



India-France Relations

Description

History :-

The French and Indian relationship goes back a long way. France maintained its colonial presence in India from the 17th century till 1954. The French were the last European people to arrive in India. They formed 'The French East India Company' in 1664 and established their factories in Surat and Masulipatnam. The French administrators in India had got involved in power-play with the Britishers and supported several kingdoms in their wars against the British Rule. Till the end, France retained its control over Pondicherry, Karikal, Yanam and Mahe with Madras Presidency under British Rule. Many Indian freedom fighters used to take refuge in the French establishments to avoid getting caught by the Britishers. After independence, a treaty of cession was signed by both the countries in 1956 and in 1962 France ceded to India full sovereignty over the territories it had under its control.

As usual, the French rule over the parts it held was exploitative in nature to the humans as well as resources.

Economics :-

India and France's economic relations are enmeshed because of stalled FTA negotiations with the EU. Trade is mainly concentrated in defence and space sector. India had a trade deficit of 1.62 billion dollars in 2017-18. Imports from France include aircraft and its parts, electrical and mechanical machinery, nuclear reactors and boilers etc. While exports to France consist of Nuclear reactors and boilers, Articles of Apparel and Clothing Accessories, Mineral Fuels, Mineral Oils and Products of Their Distillation etc.

France is cooperating with India on developing smart cities.

Defence :-

India and France share a very healthy relationship in this area. France has been a long supporter of India's nuclear programs. France has been a long-term supplier to the Indian Navy and Indian Air Force. France provided Mirage-2000s in the 1980s which were used in the Balakot strikes and is now providing the Rafale to IAF. Also, the P-75 Scorpene project is underway under which six Scorpene-class submarines are to be built in India under transfer of technology from France. We have been conducting regular bilateral Army (Shakti), Navy (Varuna) and Air Force (Garuda) exercises with the French Armed Forces.

Diplomacy :-

Both the countries are working together towards their ambition of multipolar world order. France is a staunch supporter of India's inclusion as a permanent member in UNSC. Both the countries jointly initiated the International Solar Alliance (ISA) of which all the UN countries are members. As France is a member of the EU, the relations are greatly affected by the EU regulations. India and the EU are on the same page on Iran's 2015 nuclear deal, India's stand against Pakistan and terrorism but with the EU gradually drifting towards China's BRI raise India's concerns.

Other Areas :-

- Nuclear Cooperation: France acknowledged India's need for nuclear tests and along with the US worked towards India obtaining NSG's clean waiver and thus integrating India in the global nuclear order. After the NSG waiver, France was the first country to enter into a civil nuclear deal with India.
- Space Cooperation: ISRO and CNES (French Space Organization) have been cooperating for a long time. France is a major supplier of the equipment for our space programs.

Conclusion :-

We have seen a very healthy relationship with France after independence and should continue the same and use this to strengthen our ties with the EU. It will be beneficial for us in all aspects especially when the Chinese are increasing their presence in Europe.

Your Turn...

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