

STUDENT MENTORING AND RESEARCH TRAINING PROGRAMME (SMART) NEWSLETTER



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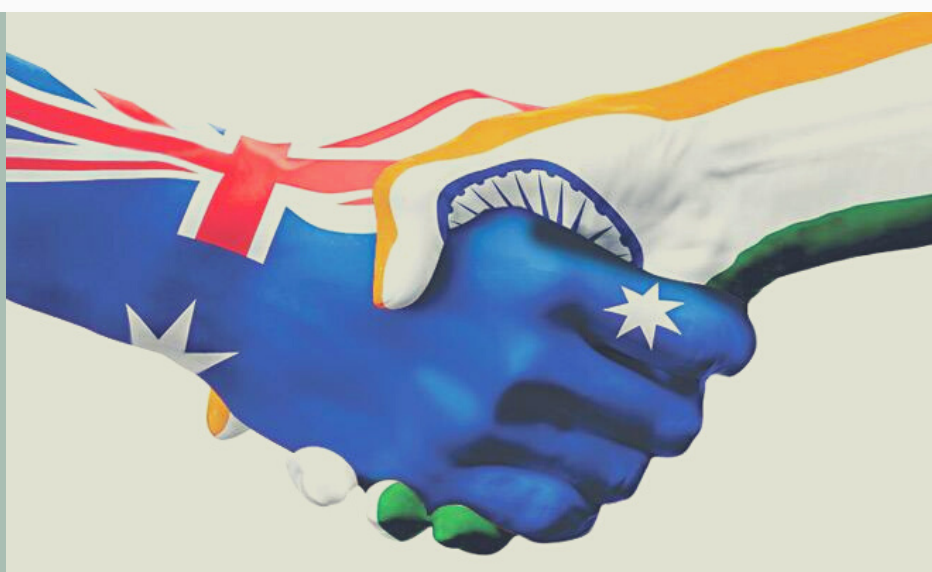
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EDITOR'S NOTE

ANUSHKA SAXENA

As the Editor for the First-ever Newsletter issue under the Student Mentoring and Research Training (SMART) Program, conducted in collaboration by the O.P Jindal Global University, India, and the Institute of Australia-India Engagaemtn (IAIE), Brisbane, Australia, it is my profound pleasure to bring to you select ideas and perspectives by our young team of interns on a range of themes that characterize the Australia India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. These focused pieces of ideas mirror what future leaders think about the India-Australia cultural, defense, trade, economic, and energy ties.

In this issue, first, Vaibhavi Nagar talks about the revival of the India-Australia Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement, the bilateral discussions over which have now begun after a 6 years hiatus. Second, India and Australia have a long way to and LNG exchange programs, argues Shivam Shukla. Third, C. Shri Khyati Reddy discusses "cricket diplomacy" between India and Australia noting the significance of the upcoming Pink-Ball Day-Night Test between the women's teams. Fourth, how Australia manifests its soft power appeal primarily through its international education and student exchange program, is covered by Harshita Calla in her piece. And finally, I discuss the scope of Australia-India technological and cyberspace cooperation following the June 2021 meeting of the Cyber Security Joint Working Group.

India-Australia Energy Ties

BY SHIVAM SHUKLA

India and Australia have shared a cordial relation with each other for a very long time, both countries bound by the same ethos of democracy and pluralism have witnessed an increased commitment in the recent past. A number of engagements in fields such as Energy, sports, military, bilateral trade, strategy, student exchange programs, similar commitments towards sustainable development have made this relationship all the more dynamic. Energy cooperation in recent years has been one of the most pivotal factors in strengthening ties between two countries. Energy ties between India and Australia find their way back to the days of the East India Company of the British-Indian era. From the first commercial export in the form of a shipment of coal to India from Australia in 1797, energy cooperation has come a long way.

India incorporated several attempts to ensure a greater supply of coal and natural gas from Australia. Two states are trying to figure out ways and means to work jointly on boosting the production of geothermal and solar energy as also to enhance clean-energy technology cooperation among other things. Australia is a natural partner for India is poised to overtake Qatar to be the largest exporter of Liquefied Natural Gas according to Energy Quest. Australia's long-term and secure LNG supply can help diversify India's current highly concentrated import supplies from the Middle East.

Recently in September 2014, in order to strengthen the energy ties, a Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement was signed between two states however it came into force in November 2015, and in the year 2017 Australia shipped its first supply of uranium to India paving the way for the framework of substantial new trade-in energy between Australia and India. This deal ensures unhindered uranium supply to India for civil use by Uranium mining companies of Australia with a belief that exports would not be affected by domestic legal action challenging the consistency of the safeguards applied by the IAEA in India and Australia's international non-proliferation obligations. This is the first instance in which Australia is supplying uranium to a country that has not signed the Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT).



PHOTO COURTESY : IANS

Revival of the India-Australia CECA

BY VAIBHAVI NAGAR

India and Australia are both secular democracies that share several cultural commonalities. Their overall relationship has grown in strength particularly due to trade. Australia is India's 8th largest trading partner and India is Australia's 5th largest. On 12th May 2011 at the conclusion of the JMC (Joint Ministerial Commission) the two countries officially agreed to commence negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA). Unfortunately, till date, the CECA negotiations have been painfully slow and unsatisfactory. Since its commencement, there have only been 9 rounds of negotiations regarding the CECA which was then suspended in 2015. The talks stalled over disputes regarding issues such as market access in agriculture and daily products. Both countries unofficially began reprioritizing the CECA after India exited the RCEP in 2019 over disputes regarding high market access sought by several states. Australian High Commissioner Barry O'Farrell indicated that both the countries have reengaged in official discussions regarding the CECA.

In 2020, the two countries also elevated their bilateral Strategic Partnership to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, under which both Prime Ministers committed to restarting negotiations on the agreement in 2020 in order to boost their post-COVID economies. The need for both countries to reduce their dependence on Chinese supply chains could act as a catalyst to conclude this agreement at the earliest. It can be anticipated that the first issue to be addressed would be whether to resume talks at the joint they were left off in 2015 or to start anew.



PHOTO COURTESY : GETTY

India-Australia JWG on Cyber-Security, and Larger Questions

BY ANUSHKA SAXENA

Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 Pandemic has demonstrated to us the importance of a strong technological and cybersecurity infrastructure. At the same time, it has opened portals of suspicious activity in how our digital data is used, interpreted and manipulated. It has also made nation-states question each other on the validity of their claim over certain data, and on the roots of the technological infrastructure they promise to each other for cyber enhancement - the most recent case being that of Chinese Company Huawei's 5G Network. In this context, bilateral and multilateral cooperation, like the Australia-India Framework Arrangement on Cyber and Cyber-Enabled Critical Technology Cooperation, have become significant for the establishment of a trustworthy digital global system, and to provide a positive momentum to the effective utilisation of cyber and critical technologies.

A result of the June 2020 Virtual Summit between Indian External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and Australian Foreign Affairs Minister Marise Payne, the abovementioned Framework Agreement sits "at the core of the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership." This is so because both partners have much to offer to each other, and together to the world, in cyberspace. A vivid example is that of rare-earth elements (REEs), which also ropes in the shared concerns of both nations over their dependence on China. Australia possesses one of the largest reserves of REEs, and this group of 17 elements found in nature is well-suited for use in batteries, CDs, mobile chips, fibre-optic telecommunications, and much more. At the same time, India possesses a skilled labour force and an advanced industrial setup that can help streamline both, the production process involving the use of REEs, and the application of the final products across Information Technology (IT) Services. Clearly, this bilateral setup can also help provide an alternative supply chain to reduce dependency of the two nations, and the region, on Chinese electronics, to a great extent. Within the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue as well, the establishment of a "Critical and Emerging Technology" Working Group demonstrates the two nations' commitment to development of a "free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific;" one that can be based on openness of critical technology as well. The role of private players and research & development institutions has been underscored thoroughly across meetings and media statements, seeing as these stakeholders play a major role in the execution of government decisions or policies on technological infrastructure and IT.

In the recent past, developments on cybersecurity cooperation have made progress, especially as the first meeting of the India-Australia Joint Working Group (JWG) on cybersecurity took place on June 10, 2021, as part of the five-year plan (2020-25) under the Framework Arrangement of June 2020. The meeting featured a discussion on strengthening of critical technology infrastructure in the 5G field, seeing as both parties have their fair share of woes against the current dominant player in the field - China. After Australia became one of the first nations to ban Huawei's 5G network in the country in 2018, many other nations, such as France, United Kingdom, and Sweden, followed suit. Also, while India did make plans to include Huawei in its 5G trials last year, in May 2021, the Department of Telecommunications allotted 5G spectrum licenses to various companies, but Huawei, or any other Chinese company for that

matter, was excluded from the list. In this context, the various technological partnership initiatives between the two countries can help secure an infrastructural setup and a supply chain for 5G, in the Indo-Pacific. This setup must ensure sharing of best practices in the management and ethical use of such critical technologies as 5G, and a host of confidence and capacity-building measures to help with the evolution of infrastructure, so as to better meet the demands of the people. What is also important is addressing, rather deflating concerns over cancerous and immunocompromisation risks of 5G cell phone/tower radiation, as the issue has blown out of proportion in the past few weeks. The intensive disinformation campaigns spread across social media platforms also require a diligent IT system to be dealt with, and India-Australia cooperation on myth-deconstruction and information-exchange can help in this regard.

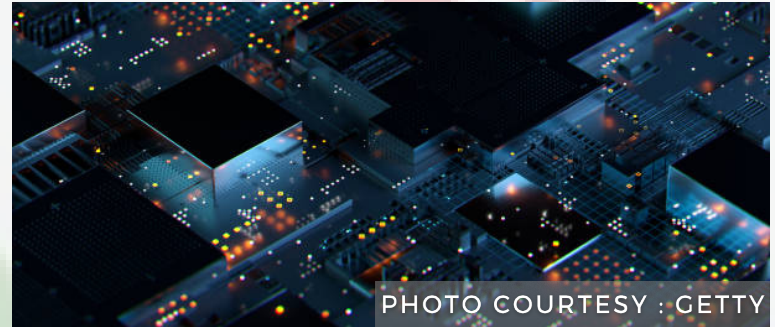


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Next on the priority list is Artificial Intelligence (AI). Amidst the absence of AI regulations and guidelines in India, there exists a "legal implications" lacunae in approaching AI and its privacy concerns. Over the past three years, a number of task forces and recommendatory bodies have been initiated in India to expand the understanding of AI systems, but they are yet to translate into action. Both India and Australia have developed norms for private stakeholders to venture into AI development, and have equally also framed legalities on the use of Autonomous weapons systems. However, there exists immense scope for further regulation, especially considering the most recent legal precedent in India, detailing that the developer (a "natural person") and not the AI system itself is responsible for its Intellectual property, comes from the Rupendra Kashyap vs. Jiwan Publishing House (P) Ltd. of December 1996! In being upholders of democratic values, both nations must work towards upholding openness and trustworthiness in AI, and one way to do this could be by domestically integrating G20's "Human-centred" AI Principles, developed during the G20 Ministerial on Trade and Digital Economy in June 2019. These principles, developed in accordance with the OECD Principles on AI Report, talk of using AI to make transformations in the labour economy and life, to bridge digital divides, and to build an inclusive and sustainable society, thus, empowering the people.

Other fields of partnership exist, especially in the fields of Space and Defense. [Outer] Space can be a potentially defining sector for India-Australia relations, considering a recent amendment in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Indian Space Research Organisation and the Australian Space Agency has created room for new joint initiatives in space technology and education. Moreover, for India's 'Gaganyaan' mission, which aims to send a crew of three to space, Australia will be a significant base for tracking infrastructure. In defense, with the historic Mutual Logistics Support and the Maritime Domain Awareness Agreements in place, there will be scope for interoperability and interchange of military technology, especially during Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief/ Search and Rescue operations, as well as counterpiracy in the Indian Ocean Region. This can be facilitated if sonar, gunshot detection technology, engine room essential equipment and other such requirements are jointly developed, and can help both nations secure "far-off waters" despite limited naval capacities. Finally, collaborative research is an important aspect, and the U.S \$12.7 million Australian-India Cyber and Critical Technology Partnership Grants are a welcome step in this regard.

Pink-Ball Day-Night Test : A first for India

BY SHRI KHYATI REDDY

Australia and India enjoy a bilateral relationship and sports, especially cricket remains to be the centrality of the Indo-Australian relationship. Given the love for the sport of cricket in both the countries and the competitive history that the Indian and Australian team share, there is no doubt that the players of both countries and the viewers eagerly wait for matches between the two.

While the Indian women's cricket team is currently putting up a tough fight against England in the ongoing red-ball cricket, another equally tough test awaits the team. The team shall face the Australian team in its first ever maiden pink-ball test at WACA during their Australia tour in September. This match will be marked as the second pink-ball day-night test in the history of women's cricket which follows the first match between Australia and England in 2017. This test, as stated by the BCCI secretary, Jay Shah, truly represents India's commitment towards women's cricket. While the team sets off to create history and pave the future road for women's cricket in India, the Australian team, as stated by Ellyse Perry, one of the players from the Australian team who shall be playing in the match, seem to be preparing to deliver their best at the match.

Given that the Indian team last played a test against Australia in 2006, this match shall be an exciting one to witness.



PHOTO COURTESY : IANS

Australia's Soft Power Appeal

BY HARSHITA CALLA

Soft power was developed as a concept by Harvard professor, Joseph Nye who described it as "the influence and attractiveness a state can acquire and leverage when others are drawn to its culture, political values, institutions and ideas". Such power plays on the public perception and voluntary effort of people to engage with what a country has to offer, and Australia has done that well with its development of international education.

International education is an example of soft power as it boosts public image, while also allowing a healthy exchange and confluence of ideas across cultures, along with more awareness about the people and culture of the home country. Over the years, the number of international students in Australia has been on the increasing side of a hundred thousand with there being 738,107 international students till October 2019. Students from all over the world come to study in Australia, with India being second with 109,736 students. This inflow of students in Australia is beneficial not only to its soft power but also economically as it contributed a total of \$37.6 billion in 2018/2019.

The reason for such an inflow can be attributed to the presence of world-renowned universities such as The University of Sydney, University of Melbourne, and Monash University among others. The Universities in Australia offer a wide range of majors and programs for students to choose from which opens doors of opportunity for the students to pursue a career of their choice. Another benefit is that most of the population of the country is situated near the coast, which has the benefit of being near nature. The most likely incentive can be the Temporary Graduate Visa (subclass 485) which allows for the students to work in Australia after graduation.



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