

Embassy of India

Paris

India-France Bilateral 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 all the four Multilateral Export Control regimes, viz. Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) and the Australia Group (AG). France's support was vital in India's accession to MTCR, WA and AG while France continues to support India's bid for accession to the NSG.

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 President Macron to India in March 2018, India and France reaffirmed their strong determination to eliminate terrorism everywhere it is to be found and condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations including cross-border terrorism and terror-related incidents in France and India.

Major visits

5. India and France have had regular exchange of visits at the highest level. **President Emmanuel Macron and Mrs. Brigitte Macron paid a State Visit to India from 10-12 March 2018** during which they visited New Delhi, Agra, Mirzapur and Varanasi. After the ceremonial welcome in New Delhi, President Macron and Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a tete-a-tete and delegation-level talks. Fourteen inter-governmental agreements were signed following the talks. President of India hosted a banquet in honour of President Macron as also delegations of other countries which had assembled in New Delhi for the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance. The Founding Conference was held in New Delhi on 11 March co-chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Macron. President Macron and Mrs Macron visited Taj Mahal the same day. On 12 March, President Macron and Prime Minister Modi visited Mirzapur to inaugurate a 100 MW solar power park built by the French firm Engie. The visit finished with a boat ride on Ganga by the two leaders in Varanasi. During the visit, the India-France CEOs' Forum also met which presented its report to the two leaders. Fourteen B2B agreements were signed. A Knowledge Summit was also held bringing together higher educational institutions from both sides to boost cooperation in the field of education, research and student mobility.

6. **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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. **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.

10. **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.

11. **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.

12. **Other recent high level ministerial visits** have been of S/Shri R.K. Singh, MoS (Power and MNRE) for participation in the International Energy Agency Ministerial (November 2017) and the One Planet Summit in Paris (December 2017), C.R. Chaudhary, MoS (Commerce & Industry) (October 2017), Arun Jaitley, Minister of Finance, Defence and Corporate Affairs (June 2017); Ms Nirmla Seetharaman, MoS (I/C) Commerce and Industry (June 2017), Suresh Prabhu, Minister of Railways (April 2016), Smriti Irani, Minister of Textiles (September 2016), Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Minister of Food Processing Industries (October 2016), Dr. Subash Bhambre, MoS for Defence Production (October 2016) and Shri M.J. Akbar, MoS (External Affairs) on 7 March 2017.

13. **From the French side, recent Ministerial visits** have been those of French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian (November 2017), Defence Minister Florence Parly (October 2017), then 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 and cooperation in strategic areas

14. 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 Ajit Doval, 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.

15. The countries decided to deepen their bilateral strategic partnership by signing various new agreements during the visit of President Macron to India in March 2018. Both countries concluded a bilateral agreement on “Exchange and Reciprocal Protection of Classified or Protected Information”. They also issued a “Joint Strategic Vision of India-France Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region” to maintain the safety of international sea lanes, for countering maritime terrorism and piracy and for building maritime domain awareness. India and France also signed an “Agreement for the provision of reciprocal logistics support between their Armed Forces” to extend logistical support on reciprocal access to their respective facilities for their armed forces.

Defence Cooperation

16. During the visit of President Macron to India, the two countries decided to create an annual defence dialogue at the Ministerial level. Regular exchange of visits at the level of Services Chiefs already takes place. The three services also have regular defence exercises; viz. Exercise Shakti (Army; the last one took place in January-February 2018 in France), Exercise Varuna (Navy; March 2018 in Goa), 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.

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

- **Purchase of Rafale aircraft:** 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 Raksha Mantri Manohar Parrikar and French Defence Minister Le Drian. Project implementation is underway.
- **P-75 Scorpene Project:** The contract for six Scorpene submarines from M/s DCNS was signed in October 2006. All six vessels are to be built under technology transfer at the Mazagaon Docks Ltd. Project implementation is underway. The first submarine INS Kalvari was commissioned in October 2017.

Space Cooperation

18. 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.

19. Building on the historical linkages in the arena of civilian space, both India and France issued a “Joint Vision for Space Cooperation” during the visit of President Macron to India. The Joint Vision spells out the concrete areas of future cooperation in this field. ISRO and CNES will realize their third joint satellite mission – TRISHNA which is meant for eco-system stress and water use monitoring as also accommodation of a French instrument of India’s OCEANSAT – 3 satellite. 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.

20. M/s Antrix and M/s Airbus Defence and Space have an MoA for commercial cooperation. GSAT-17 was launched from Kourou on 28 June 2017. GSAT-11 is planned to be launched in May 2018. France continues to be a major supplier of components and equipment for the Indian space programme.

Civil Nuclear Cooperation

21. 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. 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 signed a revised MoU on 22 March 2016 for the construction of six EPR units at Jaitapur of 1650 MWe each.

22. During the visit of President Macron to India, NPCIL and EDF concluded an Industrial Way Forward Agreement. Both sides reiterated their goal of commencing works at the Jaitapur site around the end of 2018. Both EDF and NPCIL have been directed to accelerate their contractual discussions keeping in view for the project to generate cost-effective electricity.

Economic Cooperation

23. 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. 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\$ 6.09 billion from April 2000 to October 2017. In France, about 120 Indian companies are present with an estimated investment stock of Euro one billion and employing 7000 people.

24. In 2017, India France bilateral trade in goods stood at € 10.69 billion, an increase of 24.6% as compared to the previous year. India’s exports to France were valued at € 5.35 billion, up 14.49%. French exports to India increased by 36.69% during the same period to € 5.344 billion. However, the overall volume of bilateral trade remains low with India’s exports to France being a meagre 0.99% of France’s total imports. Bilateral trade in services for year 2016 stood at € 3.14 billion which was in India’s favour with Indian exports standing at € 1.70 billion.

25. 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 Griveaux, Minister of State for Economy. During the visit of President Macron to India, both sides decided to hold annually a Dialogue at the ministerial level to deepen cooperation in the economic and financial sectors.

26. 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.

27. 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 on 10 March 2018 at New Delhi coinciding with the visit of the French President to India.

28. 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. AFD, the French Agency for Development has extended a loan of Euro 100 million to the Government of India for its Smart Cities Mission. French side has been actively cooperating with various programmes in especially three Smart Cities, viz. Chandigarh, Nagpur and Puducherry. SNCF, the French railways and the Indian Railways have established a Permanent Indo-French Railway Forum. They have been cooperating in the studies for the feasibility of semi-high speed upgrade of Delhi-Chandigarh section and station development study of Ambala and Ludhiana.

29. 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 side has informed that as all trade-related agreements are subject to the purview of EU, France cannot unilaterally decide in the matter. As declared during the visit of President Macron to India, both India and France support the efforts of India and EU to negotiate a comprehensive EU-India Broad Based Trade and Investment Agreement.

Cultural Cooperation

30. 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 works are expected to commence soon.

31. 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 presented the French cultural festival Bonjour India in India from November 2017 to February 2018. India will be the Guest of Honour country in the French Book Fair in Paris in 2020 and France will be accorded the same status in the New Delhi World Book Fair in 2022.

32. A Cultural Exchange Programme for the period 2016 to 2018 is under implementation. 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

33. 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 exist including the establishment of an Indo-French Ministerial-level Joint Committee on Science and Technology.

34. It is estimated that there are about 6000 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 "Autorization 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.

35. During the visit of President Macron to India, 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 10,000 students by 2020. An Agreement on the mutual recognition of degrees was also signed between the two sides to facilitate the pursuit of higher education by Indian students in France and French students in India and increase their employability.

Indian community in France

36. 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.

Consular issues

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

1. India-France Extradition Treaty (August 2005)
2. India-France Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) in Criminal Matters (10 October 2005)
3. India-France Agreement on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons (January 2008)
4. India-France agreement on exemption of visa requirements for diplomats (October 2013)

38. During the visit of President Macron to India, the two sides signed a landmark Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement which aims to facilitate temporary circular migration based on mobility and the encouragement for a return of skills to the home country.

Apr 2018