



06 May 2024

National and International News

<p>Integrated Pensioners' Portal</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Centre has started an Integrated Pensioners' Portal in collaboration with Bank of India.• The portal combines the pension processing and payment services of five banks into a single window. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The platform has been launched to digitalise pension services and enhance the welfare of pensioners.• Retirees can access:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Monthly pension slips,○ Check the status of life certificates,○ Submit Form 16, and○ View statements of arrears paid.• The pension portals of SBI, Bank of Baroda, Punjab National Bank, and Canara Bank have also been integrated with the Bhavishya portal.• The portal is designed to ensure complete digitisation of the pension processing and payment system.• The portal's primary objective is to achieve transparency and efficiency in pension-related services.• The portal has a Bhavishya platform and CPENGRAMS, an online complaint redressal system.
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<p>Atlas V rocket and Starliner</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Atlas V rocket is set to launch with two veteran astronauts, Barry Wilmore and Sunita Williams. • They will be inside a crew capsule called Starliner, built by Boeing. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the third test flight of the Starliner and the first with astronauts on board. • The astronauts are destined for the International Space Station (ISS) in low-earth orbit. • If successful, the U.S. will have two spacecraft capable of launching astronauts to space for the first time in its history. • The Starliner is a spacecraft that transports astronauts in space.
<p>Goods & Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT)</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Goods & Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT) has been initiated by the Centre with the appointment of retired Justice Sanjaya Kumar Mishra as its President. • The tribunal aims to help businesses resolve various disputes efficiently. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justice Mishra, former Chief Justice of the High Court of Jharkhand, will hold the post for a period of 4 years or until he attains the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier. • The Centre plans to set up 31 GSTAT benches across the country, with one Principal Bench in Delhi. • Uttar Pradesh will have the highest number of benches (three) among all states. Other larger states will have two benches each. • The Principal Bench will handle inter-State disputes, while Benches in States will handle all other issues, including rates. • GST Tribunals are envisioned as specialised bodies to handle disputes related to GST, providing a timely and efficient resolution mechanism.



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<p>Artificial General Intelligence (AGI)</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, has committed to investing billions of dollars in the development of Artificial General Intelligence (AGI). <p>About AGI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) refers to a type of artificial intelligence that can understand, learn, and apply knowledge across a wide range of tasks, much like a human. • It integrates cognitive abilities like reasoning, problem-solving, planning, and learning. • Unlike narrow AI, which is designed for specific tasks (e.g., facial recognition, internet searches), AGI can generalize its intelligence across unfamiliar tasks. • AGI adapts to new environments and tasks without needing additional programming.
<p>International Election Visitors' Programme (IEVP)</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75 delegates from 23 countries are in India to observe the Indian General Elections as part of the International Election Visitors' Programme (IEVP). • The event was inaugurated in New Delhi by CEC Shri Rajiv Kumar and ECs Shri Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu. <p>About IEVP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The International Election Visitors' Programme (IEVP) is a flagship program of the Election Commission of India for international cooperation and engagement with the Election Management Bodies (EMBs) of other countries and International Organizations. • It provides participants with a broad picture of the Indian election process, new initiatives in voter facilitation, the transparency and accessibility of the electoral system.



Kerala Regional News

<p>Kanthallur Tourism Fest</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The fest aims to explore Kanthallur’s tourism potential and attract more tourists. ● The fest is being organized in association with several entities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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.
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<p>Coastal Greening Programme</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coastal greening programme to take off in Kerala soon. <p>About Coastal Greening Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>Think:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know about Haritha Keralam Mission.
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<p>Campaign on climate change to create awareness among fishers</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>P. Govindan Kutty</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.



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<p>Jose Kattookaran</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thrissur's first Mayor Jose Kattookaran passes away. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)</p>	<p>Why in news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>About INCOIS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.



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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**.

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