

*As of 10 July 2019*

**Embassy of India**

**Paris**

**Political Wing**

**Brief on India-France Bilateral Relations**

In 1998, India and France established a **Strategic Partnership** which has since emerged as a close and growing bilateral relationship with a close convergence of views on a range of international issues.

2. The areas of **defence & security cooperation, space cooperation and civil nuclear cooperation** constitute the principal pillars of our Strategic Partnership. In addition, India and France are increasingly engaged in new areas of cooperation such as in the Indian Ocean region, climate change (including the International Solar Alliance) and sustainable growth & development, among others.

3. In the **economic** domain, French businesses and enterprises have forged strong linkages with the Indian economy and industry. There exist vibrant bilateral **cultural and educational** linkages as also growing **people-to-people** contacts. **Indian diaspora** also has a sizable presence in metropolitan France and its overseas departments/territories.

4. 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 Security Council and the reforms of the United Nations. France continues to support India's bid for accession to the NSG. India and France are steadfast partners in the fight against climate change.

5. 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 attacks, France steadfastly supported India and nationally listed the Pakistan-based 'global terrorist' Masood Azhar, which was followed up with the listing at the UN.

**Recent high level political exchanges**

6. India and France have had regular exchange of visits at the highest level. **Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and H.E. President Emmanuel Macron** of France held a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the **G-20 2018 in December 2018** in Buenos Aires. The two again met in a pull aside meeting on the sidelines of the **G-20 2019** in Osaka in **June 2019**.

7. **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 **November 11, 2018 in Paris**. He inaugurated the memorial for fallen Indian soldiers at Villiers Guislan on November 10. He also addressed the Indian community on November 9.

8. The **French President H.E. Emmanuel Macron and H.E. 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 Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi held official 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 Hon'ble President of India hosted a banquet in honor of President Macron as also delegations of other countries who had assembled in New Delhi for the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

9. The ISA Founding Conference was held in New Delhi on 11 March co-chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Macron. On 12 March, President Macron and Prime Minister Modi visited Mirzapur to inaugurate a 100 MW solar power park built by the French firm Engie. During the visit, the India-France CEO's' Forum also met which presented its report to the two leaders. Fourteen B2B agreements were also signed. A Knowledge Summit was also held bringing together higher educational institutions from both sides to boost cooperation in the field of education, research and student mobility.

10. Other recent high level interactions include:

- **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi met the French Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Edouard Philippe** on the sidelines of the World Government Summit in Dubai on **11 February 2018** and discussed issues of mutual interest.
- **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had visited France on 2-3 June 2017** and met President Emmanuel Macron. This was the first ever meeting between the two leaders which took place soon after President Macron took over the office of the President of the French Republic following his victory in the French Presidential elections in May 2017.
- The **previous French President H.E. Francois Hollande had visited India from 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.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi had visited Paris on 29-30 November 2015** to attend the inaugural Leaders' Event at the COP-21 Climate Change Summit. He launched the International Solar Alliance jointly with then French President Hollande in the presence of the then UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki Moon.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid an official visit to France from 09-12 April 2015** in his first visit to a European country as the Prime Minister.

11. At the Ministerial level, H.E. Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian, **France's Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs visited New Delhi from December 14-15, 2018** and held talks with the former External Affairs Minister Mrs. Sushma Swaraj. The two ministers discussed issues of bilateral partnership and international importance. Earlier, **former External Affairs Minister (EAM) Mrs. Sushma Swaraj had visited Paris on 18-19 June, 2018** and held a bilateral meeting with H.E. Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian. Then EAM also called on President Macron. Later, she participated in the naming ceremony of the Indian Cultural Centre in Paris which was named as 'Vivekananda International Centre' and met students and Indian diaspora. A bilateral Letter of Intent was also signed on cooperation on pre-historic caves during the visit.

12. **Former Raksha Mantri Mrs. Nirmala Sitharaman visited Paris on 11-12 October, 2018**, to hold the first bilateral Ministerial level annual defence dialogue (as decided at the March 2018 Summit) with her counter-part Ms. Florence Parly, France's Minister for the Armed Forces.

**Other recent high level Ministerial visits from India** have been those of: Mrs. Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Hon'ble Minister for Food Processing (October 2018) and Shri Suresh Prabhu, former Hon'ble Minister of Commerce, Industry and Civil Aviation (May-June 2018).

13. **From the French side, recent Ministerial visits** to India have been those of the Secretary of State to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne (June 2019); Secretary of State to the Minister for Ecological & Transition, H.E. Ms. Brune Poirson for the First General Assembly of the ISA (October 2018) and the French Foreign Minister H.E. Jean-Yves Le Drian (November 2017).

14. In addition, India and France share a range of regular official & institutional dialogue mechanisms encompassing areas such as security & defence, economy & trade as well as people to people-to-people, scientific and cultural domains.

### **Defence Cooperation**

15. During the visit of President Macron to India (March 2018), the two countries decided to create an annual defence dialogue at the Ministerial level, the first of which was held in October 2018 as mentioned above. Regular working level meetings as well as exchange of visits at the level of Services Chiefs also take place. The three services also have regular defence exercises; viz. Exercise Shakti (Army; the last one took place in February 2018 in France), Exercise Varuna (Navy; May 2019 in Goa/Djibouti) and Exercise Garuda (Air Force; July 2019 in France).

16. The major on-going defense-related projects are the following:

- **Purchase of Rafale aircraft:** The Inter-governmental agreement for purchase of 36 Rafale jets by India in flyaway condition was signed in New Delhi on 23 September 2016. Project implementation is underway.
- **P-75 Scorpene Project:** The contract for six Scorpene submarines from M/s DCNS (now 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 two others are in the stages prior to their operationalization.

### **Space Cooperation**

17. India and France have a rich history of cooperation in the field of space for over fifty years with ISRO and the French Space Agency, CNES carrying on various joint research programmes and launch of satellites. A joint stamp was released to commemorate fifty years of bilateral space cooperation during the visit of PM Modi to France in April 2015.

18. 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 (March 2018). The Joint Vision spells out the concrete areas of future cooperation in this field. The two sides have jointly developed Megha-Tropiques satellite providing valuable scientific data. As part of ongoing bilateral cooperation between ISRO and Arianespace, GSAT-11 was launched from Kourou (French Guyana) in December 2018. France continues to be a major supplier of components and equipment for the Indian space programme.

### **Civil Nuclear Cooperation**

19. An agreement on civil nuclear cooperation was signed between India and France on 30 September 2008 during the visit of then Prime Minister of India to France. Under that framework, the French utility company EDF and NPCIL signed a (revised) MoU on 22 March 2016 for the construction of six EPR units at Jaitapur of 1650 MWe each.

20. During the visit of President Macron to India (March 2018), NPCIL and EDF concluded an Industrial Way Forward Agreement. Discussions between EDF and NPCIL have been ongoing with the objective of expeditious realization of the project.

### **Economic Cooperation**

21. Both India and France have important bilateral investments and trade and commercial cooperation. 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 9<sup>th</sup> largest foreign investor in India with a cumulative investment of USD 6.59 billion from April 2000 to December 2018 which represents 1.61% of the total FDI inflows into India according to statistics provided by DIPP. As per available records, there are more than 150 Indian companies operating in France (including sub-subsidiaries), employing more than 7,000 persons.

22. In 2018, India-France bilateral trade stood at € 11.52 billion (+7.60%) as compared to the corresponding period the previous year. India's exports to France were valued at € 5.99 billion, up 11.77%. Meanwhile, French exports to India increased by 3.42% during the same period to € 5.52 billion.

23. A Joint Economic Committee exists at the level of Ministers of Commerce from both sides. The latest round of the Joint Committee Meeting took place in Paris on 24 October 2017. Bilateral joint working groups in various fields which exist are: (i) IT & Tele-communications; (ii) Roads; (iii) Sustainable Urban Development; (iv) Agriculture and Food Processing; (v) Mineral Exploration and Development; (vi) Energy; and (vii) Post. An India-France CEOs' Forum also meets annually at the level of top CEOs from either side.

### **Cultural Cooperation**

24. Indian culture enjoys wide following amongst the people of France. An Indian Cultural Centre, named Vivekananda Cultural Centre, currently under renovation, is to be opened in Paris.

25. The *Namaste France* cultural festival was held in France from 15 September to 30 November 2016. The festival saw more than 80 events presented in more than 40 cities in France and proved to be a great success. The French cultural festival *Bonjour India* was held in India from November 2017 to February 2018. India will be the Guest of Honour country in the French Book Fair in Paris in 2020 and France will be accorded the same status in the New Delhi World Book Fair in 2022. A Cultural Exchange Programme is under implementation.

26. The International Day of Yoga has been organized by the Embassy of India, Paris in Paris and in other cities of France since 2016 and which have received wide acclaim and press coverage. Events have also been organized under the Mahatma Gandhi @ 150 celebrations.

### **S&T/Education Cooperation**

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

cooperation programmes exist including an Indo-French Ministerial-level Joint Committee on Science and Technology, established in 2016.

28. It is estimated that there are about 7000 Indian students in France. Encouraged by offer of courses in English medium in the French institutes of higher education, especially in the field of business management, about 3,000 new Indian students come to France every year.

29. 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. 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. An Agreement on the mutual recognition of degrees was also signed between the two sides to facilitate the pursuit of higher education by Indian students in France and French students in India and increase their employability.

### **Indian community in France**

30. It is estimated that the Indian community, including NRIs in mainland France number around 109,000, largely originating from French enclaves of Puducherry, Karaikal, Yanam, Mahe and Chandernagore. Sizeable number of Indian origin population lives in the French Overseas Territories of the Reunion Island (280,000), Guadeloupe (60,000), Martinique (6,000) and Saint Martin (300). 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.

31. 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.

\*\*\*