



India-France Joint Patrolling

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Why in News

For the first time, India and France conducted joint patrols from the Reunion Island.

The patrol was conducted in the month of February by a **P-8I aircraft** with French Navy personnel onboard.

P-8I aircraft

- **Boeing's P-8A Poseidon** is designed for long-range Anti-Submarine warfare (ASW), Anti-Surface Warfare (ASuW), and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions.
- The **P-8s Indian variant** is referred to as **P-8I**.
- Of a total of 12 ordered aircrafts, India has received eight, making the Indian Navy's P-8 fleet the second largest in the world. Another four aircrafts are on-schedule to be delivered in 2020.
- The P-8I is not just responsible for coastal patrolling but is also used for other critical missions like search-and-rescue, anti-piracy, and supporting operations of other arms of the military.

Key Points

- Currently, under the **'Neighbourhood First' policy** and broader maritime cooperation, the Indian Navy undertakes joint **Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** surveillance with Maldives, Seychelles and Mauritius and **Coordinated Patrols (CORPATs)** with Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand and Indonesia.

- The objectives of the CORPATs are to ensure effective implementation of **United Nations Conventions on Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS)**.
UNCLOS specifies regulations regarding protection and conservation of natural resources, conservation of marine environment, prevention and suppression of illegal, unregulated fishing activity, drug trafficking, piracy, exchange of information in prevention of smuggling, illegal immigration and conduct of search and rescue operations at sea.
- The **joint patrolling with France** shows India's intent to engage with friendly foreign partners in expanding its footprint in the Indian Ocean, focusing on the stretch between the East African coastline and the Malacca straits.
 - India has recently become an **observer to the Indian Ocean Commission**. It consists of Reunion as one of its members.
 - India has **so far carried out CORPATs only with maritime neighbours** and had **rejected a similar offer by the US in 2016**.

India- France Defence Relations



- France is the first country to deploy a Liaison Officer at the **Indian Navy's Information Fusion Centre (IFC-IOR)** as part of efforts to improve Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA).
- France has steadily emerged as a major strategic partner for India with big ticket defence deals and increased military to military engagement.
- The Indian navy is currently inducting **French Scorpene conventional submarines**, being built in India under technology transfer, and the Indian Air Force will soon get the first batch of its **36 Rafale fighter jets**.
- India is working with France to develop strategic and economic partnership involving Madagascar, Reunion Islands-Comoros so as to balance the growing influence of China in that part of the Indian Ocean Region.

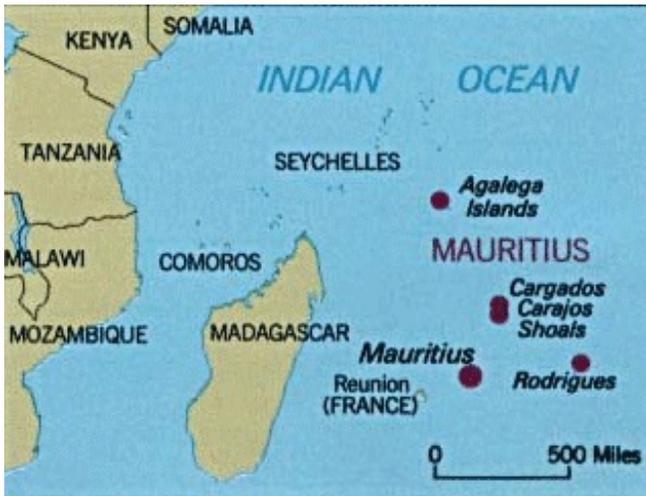
- Defence Exercises between India and France:
 - **Varuna – Naval exercise**
 - **Garuda – Air exercise**
 - **Shakti – Army exercise**

Note:

- **Gagan Shakti** is conducted by the **Indian Air Force** to showcase its air dominance over the entire extended area of the Indian Ocean Region. It includes all terrain operations – desert, high altitude, maritime scenarios and special operations – in real time with specific focus on key areas like aerial combat, air to surface combat, paratrooper assault and medical evacuation.
- **Garuda Shakti** is the **joint military exercise** between **India and Indonesia**.
- **Mitra Shakti** is the joint military exercise between **India and Sri Lanka**.

Reunion Island

Réunion is a **French overseas department** and overseas region in the western Indian Ocean. It is located about 420 miles (680 km) east of Madagascar and 110 miles (180 km) southwest of Mauritius.



Source: TH