

## India-France Relations [UPSC Notes]

In this article, you can read all about the relationship between India and France for the UPSC exam international relations segment. India and France have always been friendly countries. The relationship goes back to colonial times when French traders came to the country to establish commercial relations which culminated in the French having small colonies in India. Today, both countries share a cordial relationship as thriving democracies. India's relations with major powers of the world are important topics for the UPSC exam. Read on for more on the India France equation.

### Latest Updates about India-France Relations

1. Indian Prime Minister visited France in May 2022:
  - Issued Joint Statement with regards to each countries commitment to fight terrorism, and climate change.
  - Reiterated the strengthening of India-EU strategic partnership in the Indo-Pacific.
  - Issued statements on behalf of "Make In India" programme.
2. India and France have signed an agreement for the cooperation on Gaganyaan Mission.
  - France space agency, CNES, will support scientific experiment plans and will provide french equipment, consumables, and medical instruments for Indian astronauts use.
3. Indian Prime Minister visited France in 2019 for G7 summit as a 'Goodwill Partner'.
  - Issued India-France Roadmap on Cybersecurity and Digital Technologies and 4 Agreements/MoUs.
4. France President visited India in 2018
  - Issued Joint Strategic Vision of India-France Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region" and the "India-France Joint Vision for Space Cooperation".
  - International Solar Alliance founding conference was held in New Delhi.
5. TRISHNA is the third joint satellite mission of India's space research organization ISRO and France's CNES.
  - The use of TRISHNA is for ecosystem stress monitoring and water use monitoring.
  - Learn more about Indian Satellites from the linked article.
6. GSAT-11 was launched from French Guiana in December 2018.
7. France has emerged as a major source of FDI for India with more than 1,000 French establishments already present in India with a total turnover of US \$ 20 billion and employing around 300,000 persons.

### Basic Facts about India-France for static GK:

1. India-France DTAA – India has Double Tax Avoidance Agreement with France.
2. India-France Exercise – Shakti Exercise is a bilateral exercise between India and France.
3. India-France Time Difference – There is a time difference of around four hours and thirty minutes.
4. India-France Naval Exercise – Varuna Exercise is the annual naval exercise between India and France.

### India France Relations Historical Aspect

- In the 17th century, Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb had a French physician named François Bernier.
- The French were the last colonial power to enter into trade with India. It was only in the seventeenth century that they did so, decades after the English and the Dutch entered into India for commercial purposes.

- Like all colonial powers of that time, the French came in as traders but had greater aspirations. The French East India Company was founded in 1664.
- They started meddling in the internal politics of the subcontinent and played their cards to their advantage. Even though they had a few successes in the beginning and were able to establish trading posts, the English ultimately ended up as the supreme power in the Indian subcontinent.

**Read more on the Third Carnatic War, which established British paramountcy in India over the French.**

- The French were left with a few disparate colonies, all of which combined were called French India. These places were Pondicherry, Mahe, Yanam, Karaikal and Chandannagar.
- During the Indian freedom struggle against the British, many freedom fighters, such as Aurobindo Ghosh and Subramanya Bharathi took refuge in French India to escape from the British.
- In 1947, France established diplomatic relations with an independent India.
- In 1948, an agreement was signed between both countries that stated that the people of French India were free to choose their political future.
- In August 1962, as per the Treaty of Cession signed in 1956, the French ceded all their possessions in India to the Indian government. Accordingly, all the former French colonies were administered as the Union Territory of Puducherry.

## Political Relationship

In this section, we discuss the political relationship between both countries under various subheadings.

### Strategic Partnership

1. In 1998, the relationship between India and France took a new turn, when both nations entered into a strategic partnership.
2. The **3 principal pillars** of this strategic partnership are:
  - Defence cooperation
  - Space cooperation
  - Civil nuclear cooperation
3. The commonality in the relationship is that both countries support a multi-polar world led by democracies and not one that is polarised into two factions.
4. France has been a continued supporter of India's claims to permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
5. France has also been a great supporter of India for membership to all the four multilateral export control regimes, namely, the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA), the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), and the Australia Group (AG).
6. France's support was instrumental in India's accession to the WA, MTCR and the AG.
7. Both nations are strongly in the war against global terror.

### Bilateral visits

- In May 2022, the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi visited France during which both the countries signed a number of MoUs and issued Joint Statements reflecting upon ever deepening cooperation between the two countries.
- In March 2018, the French President Emmanuel Macron visited India during which 14 business-to-business agreements were signed.
- PM Modi had visited France in June 2017, and also previously in April 2015. The latter was his first visit to a European country as PM.
- There have been several other high-level visits from France previously.
- Dialogue also takes place between the NSAs of both countries.

- France is the only country to be invited five times to the Republic Day Parade in India. This is the highest for any country.

## Defence Cooperation

1. Regular talks take place between the service chiefs of both nations. An annual defence dialogue at the ministerial level has also been initiated in 2018.
2. Regular defence exercises take place between France and India. Some of them are:
  - Exercise Shakti (Army)
  - Exercise Varuna (Navy)
  - Exercise Garuda (Air Force)
  - Exercise Pegase
  - Exercise Desert Knight (Air Force)
3. India also buys defence equipment from France, the most famous of them being Rafale aircraft and P-75 Scorpene project.
4. There is a Dassault Reliance Aerospace Limited (DRAL) manufacturing facility at Mihan in Maharashtra, which is a joint venture between India's Reliance Group and the French aerospace company Dassault Aviation.

## Space Cooperation

- India and France have been cooperating in the space domain for many years now.
- ISRO and CNES (the French space agency) have conducted joint research programmes and satellite launches.
- Examples of joint Indo-French satellites: TRISHNA, Megha-Tropiques, etc.
- France is a major supplier of equipment and components for the Indian space programme.

## Civil Nuclear Cooperation

- An agreement for civil nuclear cooperation was signed in 2008 when the then PM Manmohan Singh visited France.

## Science and Tech and Education

- The Indo-French Centre for the Promotion of Advance Research (CEFIPRA), formed in 1987, funds joint proposals for research in the sciences. Its research has led to several patents.
- Since 2013, CEFIPRA also awards Raman-Charpak scholarships to scholars of Indian and French origins.
- An estimated 6000 Indian students study in France.

## Indian Diaspora in France

- There are more than 1 lakh NRIs in France, chiefly originating from the former French colonies.
- A good number of Indian origin persons also live in the French Overseas Territories of Reunion Island, Martinique, Guadeloupe and Saint Martin. Most of them were taken to these territories as indentured labourers during colonial times.