

**Ministry of External Affairs
(Europe West Division)**

Brief on India-France Bilateral Relations

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

The areas of **defence & security cooperation, space cooperation and civil nuclear cooperation** constitute the principal pillars of our Strategic Partnership. India and France also have a robust economic partnership. Apart from these, India and France are increasingly engaged in new areas of cooperation such as maritime security in the Indo Pacific region, counter terrorism, climate change, renewable energy and sustainable growth and development among others.

India and France share a close degree of **convergence on a range of regional and global issues**. France has continued to support India's claim for permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council and the reforms of the United Nations. France's support was vital in India's accession to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) and Australia Group (AG). France continues to support India's bid for accession to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

India and France have consistently condemned terrorism and have resolved to work together for adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) in the UN. Following the Pulwama attack (Feb 2019), France steadfastly supported India and nationally listed the Pakistan-based 'global terrorist' Hafiz Saeed, which was followed up with the listing at the UN. France has also supported India's requests to block attempts by Pakistan to enlist innocent Indian citizens under the UNSC 1267 sanctions Committee based on fabricated charges. As France witnessed a string of terrorist attacks in 2020, most notably the "Paris stabbing attack" in September and beheading of Samuel Paty in October, India expressed its condolences. In the face of the backlash against purported French "Islamophobia", in countries such as Turkey and Pakistan, Prime Minister Modi extended his support to President Macron.

The two countries have a burgeoning economic relationship. French **businesses and industry** have forged linkages with the Indian economy and contribute significantly to our goal to become an Atmanirbhar Bharat. There are over a 1000 French businesses in India in variegated sectors such as defense, ITES, consulting, engineering services, heavy industry et al. France is the 7th largest foreign investor in India with a cumulative FDI stock of USD 9 billion from April

2000 to December 2020, which represents 2 % of the total FDI inflows into India. Although India has a trade surplus, India France bilateral trade remains far below potential. In the period April 2018-March 2019, India-France bilateral trade stood at 11.59 billion Euro, India's exports to France were valued at 6.23 billion Euro meanwhile, French exports to India stood at 5.35 billion Euro.

The 18th Joint Economic Committee meeting, held virtually between the two countries on 27 November 2020, led to the signing of a bilateral 'Fast Track Mechanism' for investors. The first meetings were held on 16 February 2022 between E/I, Paris and the French Treasury and 25 February 2022 between Secretary, DPIIT and the French Ambassador, in Paris and Delhi, respectively. Commerce and Industries Minister Shri Piyush Goyal also held a virtual conference for French businesses in February 2021, whereby a dedicated desk was set up by Invest India for investor queries. In recent interactions at the EU level, India has sought an early harvest trade agreement, while working towards a comprehensive FTA. On 10 March 2022, French Minister of State for Trade and Commercial Attractiveness paid a visit to India and called on CIM. He also held meetings with Indian and French industry leaders during his visit.

There exist vibrant bilateral **cultural and educational** linkages as also growing **people-to-people** contacts. **Indian diaspora** also has a sizeable presence in metropolitan France and its overseas departments/territories.

COVID-19 Cooperation

India and France closely cooperated at the peak of the pandemic in both countries. India supplied France with nearly 2 million hydroxychloroquine tablets and 36 MT of paracetamol (API) after having lifted export restrictions on these life-saving drugs. France expressed its gratitude by sending 120 ventilators, 50 thousand serological tests and 50 thousand nose/throat swabs as aid. France also announced a 200 million euro loan to India to help the vulnerable sections most severely affected by the pandemic. Over 2500 Indians had been repatriated from France and a similar number of French citizens were repatriated from India to their home countries through special flights.

In the second wave, France provided 18 oxygen plants till date to hospitals across India which will fulfill oxygen requirements for 10 years. France also supplied over 100 tonnes of Liquid Medical Oxygen to the state of Maharashtra through the French industrial gas producer Air Liquide. Besides this, P2G assistance also came in from several French companies, including Airbus.

Recent high level political exchanges

Head of States

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and President Emmanuel Macron have a strong relationship underscored by convergences in global and regional priorities. In 2020, there was no physical meeting, on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, however there have been several telephonic exchanges between the two leaders. Most recently, PM held a telephone conversation with President Macron on 26 May 2021. Issues of mutual interest such as strategic autonomy, the Indo-Pacific region, defence cooperation and environment were discussed. Additionally, the two leaders held telephone conversations on 26 May and then 21 September 2021 to discuss issues of bilateral and multilateral interest, including the developments in Afghanistan and the Indo-Pacific. Most recently, the two Leaders met on 30 October 2021 on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Italy and held discussions on bilateral and regional issues.

PM visited France in August 2019 at the special invitation of President Macron for the 2019 G-7 Summit, where India was one of the 'Goodwill' partners. The visit comprised two segments: the bilateral component (22-23 August in Chantilly, Paris) and the G-7 related visit in Biarritz (25-26 August). The bilateral meeting entailed discussions on defence partnership, civil nuclear cooperation, space, counter-terrorism, energy, Indo-Pacific, maritime security and people to people contacts. It was followed by a joint-statement. The outcomes of the visit included India-France Roadmap on Cybersecurity and Digital Technologies and four other Agreements/MoUs. On 23 August, PM met the then French PM Edouard Philippe and discussed strengthening of economic relations and people to people contacts. PM also addressed the Indian community in Paris and virtually inaugurated a memorial for the victims of the Air India crashes of 1950 and 1966. In Biarritz PM addressed the session on digital transformation as the lead speaker and participated in another session on climate, biodiversity and oceans.

PM and President Macron held a pull aside meeting on the sidelines of the of the G-20 2019 in Osaka in June 2019. They were also co-speakers at the Leaders' Dialogue on Strategic Responses to Terrorist and Violent Extremist Narratives held on UNGA sidelines on 23 September 2019 in New York. The two had earlier held a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the G-20 meet in December 2018 in Buenos Aires.

PM addressed the One Ocean Summit on 11 February 2022. This Summit was organised by France as part of a series of ocean related events scheduled to take place in 2022.

President Emmanuel Macron and Mrs. Brigitte Macron paid a State Visit to India from 10-12 March 2018 during which they visited New Delhi, Agra, Mirzapur and Varanasi. After the ceremonial welcome in New Delhi, President Macron and Prime Minister Narendra Modi held restricted and delegation-level talks. Fourteen inter-governmental agreements were signed following the talks including one for the provision of reciprocal logistics support between the

respective Armed Forces. In addition to the visit Joint Statement, a "Joint Strategic Vision of India-France Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region" and the "India-France Joint Vision for Space Cooperation" were also issued. The President of India hosted a banquet in honour of President Macron as also delegations of other countries which had assembled in New Delhi for the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance.

PM visited France on 2-3 June 2017. This was the first meeting with President Macron. Apart from a meeting at the Elysee Palace, the two leaders visited Arc de Triomphe and laid a wreath to pay homage to the memory of the Indian soldiers who died fighting in defence of France in the two world wars.

Additionally, former French President Francois Hollande visited India **24-26 January 2016** as the Chief Guest of India's Republic Day celebrations. In a historic first, a French military contingent also marched on Rajpath on the Republic Day and thus France became the first ever foreign country to have been invited to participate in the march. PM visited France twice in 2015. First in April 2015, which was his first visit to a European country as PM. Then in November 2015, to attend the inaugural Leaders' Event at the COP-21 Climate Change Summit and launched the International Solar Alliance jointly with President Hollande in the presence of the then UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon.

Other High level Visits

India to France

Hon'ble Vice-President Shri Venkaiah Naidu represented India at the commemorative ceremony of World War-I Armistice centenary and also participated in the inaugural Paris Peace Forum on 11 November 2018 in Paris. He inaugurated the memorial for fallen Indian soldiers at Villiers Guislan on 10 November.

EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Paris on 11-12 November 2019. He called on President Macron and held meetings with French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian. He attended the 2nd edition of the Paris Peace Forum where he addressed a high-level panel-discussion on multilateral governance of cyberspace, alongside French and German FMs. He addressed a group of eminent businessmen, think-tankers and media representatives at Institut Montaigne (a prominent French think-tank). EAM met Secretary of State to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne on the sidelines of G20 Foreign Ministers meeting in Nagoya, Japan on 23 November 2019. More recently, he held a telephonic conversation with Le Drian on 30 June 2020. EAM addressed the Ministerial meeting of the Alliance for Multilateralism that was held virtually on 26 September 2020. and addressed the forum virtually on 24 February 2021. EAM hosted French Foreign Minister for a bilateral meeting in Delhi on 13 April 2021 and held a trilateral ministerial meeting with him under the India-France-

Australia Trilateral on the sidelines of the G7 Foreign Ministers Meeting. The two also met on the sidelines of the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting in Italy in June 2021 and then on the sidelines of the UNGA in New York in September 2021. Most recently, the two Foreign Ministers held a bilateral meeting in Paris on 20 February 2022 during EAM's visit to France for the EU Ministerial Forum for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh visited France from 07- 10 Oct 2019 for the 2nd edition of the Defence Dialogue with the French Minister of Armed Forces Ms. Florence Parly. He called on President Macron and interacted with heads of key French defence industry enterprises. On 08 October 2019 RM visited Bordeaux to attend the handing over ceremony of the first of the 36 Rafale fighter aircrafts being purchased from France under the inter-governmental contract signed in September 2016. He also visited select defence industry sites in France. **RM** and his counterpart held telephone conversation on 02 June 2020 to discussed matters of mutual concern including Covid-19 situation, the efforts made by the armed forces of both the countries in fighting the pandemic, regional security and agreed to strengthen the bilateral defence cooperation. Ms. Parly assured the timely delivery of Rafale jets despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

MoS External Affairs Shri V. Muraleedharan visited Reunion island on 23-24 October 2019 along with an Indian business delegation to participate in a summit meeting on "Regional Economic Integration in the Indo-Pacific Region", following an invitation from French Presidency. He held conversations with several French ministers and also called on French President Emmanuel Macron. He also participated, virtually, in the Summit on the Financing of African Economies, hosted by France in May 2021.

Other recent high level ministerial visits from India have been of: former EAM Late Mrs. Sushma Swaraj to Paris (on 18-19 June 2018); previous Raksha Mantri Mrs. Nirmala Sitharaman to Paris on (October 2018); Mrs. Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Hon'ble Minister for Food Processing (October 2018); Shri Suresh Prabhu, then Minister of Commerce, Industry and Civil Aviation (May-June 2018); Shri M.J. Akbar, then MoS (External Affairs) [April 2018] for the '*No Money for Terror*' multilateral conference; Shri R.K. Singh, then MoS (Power and MNRE) for participation in the International Energy Agency Ministerial (November 2017) and the One Planet Summit in Paris (December 2017).

France to India

The French Foreign Minister, Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian visited Delhi and Bengaluru on 13-15 April 2021. He held an extensive bilateral meeting with EAM, besides also meeting other dignitaries, including Shri Prakash Javadekar, Minister of Environment Forest Climate Change. He also participated in the

Raisina Dialogue, of only 3 foreign ministers to have physically been in Delhi during the Dialogue.

The French Minister for Ecological Transition, Ms. Barbara Pompili, visited India from 28 January to 02 February 2021. She held meetings with Shri Prakash Javadekar, Minister of Environment Forest Climate Change; Shri RK Singh, MoS (IC) Ministry of Power and Renewable Energy and Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, MoS (IC) Housing and Urban Affairs.

Florence Parly, French Minister for Armed Forces, visited India on 10 September 2020, to attend the official induction ceremony of the first batch of Rafale aircraft by the Indian Airforce. She held meetings with RM and NSA. Most recently, Ms Parly visited India to hold the third Annual Defence Dialogue on 17 December 2021. She also called on PM and met EAM, FM and NSA.

Other French Ministerial visits to India, in recent times, have been those of Culture Minister Franck Riester (27-28 January 2020); Secretary of State to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne (10 June 2019); Secretary of State to the Minister for Ecological & Transition, Ms. Brune Poirson for the 2nd General Assembly of the ISA (30 October – 1 November 2019); Minister of Solidarity and Health, Ms Agnès Buzyn for the preparatory meeting of the Sixth Replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (8 February 2019). A number of French Ministers had accompanied President Macron during his State Visit to India in March 2018. On 10 March 2022, French Minister of State for Trade and Commercial Attractiveness paid a visit to India and called on CIM. He also held meetings with Indian and French industry leaders in Delhi and Bengaluru.

Recent exchanges at the **Parliamentary level** include the visit of President of India-France Friendship Group in National Assembly Ms. Celine Calvez to India on 27-28 January 2020 and the visit of a French Senate delegation to India in September 2018 as well as in September 2019.

France has also been sending delegations for the **Raisina Dialogue**, comprising senior government officials.

Economic Cooperation

Both India and France have important bilateral investments and trade and commercial cooperation, particularly in sectors involving IT corridors, smart-cities, railways, capital and trade exchanges, skill development etc. France has emerged as a major source of FDI for India with more than 1,000 French establishments already present in India. France is the 11th largest foreign investor in India with a cumulative FDI stock of USD 9.83 billion from April 2000 to March 2021, which represents 2 % of the total FDI inflows into India. There are more than 150 Indian companies operating in France (including sub-subsidiaries), employing more than

7,000 persons. Seventeen investments from India were recorded in 2018, creating or maintaining 141 jobs.

France's GDP is almost similar to that of India's, but our bilateral trade remains far below potential, even though India has enjoyed a consistent trade surplus. In the period April 2020-March 2021, India-France bilateral trade stood at USD 7.86 billion. India's exports to France were valued at USD 5.6 billion, down by 22.9%. Meanwhile, French exports to India decreased by 20.95% during the same period to USD 5.1 billion. Trade with France constitutes only 1.41% of India's total international trade.

A Joint Economic Committee (JEC/JCM) exists at the level of Ministers of Commerce and Foreign Trade from both sides. The 18th JCM was held virtually on 27 November 2020 which was co-chaired by by Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Hon'ble Minister of State for Commerce & Industry and Mr. Frank Reister, French Minister Delegate for Foreign Trade and Attractiveness. A joint announcement was also signed for setting up of a FAST-TRACK system for French companies in India and Indian companies in France which was to be made operational by the end of December 2020. The first meetings were held on 16 February 2022 between E/I, Paris and the French Treasury and 25 February 2022 between Secretary, DPIIT and the French Ambassador, in Paris and Delhi, respectively.

Joint Working Groups exist in various fields such as (i) IT & Telecommunications; (ii) Roads; (iii) Sustainable Urban Development; (iv) Agriculture and Food Processing; (v) Mineral Exploration and Development; (vi) Energy; (viii) Environment and (ix) Post.

An India-France CEOs' Forum exists at the level of top CEOs from both sides meeting annually and presenting their reports to the Prime Minister of India and President of France. The Forum is led by Mr. Dhruv Sawhney, CEO of Triveni Engineering and Mr. Paul Hermelin, CEO of Capgemini. The last round of CEO's Forum met on 10 March 2018 at New Delhi coinciding with the visit of the French President to India.

Almost all the major French companies are present in India including Renault, Saint Gobain, Veolia, Michelin, Capgemini, Sanofi, EDF, Airbus, Lactalis, Sodexo, Total and others. India's Reliance, Tata, Mahindra, L&T and other big companies have tied up joint cooperation with major French companies like Dassault, SAFRAN, Thales, Scneider Electric and others in the defence and electronics sector. French infrastructure companies are looking forward to major opportunities in Indian projects including in smart cities and renewable energy. AFD, the French Agency for Development has extended a loan of Euro 100 million to the Government of India for its Smart Cities Mission. French side has been actively cooperating with various programmes in especially three Smart Cities, viz. Chandigarh, Nagpur and Puducherry. SNCF, the French railways and the

Indian Railways have established a Permanent Indo-French Railway Forum. They have been cooperating in the studies for the feasibility of semi-high speed upgrade of Delhi-Chandigarh section and station development study of Ambala and Ludhiana. Hon'ble Commerce and Industries Minister, Shri Piyush Goyal, addressed French companies and businesses virtually in February 2021.

The Bilateral Investment and Protection Agreement between India and France expired in 2010, ten years after coming into force. GoI intends to replace it with a revised Bilateral Investment Treaty. A model text of the agreement was proposed by the Indian side in 2015. French side has informed that as all trade-related agreements are subject to the purview of EU, France cannot unilaterally decide in the matter. As declared during the visit of President Macron to India, both India and France support the efforts of India and EU to negotiate a early harvest EU-India Trade Agreement.

In May 2020, the advisory board of the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) announced that it has allocated 200 million Euros and will sign an agreement with India's Finance Ministry to support welfare measures and the most vulnerable sections of society.

Development Cooperation

AFD, the French Agency for Development has, since 2008, committed close to 2 billion Euros in the form of loans to the State and State-owned companies, as well as technical assistance programs. It has extended a loan of Euro 100 million to the Government of India for its Smart Cities Mission. French side has been actively cooperating with various programmes in especially three Smart Cities, viz. Chandigarh, Nagpur and Puducherry. AFD has partnerships with the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA), Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and it works closely with the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) through Annual Negotiation Meetings (ANM).

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Defence Cooperation

Cooperation in defence is the cornerstone of the India France strategic partnership. The two countries have a Ministerial level Defence dialogue, which has been held annually since 2018.

The three services also have regular defence exercises; viz. Exercise Shakti (Army; the last one took place in November 2019 in India), Exercise Varuna (Navy; is scheduled be held in the gulf of Oman from 25 to 27 April 2021), Exercise Garuda

(Air Force; July 2019 in France). The Indian Navy also participated in the French led La Pérouse exercise, along with other Quad members from 05 to 07 April 2021. Various staff courses, training programmes etc. also take place regularly.

Purchase of Rafale aircraft: The Inter-governmental agreement for purchase of 36 Rafale fighter aircrafts (30 fighter aircrafts and 6 trainers) by India in flyaway condition was signed in New Delhi on 23 September 2016. On 10 September 2020, French Armed Forces' Minister Florence Parly participated in the formal induction ceremony of five Rafale aircraft at the Ambala air base. All the Rafale aircrafts have been ferried to India.

P-75 Scorpene Project: The contract for six Scorpene submarines from DCNS (Naval Group) was signed in October 2006. All six vessels are to be built under technology transfer at the Mazagaon Docks Ltd. Project implementation is underway. The first submarine INS Kalvari was commissioned in December 2017 while the second INS Khanderi was commissioned in September 2019. Third submarine, INS Karanj, Scorpene class, was commissioned on 10 March 2021. Fourth Submarine, INS Vela was commissioned in November 2021. Fifth and Sixth submarines are in various stages of development and likely to be delivered by 2022.

Space Cooperation

India and France have a rich history of cooperation in the field of space, since the 1960s with the construction of Sriharikota launch-pad with French technical assistance. Building on the historical linkages in the arena of civilian space, both India and France issued a “Joint Vision for Space Cooperation” during the visit of President Macron to India in March 2018.

ISRO and the French Space Agency, CNES have been carrying on various joint research programmes and collaborating in satellite launches. Both sides have exchanged cooperative proposals addressing Earth observation, Maritime domain awareness, Global navigation satellite system, exploration of solar system, space transportation system and human spaceflight. As part of the ongoing bilateral cooperation between ISRO and Arianespace, GSAT-11 was launched from Kourou (French Guyana) in December 2018; GSAT-30 was launched on 16 January 2020. France continues to be a major supplier of components and equipment for the Indian space programme. CNES is supporting Indian human space flight programme – Gaganyaan, in the field of space medicine and supply of crew support elements. The IA was signed during French Foreign Minister's visit to India on 15 April 2021.

Civil Nuclear Cooperation

An agreement on civil nuclear cooperation was signed between India and France on 30 September 2008 during the visit of then Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan

Singh to France. Subsequently, during the visit of then French President Nicolas Sarkozy to India in December 2010, the General Framework Agreement and the Early Works Agreement between NPCIL and M/s AREVA for the implementation of EPR for the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project (JNPP) were signed.

Further, India is a member of ITER, a multi-national consortium formed to construct a experimental fusion reactor, located in Cadarache, France. India's role in ITER project is managed by Department of Atomic Energy.

Environment and Renewable Energy

France is a founding member of the International Solar Alliance (ISA), announced by PM Modi in 2015 at UN Climate Change CoP21. The 3rd ISA Assembly held in October 2020 re-elected India and France as President and Co-President of the ISA. The first Special Assembly held on 15 January 2021, elected Dr. Ajay Mathur as the new DG of the ISA. The countries signed an MoU on renewable energy in January 2021. The objective of the MoU is to promote bilateral cooperation in the field of new and renewable energy on the basis of mutual benefit, equality and reciprocity. It covers technologies relating to solar, wind, hydrogen and biomass energy.

French Minister of Ecological Transition held a five day visit to India from 28 January- 02 February 2021. A key outcome of her visit was 2021-22 being celebrated as Indo French year of Environment. AFD and SECI signed a letter of intent for developing 150 MW floating solar power system.

On 6 October 2021, the National Thermal Power Corporation and the French electricity agency EDF (*Electricité de France*) signed an MoU to work on clean energy projects in Europe, Asia, West Asia and Africa and to collaborate on R&D, technical services and consultancy assignments on a global scale.

India and France also work together on climate and biodiversity. In this context, India joined the French-led initiative called the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, on 7 October 2021. The HAC has an objective of protecting at least 30% of the world's lands and oceans by 2030.

At the One Ocean Summit on 11 February 2022, Prime Minister announced India's support to the French initiative of the High Ambition Coalition on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) that calls for a legally binding BBNJ Treaty by the end of 2022. PM also expressed India's readiness to work with France on a global initiative on combatting single-use plastic pollution.

Cooperation in the fields of S&T and Education

In the field of S&T, the Indo-French Centre for the Promotion of Advance Research (CEFIPRA) based in New Delhi, established in 1987, plays a major role by identifying and funding joint proposals for research projects. Several other

bilateral cooperation programmes exist including an Indo-French Ministerial-level Joint Committee on Science and Technology, established in 2016, whose first meeting was held in New Delhi in June 2018.

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

During the visit of President Macron to India (March 2018), the two sides encouraged their respective Universities and academic institutes to increase the number and quality of student exchanges with the aim of reaching the number of 10,000 students by 2020. Having reached this target, during the visit of PM to France (August 2019), the two sides revised the student exchange target to 20,000 by 2025. During this latter visit, an Administrative Arrangement was also signed between the two countries for Cooperation in Skill Development and Vocational Training. An Agreement on the mutual recognition of degrees, signed in March 2018, has already entered into force. Two Knowledge Summits have also been held courtesy the French side in March 2018 (New Delhi) and October 2019 (Lyon).

During EAM’s visit to France in February 2022, the two sides adopted the India-France Roadmap on Blue Economy and Ocean Governance. The roadmap rests on four pillars:

Institutional Pillar: annual bilateral dialogue between Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister and the French Ambassador for Maritime Affairs in MoFA to share best practices and support ongoing and future cooperation.

Economic Pillar: facilitating contact between economic players, business heads of organisations, technopoles and maritime clusters of India and France.

Infrastructure Pillar: cooperating on sustainable and resilient coastal and waterways infrastructure.

Scientific and Academic Pillar: enhancing scientific cooperation and exchanges between student and researchers.

Cyberspace and Digital technology

The two countries have several convergences in their respective positions on digital sovereignty, privacy and data protection. The Indo French Roadmap on Cybersecurity and Digital Technology was signed between the two countries during PM Modi's visit to France on 22 August 2019. The roadmap lays down areas of cooperation such as cybersecurity, fight against cybercrime, regulation of Artificial Intelligence, protection of personal information, digital governance et al. There exists an MoU between ANSII and Cert-in on exchange of information signed in 2019.

Prime Minister gave the keynote address at the 5th Edition of Vivatech, held in Paris, in **June 2021**.

In the field of exascale computing, Atos in collaboration with CDAC has developed "PARAM-Siddhi- AI", India's fastest supercomputer. Additionally, there exist immense potential in collaborating in future technologies such as 5G and 6G, developing global tech standards, training and capacity building programs and connecting the start up ecosystems of the two countries.

The fourth India-France Cyber Dialogue was held on 13 October 2021 in the virtual mode. The Indian side proposed an Action Plan which is under consideration at the French side.

Counter-terrorism

India and France have consistently condemned terrorism and have resolved to work together for adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) in the UN. Following the Pulwama attack (Feb 2019), France steadfastly supported India and nationally listed the Pakistan-based 'global terrorist' Hafiz Saeed, which was followed up with the listing at the UN. France has also supported India's requests to block attempts by Pakistan to enlist innocent Indian citizens under the UNSC 1267 sanctions Committee based on fabricated charges. As France witnessed a string of terrorist attacks in 2020, most notably the "Paris stabbing attack" in September and beheading of Samuel Paty in October 2020, India expressed its condolences. In the face of the backlash against purported French "Islamophobia", in countries such as Turkey and Pakistan, Prime Minister Modi extended his support to President Macron. Both sides held the 15th JWG on CT on 16 November 2021 in Paris.

Cultural Cooperation

Indian culture enjoys wide following amongst the people of France. An Indian Cultural Centre, named Vivekananda Cultural Centre, is being opened in Paris. The building which was acquired for the purpose is undergoing renovation.

As decided during the visit of President Hollande to India in January 2016, ICCR presented the Namaste France cultural festival in France from 15 September to

30 November 2016. The festival brought home to the French audience various manifestations of Indian culture including classical and contemporary dances and music, exhibitions, seminars, food, fashion, films etc. The festival saw more than 80 events presented in more than 40 cities in France and proved to be a great success. The French side presented the French cultural festival *Bonjour India* in India from November 2017 to February 2018. India will be the Country of Honour for the 2022 edition of the Paris International Book Fair (Livre Paris, June 2022). The next edition of *Namaste France* will be held in 2022 while France will be the Guest of Honour at the World Book Fair, New Delhi to be held in 2022.

A Cultural Exchange Programme, initially for the period 2016 to 2018, continues and is under implementation. GoI has also offered five scholarships for study of Sanskrit in India to French nationals. Various other bilateral programmes of cultural cooperation are under implementation.

The International Day of Yoga has been organized by the Embassy of India, Paris in Paris and in other cities of France since 2016. Various events have also been held to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the 550th Birth anniversary of Shri Gurunanak Devji, and the 70th year of the Constitution of India. These events have received wide acclaim and press coverage. Several events have been planned in 2021-22 to commemorate 75 years of India's independence and celebrate 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'. One of the first such events from the French side was organised on 26 February 2022 as part of MEA's AKAM Week, where a French mural artist, Fabien Poes, created a wall art at the Mandi House Metro Station in Delhi on the theme of "A French Garden" to reflect the "enduring friendship" between the two countries. The wall painting was inaugurated by Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture, Smt. Meenakashi Lekhi on 26 February 2022.

Indian community in France

The Indian diaspora in France is estimated to be around 5,00,000, majority being French citizens based in the French overseas territories. Around 109,000 Indian citizens reside in mainland France, with a majority originating from former French colonies of Puducherry, Karaikal, Yanam, Mahe and Chandernagore. A sizeable number of Indian origin population lives in the French Overseas Territories of the Reunion Island (300,000), Guadeloupe (60,000) and Martinique (6,000). There has also been an increasing number of students (nearly 10,000) and professionals studying and working in mainland France. There are more than 50 Indian community organizations active in France. Major communities constituting the Indian origin population originate from Puducherry and Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Punjab.

Consular issues

Bilateral consular relations are guided by the following four agreements:

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

During the visit of President Macron to India (March 2018), the two sides signed a Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement which aims to facilitate temporary circular migration based on mobility and the encouragement for a return of skills to the home country. The Agreement came into effect on 1 October 2021. During the visit of PM to France (August 2019), the two sides decided to initiate a regular Consular Dialogue. First Consular Dialogue was held in July 2020 through virtual mode.

(March 2022)