

PANINI

A grammatical problem that has defeated Sanskrit scholars since the 5th Century BC has finally been solved by Rishi Rajpopat, an Indian PhD student at the University of Cambridge



About Panini, the ‘father of linguistics’:

- Panini probably lived in the 4th century BC, the age of the conquests of Alexander and the founding of the Mauryan Empire, even though he has also been dated to the 6th century BC, the age of The Buddha and Mahavira.
- He likely lived in **Salatura (Gandhara)**, which today would lie in north-west Pakistan, and was probably associated with the **great university at Taksasila**, which also produced **Kautilya and Charaka**, the ancient Indian masters of **statecraft and medicine respectively**.
- ‘**Ashtadhyayi**’, or ‘**Eight Chapters**’, an ancient text written by the scholar Panini towards the end of the 4th century BC.
- It is a linguistics text that set the standard for how Sanskrit was meant to be written and spoken.
- It delves deep into the language’s phonetics, syntax and grammar, and also offers a ‘language machine’, where one can feed in the root and suffix of any Sanskrit word, and get grammatically correct words and sentences in return.
- Panini’s grammar, which built on the work of many earlier grammarians, effectively stabilised the **Sanskrit language**.
- The Ashtadhyayi laid down more than **4,000 grammatical rules**.
- Later Indian grammars such as the **Mahabhasya of Patanjali (2nd century BC)** and the **Kasika Vritti of Jayaditya and Vamana (7th century AD)**, were mostly commentaries on **Panini**.

VACATION BENCHES OF THE SUPREME COURT

Chief Justice of India D. Y. Chandrachud recently said that no Vacation Benches will be available in the Supreme Court during the winter break.



About:

- **Who constitutes vacation bench?**
 - A Vacation Bench of the Supreme Court is a special bench constituted by the Chief Justice of India.
- **When is vacation bench constituted?**
 - The Supreme Court takes two long vacations each year, the summer and winter breaks, but is technically not fully closed during these periods.
- **Urgent matters:**
 - Litigants can still approach the Supreme Court during vacations and, if the court decides that the plea is an “urgent matter”, the Vacation Bench hears the case on its merits.
 - While there is no specific definition as to what is an “urgent matter”, during vacations the court generally admits writs related to habeas corpus, certiorari, prohibition and quo warranto matters for enforcement of any fundamental right.
- **Underlying rules:**
 - Under Rule 6 of Order II of The Supreme Court rules, 2013, the Chief Justice may appoint one or more Judges to hear during summer vacation or winter holidays all matters of an urgent nature.

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (GI) TAG

Kerala’s five agricultural products recently got GI Tag. With the latest five GIs, 17 agricultural products of Kerala facilitated by the Kerala Agricultural University have



received the GI status.

About:

- Attappady Attukombu Avara (beans), Attappady Thuvara (red gram), Onattukara Ellu (sesame), Kanthalloor-Vattavada Veluthulli (garlic), and

Kodungalloor Pottuvellari (snap melon) are the latest Geographical Indications that have been registered.

- The unique features of the products, imparted by the agro-climatic conditions of the geographical area of their production, are the basis for getting geographical indication tag.

Attappady Attukombu Avara:

- Attappady Attukombu Avara, cultivated in the Attappady region of Palakkad, is curved like a goat's horn as its name indicates.
- Its higher anthocyanin content compared to other dolichos beans imparts violet colour in the stem and fruits.
- Anthocyanin is helpful against cardiovascular diseases along with its antidiabetic properties.
- Other than this, calcium, protein, and fibre content are also high.
- The higher phenolic content of Attappady Attukombu Avara imparts resistance against pest and diseases, making the crop suitable for organic cultivation.

Attappady Thuvara:

- Attappady Thuvara is having seeds with white coat.
- Compared to other red grams, Attappady Thuvara seeds are bigger and have higher seed weight.
- This delicious red gram, which is used as vegetable and dal, is rich in protein, carbohydrate, fibre, calcium and magnesium.

Kanthalloor-Vattavada Veluthulli (garlic):

- Compared to the garlic produced in other areas, the garlic from the Kanthalloor-Vattavada area of Devikulam block panchayat in Idukki contains higher amount of sulphides, flavonoids, and proteins.
- It is rich in allicin, which is effective against microbial infections, blood sugar, cancer, cholesterol, heart diseases, and damages to blood vessels.
- The garlic cultivated in this area is also rich in essential oil.

Onattukara Ellu (sesame):

- Onattukara Ellu and its oil are famous for its unique health benefits.
- Relatively higher antioxidant content in Onattukara Ellu helps in fighting the free radicals, which destroy the body cells.

- Also, the high content of unsaturated fat makes it beneficial for heart patients.

Kodungalloor Pottuvellari (snap melon):

- Kodungalloor Pottuvellari cultivated in Kodungalloor and parts of Ernakulam is consumed as juice and in other forms.
- This snap melon, which is harvested in summer, is an excellent for quenching thirst.
- It contains high amount of Vitamin C.
- Compared to other cucurbits, nutrients such as calcium, magnesium, fibre and fat content are also high in Kodungalloor Pottuvellari.

WAYANAD RICE FESTIVAL

A Kerala-based organisation named Thanal has embarked on a unique conservation experiment, planting 300 climate-resilient varieties of traditional rice on 1.5 acres of land at its agroecology centre in Panavally in the Wayanad district.



About Wayanad Rice Festival:

- The initiative aims to sensitise people to the significance of conserving traditional crops that have the ability to withstand harsh climatic conditions.
- Thanal has been organising annual “rice field weeks” since 2012.
- The festival also sets the stage for knowledge sharing and co-creation of knowledge between tribal farmers and experts.
- Thanal also launched the **Rice Diversity Block (RDB)** at Panavally under the Save Our Rice campaign in 2009, with a collection of 30 varieties of rice.
- Most of the varieties were collected from Kerala, Karnataka, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Arunachal Pradesh, Maharashtra and West Bengal.
- Many varieties are drought-resistant and flood-tolerant, while others have aromatic and medicinal properties.
- **The Thondy variety**, a traditional and popular rice among the people in Wayanad a few decades ago, could compete with any hybrid rice in terms of productivity.

- **Black rice varieties** are rich in minerals like zinc, iron and other nutrients.
 - India had nearly 1.5 lakh varieties of rice, with about 3,000 varieties unique to Kerala.
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E-20 FUEL

Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister has recently said that India will soon launch E-20 fuel with 20% blending of ethanol.



About E-20 Fuel:

- **The E20 fuel is a twenty percent blend of Ethanol and eighty percent of fossil based fuel.**
 - The introduction of E20 fuel has the motive of reducing the reliance on fossil based fuels for building a more sustainable society for the future and to reduce vehicular emissions.
- It is expected to reduce air pollution, being lesser polluting than petrol.
 - The government foresees oil import savings to the tune of Rs. 30,000 crores annually.

What is Ethanol fuel?

- Ethanol fuel is ethyl alcohol, the same type of alcohol found in alcoholic drinks.
- It is most commonly utilized as a motor fuel, primarily as a biofuel addition in gasoline. Biomass is commonly utilized for making ethanol, such as corn or sugarcane. India's abundance of sugarcane production is pivotal to the push towards ethanol based fuel.

Flex engines:

- Flex engines are those that can run at any ratio of ethanol blending from **E20 to E100**.
 - These types of engines and cars are not new.
 - The Fiat 147, launched in 1978 in Brazil, was the first production car to run solely on ethanol.
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ZONAL COUNCIL

Union Home Minister will attend the Eastern Zonal Council meeting in Kolkata on December 17, 2022.



About:

- The idea of creation of Zonal Councils was mooted by the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru in 1956.
- The Zonal Councils are the **statutory bodies**.
- They are established by an Act of the Parliament, that is, States Reorganisation Act of 1956.
- **The act divided the country into five zones (Northern, Central, Eastern, Western and Southern) and provided a zonal council for each zone.**
- The present composition of each of these Zonal Councils is as under:
- **The Northern Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, National Capital Territory of Delhi and Union Territory of Chandigarh;
- **The Central Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh;
- **The Eastern Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal;
- **The Western Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra and the Union Territories of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli;
- **The Southern Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of Puducherry.
- **North Eastern Council:**
 - The North Eastern States i.e. (i) Assam (ii) Arunachal Pradesh (iii) Manipur (iv) Tripura (v) Mizoram (vi) Meghalaya and (vii) Nagaland are not included in the Zonal Councils and their special problems are looked after by the North Eastern Council, **set up under the North Eastern Council Act, 1972.**
 - The State of Sikkim has also been included in the North Eastern Council vide North Eastern Council (Amendment) Act, 2002 notified on 23rd December 2002.

What is the organisational structure of Zonal Councils?

- **Chairman** - The Union Home Minister is the Chairman of each of these Councils.

- **Vice Chairman** - The Chief Ministers of the States included in each zone act as Vice-Chairman of the Zonal Council for that zone by rotation, each holding office for a period of one year at a time.
- **Members**- Chief Minister and two other Ministers as nominated by the Governor from each of the States and two members from Union Territories included in the zone.
- **Advisers**- One person nominated by the Planning Commission for each of the Zonal Councils, Chief Secretaries and another officer/Development Commissioner nominated by each of the States included in the Zone.

Objectives:

- **The main objectives of setting up of Zonal Councils are as under:**
 - Bringing out national integration;
 - Arresting the growth of acute State consciousness, regionalism, linguism and particularistic tendencies;
 - Enabling the Centre and the States to co-operate and exchange ideas and experiences;
 - Establishing a climate of co-operation amongst the States for successful and speedy execution of development projects.

Functions:

- Each Zonal Council is an advisory body that has the authority to discuss any issue on which the Union and one or more of the States represented therein, as well as some or all of the States represented therein, have an interest in common.
- It also has the authority to recommend a course of action to the Central Government and the governments of the individual States concerned.
- **In particular, a Zonal Council may discuss, and make recommendations with regard to:**
 - any matter of common interest in the field of economic and social planning;
 - any matter concerning border disputes, linguistic minorities or inter-State transport;
 - any matter connected with or arising out of, the re-organization of the States under the States Reorganisation Act.

DIALOGUE ONLY WAY FORWARD: PM TO PUTIN

In News:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin reviewed bilateral ties, including energy cooperation, in a phone conversation.
- This was the fifth phone conversation between the two leaders since February.

India – Russia Bilateral Relation

• Political Relation:

- Since the signing of “Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership” in October 2000 India-Russia ties have acquired a qualitatively new character.
- In 2010, the Strategic Partnership was elevated to the level of **Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership**.
- In 2019, Russia awarded PM Modi the Order of St Andrew the Apostle, the highest and the oldest Russian state decoration.
- The Annual Summit between the Prime Minister of India and the President of the Russian Federation is the highest institutionalized dialogue mechanism.

• Bilateral trade

- India’s bilateral trade with Russia has soared to an **all-time high of \$18,229.03 million** in just five months (April-August) of this financial year (2022-23).
- Of the total \$18,229.03 million bilateral trade in April-August, India’s imports from Russia accounted for \$17,236.29 million.
- On the other hand, New Delhi’s exports to Moscow were only worth \$992.73 million, leaving a negative trade balance.
- India had a positive trade balance with Russia from 1997-98 (the most recent year for which comparable data is available) to 2002-03.
- But from 2003-04, New Delhi’s trade balance with Moscow has remained negative.
- The total annual bilateral trade between the two countries stood at \$13,124.68 million in 2021-22, and \$8,141.26 million in 2020-21.

- With the sharp spike in trade, Russia has now become India's seventh biggest trading partner — up from its 25th position last year.
 - The other the six countries include - US, China, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Indonesia.
 - **Reasons behind this record level of bilateral trade**
 - The record level of bilateral trade between India and Russia is mainly due to a sudden jump in imports from Moscow, which began to surge earlier this year.
 - Fertilisers and fuel together account for over 91% of the total imports from Russia this year.
 - **Multilateral engagements**
 - Both the countries are active members of SCO, BRICS, G20 etc. India also participated in Eastern Economic Forum, hosted by Russia, on a regular basis.
 - India-Russia-Japan trilateral consultations: The first ever trilateral consultations between India, Russia, and Japan at track II level on cooperation in the Russian Far East were held in January 2021.
 - **Defence Cooperation**
 - India has longstanding and wide-ranging cooperation with Russia in the field of defence. This is evident from the joint manufacturing of BrahMos missile, production of AK Rifles in Amethi, 5th generation fighter jet programme etc.
 - Recently, India bought S-400 Triumf missile defence system from Russia.
 - **Nuclear and Space Cooperation**
 - Russia is involved in the development of Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant in India.
 - India-Russia cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of outer space dates back to about four decades.
 - Currently, four Indian astronauts are being trained in Russia. These astronauts are part of India's Human Spaceflight Programme (HSP) – Gaganyaan Mission.
- Background:**
- This year's **India – Russia Annual Summit** was scheduled to be held in Russia
 - Started in 2000, so far, 21 annual summits have taken place alternatively in India and Russia.
 - The in-person summit could not take place in 2020 due to the Covid pandemic.
 - President Putin had visited Delhi in December, 2021 for the annual summit.



CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



- The current phone call came days after PM Modi decided not to travel to Russia for the annual summit citing scheduling issues.

News Summary

- PM Modi held a telephone conversation with Russian President Putin and reiterated the requirement for peace and diplomacy over the crisis in Ukraine.
- The two leaders discussed multiple issues including mutual investment and areas like energy cooperation, agriculture, transport and logistics.

