

Modi's Indo-Pacific Outreach: Big Deals, Warm Welcomes, Hard Questions

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PM Modi undertook a visit to Indonesia, Australia, and New Zealand from 6 to 11 [July 2026](#) to strengthen India's Indo-Pacific strategy and long-term partnerships. During the visits, the PM signed a number of agreements.

Three Stops, a Stack of Agreements

[PM Modi](#) was received in Indonesia by President Prabowo Subianto on 6 July. The PM was awarded Indonesia's highest civilian honor, the Bintang Republik Indonesia Adipurna (Star of Indonesia). [During the three-day visit](#) (6-8 July), seven MoUs were signed for cooperation in areas such as telecommunications, medical product regulation, outer space, disaster management, counterterrorism, technology in elections, and other sectors.

[PM Modi](#) then visited Australia from 8 to 10 July, where a large event was held at Melbourne's Docklands Stadium. It

featured speeches by PM Modi, Australian PM Anthony Albanese, and Victoria Premier Jacinta Allan. The event was attended by 35,000 people, largely from the Indian diaspora in Australia. [During](#) the bilateral meetings, agreements covering defense, economic security, energy, education, science, technology, and culture were signed. A new Joint Declaration on Defence and Security Cooperation was introduced to strengthen collaboration and dialogue between the countries' armed forces. Administrative steps were also taken to further Australian uranium exports to India.

[At the final stop](#) (10 and 11 July) of his three-nation diplomatic visit, PM Modi arrived in Auckland, New Zealand. He was welcomed at the airport by New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon. The two PMs held talks and signed agreements on maritime cooperation, mutual logistics support, a free trade agreement, and an extensive Strategic Roadmap to 2030 covering sectors such as tourism, heritage, sports, education, people-to-people relations, and agriculture technology, among others.

Warm Welcomes, Sharp Scrutiny

Modi's visits were characterized by grand, warm welcomes as well as media and public scrutiny.

In Australia, a large event at Melbourne's Docklands Stadium drew thousands of enthusiastic members of the Indian diaspora, many of whom travelled on chartered flights and chanted the Prime Minister's name. However, some observers made unverified claims that attendees had been flown in to inflate public support.

[Ahead of the visit](#), Amnesty International urged the Australian government to address India's "human rights record" in meetings. Members of the Muslim and Sikh communities in Australia also staged protests, citing alleged discriminatory practices of the Indian government.

Additionally, the visit attracted demonstrations from far-right groups in [Australia](#) and [New Zealand](#), who expressed concerns about Indian migration through banners and slogans.

[Australian media](#) outlets criticized the Albanese government for holding what they described as an extravagant taxpayer-funded event while seeking to appeal to Indian-Australian voters.

[In a press conference](#), the Indian Ambassador to New Zealand Tandon was asked why PM Modi does not hold press conferences. In response, Tandon stated that a majority of India's population lives in rural areas and prefers direct public speeches.

Assessing the Agreements

The significance of these visits can be better understood by analyzing the long-term impact and implementation potential of the agreements signed, as well as their broader socio-political implications.

Firstly, among the various MoUs signed by PM Modi and President Subianto, the BrahMos missile export agreement and broader defense industrial cooperation are the most significant. [Valued](#) at around USD 630 million, the India-Indonesia agreement is now one of India's largest defense export deals.

[The agreement](#) covers supporting infrastructure, maintenance services, operator training, manufacturing, logistics, and related areas as well. This entails a gradual implementation extending over several years, strengthening India's indigenous defense industry, furthering the Act East policy, and expanding its strategic partnerships beyond South Asia. However, unlike the ASTRA missiles, BrahMos is not autonomous to India but a joint venture with Russia and hence is also dependent on Russia's geopolitical circumstances. Russian defense industry facing sanctions and a potential redirecting

of resources to the Ukraine war instead could drastically affect the agreement. Nevertheless, given the previous successful delivery of defense equipment to the Philippines under the same BrahMos framework, this deal can be expected to be carried out with similar efficiency. The momentum needs to be consistent with Indonesia, Vietnam and others, in order to establish India as a defense producer.

By contrast, while the MoU on critical minerals cooperation would have greater long-term economic significance for India, especially given Indonesia's global role in nickel [supply chains](#), its outcome is dependent on investment, mining regulations, long implementation timelines, and private sector participation, etc.

During PM Modi's visit to Australia, the uranium agreement can be regarded as the most significant outcome. India and Australia signed a Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement in [2014](#), and the recent visit has enabled Australian uranium exports to India to commence after years of regulatory delays. With Australia possessing one-third of the world's uranium reserves, securing access to this supply has long been an Indian priority. [This agreement](#) ensures uninterrupted fuel for Indian nuclear reactors while reducing vulnerability to supply disruptions. It also supports India's long-term objective of significantly expanding its nuclear power capacity exponentially by 2047.

Like the BrahMos agreement with Indonesia, uranium exports will create an enduring strategic partnership through supply contracts, safeguards inspections, regulatory cooperation, and recurring trade. Yet, the previous implementation delays in Indian nuclear power projects like in Jaitapur, Kovvada, Mithi Viridi demonstrate that nuclear expansion targets could still fall short if faced with domestic implementation bottlenecks. [By comparison](#), the Joint Declaration on Defence & Security Cooperation updates the 2009 security declaration by expanding cooperation in areas such as interoperability,

defense industry, cybersecurity, and counterterrorism, etc. However, the implementation will be determined by future military exercises, procurement, dialogue, and consultations.

With New Zealand, the strongest initiative is the FTA as it directly affects both economies. It will eventually [eliminate tariffs](#) on 100% of Indian goods and 95% of New Zealand goods while being supported by a USD 20 billion investment commitment from Wellington, reflecting confidence in India's growth trajectory. India is moving away from its earlier reluctance of FTAs, having signed CEPA, FTA with UK, and ECTA with Australia, the new FTA with New Zealand also signifies a recalibration after withdrawal from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) in 2019.

While the Strategic Roadmap to 2030 represents the most important political outcome of the visit by establishing a framework for cooperation across a wide range of sectors, its ultimate success will depend on how effectively the individual agreements under the roadmap are implemented.

The scrutiny from foreign media is a combination of the Indian government's domestic policies, PM Modi's press conduct, and the politics of host countries, making it complex to tackle. Seeing similar concerns regarding PM Modi not holding press conferences, previously in Norway, strengthening India's positionality globally will require addressing the questions of media-forward accountability.

Despite these criticisms, the visit strengthened diplomatic trust, expanded development cooperation, diversified trade and supply chains, and reinforced India's strategic position in the Indo-Pacific. Australia and India signed a Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement in 2014, but uranium exports were delayed because of Australia's safeguard concerns. The commencement of exports therefore reflects a higher level of strategic trust between the two countries. PM Modi also became the first Indian Prime Minister to visit New Zealand in four

decades, marking a significant milestone in bilateral relations.

While the defense agreements with Indonesia, uranium exports from Australia, and the India–New Zealand FTA have the potential to create enduring strategic partnerships, they will require years of regulatory coordination, investment, and periodic review before their full benefits are realized. The long-term impact of Prime Minister Modi's three-nation visit will ultimately depend on whether the political momentum generated translates into sustained implementation supported by both state and non-state stakeholders.

The visit further highlighted that India's growing global profile is increasingly accompanied by greater international scrutiny. While the warm receptions, strong diaspora engagement, and historic outreach to New Zealand strengthened goodwill and reinforced India's Indo-Pacific partnerships, protests, human rights concerns, and anti-immigration rhetoric can shape the political environment surrounding bilateral ties.

Maintaining broad-based support will therefore require India to complement high-level diplomacy with continued engagement across governments, businesses, academia, and diaspora communities. If effectively implemented and politically sustained, these initiatives could significantly deepen India's strategic influence and economic integration across the Indo-Pacific.