

## India – France Relations

The Strategic Dialogue in 1998, soon after India's nuclear tests, led to India and France entering into a strategic partnership encompassing security, space, defence and civil nuclear cooperation sectors. India-France relationship enjoys bipartisan support in France and has been accorded a high priority by all the Presidents of France. With the establishment of the strategic partnership, there has been significant progress in all areas of bilateral cooperation through regular high-level exchanges at the Head of State/Head of Government levels.

Indo-French relations received a boost in 2015 with high level engagements and expansion of the already strong cooperation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid a landmark visit to France from 09-12 April, 2015. Prime Minister Modi and President of France Mr. Francois Hollande held a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September 2015. They again met in Paris on 30 November 2015 at the Leaders' Event of CoP-21 (21st Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) in Paris.

There has been a significant progress in bilateral relations through regular Ministerial and official visits and exchanges in strategic areas of security, defence, nuclear energy, space as well as in other areas of bilateral cooperation like science and technology, culture, education etc. France has continued to support India's permanent membership of the UN Security Council and multilateral export control regimes like the NSG, MTCR etc.

### **Major Visits:**

President of France, Mr Francois Hollande will be paying a visit to India from 24-26 January, 2016 and will be the chief guest at the 67<sup>th</sup> Republic Day Parade.

**PM's visit to Paris for CoP-21 (29-30 November, 2015)** :Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi travelled to Paris to attend the Leaders' Event on 29 November 2015 at the beginning of CoP-21. Prime Minister met President Hollande and they together attended the launch of International Solar Alliance on 30 November at Le Bourget, in which 120 countries participated. PM Modi and President Hollande jointly released a book of quotations titled, '*Ecology of Our Worlds*', for which the two leaders also co-authored the preface. Prime Minister Modi, along with President Hollande, US President Obama and entrepreneur Bill Gates, also spoke at the event of 'Mission Innovation' for promoting renewable energy.

**Visit of Prime Minister (April 2015):** Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, paid an official visit to France during 9-12 April, 2015. This visit was the first visit to a European country by the Prime Minister. This was also the first full bilateral visit to France in 9 years. Though an Official visit, French Government considered it as 'Official Plus' Visit and included elements that are normally part of a State visit (for visiting foreign Heads of State). Prime Minister was given Ceremonial Welcome and a banquet was hosted in his honour by French President Francois Hollande at the Elysees Palace.

Prime Minister had a tete-a-tete with President Hollande and discussed various bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest during delegation-level

talks. President Hollande also extended a unique honour of inviting Prime Minister for a boat ride with him on Seine River. They were accompanied by Mr. Laurent Fabius, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Development and Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for defence, as well as Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris. The co-Chairs of the CEOs' Forum presented the outcome of the 7th meeting of India France CEOs Forum which was held on 09 April 2015, to Indian PM and French President at a function organised at Elysee Palace on 10 April 2015. A statement was made to the Press by both the leaders and a joint statement covering the various decisions taken and future areas of bilateral cooperation was issued. Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy called on Prime Minister on 11 April 2015.

Prime Minister also met Parliamentary leaders of France. Mr. Claude Bartolone, President, French National Assembly hosted a lunch in honour of Prime Minister, after their meeting at the National Assembly, in which regional and global issues and Parliamentary exchanges between the two countries were discussed. Prime Minister was invited by MEDEF (French Business Confederation), to address business round-tables on Infrastructure and Defence-Manufacturing. 15 CEOs of top French companies attended each of the two round-tables. French Foreign Minister attended the round-table on Infrastructure and French Defence Minister attended the round-table on defence-manufacturing. Prime Minister also addressed a large gathering at UNESCO, Paris, after a meeting with Ms. Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO where he launched a website specially dedicated to the International Day of Yoga which was celebrated on 21 June. Prime Minister also paid his tributes to the statue of Sri Aurobindo, installed in the UNESCO premises.

Prime Minister travelled to Toulouse city in Midi-Pyrenees Region of France. In Toulouse, Prime Minister paid a visit to the manufacturing unit of Airbus, French Aircraft manufacturer where he met Indian Engineers working with Airbus. He also visited CNES (French National Centre for Space Studies) where he was given an overview of Indo-French cooperation in the field of Space, spanning five decades. Prime Minister also interacted with elected representatives from French Regions, including the President of the Regional Council of Midi-Pyrenees.

Prime Minister travelled to NeuveChapelle in the north of France, accompanied by Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister of Defence. The NeuveChapelle Memorial commemorates over 4,700 Indian soldiers who lost their lives on the Western Front during the First World War. Prime Minister paid homage to the Indian soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice. This was the first time a Prime Minister of India visited NeuveChapelle. Prime Minister addressed a large gathering of Indians and Persons of Indian Origin in France at the Carrousel du Louvre which was also broadcast live in Saint Denis and other places in Reunion and Guadeloupe Islands where large Indian origin communities live.

Nineteen Agreements/MoUs were signed during the visit encompassing diverse areas of cooperation between India and France, such as Nuclear Energy, Space, Railways, Conservation of Cultural Heritage, Science and Technology, Sports, Tourism, Human exchanges, Renewable energy and Twinning of historical monuments. The two leaders also unveiled an Indo-French joint stamp commemorating the Fifty years of Space cooperation between the two countries. A list of the Agreements/ MOUs signed during the visit is enclosed (Annexure).

**President Hollande's Visit to India (February 2013):** President Hollande visited India in February 2013. He was accompanied by six Ministers, including Foreign Minister, Defence Minister, External Trade Minister, Culture Minister, Higher Education & Research Minister and Deputy Minister in-charge of Transport, as well as a 50-member business delegation. He had detailed discussions with President and PM on bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest. EAM, UPA President, Leader of Opposition and Governor of Maharashtra had called on him. In Mumbai, he interacted with Indian business leaders. During President Hollande's visit, a Joint Declaration was issued. Four agreements in the fields of culture, space, railways and education were signed. India and France agreed to give further impetus to their strategic partnership and to reinvigorate bilateral economic engagements by harnessing the synergies between their economies. In the field of defence, they reaffirmed their continued interest to enhance bilateral cooperation. They agreed to further strengthen bilateral civil nuclear cooperation and expressed hope for increased cooperation in science and technology as well as research and education. France reiterated its support to India's permanent membership of the UN Security Council as well as membership of the NSG and other export control regimes.

**Other Visits:** Shri Prakash Javadekar, Minister of State for Environment, Forests and Climate Change attended the pre-CoP-21 ministerial consultations in Paris on 9-10 October, 2015. He also led the Indian Delegation at the Informal Ministerial Consultations held in Paris on 20-21 July, 2015 and again on 6-7 September 2015. Minister for Civil Aviation, Shri Ashok Gajapathi Raju and Shri Rao Inderjit Singh, Minister of State for Planning and Defence visited Paris for Paris Air Show during 14-18 June 2015. Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of State for Commerce (IC) visited Paris from 03-06 July, 2015.

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius visited India on 5 February 2015 in connection with Delhi Sustainable Development Summit (DSDS), New Delhi. During the visit, he called on PM and met with EAM, Minister of Railways, and Minister of State for Environment, Forests and Climate Change and discussed issues of bilateral importance. Ms. Segolene Royale, Minister for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy also attended DSDS. Mr Fabius again visited India on 20 November 2015 and called on PM in preparation of CoP-21 in Paris. French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian visited India on 24 February 2015 and met with his counterpart and NSA. He again visited India and held talks with RakshaMantri in May, 2015.

### **Institutional Structure for dialogue:**

**India-France Strategic Dialogue:** France and India have instituted Strategic Dialogue at the level of National Security Advisors. The latest round was held in Paris recently on 12-13 January, 2015 between NSA Shri Ajit Doval and Mr. Jacques Audibert, Diplomatic Advisor to French President. Earlier, the 26<sup>th</sup> round was held in New Delhi on 09 October 2014 and the 25<sup>th</sup> round was held in Paris on 30 January, 2014.

**Foreign Office Consultations:** The last round of Annual Foreign Office Consultations at the level of Foreign Secretaries was held in Paris on 17 June, 2013. An Agreement on Mutual Exemption for Short Stay Visas for Diplomatic Passport

Holdings was signed during the visit. Foreign Secretary Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Paris in March 2015 in preparation to Prime Minister's visit to France in April, 2015.

**Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism:** The 9th meeting of the Joint Working Group on Counter-terrorism was held in Paris on 20 June 2014 and the tenth round has been recently held on 8 December, 2015 in New Delhi.

**Cyber Dialogue:** The second round of the India-France cyber dialogue was held in Paris on 17 March, 2015 in New Delhi. The two sides decided to carry forward their cooperation on cyber security issues.

**Dialogue on Maritime Cooperation:** The Inaugural dialogue on Maritime cooperation was held in Paris during 14-15 January, 2016. Deputy NSA Shri Arvind Gupta headed the Indian delegation for the dialogue.

**Dialogue on non-proliferation and disarmament:** A delegation of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence of France visited India on January 28, 2014 for talks on Arms Trade Treaty.

**Track 1.5 Dialogue :** 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.

**Joint Committee for Economic and Technical Cooperation:** The 16th 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.

**CEOs' Forum and other economic dialogues:** The latest session of India-France CEO's Forum was held on 09 April, 2015 during PM's visit. The first Annual Economic and Financial Dialogue was held in Paris on 29th October 2013 between Ministries of Finance of India and France. The first meeting of Joint Working on Sustainable Urban Development was held in Paris on 20 September 2013. The 9th meeting of Joint Working Group on IT was also held in Paris during October 2013.

**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.

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit in April, 2015, two MoUs were signed, one between L&T and Areva and another Pre-Engineering Agreement between NPCIL (Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd.) and Areva. The discussions on implementation are going on.

**Space Cooperation:** France and India view each other as important partners in space technology and applications. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and its French counterpart, the Centre National de Etudes Spatiales (CNES) have a rich history of cooperation and collaboration spanning five decades. During the visit of the Prime Minister to France in April 2015, joint stamps were released to commemorate the completion of 50 years of Cooperation in Space. A program

agreement for a reinforced cooperation in space activities was signed between the two countries during the visit. The program envisages joint development of an earth observation satellite, cooperation in inter-planetary missions and hosting of a French payload on an Indian satellite. Following the signing, an ISRO-CNES meeting was held at SAC, Ahmedabad on June 24, 2015 and the two sides agreed on a broad configuration for a future joint Thermal Infra-red satellite mission.

Two other MoUs on Space, signed during the PM's Visit, include the extension of the ISRO-CNES MoU on MeghaTropiques satellite for two years and MoU between ISRO, CNES and ONERA for Ka-band propagation experiment over Indian tropical region. Towards this, the installation of the CNES instruments at Hassan (ISRO centre) has since been completed satisfactorily.

ISRO and CNES had jointly developed the Satellite for ARGOS and ALTIKA (SARAL) carrying a radar altimeter and a data collection platform. The SARAL satellite was launched on-board ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) in February 2013. The MeghaTropiques satellite for monitoring tropical atmosphere was launched in late 2011. Both satellites continue to provide useful data for atmosphere monitoring, environment monitoring and ocean surface topography. The 2nd annual review of exploitation (REVEX) of SARAL was held at Toulouse during the period 11-14 October, 2015.

Under a commercial Launch Service Agreement between Antrix Corporation Limited and ASTRIUM SAS, an advanced Remote Sensing satellite - SPOT-7 built by ASTRIUM SAS was successfully launched on-board PSLV from India in June 2014. Arianespace, France has been the major provider of launch services to Indian Geo-Stationary satellites. As many as 19 Indian satellites have been launched by Arianespace on a commercial basis. On 7th December 2014, India's multi-band telecommunications satellite GSAT-16 was precisely placed into the intended Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit by the Ariane-5 launch vehicle. ISSRO's advanced communication satellite GSAT-15 was successfully launched from French Guiana on November 10, 2015. Two Indian communication satellites (GSAT-17 and GSAT-18) are scheduled to be launched in 2016 onboard Ariane-5 rocket from Arianespace.

Recognizing the importance of space cooperation between the countries, the Indian government has felicitated Professor Jacques Blamont (French Scientist), one of the chief architects of this cooperation, with the Padma Shri Award in 2015.

**Defence Cooperation:** The defence relations between the two countries are strong and have been growing within the framework of structured talks under the Indo-French Defence Cooperation Agreement. Several meetings on industrial collaboration and service exchanges are held regularly.

**High level Visits:** French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian visited India and met Shri Manohar Parrikar, RakshaMantri on 23 February 2015. He had earlier visited India on 01 December 2014. He again visited India and held talks with RakshaMantri in May, 2015. RakshaRajyaMantri Shri Rao Inderjit Singh led the Ministry of Defence delegation to the 51st edition of the biennial Paris Air Show, held from 15 to 21 June 2015. A Cabinet Secretariat delegation also visited the show. Gen. Jean-Pierre Bosser, the Chief of Army Staff, French Army visited India in March 2015. The Chief of Army Staff, Indian Army visited France in May 2013. Admiral Bernard Rogei, the

Chief of Naval Staff, French Navy visited India in November 2014. An official invitation has been extended to French Chief of Air Staff to visit India and the visit may take place in March, 2016. The French Vice Chief of Air Staff visited the biennial Aero-India Air Show held at Bangalore from 18 - 22 February 2015 air show on behalf of the Chief of the French Air Force while Director, Asia Pacific represented the French DGA. France had the second largest participation (after the USA) in the air show with 58 participating companies.

**Joint exercises:** Joint service level exercises are held regularly in India and France. The next edition of Joint Army exercise, 'EX-SHAKTI' is to be held in Rajasthan, India from 19-21 January, 2016. The first such joint exercise was conducted in India at Chaubattia from 09 – 22 October 2011 while the second was conducted in the French Alps from 09 - 20 September 2013. The platoon level training exercise was based on Counter Insurgency / Counter Terrorism in mountainous environment. The fifth edition of the joint air exercise EX- GARUDA was held in Jodhpur in June 2014. The French complement included four Rafales from their air base at Al Dhafra, UAE and their Air to Air Refueller. The French Chief of Air Staff Gen. Denis Mercier visited India during this exercise on 09 June 2014. The latest edition of the Indo - French naval exercise EX - VARUNA, was held off the coast of Goa in May 2015. An aircraft carrier from each country participated in the exercise along with their support ships. The Indian Naval Ship Tarangini made a maintenance call at Le Havre port from 26 August to 10 September, 2015. Vice Admiral SPS Cheema, FOC-in-C West visited France when INS Trikand made a port call at Toulon from 25-29 September 2015. Three Indian Naval ships made a port call at Saint Denis in the Reunion Islands in October 2014.

**High Committee on Defence Cooperation (HCDC):** The High Level Committee for Defence Cooperation (HCDC) at the level of Defence Secretaries, met in Paris on 12 January 2015. Defence Secretary, Shri R. K. Mathur was the Indian co-chair while Mr Philippe Errera, Director General of the Directorate of International Relations and Strategy, under the French MoD, represented the French side. Various areas of defence cooperation including, Army, Navy and Air Force professional exchange visits, joint exercises as well as industrial and technology cooperation were discussed. On 13 January 2015, the Defence Secretary called on the French Defence Minister and also held meetings with the DGA, Chief of Defence Staff and the Special Advisor to the Defence Minister. The 16th HCDC meeting is likely to be held in New Delhi.

**Bilateral Trade & Investment cooperation:** In 2014, the total trade in goods between France and India was worth € 7.92 billion, registering an increase of 10.7% from 2013. India's exports to France were valued at € 5.21 billion (+18.4%) whereas French exports to India totalled € 2.7 billion (-0.33%). The trade surplus which is in favour of India for the past 10 years stood at 2.5 billion euros in 2014 up from 1.7 billion euros in 2013. India had a 1.04% share in French imports in 2014 while French exports to India represented 0.63% of total French exports.

**Trends in 2015:** In the first ten months of 2015, India France bilateral trade was worth 7.23 billion euros (+11.15% over the corresponding period last year). India's exports to France increased by 6.53% to 4.57 billion euros during this period with

exports of all top product categories registering an increase: minerals fuels & oils (2.38%); articles of apparel & clothing accessories (5.62%); machinery and mechanical appliances (11.85%); organic chemicals (6.62%); electrical machinery & equipment (1.64%); footwear (9.13%); leather goods (6.98%); vehicles and accessories (28.38%); and gems & jewellery (29.46%). Meanwhile, French exports to India increased by 20.10% from January-October 2015: Exports of following top 10 ranked products increased: aircraft, spacecraft & parts thereof (3.8%); electrical machinery & equipment (48.26%); machinery and mechanical appliances (8.71%); optical, photographic, cinematographic, measuring, checking, precision, medical or surgical instruments and apparatus & parts thereof (96.89%); organic chemicals (14.49%); plastics & articles thereof (10.43%); miscellaneous chemical products (43.11%); pharmaceutical products (6.81%). However, exports of iron & steel & articles thereof fell by 14.37%.

## **INVESTMENTS :**

**French investments in India:** France has emerged as a major source of FDI for India with about 750 big French companies already present in India. France is the 9th largest foreign investor in India with a cumulative investment of USD 4.77 billion from April 2000 to September 2015 which represents 1.80% of the total FDI inflows into India according to statistics provided by the DIPP. The highest FDI equity inflows are in the services sector (19%), with cement & gypsum products (18%) in second place followed by food processing industries (6%), industrial machinery (6%) & drugs & pharmaceuticals (5%).

Practically all the big French Groups have their subsidiaries in India. However, there are a few joint ventures and liaison offices of French companies in India. 39 of the 40 CAC 40 (French stock market index) companies are present in India. Around 50-70 SMEs are also present in India essentially in the mechanical & pharma-chemical sectors. French companies are present in a wide range of sectors: services (BNP Paribas, Cap Gemini, Havas, Sodexo etc); pharmaceutical-chemical (Arkema, l'Oréal, Sanofi, Total etc); aero-space (Airbus, Dassault, Eurocopter, Safran, Thales etc); agro-food (Bongrain, Danone, Lactalis, Lesaffre Pernod Ricard etc); electronics (Crouzet, Gemalto, Oberthur, Safran, STMicroelectronics etc); construction mechanics (Alstom, Cermex, Legris Group, Poclain, Sidel); electrical components (Hager, Legrand, Schneider Electric etc); automobile (Faurecia, Michelin, Plastic Omnium, Renault, Valeo etc). French investments cleared during 2015 include amongst others, proposals from Louis Vuitton Malletier (Luggage & Luxury Leather Goods), Freyssinet International & Compagnie (Constructing Heavy Construction Projects), Sanofi Pasteur (Healthcare Solutions), Safran Engineering Services (Engineering services to the aerospace, energy & ground transport industries), Serap Industries (Liquid & food preservation), Arkadin (Conferencing services), Aubert & Duval (alloy steels, stainless steel & special steels), Beaujon (Insurance & Asset Management) and Péters Surgical (surgical sutures & meshes).

**Indian Investments in France:** There are almost 75 Indian companies operating in France (more than 100 including sub-subsidiaries), employing more than 7,000 people. Nine new Indian investments were recorded in 2014, creating or maintaining 657 jobs. Fifty-six percent of Indian investments in France were in business services, followed by 22% in decision-making centres (first-time investments) and 22% in

production/manufacturing. Twenty-two percent of these investments were made in the aerospace equipment sector, while Indian companies were responsible for 21% of jobs generated by foreign investment in the agro-food sector. Indian companies invested primarily in the Paris Region (Ile-de-France), which attracted 33% of all Indian investments. India was the 30th largest foreign investor in France with cumulative FDI inflows amounting to € 457 million (acc. to 2013 statistics by the French Central Bank). Indian Investments in France have been growing and it is estimated that the total stock of Indian investments in France is approximately € 1 billion. Indian investment in France has come in different sectors such as pharmaceuticals (Ranbaxy & Wockhardt), software and IT (Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys & Wipro), wine (Kingfisher), steel (Tata Steel, Electrosteel), plastics (Sintex Industries), railway wagons (Titagarh Wagons), aerospace (Cades, Axis Aerospace & Technologies), Auto Parts (Jyoti), Two-wheelers (Mahindra & Mahindra), Metal Forging (Bharat Forge). In 2014, Sintex Industries, Tata Group, Mahindra & Mahindra and Mahajan Group were the four largest Indian employers in France. The following Indian companies invested in France in 2015: Mahindra & Mahindra which acquired 51% share of Peugeot Two-Wheelers and Bharat Forge which acquired Mécanique Générale Langroise (MGL).

**Cultural Cooperation:** Indian culture enjoys a wide 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. The Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) for 2013-15 was signed during the visit of President Hollande to India on 14 February 2013. Both sides are considering the renewal of the CEP during forthcoming visit of President Hollande to India.

The Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) regularly sponsors visits of Indian artists to France and also assists in exchange of students in the field of culture and arts. A significant number of Indian artists also regularly perform in France on commercial basis or at the initiative of various local cultural associations, outside the purview of official exchanges.

A 15 month long cultural festival- 'Namaste France' was held from April 2010- June 2011 showcasing the Indian culture including art, music, dance, films, cinema and literature. The French government has organised two editions of 'Bonjour India', a French cultural festival in India in 2009-10 and January- March 2013.

The second edition of 'Namaste France' festival will be organized in several cities of France in September- November 2016. ICCR empanelled and several other renowned artists will perform in 'Namaste France' festival. Several Indian cultural associations and Indian diaspora in France will participate in these celebrations. In addition to ICCR, other organisations like Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Tourism and Air India will also participate in the celebrations. The festival aims to create mutual awareness and understanding about Indian culture among the French youth, by associating them with cultural events. This festival also provides an excellent opportunity to promote tourism to India and further our soft power in France.

During the visit of Prime Minister to France in April 2015, both the governments agreed to cooperate on urban heritage preservation within the ambit of Joint Working Group (JWG) on urban development and also on twining of historical

monuments and sites in both the countries. During this visit, the following MoUs/Letter of Intent (LoI) were also signed to promote cooperation in the area of culture and heritage between India and France:

Arrangement for training of Indian Heritage Professionals between French and Indian Ministries of Culture, in presence of the *Institut National du Patrimoine* (INP)

1. Letter of Intent between Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and *Institut National de Recherches Archéologiques Préventive of France* (INRAP), France on training, exchange of best practices, and deployment of experts, especially in the area of underwater archaeology
2. MoU between the Indian Heritage Cities Network Foundation (IHCNF) and *Association National des Villes et Pays d'art et d'histoire* (ANVPAH) to undertake activities and programmes in Indian cities to address issues such as urban planning, heritage conservation, up gradation of basic services etc.
3. LoI on promoting closer cooperation between two countries in tourism sector

An agreement of cooperation between the Raja Rammohun Library of Kolkata and the National Library of France has been signed in October, 2015 in Kolkata.

Promotion of Yoga and Ayurveda in France has been given significant attention. A letter of Intent on Ayurveda was signed between Ministry of AYUSH and University of Strasbourg. Subsequently, University of Strasbourg held a conference on Ayurveda.

Several Indo-French friendship associations and cultural organizations are promoting Indian languages like Sanskrit, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu etc. In view of growing interest in Hindi in France, Government of India is planning to organize a Regional Hindi Conference in Paris in 2016.

Joint Statement issued during Prime Minister's visit to France in April 2015 emphasized the role of Indian Cultural Centre in France along with *Alliances Françaises* in India and the *Institut Français en Inde* in the promotion of cultural relations between the two countries. India is taking steps to open an Indian Culture Centre in Paris by 2017.

**Cooperation in the field of sports:** During the visit of PM in April, 2015, India and France signed a MoU providing for exchanges on sports medicine, training of executives, exchanges on expertise in high level sports, institutional cooperation, promotion of participation of women in sports and prevention and fight against doping in sports.

**Tourism Promotion:** Under the new areas for deepening India-France partnership, the Mission has identified the sector of skill building and cooperation in tourism as having potential and continues to focus on them in coordination with India Tourism Office, Paris. The Mission works to promote India as a tourist destination and provides support to Road shows held by State Governments and co-organises with India Tourism Office interactive sessions with Indian tour operators to assess their challenges in the French market. The GOI has introduced e-tourist visa for French nationals since May 2015. French travellers whose sole objective of visiting India is recreation, sightseeing, casual visit to meet friends or relatives, short duration medical treatment or casual business visit can apply for this category of visa and

obtain the visa through their e-mail account. This has promoted ease in obtaining visa for India.

**Educational and Technical Cooperation:** The bilateral educational and S&T cooperation between India and France has grown over the last few years. During Prime Minister's visit to France in April 2015, School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi and National Architecture Institute in Paris signed a MoU and Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India and University of Strasbourg signed a Letter of Intent on Ayurveda. There are approximately 5000 Indian students in France. Necessitated by the growing number of Indian students in France, a project for construction of an annex for Maison De L'Inde, hostel for Indian students and researchers in Paris, was taken up and completed in October 2013. Under the extension project, 72 additional rooms have been constructed adjacent to the present Maison De L'Inde building. There is also a vibrant school exchange programme between the two countries with 15 Indian schools visiting France and 30 French schools visiting India in 2015.

In the field of S&T, the Indo-French Centre for the Promotion of Advanced Research (CEFIPRA) based in New Delhi plays a major role in enhancement of S&T cooperation. Regular CEFIPRA meetings are held to discuss funding of joint proposals for research in sciences and review and evaluate existing research projects. The last meeting was held in Bangalore in November 2015. Raman-Charpak scholarships have been started from 2013 for Indian and French scholars.

During Prime Minister's visit to France in April 2015, both countries agreed to establish a Joint Indo-French Science and Technology Committee. Two MoUs, one between Department of Science & Technology and CNRS, France and another between Department of Biotechnology and CNRS, France along with UPMC, a French university, on collaboration for establishment of a National Institute of Marine Biology and Biotechnology in India were signed to take forward this cooperation.

Following India-France Agreement to facilitate professional experience for their students in both countries after the completion of their courses, signed during Prime Minister's visit to France in April, 2015, the French Government has started granting second "*autorisation provisoire de sejour*" of 12 months following the first period of 12 months already granted to Indian students of masters level and above while the Government of India has implemented *Volontariat International en Entreprises* (VIE) Scheme for the French students.

**Cooperation in the field of Railways:** There has been longstanding cooperation in the field of railways between India and France. During the visit of President Hollande to India in February, 2013, a joint statement to strengthen the cooperation in the Railways sector between the two countries, and a Memorandum of Understanding for Technical Cooperation in the field of Railways between Indian Railways and Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français (SNCF), the French National Railways were signed. On 24-25 November 2014 Minister of Railways, Shri Suresh Prabhu inaugurated the Indo-French Rail seminar on 'High & Semi Higher Speed, Multimodal Stations, Infrastructure & Financing' in New Delhi.

A Railway Protocol was signed between Indian Railways and SNCF during PM's visit to France in April, 2015. In October 2015, French company Alstom entered into an agreement with Indian railways for commercial manufacturing of 800 locomotives for the latter at the plant to be located in Madhepura, Bihar. The contract is worth Euro 3.2 Billion.

**People to People Contacts:** The Indian community, including NRIs, in mainland 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 overseas territories/departments of France including Reunion Island (about 250,000), Guadeloupe (about 57,000), Martinique (about 6,000) and St. Martin (about 300). Indian community organizations, which are around 50 in number, have been playing an important role in contributing towards the enhancement of closer people-to-people links.

**Cooperation between States:** Cooperation between Indian States and French regions is being promoted. An MoU on Cooperation between Telangana and the Bordeaux Metropole was signed in September 2015. The Karnataka government held investment roadshows in Paris and Toulouse in December 2015.

#### **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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