

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.5430**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 28.03.2018

**INDIA-AUSTRALIA RELATIONSHIP**

5430. SHRI RAYAPATI SAMBASIVA RAO:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the present status of India and Australia relationships;
- (b) whether there has been improvement in the relationship during the last four years;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the details of interactions that took place in QUAD where India and Australia apart from Japan and US, were part of since it came into being?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) to (c) India-Australia relationship has evolved in the recent years into a multi-faceted and strong partnership. Bilateral relationship was upgraded to strategic partnership in the year 2009. The countries have robust cooperation in the fields of defence and security, education, water resources management, trade etc.

A significant momentum to the relationship was imparted by the visit of Prime Minister to Australia in November 2014. Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull visited India in April 2017. Australian Governor General Sir Peter Cosgrove participated in the founding conference of the International Solar Alliance in New Delhi in March 2018 and held bilateral meeting with Prime Minister.

Australia lends strong support to India's bid for the membership of Nuclear Suppliers Group. The growing strength in the relationship is recognized in Australia's White Paper on Foreign Policy released on 23.11.2017. The White Paper states that India is in the front rank of Australia's international partnerships. Australia's White paper on Defence Policy also recognizes India as an increasingly important economic and security partner.

India and Australia have established many bilateral mechanisms to enhance cooperation. Inaugural India-Australia '2+2' Foreign Secretaries and Defence Secretaries Dialogue, was held in New Delhi in December 2017. Defence cooperation received a strong boost through the bilateral maritime exercise AUSINDEX, which was conducted in the Bay of Bengal

for the first time in 2015. AUSINDEX 2017 was conducted off the coast of Freemantle, Australia during 17-19 June 2017. Australian naval ship participated in the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of MILAN organised by Indian Navy from 11 to 13 March 2018.

(d) Officials from India's Ministry of External Affairs, Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs, Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and United States' Department of State met in Manila on November 12, 2017 for consultations on issues of common interest in the Indo-Pacific region.

The discussions focused on cooperation based on the converging vision and values for promotion of peace, stability and prosperity in the region. Discussions also focused on addressing common challenges of terrorism and enhancing connectivity in the Indo-Pacific region. The Indian side highlighted India's Act East Policy as the cornerstone of its engagement in the Indo-Pacific region.

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