



Daily Current Affairs Dated On 03rd and 04th July 2019

GS-1

Classical language status :

Why in News?

A proposal for granting Classical status to Marathi Language was received from Marathi Language Department, Government of Maharashtra. The said proposal was placed before the Committee of Linguistic Experts for its consideration.

What is a Classical language?

- In 2004, the [Government of India](#) declared that languages that met certain requirements could be accorded the status of a "Classical Language in India".
- Over the next few years, several languages were granted the Classical status, and demands have been made for other languages, including [Marathi](#).

Languages thus far declared to be Classical:

- [Tamil](#) (in 2004),
- [Sanskrit](#) (in 2005),
- [Kannada](#) (in 2008),
- [Telugu](#) (in 2008)
- [Malayalam](#) (in 2013),
- [Odia](#) (in 2014).

Criterion for inclusion in List:

- High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a period of 1500–2000 years;
- a body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers;
- the literary tradition be original and not borrowed from another speech community;
- the classical language and literature being distinct from modern, there may also be a discontinuity between the classical language and its later forms or its offshoots.



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Benefits

As per Government of India's Resolution No. 2-16/2004-US(Akademies) dated 1 November 2004, the benefits that will accrue to a language declared as a "Classical Language" are:

1. Two major international awards for scholars of eminence in Classical Indian Languages are awarded annually.
2. A Centre of Excellence for Studies in Classical Languages is set up.
3. The [University Grants Commission](#) will be requested to create, to start with at least in the Central Universities, a certain number of Professional Chairs for Classical Languages for scholars of eminence in Classical Indian Languages.

GS-2

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) In India:

A Report:

According to Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) report entitled "India: Health of the Nation's States", Contribution of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) to total death in the Country was 61.8% in 2016, as compared to 37.9% in 1990. Tuberculosis is a Communicable Disease.

Causes:

- Risk factors for NCDs inter alia include ageing, unhealthy diet, lack of physical activity, high blood pressure, , high blood sugar, high cholesterol and overweight.

Steps taken by Govt.

Though public health is a State subject, Central Government supplements the efforts of the State Governments.

- *National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke* (NPCDCS) is being implemented under the National Health Mission (NHM).



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- The objectives of the programme include health promotion activities and opportunistic screening for common Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) including cancer.
- *Population based screening* of common NCDs, i.e. diabetes, hypertension and cancers (Oral, Breast and Cervical cancer) has also been initiated under National Health Mission (NHM).
- To enhance the facilities for tertiary care of cancer, the Central Government is implementing *Strengthening of Tertiary Care Cancer facilities* scheme to support setting up of State Cancer Institutes (SCI) and Tertiary Care Centres (TCCC) in different parts of the country.
- *Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment (AMRIT)* Deendayal outlets have been opened at 159 Institutions/Hospitals with an objective to make available Cancer and Cardiovascular Diseases drugs and implants at discounted prices to the patients.
- *Jan Aushadhi stores* are set up by Department of Pharmaceuticals to provide generic medicines at affordable prices.

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BAN on GM CROPS

Context:

Bt. cotton is the only Genetically Modified (GM) crop approved in 2002 by the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change for commercial cultivation in the Country and, therefore, cultivation of other unapproved GM crops are banned in India. Few incidences of suspected open cultivation of Bt. brinjal and HT cotton were reported in Maharashtra, Haryana, Punjab, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh.

How are GM crops Controlled?

- There is a well established regulatory framework for approval of GM Crops under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 in the Country.
- Evaluation of each application of GM crop is done on a case-to-case basis after a thorough examination of health, environment, food and feed safety assessment studies as per prescribed guidelines, manuals and standard operating procedures stipulated by various regulatory agencies under the Rules, 1989 from time to time.
- The data generated by the applicants is reviewed at every step in the development process of GM crops by various Statutory Committees under the Rules, 1989 such as Institutional Biosafety Committee, Review



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Committee on Genetic Manipulation and Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee.

A series of guidelines and protocols have been issued by Department of Biotechnology and Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change relating to Genetically Modified Organisms and product thereof as under:

- i. Recombinant DNA Safety Guidelines, 1990
- ii. Revised Guidelines for Research in Transgenic Plants, 1998
- iii. Guidelines for the Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Genetically Engineered Plants, 2008
- iv. Guidelines for the monitoring of Confined Field Trials of Regulated, Genetically Engineered (GE) Plants, 2008
- v. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Confined Field Trials of Regulated, Genetically Engineered (GE) Plants, 2008
- vi. Protocol for Food and Feed Safety Assessment of GE crops, 2008
- vii. Guidelines and Handbook for Institutional Bio-safety Committees (IBSCs), 2011
- viii. Environmental Risk Assessment of Genetically Engineered Plants: A Guide for Stakeholders, 2016
- ix. Guidelines for the Environmental Risk Assessment of Genetically Engineered Plants, 2016.

- x Risk Analysis Framework, 2016.

What are GM crops?

- **Genetically modified crops (GM crops)** are plants used in [agriculture](#), the [DNA](#) of which has been modified using [genetic engineering](#) methods.
- In most cases, the aim is to introduce a new [trait](#) to the plant which does not occur naturally in the species.
- Examples in food crops include resistance to certain pests, diseases, environmental conditions, reduction of spoilage, resistance to chemical treatments (e.g. resistance to a [herbicide](#)), or improving the nutrient profile of the crop.
- Examples in non-food crops include production of [pharmaceutical agents](#), [biofuels](#), and other industrially useful goods, as well as for [bioremediation](#).

Advantages:

- GM crops grown today, or under development, have been modified with various [traits](#). These traits include improved [shelf life](#), [disease resistance](#), stress resistance, [herbicide resistance](#), [pest resistance](#), production of useful goods such as biofuel or drugs, and ability to absorb toxins and for use in [bioremediation](#) of pollution.



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- Recently, [research and development](#) has been targeted to [enhancement of crops](#) that are locally important in [developing countries](#), such as insect-resistant [cowpea](#) for Africa and insect-resistant [brinjal](#)

Multilateral Convention to Implement Tax Treaty Related Measures to Prevent Base Erosion and Profit Shifting

Why in News?

India has ratified the Multilateral Convention to Implement Tax Treaty Related Measures to Prevent Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (MLI), along with representatives of more than 65 countries.

What is It?

- The Multilateral Convention/MLI is an outcome of the OECD / G20 Project to tackle Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (the "BEPS Project")

BEPS: It is a tax planning strategies that exploit gaps and mismatches in tax rules to artificially shift profits to low or no-tax locations where there is little or no economic activity, resulting in little or no overall corporate tax being paid.

- India was part of the Ad Hoc Group of more than 100 countries and jurisdictions from G20, OECD, BEPS associates and other interested countries, which worked on an equal footing on the finalization of the text of the Multilateral Convention.

Effect of treaty:

- The MLI will modify India's tax treaties to curb revenue loss through treaty abuse and base erosion and profit shifting strategies by ensuring that profits are taxed where substantive economic activities generating the profits are carried out.
- The MLI will be applied alongside existing tax treaties, modifying their application in order to implement the BEPS measures.

When will it come in effect?

- The date of entry into force of the MLI for India is 1st day of October, 2019. In respect of the 22 treaty partners of India who have deposited the



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Instrument of Ratification on or before 30th June, 2019, entry into effect for India under MLI with respect to the DTAA shall be from financial year 2020-21 onwards.

National Food Security Act:

Context:

The stock of foodgrains in the Central Pool as on 1st June, 2019 was 741.41 lakh tons consisting of 275.81 lakh tons of rice and 465.60 lakh tons of wheat.

About NFSA:

- Government of India enacted National Food Security Act (NFSA) in July, 2013 which gives legal entitlement to 67% of the population (75% in rural areas and 50% in urban areas) to receive highly subsidized foodgrains.
- Under the Act, foodgrain is allocated @ 5 kg per person per month for priority households category and @ 35 kg per family per month for AAY families at a highly subsidized prices of Rs. 1/-, Rs. 2/- and Rs. 3/- per kg for nutri-cereals, wheat and rice respectively.
- Coverage under the Act is based on the population figures of Census, 2011.
- The Act is now being implemented in all 36 States/UTs and covers about 81.35 crore persons. The annual allocation of foodgrain under National Food Security Act and Other Welfare Schemes is about 610 Lakh Metric Tons.

Additional Coverage:

- The coverage of the sugar subsidy scheme introduced with effect from June, 2013, after de-regulation of sugar sector, targeted Below Poverty Line (BPL) population (inclusive of poorest of poor person in the country i.e. AAY families) and all the population of North Eastern States/ Special Category States/ Hilly States and Island Territories.
- Now, the NFSA is being universally implemented in the country.
- There is no identified category of BPL under the NFSA.



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- However, the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) beneficiaries are clearly identified.

Other Info:

In order to liquidate the excess stock of foodgrain in the Central Pool, Government of India avails the available options of disposal of the excess stock of foodgrain through Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS) and Export on Government-to-Government basis, as export from public stockholding is not compliant to WTO norms.”

Linking of Organic Farming With Processing

Why in News?

Government of India has been promoting traditional farming in the States through dedicated Schemes, namely, Mission Organic Value Chain Development North Eastern Region (MOVCDNER) and Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) since 2015-16.

Salient features of the Scheme:

Under these schemes assistance is provided to the farmers for on-farm and off-farm input production/ procurement, creation of post harvest infrastructure and connecting it through production to processing by the following ways :

- (i) **Market linkage** of producer clusters with some major agri-business, phytochemical and online grocery stores have been established under MOVCDNER.
- (ii) *Providing incentives for infrastructure* creation, storage, grading, packaging, branding, publicity, transportation, value addition, development of integrated value chain and organic fairs.
- (iii) *Promoting formation of Farmer Producers Companies (FPCs)/ Organizations (FPOs)/ Clusters*, thereby assisting member farmers to receive remunerative prices for their organic produce due to improved economies of scale, value addition and access to market for their organic produce.



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(iv) Government has launched a www.jaivikkheti.in portal acting both as a knowledge as well as marketing platform.

What is Organic Farming?

- **Organic farming** is an alternative agricultural system which originated early in the 20th century in reaction to rapidly changing farming practices.
- It is defined by the use of fertilizers of organic origin such as compost [manure](#), [green manure](#), and [bone meal](#) and places emphasis on techniques such as [crop rotation](#) and [companion planting](#).
- [Biological pest control](#), mixed cropping and the fostering of insect predators are encouraged.

Agricultural Landholdings Of India:

Salient Observation:

The number of small and marginal agricultural land holdings in the country (known as operational holdings) has registered a marginal increase in 2015-16 compared to 2010-11, according to the the tenth agricultural census. This means that there are more people who now own smaller parcels of agricultural land.

- In a positive development, the percentage of land holders who are women has increased from 12.79% in 2010-11 to 13.87% in 2015-16, with a corresponding increase of 1.2 percentage points in the operated area.

This shows that more and more females are participating in the management and operation of agricultural lands," according to a press release from the [Agriculture](#) Ministry.



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- Small and marginal holdings (Below two hectares) constituted 86.21% of the total land holdings, an increase of 1.2 percentage points compared to 2010-11.
- However, the operated area (which includes any agricultural land, provided a part of it used for production) has shown a decline of 1.5%.
- It is noteworthy that marginal, small and medium land holdings constitute the lion's share of operated area – large land holdings account for only 9% of the total operational area.
- The average size of operational holdings is highest in Nagaland (5 hectares) and lowest in Kerala (0.18 hectares).

Here's a breakdown of operational land holdings and area:

Classification	Range (ha)	2010-11 (mn.)	2015-16 (mn.)	% change
Small	<1	117.25	125.86	7.34%
Medium	1-4	19.72	19.3	-2.13%
Large	4-10	0.98	0.83	-15.31%

The above table shows that the number of small land holdings has registered an increase compared to the previous census, while the number of large land holdings has decreased.

Other Observations:

- The total number of land units used for agricultural production has shown a 5% increase in 2015-16 compared to 2010-11.
- The total number of operational holdings in the country has increased from 138 million in 2010-11 to 146 million in 2015-16.
- Uttar Pradesh is home to the largest number of land holders, constituting 16% of the total number.