

India, France join hands with in space cooperation, sign 3 deals

France’s Safran Space ties up with Hyderabad-based Dhruva Technologies in a pvt-sector agreement

PARIS

INDIA and France are stepping up cooperation in the space sector, with companies from the two countries signing three new agreements covering satellite launches, space surveillance and microsatellite technology, according to an official announcement.

The agreements, announced at the International Space Summit in Paris, include contracts worth more than 5 million euros between France’s Safran Space and Hyderabad-based Dhruva Space for technologies to be used in India’s planned 52-satellite space-surveillance constellation.

The new agreements come against the backdrop of more than five decades of space cooperation between India and France, built around the partnership between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and France’s space agency CNES.

The first edition of the International Space Summit is being held from September 9-10, bringing together governments, companies, space agencies and scientists.

The summit featured 51 announcements representing about 20 billion euros in contracts, investments and other commitments.

Safran Space signed contracts worth more than 5 million euros with Indian space company Dhruva Space to supply communication systems, inertial navigation units, optical payloads and ground stations for India’s planned SBS-III space-surveillance constellation.

The constellation is envisaged to deploy 52 satellites between 2027 and 2030, according to the announce-



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ment. The partnership is aimed at supporting India’s sovereign space capabilities and marks a further expansion of cooperation between French industry and India’s growing New Space sector.

The deal also builds on Safran’s long-standing involvement in India’s space programme, including its contribution to the Chandrayaan-III lunar mission and the expansion of its industrial presence in the country. In another major deal, French launch-services provider Ride! has signed an agreement to launch two satellites for TakeMeToSpace, an Indian company described as the country’s first designer of orbital data centres.

The agreement builds on

several years of cooperation between Ride! and Indian space companies, including the recent integration, launch and re-turn of a European atmospheric re-entry capsule aboard India’s Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), according to the summit announcements.

Separately, French space company U-Space and Indian firm AXIS-CADES have signed a commercial cooperation agreement to explore India’s microsatellite market and address growing commercial and institutional demand.

The partnership will follow a phased roadmap under India’s “Make in India” policy, combining French space technology with India’s industrial integration capabilities.

Cooperation between India and France in the space sector has expanded over the years to areas including Earth observation, space geodesy, human spaceflight, next-generation launch-vehicle technologies and planetary exploration, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). India and France have also established a Strategic Space Dialogue covering civil and defence space cooperation. The first such dialogue was held in Paris in June 2023, while the second was held in New Delhi in March 2024, according to the MEA.

India plays a key role as BRICS seeks an inclusive global order

India’s Chairship is guided by the theme of “Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability”

NEW DELHI

BRICS, which began as a boardroom acronym for four emerging markets, has grown into a geopolitical bloc spanning four continents as successive waves of membership pulled in oil states, African economies and Southeast Asian partners. At the centre of this expanding architecture sits India this year, chairing the grouping for a fourth time since its inception, according to an official factsheet on Thursday.

BRICS has emerged as a key platform for coordinating economic policy among major emerging economies. It serves as the principal forum where these nations shape a common position on global governance. Through sustained dialogue, it has become a channel for advancing the interests of the Global South within multilateral institutions.

Under its 2026 Presidency, India is set to host the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi on September 12-13, 2026. India’s Chairship is guided by the theme “Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability.” The theme reflects India’s focus on strengthening existing achievements and institutional effectiveness. It places development, sustainability and innovation at the heart of the agenda. It also highlights the aspirations of the Global South. India seeks to reinforce BRICS as a constructive and solutions-oriented forum.

Today, BRICS has expanded to 11 countries: Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and the UAE. Collectively, these members represent 49.5 per cent of the global population, 40 per cent of global GDP, and 26 per cent



Across successive summits, BRICS cooperation has progressively expanded to encompass strategic global issues and areas of practical collaboration. Its agenda covers terrorism, climate change, food and energy security, trade and agriculture. It also addresses labour and employment, telecommunications, international finance and the global economic situation

of global trade. The expansion of the bloc which took place in January 2024 was followed by the creation of a Partner Country category.

These figures underline their substantial demographic and economic weight. Its expanded membership has also widened its geographical reach across Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. This diversity brings together major markets, natural resources, technological capabilities and varied devel-

opment experiences. A major phase of expansion began in January 2024. Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE became full members. Indonesia joined

as the eleventh full member in January 2025. These accessions significantly expanded BRICS’ geographical and economic reach. The expansion was accompanied by the creation of a Partner Country category. Ten countries joined this framework during 2025: Belarus, Bolivia, Cuba, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Thailand, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

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issues and areas of practical collaboration. Its agenda covers terrorism, climate change, food and energy security, trade and agriculture. It also addresses labour and employment, telecommunications, international finance and the global economic situation. BRICS advocates for greater representation and equity in international institutions, including the WTO and global financial architecture.

These efforts seek to make global governance more inclusive, effective and responsive to contemporary challenges.

At BRICS Summit, Guterres to focus on multipolarity and UNSC reforms

UNITED NATIONS

UNITED Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will underscore the importance of multipolarity and the need to reform multilateral institutions, including the Security Council, to reflect contemporary realities when he addresses the BRICS Summit in India later this week.

Guterres will travel to New Delhi to attend the 18th BRICS Summit, to be held on September 12-13 in New Delhi.

He has been invited to address the Open Session on September 13 on the theme, ‘Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability: Shaping the Future for Inclusive Global Growth’.

In his remarks, the Secretary-General is expected to note that today’s economic, demographic, and geopolitical realities



are not those of 1945, and that countries represented at the summit speak for that changing reality,” the UN chief’s spokesperson Stephane Dujarric told reporters at the daily press briefing here on Wednesday. Guterres is also expected to “underscore that multipolarity can help bring balance to global systems and institutions”, but this would require reforms to multilateral institutions, including the Bretton Woods system and the Security Council, to reflect today’s realities, he said.

The call for Security Council reform has been a longstanding demand of India and several other countries, which argue that the composition of the

15-member body does not adequately reflect the geopolitical and economic realities of the 21st century.

India has been seeking a permanent seat on the Council as part of its campaign for comprehensive reform of the UN’s top decision-making body.

Guterres is expected to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and hold bilateral meetings with other officials attending the summit, Dujarric said.

India is the BRICS Chair for 2026. It is a founding member of BRICS and has previously held the chairship in 2012, 2016 and 2021. The country assumed its fourth BRICS chairship on January 1, coinciding with the group’s completion of 20 years since its establishment. The 18th BRICS Summit will bring together leaders of BRICS member and partner countries as well as outreach invitees.

Birtheright citizenship on focus as Republicans urge US Congress to act

WASHINGTON

THE citizenship rights of US-born children of temporary visa holders came under renewed scrutiny as Republican lawmakers advocated restrictions and Democrats said the 14th Amendment guaranteed citizenship at birth.

During a House Judiciary subcommittee hearing on birthright citizenship, Republicans urged Congress to act after the President Donald Trump’s executive order. Democrats argued that the court had settled the constitutional question.

Republican subcommittee chairman Chip Roy said Congress should define the phrase “subject to the jurisdiction thereof” in the amendment.

“It is up to Congress to define, subject to the jurisdiction thereof, to put a stop to birth tourism and to uphold the integrity of what it means to be an American citizen,”

Roy said.

Arguing that the amendment was not intended to grant automatic citizenship to children born to undocumented immigrants or temporary visitors, Roy said the Supreme Court had wrongly relied on its 1898 Wong Kim Ark decision.

That case involved the US-born child of immigrants who were legally and permanently domiciled in the country, Roy said.

Rosemary Jenks, co-founder and policy director of the Immigration Accountability Project, told the panel that the ruling did not prevent lawmakers from acting.

“The Supreme Court’s decision in *Barbara* overturned an executive order. It did not strip Congress of its constitutional plenary power over immigration and naturalisation,” Jenks said.

She urged Congress to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to establish exceptions for children born



Kansas Attorney General Kris Kobach asserted that Congress retained the authority to act. He said the Supreme Court had ruled against a broad executive order but had not declared every possible statute on the question unconstitutional

to undocumented immigrants and temporary residents.

Jenks proposed rules affecting non-immigrant visa holders seeking welfare benefits on behalf of their US-born children. She said such parents should be required to designate a US citizen or lawful permanent resident to receive the benefits for the

child. American citizenship is a precious commodity,” Jenks said. “Our government must zealously protect US citizenship and ensure it is only granted to aliens we have legally invited to permanently join our American community.”

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authority to act. He said the Supreme Court had ruled against a broad executive order but had not declared every possible statute on the question unconstitutional.

Kobach said a narrower law dealing with birth tourism could produce a different result before the court.

Democrats strongly disputed those arguments. Representative Mary Gay Scanlon, the subcommittee’s ranking Democrat, said children born in the United States to undocumented immigrants and visa holders were protected by the amendment.

“The American children of undocumented immigrants and the American children of visa holders are persons born here in America,” Scanlon said.

She said they were subject to US law from birth and had “an undeniable constitutional claim to the rights, duties and protections of that reciprocal relationship.”

UN urges for de-escalation of Hormuz, says ready to support all credible efforts

UNITED NATIONS

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is deeply concerned about the latest escalation over the Strait of Hormuz, said his spokesman.

“The secretary-general is deeply concerned by reports of further escalations in and around the Strait of Hormuz over the past days, including attacks against commercial vessels and threats of additional action against maritime and energy infrastructure,” spokesman Stephane Dujarric said.

Navigational rights and freedom of navigation in and around the Strait of Hormuz must be fully restored and



Navigational rights and freedom of navigation in and around the Strait of Hormuz must be fully restored and respected in accordance with international law, said UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric

respected in accordance with international law, said the spokesman.

“The UN recalls the secretary-general’s appeal to all concerned to exercise utmost restraint and refrain from actions and rhetoric that could further inflame an already volatile situation,” said the spokesman. “Any further escalation risks grave conse-

quences for civilians, regional stability, international peace and security, and the global economy.”

Guterres urged the parties to make full use of diplomatic channels and resolve issues through dialogue and negotiations, reports Xinhua news agency, quoting the spokesperson. The UN Secretariat is ready to support all

credible efforts aimed at de-escalation and a comprehensive and durable settlement, said Dujarric.

This came as the navy of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) said on Tuesday its forces captured one of the US Army’s “most modern, smart” unmanned submarines at the entrance of the Strait of Hormuz earlier in the day.

In a statement published on the IRGC’s official news outlet, Sepah News, the IRGC navy said the unmanned underwater vehicle was captured in a complex intelligence and operational operation. The submersible vehicle, identified as a Dive-

LD, is equipped with the world’s most modern surface vehicle technology, it said, noting that its images will be re-leased in the coming hours.

The IRGC also said in a separate statement on Tuesday that its air defence systems had shot down an MQ-9 Reaper drone over the Strait of Hormuz, according to Sepah News.

Following the IRGC’s announcement, the US military said in a statement that one of its underwater drones “malfunctioned” over a day earlier during a survey of regional waters, without mentioning whether the device was seized by Iran.

India continues to modernise nuclear arsenal, has 190 warheads: Report

WASHINGTON

INDIA’S nuclear arsenal is estimated at 190 warheads, which includes 30 additional warheads for new missiles under production, according to a US nonprofit policy think tank.

The Federation of American Scientists (FAS) derived the estimates from analyses of a combination of open sources, state-originating data and commercial satellite imagery.

“Based on available public information about its nuclear-capable delivery force structure and strategy, we estimate that India may have produced around 190 nuclear warheads,” according to the article titled ‘India’s Nuclear Weapons – 2026’ penned by FAS Nuclear Information Project Director Hans Kristensen. India’s nuclear arsenal includes over 160 warheads for operational launchers as well as additional warheads for new missiles in production, it said.

The article, published on Wednesday, noted that India continued to modernise its nuclear arsenal, with several new weapon systems fielded in recent years and several more under development to complement or replace existing nuclear-capable aircraft,

land-based delivery systems, and sea-based systems.

“We estimate that India may have produced enough military plutonium for 140 to 225 nuclear warheads and might have assembled up to 190. With more weapon systems in development, the country’s warhead stockpile will likely increase further,” it said.

India adopted the no-first-use doctrine after the Pokhran-II nuclear tests in 1998 and continues to adhere to the policy.

“India is committed to maintaining credible minimum deterrence and a posture of ‘no first use’ of nuclear weapons,” the government told Parliament recently.

The FAS article said as of

the beginning of 2026, the International Panel on Fissile Materials estimated India to have produced approximately 730 kg (plus/minus about 170 kg) of weapon-grade plutonium.

“Assuming approximately four kilograms of plutonium per warhead, this would theoretically be sufficient for producing anywhere between 140 and 225 nuclear warheads,” it said.

However, it said the calculation comes with some caveats due to several uncertainties, such as the warhead designs India has produced.

India’s 1998 nuclear tests reliably validated a fission design, but the country’s progress on boosted fission and thermonuclear weapon designs remains highly uncertain, the article said.

“Regardless of the warhead designs, it is unlikely that India has used all its plutonium to produce warheads, and it may have kept some in reserve,” the author noted.

The article stated that the size of India’s nuclear stockpile also depends on the number and types of launchers that can deliver them, as it is unlikely that it would produce significantly more warheads than these systems can launch.

