

## India-France Relations

Relations between India and France have traditionally been close and friendly. With the establishment of strategic partnership in 1998, there has been a significant progress in all areas of bilateral cooperation through regular high-level exchanges at the Head of State/Head of Government levels and growing cooperation and exchanges including in strategic areas such as defence, counter-terrorism, nuclear energy and space. France was the first country with which India entered into an agreement on civil nuclear cooperation following the waiver given by the Nuclear Suppliers' Group, enabling India to resume full civil nuclear cooperation with the international community. There is also a growing and wide-ranging cooperation in other areas such as trade and investment, culture, science & technology and education. France has consistently supported India's increasing role in international fora, including India's permanent membership of the UNSC.

The momentum of bilateral exchanges has been maintained at the highest level over recent years. A clear indication of the importance that France assigns to the strategic partnership with India was the fact that India was the first country in Asia that the President chose for a bilateral visit. **President François Hollande, accompanied by Mme Valérie Trierweiler, paid a State visit to India on 14-15 February, 2013.** He was accompanied by a 6 member Ministerial delegation as well as a large business delegation. He held talks with the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and a joint statement was issued at the conclusion of the delegation level talks. He was hosted in the evening at a State Banquet by Hon'ble President of India. EAM, UPA President, Leader of the Opposition and the Governor of Maharashtra called on him. In Mumbai, he interacted with Indian business leaders. Four principal agreements signed during the visit were: (1) Cultural Exchange Programme (2) Lol on intensification of Cooperation in the fields of Education and Research (3) Statement of Intent for long-term Cooperation in Space (4) Joint Statement to follow-up and strengthen cooperation in the railway sector. In addition, there were a series of agreements signed in the Education, Science & Technology sectors. Before the State visit, the **first meeting** between President Hollande and Prime Minister Singh took place on the sidelines of the **G20 Summit in Los Cabos on 19 June 2012.**

**EAM Shri Salman Khurshid** paid an official visit to **Paris on 10-11 January, 2013** to prepare for the Presidential State Visit in February. During the visit, he held talks with his counterpart Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius as well as the Minister for Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Energy, Mme Delphine Batho and the Minister for Higher Education and Research, Mme Genevieve Fioraso.

The **French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian** visited India for talks with Raksha Mantri on July 25-27, 2013.

### Institutional Structure for dialogue

France and India have instituted a Strategic Dialogue at the level of National Security Advisors whose 24<sup>th</sup> round took place in New Delhi on September 4, 2012. NSA held talks with the Diplomatic Advisor to the French President, Mr. Paul Jean-Ortiz in New Delhi on 12 July 2013. The latest round of Annual Foreign Office

Consultations at the level of Foreign Secretaries was held in Paris on 17 June, 2013. The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the JWG on Counter-terrorism was held in New Delhi on November 19-20, 2012. The first round of the India-France cyber dialogue was held in Paris on 24 May, 2013. The first round of the Track 1.5 India-France Annual Dialogue between the Observer Research Foundation, India and the Centre for International Studies and Research (CERI, Science Po – Paris) was held in Paris on 23 May, 2013. The High Level Committee for Defence Cooperation (HCDC) at the level of Defence Secretaries, met in New Delhi on 26-27 April 2012. The 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Indo-French Research Forum (IFRF) was held in Paris from 17-19 December 2012. The 16<sup>th</sup> session of the Joint Committee for Economic and Technical Cooperation, at the level of Ministers of Commerce was held on 23-25 June, 2010 in Paris.

The Indo-French CEOs Forum, formed in 2009, has been tasked to identify new avenues for cooperation and take initiatives to facilitate business links between both countries. The sixth edition of the CEO's Forum was held in Paris on 8-9 July, 2013. It was inaugurated by Shri Anand Sharma, Hon'ble Commerce & Industry Minister along with the French Minister for Economy and Finance, Mr. Pierre Moscovici.

## **Indo French Trade & Investment**

### **Bilateral trade**

Indo-French bilateral trade has been growing though it has still not reached the € 12 billion target set by both the Governments during the visit of the French President to India in January 2008. The growth continued in 2011, with bilateral trade increasing by 6%. In 2012, the overall bilateral trade increased by 5.98% to € 7.9 billion riding on an increase in French aero-space exports to India but there was a decrease of 2.06% in the Indian exports to France over the same period of 2011. India still had a small trade surplus of € 1.4 billion.

### **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) approvals**

France is the 9<sup>th</sup> largest foreign investor in India with a cumulative investment of approximately € 2.31 billion (USD 3.01 billion) during the period April 2000 to June 2012 which represents 2% of total FDI equity inflows into India for the period. The number of technical and financial collaborations approved with France are 952. Top sectors attracting FDI inflows from France are Chemicals (other than fertilizers), Cement and Gypsum Products, Services Sector (financial & non-financial), Fuels (power & oil refinery), Electrical Equipment (including computer software & electronics) and automobile sector. There are about 800 French companies (subsidiaries or JVs, representative offices or branch offices with about 150,000 employees. These include major French companies like Capgemini, Schneider Electric, Lafarge, Renault, Sanofi Aventis, Essilor, BNP Paribas, Louis Dreyfus, Armateurs, Alstom, Areva, Saint-Gobain, Onyx, Pernod Ricard, Alcatel-Lucent, Louis Vuitton, L'Oreal, GDF, Total, Danone, Air Liquide, Vici, Veolia, Vicat etc.

## **Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation**

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 from 4-7 December 2010**, the General Framework Agreement and the Early Works Agreement between NPCIL and Areva for implementation of EPR NPP Units at Jaitapur were signed.

## **Space Cooperation**

France and India view each other as important partners in space technology and applications. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and its French counterpart Centre National de Etudes Spatiales (CNES) have a rich history of cooperation and collaboration spanning about four decades. Scientific community of the two nations cooperates in joint radiation experiment, space components development and space education.

ISRO and CNES (French National Space Agency) have an umbrella agreement, operating successfully since 1993, under which joint missions like Megha-Tropiques and SARAL have been taken up. The joint satellite Megha-Tropiques was launched on October-12, 2011 by ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV). Another joint Indo-French satellite SARAL (Satellite for ARGOS and ALTIKA), carrying a Ka-band altimeter to study the ocean surface and a platform for collecting data, was successfully launched by PSLV on February 25, 2013.

A 'Science Seminar' and 'Research and Technology Workshop' was organised in Bangalore during February 05-06, 2013 and ISRO and CNES have jointly identified areas of further cooperation. A Statement of Intent for Long-Term Co-operation in Space between ISRO and CNES was signed between Chairman ISRO and President of CNES on 14 February 2013.

Under a commercial Launch Service Agreement between Antrix Corporation Limited (ANTRIX), the commercial arm of ISRO and ASTRIUM SAS, a Company under EADS, France, an advanced Remote Sensing satellite - SPOT -6 built by ASTRIUM SAS was successfully launched on-board ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV – C21) on 9 September 2012.

Arianespace based at France has been the major provider of launch services to Indian Geo-Stationary satellites. Subsequent to the launch of APPLE satellite on a co-operative mode, 14 Geo-Stationary satellites of India have been launched by Ariane on a commercial basis.

## **Defence Cooperation**

Within the framework of structured talks under the Indo-French Defence Cooperation Agreement several meetings on industrial collaboration and service exchanges are held regularly. The High Level Committee for Defence Cooperation (HCDC) at the level of Defence Secretaries, met in New Delhi on 26-27 April 2012.

The 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Indo-French Research Forum (IFRF) was held in Paris from 17-19 December 2012.

Indo-French Air Force Exercise Garuda IV was held at Istres air base in France from 14 - 25 June 2010. Indo - French Naval Exercise, Varuna was held in the Mediterranean sea off the port of Toulon from 19-22 July, 2012. The first India-France joint army exercise named Shakti was conducted in India at Chaubattia from 9-22 October 2011.

Government of India has selected Rafale from M/s Dassault Aviation, France for procurement of 126 MMRCA for the Indian Air Force. Contract negotiations are currently ongoing.

### **Cultural Exchanges**

Indian culture enjoys a wide and discerning audience among the French population, as is evident in the numerous and frequent cultural events organized all over France, spanning the entire spectrum of Indian art, music, dance, cinema and literature. While the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) sponsors visits of Indian artists to France, from time to time, there are a growing number of private impresarios who organize cultural events throughout France.

Hon'ble Minister of Culture of India, H.E. Mrs. Chandresh Kumari Katoch was on a two-day official visit to France on April 3-5, 2013. During the visit, she met her counterpart Minister of Culture and Communication of France, H.E. Mme Aurelie Filippetti. The two Ministers reviewed the cooperation between India and France under the bilateral Cultural Exchange Programme, which was signed in Delhi on 14 February, 2013, during the visit of President Francois Hollande to India, including cooperation in the area of museums.

In keeping with the importance both the countries accord to cinema and the willingness to enhance cooperation in the field, a revised **Indo-French Bilateral Film Co-Production Agreement** was signed during the visit of French President to India in December 2010. An MOU was signed on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2012 between the **Ministry of Culture of India and the Louvre Museum** with the aim of establishing an active partnership in the area of exchange of competencies and expertise, particularly in the field of museology, temporary exhibitions etc.

The 15-month long Indian cultural festival - "**Namaste France**" held from 14 April, 2010 to 28 June, 2011, was a comprehensive presentation of Indian culture including art, music, dance, fashion, films, and literature as also business and education. The Festival was organized in response to 'Bonjour India', a French cultural festival, organized by the French Embassy in India in 2009-2010. The French Embassy in India has successfully organized the second edition of 'Bonjour India' from January-March, 2013. The second edition of 'Namaste France' would be held in France in February-May 2015.

Various film festivals in France are celebrating the Centenary of Indian Cinema in 2013 in France. Cannes films festival had invited India as the 'Guest Country' in 2013. Several other film festivals including the South Asian Film Festival (January 2013), Vesoul International Film Festival of Asian Cinema (February 2013),

Clermont Ferrand Short Film Festival (February 2013) and La Rochelle Film Festival (July 2013) have celebrated the centenary of Indian cinema.

### **Educational and Technical Cooperation**

The bilateral educational cooperation between India and France has grown over the last few years. Around 300 MoUs have been signed between Indian and French universities and private institutions. The number of Indian students studying in France in various fields has increased over the years. For the academic year 2011-2012, 2550 Indian students came to France as compared to 2500 a year ago. There is a growing desire to further strengthen the bilateral E&T collaboration. This is reflected in the joint statement issued during the visit (February 14-15, 2013) of French President Francois Hollande to India, which lays stress on building an education plan including twinning of higher education institutions, mutual recognition of degrees, research collaborations and training of teachers.

The framework for bilateral educational cooperation is provided by the Educational Exchange Programme (EEP), which includes mutual recognition of degrees, bolstering the research programme and increasing student-scholar research mobility through a flexible visa regime). A Joint Working Group has also been set up under the EEP.

One of the most important initiatives in the field of education has been the cooperation on the new IIT in Rajasthan, following a joint declaration in 2008. A Letter of Intent (LoI) was signed in 2012.

The Indo-French Centre for Promotion of Advance Research (CEFIPRA), which has completed 25 years, is the nodal framework for promoting bilateral scientific cooperation in fundamental & applied research, frontier technologies and exchange of scientists and post-doctoral researchers. The office of CEFIPRA has been established in Delhi and the centre is currently funded through an annual corpus of € 3 million, with India and France equally contributing Euro 1.5 million each.

There is interest on both the sides to further bolster research, and technological cooperation between Indian and French research institutions and universities. To this end, two sides have launched in February 2013 the "Raman-Charpak Fellowship" which will enable exchange of doctoral students between the two countries. To further broaden the scope of future engagements in S & T several Memorandum of Understanding and Letter of Intent (LoI) between institutions were signed during the visit of French President in February 2013 to India. France will be the partner country for the 2013 Global Technology Summit to be held in New Delhi.

### **Cooperation in the field of Railways**

During the State Visit of French President François Hollande to India on 14-15 February, 2013, a Joint statement was signed by Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal, Minister of Railways, India and Mme Nicole Bricq, Minister of Foreign Trade, Mr. Frederic Cuvillier, Minister of Transportation Sea and Fishing, France to follow up and strengthen the cooperation in the Railways sector between the two countries.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by Shri Vinay Mittal, Chairman, Railway Board, Ministry of Railways, and Mr G. Pepy, Chairman and CEO Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français (SNCF), the French National Railways, for Technical cooperation in the field of Railways.

### **Indian Community in France**

The Indian community, including NRIs, in France is estimated to be around 106,000, largely originating from Puducherry, Karaikal, Yanam, Mahe and Chandranagar. There are also large communities of PIOs in the Reunion Island (about 250,000), Guadeloupe (about 57000), Martinique (about 6000) and St. Martin (about 300), the overseas territories/departments of France.

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