India-France Strategic Partnership

Why in news?

The celebration by India and France of 25 years of their strategic partnership presents an important opportunity for both to introspect on their relations.

How has India-France ties been?

> *Signed in 1998, the time-tested strategic partnership between India and France has continued to gain momentum over shared values and aspirations of peace, stability and their desire for strategic autonomy.*

- **Key trading partner** - France has emerged as a key trading partner of India with annual trade of $12.42 billion in 2021-22.
- France is the 11th largest foreign investor in India with 1.7% of the total foreign direct investment inflows into India.
- **Key defence partner** - France has become the second largest defence supplier in 2017- 2021.
- The crucial defence deals include the inducting of the French Scorpene submarines, being built in India under technology transfer agreement of 2005 and receiving of 36 Rafale fighter jets.
- The relations is further strengthened with the robust network of military dialogues and regularly held joint exercises
    - **Varuna** (navy)
    - **Garuda** (air force)
    - **Shakti** (army)
- **Nuclear deal and tests** - France was among the first countries with which India signed a civil nuclear deal.
- France also played a critical role in limiting India's isolation in the non-proliferation order after the 1998 nuclear tests.
- **Multilateral groupings -** France supports India's bid for permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council as well as its entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group.
- **Maritime security** – India and France are resident powers of the Indian Ocean and in the Indo-Pacific.
- The two countries launched "Joint Strategic Vision of India-France Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region".
- India and France in 2022 agreed to set up an Indo-Pacific Trilateral Development Cooperation Fund that will support sustainable innovative solutions for countries in the region.

- The two partners have formed a trilateral grouping with the United Arab Emirates to ensure maritime domain awareness and security from the east coast of Africa to the far Pacific.
- **Digital technology** – India is an important hub for French companies for day-to-day activities as well as R&D and innovation.
- The French tech services provides India with supercomputing hardware and quantum computing simulation software.
- **Environment** - India has supported France in the Paris Agreement expressing its strong commitment towards mitigating climate change impact.
- New Delhi and Paris, as part of their joint efforts on climate change, launched the International Solar Alliance in 2015.

The Paris Agreement

- It is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. It was adopted by 196 Parties at COP
- Its goal is to limit global warming to well below 2, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.
- India has committed to reduce the "emissions intensity" of its gross domestic product (GDP) to 45% below 2005 levels by 2030.

What lies ahead?

- **Advanced technologies** - Enhancing bilateral cooperation in nuclear cooperation and enhancing space is of significance now.
- **Defence** – Next is the new commitment to go beyond the buyer-seller relationship in the field of weapons procurement.
- India comes up with clear policies for making arms in India.
- With this, the synergies between India's large defence market and the French strengths in armament production can offer much.
- **Political cooperation** - Political cooperation between India and France is relatively new.
- Today, France has emerged as India's most reliable partner on issues relating to terrorism and Kashmir.
- **Regional cooperation** - The relationship between India and France has gone beyond the bilateral to focus on the regional.
- **Global agenda-setting** - Besides the Solar Alliance, India and France have to turn to more ambitious ideas.

References

1. The Hindu | Exploring the blue in the India-France partnership
2. The Indian Express | Bright prospects for India-France ties



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