India-France Ties

Why in news?

The French President was the chief guest at India's Republic Day 2024, making it his third visit to India, after his 2018 state visit and G-20 2023 summit hosted by India.

What is the history of India France bilateral relations?

- **Diplomatic relation**- In 1947 both countries established diplomatic relation which upgraded to strategic partnership in 1998.
- **Strategic partnership, 1988**- Defence & security, civil nuclear matters and space constitute the principal pillars of this strategic cooperation and now includes a strong Indo-Pacific component.

France is the first western country with which India signed a strategic partnership agreement

- **Horizon 2047: Charting the future of India-France Strategic Partnership**- It was signed in 2023 to mark the 25th anniversary of the Indo-French partnership, both countries agree to adopt a roadmap to set the course for the bilateral relationship up to 2047.
- **Three pillars**- The roadmap for bilateral relations has three pillars focusing on 'security, planet and people' guiding the bilateral ties for the next 25 years.
- **International support**- It was the ***first P-5 country*** to support India's claim for a permanent seat in an expanded and reformed UN Security Council. Both have resolved to work together for adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) in the UN.
- 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).

- **Economic relation**- Bilateral trade reaching an impressive 13.4 billion dollars in 2022-23, marking a significant 7.72% increase from the previous year.

France has emerged as the 11th largest investor in India

Main imports from France	Main exports to France

Aviation products, machine equipment, electrical equipment and chemical products.	Engineering goods including electrical machinery and boilers, petroleum products, pharmaceutical products, electronic equipment and ready made garment

- **Defence cooperation**- Major ongoing defence-related projects include the purchase of Rafale aircrafts and the P-75 Scorpene Project..
    - Annual Defence Dialogue (Defence Minister level) and
    - High Committee on Defence Cooperation (Secretary level).

Defence ties	Exercise name
Joint defence exercise	VARUNA
Joint military exercise	FRINJEX-23
Multilateral exercise	La Perouse- It was attended by the navies of India, Australia, Japan etc.,
	ORION- The Indian Air Force participated for the first time.

- **India France Defence Industrial Roadmap**- It supports India's goal of self-reliance in the defence sector and it's a part of broader strategic partnership between two countries.
- **Trilateral cooperation**- India-France-UAE Trilateral Focal Points meeting was held and the first track 1.5 dialogue comprising parliamentarians, officials, former diplomats and think-tanks was also held.
- **Space cooperation**- Cooperation in the space domain began in the 1960s with French assistance to set up the Indian launch facility at Sriharikota.
- The first India-France Strategic Space Dialogue was held and both concluded a joint declaration for cooperation in future launch vehicle technologies.
- **Smart cities collaboration**- France collaborated with India's Smart City projects by leveraging its expertise in urban planning and architecture with examples of Chandigarh, Puducherry and Nagpur.
- **Blue Economy -** A roadmap on Blue Economy and Ocean Governance was adopted by France and India in 2022.
- **Green hydrogen** - Indo-French roadmap for decarbonised hydrogen was adopted in 2022.
- **Renewable energy**- As part of their joint efforts on climate change, India and France launched ***'International Solar Alliance'*** in 2015.
- **Cyber cooperation**- India and France have Cyber Dialogue mechanism to discuss cyber cooperation and related matters.
- **Cooperation on counter terrorism**- India and France have robust cooperation on topics related to countering terrorism in all its forms and manifestation, including under the UN forums.
- **Digital cooperation**- France have developed 14 puters for India to date including the fastest supercomputer Param Siddhi at 4.6 petaflops per second.
- **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)**- It was launched from the Eiffel Tower, offering secure and convenient transactions for Indian visitors and NRIs.
- **Civil Nuclear Cooperation**- The cooperation on Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project and exploration of Small Modular Reactors and Advanced Modular Reactors signifies a

shared vision for sustainable and efficient nuclear energy solutions.

- Education- An ***Agreement on mutual recognition of degrees*** was signed in 2018 to facilitate pursuit of higher education by Indian students in France and French students in India and increase their employability.
- **Indo French Campus for Health**- It was also launched in 2022 to offer double degrees from Indian French Institutes.
- ***Migration Mobility Partnership Agreement*** was operationalized and ***APS-VIE Scheme*** (it allows Indian students to stay in France up to 2 yrs. after finishing Masters to look for jobs) was renewed, in 2022.
- **Cultural relation**- Namaste France 2023 was organised in Paris with the support of Ministry of Culture, to celebrate 25 years of strategic partnership.
- **Tourism**- Rajasthan continues to lead among all Indian destinations for French tourists. Foreign tourist arrivals into Rajasthan are growing at a double digit since 2016.
- **People to people relation-** The mainland France has an estimated 1,19,000 Indian community (including NRIs) largely originating from erstwhile French colonies of Puducherry, Karaikal, Yanam, Mahe and Chandernagore and the States of Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Punjab.
- ***India France Consular Dialogue*** was held and regular cooperation is undertaken between the two countries.

What lies ahead?

- India and France have been 'Strategic Partners' since 1998, when they signed a joint declaration to enhance their bilateral ties in various fields, such as nuclear, space, and counter-terrorism.
- Since then, they have consistently supported each other on various international issues, such as UN reforms, climate change, and Indo-Pacific.
- The India-France 'Strategic Partnership' reflects the maturity and resilience of the two countries, which have nurtured their ties over the last quarter century, and have adapted to the changing global and regional scenarios.
- The partnership is now moving from government domains to commercial and civil spaces, and is expected to grow further in the future

References

1. The Hindu- India France strategic partnership
2. Indian Express- The bright arc of India France ties

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