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Polity & Governance

No-confidence motion at Gram panchayat level

Why in news?

- The **president of Ramankary grama panchayat** in Kuttanad, was **voted out of office through a no-confidence motion**.
- The **no-confidence motion was passed with eight votes against five** in the 13-member panchayat.

About no-confidence motion against the president of a Gram Panchayat:

- It is a **formal procedure through which the members express their lack of confidence in the president's ability** to govern effectively.
- **State Panchayati Raj Acts**: The specific provisions for the no-confidence motion are outlined in the respective **State Panchayati Raj Acts**, as **Panchayats are a state subject in India**. The **procedure can vary slightly from one state to another**.
- **Notice Requirement**: Typically, a **specified number of Panchayat members (usually not less than one-third)** must sign and submit a **written notice of their intention to move a no-confidence motion against the president** to the **Panchayat Secretary or the competent authority**.
- **Meeting Convening**: Upon receipt of the notice, the competent authority must convene a **special meeting of the Gram Panchayat** within a **stipulated period (usually 15 to 30 days)** to discuss and vote on the motion.

Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India

Why in news?

- The **Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Parishath (KSSP)** has **opposed the implementation of the PM SHRI (Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India) scheme in Kerala**.
- The KSSP warned that this could **lead to financial pressure** and have **serious consequences for Kerala's public education sector**.

About PM SHRI:

- The **Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI)** is a **centrally sponsored scheme** by the **Government of India**.
- The scheme was approved by the Cabinet on 7 September, **2022**.
- The PM SHRI scheme **aims to develop more than 14,500 schools across the country** by **strengthening the existing schools** among those managed by the Central Government/State/UT Government/local bodies.
- These schools will showcase the implementation of the **National Education Policy 2020**.
- They will also offer leadership to other schools in their respective regions¹³.
- The scheme is proposed to be from **2022-23 to 2026-27**.
- The PM SHRI Schools will **provide high-quality education in an equitable, inclusive and joyful school environment**.



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- The PM SHRI Schools will be developed as Green schools, incorporating environment-friendly aspects like solar panels and LED lights, nutrition gardens with natural farming, waste management, plastic-free, water conservation and harvesting.

Academic Bank of Credits

Why in news?

- The Higher Education department and the Kerala State Higher Education Council (KSHEC) jointly organized a workshop on Academic Bank of Credits.
- The programme was inaugurated by Saji Gopinath, the Vice Chancellor of Digital University Kerala.

About Academic Bank of Credits:

- The Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) is a digital platform that manages the information related to the credits that students earn over the course of their academic careers.
- ABC is a virtual/digital storehouse that contains the information of the credits earned by individual students throughout their learning journey.
- It enables students to open their accounts and gives multiple options for entering and leaving colleges or universities.

Fisher Development Index (FDI)

Why in news?

- Sustainable fish stocks, fish taxa diversity, and harvest status significantly impact the welfare of the fishermen community.
- The Human Development Index (HDI) of this community is not on par with the general state population.

About Fisher Development Index (FDI):

- The Fisher Development Index (FDI) is a tool developed by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) to assess the human development in marine fishers.
- The FDI is designed to capture the complexity involved in assessing a community of fishermen, which the Human Development Index (HDI) may not fully capture.
- The FDI takes into account four components:
 - Social status,
 - Economic well being,
 - Technological proficiency, and
 - Resource sustainability.
- The FDI is based on the understanding that the wellbeing of fishers is dependent on resource sustainability, the state of technology, and infrastructure support.
- The FDI for fishermen in Kerala is higher than the HDI for the average person in India. However, it's still lower than the HDI for the average person in Kerala.



Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019

Why in news?

- The **Indian Union Muslim League (IUML)** plans to approach the **Supreme Court** and the **Election Commission of India**, regarding the **Centre's distribution of citizenship certificates** under the **Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA)**.

About CAA 2019:

- The **CAA seeks to provide Indian citizenship to persecuted minorities (Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians)** from **Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan** who entered India on or before **December 31, 2014**.
- The **CAA amends the Citizenship Act, 1955**, which regulates who may acquire **Indian citizenship** and on what grounds.
- The **CAA does not provide eligibility for Muslim immigrants** from these countries, which has been a **point of contention and debate**.
- The **act does not apply to tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura** as included in the **Sixth Schedule** to the Constitution and the areas covered under "**The Inner Line**" notified under the **Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873**.
- The **period of residence in India** for applicants from these communities is **reduced from 11 years to 5 years**.

State Human Rights Commission (SHRC)

Why in news?

- The **State Human Rights Commission (SHRC)** has taken notice of recent **gang violence in Kerala**.
- The **SHRC has ordered the police to take necessary steps** to control these anti-social activities.

About SHRC:

- **Establishment:** SHRCs are established under the **Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993**.
- **Purpose:** They are set up to **protect and promote human rights** at the state level.
- **Chairperson:** Usually a **retired Chief Justice or Judge of a High Court**.
- **Members:** At least **one member should be a woman**. Other members are often from **civil society, legal, and administrative backgrounds**.
- **Appointment:** Members are **appointed by the Governor of the state**, based on the recommendations of a committee.
- **Committee:** The committee usually includes:
 - The Chief Minister (Chairperson)
 - The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
 - The Minister in charge of the Department of Home in that state
 - The Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly



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- **Term:** Members serve for a term of **five years** or **until they reach the age of 70**, whichever is earlier.
- **Functions:**
 - **Investigate complaints** regarding violation of human rights.
 - **Conduct suo motu investigations** into matters of public interest.
- **Reports:** SHRCs **submit annual reports to the state government**, detailing their activities and findings.

Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA)

Why in news?

- The **Kerala State Heat Action Plan**, first published in 2020, is **currently being revised and updated**.
- The **revision aims** to make the **plan more relevant, comprehensive, and inclusive**.

Key points:

- The updated plan, referred to as the **Kerala State HAP 2.0**.
- The **Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA)**, which drafted the original plan, is responsible for its revision.

About KSDMA:

- **Established:** KSDMA was established **under the Disaster Management Act, 2005**.
- **Function:** The primary function of KSDMA is to **formulate disaster management policies, plans, and guidelines for the state of Kerala**.
- **Chairperson:** The **Chief Minister of Kerala** is the **ex-officio Chairperson** of KSDMA.
- **Vice-Chairperson:** The Vice-Chairperson is the **Minister for Revenue and Disaster Management**.
- **Executive Committee:** The Authority has an Executive Committee **headed by the Chief Secretary of Kerala**.

Operation Clean

Why in news?

- The **Ernakulam Rural police** have **registered 145 cases** under the **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act** in the past six months.

Key points:

- These cases were registered under the drive **Operation Clean**, a **strategic campaign aimed at identifying and neutralising major threats and players associated with organised crime**.
- The campaign prioritised **action against smuggling, peddling, and consumption of drugs**.
- The campaign was launched as a **continuation of 'Yodhav,' a project launched by the State Police in 2022** to eliminat

Vizhinjam port



Why in news?

- A seminar on 'Port Development and Employment' inaugurated.
- This seminar was organised in connection with the **58th State conference of the Kerala Gazetted Officers' Association (KGOA)**.

Key points:

- The **Vizhinjam port, once operational, will set the stage for the development of various ports** across the State, including Kollam.
- It was suggested that the **State should make extensive preparations for the opening of the port**.

About Vizhinjam International Seaport:

- The Vizhinjam International Seaport is a significant port development project in **Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala**.
- It is **India's first deep-water container transshipment port**.
- The port is **designed to cater primarily to container transshipment, multi-purpose, and break bulk cargo**.
- The port is being developed in a landlord model with a **Public Private Partnership** component on a **design, build, finance, operate, and transfer (DBFOT) basis**.
- The **port is strategically located just 10 nautical miles from the busy international shipping route** connecting Europe, the Persian Gulf, and the Far East.

Science & Technology

National Technology Day at CSIR-NIIST, Pappanamcode

Why in news?

- The **CSIR-National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (NIIST)** and the **National Institute of Technology, Calicut (NIT-C)** have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).
- The signing took place on the sidelines of the **National Technology Day** celebrations held at CSIR-NIIST, **Pappanamcode**.

About National Technology Day:

- National Technology Day, **celebrates the country's achievements in the field of science and technology**.
- National Technology Day is **celebrated annually on May 11**.
- The day was **started by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1999** to honor **Indian scientists, engineers, and technologists**.
- The **day marks the successful nuclear tests conducted by India at Pokhran in 1998**.
- The **theme for 2024 is 'School to Startups-Igniting Young Minds to Innovate'**.

Health Sector



Hepatitis

Why in news?

- On May 12, **health authorities in Malappuram issued a fresh warning against the spread of hepatitis.**
- This **warning was issued in response to two more deaths** reported in the last two days.

About Hepatitis:

- Hepatitis refers to **inflammation of the liver, which can be caused by viruses, toxins, alcohol, certain drugs, and autoimmune conditions.**
- **Types of Viral Hepatitis:** The most common types are **Hepatitis A, B, C, D, and E.**
 - **Hepatitis A:** Transmitted primarily through ingestion of contaminated food or water.
 - **Hepatitis B:** Transmitted through contact with infected bodily fluids, such as blood, semen, and vaginal fluids.
 - **Hepatitis C:** Mainly spread through blood-to-blood contact, such as sharing needles or from inadequately sterilized medical equipment.
 - **Hepatitis D:** Occurs only among those infected with Hepatitis B, as it is a superinfection.
 - **Hepatitis E:** Generally transmitted through consuming contaminated water and is prevalent in regions with poor sanitation.

West Nile fever

Why in news?

- **Around 100,000 people have been affected by epidemics** in two weeks, resulting in 10 deaths.
- Over the past five months, 91 deaths have been reported in Kerala, **attributed to rare diseases and epidemics.**
- Diseases such as **amoebic meningoencephalitis** and **West Nile fever** have been observed.

About West Nile fever:

- West Nile fever is **caused by the West Nile virus (WNV), a mosquito-borne flavivirus.**
- **Transmission:**
 - Primarily spread through the **bite of infected Culex mosquitoes.**
 - Mosquitoes become infected by feeding on birds carrying the virus.
 - **Less common modes include** blood transfusions, organ transplants, and from mother to baby during pregnancy, delivery, or breastfeeding.



- **Geographical Distribution:** WNV is found in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, North America, and West Asia.

Awards

47th Kerala Film Critics Awards

Why in news?

- **Aattam** was chosen as the **best film in the 47th Kerala Film Critics Awards**.
- The film's director, **Anand Ekarshi**, was adjudged as the **best director**.

Key points:

- **Biju Menon** (for **Garudan**) and **Vijayaraghavan** (for **Pookkaalam**) shared the **best actor (male) award**.
- **Zarin Shihab** (for **Aattam**) and **Shivada** (for **Jawanum Mullappoovum**) won the **best actor (female) award**.
- **V.C.Abilash** won the **best screenplay award for Pan Indian Story**.
- **RDX** (directed by **Nahas Hidayath**) and **Garudan** (directed by **Arun Varma**) **shared the award for the best popular film**.
- The **Chalachitra Retnam Lifetime Achievement Award** has been bestowed on actor, scenarist, and filmmaker **Sreenivasan**.
- The film **Kurinji**, directed by **Gireesh Kunnummel**, won the award for the **best tribal language film**.
- **Armo** won the **best cinematographer award for the film Anchakkallakokkan**.
- **Appu Bhattathiri** won the **best film editor award for the film Rani: The Real Story**.

Summit Conference News

Russian Literary Festival 2024

Why in news?

- **Russian Literary Festival 2024** was organized jointly by the **Moscow-based Russkiy Mir Foundation** and the **Russian House** in **Thiruvananthapuram**.
- The festival was inaugurated by writer **Paul Zacharia**.

Key points:

- The event was held in connection with the **225th birth anniversary of poet Alexander Pushkin** and the **135th birth anniversary of poet Anna Akhmatova**.
- The festival included a series of **seminars, competitions for students, recitals of Pushkin's poems, and exhibitions**.
- **Literature** has contributed immensely to **strengthening friendly relations between India and Russia**.



World Hydrogen Summit

Why in news?

- A team of five teachers from the College of Engineering, Muttathara emerged victorious at the Hydrogen Hackathon.
- The team, named **Team H2 Mission**, consisted of members C. Sreekanth, Anas S.R., Beenu Mary Panicker, Abhilash R.S., and Shalini M. Venugopal.

About World Hydrogen Summit:

- Following their victory, they were invited to participate in the **World Hydrogen Summit** in the **Netherlands**.
- The hackathon and the summit focused on **fostering innovation in hydrogen technology solutions**.
- The summit was held in **Rotterdam**.

Contract / MOU Related News

Kudumbashree Mission

Why in news?

- 50 Kudumbashree women farmers are set to learn how to use drones in their fields.
- The Kudumbashree Mission, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, and the Central Tuber Crops Research Institute (CTCRI) will jointly organise a four-day training.
- The training will focus on the use of drones in agriculture.

About Kudumbashree Mission:

- The Kudumbashree Mission, officially known as the **State Poverty Eradication Mission**, was established by the Government of Kerala in 1998.
- It aims to eradicate poverty through community-driven initiatives that empower women and promote self-help groups.
- Kudumbashree operates through a three-tier system composed of **Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs)**, **Area Development Societies (ADS)**, and **Community Development Societies (CDS)**.
- The mission has established over 49,200 microenterprises that engage in various sectors such as catering, waste management, and more.
- It has been pivotal in mobilizing savings and providing credit to its members, thereby fostering economic independence and stability among women.

Kerala Solid Waste Management Project (KSWMP)

Why in news?

- A district-level monitoring committee has been formed to monitor the bioremediation projects being implemented by the Kerala Solid Waste Management Project (KSWMP).



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- These projects are being implemented at Wadakkanchery, Kunnamkulam, and Chalakudy municipalities.
- The committee will be led by the district panchayat executive engineer from the Local-Self Governments department.

About KSWMP:

- KSWMP is a combination of technical and financial assistance provided to the participating Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and strengthens the infrastructure for solid waste management.
- The objective of KSWMP is to enhance institutional as well as service delivery systems in urban local bodies for solid waste management.
- The project comprises of three components:
 - Institutional Development, Capacity Building and Project Management
 - Support to ULBs for Solid Waste Management
 - Development of Regional Solid Waste Management Facilities

Unnathi Startup City programme

Why in news?

- The second batch of the Unnathi Startup City programme is set to begin.
- Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) has invited expressions of interest from ST community entrepreneurs for the funding scheme under the Unnathi programme.

About Unnathi Startup City programme:

- The Unnathi Startup City programme is a joint initiative of the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Development department.
- The programme is designed to promote innovators, entrepreneurs, and start-ups from Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities.
- Unnathi, works towards the betterment of the lesser privileged sections, focusing on the educational, professional, and entrepreneurial advancement of the SC/ST youth.
- The Unnathi Startup City is proposed to be developed in the capital to provide incubation facilities and support for entrepreneurial ventures promoted by members of SC/ST communities in multiple sectors.
- **Eligibility:** Individuals, groups and ST start-ups registered under the KSUM are eligible to apply for the loan-based funding programme, of which **80% of the amount will be sanctioned by the Scheduled Tribes Development department.**
- The remaining 20% of the investment amount can be taken from the Kerala State Scheduled Tribes Corporation or bank.
- The project will be implemented through the Kerala Empowerment Society.



Schemes

AMRUT scheme

Why in news?

- A total of 941 out of 1,102 projects under the **Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) scheme** have been **completed in Kerala**.
- A total of 1,111 projects were **proposed to be implemented** in the **nine mission cities** of Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Alappuzha, Kochi, Thrissur, Guruvayur, Palakkad, Kozhikode, and Kannur.

About AMRUT scheme:

- AMRUT scheme, **aimed at transforming urban living conditions through infrastructure enhancements**.
- AMRUT **aims to provide basic civic amenities to improve the quality of life for all, especially the poor and the disadvantaged**.
- The **focus is on infrastructure services like water supply, sewerage, and urban transport**.
- The scheme was **launched in June 2015** by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**.
- **Targeting 500 cities nationwide**, AMRUT encompasses cities with **populations over 100,000**, along with some specific cities of religious and cultural significance.

Ranks and Reports

MG university secure third rank in India

Why in news?

- **Mahatma Gandhi University (MGU)** has secured the **third position in India** in this year's **Asia University Ranking** by **Britain's Times Higher Education**.

Key points:

- The **Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru** and **Anna University in Tamil Nadu** hold the **first and second positions, respectively in India**.
- **MGU was ranked fourth the previous year**.
- **China's Tsinghua University** and **Peking University** have **maintained their first and second positions, respectively**, for the **fifth consecutive year** in the **list of universities in Asian countries**.
- **MGU has been placed 134th in this list**.
- **Five Indian universities, including MGU, are among the top 150 in the ranking**.
- **MGU is the only varsity from Kerala to be included in the prestigious list**.



- The **ranking was determined** by evaluating **18 indicators**, including teaching, research, knowledge transfer, and international outlook.

Miscellaneous/GK

Chinmaya Sankaram 2024

Why in news?

- The five-day **Chinmaya Sankaram 2024** event was **held to commemorate the 108th jayanti celebrations of Swami Chinmayananda and Sankara Jayanti**.
- The **inauguration was done by Swami Swaroopananda Saraswathi**, the global head of Chinmaya Mission and the Chancellor of Chinmaya Vishwa Vidyapeeth.

About Swami Chinmayananda:

- Swami Chinmayananda Saraswati, born as Balakrishna Menon on **May 8, 1916**, was a renowned **Hindu spiritual leader and teacher**.
- He **founded the Chinmaya Mission in 1951**, a **worldwide non profit organisation**, to **spread the knowledge of Advaita Vedanta, the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads, and other ancient Hindu scriptures**.
- Through the Mission, Chinmayananda spearheaded a global Hindu spiritual and cultural renaissance that **popularised these spiritual texts and values, teaching them in English all across India and abroad**.
- He was **originally a journalist** and **participated in the Indian independence movement**.

Shri Thrikkaipatta Mahakshetram

Why in news?

- The project is underway to **restore the Shri Thrikkaipatta Mahakshetram, one of the oldest temples in India**.
- The **temple, more than 1,500 years old**, is being **reconstructed in a unique apsidal shape (Gajaprishta)**, making it the **largest sreekovil in the state dedicated to Lord Subrahmanya**.

About Shri Thrikkaipatta Mahakshetram:

- The temple features the largest Lord Subrahmanya Sreekovil in Kerala, which is **designed in the "Gaja Prishta" form (resembling the back of an elephant)**.
- It is **situated** in a geographically significant area in **Kozhikode, Kerala**.
- The region's name, Kozhikode, is thought to be derived from '**Kozhi**' (**cock**), the **flag symbol of Lord Subrahmanya**, which further **underscores the area's ancient ties to the deity**.



M.C. Kattappana

Why in news?

- The noted theatre artist **M.C. Kattappana passes away.**
- M.C. Kattappana, whose real name was **M.C. Chacko**, was a renowned theatre artist from Kerala.

Key points:

- He began his professional theatre journey in 1977 with **Attingal Deshibhimani.**
- He also featured in a handful of movies, including acclaimed films such as **'Kazhcha', 'Palunku', and 'Nayakan'.**
- In **2007**, he was bestowed with the **State Government Award for Best Actor** for his role in Kollam Arena's production **'Arum Kothikkunna Mannu'.**

Bhoovastra or coir geotextile

Why in news?

- **Eloor municipality** has started work on strengthening the sides of ponds and streams.
- They are using an eco-friendly coir **'bhoovastra' (geotextile)** for this purpose.

Key points:

- The **geotextile fabric** has been laid along the sides of **Panchathodu.**
- This is part of the efforts to **stabilise the banks of the pond.**

About Bhoovastra:

- Bhoovastra, also known as **coir geotextile**, is a type of geotextile made from natural coir fiber.
- Bhoovastra is a **natural earth cover made from coconut fiber.**
- It is commonly used for the protection of land from soil erosion.
- The **bhoovastra retains the earth's moisture and protects the roots of the plants.**
- It is also used for rainwater erosion control in roads, railway embankments, and hill slopes.

Sree Narayanaguru

Why in news?

- **Sree Narayanaguru Open University (SGOU)** has initiated **Bibliotech**, a book collection drive.
- The drive aims to collect works on **Sree Narayana Guru.**
- The project aims to collect extensive literature related to the life and teachings of the **Sree Narayanaguru.**

About Sree Narayanaguru:

- Sree Narayana Guru, also known as **Gurudevan**, was a **philosopher, spiritual leader, and social reformer from India.**
- He was born on **August 20, 1856**, in **Chempazhanthy**, a village in **Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.**



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- He led a **reform movement against the injustice in the caste-ridden society of Kerala** in order to **promote spiritual enlightenment and social equality**.
- A popular quote of his is: "**one caste, one religion, and one god for all human beings**".
- He is the **author of the Advaita poem Daiva Dasakam**, which is one of the most used poems in Kerala for community prayer.

Kaithapuzha backwater

Why in news?

- **Fishermen in Kochi have reported that an island is forming in the lake.**
- The new island is forming particularly on the west side of the Aroor-Idakochi bridge of **Kaithapuzha backwater**.

About Kaithapuzha backwater:

- **Location:** Kaithapuzha backwater is **located in the Alappuzha district of Kerala**.
- **Part of Vembanad Lake:** It is an **extension of the Vembanad Lake**, which is the **largest lake in Kerala**.

Did you know?

- **Backwaters** are water bodies that are **typically still or slow-moving**, often found in **coastal regions**, and are **formed by the deposition of silt and other materials**.
- They are **commonly found in areas where rivers meet the sea**, such as **estuaries, deltas, and coastal plains**.

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