



19 April 2024

National and International News

<p>World Craft City (WCC)</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The World Crafts Council International (WCCI), based in Kuwait, is considering Srinagar for the World Craft City (WCC) nomination from India this year. The team has inspected several clusters where artisans were working on local crafts like Pashmina shawls, carpets, papier mâché, etc. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The annual ceremony to grant WCC status aims at promoting, preserving, and evolving handicrafts and building new market linkages. The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage-Kashmir (INTACH-K) is collaborating with the J&K Handicrafts department to map the craft sector ahead of the final nomination.
<p>Vice-Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vice-Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi has been appointed as the next Chief of Naval Staff. He is currently serving as the Vice-Chief of the Naval Staff (VCNS). He will take over from the current chief, Admiral R. Hari Kumar, on April 30, 2024. <p>Did you know:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In India, the chiefs of the armed forces—namely the Army, Navy, and Air Force—are appointed by the President of India. The President acts on the advice of the Government of India, typically following a recommendation from the Ministry of Defence. The appointment is usually made from among the senior-most officers of the respective forces, taking into consideration their service records, experience, and suitability for the highest leadership roles within the armed forces.



Electronic voting machines (EVMs)

YOU HAVE 7 SECS TO VERIFY YOUR VOTE

Stands for Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail

VVPAT is an independent system attached to EVMs to allow a voter to verify if his/her vote was cast as intended. VVPAT leaves a paper trail of electronic voting. If there's a complaint about EVM tampering, the paper trail ensures the truth of the matter

ONE SLIP PER VOTE

VVPATs were used in eight constituencies during the 2014 general election as a pilot project. This is the first time they are being used in all Lok Sabha constituencies

- After you cast your vote, a slip will be printed on the VVPAT's printer
- It will contain the serial number, name and symbol of the candidate you chose



1 & 2 are joined by a cable. Taken together, the system is called EVM

Why in news?

- The Election Commission of India (EC) assured that it is impossible to tamper with Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) at any stage.
- The court was hearing petitions seeking cross-verification of 100% EVM votes with VVPAT paper slips. Currently, cross-verification of EVM-VVPAT happens only in five randomly selected polling booths in a constituency.

About EVMs:

- Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) are used to record and tally votes in an electronic format, replacing traditional paper ballots and manual counting methods.
- **Purpose:** To streamline the voting process, enhance accuracy, and speed up the tallying of election results.
- **EVM Components:** Typically consists of two units, the control unit and the balloting unit, linked by a cable. The control unit is operated by election officials, while voters interact with the balloting unit.
- The Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) were first used in India in 1982 during a by-election in the Parur Assembly constituency of Kerala.

About Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT):

- VVPAT is a system that provides a physical printout of the voter's ballot as it was cast electronically.
- It serves as a means for voters to verify that their vote has been recorded accurately and to audit the electronic results.
- It was first introduced in India in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections.

'Forever chemicals' in Chennai water bodies

Why in news?

- The Southern Bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has expressed concerns about the presence of 'forever chemicals' in Chennai waterbodies.
- The bench took suo motu cognisance of chemical contamination in Buckingham Canal, Adyar River, and Chembarambakkam Lake based on news reports on a study done by Indian Institute of Technology Madras.



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Key points:

- The study noted the presence of **polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)**, **synthetic chemicals** that **do not degrade in the environment**, in surface level waters, groundwater, and even treated water treatment plant near the lake.
- PFAS are known to have **adverse health effects** such as liver damage, hormonal imbalance, immune system effects, and even cancer.

About forever chemical:

- "Forever chemicals" is a colloquial term commonly used to refer to **per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)**.
- These are a **group of man-made chemicals** that are notable for their **persistence in the environment and in human and animal bodies**, where they can accumulate over time.
- **Persistence:** PFAS are extremely durable and **resistant to typical environmental degradation processes**, which is why they are called "**forever chemicals**."
- **Widespread Use:** These chemicals have been used in various industries since the 1940s for their water- and grease-resistant properties.



Vote-from-home exercise

Why in news?

- A special polling team trekked 18 kilometres inside the deep forest under the Idukki Lok Sabha constituency to record a single home vote.





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- The trek was part of the 'vote-from-home' exercise meant for **senior citizens** aged above 85 and **differently abled voters**.
- The team trekked to the **Nooradi tribal settlement** under the **Munnar forest division**.

About Vote-from-home exercise:

- The "Vote-from-home" option is designed to **make voting more accessible to certain segments** of the electorate **who may find it difficult to visit polling stations** due to health or mobility issues.
- **Targeted Voters:** Primarily aimed at **elderly** voters above the age of 80 and **persons with disabilities (PwD)**.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Eligible voters can choose to opt for this method voluntarily; it is not mandatory.
- **Application Process:** Voters must apply in advance to avail themselves of this facility. They need to fill out a form (**Form 12D**) and submit it to the returning officer.

Who is eligible to avail the vote-for-home facility?

 <p>People aged 85 and above</p>	 <p>Persons with Disabilities</p> <p>The disability shall not be less than 40% of the prescribed handicap and certified by the certifying authority</p>	 <p>Mediapersons covering 'polling day activities'</p> <p>Carrying authorisation letters from the Election Commission</p>	 <p>Workers from essential services</p> <p>Services such as metros, railways and health care</p>
 <p>Service voters</p> <p>Personnel of the armed forces posted away from their hometowns, Central Armed Police Forces personnel deployed away from home and those on poll duty</p>			





Sugar content high in Nestlé baby food sold in India

Why in news?

- A recent report by Swiss **NGO**, the **Public Eye** and **International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)**, revealed **higher sugar content** in **Nestle's baby food products** sold in **India, African and Latin American countries** compared to those sold in European markets.
- Despite **World Health Organisation (WHO)** recommendations against added sugar in foods for children under three years, Indian regulators allow a **limited amount of sucrose and fructose** in baby food.

Key points:

- Nestle India ensures that their products manufactured in India are in full and strict compliance with **CODEX standards** (a commission established by **WHO** and the **Food and Agriculture Organisation**) and local specifications pertaining to the requirements of all nutrients including added sugars.
- The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India**, which regulates the manufacture, storage, distribution, sale, and import of food articles, while also establishing standards to ensure food safety, said that it is looking into the IBFAN report.

About CODEX standards:

- The **Codex Alimentarius**, or "Food Code", is a **collection of international food standards, guidelines, and codes of practice**.
- These standards are established by the **Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC)**, a central part of the **Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme**.
- The **main objectives** of these standards are:
 - To **protect the health** of consumers.
 - To **ensure fair practices** in the **food trade**.

Think:

- Know about the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India**.





Kerala Regional News

<p>Kerala Fibre Optic Network (KFON)</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Kerala Fibre Optic Network (KFON) has surpassed its targets and generated an annual profit of 150 crore. KFON is a public-funded project aimed at providing free internet access. <p>About Kerala Fibre Optic Network (KFON):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Kerala Fiber Optic Network (KFON) project is an ambitious initiative launched by the government of Kerala. It is aimed at providing free high-speed internet access to low-income families and to offer affordable internet connectivity across the state. Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Inclusion: To bridge the digital divide by providing free internet to over 20 lakh (2 million) economically backward households. Affordable Internet: To make internet services affordable and accessible to everyone, thereby boosting digital literacy and usage. E-Governance and Education: To facilitate e-governance services, online education, and telemedicine services more efficiently across the state.
<p>Endosulfan Rehabilitation Village</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first phase of the state government's ambitious Endosulfan Rehabilitation Village is now complete. The first phase encompasses a clinical psychology block and a consultation & hydrotherapy block. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is being built on 25 acres at a cost of Rs 45 crore in Kasaragod's Muliya Grama Panchayat. The village has four components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A foster care home, Assisted living for adults,



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Halfway homes for assisted living for adults, and ○ A clinical psychology block and hydrotherapy block. <p>About Endosulfan Rehabilitation Village:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Endosulfan Rehabilitation Village is a specialized initiative in Kerala, focused on providing care and support for victims of endosulfan pesticide poisoning. ● This project arose due to the adverse effects experienced by communities in Kasaragod district, where aerial spraying of endosulfan was conducted over cashew plantations for more than two decades. ● Prolonged exposure to endosulfan in agricultural practices led to severe health issues among the local population, including congenital disabilities, cancers, and other chronic illnesses.
<p>Vote-from-home exercise in Idukki Lok Sabha constituency</p> <p>Who is eligible to avail the vote-for-home facility?</p> <div> <div> <p>People aged 85 and above</p> </div> <div> <p>Persons with Disabilities</p> <p>The disability shall not be less than 40% of the prescribed handicap and certified by the certifying authority</p> </div> <div> <p>Mediapersons covering 'polling day activities'</p> <p>Carrying authorisation letters from the Election Commission</p> </div> <div> <p>Workers from essential services</p> <p>Services such as metros, railways and health care</p> </div> </div> <div> <p>Service voters</p> <p>Personnel of the armed forces posted away from their hometowns, Central Armed Police Forces personnel deployed away from home and those on poll duty</p> </div>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A special polling team trekked 18 kilometres inside the deep forest under the Idukki Lok Sabha constituency to record a single home vote. ● The trek was part of the 'vote-from-home' exercise meant for senior citizens aged above 85 and differently abled voters. ● The team trekked to the Nooradi tribal settlement under the Munnar forest division. <p>About Vote-from-home exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The "Vote-from-home" option is designed to make voting more accessible to certain segments of the electorate who may find it difficult to visit polling stations due to health or mobility issues. ● Targeted Voters: Primarily aimed at elderly voters above the age of 80 and persons with disabilities (PwD). ● Voluntary Participation: Eligible voters can choose to opt for this method voluntarily; it is not mandatory. ● Application Process: Voters must apply in advance to avail themselves of this facility. They need to fill out a form (Form 12D) and submit it to the returning officer.
<p>Kochi Water Metro network</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kochi Water Metro Rail Ltd (KWMRL) will start its service to Fort Kochi.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service is expected to boost tourist inflows to Fort Kochi. <p>Water metro service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kochi's distinction as the first city in India to introduce a water metro service. The first boat, named Muziris, was launched in December 2021. Objective: To enhance public transport in the Kochi metro region by integrating water transport with the existing metro network.
Fort Kochi	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fort Kochi to be part of Kochi Water Metro network. The service from High Court Junction terminal, priced at `40 per passenger, is expected to boost tourist inflows to Fort Kochi. <p>About Fort Kochi:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fort Kochi is a fascinating historical area located in the city of Kochi in the state of Kerala. It is known for its colonial architecture and rich history; it serves as a cultural gateway to the past. It has been under the rule of the Portuguese, Dutch, and British, which is evident from the architectural styles and cultural influences in the area. Fort Kochi is a blend of various cultures, including Jewish, Arab, Portuguese, Dutch, and British influences, making it unique in its cultural fabric. Heritage Sites: Key landmarks include the St. Francis Church, where Vasco da Gama was originally buried, the Santa Cruz Basilica, the Dutch Cemetery, and the iconic Chinese Fishing Nets that are symbolic of Fort Kochi's heritage.



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The percussion troupe in Thirssur Pooram

Why in news?

- For the first time, **women will be part of the percussion troupe in Thirssur Pooram, a temple festival.**
- **Sreepriya** and **Hridya**, natives of Mulankunnathukavu and Thanikkudam respectively, **will play Kurumkuzhal, a traditional woodwind instrument.**

About Kurumkuzhal:

- Kurumkuzhal is a **traditional wind instrument from Kerala, India, primarily used in the folk music** of the region.
- It is typically made from wood, with the body of the **instrument often crafted from the wood of the jackfruit tree**, known for its durability and fine grain.

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