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India, Australia to collaborate on science and research

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Singapore: There must have been many Indian prime ministers who have visited Australia before. But this one by the current Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi is surely a unique one, given the fact that from day one the focus was on research and development in agriculture.

The Prime Minister's first engagement in Brisbane focused on projects of bio-fuels, bio-fortification and agro-robotics," stated the ministry of external affairs spokesperson, Mr Syed Akbaruuddin.

"Research is the mother of development," wrote Mr Modi later in his message on the Agro-robot at Queensland University of Technology (QUT). Later in his speech at the QUT, the prime minister stated, "Let us foster closer cooperation in skill development and education; research and development. Your Universities and Research Institutions have already contributed significantly to the growing science and technology relationship between India and Australia. This is particularly true for the collaboration between the two countries under the Australia-India Strategic Research Fund."

During his stay in the island, Mr Modi visited the Super Banana lab in the QUT where scientists are brainstorming over the development fo banans with better bio-availability of Vitamin A and iron.

"I know that most of you are aware of the opportunities in India and have looked at the market. You will begin to find a difference in India. They will no longer have to reach those opportunities through uncertain and unpredictable pathways, crossing hurdles along the way. You will not only be able to convert opportunities into partnerships, you will do it in an environment that is welcoming and easy to do business in," said Modi.

It will be interesting to know what the plan of action will be, that would be undertaken by the Modi government on the biotechnology regulations bill that is pending, besides the genetically modified crops, in the next few months. Whether or not the Prime Minister overrules the objections, will be closely watched as he is percieved to be technology supporter and business friendly in his approach.