

19th February 2026: DSC

India–France Special Global Strategic Partnership

International Relations • Strategic Autonomy • Indo-Pacific • High Technology

Source: NDTV



A. Context

French President **Emmanuel Macron** visited India to attend the **AI Impact Summit 2026** and inaugurate the **India–France Year of Innovation (2026)**.

During the visit, India and France upgraded their ties to a “**Special Global Strategic Partnership**”, setting a long-term cooperation framework extending to **2047**, coinciding with the centenary of India’s independence.

✦ Relevance

GS Paper 2 – International Relations

Strategic partnerships, Indo-Pacific, defence diplomacy, technology cooperation, multipolar world order.

B. What is the Special Global Strategic Partnership?

This diplomatic elevation marks a transition from sector-specific cooperation to a **comprehensive, future-oriented alliance** focused on global stability and shared strategic interests.

Core Pillars:

1 Strategic Autonomy

- Reinforcing sovereign decision-making free from bloc politics.
- Shared belief in multipolarity and independent foreign policy traditions.

2 Global Governance

- Joint efforts to address climate change, macroeconomic imbalances, global health, and multilateral reforms.
- Positioning as responsible democratic powers.

3 Security & Innovation

- Co-development in frontier technologies — AI, space, nuclear energy, defence systems.
- Building trusted and resilient supply chains in a fragmented global economy.

C. Evolution of India–France Relations

● Early Foundations (1947)

- Diplomatic ties established immediately after India's independence.
- Shared commitment to sovereignty and non-alignment.

● Strategic Breakthrough (1998)

- France became the first Western nation to sign a Strategic Partnership with India.
- Did not impose sanctions after India's nuclear tests.

● Civil Nuclear Cooperation (2008)

- First country to sign a civil nuclear agreement after India received the NSG waiver.

● Horizon 2047 Roadmap (2023)

- 25-year strategic roadmap aligning with India@100 vision.

● High-Level Reciprocity

- India's PM was Guest of Honour at Bastille Day (2023).
- President Macron attended Republic Day (2024).

D. Key Agreements Under the New Partnership

◆ **Year of Innovation 2026**

- High-impact collaborations in AI, healthcare, sustainability.

◆ **Defence Industrial Roadmap**

- Co-production of jet engines (Safran–HAL).
- Procurement of 26 Rafale-Marine aircraft.

◆ **Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)**

- Co-development of SMRs and AMRs to support India’s 100 GW nuclear goal.

◆ **Indo-Pacific Cooperation**

- Strengthening Triangular Development Cooperation in third countries.

◆ **AI & Digital Health**

- Joint research centre between AIIMS New Delhi and Paris Brain Institute.

◆ **Space Autonomy**

- Enhanced CNES–ISRO cooperation in human spaceflight, satellite launchers, space situational awareness.

◆ **Migration & Mobility**

- Visa-free airport transit pilot for Indian nationals.
- Target of 30,000 Indian students in France by 2030.

E. Challenges in the Partnership

▲ **Divergent Global Conflict Approaches**

- India’s calibrated stance on Ukraine differs from broader Western alignment.

▲ **Trade & Regulatory Barriers**

- India–EU FTA negotiations slowed by labor, environmental, and data standards.

▲ **Nuclear Project Delays**

- Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project stalled due to liability concerns.

▲ **Technology Transfer Sensitivities**

- Full ToT in jet engine technology remains politically sensitive.

▲ **Regional Instability**

- Middle East tensions threaten connectivity initiatives like IMEC.

F. Way Ahead

- Operationalize IMEC through early ministerial coordination.
- Democratize AI access for Global South countries.
- Intensify UNSC reform lobbying with French backing.
- Expand ISA-led green energy cooperation.
- Deepen people-to-people engagement via education mobility initiatives.

Conclusion

The Special Global Strategic Partnership signifies a shift from a transactional defence relationship to a collaborative global alliance. Through Horizon 2047 alignment, India and France aim to emerge as twin anchors of stability in an evolving multipolar order.

Mains Practice Question (10 Marks)

“India–France defence cooperation forms the backbone of their strategic partnership.” Discuss its significance for India’s national security.

Circular Economy in Agriculture

Sustainable Farming • Waste-to-Wealth • Climate Mitigation

Source: PIB

A. Context

The Government highlighted progress under the **Waste-to-Wealth Mission**, noting that the **GOBARdhan Scheme** now covers over 50% of India’s districts.



◆ **Relevance**

GS Paper 3 – Agriculture & Environment

Sustainable agriculture, climate resilience, waste management, rural economy.

B. What is Circular Economy in Agriculture?

A regenerative agricultural model where waste is minimized and resources are continuously reused, replacing the linear “take–make–dispose” approach.

Based on 6Rs:

Reduce • Reuse • Recycle • Refurbish • Recover • Repair

Transforms:

- Crop residues
- Animal manure
- Food waste



Into:

- Bio-CNG
- Compost
- Biochar
- Organic fertilizers

C. Key Data

- ~350 million tonnes agricultural waste annually.
- Potential: 18,000+ MW power generation.
- 979 operational biogas plants under GOBARdhan (Jan 2026).
- 60% of India's food waste occurs at household level.
- Circular economy projected trillion-dollar opportunity by 2050.

D. Importance

Soil Restoration

Biogas slurry improves soil carbon under ICAR guidelines.

Climate Mitigation

Methane capture reduces emissions; supports Net Zero 2070.

Farm Income Diversification

Crop residue sold for ex-situ management reduces stubble burning.

Water Security

Reuse of treated greywater under Jal Shakti Mission.

Resource Efficiency

Aligns with SDG 2 & SDG 12.

E. Key Initiatives

- GOBARdhan Scheme (CBG & manure)
- Crop Residue Management (42,000+ CHCs)
- Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (₹66,310 crore)
- Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Fund (₹15,000 crore)
- Swachh Bharat 2.0 & Jal Jeevan Mission

F. Challenges

- High capital requirements for bio-CNG plants.
- Logistical difficulties in biomass collection.

- Technology gaps in biochar and modular systems.
 - Behavioral inertia in stubble burning.
 - Market competition from subsidized urea.
-

Way Forward

- Integrate farmers into carbon credit markets.
 - Strengthen FPO-led waste clusters.
 - Promote R&D in engineered biochar.
 - Ensure policy parity for organic fertilizers.
 - Launch awareness campaigns under Jan Andolan model.
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Conclusion

Circular agriculture transforms environmental liabilities into economic assets. Scaling GOBARdhan and AIF will anchor India's sustainable and climate-resilient agricultural transformation.

Mains Practice Question (250 Words)

Explain the concept of circular economy and discuss its relevance in Indian agriculture.

India's First 'Bee Corridors' Along National Highways

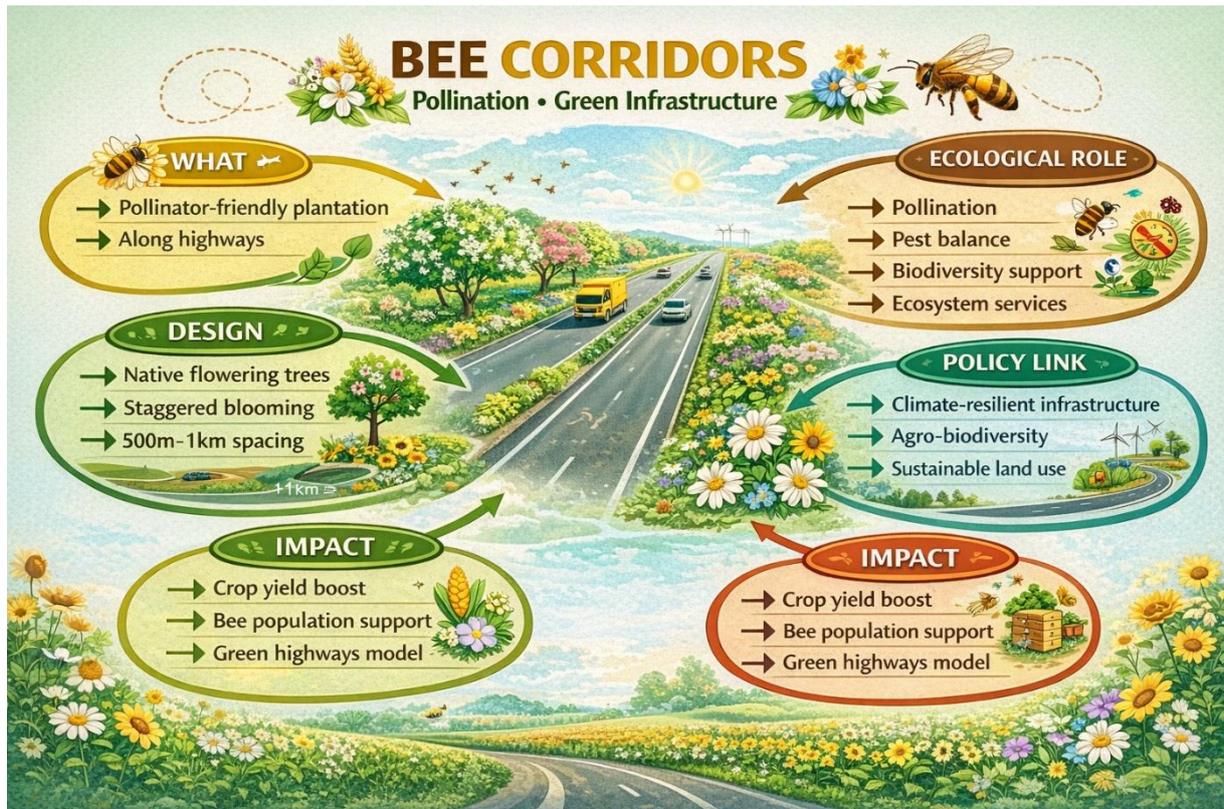
Biodiversity • Pollination Services • Climate-Sensitive Infrastructure

Source: PIB / NHAI

TAKSHASHILA

ESTD 2022

CREATING LEADERS OF TOMORROW



A. Context

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has announced the development of India's first dedicated '**Bee Corridors**' along selected National Highways.

This initiative integrates biodiversity conservation with highway plantation planning to reduce ecological stress on pollinators.

◆ Relevance

GS Paper III – Environment & Ecology

Biodiversity conservation, ecosystem services, climate-resilient infrastructure.

GS Paper III – Agriculture

Role of pollinators in crop productivity and food security.

Essay / Ethics

Balancing infrastructure development with ecological responsibility.

B. What Are Bee Corridors?

Bee Corridors are linear stretches of **pollinator-friendly vegetation** developed along highways.

They consist of flowering trees and shrubs designed to provide:

- Year-round nectar
- Continuous pollen sources
- Habitat support for bees and other pollinators

Aim:

Strengthen agricultural productivity and ecological balance by embedding biodiversity into public infrastructure.

C. Key Features

Native, Nectar-Rich Plantation Mix

Includes Neem, Karanj, Mahua, Palash, Jamun, Siris.

Staggered Blooming Cycle

Ensures seasonal continuity in flowering.

Strategic Spacing

Flower clusters planted every 500m–1 km, aligned with bee foraging range.

D. Significance

Agricultural Productivity

Pollinators contribute to ~75% of global food crops.

Climate-Resilient Infrastructure

Integrates ecosystem-based adaptation into transport projects.

Ecosystem Services

Enhances biodiversity, seed dispersal, and natural resilience.

Way Forward

- Scale bee corridors to railway and canal networks.
 - Integrate with National Mission on Pollinators.
 - Encourage community beekeeping initiatives near corridors.
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SAHI & BODH: AI Governance in Healthcare

Digital Health • Ethical AI • Data Governance

Source: PIB

A. Context

At the AI Impact Summit 2026, the Union Health Minister launched:

- **SAHI** – Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare for India
- **BODH** – Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health AI

Both initiatives aim to ensure safe and responsible AI integration in healthcare.

◆ Relevance

GS Paper 2 – Governance

Digital health, regulatory frameworks, privacy vs innovation.

GS Paper 3 – Science & Technology

AI governance, public health innovation.

B. SAHI Initiative

◆ What is SAHI?

A national governance roadmap for ethical, transparent, and accountable AI use in healthcare.

◆ Core Features

- Consent-based data usage
 - Algorithm transparency
 - Interoperability with ABDM
 - Multi-stakeholder collaboration
 - Long-term policy direction
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C. BODH Initiative

◆ What is BODH?

A benchmarking platform developed by IIT Kanpur & National Health Authority to evaluate AI tools before deployment.

◆ Core Functions

- Performance validation
 - Bias detection
 - Clinical relevance testing
 - Standardized evaluation framework
-

Significance

- Enhances public trust in digital healthcare.
- Positions India as a responsible AI governance leader.
- Strengthens DPI + AI integration.

📌 **80th Anniversary of the 1946 Royal Indian Navy Revolt**

Modern History • National Movement • Armed Resistance

Source: The Hindu

A. Context

February 18, 2026 marks 80 years since the **Royal Indian Navy Revolt (1946)**.

📌 **Relevance**

GS Paper 1 – Modern History

Post-Quit India phase, INA trials, final phase of freedom struggle.

B. Background

- Indian naval ratings faced racial discrimination and poor conditions.
 - Inspired by INA trials and nationalist momentum.
 - Racist officers like Arthur Frederick King intensified resentment.
-

C. Events (Feb 18–23, 1946)

◆ **Began at HMIS Talwar (Bombay)**

Hunger strike → Nationalist slogans.

◆ **Spread Rapidly**

- 78 ships
- 20 shore establishments
- ~20,000 ratings

◆ **Public Solidarity**

Workers, students joined protests.

Congress, League, Communist flags hoisted together.

◆ **Armed Suppression**

- British troops opened fire.
- ~200 civilians killed.
- Revolt ended Feb 23.

D. Significance

- Shook British confidence in armed forces loyalty.
- Demonstrated rare Hindu–Muslim unity.
- Accelerated British decision to transfer power.

📌 Beat the Heat Programme

Urban Climate Adaptation • Sustainable Cooling

Source: Indian Express

A. Context

30 cities in Maharashtra joined the global **Beat the Heat** programme during Mumbai Climate Week 2026.

📌 Relevance

GS Paper 3 – Environment

Climate adaptation, urban heat island effect.

B. What is Beat the Heat?

A global initiative under COP30 Presidency (Brazil), supported by UNEP’s Cool Coalition.

Core Components

- Heat risk mapping
- Urban greening
- Cool roofs & reflective surfaces
- Energy-efficient cooling tech
- Climate finance support

Significance

- Extreme heat causes more deaths than floods and storms combined.
- Urban heat islands can be 10°C hotter than rural surroundings.

🌐 G7 Summit 2026

Global Governance • Economic Coordination

Source: NDTV

A. Context

France invited India's PM to attend the 52nd G7 Summit in Évian (2026).

About G7

Members: US, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada

EU participates institutionally.

Key Functions

- Macroeconomic coordination
 - Climate leadership
 - Security dialogue
 - Development finance norms
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Significance

- Represents ~40% of global GDP.
 - Shapes global crisis response.
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AI-Preneurs of India

Innovation Ecosystem • Deep Tech • Startup Policy

Source: PIB

A. Context

Launched by Atal Innovation Mission (NITI Aayog).

What is it?

7th edition of Innovations For You series featuring 45 AI startups.

Key Themes

- Founder-first storytelling
 - 30+ sector coverage
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- Nationwide incubation support
- AI for social good

Significance

- Boosts global credibility of India's AI ecosystem.
- Strengthens public incubation platforms.

🌊 Ravi River – Mapping Focus

Indus System • Indus Waters Treaty • Hydrology

Origin

Near Rohtang Pass, Himachal Pradesh (~4,400m).
Formed by Budhil & Tantgari streams.

Course

- Flows through HP & Punjab.
- Forms part of India–Pakistan boundary.
- Enters Pakistan, joins Chenab.

Key Facts

- Length ~720 km (320 km in India).
- Eastern river under Indus Waters Treaty.
- Major dams: Chamera I–III, Ranjit Sagar.
- Shahpur Kandi Dam aims to utilize surplus waters.

19th February 2026: Daily MCQs

Q1. With reference to the India–France Special Global Strategic Partnership, consider the following statements:

1. France was the first Western country to sign a Strategic Partnership with India.
2. France imposed sanctions on India after the 1998 nuclear tests but later withdrew them.
3. The Horizon 2047 Roadmap aligns with the centenary of India's independence.

How many statements are correct?

- A) Only one
- B) Only two

- C) All three
- D) None

Answer: B

Explanation:

- 1 – Correct. France signed a Strategic Partnership in 1998.
- 2 – Incorrect. France did **not** impose sanctions after Pokhran-II.
- 3 – Correct. Horizon 2047 aligns with India@100 vision.

Q2. Which of the following correctly describes the SAHI initiative?

- A) A benchmarking platform for AI medical devices
- B) A governance roadmap for ethical AI in healthcare
- C) A subsidy scheme for AI startups in health-tech
- D) A global AI summit declaration

Answer: B

Explanation:

SAHI = Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare for India → governance framework.

Q3. BODH initiative primarily focuses on:

- 1. Bias detection in AI systems
- 2. Clinical validation of AI tools
- 3. Providing venture capital funding

Select the correct answer:

- A) 1 and 2 only
- B) 2 and 3 only
- C) 1 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A

Explanation:

BODH benchmarks AI tools; it does not fund startups.

Q4. Consider the following regarding the 1946 Royal Indian Navy Revolt:

- 1. It began at HMIS Talwar in Bombay.
- 2. It was led officially by the Indian National Congress.
- 3. It witnessed participation of nearly 20,000 naval ratings.

Which statements are correct?

- A) 1 and 3 only
- B) 2 and 3 only
- C) 1 and 2 only
- D) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A

Explanation:

Congress did not officially lead it; political leaders later urged restraint.

Q5. With reference to Bee Corridors, consider the following:

1. They are developed under the National Biodiversity Authority.
2. They involve staggered blooming cycles to ensure year-round nectar.
3. They integrate biodiversity planning into highway infrastructure.

Which statements are correct?

- A) 2 and 3 only
- B) 1 and 2 only
- C) 1 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A

Explanation:

Implemented by NHAI, not National Biodiversity Authority.

Q6. The “Beat the Heat” programme supported by UNEP focuses primarily on:

- A) Heat-related sports injury management
- B) Urban cooling and infrastructure adaptation
- C) Agricultural drought insurance
- D) Glacier melt mitigation

Answer: B

Explanation:

UNEP version targets urban cooling; WHO version focuses on sports heat safety.

Q7. Which of the following rivers is classified as an Eastern River under the Indus Waters Treaty?

1. Ravi
2. Beas
3. Sutlej

4. Chenab

Select the correct answer:

- A) 1 and 2 only
- B) 1, 2 and 3 only
- C) 2 and 4 only
- D) 1, 3 and 4 only

Answer: B

Explanation:

Eastern Rivers: Ravi, Beas, Sutlej.
Chenab is a Western River.

Q8. Under the Indus Waters Treaty, the Ravi River is allocated:

- A) Exclusively to Pakistan
- B) Jointly to India and Pakistan
- C) Exclusively to India
- D) Under neutral third-party control

Answer: C

Explanation:

Ravi is an Eastern River → exclusive use to India.

Q9. With reference to the G7, consider the following:

1. It was originally formed as G6 in 1975.
2. Russia remains a permanent member of G7.
3. The European Union participates institutionally.

Which statements are correct?

- A) 1 and 3 only
- B) 2 and 3 only
- C) 1 and 2 only
- D) All three

Answer: A

Explanation:

Russia was suspended in 2014.

Q10. Circular Economy in Agriculture aims to:

1. Replace chemical fertilizers entirely.

2. Convert agricultural waste into bio-CNG and compost.
3. Promote the 6R framework.

Select the correct answer:

- A) 2 and 3 only
- B) 1 and 2 only
- C) 1 and 3 only
- D) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A

Explanation:

It reduces but does not mandate complete elimination of chemical fertilizers.

Mains Practice Question: “India–France defence cooperation reflects India’s shift from buyer–seller relations to capability partnerships.” Analyse its strategic, technological, and industrial significance.

