




18 January 2023

National and International News

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| <p>India, U.K. sign two deals</p> | <p>Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> India and the United Kingdom signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a bilateral international cadet exchange programme and a Letter of Arrangement (LoA) on defence collaboration in research and development. The LoA on R&D was signed between the Defence Research and Development Organisation and the U.K.'s Defence Science and Technology Laboratory. |
| <p>Sisal leaves</p>  | <p>Context</p> <p>Scientists at Stanford University are researching the use of sisal leaves to create a highly absorbent material that could replace cotton, wood pulp, and chemical absorbents in sanitary napkins.</p> <p>Key points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The absorption capacity of the sisal-based material is reported to be higher than that in commercial menstrual pads. The method developed by the researchers involves using a decorticator to mechanically separate the fibres from sisal leaves and employing a process inspired by termite guts to delignify the fibres. The study claims that the process uses no polluting or toxic chemicals and can be conducted on a small scale, making it environmentally sustainable. |
| <p>Chhattisgarh govt. launches scheme for Ayodhya visit</p> | <p>Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chhattisgarh has approved its Ram Lala Darshan (Ayodhya Dham) Yojana. Under the scheme, 20,000 eligible residents of the State would be taken to the holy city for pilgrimage every year. |
| <p>ILO on unemployment</p> | <p>Context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per International Labour Organisation (ILO)'s |



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'World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2024' report

- Global unemployment rate is set to increase in 2024 while growing social inequalities remain a concern.
- Joblessness and the jobs gap have both fallen below pre-pandemic levels but global unemployment will rise in 2024.

'Minorities' right to open institutions

Context

The Supreme Court observed that the right given to religious and linguistic minorities to establish and administer their own educational institutions under **Article 30(1) of the Constitution** was not intended to "ghettoize" them.

Key points

- The minority character of an educational institution is not lost if its founders, who belong to a particular minority community, chose administrators from other communities, including the majority group, to run the institution
- **Article 30 does not mandate** that the administration of a minority educational institution should be only by members of that community
- The provision confers on the minority the discretion to choose the administrators of the institution.



Kerala Regional News

Onavillu to be presented to Ayodhya temple



Context:

The Sree Padmanabhaswamy temple in the state capital plans to present an 'Onavillu,' a traditional ceremonial bow, to the Lord Ram temple in Ayodhya as a gift on Jan 22.

Key Points:

- The 'Onavillu' will be transported to Ayodhya on a flight from Kochi.
- The tradition of consecrating 'Onavillu' at the temple dates back to the 16th century.
- The 'Onavillu' is a painted wooden bow depicting Ananthasayanam, Dasavatharam, Sreerama Pattabhishekam, and Sreekrishnaleela with micro-perfection using natural colors.
- The process involves a 41-day penance by members of the Viswakarma community, known after Lord Viswakarma, who traditionally prepare the Onavillu.
- Different versions of Onavillu are consecrated to different deities, such as Lord Padmanabha, Lord Narasimha, Lord Krishna, and Lord Rama.
- The Onavillu is offered to the respective deity on Onam day and removed on the third day after Onam.

Kumarakom

| TOURIST FOOTFALL IN KUMARAKOM | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | 2023 (till Sep) | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
| DOMESTIC | 3,51,860 | 2,83,395 | 1,35,472 | 1,22,101 | 5,01,247 |
| FOREIGN | 15,112 | 8,806 | 365 | 20,072 | 49,837 |

| KUMARAKOM TOURISM | | PREPPING FOR NEXT COOL | |
|-------------------|-----|---|--|
| Resorts | 21 | • Smaller properties are urging the government to establish a shared helipad to fully capitalise on the venture | |
| Homestays | 13 | • Currently, Kumarakom Lake Resort and the Zuri are the only properties equipped with helipad facilities | |
| House boats | 110 | | |
| Shikara boat | 80 | | |

Context:

- Kumarakom faced a tourism crisis during the pandemic, with a significant drop in visitors.
- 2022 witnessed a notable rebound, nearly filling the previous drop in tourist numbers.
- The Heli-tourism project is expected to contribute to the industry's recovery.

Key Points:

- Aerial view of Kumarakom's backwaters and landscapes now accessible through heli-tourism.
- Kumarakom Lake Resort and the Zuri currently equipped with helipad facilities.

Tripprayar temple

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the Sree Rama temple in Tripprayar as part of his Kerala's visit and participated in the vedic chants and bhajans on Lord Ram.



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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to Vadakkumpad Pasupathi Namboothiri, the vedic teacher of Brahmaswom Madom, 16 students and four teachers from the Madom took part in the vedic chanting session. • Modi also offered 'meenoottu' (offering food to fish) at the temple. |
| <p>Kerala Transport Minister Ganesh puts brake on KSRTC's e-bus purchases</p> | <p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport Minister K B Ganesh Kumar opposes further purchase of electric buses for KSRTC. • He cites high costs, low revenue, and lack of proven success as reasons. <p>Challenges with Electric Buses According to Ganesh Kumar:</p> <p>Financial Aspect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric buses cost close to Rs 1 crore each. • The minister argues that this amount could buy four diesel buses of similar size. • Claims electric buses generate less revenue for KSRTC. <p>Operational Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average operation is 200 km, leading to operational losses. • Ganesh Kumar suggests electric buses are not suitable for high revenue routes. |
| <p>Kerala school textbooks to include Constitution's Preamble, POCSO awareness from next academic year...</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kerala's education board will introduce fresh textbooks in schools in the upcoming academic year. • The new set of textbooks will be introduced in Classes I, III, V, VII and IX from the upcoming academic year. Fresh textbooks will be presented to Classes II, IV, VI, VIII and X only in 2025. • The new curriculum includes Malayalam Aksharamala (alphabet list) learning and special textbooks for skill development. <p>Key Points: Other significant changes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All textbooks will have the preamble of the Indian Constitution. • Each of the textbooks for Class I will have a supplementary activity book. |



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- A **digital version** of all the books will be made available.
- Scientific thinking, cleanliness, civic sense, and gender parity awareness will be included in the curriculum.
- Chapters on creating awareness of the Protection of **Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act will also be part of the curriculum.**

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