



19 April 2024

National & 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.



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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 cognizance of chemical contamination in Buckingham Canal, Adyar River, and Chembarambakkam Lake based on news reports on a study done by the 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 plants 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 kilometers 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**.



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- 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>Media persons 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 **Nestlé's baby food products sold in India, African and Latin American countries** compared to those sold in European markets.



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- 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 about 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**.

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