

Topic: India - Australia Ties

India and Australia on 10 April 2017 signed six agreements to boost the bilateral cooperation between the two nations including one aimed at boosting **counter—terrorism** cooperation after talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Australian counterpart **Malcolm Turnbull**. The two leaders held comprehensive discussions on **bilateral, regional and international issues** of mutual interest and concern. At a joint press event with Turnbull, Modi said they reviewed the entire gamut of ties and took many “**forward looking**” decisions including one on early holding of the next round of talks on comprehensive economic cooperation agreement. Emphasizing on **peace and stability in the Indo—Pacific region**, Modi said challenges like terrorism and cyber security require global strategy and solutions.

The two sides inked a pact to **boost counter—terrorism cooperation** which was signed between the **Ministry of Home Affairs and its counterpart Australian ministry**. While Modi noted that Australia was ready to **supply uranium to India**, Turnbull said his government was looking forward to exporting uranium to India “as soon as possible”.

The other signed agreements include cooperation in **transnational organised crime**. These agreements were signed during Australian PM Malcolm Turnbull’s **four-day visit** to India. This is **Turnbull’s first visit to India** since he assumed office in 2015. The **six agreements** which were exchanged during Prime Minister Turnbull’s visit to India includes:

1. MoU on cooperation in **combating international terrorism** and transnational organised crime.
2. MoU for **promotion and development of cooperation in civil aviation security**.
3. MoU on cooperation in the field of **environment, climate and wildlife**.
4. MoU on cooperation in **sports**.
5. MoU on cooperation in the field of **health and medicine**.
6. Implementation arrangement between **ISRO and Geoscience Australia** on cooperation in earth observation and satellite navigation.

The two nations also agreed to repeat a **bilateral maritime exercise** which was first held in the **Bay of Bengal in 2015**. It will be repeated in **Western Australia** in the **first half of 2018**. Army to Army exercise will take place in 2018. Besides, the much awaited **free-trade agreement remained elusive** during the visit of PM Turnbull. The two sides **failed** to conclude negotiations for **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)**. Australia has also decided to **join the International Solar Alliance** put together at PM Modi’s initiative. The two leaders also remotely inaugurated a **Nano-technology research centre** which was jointly established by **TERI Institute and the Deakin University of Australia**.

Some Important Points:

- This is Prime Minister Turnbull's first visit to India. Former Prime Minister **Tony Abbott had visited India in September 2014** and this was followed by our **Prime Minister's visit to Australia in November that year.**
- Prime Minister Turnbull and Prime Minister Modi have had substantive meetings on the margins of the **G-20 in Antalya in 2015 and in Hangzhou in 2016.**
- The India-Australia relationship is **more robust and multi-faceted** than it has ever been before and both Prime Ministers and both Governments are committed to carrying this forward. Reflective of this breadth of engagement, a number of MoUs and Agreements firmed up covering Security, Environment, Sports, Science & Technology, Health, etc.
- In keeping with the vast potential that both sides see in economic and commercial engagement, a high-level business delegation was done from Australia. Australia has invested about **US\$7 billion in India.**
- Education and skills development is a key area of our engagement with Australia. More than **attracting Indian students to Australia**, this encompasses cooperation between educational institutions in both countries, joint research, tie-ups between Government and non-Government entities in India with technology centres in Australia. The extent of this bilateral engagement was in full view during the visit with a large number of tie-ups in this sector. A high-powered delegation from the education sector accompanied the Australian Prime Minister during the visit.
- Cooperation in **renewable energy, clean coal and bio-fuels** also featured during the visit.

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<http://www.hindustantimes.com/opinion/india-australia-relations-education-as-the-tipping-point/story-kgPb9aYml7ozQyztAR5UMN.html>

<http://www.firstpost.com/world/malcolm-turnbulls-visit-to-india-counter-terror-cooperation-among-six-agreements-signed-with-australia-3378026.html>

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/india-australia-sign-6-pacts/article9626572.ece>

<http://www.ndtv.com/education/prime-minister-malcolm-turnbulls-visit-to-india-australia-to-showcase-education-research-offering-1679108>