

India, Australia agree on framework to streamline defence trade, services

DEEPENING TIES. Both nations ink reciprocal agreement for 'expanding aircraft deployments'

Dalip Singh
New Delhi

Building upon the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) established in 2020, India and Australia on Thursday agreed for a broader policy framework — an 'MoU for the provision of defence articles and defence services,' designed to streamline and shape ways the two nations will buy, sell, share and maintain military equipment and specialised technical services.

This is part of a string of announcements at the Third India-Australia Annual Summit in Melbourne, led by Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Anthony Albanese, with New Delhi appears to be looking to elevate its defence ties with Australia in some domains to match its engagements with other major developed nations. PM Modi is currently on a two-day official visit to Australia, which began on July 8.

BILATERAL INNOVATION

Both the nations have decided to explore a bilateral innovation framework to connect respective ecosystems and accelerate collabora-



STRATEGIC PARTNER. Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Australian PM Anthony Albanese at the India-Australia Annual Summit in Melbourne on Thursday. REUTERS

tion among governments, industry, academia, and research institutions for promoting R&D based solutions for advanced capability solutions. The initiative reflects similar arrangements India has had with the US, France and South Korea.

The two Prime Ministers "welcomed the ongoing work to develop a memorandum of understanding for the provision of defence articles and defence services, and efforts to promote connections between Australian

and Indian defence industries, including through Australia's first defence trade mission to India and the Australia-India Defence Industry Roundtable," read a joint statement issued after the Summit.

They have inked reciprocal agreement for 'expanding aircraft deployments from each other's territories' which India has formalised with other countries, like US, Russia, France, and Japan, for mutual support of military logistics to facilitate

parking and refuelling, among others. In their committed to the Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Co-operation and strengthening of the maritime security collaboration roadmap, the two countries aim at establishing a robust blueprint for regional stability and defence modernisation.

Reacting to the developments, Arun Ramchandani, President SIDM, told *businessline* that Modi's current visit to Australia had resulted in one of the most sub-

stantial upgrades in India-Australia strategic ties since the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

"The geopolitical dynamic security and economic uncertainties has steered nations world over to reboot and relook at their security and commercial strategies and policies. While the visit produced 18 agreements and initiatives, the defence and security outcomes are particularly significant from a maritime security and defence industry & start-up perspective," he said.

KEY AREAS

The two, as per the joint statement, have identified four areas for strengthening comprehensive defence co-operation, and deepening strategic dialogue. They are for: (a) undertaking to consult on defence-related developments in the Indo-Pacific that affect shared interests; (b) increasing the complexity of our defence exercises, including with partners; (c) accelerating efforts to build interoperability and information sharing between defence forces; and (d) expanding aircraft deployments from each other's territories.