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India–France Exchange 21 Agreements in Defence, Energy & Critical Minerals

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Narendra Modi and Emmanuel Macron agreed to elevate India–France bilateral ties to a “Special Global Strategic Partnership” and exchanged 21 agreements and documents covering defence, energy, critical minerals, technology, innovation, and other key sectors during Macron’s state visit to India.

Key Agreements and Outcomes

Defence & Security Cooperation

Both countries renewed the Defence Cooperation Agreement and agreed on reciprocal deployment of officers between the Indian Army and French Land Forces to strengthen interoperability and military linkages.

A joint venture between BEL and Safran to produce HAMMER missiles in India was announced, enhancing defence manufacturing capabilities.

The H125 helicopter final assembly line in Karnataka was virtually inaugurated, strengthening India’s aerospace industrial base under joint collaboration.

Energy & Critical Minerals Cooperation

India and France signed a Joint Declaration of Intent on cooperation in critical minerals, aiming to collaborate on exploration, extraction, processing, and recycling of rare earths and essential minerals crucial for defence, green economy, and tech sectors.

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A Letter of Intent to establish a Centre on Advanced Materials between India's Department of Science and Technology and CNRS was agreed to bolster research.

Technology, Innovation & Startups

The India–France Year of Innovation 2026 and India–France Innovation Network were launched to deepen cooperation in science, startups, research, digital sciences, and AI in health.

Agreements were signed to set up Indo-French Centres for digital technology and AI in healthcare, promoting joint R&D and innovation ecosystems.

Other Strategic Cooperation

An annual Foreign Ministers Dialogue was established to regularly review the implementation of the newly elevated partnership and guide strategic coordination.

The Protocol on the Double Tax Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) will be amended to boost bilateral investment and economic cooperation.

MoUs were signed for start-up ecosystem cooperation, skilling in aeronautics, health research centres, and advanced materials technology.

Significance for India's Strategic Goals

Strengthening Defence & Strategic Autonomy

The enhanced defence ties with France — a key European partner — support India's military modernization and Make in India initiatives, contributing to strategic autonomy and defence industrial base strengthening.

Collaborations like the BEL–Safran joint venture and helicopter manufacturing in India help reduce foreign dependency and foster indigenous capabilities.

Critical Minerals & Energy Security

With global supply chains for critical minerals like lithium, cobalt, nickel, and rare earths under pressure due to geopolitical risks, international cooperation with France supports diversified, resilient supply chains and technology sharing.

Critical minerals are fundamental for renewable energy, electric mobility, emerging technologies, and defence manufacturing — making such collaborations central to India's future energy and industrial strategies.

Global Tech & Innovation Leadership

Initiatives such as Indo-French AI and digital science centres align with India's ambitions under Digital India, AI integration in public services, and global tech diplomacy. The partnership enhances knowledge exchange, research, and high-skill job creation.

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