



AIR Discussions (April 2nd Week)

AIR SPOTLIGHT: INDIA- FRANCE STRENGTHENING TIES

CONTEXT: French Foreign Affairs Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian was on a trip to India.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE VISIT:

- India and France explored ways to **strengthen cooperation in the Indo-Pacific**, including under a **trilateral mechanism with Australia** to address emerging challenges in the maritime and space domains.
- French side also decided to be **part of India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)**.
 - IPOI was proposed by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the East Asia Summit in November 2019.
 - Increasing trade connectivity, maritime transport and maritime security are among the seven key pillars of the initiative.
 - Other five are maritime ecology, maritime resources, capacity building and resource sharing, disaster risk reduction and management, science, technology and academic cooperation.
- The two sides also recognised the importance of **fast tracking the discussions on an India-EU trade and investment agreement**.
- French aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle will take part in India-France Varuna naval exercise.
- India for the first time joined France-initiated La Pérouse exercises.
- In the context of the changes in a Covid-impacted world, both countries recognised the **immense opportunities for greater collaboration in diverse sectors such as trade and investments, defence and security, health, education, research and innovation, energy and climate change**.

BACKGROUND:

- India and France have traditionally close and friendly relations.
- France is the **first country with which India initiated a Strategic Dialogue after 1998 nuclear tests when France refused to impose bilateral sanctions and displayed a far greater understanding of India's security compulsions compared to other countries**.
- The areas of Defence & Security cooperation, Space cooperation and Civil nuclear cooperation constitute the principal pillars of India's Strategic Partnership with France.
- India and France are increasingly engaged in new areas of cooperation like security in the Indian Ocean region, climate change including the International Solar Alliance, and sustainable growth and development among others.
- Defence cooperation with France began in the 1950s when India acquired the Ouragan aircraft and continued with the Mystères, Jaguar (Anglo-French), Mirage 2000.
- Both countries started joint **naval exercises 'Varuna' in 1983**.
- It was the **first P-5 country to support India's claim for a permanent seat in an expanded and reformed UN Security Council**.



- France supports India's membership of Multilateral Export Control regimes- NSG and MTCR. Its support was vital in India's admission to MTCR in 2016.
- **High level Exchanges:** India and France have had regular exchange of visits at the highest level.
- In 2018, "**Joint Strategic Vision of India France Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region**" was issued.
- **Space Cooperation**
 - India and France have a rich history of cooperation in the field of space for over 50 years with ISRO and the French Space Agency (CNES) carrying on various joint research programmes and launch of satellites.
 - India and France issued a "**Joint Vision for Space Cooperation**" in 2018.
 - ISRO and CNES will realize their third joint satellite mission - **TRISHNA** which is meant for eco-system stress and water use monitoring.
 - The jointly developed **Megha-Tropiques** satellite observes clouds and water vapours over the tropical region.
 - A joint **Ka-band propagation experiment** is also under implementation.
 - France continues to be a major supplier of components and equipment for the Indian space programme.
- **Civil Nuclear Cooperation**
 - **An agreement on civil nuclear cooperation** was signed between India and France in 2008.
 - In 2010, the General Framework Agreement for the implementation of EPR for the **Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project (JNPP)** was signed.
 - A revised MoU for the construction of six EPR units at Jaitapur of 1650 MWe each was signed in 2016.
- **Economic Cooperation**
 - Bilateral trade with France has witnessed a steady rise in the last decade reaching USD 10.75 billion in 2020.
 - France has emerged as a major source of FDI for India with a total turnover of US \$ 20 billion and employing around 300,000 persons.
 - France is the 9th largest foreign investor in India
 - French side has been actively cooperating with various programmes in especially three Smart Cities, viz. Chandigarh, Nagpur and Puducherry.
- **Cultural Cooperation**
 - An Indian Cultural Centre, named Vivekananda Cultural Centre, is being opened in Paris.
- **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 is playing a major role
 - It is estimated that there are about 10000 Indian students in France.
- **Indian community in France**
 - It is estimated that the Indian community, including NRIs in mainland France number around 109,000.
 - The two sides signed a Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement which aims to facilitate temporary circular migration based on mobility and the encouragement for a return of skills to the home country.
- **Global cooperation**
 - After their joint efforts to limit climate change and develop the International Solar Alliance, India and France have turned to more ambitious ideas.
 - In this direction, both countries issued the road map on cybersecurity and digital technology.
 - France is among the countries that have consistently supported India's permanent membership to UNSC.
 - Also, France has offered unstinted support for India on targeting the sources of violent extremism in Pakistan.



- **Defence Cooperation**

- France remains a vital source of arms supply to India.
- Both countries also signed reciprocal logistics support agreement to receive logistical support, supplies and services from each other during authorised port visits, joint exercises, etc.
- India had signed an inter-governmental agreement with France in September 2016 for procurement of 36 Rafale fighter jets at a cost of around Rs 58,000 crore. Dassault Aviation, the manufacturer of Rafales, has delivered 14 jets to the Indian Air Force so far.

MUTUAL BENEFITS AND CONCERNS:

- Indo-French naval cooperation is aimed at **securing the critical sea lanes, the need to effectively combat security threats piracy, trans-national crime and terrorism and also to build security capacities in the Indian Ocean.**
- 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.**
- By leveraging the potential of convergences, **France can be India's gateway to Europe and India France's first strategic partner in Asia.**
- The underpinnings of global geopolitics are being rapidly altered with China's rise, the West being consumed by internal problems and Russia, the "America First" priorities of the US Administration, and growing threats to globalization.
- With such background, **France and India have a shared interest in developing a coalition of middle powers with a shared commitment for a rule-based multipolar world order.**
- France and India have shared a **common belief in the importance of multilateralism and have a common respect for international rules and regulations.**
- These shared beliefs can form the basis for a cooperation agenda, in particular in four areas: **strengthening multilateralism, carving out a roadmap for the Indo-Pacific region, dealing with the increasing role of geotechnology and furthering climate governance.**
- While the governments share a robust relationship, the business relationships are weak. **Bilateral trade is less than half of India's trade with Germany. The target of €12 billion set in 2008 remains elusive.**
- French FDI has picked up in recent years, but hardly does justice to the fact that there are more than 800 French enterprises in India.
- **French social security laws, long-term student visas, and the facility to work for two-three years to pay off student loans are some of the areas that need to be worked out** so that more effective cooperation can take place between the two countries.
- Even though above specified areas provided a robust basis for engagement, it **remained primarily at a government-to-government level.**

WAY FORWARD:

- **Multilateralism:**

- The Covid-19 pandemic has accentuated the emergence of cracks in various multilateral institutions. The need for reformed and well-resourced multilateral bodies with equitable approaches has increased. France and India can pave the way on this front.
- France and India can work towards building strengthened coalitions within existing multilateral systems.



- The organic evolution of issue-based multilateral institutions such as the ISA, Alliance for Multilateralism, ACT and COVAX have left room for leadership – where France and India must aim to step in.
- **A roadmap for action in the Indo-Pacific:**
 - Similarities between India and France’s definition of the Indo-Pacific strategy being one of inclusivity, sovereignty, engagement and freedom of navigation creates room for cooperation.
 - The two countries must continue to work together in areas such as maritime domain awareness, terrorism, cybercrime, piracy, disaster relief and the blue economy.
 - Engagement on a multilateral level through the QUAD, ASEM and trilateral engagements such as the India-Australia-France dialogue must also take place.
- **Geopolitics and technology:**
 - Considering the similar aspirations France and India have towards sovereign, secure and democratic regulation of tech – there are many areas they can collaborate on.
 - The rapidly developing nature of the industry calls for fast-tracked initiatives for cooperation in areas such as data protection, data localisation, investing in Indian technology and supply chain diversification.
- **Climate change and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**
 - France and India can spearhead the development of multilateral initiatives which accommodate the voices of those who are most at risk
 - India and France can work towards creating a financial mechanism within the ISA and develop action-oriented and need-based multilateral initiatives to tackle climate change.

France is a crucial partner for India, and needs to play a key role in terms of India’s strategy in the Indo-Pacific, honouring climate commitments, combatting challenges to the global tech order and rebuilding resilience in multilateralism. By reinforcing shared values and commitments to these challenges, the France-India partnership can be taken to a new level this decade.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-france-talk-ways-to-boost-indo-pacific-cooperation-discuss-climate-space-challenges-7272556/>

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/india-france-explore-ways-to-strengthen-cooperation-in-indo-pacific-121041301175_1.html

<http://mea.gov.in/Portal/ForeignRelation/France2020.pdf>

<https://www.orfonline.org/research/lessons-2020-next-steps-france-india-partnership/>



NEWS IN BRIEF: PRELIMS SPECIAL

'STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' HOLISTIC ADVANCEMENT THROUGH QUALITY EDUCATION (SARTHAQ)

- The Department of School Education and Literacy unveiled an implementation plan for school education called SARTHAQ in pursuance of the goals and objectives of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- The major focus of SARTHAQ is to **define activities in such a manner that they clearly delineate goals, outcomes and timeframe i.e., it links recommendations of NEP with 297 Tasks along with responsible agencies, timelines and 304 outputs of these Tasks.**
- SARTHAQ is a working document and is broadly indicative in nature and will be updated from time to time based on inputs/feedback from all stakeholders.
- States and UTs are given the flexibility to adopt this plan with local contextualisation and also modify it as per their needs.

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=Education-Minister-Ramesh-Pokhriyal-Nishank-launches-SARTHAQ-initiative-for-implementation-of-NEP&id=413810>

INDIA, NETHERLANDS VIRTUAL SUMMIT

- India and the Netherlands have announced the **launch of the strategic partnership in water sector** to further intensify ongoing cooperation and better coherence in the area.
- They also discussed to broaden bilateral cooperation in new areas of water including water budgeting, cost effective decentralise treatment technology, converting waste water to energy and river hazard management.
- Both sides have announced the setting up of fast track mechanism to facilitate bilateral trade and to resolve issues of Dutch and Indian companies.
- The two countries also discussed collaboration in the field of agriculture, Urban Development and Space.
- Prime Minister Modi suggested setting up of a joint working group for the cooperation between the two nations in the field of millets.
- On regional and global issues, the two reaffirmed the commitment to multilateralism and agreed to work together towards challenges of climate change, counter-terrorism and Sustainable Development Goal and pandemic.
- Netherlands is the **3rd largest FDI investor in India and India the fourth largest FDI investor in the Netherlands in the year 2019-20.**
- India welcomed the Netherlands' guidelines on the Indo-Pacific which recognises the importance of the region for global peace, security and prosperity and identifies India as a key partner to engage with.

<http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=413905>



WORLD HOMOEOPATHY DAY

- **April 10** is observed as World Homoeopathy Day to honour Dr Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann, whose birth anniversary falls on this day.
The main idea behind celebrating the day is to make more people aware of the benefits of homeopathic treatment and medicines.
The theme for this day in India this year is “**Homeopathy – Roadmap for Integrative Medicine**”.
India is one of the largest manufacturers of homeopathic drugs in the world.
In homoeopathy a person is usually cured by triggering their body’s own healing mechanisms.

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=World-Homeopathy-Day&id=413974>

RAISINA DIALOGUE-2021

- 6th edition of the Raisina Dialogue took place.
- The conference is being hosted by the think tank Observer Research Foundation in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs.
- The theme for the 2021 conference is “**#ViralWorld: Outbreaks, Outliers and Out of Control**”.
- During the four-day event, talks will be based on five subjects namely, Reconstructing the UN and beyond; Securing and diversifying supply chains; Global ‘Public Bads’: Holding actors and nations to account; Infodemic: Navigating a ‘No-Truth’ world in the age of Big Brother; and The Green stimulus: Investing in gender, growth, and development.
- Started in 2016, the Raisina Dialogue has grown to emerge as a leading global conference on international affairs.

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=Sixth-edition-of-Raisina-Dialogue-to-be-inaugurated-by-PM-Modi&id=414107>

e-SANTA

- E-Santa is an **electronic marketplace providing a platform to connect aqua farmers and buyers**.
- The term e-SANTA was coined for the web portal, meaning Electronic Solution for Augmenting NaCSA farmers’ Trade in Aquaculture.
- e-SANTA is a Digital Bridge to end the market divide and will act as an alternative marketing tool between farmers & buyers by eliminating middlemen.
- It will revolutionize traditional aquafarming by providing cashless, contactless and paperless electronic trade platform between farmers and exporters.



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- The farmers have the freedom to list their produce and quote their price while the exporters have the freedom to list their requirements and also to choose the products based on their requirements such as desired size, location, harvest dates, etc.

<http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=414131>