

FRANCE, INDIA FOCUS ON ENERGY SECTOR

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Extending ties:Sushma Swaraj and French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian in New Delhi on Saturday.PTI

India and France are moving fast towards operationalising the nuclear power project at Jaitapur, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said on Saturday.

Addressing presspersons after holding discussions with her French counterpart, Ms. Swaraj said both sides were working in the field of energy and also intensifying international developmental and counter-terrorism cooperation.

Good progress

“Both countries are working to start the Jaitapur nuclear energy project as soon as possible. We are glad that NPCIL and EDF have made progress based on the Industrial Way Forward Agreement. Today we have adopted the Status of Progress for Implementation of Industrial Way Forward Agreement,” Ms. Swaraj announced after holding talks with visiting French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian.

The French Minister said the project, which involved building six EPR reactors, would also help the ‘Make in India’ project of the Government of India as it will include transfer of technology.

Common plans

Both sides declared common plans to work in development projects in the African continent.

“...We have decided to launch projects together in Africa, particularly in the area of sustainable development in connection with the International Solar Alliance. Our respective Joint Secretaries for Africa, who held operational consultations earlier this week, will soon submit a progress report on these joint projects,” Mr. Le Drian said.

The visiting Minister referred to the 10th anniversary of the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai, and reiterated that India and France would expand collaboration to prevent terrorism in the world. Mr. Le Drian’s visit, which coincided with the ongoing debate on the Rafale aircraft deal in India, also emphasised the softer side of bilateral ties with Ms. Swaraj highlighting that a large number of student exchanges with France would be possible by 2020.

“Both sides need to work if we want to take bilateral trade to the target of €15 billion,” Ms. Swaraj said.

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