France makes Narayana Health founder Dr Devi Shetty a Knight of the National Order of Merit (5 Nov)

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News

Cardiac surgeon Dr Devi Prasad Shetty, founder and chairman of Narayana Health, was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre national du Mérite (Knight of the National Order of Merit) by France. The Consulate General of France in Bengaluru conferred it at a ceremony on 5 November 2026; Consul General Marc Lamy praised his generosity and support. He was recognised for helping the French community in Bengaluru during the Covid-19 pandemic with vaccination drives and logistical support. The order is one of France's two national orders and ranks second only to the Legion of Honour. 'It was a difficult time for everyone, and standing together and helping one another was what mattered most,' Shetty said. Note: the honour is the National Order of Merit, not the Legion of Honour.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Honour	Chevalier (Knight), Ordre national du Mérite
Date, place	5 Nov 2026, Bengaluru
Conferred by	Consulate General of France, Bengaluru (CG Marc Lamy)
Reason	Covid-19 support to the French community

Point	Details
Order founded	3 Dec 1963 – Charles de Gaulle
Grades	3 grades (Knight, Officer, Commander) + 2 dignities (Grand Officer, Grand Cross)
France's highest order	Legion of Honour (1802, Napoleon)
Shetty – Indian awards	Padma Shri (2004), Padma Bhushan (2012)

Background

- Dr Devi Shetty was born on 8 May 1953 at Kinnigoli in Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka; he studied at Kasturba Medical College, Mangaluru, and earned the FRCS in England. He operated on Mother Teresa after her heart attack in Kolkata and later served as her personal physician. In 2001 he founded Narayana Hrudayalaya at Bommasandra, Bengaluru – today's Narayana Health group – known worldwide for its high-volume, low-cost cardiac surgery model.
- Yeshasvini: Shetty designed, with the Karnataka government, this low-cost health-insurance scheme for poor farmers who are members of cooperatives. Covering major surgery for a small premium, it is seen as a forerunner of later government health-insurance schemes.
- French honours: the Legion of Honour, founded by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802, is France's highest award. The National Order of Merit, created by Charles de Gaulle on 3 December 1963, is the second national order; it replaced several smaller ministerial orders and is given to French citizens and foreigners for civil or military service. For arts and literature, France's Culture Ministry awards the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.
- Science link – the heart: the human heart has four chambers – two atria above and two ventricles below. The left ventricle pumps oxygen-rich blood from the lungs through the aorta to the whole body, so its wall is the thickest. Shetty specialises in coronary bypass (CABG) surgery for blocked heart arteries and in surgery for congenital heart defects.

Tamil Nadu link: actor Sivaji Ganesan (1995) and Kamal Haasan (2016) were made Chevaliers of France's Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. Puducherry, a former French territory, borders Tamil Nadu; France has a Consulate General in Puducherry. Narayana Health runs hospitals in Karnataka districts bordering Tamil Nadu.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

Cardiac surgeon Dr Devi Prasad Shetty, founder and chairman of Narayana Health, was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre national du Mérite (Knight of the National Order of Merit) by France.

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Honour: Chevalier (Knight), Ordre national du Mérite; Date, place: 5 Nov 2026, Bengaluru; Conferred by: Consulate General of France, Bengaluru (CG Marc Lamy); Reason: Covid-19 support to the French community.

What is the background to this news?

Dr Devi Shetty was born on 8 May 1953 at Kinnigoli in Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka; he studied at Kasturba Medical College, Mangaluru, and earned the FRCS in England.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. Which French honour was conferred on Dr Devi Shetty in November 2026?

A) Legion of Honour

B) Ordre des Arts et des Lettres

C) Ordre des Palmes académiques

D) National Order of Merit

Answer: D – Explanation: The National Order of Merit, at the rank of Chevalier (Knight) – France's second national order after the Legion of Honour.

2. Who instituted France's highest award, the Legion of Honour, in 1802?

A) Louis XIV

B) Charles de Gaulle

C) Napoleon Bonaparte

D) Louis XVI

Answer: C – Explanation: Napoleon Bonaparte, as First Consul, in 1802. Charles de Gaulle created the National Order of Merit in 1963.

3. Which Tamil film legend was made a Chevalier of France's Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 1995?

A) M.G. Ramachandran

B) Gemini Ganesan

C) Rajinikanth

D) Sivaji Ganesan

Answer: D – Explanation: Sivaji Ganesan (1995). Kamal Haasan received the same honour in 2016; it is awarded by France's Ministry of Culture.

4. Which chamber of the heart pumps oxygen-rich blood into the aorta for the whole body?

A) Left ventricle

B) Right ventricle

C) Left atrium

D) Right atrium

Answer: A – Explanation: The left ventricle – it pumps at high pressure, so its wall is thickest. The right ventricle sends blood to the lungs via the pulmonary artery.

5. The 'Yeshasvini' low-cost health-insurance scheme for cooperative farmers belongs to which State?

A) Karnataka

B) Keralam

C) Andhra Pradesh

D) Maharashtra

Answer: A – Explanation: Karnataka – designed by Devi Shetty with the Karnataka government; a forerunner of later State health-insurance schemes.

Sources: ThePrint (PTI); Outlook India; Deccan Chronicle (2016). © Shanmugam IAS Academy.