

## **EMBASSY OF INDIA**

### **INDIA-AUSTRALIA BILATERAL RELATIONS**

**Overview:** The historical ties between India and Australia started immediately following European settlement in Australia from 1788. 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.

#### **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'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 Tony Abbott visited India on 4-5 September 2014. During the visit, four Agreements/ MoUs were signed. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Australia for G20 Leaders' Summit at Brisbane in November 2014, followed by a bilateral visit from 16-18 November 2014. PM Modi held wide-ranging talks with PM Abbott and addressed a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament, the first by an Indian PM.

**PM Meetings:** Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi met Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister of Australia on the sidelines of the Quad Leaders' Summit on 24 May 2022. Both leaders reviewed the multi-faceted cooperation under the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. PM Narendra Modi met 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.

**India-Australia Summit:** Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Scott Morrison, Prime Minister of Australia held India-Australia Virtual Summit on 4 June 2020 where the bilateral Strategic Partnership concluded in 2009 was elevated to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP). Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Scott Morrison, former Prime Minister of Australia held the **2<sup>nd</sup> India-Australia Virtual Summit** on 21 March 2022.

**First 2+2 Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogue:** Foreign Minister Marise Payne and Minister for Defence 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.

**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. External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and Foreign Minister Penny Wong held the 13<sup>th</sup> FMFD in Canberra on 10 October 2022.

**Foreign Minister's visits/interactions:** EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Australia on 9-12 October 2022 and met FM Penny Wong for 13<sup>th</sup> FMFD. EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Sydney on 18 February 2023 and met Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles and Foreign Minister Penny Wong. EAM delivered keynote address at inaugural *Raisina@Sydney*. Minister for Climate Change and Energy Chris Bowen joined EAM at the In Conversation Dialogue at the *Raisina@Sydney*. AFM Penny Wong visited New Delhi from 28 February-3 March 2023 and participated at the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting and Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting. During the visit, she met EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar and also participated at Quad Foreign Ministers' panel at Raisina Dialogue.

**Recent Ministerial visits:** A number of Ministerial level visits to Australia took place in 2022-23. CIM Shri Piyush Goyal visited Australia from 5-8 April 2022. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Coal and Mines Shri Pralhad Joshi visited Australia from 3-8 July 2022. Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy Shri R. K. Singh visited Australia on 11-16 July 2022 for participation at the Sydney Energy Forum. Minister of State for External Affairs & Culture Mrs. Meenakshi Lekhi visited Australia on 7-9 August 2022. Minister for Education, Skill Development & Entrepreneurship Shri Dharmendra Pradhan co-chaired the 6th meeting of the Australia India Education Council with Jason Clare, Minister for Education 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. 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. Shri Nitin Gadkari, Minister for Road Transport and Highways visited Sydney from 20-22 October 2022. Shri Harivansh, Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha visited Australia on 3-7 January, 2023 to attend Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC). Shri V. Muraleedharan visited Sydney on 13 February 2023 and Melbourne and Perth during 18-19 February 2023.

Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles visited India on 20-22 June, 2022 and held bilateral meetings with Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh and EAM. Deputy Premier of Western Australia, Roger Cook led a 110-member strong business delegation to India on 12-19 July 2022. Premier of New South Wales Dominic Perrottet visited India on 27-29 July 2022 and opened the NSW trade office in Mumbai. Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, 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. Treasurer Jim Chalmers visited Bengaluru on 23-25 February 2023 to participate at G20 Finance Ministers' meeting and met Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman. Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education visited India from 28 February-03 March 2023 and signed Mechanism of Mutual Recognition of Education Qualification on 2 March 2023.

**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.

**Bilateral Economic and Trade Relationship:** The India-Australia economic relationship has grown significantly in recent years. The Australian Government commissioned the India Economic Strategy to 2035 to define a pathway for Australia to unlock opportunities offered by Indian Economic growth which 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 India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement ("IndAUS ECTA") came into force from 29 December 2022 which was signed on 2 April by CIM Shri Piyush Goyal and former Australian Trade and Tourism Minister Dan Tehan in a virtual ceremony, in the presence of PM Modi and former PM Scott Morrison.

**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. 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, 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.

**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.

**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. The fourth edition of AUSINDEX was held during 7-10 September 2021 in Australia at Off Darwin. 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. Australia participated in Exercise Milan in March 2022 in Vizag. 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). India-Australia Joint Military Exercise AUSTRALIND 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 AUSTRALIA HIND with participation of all arms and services contingent from both armies.

**Resources & Energy Security:** 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, 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 the 2<sup>nd</sup> Virtual 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.

**Education, Sports, Art & Culture:** The number of Indian students currently enrolled for studying in Australia is estimated at around 1,00,302 (2022). Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister for Education & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship co-chaired the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of Australia-India Education Council (AIEC) with Jason Clare, Minister for Education of Australia in August 2022. An MoU for Mutual Recognition of Education Qualification was signed by Jason Clare MP, Minister for Education and Minister for Education & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, on 2 March 2023 in Delhi.

The Ministry of Ayush announced setting up of Ayurveda Academic Chair at Western Sydney University's NICM Health Research Institute on 22 November 2022. Dr. Rajagopala S., Associate Professor & Head (Department of *Kaumrabhritya*) All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), New Delhi holds the Academic Chair in the University.

**Repatriation of Indian Cultural Artifacts:** A total of 40 artefacts have been repatriated since 2014, including 29 items which were repatriated in March 2022.

**Consular Cooperation, People to People linkages:** The Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) and the Extradition Treaty between India and Australia, signed in June 2008 entered into force on 20 January 2011. India and Australia signed a Social Security Agreement on the eve of our PM's visit to Australia in November 2014 which came into force on 1 January 2016. A Letter of Intent regarding Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (MMPA) was signed during Virtual Summit in March 2022.

**Indian Community in Australia:** The Indian community in Australia continues to grow in size and importance. Indian-related ancestry population is about 9,76,000 (Census 2021). After England, India is the second largest migrant group in Australia (2021).

Source :Website :- MEA 5<sup>th</sup> March 2023.