



For success in a changing world

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Classical Languages

Syllabus: GS-1; Art & Culture, GS-2; 8th Schedule- Indian Polity

Context

*In a major decision, the Union Cabinet approved giving the status of 'classical language' to five more languages - **Marathi, Bengali, Pali, Prakrit and Assamese**. With this cabinet decision, the number of languages that have the status will nearly double from six to 11.*

About

A Classical Language in India refers to a language that has a rich history, ancient heritage, and immense cultural significance.

The Government of India has designated certain languages as Classical Languages based on specific criteria.

These languages represent the country's linguistic heritage and hold a significant place in Indian history, literature, and culture.

Criteria for Classical Language Status in India:

To be considered for Classical Language status, the language must meet the following criteria:

Antiquity: *The language should have an early text or literary tradition that dates back at least 1,500–2,000 years.*

Rich Heritage: *The language must have a body of ancient literature that is considered a valuable heritage of the country.*

Distinctiveness: *The language and its literary tradition must be distinct from modern forms or associated languages.*

Cultural Continuity: *The language should have a long and continuous history of written literature and tradition.*

Benefits of Classical Language Status:

Financial support for the establishment of research centers.

The setting up of chairs in universities for promoting Classical Languages.

Scholarships for students and researchers in these languages.

Funding for the translation of classical works into modern languages.

Women dhakis

Syllabus: GS-1; Art and Culture

Context

Female dhakis find their own rhythm at the Durga puja traditions amidst societal barriers

A predominantly male dominated artform is now being actively practiced by many women



About

Women dhakis are emerging as a significant force in the traditional music landscape of West Bengal, India.

These female drummers are reviving the art of playing the dhak, a traditional drum integral to the Durga Puja celebrations and other festivities.

Historically, dhakis—often male—performed this role, but recent initiatives have empowered women to step into this space, bringing both cultural and economic benefits.

To know

The dhak has been recognized as an important cultural element of Bengali festivals, especially during Durga Puja.

Why Italy matters to India?

Syllabus: GS-2; International Relations

Context

The article deals with the evolving relationship between Italy and India, particularly in the context of shared challenges and interests in the Indo-Mediterranean region.

Common Interests and Challenges

Strategic Importance: The Indo-Mediterranean region is crucial for global trade and digital connectivity, especially with projects like the Blue-Raman submarine data cables connecting Genoa and Mumbai.

Security Concerns: Italy and India face joint challenges, including piracy in the Red Sea and regional conflicts (e.g., Gaza and Lebanon), necessitating cooperative efforts for a stable and prosperous environment.

Enhanced Military and Naval Cooperation

Increased Naval Presence: Italy has bolstered its naval presence in India, including participation in the Information Fusion Centre and sending ships like the patrol ship ITS Francesco Morosini and the Carrier Strike Group to India.

Military Operations: Italy plays a significant role in various EU naval operations, aiming to safeguard navigation in critical maritime zones, including the Red Sea and Indian Ocean.

Defence Ties and Agreements

Bilateral Defence Agreement: A defence cooperation agreement signed in October 2023 is designed to enhance collaboration in research, information sharing, and industrial cooperation.

Italian Defence Companies: Prominent Italian firms like Leonardo and Fincantieri are involved in defence production in India, aligning with India's 'Make in India' initiative.

Development Initiatives

Mattei Plan: Italy's new initiative, the Mattei Plan, aims to create sustainable partnerships in Africa with significant investments, reflecting mutual interests in development.

Support for IMEC: Italy has backed the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, recognizing its potential to foster regional peace and prosperity amid ongoing conflicts.

Cultural and People-to-People Ties

Diaspora Connections: *Italy hosts the second largest Indian diaspora in the EU, contributing to strong cultural and economic ties.*

Historical Relations: *The long-standing relationship is reinforced by shared cultural exchanges and integration efforts, fostering friendship and collaboration across various sectors.*

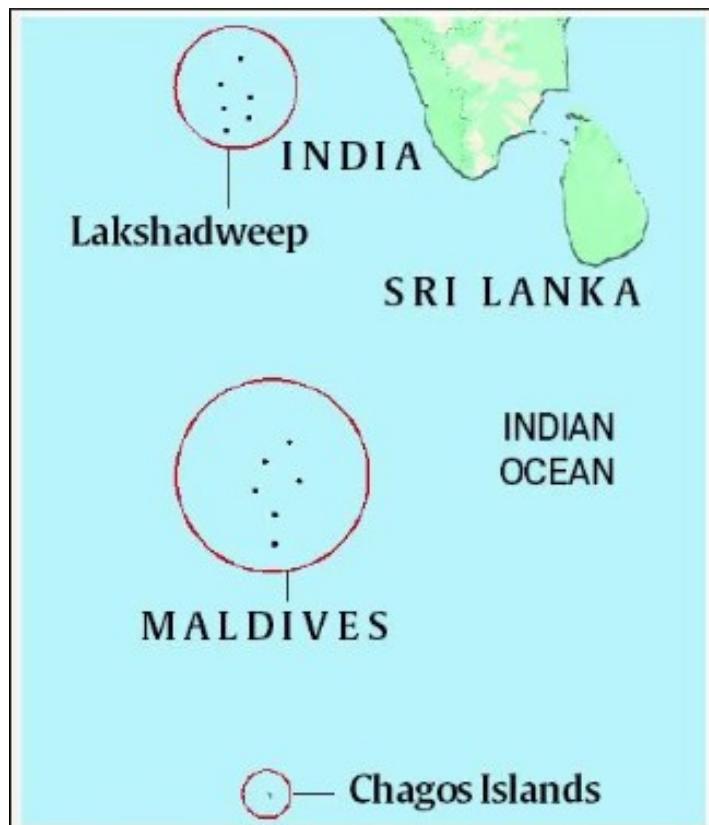
Chagos Island

Syllabus: GS-2; International Relations

Context

The United Kingdom on October 3 2024 said it would cede sovereignty of the strategically important Chagos Islands to Mauritius, calling it a "historic political agreement".

The UK has long controlled Chagos and the Diego Garcia military base located there, jointly operating it with the United States.



What is the Chagos archipelago?

The Chagos archipelago, comprising 58 islands, lies roughly 500 km to the south of the Maldives archipelago in the Indian Ocean.

These islands were uninhabited until the late 18th century, when the French brought in slave labour from Africa and India to work in newly-established coconut plantations.

In 1814, France ceded the islands to the British.

In 1965, the UK constituted the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), of which the Chagos Islands were a central part.

A few other BIOT islands were later ceded to the Seychelles in 1976 after it gained independence from Britain.

Chagos was attached to Mauritius, another British colony in the Indian Ocean, for administrative purposes.

But when Mauritius gained independence in 1968, Chagos remained with Britain.

The UK government gave the newly-independent country a grant of 3 million pounds over the “detachment” of the Chagos archipelago.

And what is Diego Garcia?

*Behind Britain retaining sovereignty over the Chagos Islands was its strategic location. In 1966, Britain signed an agreement with the US which made the BIOT available for the two countries’ defence needs. Land was acquired in 1967, and four years later, the plantation on **Diego Garcia — the largest in the archipelago** — was shut down.*

Diego Garcia became a fully operational military base in 1986.

Why did Mauritius seek sovereign rights over Chagos?

Mauritius has long claimed that the UK illegally occupies Chagos, and has raised the matter many times in international fora.

In 2017, the UN General Assembly voted to ask the International Court of Justice to examine the legal status of the Chagos archipelago. Two years later, the UNGA adopted a resolution welcoming an ICJ advisory opinion, demanding that the United Kingdom “unconditionally withdraw its colonial administration from the area within six months”.

What is the significance of the UK-Mauritius treaty?

The agreement between the UK and Mauritius strikes a balance.

The UK has ceded claims over the islands, and Mauritius is now “free to implement a programme of resettlement on the islands of the Chagos Archipelago, other than Diego Garcia”.

The UK has also promised to create a new trust fund “for the benefit of Chagossians”.

However, the agreement allows the Diego Garcia base to remain operational for an "initial period" of 99 years.

The UK will continue to exercise sovereign rights over the island.

The resolution of the dispute has broader implications.

Brazil's coast eroding faster than ever as Atlantic advances

Syllabus: GS-3; Climate Change

Context

The article here discusses about eroding Brazil's coast because of Climate change.

Into the article

Brazil's coastline is experiencing accelerated erosion, particularly as the Atlantic Ocean encroaches further inland.

*This issue has been exacerbated by climate change, rising sea levels, and the silting of river systems, particularly the **Paraíba River**, which has historically provided sediment to maintain coastal beaches.*

Key Points on Coastal Erosion in Brazil:

Rising Sea Levels: *Over the past 30 years, sea levels near Atafona, a coastal town north of Rio de Janeiro, have risen by approximately 13 cm (5 inches), with predictions of an additional 16 cm rise by 2050*

*This trend is indicative of broader changes, as the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** has noted that global sea levels are now rising at a rate of 0.48 cm per year, more than double that of the previous decade*

Erosion Rates: *In some areas, such as Atafona, the ocean could advance up to 150 meters inland over the next 28 years*

This has already resulted in the destruction of over 500 homes, with significant structures like a four-story building collapsing

Saltwater Intrusion: *The advance of saltwater into freshwater systems is also a growing concern, particularly at the mouth of the Amazon River.*

This intrusion threatens local biodiversity, as seen when saltwater reached areas 150 km upstream, affecting freshwater fish populations and local fishing communities

Impact on Communities: *Coastal towns are facing severe threats to their livelihoods and ecosystems.*

For example, Ponta Negra, a popular resort area, has lost 15 meters of beach to erosion in the last two decades, leading local governments to invest in costly beach replenishment efforts

Lack of Adaptation in Urban Planning: *Experts criticize urban planning for failing to adapt to these changing conditions. Many coastal homes were built in areas that should have been preserved for natural ecosystems like mangroves and sandbanks, which could buffer against rising seas.*