



**THE STUDY**  
By Manikant Singh



## Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour

### Why in the news?

- ◆ Recently, Prime Minister Modi was conferred with the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, the highest French honour, by French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris.
- ◆ PM Modi was on a two-day state visit to France, and he was the Guest of Honour at the French National Day (Bastille Day) parade in Paris.

### What is the Legion of Honour?

- ◆ The National Order of the Legion of Honour, or simply The Legion of Honour is the highest French decoration, both civil and military, and is one of the most famous national honours in the world.
- ◆ The Order was established by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802, and has been presented for more than the past two centuries on behalf of the French Head of State to its most deserving citizens in all fields of activity. The motto of the Order is *Honneur et Patrie*, French for Honour and Fatherland.



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## What does the award entail?

- ◆ There is no material or financial benefit attached to the award. The Legion of Honour cannot be applied for; the government identifies the potential honourees.
- ◆ The award badge is a five-armed Maltese asterisk hung on an oak and laurel wreath. On the obverse is the effigy of the Republic and on the reverse two tricolour flags surrounded by the motto Honneur et Patrie. The colour of the ribbon is red.
- ◆ The award is described as a national emblem of France: It is “an invaluable source of pride for the recipients and their families and an example of civic service made public”.

## When can a foreigner be honoured with the Legion?

- ◆ Foreigners may be decorated with the Legion of Honour “if they have rendered services (e.g. cultural or economic) to France or supported causes defended by France, such as human rights, freedom of the press, or humanitarian action”.

## What is the award that Prime Minister Modi has got?

- ◆ The Legion of Honour has five degrees of increasing distinction: three ranks - Chevalier (Knight), Officier (Officer), and Commandeur (Commander) - and two titles - Grand Officier (Grand Officer) and Grand-croix (Grand Cross). The Prime Minister has been honoured with the highest French honour, akin to the Bharat Ratna in India.
- ◆ The Legion of Honour is worn before any other French or foreign insignia, on the left-hand side. With informal attire, lapel insignia (ribbon or rosette) is worn.

