

NEXT IAS

**DAILY EDITORIAL
ANALYSIS**

TOPIC

India-France 'Strategic
Partnership'

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INDIA-FRANCE 'STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP'

Context

- **The French President, Emmanuel Macron**, was the **chief guest at India's Republic Day** this year.

Historical Context

- The India-France "strategic partnership," was **established in 1998**, when French President Jacques Chirac was the chief guest at the Republic Day in 1998.
 - ♦ He declared that '**India's exclusion from the global nuclear order was an anomaly that needed to be rectified.**'
- Further, this 'Strategic Partnership' was tested when **India undertook its series of nuclear tests in May 1998**. France was **one of the first countries to open a dialogue with India** and displayed a greater understanding of India's security compulsions.
- Also, it was the **first P-5 country to support India's claim for a permanent seat** in an expanded and reformed UN Security Council.
- France was also quick to realise the **geopolitical focus shifting from the Euro-Atlantic to the Asia-Pacific** and decided on India as its preferred partner in the region.

India-France Strategic Partnership: A Multifaceted Alliance

- **Strategic convergence:** The **nuclear dialogue**, established in May 1998, grew into a broader strategic dialogue and was elevated to the level of the National Security Advisers.
 - ♦ From the original three pillars of **nuclear, space and defence**, the agenda gradually expanded to include **counter-terrorism, intelligence sharing and cyber-security issues**.
- **Defence and Security:** France is India's second-largest defence supplier, collaborating on fighter jets, submarines, and other military equipment.
 - ♦ The agreement for **36 Rafale aircraft**, was at an impasse, has been concluded.
 - ♦ Mr. Macron's Republic Day parade visit saw the conclusion of a **India-France Defence Industrial Road map** that fits in with the goal of atmanirbharta. Tata Advanced Systems Ltd. and Airbus concluded an agreement to set up a final assembly line by 2026 for H125 civilian helicopters.
- **Space and Nuclear Energy:** Cooperation in the space domain, though started in 1960 and halted afterwards due to export controls, has seen new vigour with ISRO and the French Space Agency (CNES) now work on joint missions.
- **Economy and Trade:** Bilateral trade and investment are growing, with joint ventures in sectors like infrastructure, renewable energy, and urban development.
 - ♦ There are **nearly 1,000 French companies in India** while nearly **150 Indian businesses** have established a presence in France.
- **Education:** One of the success stories has been the growing number of Indian students going to France for higher education.
 - ♦ A decade ago, it was **less than 3,000** and today it is upwards of **10,000**. The target is now 30,000 by 2030.
- **Global Cooperation:** Convergence has also evolved on global challenges such as climate change (ISA), reform of multilateral development institutions (UNSC) and Artificial Intelligence.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- **Government plus partnership:** The challenge for both countries has been to **take the partnership out of the government domains** into the commercial and civilian spaces.
- **Geopolitical Shifts:** Navigating the changing global landscape and the rise of new players necessitates continual adaptation.

- **Balancing strategic interests with economic competition** requires continuous dialogue and understanding.
- **Increasing competition** from other major powers necessitates further deepening the partnership.
- India-France has **different cultural backgrounds, languages, and societal norms**. These differences can sometimes lead to misunderstandings or miscommunication, making it important for both countries to bridge the cultural gap and promote cultural exchange and understanding.

Way Ahead:

- 'Strategic Partnership' **does not require convergence on all issues** but **sensitivity** to those differences which can be dealt amicably. This is where India-France ties, nurtured over the last quarter century, **reflect maturity and resilience**.
- The India-France strategic partnership also serves as a **model for North-South cooperation** and contributes to regional stability and global security.
- The partnership is expected to remain a key pillar of India's foreign policy and France's Indo-Pacific strategy. **Expanding cooperation in emerging sectors and addressing global challenges** will further strengthen the alliance.

Daily Mains Question

- Q.** Discuss the key areas of cooperation between India-France and how India-France 'Strategic Partnership' evolved over the time?



