

## **India-France Relations**

India and France have traditionally close and friendly relations. In 1998, the two countries entered into **Strategic Partnership** which is emblematic of their convergence of views on a range of international issues apart from a close and growing bilateral relationship.

2. The areas of **defence cooperation, space cooperation and civil nuclear cooperation** constitute the three principal pillars of our Strategic Partnership. Apart from these traditional fields of cooperation, India and France are increasingly engaged in new areas of cooperation like climate change, sustainable growth and development, the International Solar Alliance etc.

3. India and France support a multi-polar world order. France has continued to support India's claim for permanent membership of the Security Council and the reforms of the United Nations. France has provided consistent support to India's candidature for the membership of Multilateral Export Control regimes, viz. NSG and MTCR. France's support was vital in India's accession to MTCR in June 2016.

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. During the visit of then President Hollande in January 2016, India and France also issued a Joint Statement on Counter Terrorism in which the two countries resolved to step up their bilateral cooperation in this field.

### **Major visits**

5. India and France have had regular exchange of visits at the highest level. **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited France on 2-3 June 2017** and met President Emmanuel Macron. This was the first ever meeting between the two leaders which happened soon after President Macron taking over the highest office of the French Republic following his victory in the presidential election on 7 May. Prime Minister Modi and President Macron held a meeting in the restricted format following which the latter hosted a working lunch at the Elysee Palace. The leaders had a joint press engagement in which they gave statements to the press after the lunch. President Macron joined Prime Minister Modi in visiting Arc de Triomphe and laying a wreath to pay homage to the memory of the Indian soldiers who died fighting in defence of France in the two world wars.

6. During the visit, the two leaders reiterated their strong commitment to further strengthen India-France strategic partnership. The Paris Climate Accord and the climate issue was prominently discussed. Prime Minister Modi declared India's unflinching commitment to the Paris Accord and the effort to save environment which is engrained in India's civilizational heritage and ancient philosophical thought. The two leaders also expressed deep concerns on the threat of terrorism to the global community. President Macron stated that he looks forward to visiting India in towards the end of 2017 during which an International Solar Alliance Summit could also be held.

7. Earlier **Prime Minister Modi had paid an official visit to France in April 2015** in what was his first visit to a European country. Apart from tete-a-tete with President Francois Hollande and delegation-level talks, the Prime Minister met the Parliamentary leaders of France led by Mr.

Claude Bartolone, President of the French National Assembly and attended business round tables with CEOs of top French companies. Prime Minister also visited the UNESCO where he launched a special website dedicated to the International Day of Yoga. He also visited the Airbus factory in the city of Toulouse.

8. **Prime Minister Modi visited Paris on 29-30 November 2015** to attend the inaugural Leaders' Event at the COP-21 Climate Change Summit. He launched the International Solar Alliance jointly with President Hollande in the presence of UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon. Along with President Hollande, US President Obama and Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates, he spoke at the event of "Mission Innovation" for promoting renewable energy. As the Paris Agreement was reached on the conclusion of COP-21, President Hollande praised India's contribution and Prime Minister Modi's personal leadership in reaching the historic agreement.

9. **President Hollande**, during his Presidency twice visited India. During his visit in February 2013, he met the political leadership in New Delhi and also visited Mumbai where he interacted with Indian business leaders.

10. **President Hollande visited India from 24-26 January 2016** as the chief guest of the Republic Day celebration. In a historic first, a French military contingent also marched on Rajpath on the Republic Day and thus France became the first ever foreign country to have been invited to participate in the march. President Hollande also visited Chandigarh where the two Leaders addressed the India-France CEOs' Forum. The two Leaders also jointly inaugurated the temporary headquarters of the International Solar Alliance in Gurugram. A joint declaration was issued on the conclusion of the visit and a number of important agreements were signed.

11. **Other recent high level ministerial visits** have been of S/Shri C.R. Chaudhary, MoS (Commerce & Industry) (October 2017), ArunJaitley, Minister of Finance, Defence and Corporate Affairs (June 2017); Ms Nirmala Seetharaman, MoS (I/C) Commerce and Industry (June 2017), Suresh Prabhu, Minister of Railways (April 2016), SmritiIrani, Minister of Textiles (September 2016), Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Minister of Food Processing Industries (October 2016), Dr.SubashBhambre, MoS for Defence Production (October 2016) and Shri M.J. Akbar, MoS (External Affairs) on 7 March 2017.

12. **From the French side, recent Ministerial visits** have been those of French Defence Minister Florence Parly (October 2017), Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault (January 2017), Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian (February and May 2015, and September 2016) and Christophe Sirugue, Minister of State for Industry (October 2016).

### **Institutional Dialogue relating to strategic areas**

13. India and France have a range of regular institutional dialogue. India-France Strategic Dialogue takes place between NSAs from both sides. The last Strategic Dialogue was held in New Delhi on 4 October 2017 between Shri AjitDoval, NSA and Mr. Philippe Etienne, Diplomatic Adviser to the French President. Annual Foreign Office Consultations were last held on 14 November 2016 in New Delhi led by Foreign Secretary Dr. S. Jaishankar and Mr. Christian Masset, Secretary General of the French Foreign Office. The second bilateral dialogue on Maritime Cooperation was held in New Delhi on 18 January 2017 led by Deputy NSA, Dr. Arvind Gupta and Ms. Marie-Helene Maysonauve, French Special Representative on fight

against maritime piracy and Vice Admiral Bonaventure, Defence Maritime Security Coordinator. Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism (led at the level of Additional Secretary (CT), MEA), Cyber Dialogue (led at the level of Additional Secretary (IO), MEA), Track 1.5 Dialogue (led by Joint Secretary (PP&R), MEA) with the participation of the Observer Research Foundation from our side and the Strategy and Policy Planning Division of the French MFA called CAPS and the Centre for International Studies and Research (CERI as the French acronym stands) are the other active mechanisms.

### **Defence Cooperation**

14. Regular exchange of visits at the level of Services Chiefs takes place. The three services also have regular defence exercises; viz. Exercise Shakti (Army; the last one took place in January 2016 in India), Exercise Varuna (Navy; April 2017 off Toulon), Exercise Garuda (Air Force; June 2014 at Jodhpur). Apart from service-level staff talks, the two sides have a High Committee on Defence Cooperation (HCDC) which meets annually at the level of Defence Secretary and the French Director General of the Directorate of International Relations and Strategy (DGRIS). The last HCDC meeting was held in New Delhi in March 2016. Apart from this, various staff courses, training programmes etc. also regularly take place.

15. Major on-going defence-related projects are the following:

- **Rafale deal:** The Inter-governmental agreement for purchase of 36 Rafale jets by India in flyaway condition was signed in New Delhi on 23 September 2016 by RM Manohar Parrikar and French Defence Minister Le Drian.
- **P-75 Scorpene Project:** The contract for six Scorpene submarines from M/s DCNS was signed in October 2006. All six vessels will be built under technology transfer at the Mazagaon Docks Ltd. The first two submarine Kalvari and Khanderi have been built.

### **Space Cooperation**

16. India and France have a rich history of cooperation in the field of space going back to fifty years with ISRO and the French Space Agency, CNES carrying on various joint research programmes and launch of satellites. A joint stamp was released to commemorate fifty years of bilateral space cooperation during the visit of PM Modi to France in April 2015. M/s Antrix and M/s Airbus Defence and Space also have signed an MoA for commercial cooperation in June 2016. GSAT-18 was launched from Arianespace, Kourou on 5 October 2016 which was the twentieth ISRO satellite launched by Arianespace. GSAT-17 was launched from Kourou on 28 June 2017. France continues to be a major supplier of components and equipment for the Indian space programme.

17. During the visit of President Hollande to India in January 2016, ISRO and CNES signed an Implementing Arrangement (IA) for the joint development of a thermal infrared satellite mission; an IA for the payload of French Argos-IV instrument on India's Oceansat-3 satellite and a Letter of Intent for cooperation in planetary exploration. The jointly developed Megha-Tropiques satellite which observes clouds and water vapours over the tropical region continues to be in good health and providing valuable scientific data. A joint Ka-band propagation experiment is also under implementation.

18. During the Asia Pacific Remote Sensing Symposium held in New Delhi, CNES and ISRO jointly organized a reception of heads of space agencies on 3 April 2016. The meeting attended by 60 countries came up with a “New Delhi Declaration” which identifies various international satellites contributing as space segment for monitoring climate change.

### **Civil Nuclear Cooperation**

19. A landmark agreement on civil nuclear cooperation was signed between India and France on 30 September 2008 during the visit of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to France. Subsequently, during the visit of 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. During Prime Minister Modi’s visit to France in April 2015, M/s L&T and M/s AREVA signed an MoU to maximize localisation for manufacturing of critical and large forgings involved in EPR technology for JNPP (including Reactor Pressure Vessel) and M/s AREVA and NPCIL signed a pre-engineering agreement. Following M/s AREVA’s restructuring, French utility EDF has now been designated as the lead agency from the French side for negotiations and implementation of the JNPP. EDF and NPCIL have signed a revised MoU on 22 March 2016 for the construction of six EPR units at Jaitapur of 1650 MWe each. Regular negotiations between NPCIL and EDF are going on towards finalization of a General Framework Agreement on project-related parameters.

### **Economic Cooperation**

20. Both India and France have important bilateral investments and trade and commercial cooperation. Almost 1000 French companies are present in India with a total turnover of US\$ 20 billion and employing 300,000 people in India. French companies have more than 25 R&D centres in India. France is the ninth largest foreign investor in India with cumulative investment of US\$ 5.15 billion from April 2000 to May 2016 which represents 1.5% of the total FDI inflows in India. In France, about 120 Indian companies are present with an estimated investment stock of Euro one billion and employing 7000 people.

21. In 2016, the total trade in goods between India and France stood at Euro 8.58 billion, registering an increase of 0.49% from 2015. The trade surplus remains in India’s favour for the past ten years with Indian exports to France in 2016 standing at Euro 4.67 billion and French exports to India at Euro 3.90 billion. However, the overall volume of bilateral trade remains low with Indian exports to France being a meagre 1.06% of France’s total imports. Bilateral trade in services stood at Euro 3.41 billion in 2015 which remains in India’s favour with India’s share of Euro 1.72 billion of exports.

22. A Joint Economic Committee exists at the level of Ministers of Commerce and Foreign Trade from both sides. The latest round of the Joint Committee Meeting took place in Paris on 24 October 2017. The Indian delegation was led by Shri C.R. Chaudhary, MoS for Commerce & Industry and the French delegation was led by Mr Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, Minister of State for Europe and Foreign Affairs. Shri Chaudhary also met French Foreign Minister Mr Jean-Yves Le Drian and Mr Benjamin Greveaux, Minister of State for Economy.

23. Seven bilateral joint working groups in various fields exist which are: (i) IT & Telecommunications; (ii) Roads; (iii) Sustainable Urban Development; (iv) Agriculture and Food Processing; (v) Mineral Exploration and Development; (vi) Energy; and (vii) Post.

24. An India-France CEOs' Forum exists at the level of top CEOs from both sides meeting annually and presenting their reports to the Prime Minister of India and President of France. The Forum is led by Mr. Dhruv Sawhney, CEO of Triveni Engineering and Mr. Paul Hermelin, CEO of Capgemini. The last round of CEO's Forum met in January 2017 in Paris.

25. Almost all the major French companies are present in India including Renault, Saint Gobain, Veolia, Michelin, Capgemini, Sanofi, EDF, Airbus, Lactalis, Sodexo, Total and others. Alstom has won a major project worth Euro 3.2 billion of manufacturing 800 locomotives in Madhepura, Bihar. India's Reliance, Tata, Mahindra and other big companies have tied up joint cooperation with major French companies like Dassault, SAFRAN, Thales and others in the defence sector. French infrastructure companies are looking forward to major opportunities in Indian projects including in smart cities and renewable energy.

26. The Bilateral Investment and Protection Agreement between India and France expired in 2010, ten years after coming into force. GoI would like to replace it with a Bilateral Investment Treaty. A model text of the agreement was proposed by the Indian side in 2015. French response has been pending.

### **Cultural Cooperation**

27. Indian culture enjoys wide admiration among the people of France. ICCR regularly sends Indian cultural troupes to France. An Indian Cultural Centre is proposed to be opened in Paris. The building for the Cultural Centre which was acquired for the purpose is to undergo renovation for which the tenders have been floated.

28. As decided during the visit of President Hollande to India in January 2016, ICCR presented the Namaste France cultural festival in France from 15 September to 30 November 2016. The festival brought home to the French audience various manifestations of Indian culture including classical and contemporary dances and music, exhibitions, seminars, food, fashion, films etc. The festival saw more than 80 events presented in more than 40 cities in France and proved to be a great success. The French side is going to present the French cultural festival Bonjour India in India from November 2017 to February 2018.

29. A Cultural Exchange Programme for the period 2016 to 2018 was also signed during President Hollande's visit. GoI has also offered five scholarships for study of Sanskrit in India to French nationals. Various other bilateral programmes of cultural cooperation are under implementation. MEA organised a Regional Hindi Conference at INALCO University, Paris from 14-16 September 2016. A Sanskrit Conference was organized by the Mission on 21 June 2017.

### **Cooperation in the fields of S&T and Education**

30. In the field of S&T, the Indo-French Centre for the Promotion of Advance Research (CEFIPRA) based in New Delhi established in 1987 is playing a major role by funding joint proposals for research in sciences and evaluation existing research projects. Joint Indo-French research projects funded by CEFIPRA have led to several patents. CEFIPRA also awards Raman-Charpak scholarships since 2013 to Indian and French scholars. Several other bilateral cooperation programmes exists including the establishment of an Indo-French Ministerial-level Joint Committee on Science and Technology as decided during the visit of President Hollande to India in January 2016. The first meeting of the Committee is yet to be held.

31. It is estimated that there are about 5000 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, about 3000 new Indian students come to France every year. During the visit of Prime Minister Modi to France in April 2015, the two sides decided to facilitate professional experience for their students in both countries after the completion of their academic courses. The French government has started granting the residence permit called “Authorization Provisoire de Sejour” (APS) of 12 months for the second year after the completion of the first period of 12 months which was already been granted to Indian students of Masters-level and above. GoI, on its part, has implemented the facilitation of visa for 250 French students annually under the French VIE scheme (Volontariat International en Enterprises) in which French students fresh after graduation are encouraged by the French government to seek internship opportunities in companies abroad to supplement their academic experience.

### **Indian community in France**

32. It is estimated that the Indian community, including NRIs in mainland France number around 106,000, 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 organisations active in France. Major communities constituting the Indian origin population originate from Puducherry and Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Punjab.

### **Consular issues**

33. Bilateral consular relations are guided by the following four agreements:

- i) India-France Extradition Treaty (August 2005)
- ii) India-France Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) in Criminal Matters (10 October 2005)
- iii) India-France Agreement on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons (January 2008)
- iv) India-France agreement on exemption of visa requirements for diplomats (October 2013)

34. India and France have committed to take forward their decisions on Bilateral Partnership Agreement on Migration and Mobility with a view to conclude them as soon as possible.

**Useful Resources:**

Embassy of India, Paris Website:

<http://www.ambinde.fr/>

Embassy of India, Paris Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInFrance>

Embassy of India, Paris YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX6XYIVPq0C0NeNgMljRmsg>

Embassy of India, Paris Twitter:

[https://twitter.com/Indian\\_Embassy](https://twitter.com/Indian_Embassy)

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