

French connection on cards for schools via language lessons

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LUCKNOW: Soon, students at public schools in Uttar Pradesh will be able to learn French, ambassador of France to India Thierry Mathou said at an event in Lucknow on Monday.

Talking to Hindustan Times, he said he met chief minister Yogi Adityanath and proposed the possibility of introducing courses in French for public schools in the state, which he liked.

"My team will meet the chief minister and identify a few schools and sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). First, teachers at these schools will be taught French language who will later educate the students about the language," Mathou said.

During his Lucknow visit, the French ambassador was present at the launch of 'Pardon my French!' section at Universal Booksellers in Hazratganj.

'Pardon my French!' is an initiative in which special corners for French literature are created in 12 bookstores across the country. Universal Booksellers is one of them.

Asked by Hindustan Times about the idea behind the name of the initiative, he said that they have used the name as a gimmick.

"The name sounds fun, so it is a way to create interest among people to learn French and promote it in India. When we learn a new language, we might not be able to pronounce things in the right manner at first, but through this name we are trying to bridge the gap that instead of being conscious of pronouncing things in a wrong manner one should indulge in learning," he said.

During a conversation with Chander Prakash of Universal Booksellers, he said that French literature is quite diverse, and diversity is the cradle of democracy.

"I wish to promote French also in different local languages, may it be Hindi, English or any other local language. Translation is important for the promotion of language. This will pro-



French ambassador Thierry Mathou with Chander Prakash of Universal Booksellers, in Lucknow on Monday. MUSHTAQ ALI/HT

French ambassador calls on CM

LUCKNOW: French ambassador Thierry Mathou, accompanied by a delegation, met chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday in Lucknow. The discussions focused on potential MoUs and investments in Uttar Pradesh's defence, pharma and education sectors.

The chief minister assured the delegation of full support for investments in the state, said a government statement after the meeting.

During the meeting, CM Yogi invited French companies to invest especially in NCR, Bundelkhand, and the defense sector.

The delegation expressed enthusiasm about investing in Uttar Pradesh, highlighting the state's 60% youth demographic as a key advantage, said the statement.

Ambassador Mathou, as quoted in the statement, emphasized the importance of further strengthening the

trade and cultural partnership between Uttar Pradesh and France. The delegation also expressed interest in collaborating on IT corridors, smart cities, and cultural development initiatives in the state.

CM Yogi emphasized the significance of ancient manuscripts and historical documents preserved at Sampurnanand University in Varanasi, underscoring the importance of educational and cultural collaboration. Both sides agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation in education, culture, and trade sectors.

The CM also stressed the importance of collaboration in defence, the establishment of an MRO (Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul) hub at Jewar Airport, and investment opportunities in the Pharma Park being developed by Bundelkhand Industrial Development Authority.

vide an opportunity to the local people to know about the culture of France," Mathou said.

He shared that culture is essential for everybody and Indian culture is also as important as French culture.

"We wish to bridge the cultures and promote them through exchanges from time to time. When the prime minister of India went to France, he said that we should target to have over 30,000 Indian students in France. In France the main lan-

guage is French so as a solution to it we have created a specific programme for Indian students," he added.

About the declaration of 2026 as the India-France year of innovation, he said that innovation is not confined to technology but also in other spheres like culture and social lives.

"At the opening event, we can have a fusion of French music and an Indian dance form," he suggested, while having a conversation with the audience.