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India – France Relations

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What's in News?

French Foreign Minister is on a visit to India

News Highlights:

India and France have decided to hold **separate trilateral ministerial meetings with Australia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)** in New York on the sidelines of the UNGA session as part of their cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

France has already offered joint development and manufacture of Safran aircraft engines, AIP submarines and is also willing to help India with the construction of nuclear powered conventionally armed submarines.

The Safran Group will set up their **largest and first aircraft engine MRO** (maintenance, repair, and overhaul) facility in Hyderabad.

The facility will be set up with an investment of Rs 1200 crore (USD 150 million) and is expected to create about 1,000 high-skilled jobs in Telangana.

At the United Nations Security Council, France reiterated that will continue to continue to push for a permanent seat for India

As part of their cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, India and France agreed to work towards the establishment of an **Indo-Pacific Trilateral Development Cooperation Fund** to support India-based innovators and start-ups in taking their innovations to third countries, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.

The other two initiatives are: **partnership for the planet and sustainable development, and cultural and people-to-people ties.**

India will be the first "country of honour" at the Sea Tech Week in Brest, France, a major international event bringing together blue economy stakeholders.

France plans to invite 20,000 Indian students in the country by the year 2025

India – France Relations:

India entered Strategic partnership with Russia in 1998.

Economic Cooperation:

France has emerged as a major source of FDI for India with more than 1,000 French establishments already present in India.

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France is the 11th largest foreign investor in India with a cumulative FDI stock of USD 9.83 billion from April 2000 to March 2021, which represents **2 % of the total FDI inflows into India**.

France's GDP is almost similar to that of India's, but our bilateral trade remains far below potential, Trade with France constitutes only 1.41% of India's total international trade

Development Cooperation:

AFD, the French Agency for Development has, since 2008, committed close to 2 billion Euros in the form of loans to the State and State-owned companies, as well as technical assistance programs.

It has extended a loan of Euro 100 million to the Government of India for its Smart Cities Mission

In May 2020, the advisory board of the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) announced that it has allocated 200 million Euros and will sign an agreement with India's Finance Ministry to support welfare measures and the most vulnerable sections of society.

Defence Cooperation:

The two countries have a Ministerial level Defence dialogue, which has been held annually since 2018.

The three services also have regular defence exercises; viz. **Exercise Shakti (Army), Exercise Varuna (Navy), Exercise Garuda (Air Force)**.

The Indian Navy also participated in the French led **La Pérouse exercise**, along with other Quad members in 2021

Cooperation also extends to the purchase of Rafale aircrafts and Scorpene submarines under P-75 Scorpene Project

Space Cooperation:

India and France have a rich history of cooperation in the field of space, since the 1960s with the construction of Sriharikota launch-pad with French technical assistance.

India and France issued a **“Joint Vision for Space Cooperation”** in March 2018.

The French Space Agency, CNES is **supporting Indian human space flight programme – Gaganyaan**, in the field of space medicine and supply of crew support elements.

Civil Nuclear Cooperation:

An agreement on civil nuclear cooperation was signed between India and France in 2008

India is a member of **ITER(International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor)**, a multi-national consortium formed to construct a experimental fusion reactor, located in Cadarache, France.

ITER is an international nuclear fusion research and engineering megaproject aimed at creating energy by replicating, on Earth, the fusion processes of the Sun.

India's role in ITER project is managed by Department of Atomic Energy

Environment and Renewable Energy Cooperation:

France is a founding member of the International Solar Alliance (ISA), announced by Prime Minister of India in 2015 at UN Climate Change CoP21.

The countries signed an MoU on renewable energy in January 2021.

The objective of the MoU is to promote bilateral cooperation in the field of new and renewable energy on the basis of mutual benefit, equality and reciprocity.

It covers technologies relating to solar, wind, hydrogen and biomass energy

India joined the French-led initiative called the **High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People**, in 2021.

The HAC has an objective of protecting at least 30% of the world's lands and oceans by 2030.

At the One Ocean Summit in February 2022, Prime Minister announced India's support to the French initiative of the **High Ambition Coalition on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)** that calls for a legally binding BBNJ Treaty by the end of 2022

Cooperation in the fields of S&T and Education:

In the field of S&T, the **Indo-French Centre for the Promotion of Advance Research (CEFIPRA)** based in New Delhi, established in 1987, plays a major role by identifying and funding joint proposals for research projects

During EAM's visit to France in February 2022, the two sides adopted the IndiaFrance Roadmap on Blue Economy and Ocean Governance.

The roadmap rests on four pillars:

i**Institutional Pillar:** annual bilateral dialogue between Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister and the French Ambassador for Maritime Affairs in MoFA to share best practices and support ongoing and future cooperation.

ii**Economic Pillar:** facilitating contact between economic players, business heads of organisations, technopoles and maritime clusters of India and France.

iii**Infrastructure Pillar:** cooperating on sustainable and resilient coastal and waterways infrastructure.

iv**Scientific and Academic Pillar:** enhancing scientific cooperation and exchanges between student and researchers.

In the field of exascale computing, Atos (French multinational information technology service) in collaboration with CDAC has developed **"PARAM-Siddhi- AI", India's fastest supercomputer**

Indian community in France:

The Indian diaspora in France is estimated to be around 5,00,000, majority being French citizens based in the French overseas territories.

Around 109,000 Indian citizens reside in mainland France, with a majority originating from former French colonies of Puducherry, Karaikal, Yanam, Mahe and Chandernagore.