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Polity & Governance

Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)

Why in news?

- The **Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)** has issued a **red alert** along the **Kerala and south Tamil Nadu coast** due to **swell waves**.
- The **Kerala State Disaster Management Authority** has directed people to move away from beaches.

About INCOIS:

- INCOIS was established in **1999**.
- It is an **autonomous organization** under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**.
- The **primary purpose of INCOIS** is to provide the best possible ocean information and **advisory services to society, industry, government agencies, and the scientific community** through sustained ocean observations and constant improvements through systematic and focused research.
- The headquarters of INCOIS is located in **Hyderabad, Telangana**.

Project Bhoomika

Why in news?

- **Architect N S Abhayakumar** won the **Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) design award** in the **category of cost-effective rural/urban housing deploying innovative/emerging & disaster-resistant technology**.
- The award was for **Project Bhoomika**, a **flood-relief housing initiative** where 10 houses were built for people in Cheruthana village of Alappuzha who lost their houses in the **2018 floods**.

Key points:

- The **design scheme of the project** was based on a **cost-effective and disaster-resistant technology**.
- A unique aspect of Project Bhoomika was the **partial inclusion of its beneficiaries in the design process**, allowing them to choose the design without affecting the cost.
- The **project involved young students of architecture and civil engineering** in the implementation of a socially relevant human settlement project.
- Considering the topography of the region, the **houses were conceived in such a way that different parts could be pre-fabricated and transported by boat and then erected at the site**.



National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)

Why in news?

- The Kerala government has decided to appeal against the National Company Law Tribunal's (NCLT) order.
- The order was to hand over the Steel Authority of India's steel complex at Cheruvannur in Kozhikode to Chhattisgarh Outsourcing Services Limited.

Key points:

- The tribunal order was issued on May 2 without hearing the State government's side.
- The order was in violation of the lease conditions fixed by the government.

About National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT):

- The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) is a **quasi-judicial body** in India that **adjudicates issues related to companies in the country**.
- It was **established on June 1, 2016**, under **section 408 of the Companies Act, 2013**.
- The **NCLT is the successor to the Company Law Board**.
- The NCLT is tasked with resolving **civil disputes arising under the Companies Act**.
- The establishment of the **NCLT has streamlined the corporate dispute resolution process in India**.

Gotra Neeti and Valsalya Dhara

Why in news?

- The **District Legal Services Authority (DLSA)** has launched two unique programmes, **Gotra Neeti** and **Valsalya Dhara**.
- These programmes are **aimed at mitigating the issues faced by tribespeople and the elderly people**.

Key points:

- The programmes will **last for a year**.
- DLSA officials stated that this twin programme is **being implemented for the first time in the Kerala**.
- The implementation is **supported by KMCT Law College, Kuttippuram**.

About Gotra Neeti:

- This project **aims at enhancing not only the legal awareness of tribespeople, but also improving their health and education**.
- It **encourages tribespeople to take up new means of livelihoods**.
- **Legal camps, para-legal training, and support in education and health** will be provided to them.
- They will also be given **legal support in their cases**.

Valsalya Dhara:

- This programme is **aimed at ensuring the welfare of the elderly people**.





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- The project will focus on **strengthening legal awareness among the elderly, ensuring social inclusion of the elderly as well as their access and safety in public places.**
- **Special focus** will be on **property rights and issues, legal heirship laws, misuse of the elderly, and medical negligence.**
- Programmes will be held to **create connectivity among the elderly and thus to avoid loneliness.**

State Election Commission

Why in news?

- A municipal councillor and two grama panchayat members have been **disqualified by the State Election Commission.**
- The municipal councillor had taken up a contract work of the municipality, which is a **violation of the rules.**
- The two grama panchayat members were **disqualified for skipping official meetings.**

About State Election Commission:

- The **SEC works independently of the Election Commission of India**, each having its own sphere of operation.
- **Powers and Functions:**
 - **Preparing and revising electoral rolls** for local government bodies.
 - **Conducting elections to the local bodies** and dealing with all matters pertaining to these elections, including scheduling and logistic arrangements.
 - **Issuing the Model Code of Conduct** and ensuring its enforcement during the election period to maintain election integrity.
 - **Addressing electoral disputes** and deciding on matters related to the **disqualification of elected members.**

Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB)

Why in news?

- The **Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB)** has been **linked to 'off-budget borrowings', causing friction in Centre-State fiscal relations.**
- A **new study suggests that KIIFB should consider revenue generation avenues** to shed its image as a "debt-generating State-owned enterprise".
- The study, titled '**Exploring own sources of revenue for KIIFB**', was published in the **Kerala Economy journal** by the **Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation (GIFT).**

About KIIFB:

- **Establishment:** KIIFB was established by the **Government of Kerala** to **mobilize funds for infrastructure development in the state.**
- **Purpose:** Its primary purpose is to **provide financial assistance for major and minor infrastructure projects across Kerala**, helping to enhance the state's economic growth.
- **Funding Mechanisms:** KIIFB raises funds through the **issuance of bonds, loans**



from financial institutions, and other government-approved methods.

- **Governance:** It is **governed by a board of directors**, which includes high-level state government officials and is **chaired by the state's Finance Minister**.

Science & Technology

Vijay Chandru

Why in news?

- **Vijay Chandru**, Chairperson of the Board of Governors of Digital University Kerala, has been **honoured with a lifetime membership** in the **American Association for Advancement of Science (AAAS)**.

Key points:

- He is an **eminent computational mathematician** and the **founder of Strand Life Sciences**.
- He is **currently affiliated with numerous scientific associations in India and abroad**.
- These affiliations include the **Indian National Academy of Engineering** and the **Indian Academy of Sciences**

Integrated Rural Technology Centre (IRTC)

Why in news?

- The **Integrated Rural Technology Centre (IRTC)** at **Mundur** is organising a day-long workshop on **'Climate change and agricultural livelihoods: adapting for tomorrow'**.
- The **workshop is being held in association with the Institute for Climate Change Studies (ICCS)**.

About IRTC:

- The Integrated Rural Technology Centre (IRTC) is an **autonomous research and development institution** based in **Mundur, Palakkad district, Kerala**.
- It was **founded by the Kerala Sastra Sahithya Parishad**, a pioneering People's Science Movement.
- The IRTC is a **grant-in-aid institution of the Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment (KSCSTE)**.
- The institution was **established in 1987**.
- IRTC has also marked its footprints in the areas of women and child development with the collaboration of national and international agencies such as **WHO, UNICEF, and UNDP**.

AlphaFold

Why in news?

- **Google Deepmind** has unveiled the third major version of its **"AlphaFold" artificial intelligence model**.
- The **model is designed to help scientists design drugs and target disease more effectively**.





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- The company used AI to successfully predict the behaviour of microscopic proteins.

About AlphaFold:

- **AlphaFold** is a new AI model developed by Google DeepMind and Isomorphic Labs.
- It's a revolutionary model that can predict the structure and interactions of all life's molecules with unprecedented accuracy.
- The model can generate a joint 3D structure of molecules, revealing how they all fit together.
- It models large biomolecules such as proteins, DNA, and RNA, as well as small molecules, also known as ligands — a category that includes many drugs.
- Furthermore, **AlphaFold 3** can model chemical modifications to these molecules which control the healthy functioning of cells. When disrupted, these can lead to disease.
- It assembles its predictions using a **diffusion network**, similar to those found in AI image generators.

Campus Industrial Park programme

Why in news?

- 18 educational institutions in **Kochi** have shown interest in joining the **Campus Industrial Park** programme initiated by the Kerala state government.

About Campus Industrial Park programme:

- The programme is designed to encourage entrepreneurship among students and to strengthen the industry-academia collaboration.
- It aims to make use of the unutilised land within educational institutions for industrial purposes.
- Educational institutions owning a minimum of five acres of land can develop industrial parks, and those having a minimum of two acres can develop standard design factories.
- The government will extend financial support towards building infrastructure facilities such as electricity, water, road, drainage, ETP/CETP, and common facilities like laboratory, testing, and certification facilities.
- A separate **Single Window Clearance Board** will be formed for each Campus Industrial Park.
- **Genrobotics**, a pioneer in robotics, had recently launched the State's first industrial park on campus at Ilahia College of Engineering and Technology, Muvattupuzha.



Health Sector

Widal Test

Why in news?

- The **Widal Test** often gives inaccurate results masking the true extent of India's typhoid problem.
- This situation is leading to increased expenses.
- It also poses a risk of increasing antimicrobial resistance.

About Widal Test:

- **Typhoid fever**, is a bacterial infection caused by the bacterium **Salmonella Typhi**.
- It is commonly spread through contaminated food or water.
- **Symptoms of typhoid fever** include fatigue, high fever, headache, diarrhoea or constipation, abdominal pain, weight loss, and red spots.
- These symptoms are similar to those of malaria, dengue, influenza, and typhus, making it difficult to diagnose without proper testing.
- The **Widal test** is a serological test that detects antibodies against the bacteria in a patient's blood sample.
- The test was developed in the late 1800s by a French physician but is no longer used in many countries because of its flaws.
- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** advises not to rely too much on this test due to the various factors that can influence the results.

CRISPR-Cas9 genome editing technology

Why in news?

- The **ICAR-Central Tuber Crops Research Institute (CTCRI)** in Thiruvananthapuram has embarked on a ₹4 crore research project.
- The project aims to develop tapioca varieties with waxy or high-amylose starches using **CRISPR-Cas9 genome editing technology**.

About CRISPR-Cas9 genome editing technology:

- **Discovery and Development:** CRISPR (**Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats**) and Cas9 (**CRISPR-associated protein 9**) were adapted from a naturally occurring genome editing system in bacteria. The technology was developed into a versatile tool by scientists **Jennifer Doudna** and **Emmanuelle Charpentier**, who won the **Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2020** for their work.
- **Mechanism:** CRISPR-Cas9 works by using a **guide RNA (gRNA)** to direct the Cas9 enzyme to a specific location in the DNA sequence where an edit is desired. The Cas9 enzyme then cuts the DNA at this location, allowing for genes to be removed or added.



Awards

ONV Cultural Academy's literary award for 2024

Why in news?

- **Pratibha Ray**, an Odia writer, has been selected for the ONV Cultural Academy's literary award for 2024.

Key points:

- The award includes **₹3 lakh**, a **statuette**, and a **citation**.
- The award will be **presented on May 27** in connection with poet ONV Kurup's birth anniversary.
- The **award decision** was **made by a committee** chaired by novelist **George Onakoor** and including poet **Prabha Varma** and writer **Mahadevan Thampi**.
- **Ms. Ray's writings**, which **depict the complex aspects of society and the individual mind**, have elevated Indian novel writing to international standards.
- Some of her notable works include **Droupadi**, **Shilapadma**, **Barsa Basantha Baisakha**, **Yajnaseni**, and **Aparachita**.
- She is recognized for **her efforts to rehabilitate orphans and widows from areas affected by the Super Cyclone** that hit Odisha in 1999.
- She was honored with the **Jnanpith Award in 2011** and the **Padma Bhushan in 2022**.

About O. N. V. Literary Award:

- The ONV Cultural Academy is an organization that **annually awards the O. N. V. Literary Award**.
- This **award was established in 2017** in memory of the poet **O. N. V. Kurup (1931–2016)**.
- The **award is not limited to Malayalam-language authors** but is a **national award for which writers from across India are considered** for their overall contributions to literature

Padmaprabha Literary Award

Why in news?

- **Writer and lyricist Refeeque Ahamed** has been **selected for the Padmaprabha Award 2024**.
- The jury appreciated Refeeque Ahamed for preserving **Malayalam poetry** without losing touch with reality.

About Padmaprabha Literary Award:

- **Foundation and Purpose:** The Padmaprabha Literary Award is **sponsored by the Padmaprabha Foundation** and **focuses on contributions to Malayalam literature**. It was established to **honor the memory of the freedom fighter and socialist, Padmaprabha**.





- **Award Details:** The award includes a cash prize of **₹75,000**, a **citation**, and a **gem-studded ring**. The award highlights significant contributions in the field of **Malayalam literature**.
- **Inception:** First awarded in **1996**, the award has been **given annually** to a wide array of distinguished writers in Malayalam literature.

Schemes

Coastal Greening Programme

Why in news?

- Coastal greening programme to take off in Kerala soon.

About Coastal Greening Programme:

- The **Coastal Greening Programme** aims to **strengthen the green cover along the coast by planting mangroves**.
- It will be **implemented in 33 panchayats** along the **coast between Ernakulam and Thiruvananthapuram districts**, including **Alappuzha and Kollam**.
- The programme will **cover a distance of 59 km along the coast**.
- About **14 acres** will come under the greening programme.
- The programme will be **overseen by Haritha Keralam Mission**, with the **support of Indian Railways**.
- The **Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme** will be utilised to maintain the mangrove saplings for three years.
- **Each panchayat** will decide on the saplings to be planted.
- The **Social Forestry** division of the Forest department will supply the saplings for the programme.
- The mission **also plans to create awareness among the people** about the **importance of mangrove cover** to prevent sea erosion and to help breeding of fish species in the backwaters.

Think:

- Know about Haritha Keralam Mission.

Aswasakiranam scheme

Why in news?

- The **State Human Rights Commission** has directed the **Kerala Social Security Mission** to ensure timely payment of financial assistance.
- This direction is for **beneficiaries under the Aswasakiranam scheme**.

About Aswasakiranam scheme:

- The Aswasakiranam Scheme is a **government initiative in Kerala**.
- The **scheme aims to assist caregivers of physically and mentally disabled**





bedridden patients, who are usually their family members or relatives.

- It provides a **monthly financial assistance of ₹600 to these caregivers**, who are often unable to take up employment due to their caregiving responsibilities.
- The **scheme covers all bedridden patients who need a full-time caregiver**, including those who are mentally challenged (Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental retardation, Mental illness), 100% blind, bedridden cancer patients, old-aged bedridden, and those with brittle bone disease.
- This **financial assistance is apart from the pension given to the patient**.

Miscellaneous/GK

Kanthallur Tourism Fest

Why in news?

- **Kanthallur**, a village that **won the gold award for Best Tourism Village**, is planning a tourism fest.
- The fest will be held from May 7 to 12 at **Payas Nagar in Idukki**.

Key points:

- The fest **aims to explore Kanthallur's tourism potential and attract more tourists**.
- **The fest is being organized in association with several entities:**
 - Kanthallur panchayat
 - Homestay and resorts association
 - Drivers union
 - Forests and Wildlife department
 - Merchants associations
 - Tribal villages under the panchayat.
- The **district industries centre** will **conduct a food processing and marketing expo** called '**Kanthallur Kanavu**' at the fest venue.
- In September 2023, **Kanthallur village**, under **Devikulam taluk**, had bagged the **gold award from the Government of India** in the **best rural tourism projects category**.
- **Kanthallur is the only place in the State where apples are cultivated commercially**, and the **orchards** are also a **major attraction for tourists**.

Campaign on climate change to create awareness among fishers

Why in news?

- The **ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI)** has **launched a campaign to create awareness about climate change among fishing communities**.
- This initiative is **part of the National Innovation in Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) project**.

Key points:





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- The campaign was conducted in two major fishing villages in Ernakulam district—Kuzhippilly and Chellanam.
- Scientists explained the science behind climate change, its effects on fisheries, and the adaptation strategies.
- They highlighted that increasing sea surface temperature results in migration of fish stock to cooler waters, affecting the fish catch.
- Rising temperature is causing a decline in dissolved oxygen levels in inland water bodies, leading to increased fish kills.
- CMFRI distributed ice boxes to the fisherwomen in Chellanam to address the issue of reducing the shelf life of locally harvested fish due to increasing temperature.
- They were also provided with gillnets, cast nets, pots, and seabass fish seeds during the programme.

P. Govindan Kutty

Why in news?

- G.K. Pallath, also known as P. Govindan Kutty, was a renowned lyricist in the film and theatre fields.
- He passed away at the age of 85.

Key points:

- His first song, “Rakthathirakal Neenthi Varum,” was sung by K.S. George and Sulochana at a communist plenum in 1958.
- He entered the Malayalam film industry as a lyricist with the hit song “Kattu Vannu Ninte Kamukan Vannu” in 1978 in the film Padasaram.
- He wrote songs for films including Chora Chuvanna Chora, Chakara, Kattuthee, Valkannadi, and Noolpalam.
- He showed an interest in literature since his childhood.

Jose Kattookaran

Why in news?

- Thrissur’s first Mayor Jose Kattookaran passes away.

Key points:

- Jose Kattookaran was a senior Congress leader and the first Mayor of Thrissur Corporation.
- He was district secretary of the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC).
- When Thrissur municipality was upgraded to corporation, he became the first Mayor from 2000 to 2004.
- He functioned as the general secretary of the District Congress Committee for a long period.





Aravalli hills

Why in news?

- The **Supreme Court** has halted the issuance of new mining leases and renewals in the **Aravalli ranges** and hills.
- This decision is based on a **report from the Forest Survey of India (FSI)**.

Key points:

- The FSI report was presented in court by the **Central Empowered Committee (CEC)**.
- According to the FSI report, the **Aravallis are defined to include the hills** and a **uniform 100-metre-wide buffer zone** around the downsides of the hills.

About Aravalli hills:

- The Aravalli range runs approximately in a **south-west direction**, starting near **Delhi**, passing through **southern Haryana, Rajasthan**, and ending in **Ahmedabad, Gujarat**.
- The **highest peak is Guru Shikhar in Mount Abu** at **1,722 m**.
- The Aravalli Range is **arguably the oldest geological feature on Earth**, having its origin in the **Proterozoic era**.
- The range gives rise to several rivers, including the **Banas, Luni, Sakhi, and Sabarmati**.

Uniyala multibracteata or Kattupoovamkurunnila

Why in news?

- The **tree species Uniyala multibracteata**, locally known as **Kattupoovamkurunnila**, has been **rediscovered after a gap of 140 years**.
- This **rare and endangered species** was found in a **non-protected area** of the **Wagamon hills** in the **Western Ghats**.

Key points:

- This species was thought to have become extinct.
- **Kattupoovamkurunnila is endemic to areas such as Wagamon, Memala, and Elappara**.
- The species was **originally discovered from Peerumade in 1880 by R.H. Beddome**, a pioneer botanist who conducted plant discoveries in south India.

About Kattupoovamkurunnila:

- Kattupoovamkurunnila is a **small tree or large shrub** that grows to a **height of 2 to 5 metres**.
- The **leaves** of this tree are **covered with cottony hairs**.
- The habitat of Kattupoovamkurunnila consists of **evergreen forests and rocky grasslands** situated **1,200 metres above sea level**.

Google Wallet



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Why in news?

- **Google** and **Kochi Metro Rail Limited (KMRL)** have announced a partnership.
- The collaboration **aims to enhance digital ticketing options for metro commuters.**

Key points:

- **Google Wallet** is at the center of this partnership.
- Google Wallet **provides fast and secure access to everyday essentials.**
- It **enables people** to conveniently **store and retrieve important digital documents.**
- These **documents include** boarding passes, loyalty cards, movie tickets, and more.

Important Days

Rink Demo Day

Why in news?

- The **Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM)** is conducting a **virtual event** called '**Rink Demo Day**' on **May 10.**
- The event will **showcase nine innovative food technologies** that are **ready for commercialisation.**

Key points:

- The '**Branding Challenge**' was held on the sidelines of the **KSUM's 'Huddle Global 2023'.**
- Prominent research and development (R&D) institutions from across the State will display technologies at the expo.
- The expo is being conducted as part of **National Technology Day.**

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