



Mains Practice Question

Q. "France's position as both a European power and an Indo-Pacific resident power offers India unique strategic advantages." Discuss this statement and its implications for India's multilateral engagements. **(250 words)**

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Approach

- Introduce the answer briefing about significance of France for India
- Give arguments to Strategic Advantages of France's Position for India
 - Suggest its Implications for India's Multilateral Engagements
- Conclude with a forward looking approach.

Introduction

France's dual identity as a European power and an **Indo-Pacific resident power** provides India with unique strategic advantages. Both nations share a vision for **strategic autonomy and multipolarity in global affairs**, deepening their cooperation in defense, nuclear energy, space, and technology.

Body

Strategic Advantages of France's Position for India:

- **Defense and Strategic Partnership:** France is a key arms supplier to India, with deals including **Rafale jets** and **Scorpene submarines**.
 - **Joint military exercises** (e.g., **Varuna**) enhance maritime security in the Indo-Pacific.
 - The **FRIND-X initiative** fosters collaboration between Indian and French defense startups.
- **Indo-Pacific Security and Maritime Cooperation:** France aligns with India's vision for a **free, open, and rules-based maritime order**.
 - **Military bases in Réunion Island and New Caledonia** enable strategic access to the Indian Ocean.
 - The **Indo-Pacific Triangular Cooperation** between India, France, and third countries aids climate resilience.
- **Economic and Trade Relations:** France is among India's largest European investors, with **\$13.38 billion bilateral trade (2023-24)**.
 - The **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**, with Marseille as a hub, strengthens trade.
- **Space and Aerospace Cooperation:** France has been a **long-standing partner in India's space program** (**TRISHNA satellite project**).
 - Collaboration in **human spaceflight and planetary exploration boosts** India's strategic

autonomy .

- **Civil Nuclear Collaboration: France is assisting India** in developing **Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)** for energy security.
 - The **₹20,000 crore Nuclear Energy Mission (2024-25 Budget)** enhances joint research in SMRs.
 - **The Jaitapur nuclear plant (9,900 MW)** is set to be the world's largest nuclear power plant .
- **Artificial Intelligence and Technological Innovation: India-France Roadmap on AI** fosters ethical AI development.
 - Indian startups gain access to **Station F**, the world's largest startup incubator in France.
 - Expansion of **India's UPI in France** strengthens financial technology cooperation .

Implications for India's Multilateral Engagements:

- **Strengthening India-EU Ties**
 - France can play a key role in **finalizing the India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**.
 - India's participation in **EU's Green Deal and Digital Markets Act** can be facilitated by France.
- **Enhancing India's Indo-Pacific Strategy**
 - Joint naval deployments in the **Indian Ocean and South Pacific** strengthen India's regional leadership.
 - **France's Quad Plus engagement** complements India's Indo-Pacific outreach.
- **Boosting Climate Diplomacy and Renewable Energy**
 - **France's role in the International Solar Alliance (ISA)** aids India's green energy transition. Cooperation in **hydrogen technology and energy storage** can further accelerate India's decarbonization goals.
- **Expanding Defense and Space Diplomacy:** India can leverage **France's defense influence in NATO** for technology transfers.
 - Collaboration in **hypersonic and quantum technologies** bolsters India's space and defense innovation.

Conclusion

India-France ties are built on shared principles of **strategic autonomy, multipolarity, and technological collaboration**. Strengthening this partnership will enhance India's global influence, aligning with its vision of a **Viksit Bharat by 2047**.