

## **India-France Bilateral Brief**

### **Overview**

India and France established diplomatic relations soon after India's independence in 1947 and have enjoyed close and friendly relations since then. Launched on 26 January 1998, the Strategic Partnership with France was the first-ever for India with a Western nation, and the first for France with a non-Western nation. The Strategic Partnership embodied the core vision of both countries to enhance their respective strategic autonomy by drawing upon a strong and enhanced bilateral cooperation. Defence and security, civil nuclear matters and space constitute the principal pillars of this strategic cooperation. In recent years, the partnership has broadened to include cooperation in artificial intelligence, science and technology, innovation, blue economy, environment, renewable energy, sustainable development, and trilateral cooperation with a focus on the Indo-Pacific.

2. The core of India-France partnership is underpinned by our shared democratic values, belief in multilateralism as a means to tackle global challenges, respect for international law, and strong economic, cultural, academic, and people-to-people ties. It may be noted that the year 2023 marked 25 years of India-France strategic partnership when Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid an official visit on 13-14 July as the guest of honour at the French National Day. During the visit, both sides adopted the roadmap Horizon 2047, setting the course for the next 25 years until 2047, a year that will mark centenaries of India's independence and diplomatic relations between both countries.

3. Recently, President Emmanuel Macron paid an official visit to India from 17 to 19 February 2026 where he participated in the Artificial Intelligence Impact Summit 2026. During the visit, the two leaders held bilateral talks and jointly inaugurated the 2026 India-France Year of Innovation in Mumbai on 17 February. This was President Macron's fourth visit to India. On this occasion, both leaders agreed to elevate relations to a "Special Global Strategic Partnership" to guide bilateral cooperation in the coming decades. The upgrading of relations reflects the growing ambitions and vision shared by the two leaders on India-France relationship. The leaders established an annual Foreign Ministers Comprehensive Dialogue for regularly reviewing the progress of bilateral cooperation and implementation of the elevated partnership, and the Horizon 2047, in particular, in the areas of economic security, global issues and people to people exchanges.

4. Previously, in February 2025, Prime Minister Modi had paid a visit to France and co-chaired the AI Action Summit in Paris along with President Macron. During the visit, PM Modi had also visited Marseille, where both leaders held bilateral discussions on the entire gamut of bilateral cooperation and on global and regional matters. In Marseille, both leaders jointly inaugurated India's Consulate General in

Marseille and paid respects to Indian soldiers who lost their lives during World War I at Mazargues War Cemetery. In 2024, the President Macron had paid a state visit to India as the Chief Guest for the 75th Republic Day of India on 26 January 2024. For the two leaders to be the guests of honour at successive national days respectively was unprecedented, and a high point in the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the declaration of the strategic partnership between the two countries.

5. Both leaders have used the opportunities of multilateral summits to meet regularly and review the progress of bilateral relations, in particular the Horizon 2047 roadmap. For instance, both leaders met on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Kananaskis, Canada, in June 2025, and on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa in November 2025. Both leaders also held telephone conversations in August and September 2025.

### **Other High-level Political Exchanges**

6. Both sides have been able to maintain the momentum of high-level exchanges, with discussions centering around bilateral issues and mutual global concerns, reflecting the strategic convergence between the two countries.

7. Most recently, on 26 March 2026, External Affairs Minister (EAM), Dr. S. Jaishankar visited France to participate in the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting with partner countries. On the sidelines, he called on President Macron and also held a bilateral meeting with French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot. He also visited the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre in Paris.

8. Earlier, in January 2026, at the invitation of Foreign Minister Barrot, EAM Dr. Jaishankar paid a visit to France and addressed the 31st Conference of Ambassadors of France as the guest of honour. He was the first non-European Foreign Minister to be the guest of honour at this Conference. During the visit, EAM called on President Macron and held bilateral discussions with his counterpart. EAM also participated in the first India-Weimar Foreign Ministers' meeting, which included the Foreign Ministers of France, Germany and Poland. EAM also interacted with French parliamentarians, including members of the India-France Parliamentary Friendship Group and the Parliamentary Defence and Foreign Affairs Committee. He also held discussions with the Executive Director of International Energy Agency, Mr. Fatih Birol, and the Director General of UNESCO, Mr. Khaled El-Enany.

9. In 2025, EAM paid an official visit to France in early June during which he held discussions with Foreign Minister Barrot and called on President Macron. During the visit, he also attended the inaugural Mediterranean edition of Raisina Dialogue in Marseille, together with Foreign Minister Barrot. The Mediterranean edition will now be an annual event in Marseille providing a platform for

conversations on Mediterranean linkages with India and the Indo-Pacific region that has the potential to shape a common future for the region.

10. Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industry, visited Paris from 1-3 June 2025 for participating in the WTO Ministers gathering on the sidelines of the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting at the OECD headquarters. The Minister also held meetings with the French Minister of Economy Eric Lombard, and French Foreign Trade Minister Laurent Saint-Martin. A CEO Forum Small-Group Meeting was held on 3 June 2025 co-chaired by Minister Goyal and the then French Trade Minister Laurent Saint-Martin.

11. Several high dignitaries and Indian ministers maintained exchanges with their French counterparts on a regular basis, including through bilateral visits and on the sidelines of multilateral events. Chief Justice of India Shri Justice Surya Kant visited Paris from 31st January-02 February 2026 during which he met key French judicial counterparts, including Richard Ferrand, President of the Constitutional Council, to discuss cooperation in judicial technology and training. In January 2026, Minister of State of Electronics and Information Technology Jitin Prasada visited Paris for AI Impact Summit pre-event in Paris, and held bilateral interactions with his counterpart, the Minister Delegate for Artificial Intelligence and Digital Affairs, Ms. Anne Le Hénanff. Minister Prasada had earlier visited Paris from 10-13 June 2025 to attend Vivatech Summit. Earlier, in June 2025, there were several Ministerial visits from India to France, including the visit of Minister of Earth Sciences Dr. Jitendra Singh to participate in the third United Nations Ocean Conference in Nice on 9-13 June; and visit of Dr P K Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister to Nice from 6-7 June, 2025 to co-chair the seventh International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. Besides, Shri Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Chairman, SEBI, visited Paris on 24-26 September, 2025 as a speaker at the Financial Stability Engagement Group (FSEG) meeting hosted by AMF, France, on impact of AI for securities regulators.

12. Minister of Culture and Tourism Gajendra Singh Shekhawat visited France on 26-28 September 2025. During the visit, he met with the French Minister of Culture, Ms. Rachida Dati, and discussed further strengthening India–France cultural cooperation, including collaboration in the areas of transcription and translation of manuscripts, and in the field of museums, particularly with regard to the ongoing cooperation on the Yuge Yugeen Bharat National Museum project.

13. From France, Mr. François-Noël Buffet, French Minister of State of Interior, visited India on 23 April 2025, to jointly inaugurate the second edition of MILIPOL India along with Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai. A delegation headed by Director General of National Security Guard (NSG) of India attended MILIPOL Paris in November 2025, on the occasion of which a Letter of Intent on

Cooperation between NSG and National Gendarmerie Intervention Group (GIGN) of France in the field of counter-terrorism was signed.

14. In terms of bilateral dialogues, on 13 January 2026, NSA Ajit Doval co-chaired the 38th India-France Strategic Dialogue with Diplomatic Advisor to the French President Emmanuel Bonne and Military Advisor to the President General Vincent Giraud in New Delhi. During the visit, Mr. Bonne also met EAM and called on the Prime Minister. They discussed ongoing bilateral initiatives spanning the domains of security, defence, technology, space, and civil nuclear cooperation.

15. India France Foreign Office Consultations were held on 13 April 2026 in Paris, co-chaired by Foreign Secretary Shri Vikram Misri and Secretary-General of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Mr. Martin Briens. During the visit, Foreign Secretary also called on Mr. Jean-Noël Barrot, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, and met Mr. Emmanuel Bonne, Diplomatic Advisor to the President of France. Last year, the Foreign Office Consultations were held in January 2025 in Paris. Apart from this, bilateral consultations on Indo-Pacific, UN, Middle-East, disarmament and non-proliferation, counter-terrorism, health, and consular issues have taken place since January 2025.

### **Defence Cooperation**

16. India and France have a strong and robust defence partnership with an increasing Atmanirbharata element in it. The defence cooperation between the two sides is reviewed under the Annual Defence Dialogue (Defence Minister-level) and by the High Committee on Defence Cooperation (Secretary-level). The sixth Annual Defence Dialogue co-chaired by Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh and his counterpart Minister of the Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs of France Ms Catherine Vautrin was held on 17 February 2026 in Bengaluru, Karnataka. At the dialogue, both countries renewed 10-year defence cooperation agreement and also announced reciprocal deployment of officers at Indian Army and French Land Forces establishments.

17. There have been several high-level visits on the military side. French Chief of Staff, General Pierre Schill, visited India in October 2025 to participate in the UN Troop Contributing Countries' Chief's Conclave. From the Indian side, the Chief of Defence Staff, General Anil Chauhan visited France in April 2024, followed by a visit by Chief of Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi in February 2025. French Navy Chief Admiral Nicolas Vaujour visited India to attend 9th Conclave of Chiefs of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) convened at Visakhapatnam on 20 February 2026. Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh visited France in the first week of June 2026.

18. Among the significant achievements in the defence partnership is the P-75 Scorpene Project of which the last and the sixth submarine was commissioned in the Indian Navy in January 2025, and the completion of delivery of 36 Rafale aircrafts by France to India in 2022.

19. On 28 April 2025, the Governments of India and France signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement for the procurement of 26 Rafale-M aircrafts for the Indian Navy. In line with the Government's thrust on Aatmanirbhar Bharat, the Agreement includes transfer of technology for integration of indigenous weapons in India. It also includes setting up of a production facility for Rafale fuselage as well as Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facilities for aircraft engine, sensors and weapons in India.

20. In November 2025, PM Modi inaugurated the Safran Aircraft Engine Services India (SAESI) facility at the GMR Aerospace and Industrial Park near Hyderabad airport via videoconferencing. The facility, set up by French aerospace major Safran, is India's first deep-level aircraft engine MRO centre established by a global original equipment manufacturer. It is designed to service up to 300 LEAP engines, which power Airbus A320neo and Boeing 737 MAX aircrafts, a year, and is expected to employ more than 1,000 technicians and engineers by 2035. Safran also officially announced a new MRO shop dedicated to the M88 engine powering the Rafale fighter jet, in Hyderabad, adjacent to the LEAP engine center. In addition, Safran signed a joint venture and cooperation agreement with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) to manufacture Safran's Hammer modular air-to-surface weapon. The Hammer can be integrated on multiple aircraft types, including the Rafale and India's single-seat HAL Tejas. PM Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron virtually inaugurated H125 helicopter final assembly line at Vemagal, Karnataka on 17 February 2026.

21. India France joint defence exercises have grown in scope and complexity over the years. Bilateral Staff Talks between respective services of the two militaries take place regularly. Bilateral Army exercise SHAKTI 2025 was held in France on 18 June-1 July 2025. The eighth edition of biennial Ex-GARUDA between FASF and IAF was held at Mont-de-Marsan airbase in France between 12-29 Nov 2025. **Six** Su 30 MKI ac of the IAF participated in the exercise along with supporting elements of C-17 ac and Flight refueling tankers. Almost 200 personnel of the IAF were involved in the exercise. Both air forces also participate in multilateral exercises such as TARANG SHAKTI and MILAN. Both navies conducted bilateral exercise VARUNA in March 2025, and also participated in multilateral exercises such as La Perouse. As a part of Operation Clemenceau, the French Carrier Strike Group Charles De Gaulle visited India in January 2025. Milan 2026, the Indian Navy's flagship multilateral exercise was conducted in and around Visakhapatnam from 15-25 Feb 2026. French

Maritime Patrol Aircraft Atlantique 2 participated in the exercise. The French Armed forces undertook the biennial Orion exercise between Jan-March 2026.

22. A letter of Intent on deepening the Defence Space partnership was signed on 26 January 2024 between India and France, which is a testimony to the increasing strategic co-operation in the field of space. India participated as military observer in the AsterX-23 and AsterX-24 exercises in France. As a sign of increasing trust, the status of participation was enhanced from observer to a participant for the exercise held in March 2025.

23. Both sides discussed maritime cooperation through India-France Maritime Cooperation Dialogue led by Deputy National Security Advisor on the Indian side and Director General for International Relations and Strategy on the French side. The last dialogue took place in Paris on 20 May 2026. The 23<sup>rd</sup> India-France Military Sub Committee Meeting was held at New Delhi on 12-13 May 2026. The French delegation was led by VAdm Herve Hamelin.

24. Port calls are being held regularly. INS Tabar made a port call at Toulon in August-September 2024. The port call also included the harbour phase of Ex VARUNA 2024. INS Talwar made a port call at La Reunion in October 2024. Indian Navy training ships INS Tir and CGS Sarathi visited La Reunion in September 2025, as part of efforts to strengthen maritime cooperation between the two countries. INS Sudarshini participated in Escale a Sete event from 31 Mar to 06 Apr 2026. An Indian ship participated in Escale à Sète for the very first time. The port call of this ship commemorates 400 years of the French Navy, and the long standing Indo-French friendship. It also reflects the growing momentum in the cultural collaboration between the two countries. Major maintenance activities of the ship were also carried out during the visit.

25. FRIND-X, an event between the defence technology and start-up ecosystems of India and France was organised with an aim to provide a platform for collaboration in December 2024 in Paris. Over 20 start-ups on both sides attended the event, which spanned different sectors, including AI, drone technologies, space and quantum.

### **Trilateral Cooperation**

26. Apart from bilateral dialogues, India and France also have separate trilateral institutional exchanges with Australia and UAE. Ministerial-level meetings as well as focal point meetings of both mechanisms are being held regularly, including on the sidelines of multilateral events. On 7 May 2026, India-France-UAE trilateral meeting at the level of Foreign Secretary took place in Abu Dhabi, UAE. France is one of the original signatories to the MoU on India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor that was signed on the margins of the G20 summit in Delhi on 9 September 2023.

27. In furtherance to the India-France Roadmap on Indo-Pacific of 2023, in February 2025, both sides signed a Joint Declaration of Intent on Triangular Development Cooperation to identify and implement sustainable development goals and climate-focused projects in priority sectors, including digital innovation, digital public infrastructure, clean energy, green technologies, preservation of biodiversity, women empowerment, education, health, nutrition, water, and sanitation.

### **Space Cooperation**

28. India and France have a rich history of space cooperation spanning over fifty years, built on a strong partnership between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the French space agency, Centre National d'Études Spatiales (CNES). This long-standing partnership has matured over the years, now encompassing multiple domains and underscoring the robust strategic partnership between the two nations. ISRO and CNES continue to advance joint programmes in Earth observation, space geodesy, human spaceflight, next-generation launch vehicle technologies, and planetary exploration.

29. The first India-France Strategic Space Dialogue was held in Paris on 26 June 2023 led by then Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra and the then Secretary General, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Anne-Marie Descôtes, where they identified areas for cooperation under the civil space cooperation and defence space cooperation tracks. The second India–France Strategic Space Dialogue, held in New Delhi on 4 March 2024, assessed progress of the inaugural meeting and explored new opportunities under the broader Horizon 2047 roadmap.

30. ISRO and CNES have concluded a joint declaration for cooperation in future launch vehicle technologies, and an agreement for cooperation in joint earth observation mission TRISHNA, maritime domain awareness and space situational awareness. Notable progress is being made in these domains. While ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) has launched French satellites on commercial basis, Ariespace France has been a major provider of launch services to Indian geostationary satellites. In the year 2024, Ariespace and NSIL signed an MOU, which establishes a long-term partnership to jointly address global satellite launch demands using NSIL's LVM-3 and Ariespace's Ariane-6 vehicles.

31. Industrial and Start-up Partnerships: The Indian Space Association (ISpA) and the French Aerospace Industries Association (GIFAS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 9 October 2023 during the second edition of the Indian Space Conclave in New Delhi. The agreement aims to foster deeper understanding of space industry capabilities and explore business opportunities between India and France, and promotes enhanced business-to-business (B2B) and startup-to-startup collaborations, driving innovation and sustainable growth in the bilateral space sector. During President Macron's visit to India in 2026, both sides reaffirmed their

long-standing cooperation in civil satellite development and human flight programs. An MoU between two private firms was signed for maritime satellite ground infrastructure and surveillance. Three contracts were signed for a French leader to supply electric propulsion to three Indian companies. A bilateral private contract was signed to deploy optical stations for Space Situational Awareness. Both sides prioritized LEO constellations for high-speed connectivity to underpin digital and AI innovation.

### **Cyber Cooperation**

32. India and France have a cyber dialogue mechanism to discuss cyber cooperation and related matters. A dialogue on cyber security matters was held in Paris on 9 Jan 2024.

### **Cooperation on Counter terrorism**

33. India and France have a robust cooperation on topics relating to countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including under UN forums. The 17th Meeting of the Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism was held in September 2025 in Paris. Further boosting the bilateral counter-terrorism and intelligence cooperation, a Letter of Intent (LoI) was signed between National Security Guard (NSG) and Groupe d'Intervention Gendarmerie Nationale (GIGN) of France. The LoI will enhance operational efficiency and expertise sharing in joint fight against terrorism. India participated in the fifth "No Money for Terror" conference, hosted by France in Paris on 19 May 2026.

### **Civil Nuclear Cooperation**

34. India and France have a deep cooperation on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including in relation to the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Plant Project. India-France Special Task Force on Nuclear Energy within the framework of the Indo-French Strategic Dialogue met twice in 2025. It was co-chaired by Foreign Secretary Shri Vikram Misri from Indian side and Secretary-General of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Ms. Anne-Marie Descôtes, from the French side. Besides, both sides have agreed to work on establishing a partnership on Small Modular Reactors (SMR) and Advanced Modular Reactors (AMR). During the visit of Prime Minister Modi in February 2025, both sides signed a letter of intent on SMRs and AMRs, and the Implementing Agreement between India's GCNEP, DAE, and France's INSTN, CEA, for cooperation in training and education of nuclear professionals. The cooperation on JNPP and exploration of SMRs and AMRs signifies a shared vision for sustainable and efficient nuclear energy solutions.

35. In 2025, Dr V K Saraswat, Member, NITI Aayog, visited France in October and delivered a keynote address at India Fusion Day organized by ITER in south of France. Over ten leading Indian companies and more than 20 industry delegates

participated in the 6th edition of World Nuclear Exhibition (WNE) held in November 2025 in Paris showcasing their nuclear engineering capabilities, advanced technologies and expertise across the nuclear sector.

36. The Second Nuclear Energy Summit was hosted by France and IAEA in Paris on 10 March 2026. The Summit was inaugurated by President Macron alongside DG, IAEA. From the Indian side, Shri Shantanu Paraswar, Director (Operations), NPCIL had participated in the Summit.

### **Trade and Investment**

37. Within the European Union, France is India's third-largest trading partner, after the Netherlands and Germany. For the year 2025-26, Indian exports to France amounted to Euros 6.1 billion (USD 7.1 billion). The bilateral trade between India and France has more than doubled in the last decade to Euros 13.59 billion (USD 15.81 billion) in 2025-26. Bilateral trade with France is expected to grow further with the signing of India-EU Free Trade Agreement on 27 January 2026.

38. France is the 11th largest foreign investor in India with a cumulative investment of Euros 10.50 billion (USD 12.01 billion) from April 2000 to December 2025 which represents 1.55 percent of the total FDI inflows into India, according to data provided by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). Top 5 FDI equity inflows are in: services sector (17.65 percent), cement and gypsum products (8.37 percent), air transport (including air freight) (6.87 percent), miscellaneous industries (6.54 percent) and petroleum and natural gas (6.20 percent). These five sectors represent 45.62 percent of the total equity inflow from France from April 2000 to December 2025. Most big French groups have their subsidiaries in India: 38 of the 40 French CAC 40 companies are already present in India, and around 50-70 SMEs are also present in India, essentially in the mechanical and pharma-chemical sectors.

39. Discussions during various high-level visits in 2024-25 focused on trade, technological advancements, and energy security, reflecting a commitment to deepening ties for mutual economic growth and global leadership. France considers India an important market for its products, and is looking to increase the number of joint ventures and encourage investments in and from India. Both countries are also moving to jointly develop technologies and integrate existing technologies. The process of enabling Unified Payment Interface (UPI) in France has started. Several Indian companies, including TCS and L&T Tech Service, have opened their innovation centres in France for joint technology development.

40. Several events are routinely held in France to strengthen trade, investment, and technology ties between the two countries, including promotion of Indian fashion and Indian textiles, round-table conferences on opportunities in India's first

International Financial Services Centre at GIFT City, Gujarat, round-table conferences with CEOs of major French companies in construction, automobile, education, infrastructure, logistics and technology, UPI and digital infrastructure. Several delegations of companies from FICCI, CII and ASSOCHAM regularly visit France and hold round-table meetings, seminars and workshops in different sectors with their French counterparts.

### **Financial Cooperation**

41. RBI entered into an MoU with Banque de France (central bank of France), in March 2026, providing for regular high-level dialogues, exchanges of experts, and joint projects in areas specific to central banks.

### **Digital Cooperation**

42. During Prime Minister's visit to Paris in July 2023, NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) and France's Lyra Collect executed an agreement to implement UPI in France and Europe. The payment mechanism went live at the Eiffel Tower during President Macron's visit to India on 26 January 2024, as the first merchant in France to accept UPI. Subsequently, UPI payments were launched at Galeries Lafayette on 3 July 2024 and at the La Vallée Village Concierge in 2025. Efforts are now focused on expanding UPI acceptance across key locations frequented by Indian tourists, including airports, retail stores, pharmacies, restaurants, museums, and transport hubs.

43. With a shared belief in the power of a Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) approach for the development of open, free, democratic and inclusive digital economies and digital societies, India and France have advanced multi-stakeholder exchanges through the InFraStructures (India France Structures) and InFinity (India France Innovation in Information Technology) platforms. So far, there have been three editions of the InFraStructures workshop in 2022, 2023 and 2025. Additionally, a half-day session on DPI for 45 French civil servants was organized in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

44. Under the Station F-HEC Paris International Launchpad program, ten Indian startups participated at Station F since May 2025 for a 4-month program. MeitY has started conversations with Station F-HEC for enrolling two more cohorts of ten startups in 2026. The program is to be extended for more cohorts of Startups from India.

45. As part of the joint DPI cooperation efforts, India and France have mutually identified potential high-impact initiatives in the areas of mobility, commerce and culture, as initial focus areas to showcase the significant benefits of inter-connectedness between platforms accomplished by leveraging open protocols.

## **India France Year of Innovation**

46. India and France are celebrating the India-France Year of Innovation in the year 2026, which was jointly inaugurated by President Emmanuel Macron and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 17 February 2026 in Mumbai. Both leaders launched Indo-French Innovation Network as its flagship initiative. The Year of Innovation will feature a series of events in both countries throughout the year, spanning diverse sectors such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, digital art, defence technology, and sustainability. These engagements aim to foster collaboration between startups, academic institutions, research bodies, and industry leaders.

## **Cultural Cooperation**

47. Indian culture enjoys a wide and discerning audience among the French population, reflected in the numerous and frequent cultural activities held across France. Taking it to the next level, India operationalised the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC) in Paris on March 26, 2026. The inaugural event attended by Ms. Eléonore Caroit, French Minister Delegate for Europe and Foreign Affairs as Chief Guest, also marked the opening of its first exhibition titled “L’art de l’Inde d’aujourd’hui (Living Arts of India)”. Drawing from the art collection of MOSA (Museum of Sacred Arts, Belgium), this exhibition presents an anthology of more than 80 art works by 40 artists from India and beyond, celebrating India’s living artistic traditions. In addition, the SVCC organises cultural events to bring the authentic flavour of Indian performing arts directly to the people of France and offers specialised classes in Yoga, Hindi language, Indian classical music and classical dances, making it a living bridge between the two nations. In addition to the official cultural exchanges, a substantial number of Indian artists perform in France on a commercial basis and/or at the initiative of various local cultural associations making it a people-to-people endeavour.

48. A major highlight in recent years was the Festival of India, Namaste France 2023, which was held at La Seine Musicale in Paris from 6-9 July 2023. The festival showcased renowned Indian visual and performing artists spanning classical, modern, and contemporary traditions. It featured 18 concerts, 16 workshops, and seven panel discussions, along with a craft bazaar, a tribal paintings exhibition, a photo exhibition on the Rabari nomadic tribe etc. The next edition of Namaste France will be hosted in 2028 to mark the 30 years of India-France strategic partnership. In addition, several French cities host Indian cultural festivals that showcase our culture through dance, music, films and gastronomy including Namaste Nantes, the India Carnival at Val-de-Reuil, Desi Week in Bobigny, the Indian Festival in Grigny, Happy Inde in Nice and Ganga Sur Seine (Film Festival) in Paris.

49. India sets up a pavilion every year at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival where it was the Country of Honour in 2022. In October 2025, India also participated in MIPCOM 2025 in Cannes, an annual international trade show for the television industry. India established its pavilion under the WAVES - World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit banner, highlighting its strengths in films, OTT platforms, animation, and gaming.

50. Building upon the agreement signed between the National Museum in Delhi and France Muséums Développement in December 2024, India and France are making progress in establishing the Yuge Yugeen Bharat Museum as a global cultural landmark. Furthermore, discussions are ongoing for cooperation on the National Maritime Heritage Complex in Lothal.

51. To mark the 30 years of India-France strategic partnership in 2028, a cultural year dedicated to India will be celebrated at the French National Museum of Asian Arts (Guimet Museum) and an exhibition dedicated to contemporary Indian photography will take place at the Musée du Quai Branly – Jacques Chirac.

### **Cooperation in Blue Economy**

52. Both sides have decided to enlarge the scope of maritime cooperation to address issues of sustainable use of marine resources, and work towards ocean governance, including through coordination in relevant international bodies. In this regard, an India-France Roadmap on Blue Economy and Ocean Governance was agreed to in February 2022 whose purpose was to exchange views on respective priorities, share best practices and support ongoing and future cooperation. In order to achieve this, an annual bilateral dialogue on the blue economy and ocean governance was agreed. Its first meeting was held in Paris on 12 October 2023 where both sides had a detailed discussion to explore cooperation on the agenda items across the institutional, economic and infrastructure, scientific, academic, and cultural pillars of blue economy.

### **Cooperation in Environment**

53. India and France had launched International Solar Alliance (ISA) during COP21 in Paris in 2015, and France is the current co-chair of ISA (2024-26). France also joined Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) in July 2020 and has assumed the role of co-chair of CDRI for the period 2024-26. The 7th edition of International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure was held on 7 June 2025 in Nice, France, which was the first time the conference was held outside of India. On 21 April 2026, Mr Jean-Paul Seytre, Deputy Director General for Global Affairs and Cultural and Economic Diplomacy of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, co-chaired the 7th Governing Council of the CDRI, in New Delhi, with

Dr P.K. Mishra, Principal Secretary to Prime Minister. The 7th Governing Council marked the transition of the co-chairship from France to Brazil.

54. Both sides have constituted a Joint Working Group on Environment, the fourth meeting of which took place in July 2024. Recalling the richness of the bilateral cooperation in environment, climate change, biodiversity and pollution, the sides agreed to work under the Blue Economy Dialogue in the areas of coastal ecosystem and services, marine and coastal planning and in coastal ecology and environment.

55. Ministries of Renewable Energy on both sides have an active cooperation through a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2021. The MoU was renewed for 05 more years during President Macron's visit to India in February 2026.

56. Green hydrogen has become a priority area of cooperation area for both India and France and has been identified as one of the areas of interest in the above-mentioned MoU. Both countries have even adopted a Road-map on Green Hydrogen in October 2022, including elements such as fostering industrial partnerships, R&D to improve hydrogen technologies, certification, and establishing a regulatory framework for developing a decarbonised hydrogen value chain.

### **Cooperation in Health**

57. Both countries are intensifying their cooperation in the field of health and medicine. As a first step, a Declaration of Intent (DoI) has been signed on 23 January 2024 by both countries to cooperate in the field of health and medicine. The DoI provides the basis for cooperation in new areas including Digital Health, AI for Healthcare, Medical Waste Treatment Technology, Biotechnology, One Health approach for fight against antimicrobial resistance, exchange and training of skilled health professionals. The first meeting of Joint Working Group in the field of healthcare was held on 28-29 January 2025 in Paris, when both sides held detailed discussions on anti-microbial resistance, digital health and human resources for health. To push forward the collaboration in AI in Health, the Indo-French institute for AI in global health was inaugurated in AIIMS, Delhi in February 2026 during President Macron's visit to India. This new center, jointly led by Sorbonne University, AIIMS, and the Paris Brain Institute, aims to structure Indo-French scientific cooperation in the field of AI applied to global health.

58. Apart from these, the Franco-Indian Campus (FIC) for Life Sciences and Health is a project initiated by the French Government in 2022 that brings together 20 of the most prestigious French and Indian Higher Education and Research Institutions and more than 80 Research laboratories. The goal is to address jointly the Global challenges related to Life Sciences and Health and build long lasting cooperation between the two countries through student training. Previously, during PM's visit to France in February 2025, India's C-CAMP (Centre for Cellular and

Molecular Platforms) and France's Parisante Campus entered into a partnership to establish an Indo-French Life Sciences Sister Innovation Hub, which was reaffirmed during President Macron's visit to India in 2026. In February 2026, both sides announced establishment of the India-France Centre for Digital Science and Technology.

59. On 19 February 2026, during the AI Impact Summit in New Delhi, the French Health Data Hub and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) launched a strategic collaboration to pilot India's Data Empowerment and Protection Architecture (DEPA) framework for secure and ethical health-data sharing between the two countries. Supported by PariSanté Campus and the iSPRIT Foundation, the initiative's first proposed use case is a cardiology project involving Narayana Health and France's e-Must registry. The project will compare myocardial infarction characteristics, use AI to analyse care pathways and risk factors, and identify epidemiological differences to strengthen prevention strategies in both countries.

60. To further cooperation on infectious diseases and vector borne diseases, an Lol was signed in February 2026 between Department of Biotechnology and French Institute ANRS MIE for joint research projects in these areas.

### **Cooperation in Education**

61. India and France are committed to strengthening their academic ties and to foster exchanges of students. The number of Indian students studying in France is estimated to be about 10,000, with the ambition of having 30,000 Indian students in France by 2030. Among the Indian students who come to France every year, the majority is for business management studies. With the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020, French University campuses are also being welcomed in India.

62. In 2023, France launched a five-year validity Schengen visa for Indians who have studied in France for at least one semester at Masters-degree level at a university recognized by the French university system. In September 2024, the French government started international classes in about 35 French universities and schools. Usually spread over two semesters, the program allows non-French speaker students to reach B2 level of French. There is no entrance exam to qualify for admission in such schools. After successful completion of the international classes, direct admission into a French-taught undergraduate programs and scholarships can be provided.

63. During President Macron's visit to India in February 2026, a high level scientific and academic programme, named RUSH (Rencontres Universitaires et Scientifiques de Haut Niveau), was organized at AIIMS, New Delhi. This two-day high-level academic meeting gathered leading French and Indian institutions to assess ongoing bilateral initiatives such as the Franco-Indian Health Campus,

International Classes and vocational training programmes. It also addressed shared concerns and systemic challenges within both higher education systems, including quality assessment frameworks, international student mobility, UGC regulations, and alignment with India's National Education Policy (NEP).

### **Cooperation in Science and Technology**

64. India and France have a rich history of cooperation in the fields of science and technology. The cooperation ranges from health, digital, energy and oceans to applied mathematics. Several linkages have been forged between both the sides, namely between MoES, MeITY, DST, DBT, and CSIR on the Indian side, and ANR, CNRS, INSERM, INRIA, and Institut Pasteur on the French side. The broad areas of cooperation are discussed and agreed upon annually under India-France Joint Committee on Science and Technology. Its second meeting was held in January 2024, when a MoU between Department of Science and Technology (DST) of India and L'Agence nationale de la recherche (ANR) of France was signed.

65. The Indo-French Centre for the Promotion of Advanced Research (IFCPAR/CEFIPRA), registered in 1986, acts as one of the key institutions driving research activities between the two sides. Projects under CEFIPRA include: Collaborative Scientific Research Programme (CSR), Industry-Academia Research Development Programme (IARDP), Raman-Charpak Fellowship Programme, Indo-French Programme for Women in Science (PROWIS), Indo-French Emerging Project Partnership Programme, High Impact Scientific Research Network Programme and Seminars/Workshops on mutually agreed topics. Since its launch, over 250 fellows have been supported under Raman-Charpak Fellowship. A total of 16 women scientists have been supported under PROWIS since its launch in 2022.

66. The 39th Governing Body meeting of CEFIPRA was held in January 2026 in Paris, co-chaired by Shri Abhay Karandikar, Secretary (DST) from the Indian side, and by Ms. Sabine Sciortino, Director General of Global Affairs and Cultural and Economic Diplomacy from French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. On the occasion of India-France Year of Innovation 2026 that also marks the 40th anniversary of establishment of CEFIPRA, both sides plan to organize various activities as part of Year of Innovation celebrations.

67. During the visit of President Macron to India in February 2026, both sides signed the Letter of Intent to establish a Centre on Advanced Materials between DST and CNRS, Memorandum of Understanding for Scientific collaboration between DST and CNRS, and the Joint Declaration of Intent on establishing an Indo-French Centre for Digital Sciences and Technology.

### **Consular cooperation**

68. In a significant development, and following the announcement made by Prime Minister Modi and President Macron during the latter's visit to India in February 2026, Indian nationals transiting through the European territory of France exclusively by air have been exempted from the requirement of a transit visa by the French authorities.

69. In terms of broader exchanges on consular issues, the Second India-France Consular Dialogue was held on 29 January 2026 in Paris. It was led by Joint Secretary, CPV Division, Ministry of External Affairs from the Indian side and by Director, Directorate for French Nationals Abroad and Consular Administration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs from the French side. The first Dialogue was held on July 21, 2020 in video-conference format. During the second dialogue both sides discussed issues pertaining to visas and consular matters.

70. In March 2018, during President Macron's visit to India, the two sides signed Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (MMPA) aimed at enhancing people to people contacts, fostering mobility of students, academics, researchers and skilled professionals. The first JWG on MMPA was held on 29 November 2022. The Young Professionals scheme mentioned under MMPA was operationalized in 2024.

### **Indian Community in France**

71. There is a large presence of Indian diaspora in French mainland and its overseas territories. In mainland France, the diaspora size is estimated at about 119,000, largely originating from the erstwhile French colonies of Puducherry, Karaikal, Yanam, Mahe and Chandernagore, and the states of Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Punjab. The estimated Indian-origin population in French Overseas Territories is over 350,000: Reunion Island (over 300,000), Guadeloupe (over 57,000), Martinique (over 8,000) and Saint Martin (over 1,900). There are over 50 Indian community organisations active in France.

72. There had been a long-standing request from the Indian-origin communities in Guadeloupe and Martinique for registration under the scheme of Overseas Citizen of India, which has been granted through a notification dated 11 July 2024 from the Ministry of Home Affairs of India. As of 01 June 2026, fourteen OCI cards have been issued to people of Indian origin in Guadeloupe and Martinique.

\*\*\*

June 2026