

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-2720
ANSWERED ON- 04/08/2023

BILATERAL TIES WITH FRANCE

2720. SHRIMATI SAJDA AHMED

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

(a) whether the trade deficit with France poses challenges and impacts the economic dynamics between the two countries and if so, the details thereof;

(b) the steps have been taken by the France and India for the potential progress of the International Solar Alliance; and

(c) the details of the efforts taken by India to streamline visa-related issues with France for Indian students and professionals?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN)

(a) Since FY 2020-21 India has trade surplus with France. During FY 2022-23, India has trade surplus of \$1.837 billion with France (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India).

USD in Million

Financial Year	Import	Export	Total	Trade Balance
2020-21	4,343.22	4,782.18	9,125.4	+438.96
2021-22	5,782.1	6,640.91	12,423.01	+858.81
2022-23	5,772.58	7,610.06	13,382.63	+1837.48

(b) The International Solar Alliance was jointly launched by India and France on 30 November 2015 at Paris on the sidelines of COP 21 UN Climate Change Conference. The Framework Agreement of the ISA came into force on 6th December 2017 after completion of the signing and ratification process by 15 countries. As on date, 94 countries, out of 116 signatories, have ratified the ISA Framework Agreement. During the recent visit of Prime Minister to France (13-14 July, 2023), India and France committed to development of solar energy in third countries including through the STAR-C programme (Solar Technology Application Resource-Centre), and other sustainable development solutions. India and France have also decided to create a solar academy in Senegal.

(c) As a part of further streamlining visa process for Indian students and professionals, India and France entered into the Partnership Agreement on Migration and Mobility, which came into force in 2021, aimed to enhance the mobility of students, graduates, academics, researchers, professionals and skilled workers. France presently provides one-year *authorization provisoire de sejour* (APS) for searching employment post completion of vocational/masters equivalent degree. During the Prime Minister's visit to France from 13-14 July, 2023, it was announced that France will issue five-year validity Schengen visas for Indians who have studied in France for at least one semester, provided that they reached Master degree level at a university recognized by the French university system and submit a fully acceptable file compliant with Schengen requirements. Both countries regularly promote exchanges and training of language teachers, and support visa facilitation for exchange programmes in this regard.
