

You have Australia's support for NSG bid, Malcolm Turnbull assures PM Modi

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Hangzhou: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Australian counterpart Malcolm Turnbull today assured his country's support for India's entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) as the two leaders met on the sidelines of the G20 Summit. Also, they agreed to deepen the bilateral defence and security cooperation.

PM Modi and Malcolm Turnbull

In return of Australia's pro-active support to India's NSG membership, PM Modi expressed gratitude towards Turnbull, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Vikas Swarup said.

"Prime Minister Turnbull assured that Australia will continue to support India's inclusion in the NSG," he said.

India's efforts to join the grouping suffered a setback in June when the NSG plenary held in South Korea decided against accepting its membership application after China and some other nations opposed entry of a non-NPT signatory.

"The two leaders discussed defence and security cooperation. In this context, both the sides positively accessed the recent Naval exercises held between the two sides and agreed to remain in touch," Swaup said after their talks.

"The issue of terrorism was also discussed during the meeting and Prime Minister Modi said that it is important for all the democratic forces to come together to counter this challenge," the spokesperson said.

Swarup said the Prime Minister told Turnbull that India's neighbourhood, in particular, is suffering from the destabilising effects of terrorism.

"Even Russia, China, Afghanistan were all facing terrorism threat emanating from our region and it was important for us to identify the suppliers, exporters and financiers of terrorism. Otherwise, the world is going to face a huge challenge in coming weeks and months," Modi said, apparently referring to Pakistan from where terror groups such as Haqqani network, Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Taliban operates.

"Prime Minister Modi's overall message was that we need a unified approach on countering terrorism," Swarup said.

Modi said India-Australia relations are full of energy and the implementation of the mutually agreed projects and programmes have been considerably speeded up under Turnbull's guidance.

The two leaders also discussed the possibilities of trade and investment ties between India and Australia.

In the context of trade, both the sides felt that much more can be done and if the comprehensive economic cooperation agreements between Australia and India could be speeded up that would certainly provide much more momentum to their ties.

Modi also sought the support of Turnbull in encouraging the Australian pension funds to invest in India. He also sought Turnbull's support for clean coal technology.

"Because of India's clean energy targets, it is important for us to adopt as much clean coal technology as possible and this is an area in which Australia has proven expertise. Whether it is underground mining or other form of mining, Australian companies can provide us those technologies," he added.

(With PTI inputs)