapatnam. Indian Coast Guard Ship 'Vaibhav' visited Darwin, Australia in February 2017 as part of its tri-nation tour to Singapore, Australia and Malaysia. An Australian Naval ship HMAS Larrakia participated in 'MILAN' Naval exercise in Andaman & Nicobar Islands in March 2018. In 2018, Indian Air Force participated for the first time in the Exercise Pitch Black in Australia from 27 July – 17 August. INS Sahyadri participated in Kakadu, the biennial Exercise of the Australian Navy held from 30 August to 15 September, 2018, in which 27 nations participated. The third edition of AUSTRALIND (Special Forces of Army Exercise) was held in September 2018.

Australia's Chief of Defence Force Angus Campbell visited India on 7 - 11 January 2019 to participate in the Raisina Dialogue. Air Marshal Gavin Neil Davies, Chief of the Air Force, Royal Australian Air Force visited India during 4-7 February 2019. Admiral Karamvir Singh, Chief of Naval Staff visited Australia from 2- 4 September 2019. In October-November 2020, the Australian Navy participated in Malabar Exercises. India participated in the French-led naval exercises La Perouse in April 2021 in Bay of Bengal along with Australia, USA and Japan Arrangement concerning Mutual Logistics Support (MLSA) and Implementing Arrangement concerning cooperation in Defence Science and Technology to the MoU on Defence Cooperation were concluded during the Virtual Summit held in June 2020.

Navies of India, Australia, Japan and the USA also participated in Phase I of Exercise Malabar 2021 from 26-29 August 2021 off Guam and in Phase II in the Bay of Bengal from 12-15 October 2021. India participated as an Observer in Exercise Talisman Sabre 2021 in July 2021.

Vice Admiral Michael Noonan, Chief of Navy visited India in March 2022. Australia participated in Exercise Milan in March 2022 in Vizag. Lt General Rick Burr, Chief of Australian Army visited India in March 2022. General Angus J Campbell and Mr Greg



Moriarty, Secretary of the Department of Defence visited India in April 2022. Air Marshal Mel Hupfield, Chief of Royal Australian Air force visited India in May 2022. Indian Ship INS Sumedha visited Fremantle port in Perth on 15-17 August 2022 to celebrate [India@75](#). Indian Air force participated in Exercise Pitch Black in Northern Territory from 18 August-9 September 2022. Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff visited Australia on 25-29 September 2022. INS Satpura participated at the multinational Exercise KAKADU in Darwin in September 2022. A Maritime Partnership Exercise involving Royal Australian Navy (RAN) ships HMAS Adelaide and HMAS Anzac and Indian Navy Ships Jalashwa and Kavaratti along with their embarked helicopters was held in the Bay of Bengal from 02 to 03 November 2022 as part of Australia's Indo-Pacific Endeavour 2022 (IPE 22). 2nd India-Australia JWG meeting on Research, Industry and Materiel Cooperation was held at Canberra on 22nd November 2022. India-Australia Joint Military Exercise AUSTRAHIND 2022 was held in Rajasthan from 28 November to 11 December 2022 between Indian Army and the Australian Army, first exercise in the series of AUSTRAHIND with participation of all arms and services contingent from both armies.

### **Agriculture, Science & Technology**

India-Australia S&T cooperation was formalized through Inter-Governmental Agreement signed in October 1986 between Department of Science & Technology (DST) and Department of Industry, Australia. Australia-India Strategic Research Fund (AISRF), which was established in 2006, supports collaboration between scientists in India and Australia on cutting-edge research. AISRF consists of India Australia Biotechnology Fund; India-Australia Science & Technology Fund; Grand Challenge Fund and Fellowship Schemes. The fund, where each side contributes equally, supports large-scale research projects designed to deliver practical solutions, focussing on energy, food and water security, health and the environment. Joint Committees on S&T and Biotechnology have been established to administer the Fund. The fifth meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) on cooperation in Agriculture was held virtually on 3 December 2020. The JWG meeting on cooperation in Water Resources was held virtually on 22 September 2020. The last JWG meeting on Science and Technology was held in Canberra in September 2019.

Pursuant to the commitment made by India and Australia during the Virtual Leaders' Summit in June 2020, to have AISRF Special COVID-19 Round in 2020, the AISRF Covid-19 special round projects (on Covid19 screening & diagnostic testing and cardiac marker) were announced in December 2020. Grants for round 14 of the AISRF were announced in March 2022, including in areas of quantum technologies, earth observation remote sensing, groundwater resources management and downstream processing, recycling and tailings reclamation of critical minerals, COVID-19 long-term health impacts, Infection prevention and control, Digital health and telemedicine, Biomaterials (including bioplastics).

### **Resources & Energy Security**

Shri Piyush Goyal, then Minister of State (I/C) for Coal, Power and New & Renewable Energy, accompanied by a business delegation, visited Australia during 8-11 February 2016 to participate in the India-Australia Energy Security Dialogue, jointly chaired by him and the then Minister of Resources, Energy and Northern Australia Hon. Josh Frydenberg. He also held bilateral talks with Hon. Andrew Robb, the then Minister for Trade and Investment, NSW Premier Hon. Mike Baird and attended the five Roundtable events on Energy Security and renewable energy issues. Shri Goyal again led a delegation to Australia in October 2016 for bilateral discussion with Federal Minister for Resources Hon. Matthew Canavan and addressed the Roundtable events on Clean Energy renewables and LNG. Pursuant to the MoU on cooperation in the field of mining and processing of Critical and Strategic minerals concluded during the Leaders' Virtual Summit in June 2020, the first meeting of the JWG

was held virtually on 26 November 2020. During her visit to India in July 2017, then Foreign Minister Ms Julie Bishop signed a Framework Agreement for Australia to join the International Solar Alliance, led by the Governments of India and France. Following the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, Australia announced a funding of AUD 1 million to the ISA and AUD 10 million to the CDRI.

The Fourth India-Australia Energy Dialogue was held virtually on 15 February 2022 and was chaired by Shri Raj Kumar Singh, Hon. Minister of Power, New and Renewable Energy and Mr. Angus Taylor, Hon. Minister for Industry, Energy and Emission Reduction. Both Ministers signed a Letter of Intent on New and Renewable Energy Technology wherein both sides committed to work together on reducing the cost of ultra low-cost solar and clean hydrogen.

During Leaders' Summit in March 2022, matching funds of the amount of AUD 10 million for Pacific Island Countries under Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS) and of AUD 10 million for Pacific Island Countries under International Solar Alliance (ISA) were announced by India.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Virtual Leaders' Summit held on 21 March 2022, an MOU on Co-Investment in Australian Critical Minerals Projects was signed between Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL), India and Critical Minerals Facilitation Office (CMFO) Australia. To advance cooperation in critical minerals, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Coal and Mines of India, Shri Pralhad Joshi visited Australia on 3-8 July 2022 and held meeting with Hon. Madeleine King, Minister for Resources and Minister for Northern Australia and also interacted with key businesses. The 3<sup>rd</sup> JWG on cooperation in the field of Mining and processing of Critical & Strategic Minerals was held on the sidelines of International Mining and Resources Conference & Expo (IMARC) on 1 November 2022 in Sydney.

### **Education, Sports, Art & Culture**

The number of Indian students currently enrolled for studying in Australia is estimated at around 77,000. Under the New Colombo Plan of Australian Government, Australian undergraduates have studied and completed internships in India.

India and Australia signed an Educational Exchange Programme (EEP) in 2003.

Pursuant to the signing of the new Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training, the Joint Working Group Meeting between India (Ministry for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship) and Australia (Dept. of Education, Skills and Employment) was held virtually on 26 November 2020.

**Australia-India Education Council meeting:** Shri Prakash Javadekar, then Minister for Human Resource Development (HRM) visited Australia from 28 June- 3 July 2018 to participate in the fourth meeting of Australia-India Education Council (AIEC). Australia's former Education Minister Hon. Den Tehan led a delegation of senior leaders from the education sector to India from 19-21 November, 2019 and held meeting with Minister for Human Resource Development Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'. He also co-chaired 5th Australia-India Education Council meeting along with his Indian counterpart in New Delhi. Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister for Education & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship visited Australia during 21-24 August, 2022 and co-chaired the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of Australia-India Education Council (AIEC) with Hon. Jason Clare, Minister for Education of Australia. A Letter of Intent (LoI) was signed by University of Wollongong and handed over to Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) on 27 July 2022. University of Wollongong would be first Australian University to set up its campus in India.

The Ministry of Ayush announced setting up of Ayurveda Academic Chair based at Western Sydney University's NICM Health Research Institute on 22nd November 2022 and Dr. Rajagopala S., Associate Professor & Head (Department of Kaumarabhritya) All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), New Delhi was selected for the post of Academic Chair in the University.

A MoU on Cooperation in Sports was signed during visit of former PM Turnbull to India in April 2017. A MoU in the field of Tourism was signed between the two countries during the visit of PM Modi to Australia in November 2014 and was renewed in February 2022. JWG meeting on Tourism was held in April 2019 in Australia.

Confluence, the Festival of India in Australia was held in 2016 and Confluence 2 was held in 2017. Hon. Dr. Mahesh Sharma, the then Minister of State (I/C) for Culture and Tourism visited Australia on 18-19 September 2016 for the inauguration of the Festival. A Festival of India was held in Australia during 6-17 October 2022, involving multi city performances by ICCR sponsored Vande Bharat dance troupes namely Margam and Pavitra Bhatt in Canberra, Melbourne and Sydney.

**Repatriation of Indian Cultural Artifacts:** Nine artefacts have been successfully repatriated to India. They include Bronje Idol of Nataraja from Art Gallery of South Australia (AGSA) (2019), Nagaraja stone sculpture (2020), two Dwarpala stone sculptures (2020). Australia also repatriated 29 stolen artefacts in March 2022, in advance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Virtual Leaders' Summit.

### **Consular Cooperation, People to People linkages**

The Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) and the Extradition Treaty between India and Australia, which were signed in June 2008, have been ratified by both Governments, and have entered into force on 20 January 2011. A Joint Working Group on Visas, Passports, and Consular Matters was established during the visit of then Foreign Minister Hon. Stephen Smith to India in September 2008. The 5<sup>th</sup> India-Australia JWG was held in Canberra during 20-21 October 2015. India and Australia signed a Social Security Agreement on the eve of our PM's visit to Australia in November 2014. The Agreement has been ratified by both countries and came into force with effect from 1 January 2016.

A Letter of Intent regarding Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (MMPA) was signed during Leaders' Summit in March 2022. Mutual Recognition of COVID-19 Vaccination Certificates between India and Australia was concluded in November 2021.

### **Indian Community in Australia**

The Indian community in Australia continues to grow in size and importance, with the population of about 7,80,000 (Census 2021). India is one of the top sources of skilled immigrants to Australia. The number of Indian students continue to grow with more than 77,000 students presently studying in Australian universities. There is a constant flow of students and tourists from India. After England, India is the second largest migrant group in Australia (2021). The growing significance of the community is reflected in the large-scale celebration of Indian festivals in Australia

**Source: High Commission of India, Australia Web site Dec 2022**