Brief on India-France Bilateral Relations

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties in June 1948, India and France have enjoyed 75 years of close and friendly relations. In 1998, India and France elevated their diplomatic relationship to Strategic Partnership which completed 25 years in January, 2023. This Strategic Partnership, first for France outside EU has been instrumental in comprehensive growth of India-France relationship.

2. The cooperation in the areas of defence & security, space and civil nuclear matters constitute the principal pillars of the Strategic Partnership. India and France are increasingly engaged in new areas of cooperation in bilateral, trilateral and plurilateral formats such as maritime security in the Indo Pacific region, digitalisation, cyber security and advanced computing, counter terrorism, climate change, renewables and sustainable growth and development among others.

3. Both countries share a high degree of convergence on a range of regional and global issues. France has continued to support India’s claim for a permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council and the reforms of the United Nations. France’s support was vital in India’s accession to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) and Australia Group (AG). France continues to support India’s bid for accession to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). India played a key role in France’s membership of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and France supported India’s joining of Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) as an observer country.

4. India and France have consistently condemned terrorism and have resolved to work together for adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) in the UN. Following the Pulwama attack (Feb 2019), France steadfastly supported India and nationally listed the Pakistan-based ‘global terrorist’ Hafiz Saeed, which was followed up with the listing at the UN. France supported India’s requests to block attempts by Pakistan to enlist Indian citizens under the UNSC 1267 sanctions Committee. France and India coordinate their exchanges as part of the Joint Working Group (JWG) on Counter terrorism. Showing further solidarity with India, France sent Minister for Digital Transition Mr Jean-Noel Barrot to India for the 3rd Ministerial Conference on No Money for Terror (NMFT) held in New Delhi from November 18-19, 2022. This cooperation was bolstered through discussions under G20.

High-level Political Exchanges

5. Regular high level visits and exchanges take place between the Head of States/Government, Ministers and officials between India and France with an outcome based approach. On 16 August 2022, President Macron and Prime Minister spoke telephonically to discuss Ukraine crisis, Climate Change, Indo Pacific and Sri Lanka crisis. The two leaders also met briefly on the sidelines of G7 Summit at Scholss Elmau where they discussed a wide range of bilateral and global issues.

6. On 16 November 2022, President Macron and PM had a meeting at the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Bali, Indonesia. Their meeting focused on
increasing cooperation in areas of defence, nuclear energy, trade and food security. Ukraine conflict and its implications including on food and energy security also figured in the talks.

7. On 14 February 2023, PM and President Macron virtually attended the launch event of the new partnership between Air India and Airbus as Air India signed an LoI to acquire 250 aircrafts from Airbus. The event was also attended by India’s Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, Airbus CEO Guillaume Faury and Chairman of Tata Sons, Natarajan Chandrasekaran.

8. On 20 May 2023 in Hiroshima, PM held a bilateral meeting with President Macron on the margins of G7 Summit in Hiroshima and discussed a broad range of issues, including cooperation in trade and economic spheres, co-production and manufacturing in the defence sector, and civil nuclear cooperation.

9. On 4 May 2023, PM made a stop-over in Paris on his way back from Denmark to meet President Macron, thus becoming the first world leader to meet President Macron after he won his second term on 17 April 2022.

10. On 1 March 2022, President Macron and PM spoke on the phone about the crisis in Ukraine and deteriorating humanitarian situation.

11. On August 22-23,2019, the two leaders met for a bilateral meeting. The outcomes of the visit included a Joint Statement, the India-France Roadmap on Cybersecurity and Digital Technologies and 4 agreements/MoUs. On August 23, PM met the then French PM Edouard Philippe and discussed strengthening of economic relations and people to people contacts. PM also addressed the Indian community in Paris and virtually inaugurated a memorial for the victims of the Air India crashes of 1950 and 1966.

12. On 10-12 March 2018, President Macron paid a State Visit to India during which he visited New Delhi, Agra, Mirzapur and Varanasi. 14 inter-governmental agreements were signed following the talks including one for the provision of reciprocal logistics support between the respective Armed Forces. In addition to the visit Joint Statement, a ‘Joint Strategic Vision of India-France Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region’ and the ‘India-France Joint Vision for Space Cooperation’ were also issued.

Other high-level interactions in the past include:

13. PM visited France on 2-3 June 2017. This was the first ever meeting between the two leaders which took place soon after President Macron took over the office of the President of the French Republic in May 2017. Apart from a meeting at the Elysée Palace, the two leaders visited Arc de Triomphe and laid a wreath to pay homage to the memory of the Indian soldiers who died fighting in defence of France in the two world wars.

14. Former French President Francois Hollande visited India 24-26 January 2016 as the Chief Guest of India’s Republic Day celebrations. In a historic first, a French military contingent also marched on Rajpath on the Republic Day - first ever foreign country to have been invited to participate in the march. PM paid an official visit to France from 09-12 April 2015 in his first visit to a European country
as the PM.

**Ministerial Visits**

15. EAM Dr. Jaishankar visited France in January 2022 for Indo-Pacific Summit. Ms. Catherine Colona visited India in September 2022, and discussed important bilateral issues. Dr. Jaishankar met his counterpart, Ms. Catherine Colona on the sidelines of G20 Summit in Bali, Indonesia.

16. Apart from External Affairs Ministers of both countries, other Ministers have also been in regular touch. Mr. Franck Reister, French Minister delegate for Foreign Trade and Economic Attractiveness visited India in March 2022 and discussed issues of bilateral significance. Mr. Jean Baptiste Djebbari, French Minister delegate for Transport visited India soon after. He visited Delhi, Hyderabad & Mumbai and attended WINGS India 2022, an expo on civil aviation. Sh. Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of Health & Family Welfare visited France in April 2022 to attend GAVI. Ms. Chrysoula Zacharopoulou, Minister of State for Development, Francophonie and International Partnerships, attached to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs visited India for ISA. Mr. Sebastien Lecornu, Minister of Armed Forces visited India for Annual Defence Dialogue. Mr. Édouard Philippe, Former Prime minister of France and Mayor of Le Havre visited India in March 2023 and called on EAM and Minister for Shipping.

17. Mr. Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Textiles visited Paris in March 2023 to co-chair India-France Business Summit. CIM co-chaired a roundtable luncheon meeting of CEOs alongwith Mr. Olivier Becht, Minister Delegate for Foreign Trade, Economic Attractiveness. Earlier Minister, Sh Piyush Goyal, had addressed French companies and businesses virtually in February 2021.


19. India was the country of honour at Cannes Film Festival, Viva Tech, Paris Book Festival, Sea Tech Week. In March 2022, Sh. Anurag Thakur, Minister of Information and Broadcasting attended the Cannes Film Festival. Sh. Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways, Communications and Electronics & Information Technology attended Viva Tech Event in France in June 2022. One of the key outcomes was Exchange of NDA between NPCI, International and Lyra Network of France for 'Acceptance of UPI & Rupay Card in France'.

20. India and France have a range of regular official and institutional dialogue mechanisms encompassing areas such as security & defence, economy & trade as well as people to people, scientific and cultural domains. India-France Strategic Dialogue was held on 5 January 2023 in New Delhi, India. Mr. Emmanuel Bonne (Diplomatic Advisor to French President) travelled to Delhi. Foreign Office Consultations were held from 5-6 February, 2023 in Paris. Sh. Vinay Kwatra, Foreign Secretary visited for FOC with his French counterpart SG Ms. Anne Marie
Descotes. A Trilateral meeting with his French and UAE counterpart was also held on the occasion.

**Defence Cooperation**

21. Indo-French defence cooperation started with the MoU signed in 1982. The **Agreement on Defence Cooperation** signed on 20 Feb 2006 and renewed for another 10 years in Jan 2016 that gives the frame work for all defence cooperation activities between India and France.

**Trilateral exchanges**

22. Apart from bilateral dialogues, India and France also have separate trilateral institutional exchanges with Australia and UAE respectively.

23. **India-France-UAE trilateral**: A Trilateral of focal points was held during FS’s visit to Paris on 6 February 2023. On 4 Feb 2023, three foreign ministers connected on call to ‘adopt a roadmap for implementation’ of their trilateral initiative. Trilateral **Ministerial Level** meeting held on the sidelines of the 77th UNGA in New York on 21 September 2022.

24. **India-France-Australia trilateral**: After a yearlong hiatus triggered by AUKUS, **Ministerial Level meeting** on this trilateral was held on the sidelines of the 77th UNGA in September, 2022. India, France, Australia held a Trilateral Focal Points Meeting on June 20, 2023. The meeting was led by JSEW Sandeep Chakravorty and JS (Oceania) Paramita Tripathi from India, Benoit Guidée (Director, Asia and Oceania) from France, and Gary Cowan (First Assistant Secretary- North and South Asia Division) from Australia.

**Space Cooperation**

25. India and France have a rich history of cooperation in the field of space for over fifty years with ISRO and the French Space Agency, CNES carrying on various joint research programmes and launch of satellites. Programme for Reinforced Cooperation in Space Activities signed in April 2015 provides framework for undertaking cooperative activities. India-France joint vision for space cooperation released in March 2018, provides directions for future cooperation in space activities.

26. ISRO and the French Space Agency, CNES have been carrying on various joint research programmes and collaborating in satellite launches. Both sides have exchanged cooperative proposals addressing Earth observation, Maritime domain awareness, Global navigation satellite system, exploration of solar system, space transportation system and human spaceflight. As part of the ongoing bilateral cooperation between ISRO and Arianespace, GSAT-11 was launched from Kourou (French Guyana) in December 2018; GSAT-30 was launched on 16 January 2020. France continues to be a major supplier of components and equipment for the Indian space programme. CNES is supporting Indian human space flight programme – Gaganyaan, in the field of space medicine and supply of crew support elements. The IA was signed during French Foreign Minister’s visit to India on 15 April 2021.

27. On 22 June 2022, GSAT-24 communication satellite of New Space India Ltd (NSIL) was successfully launched on-board Ariane-5 from Kourou, French Guiana,
GSAT-24 was built by ISRO for NSIL and NSIL had had entered into launch service agreement with Arianespace for its launch, GSAT-24 is a 24 Ku band communication satellite meant for meeting the Direct-To-Home (DTH) communication needs of the country. NSIL has leased the entire satellite capacity to M/s Tata Play for a period of 15 years.

Civil Nuclear Cooperation

28. An agreement on civil nuclear cooperation was signed between India and France on 30 September 2008 during the visit of then Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to France. Subsequently, during the visit of then French President Nicolas Sarkozy to India in December 2010, the General Framework Agreement and the Early Works Agreement between NPCIL and M/s AREVA for the implementation of EPR for the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project (JNPP) were signed. Further, India is a member of ITER, a multi-national consortium formed to construct a experimental fusion reactor, located in Cadarache, France. India’s role in ITER project is managed by Department of Atomic Energy.

Economic Cooperation

29. India and France have important bilateral investments and trade and commercial cooperation, particularly in sectors involving IT corridors, smart-cities, railways, capital and trade exchanges, skill development etc. France has emerged as a major source of FDI for India with more than 1,000 French establishments already present in India. France is the 11th largest foreign investor in India with a cumulative investment of USD 10.49 billion from April 2000 to December 2022 which represents 1.68% of the total FDI inflows into India. The highest FDI equity inflows are in the services sector, cement & gypsum products, air transport (including air freight) and petroleum & natural gas (7.22%). These 4 sectors represent about 43% of the total equity inflow from France from April 2000 to December 2022.

30. A Joint Economic Committee exists at the level of Ministers of Commerce from both sides. The 18th JCM was held virtually on 27 November 2020. A joint announcement was also signed for setting up of a FAST-TRACK system for French companies in India and Indian companies in France. The technical meeting of the Fast Track mechanism between Indian Embassy in Paris and the French Ministry of Economy highlighting the investment-related issues faced by Indian companies in France took place on February 16, 2022. Bilateral Joint Working Groups exist in various fields. These are: (i) IT & Tele-communications; (ii) Roads; (iii) Sustainable Urban Development; (iv) Agriculture and Food Processing; (v) Mineral Exploration and Development; and (vi) Energy. The 16th JWG on Sustainable Urban Development took place on 16 January, 2023 in New Delhi.

31. MoUs and Agreements India and France have signed a number of Agreements to facilitate the expansion of commercial relations. Among these are the Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC), MoU on cooperation in Tourism, MoU on Intellectual Property and a Social Security Exemption Agreement (SSA). The most recent ones, signed during the visit of Prime Minister to France in August 2019, include MoUs on Renewable Energy, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, an Advanced Computing.
32. Pursuant to signing of a MoU in September 2008 between Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) and the French Agency for Development, the AFD extends credit for various projects in India. The priority areas for AFD economic cooperation in India are (i) energy efficiency and renewable energy within the framework of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), (ii) urban infrastructure (public transport, water, etc., through sustainable development projects and infrastructure development programmes such as JNNURM), and (iii) the preservation of biodiversity. The current projects being supported by the AFD include (i) ‘Reorganizing the Water Supply System of Jodhpur City in Rajasthan’, Phase II worth € 71.1 million (ii) ‘Forestry and Bio-diversity Conservation Project in Assam’ worth € 54 million (iii) Credit Facility Agreement (CFA) for the Bangalore Metro Rail Project, Phase-I (iv) IREDA II and (v) Cochin Metro Project.

**Digital Cooperation**

33. India-France Roadmap on Cybersecurity and Digital Technologies was one of the outcomes of visit of PM of India to France in August 2019. Some of the areas of cooperation on digital side between the two countries include:

34. M/S Atos in France and C-DAC in India have developed 14 supercomputers for India to date including the fastest supercomputer Param Siddhi at 4.6 petaflops/second. Further, discussions are ongoing between MeITy, CDAC, Atos and Directeur General du Tresor, French Ministry of Economy to develop exascale computing capacity in India. Eviden, the Atos business leading in advanced computing announced in June 2023, being awarded a $100M contract on behalf of the India Ministry of Earth Sciences, to build two new supercomputers dedicated to weather modelling and climate research for IIT-Madras and National Center for Medium Range Weather Forecast (NCMRWF).

**Culture and Tourism Cooperation**

35. Indian culture enjoys a sizeable audience in France. There are many Indo-French cultural associations which organize various events across France. Indian diaspora through diverse community associations celebrate Diwali, Holi, Pongal, Onam, Lohri etc and regularly organize cultural programs. An Indian Cultural Centre, named Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre, currently under renovation, will soon be opened in Paris. Every year at the famous Cannes Film Festival, an Indian delegation participates through an India pavilion to promote Indian films at the international stage. India was the Country of Honour at the Cannes Film Festival in 2022. This year a delegation was led by Minister of State of I&B- Dr. L. Murugan. India has a film co-production agreement with France.

36. Yoga and Ayurveda are also popular. “International Day of Yoga” (IDY) is celebrated across France with much enthusiasm. Indian Embassy celebrates IDY in collaboration with different Yoga institutions with a participation of more than 10,000 people across France. This year, more than 30 events across 15 locations celebrated IDY in 2023.

37. Government of India organized ‘Namaste France’ cultural festival in several cities of France in 2016 and PM during his visit to France in 2019 announced the next edition of “Namaste France” in 2020, however it had to be rescheduled due to the COVID pandemic. In 2021-22 and 2022-23, to celebrate Namaste France and
75 years of India’s Independence (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav), more than 100 events across France were organized and planned by the Embassy. An exhibition of S.H. Raza was held at the prestigious Centre Pompidou from 15th February to 15th May, 2023.

38. A Letter of Intent on the Museum and Heritage cooperation was signed between Ministry of Culture, Government of India and Ministry of Culture, Government of France on 30th January, 2020. Under this LOI, two Joint Working Groups have been convened i.e. 29th April 2020 via video-conference and the second one on March 28 2023 in Paris. A LOI is also being negotiated for the National Museum project, with France as a potential Knowledge Partner.

39. A Letter of Intent for Cooperation and Collaboration on broadcasting has been signed between Prasar Bharti, and France Media Monde, France in March, 2023.

40. On Tourism, though India Tourism Office in Paris was closed in December 2020, engagement in this area continues at initiative of the Mission and some states. India pavilion was set in the 97th Annual Marseille International Fair (23 September - 3 October 2022) at Marseille and India Day was organized on 28 September with Business Club France Inde. Delegations from Puducherry government, Kerala Tourism, Madhya Pradesh Tourism, Karnataka Tourism have participated in various stand alone and international events like IFTM Top Resa in Paris recently. The Embassy also organised event on Incredible India and states of Madhya Pradesh in September 23, 2022 with approximately 60 tour operators and influencers.

Marine and Maritime Cooperation


42. Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) and National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management and the French National Institute for ocean science and technology (IFREMER). In Deep Ocean Mission, one vertical is setting up of an Advanced Marine Biology Research Station. The proposed ‘Advanced Marine Station for Ocean Biology’ is driven by a mission to carry out the highest quality fundamental science with a multidisciplinary approach, French Embassy and CNRS are in touch with MoES to take this project forward.
43. University and scientific cooperation programme called GOAT (Goa Atlantic cooperation in Marine Science and Technology) was signed in Brest on January 20, 2020, between the French actors of “Campus mondial de la mer” and the Indian Institute of Technology. This would entail student and researchers’ mobility in the blue economy sector and in marine science and technology.

**S&T / EDUCATION COOPERATION**

44. India and France have a rich history of cooperation in the field of Science and Technology. Several linkages have been forged between Ministries / departments / institutes/ organizations on both sides viz. Indo-French Centre for the Promotion of Advance Research (CEFIPRA), Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Earth Sciences, Department of Biotechnology, Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) on the Indian side and National Research Agency (ANR), National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), Institut Pasteur, National Institute of Health and Medical Research (INSERM), Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation from the French side.

45. India France Knowledge Summit is a bilateral forum dedicated to scientific and academic cooperation between France and India. Three editions of this Summit have take place since 2018. The fourth edition will be held next year in Delhi, in person.

46. A delegation led by Secretary, DST had visited Paris and held various meetings from 04-05 May 2023 besides Co-chairing the 36th Governor Body Meeting of CEFIPRA. It was decided to increase funding by Euros 1 million from each side. More involvement of Private Sector is envisaged. Priority areas such as Hydrogen, Cyber Security, Quantum and other Future technologies for projects were identified It was mutually agreed that the French Ministry of Higher Education, will publicize Raman Charpak Scholarship: scholarship in France.

47. The Joint Committee on Science and Technology deliberated and identified priority areas for future collaboration in energy, manufacturing, cyber physical system, host-microbe-interactions in health and agriculture. The second JCM is to be held in 2023 in Paris.

48. Roadmap on Green Hydrogen was signed during the visit of Ms. Chrysoula Zacharapoulou, Minister of State for Development, Francophonie and International Partnerships of France to India along with Sh. R.K. Singh, Minister of Power, New and Renewable Energy on 4th May, 2022, it aims to bring the French and Indian hydrogen ecosystems together in order to establish a reliable and sustainable value chain for decarbonised hydrogen.

49. It is estimated that there are about 10000 Indian students in France. Encouraged by offer of courses in English medium in the French institutes of higher education, especially in the field of business management, more than 6,000 new Indian students come to France every year. The APS-VIE Scheme (it allows Indian students to stay in France upto 2 years after finishing Masters to look for jobs) was also renewed in October 2022 and is in force.

50. During the visit of PM to Chantilly (August 2019), the two sides encouraged their respective Universities and academic institutes to increase the number and
quality of student exchanges with the aim of reaching the number of 20,000 students by 2025. During this visit, an Administrative Arrangement was also signed between the two countries for Cooperation in Skill Development and Vocational Training. Migration Mobility Partnership Agreement entered into effect in October 2022. During her visit to India, Catherine Colonna, French Foreign Minister from 13 to 15 September 2022, India and France agreed to launch scheme for Young Professionals in the age group 18 to 35 years (issue of 500 visas on both sides).

51. The Indo French Campus for Health was also launched in June 2022 to offer double degrees from Indian French Institutes. *Indo-French Campus - Biosantex Project: Partner Institutions:* Currently there are 10 partner institutes in India: 6 Indian Institutes of Science, Education and Research (IISER), National Centre for Biological Sciences (Bangalore), National Center for Cell Sciences (Pune), National Institute of BioMedical Genomics (Kalyani, WB) and Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Mumbai).

**Community in France**

52. It is estimated that the Indian community, including NRIs in mainland France number around 109,000, largely originating from French enclaves of Puducherry, Karaikal, Yanam, Mahe and Chandernagore. Sizeable number of Indian origin population lives in the French Overseas Territories of the Reunion Island (280,000), Guadeloupe (60,000), Martinique (6,000) and Saint Martin (300). There are more than 50 Indian community organizations active in France. Major communities constituting the Indian origin population originate from Puducherry and Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Punjab.

53. During the visit of President Macron to India (March 2018), the two sides signed a Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement to facilitate temporary circular migration based on mobility and the encouragement for a return of skills to the home country. It came into force on 1 October 2022. First JWG on MMPA was held on November 29, 2022.

54. Agreement on exemption of short stay visa requirements for official passport holders: The matter was taken up with French side in 2019. It was proposed that there be one agreement on mutual exemption of visa for both diplomatic and official passport and the current agreement on visa waiver for diplomatic passport be subsumed in the new agreement.

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