

Knight of the Legion of Honour

April 5, 2023

In news— French Ambassador Emmanuel Lenain recently conferred the ‘Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur’ (Knight of the Legion of Honour) on Kiran Nadar.

Who is Kiran Nadar?

- Kiran Nadar is a Philanthropist and art collector.
- She is **chairperson of the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA), a philanthropic initiative in art and a trustee of the Shiv Nadar Foundation.**
- In 2022, KNMA joined hands with Alkazi Foundation, and the French Institute in India to create “Converges”, the largest exhibition of original pictures from French photographers ever shown in India.
- This exhibition was brought to India as part of “Bonjour India 2022”, a six-month cultural festival organised by France across India as a present for India’s 75th Independence anniversary.
- She has also played a vital role in advancing Indo-French cultural ties, and artistic cooperation.
- The highest French civilian award comes in recognition of Ms. Nadar’s outstanding contribution in the field of art, her commitment to providing greater access to culture both nationally and internationally, and her leading role in fostering Indo-French cultural ties.

About the award-

- It is the **highest civilian award given by the French Republic** for outstanding contribution to the recipient’s field of expertise, regardless of their nationality.
- It was **instituted in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte.**
- The order’s motto is Honneur et Patrie (“Honour and

Fatherland”), and its seat is the Palais de la Légion d’Honneur next to the Musée d’Orsay, on the left bank of the Seine in Paris.

- **The Legion has five classes, listed in descending rank:**
 1. Grand cross (limited to 80 members).
 2. Grand officer (200).
 3. Commander (1,000).
 4. Officer (4,000), and
 5. Knight, or chevalier (unlimited).
- According to Britannica, the membership of the Legion is remarkably egalitarian; both men and women, French citizens and foreigners, civilians and military personnel, irrespective of rank, birth, or religion, can be admitted to any of the classes of the Legion.
- Admission into this order, which can be conferred posthumously, requires 20 years of civil achievement in peacetime or extraordinary military bravery and service in times of war.

Other Indians who received it-

- The **first Indian to be awarded with the Legion of Honour was Maharaja Pratap Singh** of Idar in 1918.
- Since then, more than 40 Indians have been honoured with the award.
- The list of the recipients includes JRD Tata (1983), Satyajit Ray (1987), Pandit Ravi Shankar (2000), Zubin Mehta (2001), E Sreedharan (2005), Amitabh Bachchan (2007), Lata Mangeshkar (2007), Shah Rukh Khan (2014), Manish Arora (2016) Kamal Haasan (2016), Ratan Tata (2016), Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw (2016), and Azim Premji (2018), Shashi Tharoor, Shashank Subramanyam, (2022) renowned Flute Artist, Indian Classical Music among others.