

India-Australia Civil Nuclear Cooperation

Administrative Arrangement signed to secure long-term Australian uranium for India's clean energy programme

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 14 JUL 2026 4:01PM by PIB Delhi

Fueling India's Long-term Nuclear Energy Programme



The **Third India–Australia Annual Summit**, held in **Melbourne on 9 July 2026**, marked a significant milestone in bilateral relations. Both countries reaffirmed their **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership**. The Summit delivered outcomes across **maritime security, energy security, cyber cooperation, critical technologies, skill development and entrepreneurship**, expanding collaboration in priority sectors.

A major outcome of the summit was the **finalisation of the Administrative Arrangement** under the **India–Australia Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement**. It enables long-term exports of **Australian uranium** to India for peaceful purposes under **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards**. Australia possesses the **largest uranium resources globally**, accounting for **more than one-third of the global total**. Assured access to Australian uranium would strengthen the fuel base for India's expanding nuclear power programme.

The Arrangement is also significant for India's long-term energy security and nuclear ambitions. It complements the **Nuclear Energy Mission**, which targets **100 GW of nuclear power capacity by 2047**. It also reinforces the **Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Act**, enacted in **December 2025**. The Act enables participation by **Indian private companies and joint ventures** in building, owning and operating nuclear power plants. Assured long-term uranium supplies provide greater confidence to developers, investors and industry, supporting timely project implementation. The SHANTI Act and the Administrative Arrangement provide the policy framework and strengthen fuel security needed to expand nuclear power for energy security and support sustained economic growth. Read More About *the SHANTI Act*.

India's Nuclear Energy Landscape

India is steadily expanding its nuclear power programme to strengthen energy security and support clean economic growth. Backed by indigenous technologies and long-term planning, nuclear energy will play an increasingly important role in India's low-carbon energy transition.

- India currently operates **24 nuclear power reactors** across **seven sites** with a total installed capacity of **8.78 Gigawatt (GW)**.
- **Ten more reactor units** with a combined capacity of **8000 Megawatt (MW)** are under construction. Pre-project activities for **10 additional reactors** are also underway.
- These reactors are Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs), Boiling Water Reactors (BWRs) and Light Water Reactors (LWRs).
- India mainly uses natural uranium fuel to run the Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) to produce nuclear energy. Plutonium is produced as a by-product.
- The Australian uranium will ensure a steady supply of the primary fuel to run these reactors.
- India's long-term strategy is centred on utilising its abundant thorium reserves for future nuclear fuel, found mainly in the coastal sands of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha. But naturally occurring Thorium has to be first made fissile by neutron absorption inside a nuclear reactor.
- India is advancing **Fast Breeder Reactors (FBRs)** to utilise plutonium and support the transition to thorium-based reactors.
- The Government has allocated **₹20,000 crore** in the **Union Budget 2025–26**, for the research, design, development, and deployment of indigenous **Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)**.
- **SMRs** typically generate **up to 300 MWe** of electricity. Their compact, modular design enables factory-based manufacturing, faster construction, improved quality and phased deployment.
- The Government aims to operationalise **at least five indigenous SMRs by 2033**.

With continued investments in advanced reactor technologies and domestic innovation, nuclear energy is emerging as a reliable pillar of India's future energy mix.

Did You Know

India's indigenously built **500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR)** at Kalpakkam attained **first criticality on 6 April 2026**, marking the start of India's **second stage of its three-stage nuclear power programme**. Unlike conventional reactors, the PFBR uses plutonium recovered from spent fuel of Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) and is designed to **produce more nuclear fuel than it consumes**. It will eventually breed **Uranium-233 from thorium**, unlocking India's vast thorium reserves for future-ready clean energy generation. Developed indigenously by the Department of Atomic Energy, the reactor is a major milestone, strengthening India's reliable fuel supply, reducing dependence on imported uranium, and advancing the country's net-zero ambition by 2070. Click to Read More: *A New Chapter in India's Nuclear Journey*.

A New Chapter in India–Australia Nuclear Cooperation

India and Australia's civil nuclear partnership is anchored in the Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement, signed in September 2014 and entered into force in November 2015.

- On **9 July 2026**, both countries finalised the **Administrative Arrangement**, operationalizing the Agreement.
- The Arrangement enables **long-term exports of Australian uranium** to India for **peaceful purposes**.

- Under Australian policy, uranium is exported only to countries covered by a civil nuclear cooperation agreement.
- All Australian uranium supplied to India will remain under IAEA safeguards.
- The Administrative Arrangement establishes the procedures for implementing the Agreement and provides a stable, long-term framework for cooperation between both governments and industry.
- The Arrangement marks a significant milestone in India–Australia bilateral energy cooperation and provides a reliable foundation for peaceful nuclear collaboration over the coming decades.
- Australia also reaffirmed its support for **India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)**.

The **administrative arrangement** reinforces mutual trust and creates a stable foundation for sustained cooperation. It also expands the strategic dimension of the India–Australia partnership while supporting secure and diversified energy supplies.

Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)

The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) is a voluntary grouping of 48 nuclear supplier countries that seeks to prevent nuclear weapons proliferation by implementing common guidelines governing exports of nuclear materials, equipment and related technologies for peaceful use.

Why This is Crucial for India

The India–Australia Civil Nuclear Agreement bolsters India's long term fuel security, diversifies uranium imports, and deepens the comprehensive strategic partnership in the Indo-Pacific.

- **Energy Security:** The Arrangement assures a long-term supply of fuel for an expanding fleet of reactors. Nuclear power provides dependable baseload generation, available at all hours, which lends stability to the grid and complements the variable output of solar and wind power.
- **Clean Energy:** Nuclear power is a low-carbon source that adds firm capacity to India's non-fossil energy mix. It can progressively meet demand currently served by coal while supporting the growing energy needs of industry, data centres and the digital economy.
- **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and net-zero:** India has committed to achieving **net-zero emissions by 2070** and has progressively raised its climate targets, including a greater share of non-fossil capacity. A secure supply of nuclear fuel supports this transition by enabling the expansion of clean and reliable generation.
- **India as a responsible nuclear power:** Australia's decision to supply uranium reflects confidence in India's strong non-proliferation record and responsible use of nuclear technology.

The Arrangement further reinforce the India–Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership by adding a robust energy pillar to cooperation spanning trade, defence, critical minerals, technology and the Indo-Pacific.

Did You Know?

India has signed Inter Governmental Agreement (IGA) with 18 countries on Civil Nuclear Co-operation for peaceful purposes.

The Road Ahead

The Administrative Arrangement is a practical measure with far-reaching benefits. For the economy, it helps to secure clean and firm power for growth, manufacturing and digital infrastructure. For energy security, it diversifies India's fuel supply and strengthens the foundation of the power system. This momentum is already evident, with milestones such as the PFBR at Kalpakkam attaining first criticality. For the bilateral partnership, energy now joins a broad and deepening relationship. Anchored in shared interests and mutual trust, India and Australia are well placed to widen their cooperation in the years ahead, with a dependable supply of uranium lending India's clean energy endeavour a firmer foundation.

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