

India, Norway agree to 'green strategic partnership'

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● The new partnership is "beneficial for the entire world", Modi said

● Signed partnership agreements in the fields of health and digital technology

AFP | Oslo, Norway

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Norwegian counterpart agreed yesterday to a "green strategic partnership" deal aimed at promoting a clean-energy transition and sustainable development.

"From clean energy to climate resilience, from the blue economy to green shipping, in every sector, India's scale, speed and talent will combine with Norway's technology and capital, and our companies will develop global solutions," Modi said on the first day of a two-day visit to the Norwegian capital.

India, the world's third-largest importer of oil, has seen its supplies severely disrupted by the



Crown Prince Haakon of Norway (L) shakes hands with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (R) during a meeting with King Harald V of Norway (C) at the Royal Palace in Oslo, Norway

closure of the Strait of Hormuz during the war in the Middle East.

Roughly half of India's crude imports usually pass through the strait.

After announcing a cut in fuel

taxes to curb a surge in prices at the pump, the country -- where 73 percent of electricity generation currently comes from coal-fired power plants -- has announced it will speed up approvals for wind power plants

and battery-powered energy storage systems.

Meanwhile Norway, Europe's largest oil and gas producer excluding Russia, derives almost all of its electricity from renewable sources, primarily hydroe-

lectric facilities.

The new partnership is "beneficial for the entire world", Modi said in a statement to the press.

His Norwegian host, Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store, told broadcaster NRK that India had "a lot to contribute" on the matter.

"The country is currently making significant progress in the fields of renewable energy, solar, wind, and energy storage technologies," he said.

This is the first visit to Norway by an Indian prime minister since Indira Gandhi in 1983.

The two countries have also signed partnership agreements in the fields of health and digital technology.

They have boosted their economic ties since the entry into force in October 2025 of a free-trade agreement between the Asian giant and the member countries of the European Free Trade Association (Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, Liechtenstein).

"Whether in Ukraine or West Asia, many parts of the world are witnessing conflict. In such a situation, India and Europe are entering a new golden era in

their relations," Modi said.

The Indian leader, who arrived from Sweden in the morning, was to take part in a Norway-India business conference in the afternoon.

On Tuesday, he is due to meet with the heads of government of the Nordic countries and participate in the third Nordic-India summit, before winding up his European tour with a visit to Italy.



Norway is home to the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, a secure underground facility built inside an Arctic mountain that stores backup seeds from around the world to protect global food crops in case of disasters or climate crises.

Indonesia boosts defences with new fighter jets

Jakarta, Indonesia

Indonesia will continue boosting its defence capabilities, President Prabowo Subianto said Monday, citing uncertain times as he presented new military hardware, including six French-made Rafale jets, to the air force.

The Southeast Asian nation, which pursues a policy of diplomatic non-alignment, must "continue to improve our defence capabilities to serve as a deterrent", Prabowo told reporters at a ceremony at a military air base in Jakarta.

"We observe that the global geopolitical landscape is fraught with uncertainty, and we recognise that defence is a primary prerequisite for stability," he added.

Prabowo inspected defence equipment recently procured for the Indonesian military, including four Dassault Falcon 8X jets and an Airbus A400M Atlas transport aircraft, according to a presidential palace statement. Jakarta signed an \$8.1 billion deal in 2022 under then-defence minister Prabowo to purchase 42 French-made Rafale fighters. Six of the jets have been delivered so far -- three in January and another three on Monday, defence ministry spokesman Rico Ricardo Srait told AFP.

Japan arrests Americans over stunt at baby monkey Punch's zoo

AFP | Tokyo, Japan

Two American nationals were arrested in Japan after a stunt in which one entered the monkey enclosure at a zoo where a baby macaque named Punch became a global internet sensation this year, police said Monday.

One of the men, who identified himself as a 24-year-old college student, was arrested Sunday after climbing over a fence and dropping into a dry moat surrounding the monkey exhibit at Ichikawa City Zoo outside Tokyo.

The other man, who was film-



A seven-month-old male Japanese macaque monkey named Punch, who was abandoned by his mother shortly after birth, drags a stuffed orangutan toy at Ichikawa City Zoo and Botanical Gardens in Ichikawa, Chiba Prefecture

ing the act, identified himself as a 27-year-old singer.

Images on social media showed a person scaling the fence in a costume that included a smiley face head with sunglasses, prompting the monkeys to scatter.

The men did not come close to the animals, and were quickly apprehended by zoo officials, said an official at Ichikawa Police who spoke with AFP on a traditional condition of anonymity.

The two men face charges of forcible obstruction of business, which they refute, the police official said.

The duo did not have formal

identifications with them and initially tried to lie to police about their names, he added.

The arrests follow a massive surge in domestic and international visitors to the zoo, driven by Punch's viral fame.

The baby monkey became an internet star this year after the zoo posted photos of Punch clutching an IKEA plush orangutan for comfort after being rejected by his mother.

Punch was raised in an artificial environment after being born in July, and began training to rejoin his troop earlier this year.

Australia orders China-linked investors to sell stakes in rare earths firm

AFP | Sydney, Australia

Australia ordered a string of China-linked shareholders to sell their stakes in a rare earths firm on Monday, citing the need to protect the sector from foreign control.

Northern Minerals is vying to challenge China's dominance in producing dysprosium, a rare earth mineral used to make high-performance magnets used in electric vehicles.

Chinese investors have been snapping up shares in an effort to exert sway over the firm -- on one occasion even launching a bid to topple its chair.

Wary of a stealth takeover, the company referred itself to Australia's foreign investment review board in November 2025.



Treasurer Jim Chalmers said six shareholders would be forced to exit Northern Minerals.

"We operate a robust and non-discriminatory foreign investment framework and will take further action if required to

protect our national interest in relation to this matter," he said in a statement.

Three of those shareholders had addresses listed in China, two were listed in Hong Kong and one was listed in the British Virgin Islands.

The list included some of Northern Minerals' largest single shareholders, including Beijing-based Vastness Investment Group, which held more than six percent of the firm.

Vastness tried to use its sizeable stake to replace the chair of Northern Minerals earlier this year.

It eventually withdrew its bid to vote on the company's leadership at an extraordinary general meeting.

Hong-Kong based Qogir Trading and Service Company separately holds almost five percent of Northern Minerals.

Asked about Australia's order, the Chinese foreign ministry said it was not aware of the situation.

"China has consistently op-

posed the overstretching of the concept of national security to interfere with normal investment activities," ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun told a news briefing, adding that "the Australian side should earnestly respect the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese investors".

Australia has over the past two years waged a running battle to pry Northern Minerals away from Chinese investors.

It used the same foreign takeover laws in 2024 to force a different group of Chinese investors to sell shares in Northern Minerals.

Northern Minerals said it was "currently considering the new disposal orders and will make a further announcement once it has done so".