

At the invitation of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, French President Emmanuel Macron is on a State Visit to India during 10 to 12 March 2018. The two leaders co-hosted the Founding Summit of the International Solar Alliance in New Delhi on 11 March 2018. The leaders held wide-ranging and constructive discussions on the bilateral relations and underlined the growing convergence between the two countries on regional and international issues.

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the strategic partnership between India and France, the first to be established by India, the two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to furthering it and decided to take it to a new level by agreeing to hold biennial summits between the Prime Minister of India and the President of the French Republic. Both leaders agreed to deepen and strengthen the bilateral ties based on shared principles and values of democracy, freedom, rule of law and respect for human rights.

Recalling the valiant sacrifices made by Indian and French soldiers during the First World War, Prime Minister Modi expressed his willingness for India to participate in the closing of the First World War Centenary celebrations, which will take place on 11 November 2018 in Paris. He also welcomed the organization of the Paris Peace Forum on this occasion. President Macron thanked Prime Minister Modi for India's support to this initiative.

### **Strategic Partnership**

The leaders welcomed the signing of the "Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of France regarding the Exchange and Reciprocal Protection of Classified or Protected Information" between India and France, reflecting the high level of strategic trust between the two countries. Both sides also agreed to create an annual defence dialogue at the ministerial level.

Both the leaders appreciated the deepening interactions in the maritime domain for enhanced cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region. In that context, they welcomed the "Joint Strategic Vision of India-France Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region", as a guiding beacon for such partnership. The leaders reiterated that this cooperation will be crucial in order to maintain the safety of international sea lanes for unimpeded commerce and communications in accordance with the international law, for countering maritime terrorism and piracy, for building maritime domain awareness, for capacity building and for greater coordination in regional/international fora in the region.

India & France welcomed the signing of the “Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of France for the provision of reciprocal logistics support between their Armed Forces”, which seeks to extend logistical support on reciprocal access to respective facilities for Indian and French armed forces. The agreement is symbolic of the strategic depth and maturity reached in India-France defence ties.

The leaders emphasized the importance of the regular joint military exercises. They welcomed the successful conduct of the Varuna naval exercise held in France in April 2017, and the Shakti army exercise held in France in January 2018. Both sides looked forward to the next Varuna naval in India in the coming weeks and to the next Garuda air force exercise in France in 2019. Both sides affirmed their intention to enhance the level of joint military exercises and maintain the operational quality-level of these exercises in the future.

The two leaders noted with satisfaction the on-schedule progress in the implementation of acquisition-related agreements, including the Rafale aircraft agreement signed in 2016. They also noted the commissioning of INS Kalvari, the first Scorpene submarine made in India by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd., in collaboration with Naval Group, the French shipbuilder.

They looked forward to continuing their discussions to expand and deepen the ongoing defence manufacturing partnerships. They acknowledged that the Make-in-India initiative offers a valuable opportunity for Indian and French defence enterprises to enter into arrangements for co-development and co-production of defence equipment in India, including through transfer of know-how and technologies to the mutual benefit of all parties. In this context, the leaders welcomed various joint ventures between Indian and French companies and reaffirmed their commitment to facilitate the establishment of new ones.

The leaders noted ongoing discussions between DRDO and SAFRAN on combat aircraft engine and encouraged necessary measures and forward-looking approaches to facilitate early conclusion.

The two leaders reiterated their strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations including cross-border terrorism and terror-related incidents in France and India. Both leaders also affirmed that terrorism cannot be justified on any grounds whatsoever it may be and it should not be associated with any religion, creed, nationality and ethnicity. Recalling the joint statement on terrorism adopted by the two countries in January 2016, the two leaders reaffirmed their strong determination to eliminate terrorism everywhere it is to be found. They agreed that more must be done by the international

community to stem terrorism financing and welcomed the organization of an International Conference on Fighting Terrorism Financing in Paris in April 2018 by the French government.

They also called upon all countries to work towards rooting out terrorist safe havens and infrastructure, disrupting terrorist networks and their financing channels, and halting cross-border movement of terrorists like Al Qaeda, Daesh/ISIS, Jaish-e-Mohammed, HizbulMujahideen, Lashkar-e-Tayabba, and their affiliates as well as terrorist groups threatening peace and security in South Asia and the Sahel region.

The two leaders in addition to pursuing the excellent cooperation between the intervention forces (NSG-GIGN) and the investigation agencies of the two countries, agreed to enhance operational cooperation between the Indian and French counter-terrorism agencies and launch a new cooperative effort to prevent and fight radicalization, in particular online. The two leaders agreed to strengthen counter-terrorism in Multilateral Fora such as UN, GCTF, FATF and G20 etc. They called upon all UN member countries to implement the UNSC Resolution 1267 and other relevant resolutions designating terrorist entities. The leaders also agreed to work together on early adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) in the UN.

They welcomed the conclusion of an Agreement on Prevention of the Illicit Consumption of and Reduction of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Chemical Precursors between the two countries aimed at effective institutional interaction and curbing transnational narcotics trafficking including disruption of terrorist financing.

In pursuance of the 2008 Agreement on the Development of Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy between India and France as well as the January 2016 roadmap of cooperation, the two leaders noted with satisfaction the conclusion of the Industrial Way Forward Agreement between NPCIL and EDF for the Implementation of six nuclear power reactor units at Jaitapur, Maharashtra, India.

The two leaders reiterated the goal of commencing works at the Jaitapur site around the end of 2018 and encouraged NPCIL and EDF to accelerate the contractual discussions in that respect. Once installed, the Jaitapur project will be the largest nuclear power plant in the world, with a total capacity of 9.6 GW. It will contribute, in addition to renewable energy, to achieving India's goal of 40% non-fossil energy by 2030. In this context, they emphasized the need for the project to generate cost-effective electricity; economical and competitive financing package from the French side; reliable, uninterrupted and continued access to guaranteed fuel supply for the lifetime of the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Plants; and

collaboration on transfer of technology and cost-effective localization efforts of manufacturing in India. The latter includes the transfer of rights on technology to be mutually agreed.

Demonstrating our cooperation across sectors, 14 documents were exchanged on the sidelines of the meeting between PM [@narendramodi](#) and French President [@EmmanuelMacron](#) in areas of civil nuclear, renewable energy, defence, railway and many others. Link at <https://t.co/eCvKxG3o0f> [pic.twitter.com/Hy9UH4fp9c](https://pic.twitter.com/Hy9UH4fp9c)

— Raveesh Kumar (@MEAIndia) [March 10, 2018](#)

They welcomed the understanding shared by the two parties on the enforcement of India's rules and regulations on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damages applicable to the Jaitapur project. The understanding is based on the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act 2010, the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Rules 2011, and compliance of India's rules and regulations with the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage, ratified and notified to the IAEA.

The leaders welcomed the regular engagement between their atomic energy organizations and their growing collaboration in mutually beneficial scientific and training activities related to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and particularly the cooperation between CEA/INSTN and DAE/GCNEP. They also appreciated the long-standing relations and continuing interactions between their nuclear regulatory authorities - India's Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) and France's Autorité de sûreté Nucléaire (ASN) - which have facilitated sharing of valuable experiences, best practices and developments related to nuclear safety and regulatory issues.

## **Space Cooperation**

Building on the historical and formidable linkages in the arena of civilian space, the leaders welcomed the "India-France Joint Vision for Space Cooperation" which spells out the concrete areas of future cooperation in this field. They acknowledged, in particular, the ongoing cooperation between their space agencies to realize the third joint satellite mission - TRISHNA, meant for eco-system stress and water use monitoring and also accommodation of French instrument on India's OCEANSAT-3 satellite.

## **Economic, Educational, Science & Technology, Cultural & People to People Cooperation**

Prime Minister Modi and President Macron noted with satisfaction the depth of the ties between the two countries, particularly in the economic, educational, scientific, cultural and tourism sectors.

They welcomed the signing of a bilateral partnership agreement on migration and mobility, which will facilitate student and professional mobility between France and India by simplifying the conditions for entry and long-term stay in the two countries.

Prime Minister Modi and President Macron appreciated the role of continuing people-to-people exchanges between the two countries and underscored the necessity of greater youth exchange programmes for promotion of understanding of each other's cultures. They welcomed in this regard the launch of the "France-India Programme for the Future", a French initiative aimed at fostering youth exchanges, which are vital for the future growth of India-France ties.

### **Economic Exchanges**

The leaders noted with satisfaction the involvement of French companies in several new and ongoing manufacturing partnership projects in India. They were pleased with the robust expansion of research and development conducted by these companies in India. They equally highlighted the attractiveness of France for Indian investors.

Both sides noted with satisfaction the growth in bilateral trade during the recent period and expressed their desire that this momentum is sustained with the aim of raising trade in goods to 15 billion euros by 2022. They encouraged SMEs and mid-cap companies to play a growing role in the economic and commercial exchanges between the two countries. Reaffirming their commitment to facilitate a conducive environment for enhancing bilateral trade and investment, the leaders:

- Underlined the importance of regular and sustained economic cooperation dialogue through the India-France Joint Committee.
- Welcomed the new recommendations presented by the Co-Chairs of the CEO Forum in

Delhi in March 2018.

The two leaders stressed the importance of holding annually a Dialogue at the ministerial level to deepen cooperation in the economic and financial sectors.

## **Educational and S&T Cooperation**

The leaders recognized with satisfaction a vibrant educational cooperation within the Governmental framework and amongst Universities and academic institutes and encouraged them to increase the number and quality of student exchanges, with the aim of reaching 10,000 students by 2020. They welcomed in this regard the signing of an agreement for the mutual recognition of degrees, which will facilitate the pursuit of higher education by Indian students in France and French students in India and enhance their employability. They welcomed the holding of the Knowledge Summit, the first Indo-French conference on research and higher education, in New Delhi on 10th and 11th March 2018.

Recognizing that skill development is a key priority for the two countries, both leaders welcomed the important role played by French companies in India in training and skilling of the Indian workforce and encouraged them to engage even more actively in the sector. Both sides looked forward to furthering tie-ups and formal arrangements between skill development institutions and agencies of the two countries.

The leaders recognized with satisfaction, the role played by the Indo-French Centre for Promotion of Advanced Research (CEFIPRA) and congratulated it on its 30th anniversary, which was celebrated in 2017. They encouraged CEFIPRA to expand its role through interactive continuum between research, market and societal needs by linking the discoveries from fundamental research and their technological applications. In order to expand the scope and content of the bilateral cooperation in science, technology and innovation, the leaders emphasized the need to convene the Joint Committee on S&T in 2018.

## **Cultural Exchanges**

The two leaders lauded the success of 'Namasté France' festival organized in 2016, which featured 83 events in 41 cities of France, in highlighting Indian cultural heritage in France

and the success of the third edition of 'Bonjour India', which featured 300 projects in 33 cities of India. The leaders greeted the year-long 'India@70' celebrations being organized by India in France.

Noting the importance of literature in the promotion of friendly relations between the two countries, the leaders welcomed the participation of India as a Guest of Honour in the 42nd edition of 'Salon du Livre de Paris' (French Book Fair) in the year 2020. Reciprocally, France will participate as a Guest of Honour in New Delhi World Book Fair in 2022.

Prime Minister Modi and President Macron noted with satisfaction the strong upsurge in tourist exchanges between the two countries (+69% growth of Indian tourists to France since 2014). The two countries set the target of one million Indian tourists in France and 335,000 French tourists in India by 2020.

## **Partnership for the planet**

The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to lead the fight against climate change, based on the principles of climate justice, fostering climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development. They committed to fully implement the Paris Agreement at the COP24 and further on, under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) as a part of an irreversible global process at combating climate change for the benefit of all humanity. They stressed the positive contribution of the One Planet Summit in Paris on 12 December 2017 to this objective.

The French President thanked the Indian Prime Minister for India's support to the initiative to work on a Global Pact for the Environment.

## **International Solar Alliance**

The two leaders welcomed the entry into force of the Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and looked forward to co-hosting the ISA Founding Conference on 11th March 2018 in New Delhi. The leaders underlined their commitment to furthering and deepening concrete projects and programmes under the aegis of ISA to mobilize affordable financing for massive solar energy deployment.



## **Renewable energy**

The two leaders reaffirmed that the strengthening of the India-French technological cooperation on renewable energy was a common priority for encouraging the emergence and dissemination of innovation in all the sectors. They stressed the importance of mobilizing public and private funds to support the development of solar energy. In this regard, they welcomed the establishment, within the International Solar Alliance, of an international committee of chambers of industry, and the willingness of MEDEF, SER, FICCI and CII among others to join it.

## **Sustainable mobility**

The leaders noted that efficient modes of transportation with low GHG emissions are an essential condition for the sustainable development and economic growth of India and France. They recalled the strong ambitions of the two countries with regard to the development of electric mobility. In this regard, they welcomed the signing of a Statement of Intent between the French Ministry for Ecological and Inclusive Transition and NITI Aayog, which will be supported by French technical assistance provided by French Development Agency (AFD)

The leaders reaffirmed the commitment of both countries to strengthening their railway cooperation and noted with satisfaction the completion of a feasibility study for semi-high speed upgrade of the Delhi-Chandigarh section and station development study of Ambala and Ludhiana stations. Both sides agreed that future technical discussions on upgradation of the speed of the Delhi-Chandigarh sector will necessarily take into account the passenger and freight traffic load on the section and the complexities it entails. The leaders also welcomed the establishment of a permanent Indo-French Railway Forum, bringing together the French Ministry of Ecological and Inclusive Transition, and SNCF (French Railways) on the one hand, and the Indian Ministry of Railways on the other, to pave the way for industrial cooperation between the two countries.

## **Smart Cities**

Prime Minister Modi and President Macron noted with satisfaction the excellent Indo-French cooperation on sustainable cities and Smart Cities, marked by numerous cases of



innovation sharing and fruitful collaborations between French and Indian stakeholders, They welcomed the exemplary cooperation programme in the three Smart Cities of Chandigarh, Nagpur, and Puducherry, and the extension of AFD's technical assistance programme under the framework of this Mission. They welcomed the signing of the loan agreement between the AFD and the Government of India for 100 million euros in support of the Smart Cities Mission.

## **Expanding Global Strategic Convergences**

As Strategic Partners, the two countries share converging views on key regional and global issues and continue to consult and coordinate closely with each other on matters of common interest.

France reaffirmed its support for India's candidature for a permanent membership of the UN Security Council. France and India share common concerns and objectives in the field of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

France welcomes India's accession to the MTCR in June 2016, to the Wassenaar Arrangement in December 2017 and to the Australia Group in January 2018. Prime Minister Modi thanked President Macron for France's leadership that led to India's membership of the Wassenaar Arrangement. He also thanked France for supporting India's membership of the Australia Group. In order to further strengthen global non-proliferation France reaffirmed its strong and active support to building consensus among regimes' members on the issue of India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, recognizing that India's accession will add value to the aims and objectives of these regimes.

The leaders agreed that DPRK's continued pursuit of nuclear and ballistic missile programmes and its proliferation links poses a grave threat to international peace and security, and called for the complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which has been endorsed by DPRK. Both sides stressed the need to hold accountable those who support or have supported DPRK's nuclear and missile programmes. They also stressed the importance of unity of the international community in addressing this challenge, ensuring that all UNSC sanctions are fully implemented by the entire international community, so as to maximize pressure towards achieving a peaceful and comprehensive solution through dialogue.

India and France reaffirmed their support for the continued full implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) signed between Iran and the E3+3. They recognised the confirmation by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that Iran is complying

with its nuclear-related JCPOA commitments. The two countries called for the full and effective implementation of the deal, which has been endorsed by the UN Security Council and is a crucial contribution to the non-proliferation framework and international peace, stability and security. They called on all parties to implement fully UN Security Council resolution 2231.

Both leaders reaffirmed the primacy of the UN-led Geneva process for a comprehensive and peaceful resolution of the Syrian conflict through the all-inclusive Syrian-led political process taking into account the legitimate aspirations of the people of Syria. Protection of civilians and access to humanitarian aid are fundamental and all parties to the conflict and their supporters are expected to live up to their commitments. Both leaders affirmed that there can be no military solution to the conflict and that the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Syria should be protected. They also emphasized the importance of the OPCW and stressed that under no circumstances should there be any use of chemical weapons.

The leaders reaffirmed their support for the strategic partnership between the European Union and India, based on shared principles and values, as well as a commitment to a rules-based international order. They agreed that India and the EU should deepen their cooperation on multilateral and security issues, as well as on economic, trade and climate change issues and welcomed the outcome of the 14th EU-India summit held in New Delhi on 6 October 2017. They expressed support to the efforts of both sides to re-engage actively towards timely relaunching of negotiations for a comprehensive and mutually beneficial EU-India Broad Based Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA).

India and France acknowledged the importance of connectivity in today's globalised world. They underlined that connectivity initiatives must be based on key principles of international norms, good governance, rule of law, openness, transparency; follow social and environmental standards, principles of financial responsibility, accountable debt-financing practices; and must be pursued in a manner that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity.

India and France are committed to implement the G20 decisions and to work together with other G20 members to achieve strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth.

The leaders reaffirmed the crucial role of the rules-based multilateral trading system, and the importance of enhancing free, fair, and open trade for achieving sustainable growth and development. They reaffirmed their commitment to work together with all members of the WTO, which would reaffirm the centrality of the rules-based multilateral trading system and

its importance for open and inclusive global trade.

India and France are willing to work together to improve the global economic and financial governance architecture, reduce excessive global imbalances, promote inclusive and interconnected development and tackle common global challenges, including terrorism, poverty, hunger, job creation, climate change, energy security, and inequality including gender inequality, as a basis for sustainable development.

Indian and France share a common interest to cooperate and collaborate for the stability and prosperity of Africa, including through development-oriented initiatives such as capacity building programs and joint projects. Building on their first dialogue on Africa in June 2017 in Paris, both leaders reiterated their willingness to implement common projects on the ground. The leaders also welcomed the establishment of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, which demonstrates the willingness of African nations to take charge of their own security to address the threat of terrorism, as well as the serious challenges posed by transnational organized crime in the region.

The leaders reiterated their support for the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the values it promotes. They shared their commitment to proactively contribute towards the priorities of IORA.

With the aim of broadening the canvas of such like-minded convergences, it was agreed to initiate regular expert level official dialogues on East Asia, as well as on the Middle East. An annual Policy and Planning Dialogue was also instituted between the two Foreign Ministries.

President Macron thanked Prime Minister Modi and the Government of India for the warm hospitality extended to him and his delegation and looked forward to welcoming him to France.

*Source: PTI*

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*The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Kootneeti Team*

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