

Carney secures \$2.6-billion uranium supply deal with India, launches talks on trade

After months of discussions, meeting between Carney and Modi marks a thaw in relations

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Prime Minister Mark Carney on Monday secured a \$2.6-billion deal to supply Canadian uranium to India and launched talks on a comprehensive trade deal with New Delhi as he wrapped up a four-day visit to the subcontinent aimed at repairing years of ruptured ties.

The uranium deal was one of 10 commercial agreements touted during the trip, valued at a combined \$5.5-billion. Unlike the uranium contract, many of the others had been made public months ago.

The Prime Minister, who has set a goal of doubling non-U.S. trade over the next decade, said co-operation with India would make both countries more self-reliant.

"With this new partnership, we will not stop until the goals of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Canada Strong are reached," he said, using a Hindi phrase for "self-sufficient India."

Mr. Carney, touting an approach he calls "values-based realism," has largely sidestepped questions over meddling by New Delhi in Canada, including allegations it was behind the 2023 murder of a Canadian Sikh activist. Last year, a public inquiry report flagged India as the "second most active country engaging in electoral foreign interference in Canada" after China.

India's envoy to Ottawa, Dinesh Patnaik, signalled there would be no softening of his country's position on the matter, telling reporters accompanying Mr. Carney that, as far as New Delhi is concerned, it has never conducted foreign interference in Canada.

After a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Monday, Mr. Carney announced Saskatoon-based Cameco Corp. has reached a deal to supply nearly 22 million pounds, or 9.9 million kilograms, of uranium to the Indian government for nuclear energy generation. The deal spans 2027 to 2035.

The two leaders, who held a private tête-à-tête for 35 minutes and a 90-minute meeting with their delegations, also launched talks on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which Mr. Carney has said he aims to wrap up by the end of the year. The Prime Minister's Office said it's a deal that would support Canada's goal



Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, left, walks with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi before their meeting in New Delhi on Monday. SAJJAD HUSSAIN/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

of more than doubling two-way trade with India to \$70-billion by 2030.

Mr. Carney's office said Canada and India will also increase defence co-operation, including on maritime security, and identify opportunities for joint naval activities, including with other countries - "underscoring our shared commitment to security and resilience."

Canada and India also pledged to work more closely on security and law enforcement, including on curtailing the flow of ingredients for illegal production of fentanyl and fighting "transnational organized criminal networks."

Canada and India announced a strategic energy partnership that would involve working together on liquefied natural gas, uranium, solar and hydrogen. They signed two non-binding memorandums of understanding to collaborate on critical minerals and energy, and strengthen co-operation in solar, wind, biofuels and hydropower. The Prime Minister's Office said Canada intends to join the International Solar Alliance, which was set up by India and France.

Canada and India are emerging from a two-way diplomatic freeze of more than two years.

Only 16 months ago, Canada-India relations hit a low point when Ottawa accused Indian diplomats of being part of a campaign of violence against Canadians and expelled New Delhi's top envoy as well as other diplomats.

The RCMP had deemed them "persons

of interest" in an investigation probing alleged violence, extortion and intimidation directed at the Sikh diaspora by agents of Mr. Modi's government.

Mr. Carney's visit, which included four other cabinet ministers and senior executives from the nine major Canadian pension funds, follows months of trips to India by Canadian officials.

Goldy Hyder, chief executive officer of the Business Council of Canada, who attended the Canada-India meetings in New Delhi, said the uranium deal wouldn't have been achieved without Mr. Carney's work to repair the Canada-India relationship.

"There's no question that the Prime Minister's decision to reset and recast this relationship as a strategic partnership made the Cameco deal possible."

The Prime Minister boasted in his remarks Monday that his cabinet has conducted "more engagement between the Canadian and Indian governments in the last year than there has been in more than two decades combined."

Mr. Modi told reporters Monday that Mr. Carney deserves all the credit for the turnaround in relations.

The streets of New Delhi on Sunday and Monday were festooned with placards welcoming Mr. Carney to India, some of them featuring photos of him alone and some of him and Mr. Modi.

The previously announced investment commitments highlighted Monday include India's third-largest IT services com-

pany, HCL Technologies, pledging to expand operations in Canada, "creating thousands of high-paying careers" by 2030, according to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office. HCL has promised to enlarge its 3,000-person workforce by 75 per cent.

India last awarded Cameco a uranium supply deal in 2015 after then-prime minister Stephen Harper patched up a decades-long dispute that followed India's use of Canadian nuclear technology to make a bomb. Cameco's contract at the time went until 2020.

A comprehensive trade deal with the country of 1.4 billion people would be more proof that Mr. Carney's efforts to repair a diplomatic rupture with New Delhi had borne fruit.

In a nod to significant foreign-policy differences between India and Canada, Mr. Carney in a Mumbai speech Saturday said Ottawa can work with partners even if it sometimes disagrees with them.

India, for instance, has a friendly relationship - and robust energy and arms trade - with Russia. Mr. Modi played host to Russian President Vladimir Putin last December and praised their "deep and unbreakable relationship."

By comparison, Canada has spent more than \$25-billion in recent years to help its ally Ukraine fight off Russia's full-scale invasion, which began in 2022.

The Prime Minister said in Mumbai his approach is pragmatic and principled, "recognizing that progress is often incremental, that interests of nations can diverge, and that not every partner will share all our values."

A new poll conducted for the Asia Pacific Foundation by the Angus Reid Institute finds Canadians' views toward India have not warmed at the same pace as official relations. Only three in ten, or 30 per cent, say they have a favourable view of India, the survey found.

"The diplomatic reset with India has not yet translated into a public opinion reset," Vina Nadjibulla, vice-president of research and strategy at the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, said.

Canadians support engagement but they don't feel positively about India, she said. "If Ottawa wants this reset to endure, it will need to clearly articulate why India matters to Canada's economic security and diversification and how it is dealing with the ongoing foreign interference and security concerns."

The online survey of 1,607 Canadian adults was conducted Feb. 24 to 26.