



Indian PM's Visit to European Countries

For Prelims: Nordic Countries, Geographical Locations in Europe, First India-Nordic Summit

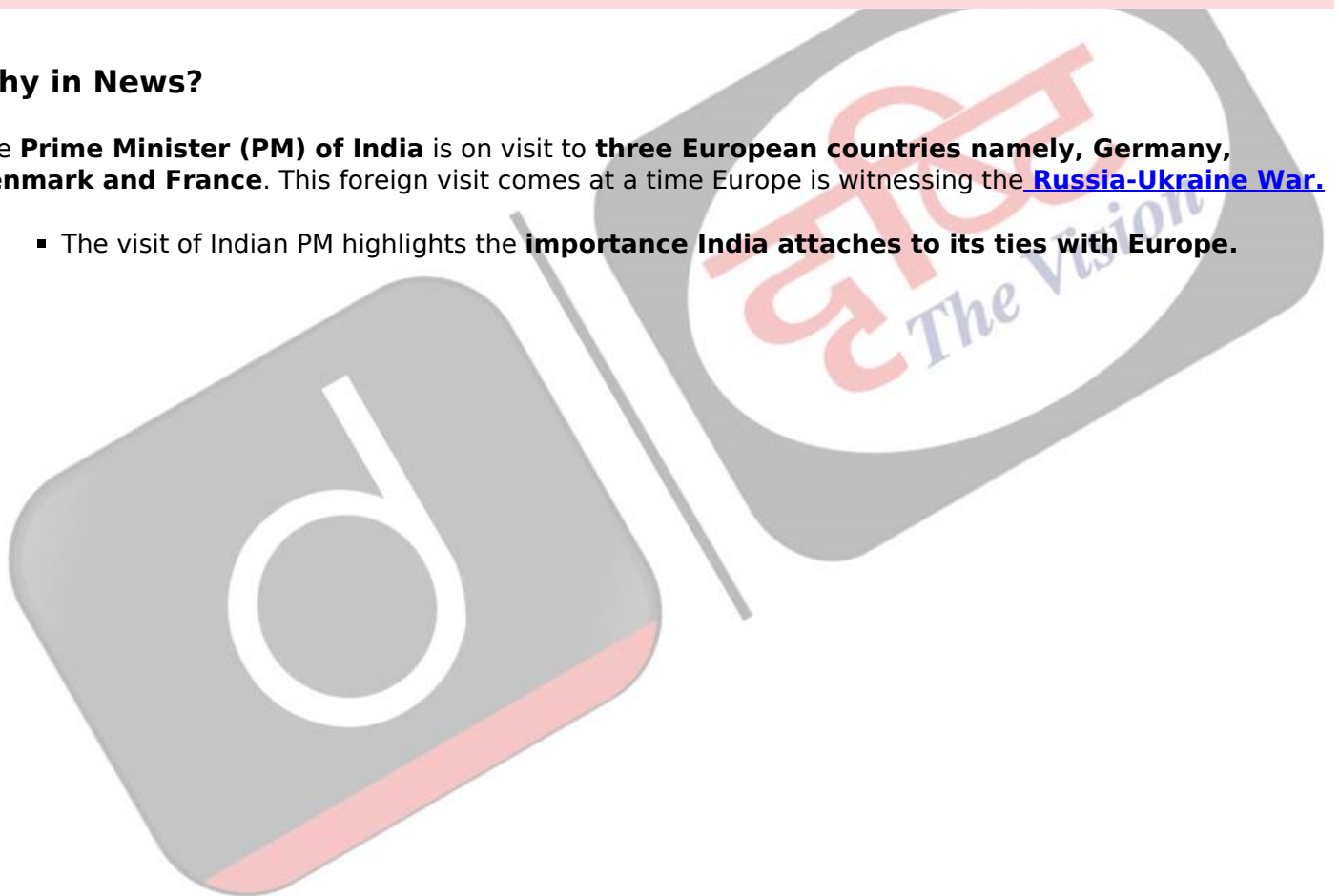
For Mains: World War II, Indian PM's Visit to Europe, India-Germany Relations, India-Denmark Relations, India-France Relations, India-Europe Relations, Groupings & Agreements Involving India and/or Affecting India's Interests, Bilateral Groupings & Agreements

Why in News?

The **Prime Minister (PM) of India** is on visit to **three European countries** namely, **Germany, Denmark and France**. This foreign visit comes at a time Europe is witnessing the [Russia-Ukraine War](#).

- The visit of Indian PM highlights the **importance India attaches to its ties with Europe**.

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What is the Significance of the Visit?

▪ India-Germany Relations:

- **Background:** Germany is one of India's most important partners in Europe, with deep bilateral relations, and because of its key role in the European Union.
 - India was among the first countries to establish diplomatic ties with the Federal Republic of Germany after World War II (WWII).
 - India and Germany have a **'Strategic Partnership'** since **May 2000**, and it has been strengthened with the launch of the **Inter-Governmental Consultations (IGC)** in 2011 at the level of heads of government.
 - India is among a select group of countries with which Germany has such a **dialogue mechanism**.

- **Significance:** Germany has made key strategic choices in the [Russia-Ukraine war](#).
 - It has promised to reduce its **energy dependence on Russia and decided to increase defence spending** — a significant move, given its **post-WWII posture**.
 - With India too dependent on **Russia for defence supplies**, it will be important for India and Germany to exchange notes on strategic choices — and **moving away from Russia for their respective needs**.

▪ **India-Denmark Relations:**

- **Background:** Bilateral relations were elevated to the level of a **“Green Strategic Partnership”** during the Virtual Summit held in September 2020.
 - The [first India-Nordic Summit](#) took place in April 2018 to explore new areas of cooperation.
 - This format is special, the only other country with which the **Nordic countries — Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Iceland** — have this kind of engagement is with the US.
- **Significance:** Nordic countries are pioneers in **innovation, clean energy, green technologies, education, health-care, human rights, rule of law**. This presents enormous opportunities for India to expand its own strengths by collaborating with these countries.
 - Also, India presents an ideal opportunity to these countries because of its large market.
 - Many new flagship schemes have been launched by India — like [Make in India](#), [Smart Cities Mission](#), [Start-up India](#), [Clean Ganga](#) etc — in which Nordic countries can take active part and provide their expertise.

▪ **India-France Relations:**

- **Background:** India and France have **traditionally had close relations**.
 - In 1998, the two entered into a **Strategic Partnership**, with defence & security cooperation, space cooperation and civil nuclear cooperation being its pillars.
 - India and France also have a **robust economic partnership**, and are increasingly engaged in new areas of cooperation.
 - France was among the few western countries to not condemn India after the [1998 Pokhran tests](#).
 - It has continued to support India’s claim for permanent membership of the [United Nations Security Council](#).
 - France’s support was vital in India’s accession to the [Missile Technology Control Regime, Wassenaar Arrangement and Australia Group](#).
 - France continues to support India’s bid for accession to the [Nuclear Suppliers Group](#).
 - France has also supported India’s requests to block attempts by Pakistan to enlist Indian citizens under the [UNSC 1267 Sanctions Committee](#).
- **Significance:**
 - **Indian Ocean, the Common Shared Interest:** France needs to protect its colonial territorial possessions like reunion island and Indian ocean being the zone of influence for India.
 - **Counter Terrorism:** France backed the India’s proposal for a global conference on terrorism.
 - Both the countries also support organizing a new “No Money for Terror” - an International Conference on Fighting Terrorist Financing.
 - **France Backing India:** France also continues to steadfastly back India on Kashmir while its relations with Pakistan have plummeted in the recent past and China has become an object of suspicion.
 - **Defense Cooperation:** India and France have entered in the phase of close defense partnership. For example, recently, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has inducted [French Rafale](#) multi-role combat aircraft.

▪ **India-Europe Relations:**

- **Background:** India in **1962 had been one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with the European Economic Community** — the precursor of the European Union.
 - A Cooperation Agreement signed in 1994 broadened the relationship to include **ministerial meetings and a political dialogue**.

- These ties have expanded to include political and security issues, climate change and clean energy, information and communications technology, space and nuclear, health, agriculture and food security, and education and culture.
- **Significance of the Visit:** The visit to Europe is likely to set the stage for the India-EU summit and a [boost in Free Trade Agreement negotiations](#), which have been ongoing for a decade and a half now.

[Source: IE](#)

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