



## 4th India-France Annual Defense Dialogue

**For Prelims:** 4<sup>th</sup> India-France Annual Defense Dialogue, India-France Military Exercises, International Solar Alliance.

**For Mains:** Effect of Policies & Politics of Countries on India's Interests, India-France Relations

Why in News?

Recently, **the 4<sup>th</sup> India-France Defense Dialogue** was held in India.



### What are the Key Highlights?

- **Defence Industrial Cooperation:**
  - Both countries discussed Defence Industrial Cooperation with a focus on **'Make in India'**.
  - A wide range of bilateral, regional and defence industrial cooperation issues were discussed during the dialogue.
- **Military-to-Military Cooperation:**
  - Both sides reviewed the **ongoing military-to-military cooperation**, which has increased substantially in recent years.
  - They recognised their convergences **on a number of "strategic and defence issues"** and shared the commitment to work together on enhancing cooperation in bilateral, regional and multilateral fora, with a focus on the **Indo-Pacific region**.
- **Indian Ocean Region:**
  - The discussions ranged from enhancing cooperation in areas of mutual interest to the **maritime challenges in the IOR (Indian Ocean Region)**.

- France reaffirmed its engagement in the **Indo-Pacific and India's centrality in the French strategy for the region.**
  - France is the current chair of [Indian Ocean Commission \(IOC\)](#) and [Indian Ocean Naval Symposium \(IONS\)](#) and both countries cooperate closely in these fora.

## How has been the India-France Strategic Relations?

### ▪ Background:

- France was one of the **first countries with which India signed a “strategic partnership”** after the end of the Cold War, in January 1998.
- France was one of the very **few countries to support India's decision to test nuclear weapons in 1998.**

### ▪ Defence Cooperation:

- The three services have regular defence exercises; viz.
  - [Exercise Shakti \(Army\)](#)
  - [Exercise Varuna \(Navy\)](#)
  - [Exercise Garuda \(Air Force\)](#)
    - **Garuda VII** was recently held in Jodhpur, Rajasthan.
- India and France had signed a Euro 7.87 billion inter-governmental agreement (IGA) in 2016 for 36 Rafale multi-role fighter jets in fly-away condition,
  - France has delivered 35 [Rafale jets](#) to India till July 2022.
- India entered into a **contract with a French firm to build six Scorpene submarines in India's Malegaon dockyards** through a technology-transfer arrangement in 2005.
- The two countries also signed the Agreement regarding the Provision of Reciprocal Logistics Support.
  - This agreement will help to facilitate the replenishment of fuel, rations, spares, and berthing and maintenance for the other nations' warships, military aircraft and troops during routine port calls, as well as during **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR).**

### ▪ Indian Ocean, the Common Shared Interest:

- France needs to protect its colonial territorial possessions like reunion island and Indian ocean being the zone of influence for India.
- In 2020, France became the 23rd member of the [Indian Ocean Rim Association \(IORA\)](#).
  - It is the first time that a country whose mainland is not on the Indian Ocean has been brought into the fold of the IORA.

### ▪ Counter Terrorism:

- France backed the India's proposal for a global conference on terrorism. Both the countries also support organising a new “No Money for Terror” - an International Conference on Fighting Terrorist Financing.

### ▪ France Backing India:

- France also continues to **steadfastly back India on Kashmir** while its relations with Pakistan have plummeted in the recent past and China has become an object of suspicion.

### ▪ Bilateral trade and Economic relations:

- The **India-France Administrative Economic and Trade Committee (AETC)** provides an appropriate framework to assess and find ways to further promote bilateral trade and investment as well as to speed up the resolution of market access issues to the benefit of economic operators
- France is the **11<sup>th</sup> largest foreign investor in India with a cumulative investment of USD 10.31 billion** from April 2000 to June 2022 which represents 1.70% of the total FDI inflows into India according to statistics provided by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**.
- Aeronautics account for 50% of France's total exports to India. French imports from India have also increased by **39% year-on-year (7% compared to 2019)**.

### ▪ Global agendas:

- Climate change, biodiversity, renewable energy, terrorism, cybersecurity and digital technology, etc:
- There have been joint efforts to limit climate change and develop the [International Solar Alliance](#).
- Both countries have agreed on a road map on cybersecurity and digital technology.

▪ **Space:**

- France has agreed **to be part of India's Venus mission**, scheduled for 2025.
- ISRO's Venus instrument, **VIRAL (Venus Infrared Atmospheric Gases Linker)** has been co-developed by Russian and French agencies.

## Way Forward

- France, **which has valued independent foreign policy**, are natural partners in building the new coalitions for an uncertain era.
- France opens the pathway for deeper engagement with Europe on global issues, especially after uncertainty in the **region due to BREXIT**.
- **The new partnerships with France, Germany and other like-minded countries like Japan would hopefully turn out to be far more consequential for India's** influence on the global stage.

[Source: TH](#)

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