



India-France Strategic Dialogue

For Prelims: [Indo-Pacific Region](#), **Major Exercises**, [India France Relations](#).

For Mains: India France Relations, Major Areas of Cooperation between India and France,

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, during the **India-France Strategic Dialogue**, the French President praised India's peace efforts in a meeting with [National Security Advisor \(NSA\)](#) Ajit Doval and highlighted India's role in global diplomacy.

- Discussions also centered on a significant cost reduction for Rafale-M fighter jets and the enhancement of military capabilities.

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What are the Key Highlights of the Visit?

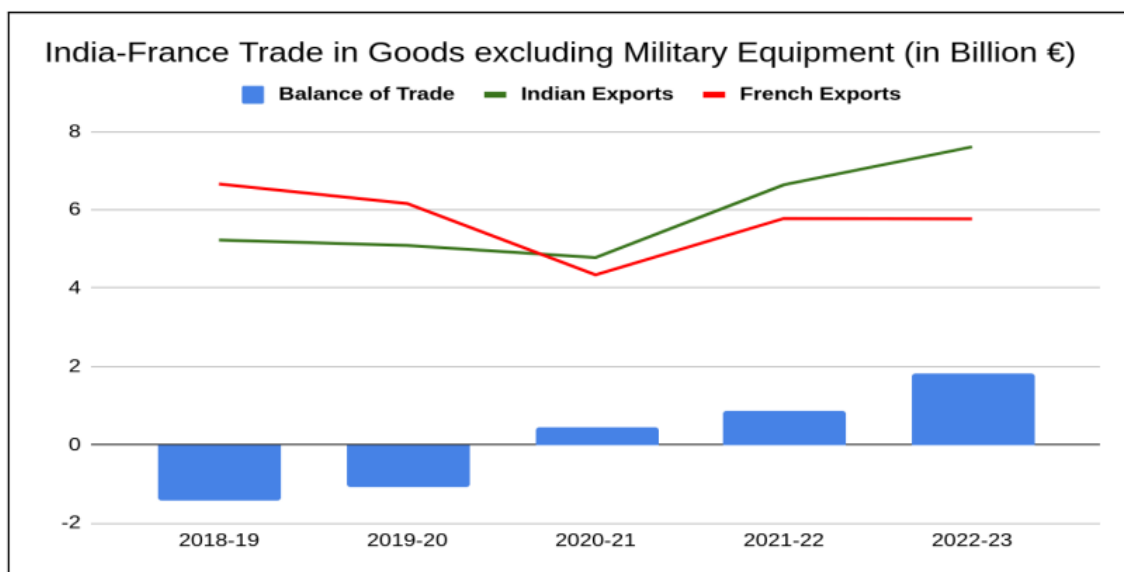
- **Commitment to Horizon 2047:**
 - The NSA reiterated India's commitment to the **Horizon 2047 initiative**, which aims to strengthen India-France relations.
- **Peace Initiatives:**
 - French president acknowledged the importance of India and France's efforts in advancing peace, particularly regarding the [Russia-Ukraine Conflict](#) and New Delhi's mediation role.
- **Bilateral Defence and Space Cooperation:**
 - Talks with the French armed forces minister focused on strengthening bilateral defence ties and expanding space collaboration.
 - Key discussions covered Rafale Marine jets, Scorpene submarines, and the integration of indigenous weapons on the Rafale jet.

Note:

- **Horizon 2047:** It outlines the roadmap for **France-India relations** across all sectors until 2047, the year that will commemorate 100 years of India's Independence, a century of diplomatic ties, and **50 years of the Indo-French strategic partnership**.
 - This vision document aims to enhance collaboration in defense, space, civil nuclear energy, renewable resources, cyberspace, digital technology, counter-terrorism, maritime security, joint defense exercises, and the blue economy.

What are the Major Areas of Cooperation between India and France?

- **Strategic Partnership:**
 - [India and France](#) have deep-rooted cultural, trade, and economic ties.
 - The strategic partnership established in **1998** has gained momentum, evolving into a closer, multifaceted relationship encompassing various areas of cooperation.
- **Defence Partnerships:**
 - Beginning with the [Rafale deal](#) and extending to the acquisition of 26 Marine aircraft, France has offered India some of its top defense systems.
 - The **technology transfers** by France have already helped India construct six **Scorpene-class submarines** with another three now being procured to boost the navy's falling numbers.
 - **Joint Exercises:** [Exercise Shakti \(Army\)](#), [Exercise Varuna \(Navy\)](#), [Exercise Garuda \(Air Force\)](#).
- **Civil Nuclear Cooperation:** India and France signed a civil nuclear cooperation agreement in 2008. France is involved in the development of the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project, although progress has been slow since the initial agreement.
 - Additionally, both nations have agreed to partner on Small Modular Reactors (SMR) and Advanced Modular Reactors (AMR).
- **Marine and Maritime Cooperation:** Indo-French maritime collaboration is guided by the India-France Roadmap on Blue Economy and Ocean Governance, which was adopted in 2022.
- **Economic Cooperation:**
 - France has become a key source of [FDI \(Foreign Direct Investment\)](#) for India, with over 1,000 French companies operating in the country.
 - It ranks as the **11th largest foreign investor**, contributing USD 10.84 billion (1.63% of total FDI) from April 2000 to December 2023, according to DPIIT data.



Source: Ministry of Commerce & Industry (Data rounded off to nearest billion €)

What are the Challenges in India-France Relations?

- **FTA Stagnation:**
 - The absence of an [FTA \(Free Trade Agreement\)](#) between France and India hinders the maximisation of their trade potential.
- **Differing Defense and Security Priorities:**
 - Despite a strong defense partnership, differing priorities can impact cooperation. India's regional focus and non-aligned stance sometimes conflict with France's global interests. For, e.g. differing stance on Russia- Ukraine conflict.
- **Intellectual Property Rights Concerns:**
 - France has expressed concerns over India's insufficient intellectual property protection,

which affects French businesses and hinders a favourable environment for bilateral trade.

▪ **Human Trafficking Concerns:**

- Cases like the Nicaragua flight human trafficking incident highlight the need for stronger cooperation in tackling transnational crimes and ensuring individual safety.

▪ **Visa Barriers:**

- Correspondents in India voiced their concerns through a letter of protest, noting that they have been facing tighter visa restrictions in recent years which is resulting in challenges for reporting and coverage.

▪ **Barriers to Indian Products in France:**

- India has faced difficulties exporting to France due to Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, which can discourage Indian products from entering the French market.

Way Forward

- India and France can collaborate to shape the international order and counterbalance dependencies. The **Indo-Pacific framework** has bolstered their relations, with France having key interests in **Indian Ocean stability** due to its territories and bases.
- France already plays a critical role in India's ambitious plans to expand domestic weapon production with **increased private and foreign investment**. Discussions should cover new collaboration areas such as **connectivity, climate change, cybersecurity, and science and technology**.

Drishti Mains Question

Q. Discuss the evolving strategic partnership between India and France, focusing on defense cooperation, and the Indo-Pacific framework. Highlight the key challenges and opportunities in strengthening bilateral ties, especially in the context of global diplomacy and regional stability. (250 words)

UPSC Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. Consider the following statements: (2016)

1. The International Solar Alliance was launched at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2015.
2. The Alliance includes all the member countries of the United Nations.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (a)