India’s New Push for Stronger Ties with Europe

Why in news?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron held extensive discussions on a range of bilateral and pressing global issues.

What bilateral issues have been discussed in the meeting?

- Mr. Modi arrived France on the final leg of his three-nation European tour and held one-on-one and delegation-level talks with Mr. Macron.
- Bilateral trade- India and France enjoy a robust economic partnership with a bilateral trade of $7.86 billion (2020-21) and cumulative Foreign Direct Investment of $9.83 billion since April 2000.
- **Strategic partnership**- The two leaders discussed ways to work together in making the India-France Strategic Partnership.
- **Food security**-They also talked about food security issues and the FARM initiative, in which India will play a key role.
- **People- people linkages**- India and France are fully committed to pursuing the implementation of the *Partnership Agreement on Migration and Mobility* to increase the mobility of students, graduates, professionals and skilled workers.
- **Sustainable Development**- India and France expressed satisfaction at the adoption of the bilateral roadmap on Blue Economy and Ocean Governance and committed to accelerating its implementation.
- Both sides are eager to foster cooperation on decarbonized hydrogen in order to build robust industrial partnerships and agreed to finalise a roadmap to take forward this cooperation.

India-France Joint exercises include Shakti, Varuna, Pegase, Desert Knight and Garuda.

What is the position of the two countries regarding the global issues?

- Both the leaders discussed regional and global issues including developments in Europe and in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Ukraine crisis**- The two leaders also expressed serious concern at the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and called for an immediate cessation of hostilities to find an immediate end to the suffering of the people.
- They underlined the need to respect the UN Charter, international law and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states.
- The two leaders spoke exchanged views on the cascading effect of the Ukraine crisis, in terms of shortages of food and commodities and how the two countries can partner together to address these challenges.
- **Taliban issue**- On Afghanistan, India and France expressed serious concern on the

humanitarian situation and violation of human rights.
- They called for an inclusive and representative government, and respect for the rights of women, children and minorities.
- They also reaffirmed the UNSC Resolution 2593 (2021) and emphasized on zero tolerance for the use of Afghan territory for spreading terrorism in other parts of the world.

What new domains were to be strengthened in the future?

- The current global geopolitical challenges has made the two nations to prepare for the future together by further deepening their cooperation and expanding it in new domains.
- India and France will continue to develop new partnerships in various formats with like-minded countries in the region and within regional organisations.
- The two countries share a vision of a free, open and rules-based **Indo-Pacific region**, based on commitment to international law, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, freedom of navigation and a region free from coercion, tensions and conflicts.

The first Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum was held in Paris in 2022 during the French presidency of the Council of the EU.

References

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Quick facts

The Food and Agriculture Resilience Mission (FARM) Initiative

- President Macron announced the launch of the FARM initiative in 2022 in conjunction with European Union, G7 and African Union partners.
- FARM's objective is to prevent the catastrophic effects for global food security, of the war Russia is waging in Ukraine.
- Under no circumstances must agricultural products become a weapon of war used for geopolitical purposes.
- The initiative is based on three pillars
    - **Trade pillar**- to ease tensions on the agricultural markets, guarantee full transparency on flows and stocks and combat unjustified trade barriers
    - **Solidarity pillar**- to support Ukraine's agricultural capabilities, ensure access to agricultural commodities at reasonable prices, alleviate the war's effects on the level of agricultural production

- **Production pillar**- to strengthen agricultural capabilities sustainably in the countries most affected

