Royal Order of the Polar Star

Prelims: Current events of national & International importance

Why in the News?

Recently, PM of India was conferred with Royal order of the Polar start, Degree Commander Grand Cross a Sweden's highest honor for foreign head of government.

About Royal Order.

- A Premier Swedish order to honor foreign citizens, head of the government, Royalty & Individuals for their outstanding public service.
- **Established on** – 1748 by King Fredrik I of Sweden.
- **Historically** – Award was dedicated to civic Merit, science & Literature – symbolizing Polar star piercing through the darkness of Ignorance (Enlightenment Focus).
- **Modern Reforms –** From 1975 onwards it's exclusively reserved for foreign nationals & Stateless individuals who have given their exceptional service to Sweden.

Features of the award.

- **Insignia -** A white-enameled golden Maltese cross with a distinct blue medallion featuring the silver Polar Star and the motto ***Nescit occasum*** ("*It knows no decline*").
- **Ribbon -** Modern foreign recipients receive the order on a pale blue ribbon with yellow edges, directly reflecting Sweden's national colors.
- **Grand Cross Collar -** features a decorative collar adorned with crowned monograms and Polar Stars, paired with an eight-pointed silver breast star.
- **Strict protocol** - These royal decorations must be formally returned to the Royal Orders of Knighthood upon the recipient's demise.

Significance

- **Historic First -** Pm Modi becomes the **first Asian leader** to receive this prestigious honor, marking his 31st international accolade.
- **Strategic Elevation -** The conferral coincided with India and Sweden officially upgrading their bilateral ties to a **Strategic Partnership**, deepening cutting-edge collaborations in defense manufacturing (e.g., *Saab Gripen* fighter jets), green hydrogen, and deep-tech.
- **Conferral Coincided -** With India & Sweden officially upgrading their strategic ties in defence, manufacturing (Saab Gripen Fighter Jets), green hydrogen & deep tech.
- **Tagore's connections –** Sweden presented India with a symbolic box containing faithful reproductions of 2 handwritten cards by Rabindranath Tagore.

Quick Facts

This year marks the **100th anniversary** of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's historic visit to Sweden in **1926**, where he was received by King Gustav V (Tagore won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913 but was unable to travel to Sweden until later).

For Reference: The Hindu | IAS Parliament

