



India-France External Affairs Ministers Meet

For Prelims: Location of France and the Neighbourhood, South China Sea, Blue Economy, India-France Military Exercises, International Solar Alliance.

For Mains: Effect of Policies & Politics of Countries on India's Interests, India-France Relations

Why in News

Recently, the **External Affairs Minister of India held talks with his French counterpart.**

- The two leaders discussed several regional and global issues including the [India-EU relationship](#), [Afghanistan situation](#), [Indo-Pacific Strategy](#), [South China Sea Dispute](#), [Iran nuclear deal](#) and the [Ukraine crisis](#).



What are the Highlights of the Meeting?

- **Indo-Pacific Parks Partnership:** The two Ministers agreed to jointly launch the Indo-French call for an Indo-Pacific Parks Partnership.
 - This partnership aims **to build capacities in the Indo-Pacific region**, in terms of sustainable management of protected areas, by gathering and sharing the experiences and expertise that exist in the region among key Indo-Pacific public & private natural park managers.
- **India-France Roadmap on the Blue Economy and Ocean Governance:** Both sides also adopted the "India-France Roadmap on the [Blue Economy](#) and Ocean Governance".
 - The roadmap aims **to enhance partnership in the field of blue economy** by way of institutional, economic, infrastructural and scientific cooperation.
- **Intensify India-EU Ties:** They also agreed to intensify India-E.U. ties under the French Presidency, and the **need to begin negotiations on the [Free Trade and Investment Agreements](#)** and implement the India-E.U. Connectivity Partnership.
- **Strengthening Multilateralism:** They also agreed to coordinate in the [United Nations Security Council](#) on issues of mutual concern.
- **Deepening Strategic Partnership:** Both Ministers agreed to further deepen the Strategic Partnership, particularly in the areas of trade and investments, defence and security, health, education, research and innovation, energy and [climate change](#).
- **Facilitating People-To-People Contact:** Agreed to soon conclude a Joint Declaration of Intent in the Area of Sports, aimed at further facilitating people-to-people contact.
 - Strengthening the long-standing cooperation on public administration and administrative reforms between the relevant authorities.

What are the Areas of Cooperation in India-France Relations?

- **Background:** France was one of the first countries with which India signed a "strategic partnership" after the end of the [Cold War](#), in January 1998.
 - France was one of the very few countries to **support India's decision to test nuclear weapons in 1998**.
 - Today, France has emerged as **India's most reliable partner** on issues relating to terrorism and Kashmir.
- **Defence Cooperation:** Both countries have a defence dialogue at the Ministerial level.
 - The three services have regular defence exercises; viz.
 - [Exercise Shakti \(Army\)](#)
 - [Exercise Varuna \(Navy\)](#)
 - [Exercise Garuda \(Air Force\)](#)
 - Recently, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has inducted [French Rafale multi-role combat aircraft](#).
 - India entered into a contract with a French firm to build [six Scorpene submarines](#) in **India's Malegaon dockyards** through a **technology-transfer arrangement in 2005**.
 - The two countries also signed the Agreement regarding the **Provision of Reciprocal Logistics Support**.
- **Bilateral trade and Economic relations:** The **India-France Administrative Economic and Trade Committee (AETC)** provides an appropriate framework to assess and find ways to further promote bilateral trade and investment as well as to speed up the resolution of market access issues to the benefit of economic operators
- **Global agendas:** Climate change, biodiversity, renewable energy, terrorism, cybersecurity and digital technology, etc:
 - There have been joint efforts to limit climate change and develop the [International Solar Alliance](#).
 - Both countries have agreed on a road map on cybersecurity and digital technology.

Way Forward

- France has opened the pathway for deeper engagement with Europe on global issues, especially

after uncertainty in the region due to **BREXIT**.

- 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.

Source: IE

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