

State government vs Governor

- The Kerala Cabinet approved the draft Bill removing Governor Arif Mohammed Khan as Chancellor of the State universities after recurrent and politically charged ruins with Raj Bhavan over matters relating to the administration of centers of higher learning.
- Instead, the Bill proposes supplanting the Governor with eminent academicians as Chancellors of various universities.
- The Bill, if passed, will, at a stroke, negate the Governor's watchdog role in university administration and accord the government more leeway in appointing Chancellors of its choice.

THE HINDU

SC on Jallikattu

- The Supreme Court said the sport of Jallikattu as such now might not be brutal but the "form" in which it was being held in Tamil Nadu might be cruel.
- A Constitution Bench led by Justice K.M. Joseph said the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Tamil Nadu Amendment) Act of 2017 and

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Conduct of Jallikattu) Rules of 2017 had laid down procedures to protect the bulls from brutality.

- Violation of these rules would attract penal action.

THE HINDU

Eg Human-animal conflict

- An eight -member team from Chinnakkal that comes under the Munnar forest division, which has been instrumental in bringing down the incidents of man- animal conflict in the region, has won recognition for its efforts.
- Taking note of its contributions in mitigating man-animal conflicts as well as in ensuring the protection of wild elephants over the past eight months, the Wildlife Trust of India has selected the team for its award this year.

THE HINDU

Election commission reform

- Whether Election Commissioners should be selected by the executive or by a collegium. The idea of a collegium is not new.
- The Dinesh Goswami Committee in 1990 suggested that the Chief Election Commissioner be appointed

by the President (read: executive) in consultation with the Chief Justice of India and the Leader of the Opposition (and in case the Leader of the Opposition was not available, then consultation be held with the leader the largest opposition group in the Lok Sabha).

- It said this process should have statutory backing.
- The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution, under Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah, said that the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners should be appointed on the recommendation of a body comprising the Prime Minister, the Leaders of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.
- The 255th Report of the Law Commission, chaired by Justice A.P. Shah, said the appointment of all the Election Commissioners should be made by the President in consultation with a three-member collegium consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition of the Lok Sabha (or the leader of the largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha), and the Chief Justice of India.

- It also suggested measures to safeguard Election Commissioners from arbitrary removal, in a manner similar to what is accorded to the Chief Election Commissioner, who can only be removed by impeachment, which is by no means easy. Recommending that the Election Commissioners be offered the same protection from arbitrary removal as enjoyed by the Chief from the day of the appointment.
- Without this, they may hesitate to act independently, which they otherwise might if they were truly secure.
- In the absence of full constitutional security, an Election Commissioner could feel they must keep on the right side of the Chief Election Commissioner.

THE HINDU

Assam -Meghalaya dispute

How did the boundary dispute start?

- Meghalaya was carved out of Assam as an autonomous State in 1970 and became a full-fledged State in 1972.
- The creation of the new State was based on the Assam Reorganisation (Meghalaya) Act of 1969, which the Meghalaya government refused to accept.

- This was because the Act followed the recommendations of a 1951 committee to define the boundary of Meghalaya.
- On that panel's recommendations, areas of the present -day East Jaintia Hills, Ri-Bhoi and West Khasi Hills districts of Meghalaya were transferred to the Karbi Anglong, Kamrup (metro), and Kamrup districts of Assam.
- Meghalaya contested these transfers after statehood, claiming that they belonged to its tribal chieftains.
- Assam said the Meghalaya government could neither provide documents nor archival materials to prove its claim over these areas.
- After claims and counter-claims, the dispute was narrowed down to 12 sectors on the basis of an official claim by Meghalaya in 201.

THE HINDU

Ransomware attack in AIIMS

- On November 23, e-services at the All- India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) were crippled by what is suspected to be a ransomware attack.

What is ransomware?

- Ransomware is a type of malicious software, used by cybercriminals, to infect a computer system by blocking access to the stored data by encrypting the files.
- A ransom is then demanded from the owner in exchange for the decryption key.

Which agencies in India deal with cyber-attacks?

- Set up in 2004, the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) is the national nodal agency that collects, analyses, and circulates inputs on cyber-attacks; issues guidelines, and advisories for preventive measures, forecasts and issues alerts; and takes measures to handle any significant cyber security event.
- It also imparts training to computer system managers.
- The National Cyber Security Coordinator, under the National Security Council Secretariat, coordinates with different agencies at the national level on cybersecurity issues, while the National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre has been set up for the protection of nationally critical information infrastructure.

- According to the government, the Cyber Swachhta Kendra (Botnet Cleaning and Malware Analysis Centre) has been launched for the detection of malicious software programs and to provide free tools to remove the same, while the National Cyber Coordination Centre works on creating awareness about existing and potential threats.

THE HINDU

Women and GM Crops

- The Supreme Court expressed concern about the plight of thousands of women agricultural laborers in rural areas traditionally engaged in de-weeding as they would be part of the human cost if the government permitted the commercial cultivation of herbicide-tolerant crops such as GM mustard.
- “In rural areas, women are experts in removing weeds.
- They are a part of the labor force in agriculture in India.
- It brings them employment... You know it is because women started agriculture that humankind stopped being nomads and we saw the sprouting of civilizations.
- Widespread use of herbicide-tolerant crops would encourage farmers to spray chemical weed

killers, leaving toxic chemical residue in large amounts on the crops.

- The Supreme Court’s own Technical Expert Committee [TEC] had said that these GM crops were not meant for agriculture in the Indian context.
- They may be suitable in the western context where there are large farms, but not here.

THE HINDU

Growing cooling sector in India

- From 2030, 160 million to 200 million people can be exposed to lethal heatwaves in India every year, and nearly 34 million Indians will face job losses due to heat stress-related productivity decline.
- By 2037, the demand for cooling is likely to be eight times more than the current level, the World Bank has said in a report.
- In this scenario, it is imperative for India to deploy alternative and innovative energy-efficient technologies for keeping spaces cool.
- According to the report, “Climate investment opportunities in India’s cooling sector”, this could open an investment opportunity of \$1.6 trillion by 2040, besides reducing greenhouse gas emissions

significantly and creating 3.7 million jobs

- With the demand for cooling shooting up, there will be a demand for a new air-conditioner every 15 seconds, the report said, leading to an expected rise of 435% in annual greenhouse gas emissions over the next two decades
- Thus, there is a need to shift to a more energy-efficient pathway which could lead to a reduction in expected CO2 levels.
- The report proposes a road map to support New Delhi's India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP), 2019, through new investments in three major sectors: building construction, cold chains, and refrigerants.
- Adopting climate-responsive cooling techniques as a norm in both private and government-funded constructions can ensure that those at the bottom of the economic ladder are not disproportionately affected by rising temperatures.
- The report suggests that India's affordable housing program for the poor, the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), can adopt such changes on a scale.
- It proposed enacting a policy for "district cooling", which could lead to the consumption of 20- 30% less

power than the most efficient conventional cooling solutions.

- District cooling technologies generate chilled water in a central plant which is then distributed to buildings via underground insulated pipes.
- This brings down the cost of providing cooling to individual buildings.
- Apart from this, guidelines for the implementation of local and city-wide urban cooling measures such as cool-roofs should also be considered.

THE HINDU

Fortification and malnutrition

- According to an FAO Food Security Report for 2021, India ranks 101 out of 116 countries in the Global Hunger Index 2021, with a 15.3% undernourished population, the highest proportion of stunted children (30%), and wasted children (17.3%).
- The picture the Global Nutrition Report 2021 paints is cause for concern, noting that stunting among children in India is significantly higher than the Asian average of 21.8%

- Pilot projects on the distribution of fortified rice have been taken up in select States
- Experiences from the different States on the fortified rice project, so far tally with the results of global programs that use fortified food as a cost-effective strategy.
- The health benefits accruing from food fortification have made 80 countries frame laws for the fortification of cereal flour, and 130 countries with iodized salt, where 13 countries have mandated rice fortification
- Noon meal scheme in Gujarat In Gujarat, an eight-month long study on multiple micronutrients fortified rice intervention for schoolchildren (six-12 years) in 2018-2019, as part of the Midday Meal Scheme
- Despite the program's proven efficacy, activists have expressed concern that excess iron overload from fortified rice has been dangerous for Jharkhand's tribal population suffering from sickle cell anaemia and thalassemia.
- Food fortification, according to stalwarts of nutrition, is a cost-effective complementary strategy to address multiple micronutrient deficiencies.

THE HINDU
