

## AIR Spotlight - Discussion on India Australia 2+2 Dialogue

AIR Spotlight is an insightful program featured daily on the All India Radio Newsonair. In this program, many eminent panelists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in the [IAS exam](#) preparation. In this article, the discussion is on India Australia 2+2 Dialogue and its outcomes.

### Participants:

1. Skand Ranjan Tayal, Former Diplomat
2. Manas Prathim Boyal, Journalist

### Context:

India - Australia 2+2 Dialogue took place in September 2021 in which India's External Affairs Minister and Defence Minister held talks with their Australian counterparts in New Delhi. This edition of AIR Spotlight discusses the **outcomes of the India - Australia dialogue**.

In the talks both the countries focused on three major areas:

1. **The current situation in Afghanistan:**
  - a) After the Taliban recently took over Afghanistan, both countries showed a common attitude towards the Afghan crisis.
  - b) India pointed out that the UN Security Council Resolution 2593 outlines this policy which specifically emphasizes that Afghanistan must not allow any agency to use its land in any way to engage in terrorist activities.
2. **Expand co-operation between Australia and India to ensure an open, free, prosperous, and rule-based Indo-Pacific region.**
  - a) Supports India's Indo-Pacific initiative.
  - b) It is necessary for the [Quad](#) member states to make new efforts to expand cooperation in the region.
3. **Strengthening bilateral defense and strategic co-operation between the two countries.**

### Indo-Australian relationship

- India and Australia share general good relations, both countries bound by the same ethos of democracy and pluralism.

- In 2017, Australia shipped its first supply of uranium to India, after a deal that was signed in 2014. This is significant and can go a long way towards strengthening the relationship between the two countries.
- The prime ministers of India and Australia held the first virtual bilateral summit. The two sides signed nine agreements, including a comprehensive strategic partnership (CSP) and a mutual logistics support agreement (MLSA).
- In 2007, Australia was a participant in the [Malabar Exercise](#) which is an annual trilateral naval exercise between India, the USA, and Japan.

### **Outcomes of India Australia 2+2 Dialogue and the outcomes**

- During the meeting, the two defense ministers discussed the fragile security situation in Afghanistan and their "common concern" about the possible spread of [terrorism](#) from Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.
- Regarding the "significant challenge" in the Indo-Pacific region, Australia's Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that Canberra wants a region that respects the rights of nations large and small, and there is no "single dominant force" that will determine the outcome of other countries.
- Australia has invited India to participate in the 2023 Talisman Sabre Exercise which covers Australia, Japan, South Korea, and the United States. The 2021 version was recently completed in August. The next version is scheduled to be held in 2023.
- **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)** – Negotiations for a CECA started in 2001. If this is materialized, India will have better access to the world's 12th largest economy. Half of India's exports to Australia face stiff tariffs, and if the CECA is made, Indian businesses would be on the same footing as other FTA partners of Australia such as China. This would also improve investments from Australia, which has the third-largest pool of investment funds under management in the world.
- India is opposed to greater access for Australian businesses in the sector of dairy and agricultural markets in the interests of its small and marginal farmers and people working in the dairy industry, as it affects the recent policy goal of doubling farmers' income (as dairy is one the most significant ways to double the farmer's income).

### **India-Australia Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism**

- India and Australia emphasize that all countries urgently need to take immediate, continuous, verifiable, and irreversible actions to ensure that no territory under their control will be used for terrorist attacks and that the perpetrators will be quickly brought to justice.
- Australia reiterated its condemnation of the terrorist attacks in the Mumbai, Pathankot, and Pulwama regions of India and reiterated its support for the Indian people and government to fight terrorism.

### **India-Australia Bilateral Cooperation**

- India and Australia reaffirmed the importance of the defense relationship, which is an important pillar of a comprehensive strategic partnership. India and Australia acknowledged that the two countries should strengthen defense cooperation and discussed measures to strengthen defense contacts.
  - The two countries also agreed to explore areas of cooperation in the defense industry, including unmanned vehicles and other niche technologies.
  - The Ministers recognized that cooperation in cybersecurity, innovation, digital economy, networks, and key technologies are important pillars of [India-Australia relations](#), and reiterated the importance of cooperation in areas.
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