



2nd India-Australia Annual Summit

For Prelims: [G20](#), [Green hydrogen](#), [Ind-Aus ECTA](#), [Make in India](#), [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea](#), [Indian Ocean Rim Association](#), [AUSINDEX](#), [Pitch Black](#), [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation](#).

For Mains: India and Australia Relations, India-Australia Critical Minerals Investment Partnership, Significance, India Australia Summit.

Source: [PIB](#)

Why in News?

The Prime Minister of India and the Prime Minister of Australia held the **2nd India-Australia Annual Summit** on the sidelines of the **2024 Group of 20 (G20) Summit** in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

- Ahead of the fifth anniversary of the [India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership](#) in **2025**, the Prime Ministers highlighted significant progress in areas including climate change, trade, defence, education, and regional cooperation.



What are the Key Highlights of the India-Australia 2nd Annual Summit?

- **Renewable Energy Partnership:** The **India-Australia Renewable Energy Partnership (REP)** was launched to bolster cooperation in [solar energy, green hydrogen](#), and energy storage.
- **Trade and Investments:** Committed to developing a **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)**, building on the success of the [India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement \(Ind-Aus ECTA\)](#), which led to a **40% increase in mutual trade within two years**.
 - The Prime Ministers highlighted the complementarity between **'Make in India'** and **'Future Made in Australia'**, emphasising their potential to create jobs, drive economic growth, and secure future prosperity.
 - Both Nations welcomed the extension of the **Australia-India Business Exchange (AIBX) programme** for another four years from July 2024.
 - The AIBX is a **4-year program aimed at boosting trade and investment between India and Australia** by providing market insights and fostering commercial partnerships.
- **Enhanced Mobility:** Both nations recognized mobility between Australia and India as key to economic growth, they welcomed the launch of [Australia's Working Holiday Maker visa programme for India in October 2024](#).
 - They also looked forward to the commencement of **Australia's Mobility Arrangement for Talented Early-professionals Scheme (MATES)**, aimed at promoting mobility of early professionals and providing Australian industry access to India's top [STEM \(science, technology, engineering, and mathematics\) graduates](#).
- **Strategic Collaboration:** The leaders agreed to renew the **Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation (JDSC) in 2025**, reflecting their enhanced defence partnership and strategic convergence.
 - The JDSC, agreed in 2007, aimed to strengthen cooperation in areas such as [counter-terrorism, disarmament, non-proliferation](#), and [maritime security](#).
- **Regional and Multilateral Cooperation:** Both nations reiterated their support for a free, open, and inclusive [Indo-Pacific](#), consistent with the [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\)](#).
 - They pledged continued collaboration under the [Quad framework](#), emphasizing areas like pandemic response, [cybersecurity](#), and critical infrastructure.
 - The [2024 Indian Ocean Conference in Perth](#) and **India's upcoming Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Chairmanship in 2025** underscore mutual efforts in maritime ecology and sustainable development.
 - Both nations reaffirmed commitments to supporting Pacific island countries through [Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation \(FIPIC\) framework](#).

Note:

The 1st Annual Summit was held in **2023** in New Delhi, the Prime Ministers reaffirmed their support for strengthening the **India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**.

What is the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership?

- **About:** In June 2020, India and Australia elevated their relationship from a **'Strategic Partnership' signed in 2009** to a **'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' (CSP) to strengthen bilateral ties**.
 - It is grounded in mutual trust, shared democratic values, and common interests in areas like regional security, economic growth, and global cooperation.
- **Key Features of the CSP:**
 - **Science, Technology & Research Collaboration:** Enhanced cooperation on medical research, technology, and cyber security.
 - **Maritime Cooperation:** Joint efforts to ensure a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific,

with a focus on sustainable maritime resources and combating illegal fishing.

- **Defence:** Expanding military cooperation by conducting joint exercises like the "["Malabar" exercise](#)" and providing logistics support through agreements such as the [Mutual Logistics Support Agreement \(MLSA\)](#) to address common security challenges.
- **Economic Cooperation:** Re-engaging on a [Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement \(CECA\)](#), encouraging trade, investment, and collaboration in infrastructure, education, and innovation.
- **Implementation:** The CSP includes regular dialogues at various levels, including [foreign and defence ministers meeting in a '2+2' format](#). Annual summits and ministerial meetings are intended to ensure continued cooperation.

Ind-Aus ECTA

- The Ind-Aus ECTA signed in 2022, aimed to boost trade between the two nations. It granted **India preferential access to 100% of Australia's tariff lines**, covering key sectors like gems, textiles, leather, and agriculture.
- In return, **India offered preferential access to over 70% of its tariff lines**, including raw materials like coal and minerals, benefiting both countries' trade interests.

What are the Key Milestones in India-Australia Relations?

- **Bilateral Trade:** India is Australia's **5th largest trading partner** with two-way trade in goods and services valued at USD 49.1 billion in 2023.
 - **India's Exports to Australia:** Refined petroleum, Pearls and gems, Jewellery, and Made-up textile articles.
 - **Australia's Exports to India:** Coal, Copper ores and concentrates, Natural gas, Non-ferrous/Ferrous waste and scrap, and Education-related services.
- **Civil Nuclear Cooperation:** In 2014, India and Australia signed the [Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement](#), allowing [uranium exports to India](#).
 - The agreement came into force in 2015, facilitating the supply of uranium for India's peaceful nuclear energy needs.
- **Defence and Security Cooperation:** India-Australia defence ties are strengthened through joint exercises like [AUSINDEX](#), [Pitch Black](#), and initiatives like the **2022 General Rawat Exchange Programme**, a military exchange program.
 - India and Australia have signed an agreement allowing the **Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) to refuel Indian aircraft near Australian airspace**. This aims to enhance interoperability and **boost operational reach in the Indo-Pacific region**.
 - Under this agreement, the **RAAF's KC-30A will refuel India's P-8I surveillance aircraft**, strengthening defence ties and regional security.
- **Multilateral Engagement:** Active participation in Quad initiatives, IORA, and the [International Solar Alliance \(ISA\)](#).
 - Australia supports India's candidature for a permanent seat in the [United Nation Security Council](#) and membership in the [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation](#).

Conclusion

India and Australia have made notable progress in strengthening their economic and strategic ties, driven by shared democratic values. Despite challenges like delay in developing CECA, and evolving regional security, both nations remain **committed to deepening their partnership**. With continued cooperation, they are well-positioned to enhance ties in the future.

Drishiti Mains Question:

Evaluate the evolution of India- Australia trade relations in the context of shifting global dynamics.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q.1 Consider the following countries: (2018)

1. Australia
2. Canada
3. China
4. India
5. Japan
6. USA

Which of the above are among the 'free-trade partners' of ASEAN?

- (a) 1, 2, 4 and 5
(b) 3, 4, 5 and 6
(c) 1, 3, 4 and 5
(d) 2, 3, 4 and 6

Ans: (c)

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has free trade agreements with six partners, namely the People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Japan, India as well as Australia and New Zealand.

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