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Kerala Regional News

<p>India Skills Report 2025</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the India Skills Report 2025, Kerala has been recognized as one of the top states in India for employability. The report reveals that Kerala's workforce maintains a strong employability rate of 71%, placing it on the fifth position after Maharashtra, Delhi, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. This report highlights a 7% increase in employability among Indian graduates, with Kerala's robust educational initiatives contributing significantly to this improvement. The state's focus on skill development programs, particularly through initiatives like the Additional Skill Acquisition Programme (ASAP), has enhanced the readiness of its youth for the job market. This recognition underscores Kerala's commitment to fostering a skilled workforce and addressing employment challenges effectively. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report provides insights into the employability skills of India's workforce. It assesses the skills gap between the demand and supply of talent in various sectors. The report is based on the Global Employability Test (GET), which evaluates candidates on their cognitive, technical, and behavioral skills.
<p>16th Finance Commission</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political parties in Kerala are urging the 16th Finance Commission to increase the state's share of central taxes to 50%. The demand is based on concerns regarding the state's growth and population management. The UDF has demanded that the weightage for population, based on the 2011 census, be decreased from 15% to 10% as States like Kerala that have ensured population control are being penalised with a lower tax share. Kerala's government has submitted a memorandum highlighting the need for a fairer distribution of the divisible tax pool, which currently does not adequately reflect the state's financial needs. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Sixteenth Finance Commission was constituted on 31.12.2023 with Shri Arvind Panagariya, former Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog as its Chairman. The following members are appointed to the Commission with the



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	<p>approval of the President of India.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shri. Ajay Narayan Jha, former member, 15th Finance Commission and former Secretary, Expenditure • Smt. Annie George Mathew, former Special Secretary, Expenditure • Dr. Niranjan Rajadhyaksha, Executive Director, Artha Global • Dr. Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Group Chief Economic Advisor, State Bank of India <p>Finance Commission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Finance Commission is a constitutional body for the purpose of allocation of certain revenue resources between the Union and the State Governments. • It is a QUASI- JUDICIAL BODY. • It was established under Article 280 of the Indian Constitution by the Indian President. • It was created to define the financial relations between the Centre and the states. • It was formed in 1951. <p>Fifteenth Finance Commission:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 15th Finance Commission (FC) recommended that states receive 41% of the divisible pool, which is a share of the total funds available for distribution: • Vertical devolution: The 15th FC recommended that states receive 41% of the divisible pool. • Horizontal devolution: The 15th FC used a formula to distribute funds among states based on several criteria, including: • Income distance: The distance of a state's income from the state with the highest per capita income • Population: The population as per the 2011 Census • Forest and ecology: The share of dense forest in each state relative to the total dense forest in all states • Demographic performance: 12.5% weightage • Area: 15% weightage • Tax and fiscal efforts: 2.5% weightage
<p>POCSO Act</p>	<p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A judge in Kerala has expressed concerns over the declining conviction rate in POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) cases, which dropped to 15.14% in 2022 from 35.98% in 2018. • This trend reflects systemic issues within the judicial and investigative processes, including delays in probes and witnesses turning hostile. • She highlighted the rising number of cases, which exceeded 4,600 in 2023, underscores the urgent need for reforms to ensure justice for child victims of sexual offenses <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • POCSO Act stands for Protection of Children from Sexual



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Offences Act,2021.

- It is a comprehensive law in India designed to safeguard children from sexual abuse.

Key features of the act include:

- **Definition of child:** The act defines a child as anyone **below the age of 18 years.**
- **Sexual offenses:** It covers a wide range of **sexual offenses, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, and sexual abuse.**
- **Penalties:** The act prescribes stringent penalties for perpetrators of sexual offenses, including imprisonment and fines.
- **Special courts:** It **mandates the establishment of special courts** to expedite the trial of POCSO cases.
- **Protection of child witnesses:** The act provides for measures to protect the identity and dignity of child witnesses during the trial.
- **Mandatory reporting:** It makes reporting of sexual offenses against children mandatory for certain persons, **such as teachers, doctors, and social workers.**
- **Child Protection Officers are key figures in implementation of POCSO Act.**

Child Protection Officers (CPOs):

- **Child Protection Officers (CPOs) are key figures in the implementation of the POCSO Act.**
- Their primary responsibilities include:
- **Reporting and Investigation:** Receiving complaints of sexual offenses against children, conducting thorough investigations, and ensuring that evidence is collected and preserved appropriately.
- **Child Welfare:** Providing support and counseling to child victims of sexual abuse, ensuring their safety and well-being, and coordinating with relevant agencies for rehabilitation and therapy.
- **Awareness Creation:** Conducting awareness programs and campaigns to educate the public about the POCSO Act, its provisions, and the importance of reporting child sexual abuse.
- **Collaboration:** Working closely with other law enforcement agencies, child welfare organizations, and healthcare providers to ensure effective coordination and response to cases of child sexual abuse.

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