

Embassy of India, Paris

Bilateral Brief on 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 have received a boost in the last two years 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 Hollande 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. President Hollande paid State visit to India during 24-26 January, 2016 for India's Republic Day celebration.

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 and MTCR.

Major Visits:

President Francois Hollande's visit to India on Republic Day (24-26 January, 2016)

French President Mr Francois Hollande visited India from 24-26 January, 2016. This was his second State visit to India since taking up office in 2012. He was the Chief Guest of the 67th Republic Day. This was the fifth time when a president of France was invited as a chief guest at our Republic Day celebrations, making France the only country which has received this unique honour. On 26th January, the 35th Infantry Regiment of France and the Musical Infantry Regiment marched along with Indian troops in the parade. This was the first time that a foreign contingent was invited to participate in the Republic Day Parade on Rajpath.

President Hollande started his visit in Chandigarh, where, with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, he jointly addressed the Indo-French CEOs' Forum. Delegation level talks were held in Delhi. President Hollande attended the banquet hosted by Rashtrapati in his honour at the Rashtrapati Bhawan. Vice President Shri Mohammed Ansari and EAM Smt Sushama Swaraj also called on President Hollande. President Hollande and his delegation also travelled in a metro with Prime Minister to Gurgaon for the foundation stone laying ceremony of the International Solar Alliance secretariat.

Following the meeting of CEOs' Forum in Chandigarh, 16 agreements/MoUs were signed in the presence of the two leaders which mainly included business to business agreements. Following the delegation level talks in Delhi, 14 Agreements/MoUs were

signed, encompassing sectors such as space, defence, railways, culture, food safety, public administration, science and technology and higher education, including the inter-Governmental agreement for purchase of 36 Rafale aircraft by India, the announcement for which had been made during PM's visit to France in April, 2015. An Indo-French Joint Statement as well as an India- France Joint Statement on Counter Terrorism were issued following the talks.

PM's visit to Paris for CoP-21 (29-30 November, 2015)

Prime Minister 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.

Prime Minister's Visit (09-11 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 the 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 Neuve Chapelle in the north of France, accompanied by Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister of Defence. The Neuve Chapelle 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 Neuve Chapelle. 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.

President Hollande's Visit to India (14-15 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:

From the Indian side

- Visit of Smt. Harsimrat Kaur Badal (18-20 October, 2016), Minister of Food Processing Industries during the SIAL Food Fair in Paris. She also met French Minister of Agriculture, Food & Forest, Mr. Stephane Le Foll.
- Visit of Dr. Subash Bhambre (17-20 October, 2016), Minister of State (Defence Production) for Euronaval Defence Exhibition. During his visit, he also called on French Defence Minister, Mr. Jean Yves Le Drian.
- Visit of Shri Venkaiah Naidu (5-6 October 2015), Minister of Urban Development to Bordeaux to attend a Global Intelligent Transportation Summit. During his visit, he also met France's Minister of the Environment, Energy and Marine Affairs, Ms. Segolene Royal in Paris.
- Visit of Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani (1-5 September, 2016), Minister of Textiles to Paris during the Who's Next Premiere Class Textile & Garments Exhibition.
- Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of State for Commerce (IC) visited Paris from 03-06 July, 2015. She also visited Paris from 1-2 June 2016, to attend the Informal Gathering of the WTO Ministers on the margins of the OECD Ministerial Council Meeting.
- Visit to France of Shri Suresh Prabhu (11-12 April 2016), Minister of Railways, to discuss the possible areas of cooperation between India and France in the Railway sector. Minister also addressed the 'Emerging Forum' organized by Banque de France. He met Minister of State for Railways Mr. Alain Vidalies and also paid a courtesy call on Mr. Laurent Fabius, President of the Constitutional Council of France.
- 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.
- Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of State with Independent Charge for Power, Coal, New and Renewable Energy and Mines also visited to attend the CoP-21 in Paris on 30 November, 2015.
- Shri Rao Inderjit Singh, Minister of State for Planning and Defence and Shri Ashok Gajapathi Raju, Minister of State for Transport visited Paris for Paris Air Show during 14-18 June 2015.

From the French side

- Christophe Sirugue, Minister of State for Industry visited India from 25-27 October 2016 to explore economic cooperation and investments. During his visit, he also called on Shri Venkaiah Naidu, Minister of Urban Development and Shri Arun Jaitley, Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs.

- French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius visited India on 20 November 2015 and called on PM in preparation of CoP-21 in Paris. He had earlier visited India on 5 February 2015 in connection with Delhi Sustainable Development Summit (DSDS), New Delhi. Ms. Segolene Royale, Minister for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy also attended DSDS.
- 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 Raksha Mantri in May, 2015 and on 23 September 2016 to sign the agreement on the purchase of 36 Rafale aircraft.

Institutional Structure for dialogue:

India-France Strategic Dialogue: France and India have instituted annual Strategic Dialogue. The latest round of Strategic Dialogue was held in Paris on 12-13 January, 2016, between Shri Ajit Doval, National Security Advisor and Mr. Jacques Audibert, Diplomatic Advisor to French President. The next round is likely to be held in New Delhi in January 2017.

Foreign Office Consultations: The latest round of Annual Foreign Office Consultations at the level of Foreign Secretaries was held in New Delhi between Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar and Christian Masset, Secretary General of French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development on 14 November, 2016.

Bilateral dialogue on maritime cooperation: First Bilateral dialogue on maritime cooperation, with a focus on maritime security issues was held in Paris during 13-14 January, 2016. Deputy NSA Dr. Arvind Gupta led the Indian delegation, while on the French side it was co-chaired by Ms Marie-Helene Maysonauve, special representative for coordination of the international fight against maritime piracy and Vice Admiral Charles-Henry du Ché, French Defence maritime security coordinator.

Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism: The tenth meeting of the Joint Working Group on Counter-terrorism was 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.

Track 1.5 Dialogue: The latest round of Track 1.5 India-France dialogue was held in Paris from 28-30 June, 2016, during which an India-France Nuclear Dialogue was also held, with the participation of the Observer Research Foundation, India and the Centre for International Studies and Research (CERI, Science Po – Paris). 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. The 17th session is being planned to be held in the first quarter of 2017.

CEOs' Forum and other economic dialogues: The latest session of India-France CEO's Forum was held on 24 January 2016 in Chandigarh during President Hollande's India visit. Before that the CEOs' Forum had met in Paris on 09 April, 2015 during PM's visit to France. The next round is planned to be held in Paris on 13 January 2017. 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.

Various bilateral Scientific collaboration agreements between India and France are in place within the framework of the 2008 Agreement on the Development of Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy between India and France Under this framework exchanges relating to technical information and cooperation in the field of Nuclear Safety are going on.

To carry forward the Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation, 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.

India is a partner in ITER, the international nuclear fusion research and engineering megaproject, which is located at Cadarache in the southern France. Members of ITER are Europe union, U.S., Russia, Japan, Korea, China and India.

Space Cooperation:

France and India view each other as important partners in space technology and applications. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and its French counterpart Centre National de Etudes Spatiales (CNES) have a rich history of cooperation and collaboration spanning more than five decades.

A bilateral meeting between Mr A.S.Kiran Kumar, Chairman, ISRO and Mr Jean Yves Le-Gall, President, CNES was held at CNES headquarters, Paris on October 6, 2016. A letter for extension of Megha-Tropiques MOU was signed and exchanged during this meeting. Earlier, Chairman, ISRO and President, CNES had met on September 01, 2016 at Bengaluru.

Arianespace, France has been the major provider of launch services to Indian Geo-Stationary satellites. Subsequent to the launch of APPLE satellite on a co-operative mode in June 1981, 20 Geo-Stationary satellites of India have been launched by Arianespace on a commercial basis. India's advanced communication satellite GSAT-18 was launched successfully from Arianespace, Kourou on October 5, 2016, witnessed by Mr. A. S. Kiran Kumar, Chairman, ISRO and Ambassador Dr. Mohan Kumar from Jupiter control center at CSG, Kourou.

India was invited as the special guest at the Toulouse Space Show-2016 (June, 2016). A special booth was provided to ISRO for exhibition. France became a partner country at the Bengaluru Space Expo-2016 held during September, 2016.

A Heads of Space Agency reception on 'Space and Climate' was jointly organized by CNES and ISRO at New Delhi on April 3, 2016. A 'New Delhi declaration' on Space and Climate Change was adopted at this meeting.

During French President Hollande's visit to India in January, 2016, an Implementing Arrangement was signed between ISRO and CNES for the joint development of thermal infra-red satellite mission. A kick-off meeting for this mission was held at Ahmadabad in April, 2016. The two agencies signed another Implementing Arrangement for the flying of French Argos-4 instrument on Indian Oceansat-3 satellite. A letter of intent was signed between ISRO and CNES for cooperation in Planetary Exploration. Chairman, ISRO and President, CNES have identified officials for the ISRO-CNES Planetary Exploration Joint Working Group.

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 Megha Tropiques 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.

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.

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 Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian visited India on 23 September 2016 on the occasion of signing of the deal to procure 36 Rafale aircraft. He met Shri Manohar Parrikar, Raksha Mantri. Le Drian earlier visited India several times including as member of the French delegation led by President Hollande during the latter's visit in January 2016 as the Chief Guest of our Republic Day celebrations. Le Drian also visited India in May 2015, February 2015 and December 2014.

Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Subhash Bhamre, visited Euronaval 2016 at Paris from 17 to 21 October 2016. During the visit, RRM called on French Defence Minister Le Drian on 18 October 2016.

Raksha Rajya Mantri 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.

Joint exercises:

Joint service level exercises are held regularly in India and France. The last and third edition of Indo-French Joint Army exercise, 'EX-SHAKTI' concluded on 16 January 2016 in Rajasthan. 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 next exercise SHAKTI is planned in France during 2017.

The fifth edition of the joint air exercise EX- GARUDA was held in Jodhpur in June 2014. The next Garuda Exercise is scheduled to be conducted in France in 2017.

The latest edition of the Indo - French naval exercise EX - VARUNA, was held off the coast of Goa in from 23 April- 2 May 2015. An aircraft carrier from each country participated in the exercise along with their support ships. The next exercise is planned to be held in France in 2017.

The Indian Naval Ship Tarangini made a maintenance call at Le Havre port from 26 August to 10 September, 2015. Three Indian Naval ships made a port call at Saint Denis in the Reunion Islands in October 2014.

The 16th High Committee on Defence Cooperation (HCDC) meeting was held in New Delhi on 9 March 2016. Defence Secretary, Shri G. Mohan Kumar was the Indian co-chair while Mr Philippe Errera, the Director General of the Directorate of International Relations and Strategy (DGRIS), 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 in the HCDC.

The deal to purchase 36 Rafale jets in fly away condition was signed on 23 September 2016. The contract for six Scorpene submarines from M/s DCNS was signed on 6 October 2006. All six vessels will be built under technology transfer at M/s Mazagon Docks Ltd, Mumbai. One submarine Kalvari is presently undergoing sea trials.

Economic and Commercial Cooperation:

Bilateral trade and investment forms an integral part of the India France strategic partnership. The joint statements issued after the visits of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to France in April 2015 and President Hollande to India in January 2016 have set the tone for further deepening and strengthening of bilateral commercial and economic relations between the two countries.

In 2015, the total trade in goods between France and India was worth € 8.54 billion, registering an increase of 7.91% from 2014. India's exports to France were valued at € 5.37 billion (+2.96%) whereas French exports to India totaled € 3.17 billion (+17.47%). The trade surplus which is in favour of India for the past 10 years stood at 2.2 billion euros in 2015. Bilateral trade in services has shown a growth from 2011-2014, reaching € 3.68 billion in 2014, but has decreased by 7.33% in 2015 to € 3.41 billion.

Almost 1000 French companies are present in India with a total turnover of more than 20 Billion USD. They employ around 300,000 people in India. There are about 120 Indian companies operating in France with an estimated investment stock of 1 billion Euros and employing around 7000 people. French companies have more than 25 R&D centres in India.

The highest FDI equity inflows from France to India are in the services sector (19.02%), with cement & gypsum products (16.49%) in second place, followed by drugs & pharmaceuticals (6.06%), food processing industries (5.86%) and industrial machinery (6.06%). In France, twelve new Indian investments were recorded in 2015, creating or maintaining 290 jobs. 42% of Indian investments in France were in production/manufacturing, 33% were in business services, followed by 17% in decision-making centres.

Investments from France to India and vice versa are well below the potential and India seeks higher French investments, particularly in agro-processing, aero-space, energy, transport, including high speed rail networks, and urban infrastructure sectors. France is the 9th largest foreign investor in India with a cumulative investment of USD 5.15 billion from April 2000 to May 2016 which represents 1.75% of the total FDI inflows into India. Similarly, India is the 30th largest foreign investor in France with cumulative FDI inflows amounting to € 457 million.

Special emphasis is being laid on enhancing cooperation between French and Indian Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). While the large corporates from France

and India have enjoyed the benefits of the growing economic relationship between the two countries, increasing participation of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) of the two countries has remained a challenge. Facilitation measures are being extended to French SMEs desirous of investing and working in India. The 'Make in India' campaign initiated by Government of India is being successfully popularized in France through various promotional events being held by the Embassy in France in collaboration with various Chambers of Commerce and Industry bodies.

India and France signed a MoU in October 2012 for cooperation in the field of sustainable urban development including development of mass transportation systems, water supply and sewerage systems, disposal and treatment of solid waste, green housing and urban planning. This agreement is to be implemented under the aegis of the India France Joint Working Group on Urban Development.

India and France signed agreements on smart cities for Chandigarh, Nagpur and Puducherry. Agence française de développement (AFD) has committed a credit line of 2 billion Euros over the three-year period 2015-2017 for sustainable infrastructure and urban development projects in India.

Railways Cooperation:

Shri Suresh Prabhu, Minister of Railways visited France on 11-12 April 2016 and met French State Minister of State for Railways Mr. Alain Vidalies and the French railways SNCF top management. Minister Prabhu invited the French SNCF and the French private sector to invest in the railways sector of India citing that the sector has immense potential of growth and one of the world's largest market. Minister particularly requested for French technological know-how and collaboration in the railways sector with Indian Railways and private sector.

French investment in five key areas in the Railways sector include- Semi-high Speed trains, Modernization of the network, High Speed rail projects, Modernization of 400 stations to international standards on PPP mode, Signalling System projects and Electrification of 10,000 route kilometres. A MoU for Technical Cooperation in the field of Railways was signed on 14.2.2013 between Indian Railways and SNCF (French National Railways). In follow up of the MoU, a Protocol was signed between Ministry of Railways and SNCF on 10 April 2015 during the visit of Prime Minister to France in April, 2015, for cooperation in Semi High Speed Rail and Station Renovation/Development. A MoU has been signed between EPI and Alstom Transport, a French company to work for sustainable urban mobility systems like integrated railways solutions.

Alstom has won a contract of 200 million Euros for electrification and signalling works of a section of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC) and has recently obtained a contract for the production of 800 electric locomotives over 11 years, associated with a maintenance contract. This will imply the construction of an electric locomotive factory in Madhepura, Bihar, with orders to the tune of approximately Euros 3.5 billion. After a MoU between Indian company EPI and Thales, Thales would provide solutions in Safety and Security of smart cities including Surveillance systems, Urban and

Mainline Transportation systems covering Integrated Communication systems/Revenue Collections Systems/ Signaling and intelligent traffic management systems etc.

Co-operation in the Field of Prevention of Tax Evasion and Avoidance:

India and France are committed to co-operating in the field of combating tax evasion through facilitating better exchange of information for tax purposes; sharing best practices and co-operating through capacity building initiatives. Both countries share common concerns with regard to avoidance of incidence of taxation by enterprises emanating from gaps in the existing rules pertaining to international taxation and transfer pricing and have contributed to the revision of such rules to lead to taxation where the economic activity is carried out under the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) project.

Ambassador Dr. Mohan Kumar signed the Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement for Automatic Exchange of Financial Account Information on 3 June 2015. The agreement scheduled to come into force in India in 2017, will serve as a deterrent to illicit flow and investments of fund abroad.

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 2016-18 was signed during the State visit of President Hollande to India in January 2016. 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.

The second edition of 'Namaste France' – The Indian Cultural Festival in France is being organized in several cities of France including Paris, Strasbourg, Nice, Marseilles, Lyon, Nantes, Aix-en-Provence and Bordeaux from 15 September to 30 November 2016. Several internationally renowned Indian artists and French artists trained by ICCR are performing in this cultural extravaganza. This cultural festival aims to create awareness and understanding about Indian culture among the French and to promote people to people contacts.

The first Edition of Namaste France, a 15 month long cultural festival, 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.

During the visit of Prime Minister Modi 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)
- 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
- 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.
- Letter of Intent on promoting closer cooperation between two countries in tourism sector.

During the visit of President Hollande to India in January 2016 the following agreements were signed:

- Administrative agreement between Ministry of Culture & Communication of the French Republic and the National Library of France and the Ministry of Culture of India.
- An agreement for twining the two iconic Indian and French monuments- the India Gate in New Delhi and the Arc de Triomphe in Paris to commemorate the sacrifices made by Indian and French soldiers in the First World War.

Joint Statements issued during Prime Minister Modi's visit to France in April 2015 and President Hollande's visit to India in January 2016 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.

In addition to cooperation in the above fields, significant strides were made in mutual collaboration in the areas like archaeology and recovery of stolen art from India etc. Joint efforts of archaeologists of both the countries led to the remarkable discovery of human existence that could date back to 2.6 million years near Chandigarh in India. In addition, *Institut Français de Pondichéry* made an important contribution to the preservation and recovery of stolen Indian art by publishing a book "Shadow of Gods" with an extensive catalogue of Indian *Objets d'Arts* and cultural heritage.

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.

Several Indo-French friendship associations and cultural organizations are promoting Indian languages like Sanskrit, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu etc. Government of India organised a Regional Hindi Conference on 14-16 September 2016 in Paris in association with INALCO (*L'Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales*) for promotion of Hindi. During President Hollande's visit to India in January 2016, GoI announced five scholarships for French citizens to learn Sanskrit language in India.

Indian cinemas especially Tamil and Hindi movies have huge audience in France. India has film co-production agreement with France. Both the countries jointly produced Vanaprastham (1999), Miral (2011), Qissa (2012), Dabba/Lunchbox (2013), Masaan (2015) and Chauthikoot (2015).

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. With a view to develop grassroots football in India, the Paris Saint-Germain Football Club established its Academy in Delhi and Bangalore in 2014 and is also considering a possible exhibition match in future.

Tourism:

Under the new areas for deepening India-France partnership, the Embassy 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 Embassy 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. In 2014, around 246,000 French tourists visited India. Whereas, in April 2016, the number of Indian tourists visiting France has reached 500,000.

Educational and Technical Cooperation:

The bilateral educational and S&T cooperation between India and France has grown over the last few years. In recent years, more than 400 MoUs have been signed between educational institutions of both the countries which include student exchanges, faculty exchanges and research cooperation.

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.

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 “*authorization 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

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.

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, in 2016, 25 Indian and 6 French have been selected for the Fellowship. The last meeting of the Scientific and Industrial Councils was held at Tours (France) on May 17-21 2016.

During Prime Minister’s visit to France in April 2015, both countries agreed to establish a Joint Indo-French Science and Technology Committee. An agreement was signed in January 2016 in New Delhi to establish the 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.

During the visit of French president Hollande to India in January 2016, agreements were signed between the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Pune and the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon, and between Indian Institute of Technology in Mumbai and French CNRS/Telecom Bretagne/Université de Bretagne occidentale/Université de Bretagne Sud/ENSTA Bretagne/ENI Bretagne. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for sponsored Ph.D. Fellowships was also signed between Thales and Indian Institute of Technology Mumbai

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 Website: <http://www.ambinde.fr/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInFrance>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX6XYIVPq0C0NeNgMljRmsg>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/Indian_Embassy

Issuu: <http://issuu.com/embassyindiaparis>

Embassy's Bimonthly Publication Nouvelles de l'Inde: <http://www.ambinde.fr/nouvelles-de-l-inde>

Consulate General of India, Saint Denis, Reunion: <http://www.cgireunion.com/>

Namaste France, 2016: <http://www.namaste-france.org/>

24 November, 2016