

Editorial of the Day – 14.01.2026

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1. Language Of Harmony- On the Malayalam Language Bill (TH)

General Studies 2- Governance

Topic- Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, Issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure.

Sub Topic- Linguistic Diversity & Regionalism, Constitutional safeguards for Linguistic Minorities, Inter-State Relations (Inter-State Council).

Language of Harmony- The Malayalam Language Bill, 2025

1. Introduction

The Malayalam Language Bill, 2025, passed by the Kerala Assembly, represents a legislative effort to cement the status of Malayalam as the official language of the state. While aimed at cultural and administrative enrichment, the Bill has sparked inter-state friction, particularly with Karnataka, regarding the rights of linguistic minorities. The legislation attempts to balance the promotion of regional identity with the Constitutional safeguards guaranteed to minority language speakers (specifically Tamil and Kannada).

2. Background and Operational Context

The Legislation- The Bill mandates the use of Malayalam for official purposes and promotes its development across various sectors.

The Conflict- Political leaders from neighboring states (primarily Karnataka) have opposed the Bill, fearing it will disenfranchise Kannada and Tamil speakers living in Kerala.

The Defense- The Kerala government asserts these concerns stem from a misunderstanding of the Bill's provisions, arguing that it strengthens Malayalam without violating the rights of minorities.

3. Core Objectives of the Bill

The primary aim is the "cultural and administrative enrichment" of the state through its mother tongue-

Official Adoption- Formally adopting Malayalam as the Official Language of the State of Kerala.

Mandatory Usage- Mandating Malayalam for all official purposes, within the bounds of the Constitution of India.

Sector-Wide Promotion- Encouraging the language's use in

1. Governance & Administration
2. Judiciary (Court proceedings)
3. Information Technology (IT)
4. Education

4. Provisions for Education

The Bill integrates language policy directly into the educational curriculum-

First Language Status- Malayalam is proposed as the first language for school children in the state.

Curriculum Alignment- Educational measures are aligned with the National Education Curriculum while ensuring the "mother tongue" takes precedence in state schools.

5. Safeguards for Linguistic Minorities (Key Provisions)

To address the concerns of exclusion, the Bill includes specific statutory protections for Tamil and Kannada speakers

Communication Rights- In "notified areas" (regions with high minority populations), linguistic minorities can communicate with State authorities in their respective mother tongues (Tamil/Kannada).

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Mandatory Replies– The State Secretariat, Heads of Departments, and local offices are legally bound to issue replies in the minority language (Tamil or Kannada) when addressed in such.

Educational Exemptions – Students whose mother tongue is not Malayalam can pursue education in other available languages.

Exemption from Exams– Students from other states or foreign countries are exempt from passing Malayalam examinations in Class IX, Class X, and Higher Secondary levels.

6. Legislative History and Judicial Intervention

The journey of the Bill highlights the friction between State autonomy and Central clearance

The Delay– An earlier iteration (2015) was pending Central clearance for 10 years.

Supreme Court Intervention– The Centre returned the Bill only after a Supreme Court ruling stating that Bills **cannot be indefinitely delayed** by the Governor/Centre.

Re-enactment– The Kerala government subsequently revised and passed the 2025 version.

7. Federal Perspective on Language Policy

The text offers a critical analysis of India's linguistic federalism

Linguistic Reality– The linguistic reorganization of states (1956) was an approximation. Migration and historical overlapping have blurred strict language boundaries, making states like Kerala and Karnataka inherently multilingual.

Central Policy– The Centre's stance is to promote all Indian languages. State-level promotion is legitimate provided it does not trample minority rights.

Nation-Building Challenge– Promoting regional languages while preventing inter-community hostility remains a key challenge for Indian federalism.

8. Way Forward

To ensure harmony between linguistic assertion and national integration

Inclusive Policies– National and regional policies must reflect multilingual realities rather than pursuing narrow, exclusionary agendas.

Reviving Institutions– The Inter-State Council, currently described as "largely dormant," must be strengthened and empowered to resolve such friction.

Dialogue– Good-faith dialogue across linguistic groups is essential for cooperative federalism.

Space for All– All Indian languages must find due space in the public sphere and administration.

Conclusion

The Malayalam Language Bill, 2025 serves as a case study in managing diversity. It demonstrates that regional language assertion is compatible with constitutional obligations if safeguard mechanisms are robust. However, the friction surrounding the Bill underscores the need for active institutional forums like the Inter-State Council to mediate perceptions and ensure that the "Language of Harmony" does not become a cause for discord.

Source– <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/language-of-harmony-on-the-malayalam-language-bill/article70505903.ece>

2. Delhi and Berlin seek common ground (IE)

General Studies 3– Economy

Topic– Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Sub Topic– India-Germany Relations, Effect of policies and politics of developed countries on India's interests (Defense, Trade, Mobility).

India-Germany Relations– Finding Common Ground

1. Introduction

The India-Germany relationship has reached a pivotal moment following the conclusion of German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's official two-day visit to India in January 2026. Marked by substantive engagements with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar, the visit signifies a

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shift from conventional diplomacy to a strategic, economic, and people-centric partnership. This engagement, coinciding with the celebration of 75 years of diplomatic relations, underscores Berlin's intent to elevate ties beyond traditional European priorities.

2. Strengthening Strategic and Economic Ties

The visit highlighted a mutual commitment to building consensus on key areas such as trade, security, and technology.

Record Bilateral Trade- Economic relations remain the anchor of the partnership. Bilateral commerce has crossed the USD 50 billion mark, a record high that reflects robust investment confidence from German companies in India.

Focus on Future-Ready Sectors- At the India-Germany CEO Forum, discussions centred on high-tech cooperation. Key focus areas included Green Technologies, Semiconductors, and Critical Minerals, which are essential for the economic resilience of both nations.

Elevated Engagement- As Chancellor Merz's first official visit since assuming office, the engagement signals a "broadening and deepening" of the partnership.

3. Key Agreements and Institutional Frameworks

A total of 19 agreements and MoUs were signed during the visit, spanning defence, clean energy, and infrastructure.

Defence Cooperation

1. Adoption of a Defence Industrial Cooperation Roadmap.
2. Focus on deepening industrial collaboration and the co-development of defence systems, aiming to reduce India's import dependencies.

Connectivity and Logistics

Visa-Free Transit- Germany announced a visa-free airport transit facility for Indian passport holders to boost connectivity.

Logistics Pacts- Agreements on postal and express services were signed to facilitate cross-border e-commerce and trade.

Clean Energy & Tech- Frameworks established for cooperation in renewable energy projects and climate action.

4. Shared Values- Mobility, Culture, and Education

Beyond strategic deals, the visit emphasized "soft power" and human capital exchange.

Skilled Labour Mobility- Focus on facilitating the movement of trained professionals, particularly in healthcare, to address Germany's workforce shortages.

Education and Research

1. Expansion of the education roadmap.
2. Invitations extended to German universities to establish campuses in India to foster academic and research collaboration.

Cultural Diplomacy- Chancellor Merz's participation in the International Kite Festival and visit to Sabarmati Ashram symbolized deep mutual respect for heritage and a warmer diplomatic tenor.

5. Global and Security Cooperation

Both nations reaffirmed their commitment to a rules-based international order while respecting India's strategic autonomy.

Multilateral Alignment- Collaboration on global challenges such as Climate Change and multilateral security issues.

Supply Chain Resilience- Discussions focused on diversifying supply chains to reduce vulnerabilities and external dependencies.

Strategic Autonomy- Germany acknowledged India's need to balance engagements with other global partners while strengthening bilateral security ties.

6. Conclusion

The editorial concludes that the India–Germany relationship has evolved from transactional interactions to a multi-dimensional alliance. By finding common ground in sustainable development, secure supply chains, and human connectivity, both democracies are laying the foundation for long-term stability. The partnership is now poised to contribute not just to bilateral gains, but to broader global economic growth and stability.

Source- <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/delhi-and-berlin-look-for-common-ground-10472226/>

