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**DAILY EDITORIAL
ANALYSIS**

TOPIC

INDIA-FRANCE PARTNERSHIP 2.0

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Context

- The recent visit of the Prime Minister of India to France, including meetings with the French President on the **sidelines of the G-7 Summit in Evian** has reinforced the growing **India–France partnership** centred on technology, innovation, defence and strategic autonomy.

About India–France Relations

- India and France established diplomatic relations in 1947 and elevated ties to a **Strategic Partnership in 1998**.
- Over the years, the relationship has expanded beyond traditional pillars such as defence, civil nuclear cooperation and space to include emerging domains like Artificial Intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, digital technologies, clean energy, education and innovation.
- The partnership was further strengthened through the **India–France Horizon 2047 Roadmap**, the **Year of Innovation 2026**, and the **recently elevated ‘Special Global Strategic Partnership’**, reflecting a shared vision for a stable, multipolar and rules-based international order.

Key Features and Outcomes of India–France Partnership 2.0

- **Technology and Innovation:** France offers advanced capabilities in aerospace, AI, robotics and clean technologies, while India contributes strengths in frugal innovation, digital governance, start-up ecosystems and scalable technological solutions. Major developments are:
 - ◆ Joint inauguration of the **India–France Year of Innovation 2026**.
 - ◆ Launch of **‘Bharat Innovates’** in Nice, bringing together Indian start-ups, innovators and venture capital funds.
 - ◆ India’s participation in **VivaTech 2026**, Europe’s largest start-up and technology event.
 - ◆ Expansion of cooperation in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cybersecurity, Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), healthcare technologies, biotechnology, green technologies, creative economy and research.
- **Strategic and Economic Cooperation:** Recent bilateral engagements have produced several outcomes aimed at strengthening economic resilience and technological partnerships.
 - ◆ **Key Areas:** Supply-chain diversification, strategic technology cooperation, semiconductor and digital ecosystem collaboration, investment and venture capital partnerships, and expansion of trade and industrial cooperation.
 - ◆ India and France seek to build trusted economic partnerships that reduce vulnerabilities and promote sustainable growth as global supply chains undergo restructuring.
- **Defence and Space Cooperation:** Rafale fighter aircraft and Scorpene submarine projects have established France as one of India’s most reliable defence partners.
 - ◆ Increasing focus on co-design and co-development, defence industrial collaboration, indigenous manufacturing under Atmanirbhar Bharat, and maritime security in the Indo-Pacific.
 - ◆ India and France have a long-standing partnership between ISRO and CNES. Emerging areas include joint satellite development, space situational awareness, climate and ocean monitoring, and human spaceflight cooperation.
- **Cooperation in Civil Nuclear Energy:** Civil nuclear cooperation continues to be a critical pillar of bilateral relations. **Key areas:**
 - ◆ Progress on the **Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project**, expected to become one of the world’s largest nuclear power facilities.
 - ◆ Exploration of cooperation in Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), nuclear safety, and advanced reactor technologies.
- **Africa and the Global South:** India and France increasingly recognize Africa as an important area of strategic collaboration.

- ◆ **Scope of Cooperation:** Infrastructure development, capacity building, healthcare and digital connectivity, climate resilience, and maritime security in the Western Indian Ocean.
- ◆ **Shared Vision:** Both countries advocate greater representation of developing countries in global institutions and seek to amplify the voice of the Global South in international decision-making.
- **Strategic Autonomy in a Multipolar World:** A defining feature of India–France relations is the shared commitment to **strategic autonomy**.
 - ◆ Both countries seek independent foreign policy decision-making, issue-based partnerships, preservation of national interests, and support for a multipolar international order unlike alliance-based approaches.
 - ◆ It has enabled India and France to cooperate effectively despite global geopolitical tensions, including conflicts in Ukraine and West Asia.

India, France and the Future of Global Governance

- PM Modi's participation in the G-7 Summit reflects India's growing global relevance. Increasing discussions regarding the **expansion of the G-7 into a broader 'D10' (Democratic Ten) framework** have strategic implications.
- **Why the D10 Debate Matters?**
 - ◆ A potential D10 could bring major democracies into closer strategic coordination, address challenges related to technology governance and supply chains, and influence future global economic and security architecture.
- India's inclusion in such arrangements would enhance its role in shaping international norms and institutions.

What are the Concerns and Issues in India–France Relations?

- **Slow Project Implementation:** Delays in major projects, especially in civil nuclear cooperation.
- **Trade Below Potential:** Bilateral trade remains modest compared to the size of both economies.
- **Regulatory and Market Barriers:** Differences in standards and regulations can hinder deeper economic integration.
- **Defence Technology Transfer:** Need for greater progress in co-development and transfer of advanced technologies.
- **Limited People-to-People Connectivity:** Academic, cultural and mobility linkages require further strengthening.
- **Competition in Strategic Markets:** Both countries may occasionally compete in sectors such as defence exports and technology markets.

Way Forward: India, France and the Future of Global Governance

- **Deepen Technology Partnerships:** Strengthen collaboration in AI, semiconductors, quantum technologies, cybersecurity and digital governance.
- **Accelerate Defence Co-Production:** Move beyond buyer-seller relationships towards joint design, manufacturing and export of defence platforms.
- **Advance Clean-Energy Cooperation:** Fast-track cooperation in nuclear energy, hydrogen, renewables and climate technologies.
- **Strengthen Africa Outreach:** Develop joint development initiatives focused on health, education, connectivity and capacity-building.
- **Reform Global Institutions:** Work together to advocate reforms in the UN Security Council, multilateral development banks and global governance mechanisms.
- **Promote Innovation Ecosystems:** Encourage start-up partnerships, research collaboration and academic exchanges under the Year of Innovation framework.

Conclusion

- The India–France partnership is evolving from a traditional strategic relationship into a comprehensive technology and innovation-driven alliance.
- Both countries are increasingly collaborating in defence, space, nuclear energy, digital technologies and Global South initiatives anchored in mutual trust, strategic autonomy and shared democratic values.
- India and France can emerge as key stabilizing powers capable of shaping a more balanced, inclusive and resilient international order as geopolitical competition intensifies and the world transitions towards multipolarity.

Daily Mains Practice Question

[Q] India and France have transformed their bilateral ties from a traditional strategic partnership into a 'Special Global Strategic Partnership' driven by technology, innovation, defence and shared commitment to strategic autonomy. Examine the key pillars of the India–France partnership.

Source: TH

