



News Analysis (23 Nov, 2019)

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Bill to Change Stature of Official Languages

Why in News

Recently, a **private member's bill** was introduced in the ongoing Winter Session of the Parliament to give all 22 languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution the stature of national official languages.

What the Bill Proposes

This proposed (**Constitutional Amendment**) **Bill** seeks to **amend**:

- **Original Provision: Article 343** of the Constitution, which states that ***the official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script.***
Proposal: The bill proposes to substitute this with, "the official language of the Union **in addition to Hindi** in Devanagari script shall be the **languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule** to this Constitution".
- **Original Provision: Subclause-3 of the Art. 343** which states that "*Parliament may by law provide for the **use of the English language***".
Proposal: The bill seeks to add to this subclause, "Parliament may by law provide for the use of the English language **or the languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule** to this Constitution".

Purpose

As India is known for **unity in diversity**- also enshrined in the **Preamble to the Constitution**, it is necessary that all the regional languages recognized in the Eighth Schedule be encouraged, developed and used as the official language of the Union. This will **promote national integrity**.

Eighth Schedule and related Constitutional Provisions

- Part **XVII of the Indian constitution** deals with the official languages in **Articles 343 to 351**.
- The Constitutional provisions related to the Eighth Schedule are:
 - **Article 344:** Article 344(1) provides for the constitution of a **Commission by the President** on expiration of **five years** from the commencement of the Constitution.
 - **Article 351:** It provides for the spread of the Hindi language to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India.

22 Official Languages

- The Eighth Schedule to the Constitution consists of the following 22 languages:
(1) Assamese, (2) Bengali, (3) Gujarati, (4) Hindi, (5) Kannada, (6) Kashmiri, (7) Konkani, (8) Malayalam, (9) Manipuri, (10) Marathi, (11) Nepali, (12) Oriya, (13) Punjabi, (14) Sanskrit, (15) Sindhi, (16) Tamil, (17) Telugu, (18) Urdu (19) Bodo, (20) Santhali, (21) Maithili and (22) Dogri.
- Of these languages, **14 were initially included** in the Constitution.
- **Sindhi** language was added by the 21st Amendment Act of 1967.
- **Konkani, Manipuri, and Nepali** were included by the 71st Amendment Act of 1992.
- **Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, and Santhali** were added by 92nd Amendment Act of 2003.

Committee on Official Languages

- As the evolution of dialects and languages is dynamic, influenced by socio-political developments, it is **difficult to fix any criterion for languages**, whether to distinguish them from dialects, or for their inclusion in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India.
Consequently two committees viz. the **Pahwa (1996) and Sitakant Mohapatra (2003) Committees** were formed by the government.
- A Committee was set up in September 2003 under the Chairmanship of **Shri Sitakant Mohapatra** to evolve a set of objective criteria for inclusion of more languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.
The Committee submitted its report in 2004, which is still under the government's consideration in consultation with the concerned Minorities/Departments.

Private Member Bill

- It refers to the bills introduced by any member of Parliament who is **not a minister**.

- Its introduction in the House requires **one month's prior notice**.
- Its drafting is the responsibility of the member concerned.
- Its rejection by the House has no implication on the parliamentary confidence in the government or its resignation.

Source: IE

Convention on Global Cybercrime

Why in News

India voted in favour of a cybercrime resolution led by Russia in a committee of the United Nations General Assembly. The resolution seeks to set up new cyber norms considered as counter alternative to the US backed Budapest Accord.

A final General Assembly vote to adopt the resolution will be held in December, 2019.

Budapest Convention

- The ***Council of Europe's (CoE) Cybercrime Convention*** is also known as the Budapest Convention. It was open for signature in 2001 and came into force in 2004.
- The convention is the **sole legally binding** international multilateral treaty on cybercrime. It **coordinates cybercrime investigations** between nation-states and **criminalizes** certain cybercrime conduct.
- It serves as a **guideline for any country developing comprehensive national legislation against Cybercrime** and as a **framework** for international cooperation between state parties to this treaty.

The Budapest Convention is supplemented by a **Protocol on Xenophobia and Racism** committed through computer systems.

- **Significance:** Almost all stakeholders agree that the current form of cross-border data sharing for law enforcement through the **Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT)** is insufficient for the digital age. However, there is an ongoing debate whether to revamp MLAT or form an entirely new system for cybercrimes in the form of this Convention.
- This Convention has eagerly called for Indian participation since its formation in 2001, but **India has decided not to be a party to it**.

Russia-led Resolution

- The Russian proposal entitled ***“Countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes”*** was recently put forth in the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)**.

This recent UN proposal follows previous Russian initiatives, including the “Draft United Nations Convention on Cooperation in Combating Cybercrime” in 2017 to develop a UN convention on cybercrime.

- The Russian proposal calls for creation of a committee that will convene in August 2020 in New York in order to **establish a new treaty through which nation-states can coordinate and share data to prevent cybercrime.**
 - This draft Convention goes far beyond what the Budapest Convention allows for regarding cross-border access to data, including limiting the ability of a signatory to refuse **to provide access to requested data.**
 - This is the reason why several human rights groups criticize the UN proposal as a way to extend a Chinese and Russian form of internet governance, or the so-called “closed Internet” or “state-controlled internet.”
- If this resolution will be passed by the UNGA, it will become the second international convention on cybercrime.
- Russia and China question the Budapest Convention on the grounds of national sovereignty issues, thereby proposing their own treaty at the UN.

India’s Stand

- India maintained its status as a non-member of the Europe-led Budapest Convention. Although, India voted in favour of a Russian-led UN resolution to set up a separate convention.
- According to the **Intelligence Bureau (IB)**, data sharing with foreign law enforcement agencies infringes on national sovereignty of India.
- India has also previously argued that it will not sign onto the Budapest treaty since it was drafted **without its participation.**

Data Laws in India

Data protection laws in India are currently facing many problems and resentments due to the absence of a proper legislative framework. The legal framework includes:

- **Information Technology Act, 2000:** IT Act contains provisions (For example, mentioned in section 43A, 72A) regarding cyber and IT-related laws in India.
 - **Section 43A:** Compensation for failure to protect data.
 - **Section 72A:** Any disclosure of information, knowingly and intentionally, **without the consent** of the person concerned has been made punishable with imprisonment for a term extending to three years.
- However, these provisions neither protect any breach of information on the one hand nor enforce a right-based framework on privacy.

Supreme Court in ***Justice K. S. Puttaswamy (Retd.) Vs Union of India*** (2017) unanimously held that citizens have a constitutionally protected **fundamental right to privacy** that forms **an intrinsic part of life and liberty under Article 21**.
- Therefore, in order to establish a strong data protection regime, the government has proposed the **Draft Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018** (based on the recommendation of Justice BN Srikrishna Committee).

Source: IE

Kuki and Zomi Group

The Government of India is looking at concluding peace talks with the 23 **Kuki and Zomi groups** in Manipur.

Background

- **Manipur was a princely state before merging with the Indian Union on 15th October 1949.** It has been inhabited by ethnic communities including Nagas, Kukis and Meiteis.
- Merger of Manipur and the delay in the conferring of full fledged **statehood (granted in 1972)** to it was greatly resented by the people of Manipur.

Separate aspirations and perceived insecurity regarding overlapping claims over natural resources led various ethnic communities move apart.
- Following ethnic clashes between the Nagas and Kukis in the early 1990s, a number of Kuki outfits were formed as a means to counter Naga hegemony and assertion. Consequently, Kuki National Front (KNF) was formed in 1998.

The areas in Manipur which **National Socialist Council of Nagalim-Issac Muivah - NSCN - IM** (formed in 1988) is demanding be merged with Nagaland as part of greater **Nagalim included large areas of Kuki inhabitancy**.

- Meanwhile, **Zomi Reunification Army (ZRA) was formed in 1997** whose objective is to protect the interests of the Paite community from the 'onslaught of any community or group'.
- However in 2008, 20 militant groups related to Kukis and Zomis under two umbrella organizations, Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and United People's Front (UPF) signed **Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement** with the Government of India and Government of Manipur. The agreement aims to discuss demands put forward by the extremist groups and bring peace in Manipur.

Ethnic Communities in Manipur

- The people of Manipur are grouped into three main ethnic communities - **Meiteis** those inhabiting the valley and 29 major tribes in the hills dividing into two main ethno-denominations, namely **Nagas and Kuki-Chins**.
- The **Naga group** consists of Zeliangrong, Tangkhul, Mao, Maram, Maring and Tarao.
- The **Chin-Kuki group** consists of Gangte, Hmar, Paite, Thadou, Vaiphei, Zou, Aimol, Chiru, Koireng, Kom, Anal, Chothe, Lamgang, Koirao, Thangal, Moyon and Monsang.
- The term Chin is used for the people in the neighboring Chin state of Myanmar whereas Chins are called Kukis in the Indian side. Other groups like **Paite**, Zou, Gangte, and Vaiphei **identify themselves as Zomi** and have distanced themselves from the name, Kuki.
- It should be noted that all the different ethnic groups are of the same **Mongoloid group**, and have very close similarities in their culture and traditional habits.
- However, **Meiteis differ** culturally from the surrounding hill tribes by following **Hindu customs**.
- The legend of all tribes including Meiteis claim that they originated somewhere in the north from a cave.

Source: IE

Organic Food Regulatory System in India

Why in News

The Union Minister for Commerce and Industry informed about the **existent organic food regulatory system in the country** during the winter parliamentary session (2019).

- **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** is the **food regulator** in the country and is also responsible for **regulating organic food in the domestic market and imports**.

- FSSAI had notified the existing certification system through **Food Safety and Standards (Organic Foods) Regulations in 2017.**

Organic Food

Organic farm produce means the produce obtained from **organic agriculture**, while **organic food** means food products that have been produced in accordance with **specified standards for organic production.**

According to FSSAI, '**organic agriculture**' is a system of farm design and management to create an ecosystem of agriculture production without the use of synthetic external inputs such as chemical fertilisers, pesticides and synthetic hormones or genetically modified organisms.

Existing Certification Systems

- **National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP)**
 - NPOP grants **organic farming certification** through a process of **third party certification.**
 - It involves the **accreditation programme** for Certification Bodies, standards for organic production, promotion of organic farming etc.
 - It is implemented by **Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Ministry of Commerce and Industry.**
 - The **NPOP standards** for production and accreditation system have been **recognized** by the **European Commission, Switzerland** and **USA** as equivalent to their respective accreditation systems.
- **Participatory Guarantee System for India (PGS)**
 - PGS is another process of **certifying organic products.**
 - The certification is in the form of a **documented logo or a statement.**
 - It is implemented by the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.**
 - The organic **farmers have full control over the certification process.**
 - PGS certification is **only for farmers or communities** that can organise and perform as a **group. Individual farmers** or groups of farmers smaller than five members are **not covered** under PGS.
 - PGS is applicable on **on-farm activities** comprising of crop production, processing and livestock rearing, etc.
 - **Off-farm processing activities** such as storage, transport and value addition activities by persons/agencies other than PGS farmers away from the group are **not covered under PGS.**
- Organic foods are also required to comply with the requirements of **labelling of FSSAI** in addition to that of NPOP or PGS-India.

Source:PIB

Bougainville

Why in News

On November 23, the people of **Bougainville** (a small South Pacific island), will vote for a referendum to gain independence from Papua New Guinea. If the referendum is passed, Bougainville would become the **world's newest and possibly the smallest independent country**.

Background

Bougainville is currently a province of **Papua New Guinea**- one of the most populous Pacific island states. It forms the part of the **Solomon Islands archipelago**.

Bougainville has a population of around 300,000 people comprising of **21 distinct language groups**.



In the late 1970s, a **decentralized system** of provincial government was introduced in Bougainville. The current autonomy arrangements were implemented following the constitutional enactment of the **Bougainville Peace Agreement**.

The **Bougainville Peace Agreement**, signed in 2001, brought **autonomy and an end to the violent conflict** between the people of Bougainville and the government of Papua New Guinea.

Issues Leading to Referendum

- The subsequent dissatisfaction among Bougainvilleans over implementation of the agreed arrangements for Bougainville autonomy (2001), particularly in regard to the constitutionally guaranteed financial grants was the major bone of contention.

The Autonomy Bougainville Government (ABG) was legally entitled to the financial grants but the Papua New Guinea National Government did not provide the same in accordance with the ABG's calculations.

- Also, the historic **plunder of the resource-rich island** and the **unequal distribution of wealth** that followed was the major issue.
 - Bougainville has **large deposits of copper**.
 - The **Panguna mine** (also known as the **Bougainville Copper Mine**) holds some of the world's largest reserves of copper. It is the **world's largest open-cut copper mine**.
 - The export of copper extracted from the Panguna mine contributed significantly to Papua New Guinea's economy.
 - The mine also **created job opportunities** for people from Papua New Guinea and Australia, leading to conflicts with Bougainvilleans who reported cases of discrimination and racism at the hands of foreigner mine workers.
 - Mining activities over the years also caused **environmental degradation** of Bougainville's lands and water.

Way Forward

- The referendum is not binding and would still have to be passed by the Government and the Parliament of Papua New Guinea, in consultation with the Autonomous Bougainville Government before a final decision is made.
- If Bougainville becomes independent, the immediate steps would involve putting in place the law and order, economic opportunities, and access to education.
- If the referendum is passed it will have implications on countries like Australia, New Zealand, and China in general, and other provinces of Papua New Guinea in specific. The stability of the region of which Bougainville is part is clearly important to Australia and other nations.

Source: IE

Fundamental Duties

The Government is planning to assign its different Ministries with the task of spreading awareness about Fundamental duties among people.

- The **idea of Fundamental Duties** is inspired from the **Constitution of Russia**.

- These were incorporated in **Part IV-A** of the Constitution by the **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1976** on the **recommendations of Swaran Singh Committee**.
- Originally 10 in number, one more duty was added through the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002. All the **eleven duties** are listed in **Article 51-A** of the Constitution (the sole Article in Part-IV-A).
- The fundamental duties serve as a reminder to citizens that while enjoying their rights, they have also to be quite conscious of duties they owe to their country, their society and to their fellow-citizens.
- However, like the Directive Principles, the duties are also **non-justiciable** in nature.

List of Fundamental Duties

- To abide by the Constitution and respect its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem;
- To cherish and follow the noble ideals that inspired the national struggle for freedom;
- To uphold and protect the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India;
- To defend the country and render national service when called upon to do so;
- To promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women;
- To value and preserve the rich heritage of the country's composite culture;
- To protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have compassion for living creatures;
- To develop scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform;
- To safeguard public property and to abjure violence;
- To strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement; and
- To provide opportunities for education to his child or ward between the age of six and fourteen years (added by the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2002).

Source: IE

SAMEER App

Why in News

SAMEER App is one of the air pollution mitigation measures which provides **hourly updates** on the **National Air Quality Index (AQI)**.

- The app is developed by the **Central Pollution Control Bureau (CPCB)** which provides information on air quality for more than 100 cities across the country.

- The app represents the listed cities in a **colour-coded format based on their AQI levels**.
- The app can also be used to **file or track complaints** related to garbage dumping, road dust, vehicular emissions or other pollution issues in a particular area.

National Air Quality Index (AQI)

- The AQI is an index for reporting daily air quality.
- It focuses on health effects one might experience within a few hours or days after breathing polluted air.
- AQI is calculated for eight major air pollutants:
 - Ground-level ozone,
 - PM10,
 - PM2.5,
 - Carbon monoxide,
 - Sulfur dioxide,
 - Nitrogen dioxide,
 - Ammonia,
 - Lead,
- Ground-level ozone and airborne particles are the two pollutants that pose the greatest threat to human health in India.

Source:PIB

Winter Grade Fuel in Ladakh

The **winter-grade diesel** was launched to address **the problem of loss of fuel during extreme winter conditions**.

- Motorists in high-altitude areas of Ladakh face the problem of **freezing of diesel** in their vehicles when **winter temperatures drop to as low as minus 30-degree celsius**.
- The **special winter-grade diesel** is developed by the **Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL)**.
 - It has a **pour point of minus 33-degree celsius** and **does not lose its fluidity** even in the region's extreme winter weather unlike normal grade diesel, which is difficult to use in sub-zero temperatures.

The pour point of a liquid is the temperature **below which the liquid loses its flow characteristics**.
 - It also meets **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** specification of **BS-VI grade**.
- The special winter-grade diesel will help **to reduce** the hardships faced by the local people for transportation and mobility during the harsh winter months.

- It will further **facilitate the local economy** as well as **tourism** in the region.

BS-VI

- **Bharat stage norms** are **emission control standards** put in place by the government to keep a **check on air pollution** based on the **European regulations (Euro norms)**.
- These standards set limits the release of air pollutants from equipment using internal combustion engines, including vehicles.
The higher the stage, the more stringent norms.
- **BS VI's key improvement in fuel quality over BS IV include,**
 - **Lower Sulphur Content:** It has lowered **sulphur content of 10 parts per million (ppm)**. Sulphur in fuel contributes to fine particulate matter emissions.
 - **Harmful Hydrocarbon:** It seeks to **reduce the level of certain harmful hydrocarbons** in the emissions that are produced due to incomplete combustion of fuel.

Source: TH

FSSAI Notice For Irresponsible Advertising

The food regulator of India, **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)**, has issued a show cause notice on McDonald's for belittling freshly cooked food and vegetables in its advertisements to promote fast food.

- FSSAI said that the company has contravened the provisions of **Food Safety and Standards (Advertising and Claims) Regulations, 2018**.
- FSSAI considered the advertisement as an **incidence of irresponsible advertising** by some food companies to promote sales of their own foods which are often considered unhealthy.
- As per the FSSAI's regulations, **the advertisements should not undermine the importance of healthy lifestyles**, and also shall not promote or portray their food & beverages as a meal replacement unless otherwise specifically permitted by FSSAI.
- The Government of India has been taking steps to promote healthy lifestyle. One such is the **Eat Right campaign**, launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to nudge people towards healthier food choices.
Also, the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, in its resolution on marketing of food and non-alcoholic beverages to children, has asked the member-states to reduce the impact on children of marketing of foods high in saturated fats, trans-fatty acids, free sugars, or salt.

Source: IE

Living Root Bridges

Why in News

According to a study recently published in the journal **Scientific Reports**, the living root bridges (found in Meghalaya) can be considered as a reference point for future botanical architecture projects in urban contexts.

Root Bridge

- Living root bridges (also known as Jing Kieng Jri) are the **aerial bridges** that are built by **weaving and manipulating the roots** of the **Indian rubber tree**.
 - A root bridge uses **traditional tribal knowledge** to train the roots of the Indian rubber tree (found in abundance in the area) to grow laterally across a stream bed resulting in a living bridge of roots.
 - It spans between 15 and 250 feet and is built over centuries.
- They have been serving as connectors for generations in the Indian state of **Meghalaya**.

The bridges are primarily a **means to cross streams and rivers**. They have also become world-famous **tourist attractions**. The two most popular tourist spots are- **Riwai Root Bridge and Umshiang Double Decker Bridge**.
- They have **three main properties**:
 - They are **elastic**,
 - The roots **easily combine**, and
 - The plants grow in **rough and rocky soils**.



Source: IE

Pink Ball Cricket

India is currently playing its **first pink-ball, day-night Test** match against Bangladesh at **Eden Gardens (Kolkata)**. The match started on November 22, 2019.

For this match the pink ball has been manufactured by **Sanspareil Greenlands (SG)**, a **Meerut-based** sports company.

Day-night Test

A day-night Test match is played either totally, or partially under floodlights (artificial stadium lighting) in the evening or at night.

Need for a Pink Ball

The idea behind playing day-night Tests is to **increase footfall at matches**, as a large number of cricket enthusiasts watch matches only after work hours.

Pink Ball

RED BALL VS PINK BALL	
	
White seam, provides initial movement	More pronounced black seam, provides more bounce
Grease applied on the surface	Grease not applied on the surface
The red ball has dyed leather. Bowlers get reverse swing later in the innings	Extra coat of pigment and lacquer, as a result it will swing initially
Shine stays for 25-30 overs	Shine stays for more than 60 overs

- **Visibility:** Pink was the consensus colour after ball makers tried optic yellow and bright orange, which were easy to spot on the grass. Batsmen, however, complained that these colours tended to merge with the brownish patches on the pitch.
 - The conventional red Test cricket ball is dipped in grease but this cannot be done with the Day/Night(D/N) Test pink ball since grease would dull the fluorescent pink, affecting the visibility of the ball under lights.
 - The D/N ball is sprayed with a thick coat of pink colour so that it sparkles for long, making visibility easier.
- **Manufacturing:** Like Red and White, Pink balls are also made of same core using similar production techniques.

The colour of the dye, and the difference in 'finishing' decide in which format a ball is used.
- **Slow Deterioration:** An advantage of using the Pink Ball is that they deteriorate slowly as compared to the White Balls (used in limited over matches) which makes them ideal for day-night Test matches.

Concerns

- **Detrimental to Variations:** Emphasis on maintaining the pinkness of the ball also slows its aging, taking away the options of reverse swing as well as spin. This effectively takes away the intrigue of a Test match.

Also limited exposure to sunshine in D/N tests means the pitch will not break/crack up as rapidly which may result in long periods of boring play.
- **Tinkering with the idea of Test Cricket:** The entertainment of Test cricket lies in a batsman trying to survive a session, a bowler trying to set up a batsman. Tinkering with the basic idea of Test cricket just to make it entertaining should not define its future.
- **Extra Coating of Lacquer (Polyurethane):** The extra coating of lacquer on the ball enables it to retain its colour over the course of the match. However, there are concerns that this may make the ball appear more orange than pink under floodlights.

Background

- **First trial:** England v Australia Women's One-day match in 2009.
- **International Cricket Council's Approval:** The International Cricket Council (ICC) had approved Day/Night Tests in 2012.
- **First International Day/Night Test:** It was played in 2015 between Australia and New Zealand at Adelaide (Australia). So far, 11 Day-night Tests have been played and Australia has been the most successful so far in Pink-ball cricket, winning all their five games.

- **India's Stand:** India had earlier refused to participate in the Pink-ball Test matches. India was the only major Test-playing nation to not have played a Day-night Test.
 - India had earlier experimented with the pink ball during a Duleep Trophy game in 2016, but the BCCI had not thereafter accepted suggestions from several former Indian cricketers, including Sourav Ganguly, to organise more such games.
 - Ganguly, now being the President of BCCI approved the first Pink-ball test which is being held in Eden Gardens, Kolkata.

Source: IE
