

1. India-France Relations- International Relation

The French President arrived on a three-day official visit to India to participate in the AI Impact Summit

I. Recent Major Outcomes of India-France Engagement

Elevation to "Special Global Strategic Partnership"

PM Narendra Modi announced the upgradation of the bilateral framework to a Special Global Strategic Partnership, signalling deeper political trust and global coordination. The elevation reflects convergence on -

1. Strategic autonomy
2. Multipolar world order
3. Indo-Pacific stability
4. Technology sovereignty

It indicates a shift from transactional cooperation to long-term geopolitical alignment.

Renewal of Defence Cooperation Agreement (10 Years)

Renewed during the 6th India-France Annual Defence Dialogue (Ministerial-level mechanism).

Ensures continuity in

1. Defence industrial collaboration
2. Joint exercises
3. Intelligence and maritime coordination

Signals France's position as a long-term defence partner distinct from alliance-based suppliers.

Annual Foreign Ministers' Dialogue

Institutionalises political review of

1. Special Global Strategic Partnership implementation
2. Horizon 2047 Roadmap milestones

Enhances diplomatic coordination on

1. Indo-Pacific
2. Global governance reforms
3. UNSC reform
4. Ukraine conflict and Middle East issues

India-France Year of Innovation & Innovation Network

Focus areas

1. AI, quantum technologies
2. Clean energy
3. Space tech
4. Defence tech
5. Deep tech startups

Encourages academia-industry collaboration. Promotes co-development instead of simple technology imports.

H125 Helicopter Final Assembly Line (FAL), Vemagal (Karnataka)

First Airbus Helicopters final assembly line in India. Supports Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Enables

1. Indigenous assembly
2. Skill development
3. Export potential

BEL-Safran Joint Venture (HAMMER Missile Production)

1. Production of Highly Agile Modular Munition Extended Range (HAMMER) precision-guided munitions in India.

2. Enhances local defence manufacturing ecosystem.
3. Reduces import dependency.
4. Creates supply chain integration with Indian MSMEs.

Increased Indigenous Content in Rafale

India requested up to 50% indigenous content in future Rafale procurements. Expansion of Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facility in India. Strategic importance –

1. Lifecycle cost reduction
2. Operational readiness
3. Technology absorption

Reciprocal Deployment of Army Officers

Officers stationed in each other's military establishments. Enhances doctrinal understanding. Improves interoperability in Indo-Pacific and UN peacekeeping contexts.

II. Evolution of India–France Strategic Partnership

Launch – 26 January 1998

India's first-ever Strategic Partnership. Established soon after Pokhran-II nuclear tests, when France did not impose harsh sanctions. Signified France's recognition of India as a major power.

Core Vision

1. Enhance strategic autonomy of both nations.
2. Promote multipolarity in global order.
3. Deepen cooperation beyond alliance politics.

Key Strategic Pillars

1. Defence & Security

1. High Committee on Defence Cooperation (Secretary-level)
2. Annual Defence Dialogue (Minister-level)
3. Expanding defence industrial cooperation

2. Civil Nuclear Cooperation

1. 2008 Civil Nuclear Agreement.
2. Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project (EPR reactors).

3. Space Collaboration

1. Over 60 years of cooperation between ISRO and CNES.
2. Satellite launch collaboration via Arianespace.

III. Defence Cooperation – The Backbone

Rafale Fighter Aircraft – 36 Rafales procured from Dassault Aviation. Enhances –

1. Air superiority
2. Nuclear triad capability
3. Maritime strike capability

Rafale-M for Indian Navy – 26 Rafale-M jets for INS Vikrant. Ensures carrier-based operational capability.

Scorpene Submarines (Project P-75)

1. Built in collaboration with Naval Group.
2. 6 submarines constructed at Mazagon Dock.
3. Latest addition – INS Vaghsheer.
4. Boosts underwater deterrence.

Engine Co-development (IMRH Programme)

HAL–Safran collaboration. Indigenous helicopter engine development. Future potential – 110 kN class jet engines for AMCA programme.

Joint Military Exercises

1. Shakti (Army)
2. Varuna (Navy)
3. FRINJEX (Air Force)

4. Strengthens interoperability and maritime domain awareness.

IV. Economic & Trade Cooperation

Trade Profile

Bilateral trade – USD 15.11 billion (2023–24).

France is India's 5th largest trading partner within the EU. Trade has more than doubled in a decade.

Key Sectors

1. Aerospace
2. Renewable energy
3. Urban infrastructure
4. Luxury goods
5. Defence manufacturing

UPI Enablement in France

1. India's digital payment ecosystem operational in France.
2. Promotes fintech diplomacy.
3. Enhances tourism and diaspora convenience.

V. Space Cooperation

Collaboration spanning six decades.

Joint Mission – TRISHNA (climate monitoring satellite).

France supplies –

1. Critical components
2. Launch services
3. Ground station support

Strategic dimension –

1. Maritime surveillance
2. Climate monitoring
3. Space situational awareness

VI. Energy Cooperation

International Solar Alliance (2015)

1. Co-founded by India and France.
2. Promotes solar energy in tropical countries.
3. Symbol of climate diplomacy leadership.

Nuclear Energy Cooperation

Special Task Force on nuclear energy (2025 meeting). Focus on –

1. SMRs (Small Modular Reactors)
2. AMRs (Advanced Modular Reactors)

Addresses energy transition goals.

VII. Community & Cultural Links

1. Around 1.19 lakh Indian-origin community in France.
2. Strong educational and research partnerships.
3. Cultural exchanges deepen people-to-people ties.

VIII. Areas of Concern

Trade Underperformance – Below potential compared to India–Germany or India–Netherlands trade.

Technology Transfer Limits – Sensitive technologies not fully transferred. Need for deeper industrial sovereignty.

Nuclear Liability Law – Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act (2010) deters French firms. Supplier liability clause remains contentious.

Geopolitical Differences – France–China economic ties. Divergence in Middle East approach.

IX. Future Outlook – Horizon 2047 Roadmap

Long-Term Vision – Marks 25th anniversary milestone. Structured roadmap till 2047.

Defence

1. Co-development of next-gen fighter engines.
2. Export of jointly developed systems.
3. Make in India for global markets.

Indo-Pacific

1. Joint naval patrols.
2. Maritime domain awareness cooperation.
3. Logistics support agreements.

Space & Emerging Technologies

1. AI-driven surveillance systems.
2. Space security collaboration.
3. Climate-tech innovation.

X. Strategic Significance for India

1. Diversifies defence suppliers beyond Russia and the US.
2. Strengthens India's Indo-Pacific posture.
3. Enhances technological sovereignty.
4. Supports multipolar global order.
5. Reinforces India's case for UNSC reform (France supports India's permanent membership).

Conclusion

India–France defence and strategic cooperation has evolved from a conventional bilateral relationship into a multi-domain, high-technology, Indo-Pacific-oriented partnership. Under the Horizon 2047 vision, the relationship is transitioning from – Buyer–seller model to Co-development and co-production model. The trajectory indicates deeper industrial integration, stronger geopolitical convergence, and expansion into advanced strategic domains – positioning the partnership as one of India's most reliable and future-oriented global engagements.

Source – <https://epaper.thehindu.com/ccidist->

[ws/th/th_international/issues/171636/OPS/G9KFIKAL2.1+G5FFJQER8.1.html](https://th/th_international/issues/171636/OPS/G9KFIKAL2.1+G5FFJQER8.1.html)