

Indian Diplomacy At Work

INDIA AND FRANCE



NAMASTE FRANCE
BONJOUR INDIA

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Relations between India and France have traditionally been close and friendly. With the establishment of strategic partnership in 1998, there has been a significant progress in all areas of bilateral cooperation through regular high-level exchanges at the Head of State/Head of Government levels and growing cooperation and exchanges including in strategic areas such as defence, counter-terrorism, nuclear energy and space.

France was the first country with which India entered into an agreement on civil nuclear cooperation following the waiver given by the Nuclear Suppliers' Group, enabling India to resume full civil nuclear cooperation with the international community. There is also a growing and wide-ranging cooperation in other areas such as trade and investment, culture, science & technology and education. France has consistently supported India's increasing role in international fora, including India's permanent membership of the UNSC.

At the invitation of the President of the French Republic Mr. François Hollande, the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi paid an official visit to France on 10-11 April 2015.

The two leaders held wide ranging and fruitful discussions on bilateral, regional and global issues reflecting their convergence in world views. They reaffirmed their commitment to the longstanding strategic partnership and agreed to further deepen and strengthen bilateral ties based on shared principles and values relating to democracy, freedom, rule of law and respect for human rights.

In a further effort to strengthen global non-proliferation and export control regimes, India and France committed to continuing to work jointly towards India's accession to the multilateral export control regimes, namely, the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Australia Group, and the Wassenaar Arrangement. France especially reaffirmed its strong and active support to building consensus among regimes' members on this issue.

The two leaders expressed satisfaction at the regular and frequent high level visits and meetings; growing cooperation in strategic sectors, especially, defence, space, civil nuclear and security; expanding trade and investment ties; cooperation in science and technology; and increasing exchanges in cultural, educational and tourism sectors. This was the first visit of the Prime Minister of India to Europe and the key outcomes are as follows :

- ❖ Prime Minister extended his full support to France for a successful outcome of CoP 21 to UNFCCC to be held in Paris later this year. Both the leaders expressed confidence that the forthcoming Paris Conference will finalize an historic agreement for the post 2020 period.
- ❖ France welcomed India's offer to be a partner of the Smart cities development scheme and is ready to implement its best technological solutions and share its experience in the field of integrated sustainable urban infrastructure, especially in Pondicherry, Chandigarh and Nagpur.
- ❖ In view of the critical operational necessity for Medium Multirole Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) for Indian Air Force, Government of India conveyed that it would like to acquire 36 Rafale jets in fly-away condition as quickly as possible. The two leaders agreed to conclude an Inter-Governmental Agreement for supply of the aircraft and associated systems delivered in the same configuration as had been tested and approved by Indian Air Force, and with a longer maintenance responsibility by France.
- ❖ Celebrating 50th anniversary of Indo-French Space Cooperation, both leaders welcomed the signing of Programme between their Space Agencies for a reinforced cooperation in space activities addressing joint realization of third earth observation mission, earth observation applications, planetary exploration; MoU on Ka-band propagation experiment; and a document to extend the utilisation of Indo-French Joint Satellite, Megha Tropiques, for two more years.
- ❖ Recalling the Memorandum of Understanding signed on 4 February 2009 between NPCIL and AREVA, the two leaders encouraged their commercial enterprises for an early conclusion of techno-commercial discussions on

the proposal for construction of six 1650 Mwe nuclear power plants at Jaitapur, with due consideration to project viability and in the framework of an ambitious partnership for large and critical components.

- ❖ The two leaders welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between L&T and AREVA, which will widen the scope of industrial cooperation as well as the conclusion of Pre-engineering studies agreement.
- ❖ Both leaders welcomed the agreement between Indian Railways and the French National Railways (SNCF) to co-finance an execution study by SNCF for a semi-high speed project on upgradation of the Delhi-Chandigarh line to 200 kmph and for redevelopment of Ambala & Ludhiana Railways Stations. They also noted with satisfaction the successful completion of a business development study for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad high speed corridor.
- ❖ India welcomed the target set by French companies aimed at developing 8 to 10 GW of solar energy in India by 2020-2022. France is also willing to support other renewable sources in India, such as wind, biomass and hydropower.
- ❖ Both leaders expressed support for G-20 as the key Forum for international economic cooperation and called for coordinated and concerted international action -including steps to manage spillovers arising from domestic policies, address tax base erosion and profit shifting, to promote tax transparency, facilitate automatic exchange of information and channelize long-term financing for infrastructure.
- ❖ They also noted with satisfaction a number of new and ongoing projects of French companies in keeping with the "*Make in India*" policy. President Hollande appreciated Prime Minister Modi's initiative to receive delegations of French CEOs in infrastructure and defence sectors to encourage them further in that direction.
- ❖ President Hollande confirmed the target of AFD credit line of 1 billion euros over the next three years for sustainable infrastructure and urban development in India and conveyed the commitment of France to partner with India in implementation of the following projects launched by India for development of renewable sources of energy.
- ❖ France welcomed India's decision to extend Tourist Visa on Arrival - Electronic Travel Authorisation (TVOA-ETA) scheme to France while India welcomed the French decision to implement a scheme for expedited 48 hours visa issuance for Indian tourists.

- ❖ They also welcomed in particular the arrangement, wherein, Indian Post Graduate students shall be allowed the benefit of a 2 years special residence permit in France and 250 French students be permitted yearly a maximum stay of 2 years in India under the VIE Scheme of France to join French companies operating in India.
- ❖ The two leaders welcomed the range of cooperation initiatives undertaken by Indian and French institutions in a move to promote and preserve the unique heritage of the two countries
- ❖ They welcomed the signing of the Letter of Intent between Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CRAS), Ministry of Ayush, and University of Strasbourg for cooperation in the field of education and research in Ayurveda, through exchange of students, teachers, researchers, scientific and technical publications.
