

The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE

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No: 1521, Second Floor, H-Block, 5th Street, Anna Nagar, Chennai-80.

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India's maiden mission to Venus, which is scheduled for launch in March 2028, will embark on a 112-day journey to reach the planet.

ISRO plans to launch 112-day mission to the planet Venus in March 2028

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

India's maiden mission to Venus, which is scheduled for launch in March 2028, will embark on a 112-day journey to reach the planet. The ₹1,236-crore Venus Orbiter Mission (VOM) was recently approved by the Union Cabinet and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Tuesday revealed the targeted launch window for the mission.

According to the targeted launch window for VOM, the Earth departure date is scheduled on March 29, 2028, and the arrival date on Venus is July 19, 2028. VOM will be

launched by the Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM-3).

"LVM-3 has been identified as the candidate launch vehicle which will place the spacecraft in an Elliptical Parking Orbit (EPO) of 170 km x 36,000 km, 21.5 degrees inclination and Argument of Perigee (AOP) of 178 degrees. Minimum energy requirement (expressed as incremental velocity, V) for the launch opportunity that exists in 2028 for placing a spacecraft in an elliptical orbit of 500 x 60,000 km around Venus," ISRO said.

The agency said that after the cruise phase, Venus Orbit Injection (VOI) will be at 500 km x 60,000 km. "Aerobraking will be em-



LVM-3 is the chosen launch vehicle for the mission: ISRO

ployed for over a period of six to eight months from VOI to achieve the desired low altitude Science Orbit of 200 X600 km with an inclination of around 90 degrees, to carry out proposed science studies for a

period of five years," it said.

ISRO said that 19 payloads will be onboard VOM, of which 16 are Indian payloads, two are Indian and international collaborative payloads, and there would be one international payload. ISRO added that VOM will explore the planet's atmosphere, surface and its interaction with the sun.

"Key objectives include examining dust in the Venusian atmosphere, mapping its topography in high resolution, studying the solar X-ray spectrum near Venus, analysing Venusian airglow, and investigating sub-surface characteristics," it added.

About Venus Orbiter Mission (VOM):

- **Launch year:** Scheduled for March 2028.
- **Aim:** The mission aims to study Venus' atmosphere, surface, and solar interactions. Key objectives include mapping Venus' topography, analyzing atmospheric composition, studying solar X-rays, and examining subsurface characteristics.
- **Sanctioned budget:** ₹1,236-crore
- **Launch vehicle:** Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM-3)
- **Targeted window:** Earth departure date is scheduled on March 29, 2028, and the arrival date on Venus is July 19, 2028
- **Features:**

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- 19 payloads (16 Indian, 2 Indian-international, 1 international).
- Aerobraking technique to achieve a low-altitude science orbit (200×600 km).
- Five-year scientific exploration period post-orbit insertion.

Other Missions Related to Venus

▶ Past missions:

- Venera Series (1961-1984): Soviet Union's series of successful Venus missions including flybys, orbiters, landers, and balloons.
- Pioneer Venus (1978): NASA mission studying Venus' atmosphere, cloud structure, and surface using radar.
- Magellan (1989): NASA mission mapping Venus' surface using radar imaging.
- Akatsuki (2010): JAXA mission studying Venus' atmospheric circulation.

▶ Future missions:

- VERITAS (2026): NASA radar mission to map Venus' geology.
- DAVINCI (2026): NASA mission to study Venus' atmosphere.
- EnVision (2030s): ESA radar mission mapping Venus' surface.

LVM 3

▶ The LVM-3 has 3 stages,

- The first (or bottom most stage) is in the form of 2 S200 boosters straps to the sides of the rocket body. They combust a solid fuel called hydroxyl-terminated polybutadiene,
- The second stage is powered by Vikas Engines, which combust a liquid fuel, either nitrogen tetroxide or unsymmetrical dimethylhydrazine.
- The Uppermost final stage is Powered by a cryogenic engine. It combusts liquified hydrogen with liquified oxygen.

▶ It can lift upto 8 tonnes in low earth orbit.

▶ Some of the LVM 3 Missions launched are,

- OneWeb India-2 Mission
- OneWeb India-1 Mission
- Chandrayaan-2 Mission
- GSAT-29 Mission
- GSAT-19 Mission
- CARE Mission

The Geographical Indications Registry in Chennai has granted the GI tag to eight products from Assam, including traditional food items and several unique varieties of rice beer.

8 products used by Assam tribe, including traditional food items, granted GI tag

Sangeetha Kandavel
CHENNAI

The Geographical Indications Registry in Chennai has granted the GI tag to eight products from Assam, including traditional food items and several unique varieties of rice beer.

The application for Geographical Indication tags for three variants of rice beer was filed by the Bodo Traditional Brewers Association.

The first variant, 'Bodo Jou Gwran', has the highest percentage of alcohol (about 16.11%) compared with other varieties of rice beer made by the Bodo community.

The second variant, 'Maibra Jou Bidwi', known locally as 'Maibra Jwu Bidwi' or 'Maibra Zwu Bidwi', is revered and served as a welcome drink by most Bodo tribes. It's prepared by

A GI tag has been secured by 'Bodo Napham', a dish prepared with fermented fish

fermenting half-cooked rice (*mairong*) with less water, and adding a little 'amao' (a potential source of yeast) to it.

The third variant, called 'Bodo Jou Gishi', is also a traditionally fermented rice-based alcoholic beverage.

The GI filing states Bodo land has had a tradition of consuming rice beer since times immemorial. The Bodo people believe the drink originated from Lord Shiva, and it's taken as a medicine.

The Association of Traditional Food Products applied for four GI tags and obtained them successful-

ly. A GI tag has been secured by 'Bodo Napham', a dish prepared with fermented fish.

A GI tag has also been secured by 'Bodo Ondla', a rice powder curry flavoured with garlic, ginger, salt, and alkali.

The 'Bodo Gwkha' has also received the GI tag. Locally also known as 'Gwka Gwkhi', it's prepared during the Bwisagu festival.

The fourth speciality given the GI tag is 'Bodo Narzi', a semi-fermented food prepared with jute leaves (*Corchorus capsularis*), a rich source of Omega 3 fatty acids, vitamins and essential minerals, including calcium and magnesium.

The 'Bodo Aronai', a small, beautiful cloth, also has the GI tag following the application by the Association of Traditional Bodo Weavers.

- ▶ The first variant, 'Bodo Jou Gwran', has the highest percentage of alcohol (about 16.11%) compared with other varieties of rice beer made by the Bodo community.
- ▶ The second variant, 'Maibra Jou Bidwi', known locally as 'Maibra Jwu Bidwi' or 'Maibra Zwu Bidwi', is revered and served as a welcome drink by most Bodo tribes. It's prepared by fermenting half-cooked rice (*mairong*) with less water, and adding a little 'amao' (a potential source of yeast) to it.

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- The fourth speciality given the GI tag is 'Bodo Narzi', a semi-fermented food prepared with jute leaves (*Corchorus capsularis*), a rich source of Omega 3 fatty acids, vitamins and essential minerals, including calcium and magnesium.
- The 'Bodo Aronai', a small, beautiful cloth, also has the GI tag following the application by the Association of Traditional Bodo Weavers.

Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

➤ About:

- A GI tag is a name or sign used on certain products that correspond to a specific geographical location or origin.
- The GI tag ensures that only the authorised users or those residing in the geographical territory are allowed to use the popular product name.
- It also protects the product from being copied or imitated by others.
- A registered GI is valid for 10 years.
- GI registration is overseen by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

➤ Legal Framework and Obligations:

- The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 seeks to provide for the registration and better protection of geographical indications relating to goods in India.
- It is governed and directed by the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).
- Furthermore, the significance of protecting industrial property and geographical indications as integral components of intellectual property is acknowledged and emphasised in Articles 1(2) and 10 of the Paris Convention.

France appreciates Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiatives to advance peace, French President Emmanuel Macron said on Tuesday, while meeting National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, who was in Paris for the India-France Strategic Dialogue.

India and France discuss defence cooperation and efforts to advance peace

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

France appreciates Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiatives to advance peace, French President Emmanuel Macron said on Tuesday, while meeting National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, who was in Paris for the India-France Strategic Dialogue.

Mr. Doval also discussed India's plans to procure French planes and submarines for the Navy during talks with his counterpart, the French President's Diplomatic Adviser Emmanuel Bonne, as well as French Armed Forces Minister Sebastien Lecornu. Sources have confirmed that France had agreed to a "significant reduction" in the cost of 26 Rafale-M fighters.

"[Mr. Doval] reiterated



National Security Adviser Ajit Doval with French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris on Tuesday. PTI

the commitment to implement the Horizon 2047," the Indian Embassy in France said in a post, adding that Mr. Macron had "stressed the value of India and France's efforts to advance peace and address global challenges; appreciated Mr. Modi's initiatives". While the reference to the peace initiatives is mainly in relation to the

Russia-Ukraine conflict, and New Delhi's efforts to mediate between Kyiv and Moscow, the NSA's visit came even as Israel announced its ground invasion of Lebanon. In the past few days, Mr. Macron has spoken to the U.S. President Joe Biden, asking him to put pressure on Israel to stop its advances into Lebanon.

Major Areas of Cooperation between India and France

► Pillars of Relationship:

- India and France share long-standing cultural, trade and economic linkages. The India-France strategic partnership, signed in 1998, has gathered significant momentum over time and has today evolved into an even closer multifaceted relationship that spans diverse areas of cooperation.

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➔ **Both countries have held on to three pillars in the relationship:**

- Mutual respect for non-interference in internal matters.
- A firm commitment to strategic autonomy and non-alignment.
- A shared stance of refraining from involving each other in respective coalitions and alliances.

➔ **Defence Partnerships:**

- At the core of the Indo-French relationship is the defence partnership; France comes across as a far more willing and generous partner when compared to other western countries.
- Starting with the Rafale deal to the acquisition of 26 Marine versions of Aircraft, the French have been willing to give the Indians some of their best defence systems.
- The technology transfers by France have already helped India construct six Scorpene-class submarines with another three now being procured to boost the navy's falling numbers.
- Joint Exercises: Exercise Shakti (Army), Exercise Varuna (Navy), Exercise Garuda (Air Force).

➔ **Similarity in Stand on NATO+ (Plus):**

- France announced publicly that it disapproves of a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)-plus (NATO+) partnership plans, that would see the Trans-Atlantic alliance build direct ties with Japan, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and even India.
- India has also rejected the plan saying that NATO "is not a template that applies to India".

➔ **Economic Cooperation:**

- Bilateral trade between the two countries reached a new peak at USD 13.4 billion in 2022-23, with exports from India crossing USD 7 billion.
- France is the 11th largest foreign investor in India, with a cumulative investment of USD 10.49 billion from April 2000 to December 2022.

➔ **Cooperation at International Forum:**

- France supports India's bid for permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council as well as its entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

➔ **Climate Cooperation:**

- Both countries are concerned about climate change, and India has supported France in the Paris Agreement expressing its strong commitment to mitigating the effects of climate change.
- Both countries, as part of their joint efforts on climate change, launched the International Solar Alliance in 2015.

Challenges Between India-France Relations

➔ **FTA and BTIA Stagnation:**

- The absence of an FTA (Free Trade Agreement) between France and India hinders the maximisation of their trade potential.
- Additionally, the slow progress on the India-EU Broad-Based Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) further compounds the challenges in fostering comprehensive economic cooperation.

➔ **Differing Defense and Security Priorities:**

- Despite a strong defense partnership, differences in priorities and approaches can influence defence and security cooperation.

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- India's regional focus and its "non-aligned" policy may at times clash with France's global interests.
- ➔ **Intellectual Property Rights Concerns:**
 - France has raised concerns about India's inadequate protection of intellectual property rights, impacting French businesses operating within India. This presents a challenge to fostering a conducive environment for bilateral trade.
- ➔ **Trade Imbalance and Dominance of Defense Products:**
 - Although France is India's 11th trade partner, there is a notable trade imbalance.
 - The dominance of defence products in the trade relationship poses challenges for diversification and achieving a more balanced economic exchange.
- ➔ **Barriers to Indian Products in France:**
 - India has faced challenges in exporting its products to France, particularly in the context of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures. This can act as a discouragement to Indian products entering the French market.
- ➔ **Student Mobility:**
 - While the French President announced plans to welcome 30,000 Indian students to France, issues related to student mobility, including visa processes and cultural integration, may pose challenges to realising this goal.
- ➔ **Human Trafficking Concerns:**
 - Instances such as the Nicaragua flight case involving human trafficking raise concerns and underscore the need for enhanced cooperation in addressing transnational crimes and ensuring the safety and well-being of individuals.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has introduced six new regulations aimed at reducing retail participation in the high-risk Futures and Options (F&O) market.

F&O spike: SEBI to step in to guard investors

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator SEBI is expected to take measures regarding the Futures and Options (F&O) segment very soon, in a bid to enhance investor protection, a senior official said on Tuesday.

In addition, SEBI has urged the government to introduce tax breaks for subscribers of municipal bonds, which are crucial for funding infrastructure development.

The regulator will make a case for a tax break for municipal bonds during a meeting with the finance commission, the regulator's whole time member Ashwani Bhatia said here.



Since 1997, municipalities have raised ₹2,700 crore through bonds for infrastructure projects.

Talking about F&O, Mr. Bhatia said, "SEBI is very soon going to do something about F&O". In its consultation paper, the regulator had suggested to revise the minimum contract size for index derivatives in two phases, considering market growth.

About F&O:

- ▶ Futures and Options (F&O) are derivative financial instruments that derive their value from an underlying asset, such as stocks, commodities, or indices.

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- ▶ They are widely traded in the Indian stock market, primarily on exchanges like the National Stock Exchange (NSE) and the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE).
- ▶ Understanding F&O is crucial for investors looking to hedge risks, speculate, or enhance portfolio strategies.
- ▶ In India, F&O trading is regulated by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

What are Derivatives?

- ▶ Derivatives are financial contracts whose value is dependent on an underlying asset, which can be equities, indices, commodities, or currencies.
- ▶ F&O are the two most popular types of derivative contracts in India.

About Futures:

- ▶ A futures contract is a legal agreement to buy or sell an asset at a predetermined price at a specified future date.
- ▶ Both the buyer and the seller are obligated to complete the transaction at the agreed price, regardless of the current market value at the time of the contract's maturity.

Key Features:

- ▶ **Standardized Contracts:** Futures contracts are standardized in terms of quantity, quality, and delivery time.
- ▶ **Leverage:** Investors can trade large amounts of assets by putting down a fraction of the value, known as margin. This offers leverage but also increases risk.
- ▶ **Mark-to-Market:** Futures contracts are marked to market daily, meaning profits and losses are calculated at the end of each trading day.
- ▶ **Settlement:** In India, most futures contracts are settled in cash, but certain commodity futures might involve physical delivery.

Example:

- ▶ If you buy a Nifty 50 futures contract at 19,000 and the market rises to 19,500 by the contract's expiry, you profit ₹500 per unit.
- ▶ Conversely, if the market drops to 18,500, you incur a loss of ₹500 per unit.

About Options:

- ▶ Options contracts give the holder the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell an asset at a predetermined price before or on the contract's expiry date. There are two types of options: Call options and Put options.

Call Option:

- ▶ A call option gives the buyer the right to purchase the underlying asset at a fixed price within a specified time frame. This is used when investors expect the price of the asset to increase.

Put Option:

- ▶ A put option gives the buyer the right to sell the underlying asset at a predetermined price within a specific time frame. Investors use this when they expect the asset's price to fall.

Premium:

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- ▶ In both call and put options, the buyer pays a premium to the seller (writer) for the right to exercise the option. The premium is the cost of purchasing the option.

Example:

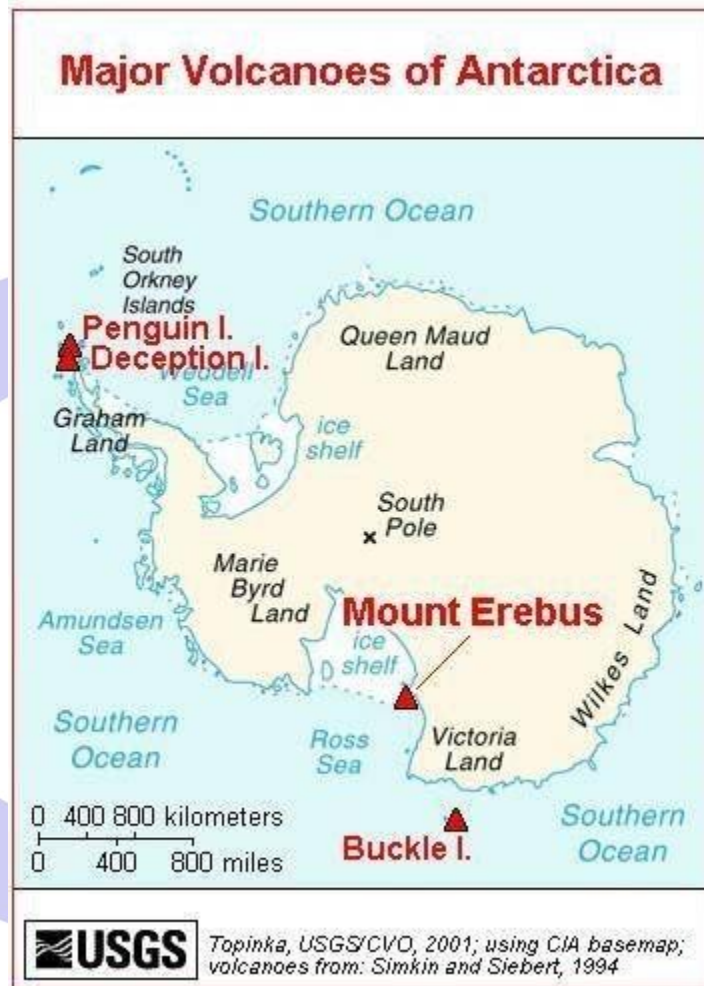
- ▶ **Call Option:** Suppose you purchase a call option on Reliance stock with a strike price of ₹2,500. If Reliance's stock price rises to ₹2,700 before the option's expiry, you have the right to buy it at ₹2,500, gaining ₹200 per share.
- ▶ **Put Option:** If you buy a put option for the same stock with a strike price of ₹2,500, and the price drops to ₹2,300, you can sell it at ₹2,500, making a profit of ₹200 per share.

Sebi Tightens F&O Rules:

- ▶ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has introduced six new regulations aimed at reducing retail participation in the high-risk Futures and Options (F&O) market. The changes include:
 - Raising the minimum contract value to ₹15 lakh,
 - Requiring upfront payment of options premium,
 - Limiting weekly expiries to one per exchange, and
 - Increasing margins as contracts approach expiry.
- ▶ The regulations will be implemented in phases, with the first set of changes, including higher contract sizes and a 2% rise in loss margin for short options on expiry day, taking effect on November 20, 2024.
- ▶ Additional measures like the removal of calendar spread benefits will begin on February 1, 2025, and intra-day position limit monitoring will start from April 1, 2025.
- ▶ These actions follow concerns raised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Finance Ministry about retail investors losing substantial household savings in speculative F&O trades.
- ▶ A SEBI study revealed that 93% of retail traders suffered losses averaging ₹2 lakh in the past three financial years, contributing to a total net loss of ₹1.81 trillion between FY22 and FY24.
- ▶ While the regulations aim to enhance market risk management and curb speculative behavior, brokerage firms and stock exchanges are expected to face a reduction in F&O trading volumes by 30-40%.

Location In News : Mount Erebus

Mount Erebus in Antarctica, the southernmost active volcano, stands out by not only being active in the extreme cold but also emitting micro-crystals of gold.



About Mount Erebus:

- **Location:** Ross Island, Antarctica; southernmost active volcano on Earth.
- **Volcano type:** Stratovolcano, characterized by a conical shape formed from layers of lava and ash.
- **Discovery:** Discovered in 1841 by British explorer Sir James Clark Ross, named after his ship HMS Erebus.
- **Elevation:** Stands at 3,792 meters (12,441 feet), the second-highest volcano in Antarctica.
- **Lava lake:** Known for its persistent lava lake, active since at least 1972, one of the few long-lived lava lakes globally.
- **Eruptions:** Features Strombolian eruptions, with occasional ejection of molten lava bombs.
- **Proximity to research stations:** Monitored closely due to its proximity (40 km) to McMurdo Station (U.S.) and Scott Base (New Zealand).

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In France, a summit for diplomacy, tech and diversity

France will host over 100 Heads of states and government and high-ranking officials for the 19th Francophonie Summit on October 4-5, 2024. The summit will take place in Paris and in Villers-Cotterêts, a city where, in 1539, King François I declared French as the country's official language. It will deal with a number of key international questions that also matter to many non-French-speaking countries, and especially to India. These include the renewal of multilateralism; and major digital issues linked to the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as well as the need to promote cultural and linguistic diversity.

As the famous Senegalese President and poet Léopold Sédar Senghor said, "Francophonie is the integral Humanism." One of the key messages of the summit will be that: far from being barriers or creating divides, multilingualism and cultural diversity foster mutually beneficial exchanges and collective thinking, and, as such, should be cherished. I have every reason to believe that this spirit, shared by 321 million French speakers across the world, including Puducherry (India), also resonates with India's own priorities.

Reducing the divide

Founded in 1970, the l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (the International Organization of La Francophonie) is an institution organising relations between countries that use the French language. Prominent statesmen such as Léopold Sédar Senghor, Habib Bourguiba (Tunisia), Hamani Diori (Niger) and Norodom Sihanouk (Cambodia) were among its founding fathers.

The aim of the organisation is to promote the French language and cooperation between its 88 Member States and Governments (54 full-fledged members, seven associate members and 27 observer members). This aim is enshrined in the Charter of La Francophonie, adopted in 1997 at the Hanoi Summit. From the outset, the organisation has been a forum of discussions and projects between countries boasting diverse



Thierry Mathou
the Ambassador of France to India

The 19th Francophonie Summit has priorities that will resonate with those of India's

cultures, economic and geographic situations as well as different political orientations. Francophonie has been promoting democracy, peace, prosperity with the idea of reducing any so-called "North/South divide" as well as bolstering cultural and linguistic diversity. Today, La Francophonie also provides a cooperation framework for key global issues such as digital technology, gender equality, and economic matters, under the leadership of Secretary General Louise Mushikiwabo, former Rwandan Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Renewing multilateralism

In the face of a fragmented world, the Summit, which takes place every two years under the leadership of a rotating host country, is meeting to decide on the main orientations of the organisation. For the first time in 33 years, the summit will be hosted by France. Upholding "Create, Innovate and do Business in French", the theme, a new method of discussion will be followed during the Summit. Civil society stakeholders will be able to exchange more directly with summit officials to promote solutions and explore new avenues for cooperation.

Heads of states and high-ranking officials will deliberate in Paris on how to renew multilateralism. As France's President Emmanuel Macron has stated in his speech at the 79th United Nations General Assembly, the renewal of multilateralism implies that we must change the governance composition of our main institutions. This is the reason why France supports the bid by India and other G-4 nations for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council. We need to make our international institutions more efficient, which also means making them more representative. Beyond that, we need to work on a common financial agenda and to thoroughly reform the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

As President Macron has pointed out: "These institutions were conceived, designed and

calibrated at a time when the challenges were not the same, when the world economy was not the same size, when demographics had nothing to do with it. We need to give these institutions the capacity to act to finance the projects that the countries of the South need. This reform is imperative for our collective credibility." As we need to build an agenda that allows us to tackle climate change, biodiversity preservation, global health issues, as well as reduce inequalities, France believes that La Francophonie can make an important contribution in this regard.

A focus on digital technology

The summit will also have a major focus on digital technology at a time when AI is proliferating in our societies. AI tools have raised new questions about the protection of creation and the promotion of diversity. Platforms must be able to enforce citizens' rights in their own language, while AI can also become a tremendous asset for French and all other languages, by facilitating translation. As it is one of the civilizational challenges of our century, France will follow up on these deliberations by hosting the AI Action Summit in February 2025.

On the margins of this summit, the first FrancoTech Fair, a major event that will bring together more than 150 exhibitors from various nations to discuss pressing challenges of our times, will be held. Topics will include opportunities and challenges in developing AI; energy transition; education, and, more broadly, human capital development. For young Indian innovators with international ambitions, this event will offer opportunities with Francophone actors from around the globe.

Multilateralism, innovation, AI, cultural and linguistic diversity. I believe that all these La Francophonie topics are of shared interest and importance for France and India. The Paris AI Action Summit in 2025 as well as the India-France Year of Innovation that will be launched in 2026 will be important moments to push forward new collective solutions in these fields.

GS Paper 02 : International Relations : Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and agreements involving India

(UPSC CSE (M) GS-2 2022) : How will the I2U2 (India, Israel, UAE and USA) grouping transform India's position in global politics? (150 w /10 m)

UPSC Mains Practice Question : Discuss the importance and obstacles in Indo-French relations. Propose measures for enhancing their collaboration. (150 w /10 m)

Context :

- The ageing population in India and China presents both challenges and opportunities.
- Rising health-care needs, financial insecurities, and digital exclusion are key concerns that need reform.
- Addressing these issues through health care, economic support, digital inclusion, and the development of a "silver economy" can ensure better quality of life for the elderly.

Introduction

- France will host over 100 Heads of states and government and high-ranking officials for the 19th Francophonie Summit on October 4-5, 2024.
- The summit will take place in Paris and in Villers-Cotterêts, a city where, in 1539, King François I declared French as the country's official language.
- It will deal with a number of key international questions that also matter to many non-French-speaking countries, and especially to India.
- These include the renewal of multilateralism; and major digital issues linked to the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) as well as the need to promote cultural and linguistic diversity.

Francophonie and Cultural Diversity

- As the famous Senegalese President and poet Léopold Sédar Senghor said, "Francophonie is the integral Humanism."
- **The key messages of the summit:** will be that: far from being barriers or creating divides, multilingualism and cultural diversity foster mutually beneficial exchanges and collective thinking, and, as such, should be cherished.

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- ➔ **Matching India's interest:** I have every reason to believe that this spirit, shared by 321 million French speakers across the world, including Puducherry (India), also resonates with India's own priorities.

Reducing the divide

- ➔ **About the organisation:** Founded in 1970, the l'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (the International Organization of La Francophonie) is an institution organising relations between countries that use the French language.
- ➔ **Renowned founding members:** Prominent statesmen such as Léopold Sédar Senghor, Habib Bourguiba (Tunisia), Hamani Diori (Niger) and Norodom Sihanouk (Cambodia) were among its founding fathers.

Key goals of the organisation

- ➔ **Promoting French:** The aim of the organisation is to promote the French language and cooperation between its 88 Member States and Governments (54 full-fledged members, seven associate members and 27 observer members).
 - This aim is enshrined in the Charter of La Francophonie, adopted in 1997 at the Hanoi Summit.
- ➔ **Inclusive organization:** From the outset, the organisation has been a forum of discussions and projects between countries boasting diverse cultures, economic and geographic situations as well as different political orientations.
- ➔ **Promoting democracy:** Francophonie has been promoting democracy, peace, prosperity with the idea of reducing any so-called "North/South divide" as well as bolstering cultural and linguistic diversity.
- ➔ **Promoting Cooperation:** Today, La Francophonie also provides a cooperation framework for key global issues such as digital technology, gender equality, and economic matters, under the leadership of Secretary General Louise Mushikiwabo, former Rwandan Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Renewing multilateralism

- ➔ **Conducting summits:** In the face of a fragmented world, the Summit, which takes place every two years under the leadership of a rotating host country, is meeting to decide on the main orientations of the organisation.
- ➔ **France's first time:** For the first time in 33 years, the summit will be hosted by France.
- ➔ **Theme and vision of the summit:** Upholding "Create, Innovate and do Business in French", the theme, a new method of discussion will be followed during the Summit.
 - Civil society stakeholders will be able to exchange more directly with summit officials to promote solutions and explore new avenues for cooperation.
- ➔ **Focusing on multilateralism:** Heads of states and high-ranking officials will deliberate in Paris on how to renew multilateralism.

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- ➔ As France's President Emmanuel Macron has stated in his speech at the 79 United Nations General Assembly, the renewal of multilateralism implies that we must change the governance composition of our main institutions.
- ➔ **France favouring India:** This is the reason why France supports the bid by India and other G-4 nations for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council.

Renewing multilateralism

- ➔ **Tackling multiple challenges:** As President Macron has pointed out: "These institutions were conceived, designed and calibrated at a time when the challenges were not the same, when the world economy was not the same size, when demographics had nothing to do with it."
- ➔ **Capacity building and finance:** We need to give these institutions the capacity to act to finance the projects that the countries of the South need. This reform is imperative for our collective credibility."
- ➔ **Environmental focus:** As we need to build an agenda that allows us to tackle climate change, biodiversity preservation, global health issues, as well as reduce inequalities, France believes that La Francophonie can make an important contribution in this regard.

A focus on digital technology

- ➔ **Digital boost:** The summit will also have a major focus on digital technology at a time when AI is proliferating in our societies.
- ➔ **Promoting Diversity:** AI tools have raised new questions about the protection of creation and the promotion of diversity.
- ➔ **Cater to Rights:** Platforms must be able to enforce citizens' rights in their own language, while AI can also become a tremendous asset for French and all other languages, by facilitating translation.

As it is one of the civilizational challenges of our century, France will follow up on these deliberations by hosting the AI Action Summit in February 2025.

Way forward: Opportunities for India

- ➔ On the margins of this summit, the first FrancoTech Fair, a major event that will bring together more than 150 exhibitors from various nations to discuss pressing challenges of our times, will be held.
- ➔ Topics will include opportunities and challenges in developing AI; energy transition; education, and, more broadly, human capital development.
- ➔ For young Indian innovators with international ambitions, this event will offer opportunities with Francophone actors from around the globe.

Conclusion

- ➔ Multilateralism, innovation, AI, cultural and linguistic diversity, the La Francophonie topics are of shared interest and importance for France and India.
- ➔ The Paris AI Action Summit in 2025 as well as the India-France Year of Innovation that will be launched in 2026 will be important moments to push forward new collective solutions in these fields and ensure a more inclusive society

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