

Consulate General of India Brisbane

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. 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.

Historical Perspective

The **historical ties** between India and Australia started immediately following European settlement in Australia from 1788. All trade to and 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.

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, JWG's 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 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, 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.

PM Modi had telephonic conversations with then Australian PM Hon. Scott Morrison on 18 February 2021, 7 May 2021 and 15 September 2021. 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.

Virtual Meetings between Leaders: Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi and the Hon. Scott Morrison MP, former Prime Minister of Australia held a virtual meeting 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 virtual interaction also delivered eight landmark agreements/MoUs in various fields, including Maritime Cooperation in Indo-Pacific, Defence, Cyber Security, Education, Mining, Water Resource Management etc. Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi and the Hon. Scott Morrison, former Prime Minister of Australia held virtual meeting on 21 March 2022. A Joint Statement was issued at the conclusion of the meeting. The list of outcomes and documents announced/signed include:

- Establishment of Annual Summit between India and Australia;
- Establishment of General Rawat India-Australia Young Defence Officers' Exchange Programme;
- Return of 29 artefacts by Government of Australia;
- MoU on Co-Investment in Australian Critical Minerals Projects between Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL), India and Critical Minerals Facilitation Office (CMFO), Australia;
- Letter of Intent regarding Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement;
- Letter of Arrangement between India and Australia for Educational Qualifications Recognition;
- MoU for cooperation and collaboration on broadcasting between Prasar Bharati, India and Special Broadcasting Service (SBS), Australia;
- Matching funds as Australia of the amount of AUD 10 million for Pacific Island Countries under Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS) and;
- 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 Hon. PM Anthony Albanese on 16 November 2022 on the sidelines of G20 in Bali, Indonesia. Hon. Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister of Australia participated in the G20 Virtual Summit held on 22 November 2023.

Visit of PM Albanese to India: Hon. Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister of Australia paid a 3-day State visit to India from 8-11 March 2023. Hon. PM Narendra Modi and Hon. Prime Minister Albanese held the **1st India-Australia Annual Summit** in New Delhi on 10 March 2023. The outcomes of the Annual Summit, interalia, include Audio-visual Co-production Agreement; Terms of Reference for India-Australia Solar Taskforce and Letter of Intent between Atal Innovation Mission and Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) for furthering cooperation in Innovation.

Hon. Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister of Australia visited India from 8-10 September 2023 to participate in the G20 Summit in New Delhi. He also had a pull-aside meeting with PM Modi.

Visit of PM Narendra Modi to Australia: Hon. PM Narendra Modi visited Sydney on 22-24 May 2023. During the visit, both PMs held the bilateral meeting on 24 May, exactly 1 year after their first meeting in Tokyo in 2022 on the sidelines of Quad Leaders' Summit. This was the 6th meeting at the level of PMs since Hon. PM Albanese assumed office in May 2022 and came just 2 months after the State visit of Hon. PM Albanese to India in March 2023. The outcomes of the meeting included signing/exchange of Migration and Mobility Partnership Arrangement (MMPA) and Terms of Reference of Taskforce on Green Hydrogen, announcement to open a new Consulate General of India in Brisbane and opening of Australian Consulate General in Bengaluru. Hon. PM Albanese also attended and addressed the vibrant Indian-Australian community at the Qudos Bank Arena. He announced establishment of Centre for Australia-India Relations in Parramatta, Sydney. Both PMs laid the Foundation Stone of Little India Gateway to be established in Harris Park, Parramatta. Nelson Avenue in Perth was renamed as Sailani Avenue to honor the sacrifice of Private Nain Singh Sailani during World War I. Sydney Opera House and Harbor Bridge were illuminated with colour of Tiranga. During the visit, PM Modi also met with H.E. General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor General and Hon. Peter Dutton MP, Leader of Opposition, addressed a Business Roundtable, in addition to meeting with select CEOs and key personalities in diverse fields.

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 and again at the Quad Leaders' Summit in Hiroshima on 20 May 2023.

2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogue: Former Foreign Minister Hon. Marise Payne and Minister for Defence Hon. Peter Dutton met External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and 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.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, Hon. Richard Marles and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator the Hon. Penny Wong met Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar on 20 November 2023 in New Delhi for the Second 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 11th FMFD in New Delhi. External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and former Foreign Minister Hon. Marise Payne held the 12th FMFD and 1st Foreign Ministers' Cyber Framework Dialogue in Melbourne on 12 February 2022. External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and Foreign Minister Hon. Penny Wong held the 13th FMFD in Canberra on 10 October 2022 during which bilateral, regional, and multilateral issues of mutual interests were discussed. The 14th FMFD was held in New Delhi on 21 November 2023 during the visit of Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator the Hon. Penny Wong to India on 20-21 November 2023.

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) 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. EAM met then FM Hon. Marise Payne in Tokyo on 6-7 October 2020 for 2nd Quad Foreign Ministerial Meeting. They also participated in the 3rd Quad Ministerial (Virtual) meeting on 18 February 2021. EAM held Virtual Bilateral Talks on 6 May 2021 with then FM Marise Payne on the sidelines of G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in London. 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. EAM met then FM Hon. Marise Payne on 22 September 2021 in New York on sidelines of UNGA.

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. 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. EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Australia on 9-12 October 2022 and met AFM Hon. Penny Wong for 13th FMFD and held meetings with Deputy Prime Minister & Defence Minister Hon. Richard Marles and Education Minister Hon. Jason Clare during the visit.

EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Sydney on 18 February 2023 and met Hon. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Hon. Richard Marles and AFM Hon. Penny Wong. EAM delivered Keynote address at inaugural Raisina@Sydney.

AFM Hon. Penny Wong visited New Delhi from 28 February-3 March 2023 and participated at the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting and Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting. Hon. EAM met AFM Hon. Penny Wong in Sydney on 24 May 2023, on the margins of the visit of PM Modi. EAM, along with AFM Hon. Penny Wong and Indonesia's Foreign Affairs Minister Hon. Retno Marsudi held a trilateral meeting on 12 July 2023 on the sidelines on ASEAN engagements in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Both Foreign Ministers met for Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting during UNGA High level week on 22 September 2023. EAM held a meeting with AFM Hon. Wong on the margins of UNGA in New York on 23 September 2023.

EAM and AFM Hon. Penny Wong held the 14th FMFD in New Delhi on 21 November 2023 and discussed bilateral and regional issues of mutual interest.

Addresses by EAM and FM: 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, 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. 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. EAM delivered Keynote address at inaugural Raisina@Sydney on 18 February 2023 during his visit to Sydney. EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar and AFM Hon. Penny Wong virtually addressed the Australia India Leadership Dialogue (AILD), held in Melbourne on 23 November 2023.

Other Recent Ministerial visits: Several high-level delegations at the Ministerial level visited Australia during the last two years. 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 2nd 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 6th 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 73rd IEC and 24th 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. Shri Harivansh, Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha visited Australia from 3-7 January 2023 and participated at the 26th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth in Canberra. Shri V. Muraleedharan, Minister of State for External Affairs & Culture visited Sydney, Melbourne and Perth in February 2023 and held bilateral meetings and interacted with Indian diaspora. Shri G.C Murmu, Comptroller & Auditor General visited Australia on 17-22 April 2023 and met Auditor-General of Australia Grant Hehir. He also delivered Keynote address at the IMPACT 2023 Conference in Canberra. Minister of State for Mines, Coal and Railways Shri Raosaheb Patil Danve visited Australia from 31 October- 2 November 2023 and participated in the International Mining and Resources Conference (IMARC) in Sydney. During the visit, he met Minister for Resources and Northern Australia Hon. Madeleine King and Assistant Minister for Trade and Manufacturing Senator Tim Ayres.

Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Hon. Richard Marles visited India on 20-22 June 2022 and held bilateral meetings with Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh and EAM. Then Deputy Premier of Western Australia Hon. Roger Cook led a 110-member strong business delegation to India on 12-19 July 2022. Then 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. Hon. Jim Chalmers, Treasurer visited Bengaluru on 23-25 February 2023 and participated at the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG). He also held bilateral meeting with Hon. Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman. AFM Hon. Penny Wong visited India on 28 February- 3 March 2023, participated at the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting, Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting and Raisina Dialogue and also held bilateral meeting with Hon. EAM. Hon. Education Minister Jason Clare visited India on 28 February- 4 March 2023 and held bilateral meeting with Hon. Minister of Education and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Shri Dharmendra Pradhan. Both Ministers signed the Mechanism for Mutual Recognition of Educational Qualifications on 2 March 2023. Senator Don Farrell, Minister for Trade and Tourism visited India and held the 18th Joint Ministerial Commission meeting with Hon. CIM Shri Piyush Goyal on 11 March 2023. The CEO Forum was held on 9 March 2023 in Mumbai. Hon. MP Madeleine King, Minister for Resources visited India on 8-12 March 2023 and held a bilateral meeting with Hon. Minister of Mines Shri Pralhad Joshi to strengthen cooperation in critical minerals. Hon. MP Tim Watts, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs visited India on 17-18 May 2023 and inaugurated the Australian Consulate General in Kolkata. He also launched the Australia-India Youth Dialogue 2023. Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry and Emergency Management Senator Hon Murray Watt led a delegation, including 12 senior Australian agribusiness representatives, to India from 2-5 July 2023, and held high-level meetings in Delhi and Mumbai. Treasurer Hon Dr. Jim Chalmers visited India from 16-

18 July 2023 to attend the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meetings in Gandhinagar. Minister for Skills and Training Hon. Brendan O'Connor travelled to New Delhi and Indore, India to participate in the G20 Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting. Minister for Climate Change and Energy Hon. Chris Bowen visited India from 20-23 July 2023 and again from 27-29 July 2023 to participate in the G20 Mission Innovation and Clean Energy Ministerial Meeting on 21 July, G20 Energy Transitions Ministerial Meeting on 22 July, and Environment and Climate Sustainability Ministerial Meeting on 28 July. Minister for Health and Aged Care Hon. Mark Butler attended the G20 Health Ministers' Meeting in Gandhinagar from 17-23 August 2023 and held meeting with Minister for Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Shri Dharmendra Pradhan on key health issues in New Delhi on 21 August. Assistant Minister for Trade and Manufacturing Senator Hon Tim Ayres visited India on 24-27 August 2023 to attend the G20 Trade and Investment Ministers' Meeting in Jaipur, and the B20 Business Summit in New Delhi. A Parliamentary delegation led by Speaker of the House of Representatives Hon. Milton Dick visited India from 7-14 October 2023. Speaker Milton Dick and President of the Senate Senator Sue Lines participated in the G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit (P20) held in New Delhi on 13-14 October 2023. Minister of Education Hon. Jason Clare visited India and co-chaired the 1st Australia India Education and Skill Council (AIESC) meeting with Minister of Education Shri Dharmendra Pradhan in Gandhinagar on 6 November 2023. Minister for Skills Hon. Brendan O'Connor joined the AIESC virtually. Ministers welcomed the building of the campuses of University of Wollongong and Deakin University at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City)

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 on 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 2nd 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 and Skills 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. 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 PM Modi and former PM Hon. Scott Morrison. 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, then 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. Legislation on DTAA, alongside ECTA passed in Australian Parliament and came into effect with the Entry into Force of ECTA. The Indian IT companies will not be double taxed with effect from the financial year 2023-24. Both sides are also engaged in negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA).

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. Minister of Commerce and

Industry (CIM) Shri Piyush Goyal and former Trade and Tourism Minister Hon. Dan Tehan co-chaired the 17th India-Australia Joint Ministerial Commission meeting in New Delhi on 30 September 2021.

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.

Bilateral Trade: India is Australia's sixth largest trading partner. Bilateral trade between India and Australia increased from US\$ 22.2 billion in 2021 to US\$ 31.4 billion in 2022, registering a growth of 41%. India's total exports to Australia grew by 38% from US\$ 6.3 billion in 2021 to US\$ 8.7 billion. Similarly, Australia's exports to India grew by 42% from US\$ 15.9 billion in 2021 to US\$ 22.5 billion.

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.

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. CIM launched the India-Australia Business Champions with then Trade and Tourism Minister Hon. Dan Tehan on 27 September 2021. The CEO Forum was chaired by CIM Shri Piyush Goyal and Hon. Don Farrell, Minister for Trade and Tourism on 9 March 2023 in Mumbai, during the visit of Hon. PM Albanese to India.

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 1st 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. CNS Admiral RK Dhowan signed a Technical Agreement on White Shipping Information Exchange during his visit to Australia in October 2015.

The Bilateral Maritime Exercise, AUSINDEX was conducted in Sydney on 22-25 August 2023. Australia participated in Exercise Milan in 2018, 2020, 2021 and 2022. Indian ships participated in Kakadu, the biennial Exercise of the Australian Navy held from 30 August to 15 September 2018 (in which 27 nations participated) and in September 2022. Indian Air force participated in Exercise PITCHBLACK in 2018 and in September 2022. India participated in the French-led naval exercises La Perouse in April 2021 in Bay of Bengal along with Australia, USA and Japan. India participated in Exercise MALABAR conducted in Sydney on 10-22 August 2023 with two Indian Naval Ships and P8I maritime aircraft. There have been multiple visits of P8 maritime aircraft between both sides. A P-8I maritime patrol aircraft was deployed to Darwin in April 2022 and conducted coordinated exercises with a Royal Australian Air Force P-8A Poseidon aircraft. Reciprocal deployment of Royal Australian Air Force P-8A Poseidon aircraft was done in Goa in June 2022 and in Chennai in June-July 2023. Indian P8I participated for the first time in the multinational Kakadu exercise held in Darwin in September 2022. A P-8I maritime patrol aircraft participated in the coordinated operations with RAAF strengthening Maritime Domain Awareness in Darwin on 7-15 April 2023. 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 Leaders' virtual meeting held in June 2020.

Vice Admiral Hark Hammond, Chief of Navy visited India in March 2023. Lt General Simon Stuart, Chief of Australian Army visited India on 24-27 September 2023 and attended Indo-Pacific Army Chief's Conference (IPACC) held in New Delhi. General Angus J Campbell Chief of Defence Force visited India in April 2022 and March 2023 to participate in Raisina Dialogue. 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. 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). 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. AUSTRAHIND 2023 is scheduled in Perth on 22 November-7 December as first iteration with participation of triservices. The 11th IAF-RAAF Staff Talks was held in Australia in May 2022. The 15th Naval Talks were held on 1-3 May 2023 in Australia. 8th Defence Policy Talks were held in Canberra on 24 July 2023. The Army-to-Army Staff Talks was held in Perth from 4-6 October 2023. 3rd India-Australia JWG meeting on Research, Industry and Materiel Cooperation was held in New Delhi on 18 August 2023. India participated at Sea Power Conference 2023, Air & Space Power Conference 2022, and Army Chief Symposium. Chief of Naval Staff visited Australia in September 2022. Chief of Army Staff visited Australia on 3-7 April 2023.

Establishment of General Rawat India-Australia Young Defence Officers' Exchange Programme was announced during Virtual meeting in March 2022 under which 15 Australian Defence Force officers joined 15 Indian Defence Force personnel for the first iteration of the program in March 2023 in India. India participated in the 2021 and 2023 edition of EX TALISMAN SABRE as Observers. INS Vagir, India's Scorpene submarine, on its extended range deployment visited Australia from 21-28 August 2023 and participated in various exercises with Royal Australian Navy.

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. 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 finalisation of market access for Australian Hass avocados to India and Indian okra to Australia.

Pursuant to the commitment made by India and Australia during the Leaders' virtual meeting 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). Call for applications for Round 15 of the AISRF was announced on 16 January 2023.

In 2012, the India-Australia MoU on Cooperation in Civil Space Science, Technology and Education was signed. On 10 December 2021, ISRO and ASA signed the Implementing Arrangement (IA) on "Cooperation on establishing and operating transportable Telemetry terminals in Cocos Island, Australia for the Human Space Flight Mission". Mr. Enrico Palermo, Head of ASA visited India on 4-10 September 2022 and participated at Space Expo in Bengaluru.

AIM (Atal Innovation Mission), NITI Ayog in association with CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation) launched the I-ACE hackathon on 16 October 2020 on virtual mode. Letter of Intent between Atal Innovation Mission and Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) for Furthering Cooperation in Innovation was signed during the 1st India-Australia Annual Summit on 10 March 2023. The Australia-India Rapid Innovation and Startup Expansion (RISE) Accelerator was launched on 21 November 2023 to help Indian and Australian startups with mature cutting-edge technology fast-track their cross-border impact. The program will support startups working on climate smart agriculture, clean energy, waste and circular economy and climate smart mobility.

Resources & Energy Security

Pursuant to the MoU on cooperation in the field of mining and processing of Critical and Strategic minerals concluded during the Leaders' virtual meeting in June 2020, the first meeting of the JWG was held virtually on 26 November 2020. The Fourth India-Australia Energy Dialogue was held virtually on 15 February 2022 and was chaired by Shri Raj Kumar Singh, 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 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. During Leaders' virtual meeting 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 1st India-Australia Annual Summit on 10 March 2023, the Terms of Reference for India-Australia Solar Taskforce were announced. A Renewable Energy Partnership was also announced. The Terms of Reference for India-Australia Green Hydrogen Task Force was signed on 23 May 2023 during the visit of Hon. PM Modi to Sydney. Co-chairs have been appointed in both Taskforces by both sides.

Critical Minerals

During the Leaders' virtual meeting 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 interacted with key businesses. The 3rd 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. Minister of State for Mines, Coal and Railways Shri Raosaheb Patil Danve visited Australia from 31 October- 2 November 2023 and participated in the International Mining and Resources

Conference (IMARC) in Sydney. During the visit, he met Minister for Resources and Northern Australia Hon. Madeleine King and Assistant Minister for Trade and Manufacturing Senator Tim Ayres and discussed cooperation in critical minerals.

Education, Sports, Art & Culture

The number of Indian students currently enrolled for studying in Australia is estimated at around 1,20,277 (August 2023), making Indian students the second largest cohort of foreign students in Australia. 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 and Skills Council meeting: Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister for Education & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship visited Australia during 21-24 August 2022 and co-chaired the 6th meeting of Australia-India Education Council (AIEC) with Hon. Jason Clare, Minister for Education of Australia. It was decided to rename AIEC as Australia- India Education and Skills Council (AIESC). 1st Australia India Education and Skill Council (AIESC) meeting was held in Gandhinagar on 6 November which was co-chaired by Minister for Education and Skill Development, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan with Australian Ministers Hon. Jason Clare, Education Minister and Hon. Brendan O'Connor, Skills & Training Minister who joined the AIESC virtually. Mechanism for Mutual Recognition of Educational Qualifications was signed on 2 March 2023 during the visit of Hon. Minister for Education Jason Clare to India.

Deakin University will be the first Australian University to open campus at Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City). This was announced on 8 March 2023 during the visit of Hon. PM Albanese to India. The Campus is expected to open in mid-2024. 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 expressing its intention to set up campus in India. Western Sydney University has announced to open its campus in Bengaluru.

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.

Australian government announced appointment of Ms. Swati Dave as inaugural Chair and Tim Thomas as inaugural CEO for the Centre for Australia-India Relations, to be based in Parramatta, Sydney. The Centre is working to intensify diaspora linkages, including through the Maitri Scholarships Program, the Maitri Grants and Fellowships Program and the Maitri Cultural Partnership. Six projects have been selected for funding support under the Maitri Cultural

Partnerships grant, including for endeavours in music, arts, textiles, dance, circus and physical theatre, and sound and media. Maitri Fellowships were announced by AFM Hon. Penny Wong on 21 November 2023 in New Delhi to support two-way exchange of researchers in foreign trade and policy to focus on economic trends and geostrategic issues

A MoU on Cooperation in Sports was signed during visit of former PM Turnbull to India in April 2017 and was renewed during the visit of Hon. PM Albanese to India in March 2023, along with signing of the India-Australia Audio-Visual Co-production Agreement which entered into force on 20 November 2023. 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. 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 Artefacts: A total of 40 artefacts have been repatriated since 2014, including 29 items which were repatriated in March 2022, in advance of the Virtual Leaders' meeting.

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 5th 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.

Mutual Recognition of COVID-19 Vaccination Certificates between India and Australia was concluded in November 2021.

A Letter of Intent regarding Migration and Mobility Partnership Arrangement (MMPA) was signed during Leaders' virtual meeting in March 2022. MMPA was signed on 23 May 2023 and was exchanged in the presence of both PMs on 24 May 2023, during the visit of PM Narendra Modi to Sydney. 1st Joint Working Group meeting under the India-Australia Migration and Mobility Partnership Arrangement (MMPA) was held on 13 October 2023 in Canberra.

Indian Community in Australia

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.
