Prelim Bits 03-01-2018

Classical Language Status

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- Maharashtra government has sent a proposal to Ministry of Culture for granting classical language status to Marathi language.
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- As of now, six languages i.e. Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia and Sanskrit have been given the status of classical languages.
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- The criteria adopted for the eligibility of a language for granting classical language status are
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i. High antiquity of its early texts/ recorded history over a period of 1500-2000 years;
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ii. A body of ancient literature/ texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers;
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iii. The literary tradition be original and not borrowed from another speech community;
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iv. 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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The benefits include-

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- A one-time grant of Rs 100 crore for research and development of the language.
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- Two major annual international awards for scholars of eminence in the concerned language.
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- Setting up of a 'Centre of Excellence for Studies in Classical Languages' can be set up.
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- The University Grants Commission can be requested to create, to start with at least in Central Universities, a certain number of professional chairs for classical languages, for scholars of eminence in the concerned language.
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NABARD

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- The Parliament has recently passed the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Amendment) Bill, 2017.
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- The Bill seeks to amend the NABARD Act, 1981 which establishes NABARD by transferring the agricultural credit functions of RBI and refinance functions of the then Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation (ARDC).
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- The amendment bill seeks to increase the authorised capital of the Bank to 30,000 crore rupees from 5,000 crore rupees.
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- Currently the Central government is holding 99.60% share of the bank and the rest is with RBI (0.40%).
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- The capital can be increased further by the government in consultation with the RBI.
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- NABARD is responsible for providing and regulating facilities like credit for agricultural and industrial development in the rural areas.
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- It provides both direct finance (lending directly to customers) and refinance (lending to financial institutions to provide loans to customers)
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\n Direct Finance \n	\n Refinance \n

\n \n 1. Loans for Food Parks and Food Processing Units in Designated Food Parks \n 2. Loans to Warehouses, Cold Storage and Cold Chain Infrastructure \n 3. Rural Infrastructure Development Fund \n 4. Long Term Irrigation Fund \n 5. Alternative Investment Fund \n \n	\n \n 1. State Cooperative Banks and Regional Rural Banks for providing short term agricultural loans \n \n\n \n\n \n 2. Cooperative Banks - State, District, Primary Urban; RRB, Commercial Banks, Agriculture Development Finance Companies, NBFC for providing credit for investment activities in agriculture and allied activities. \n \n

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Speed Breeding Technique

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- Australian scientists have developed the world's first 'speed breeding' technique that can boost the production of the crop by up to 3 times.
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- The technique is inspired by the NASA's experiments to grow wheat in space.
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- It involved the use of continuous light on wheat to trigger early reproduction in the plants.
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- It has largely been used for research but now is being adopted by industry.
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Humpback Whale

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- The humpback whale is one of the four species of baleen whales occurring in Indian waters.

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- Characteristic baleen plates and paired blowholes help distinguish baleen whales from toothed whales.
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- These whales strain huge volumes of ocean water through their baleen plates to capture food
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- Humpback Whales migrate annually from the summer feeding grounds near the poles to warmer winter breeding waters closer to the Equator.
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- They are found near coastlines, feeding on tiny shrimp-like krill, plankton, and small fish.
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- The Arabian Sea humpback whales are the only sedentary whales in the world, feeding and breeding in the same area.
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- Researchers from Environment Society of Oman have tagged a female humpback whale named as “Luban” to track its movement via satellite.
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- It started its journey from Oman, heading towards east and reached off the coast of Goa after two months.
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- Even though the IUCN Red List categorises humpback whale as of ‘least concern’, it recognised the distinct Arabian Sea population as ‘endangered’ in 2008.
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Bhima Koregaon Battle

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- It is one of the last battles of 3rd Anglo-Maratha War in January 1818, between Maratha ruler Baji Rao Peshwa II and the British East India Company along with the local Mahar community.
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- The battle brought an end to the domination of Peshwas.
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- Historically, Mahars were considered as untouchables.
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- Maratha King Shivaji, nevertheless, recruited large number of Mahars into the Maratha Army in the 17th century.
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- However, relations between Mahars and Peshwas turned sour after Baji Rao

II reportedly insulted the community by rejecting their offer to serve the army.
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- This made them to side with the English against the Peshwa’s numerically superior army.
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- After the victory, British erected a commemorative victory pillar (Koregaon Ranstambh) in Bhima-Koregaon village in 1818.
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- Dr BR Ambedkar visited the site.
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- This year, the event commemorating the 200th anniversary of the battle had been met with protests.
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Source: The Hindu, PIB

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