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1.Kerala as a Model AI Governance State

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

Kerala is exploring an AI-powered governance dashboard to modernize public administration by integrating live data from government departments, public utilities and local bodies, enabling real-time monitoring, predictive alerts, better fiscal management and more accountable service delivery.

Key Features

- A unified AI-powered dashboard is proposed to overcome fragmented information, delayed reporting and departmental silos in public administration.
- The system will integrate live data streams from departments, public utilities and local self-government institutions to provide a real-time picture of programme implementation.

- Predictive alerts and anomaly detection will enable administrators to identify execution gaps, regulatory leakages and cost overruns before they become major problems.
- State ownership of public data will remain central to the framework, alongside compliance with Indian data protection laws and greater transparency in algorithmic decision-making.

Applications in Governance

- Public health systems can use real-time information on hospital capacity and disease surveillance to identify emerging pressure points and prevent system overload.
- The energy sector can use integrated data to monitor electricity generation, distribution losses and subsidy flows more dynamically.
- Local self-government institutions can gain real-time visibility into project implementation and utilization of public funds, strengthening Kerala's decentralised governance model.
- Social welfare delivery can benefit from database reconciliation to identify duplicate beneficiaries and reduce wrongful exclusion from government schemes.
- Treasury-level monitoring can provide continuous visibility into cash flows and committed liabilities, supporting stronger fiscal discipline.
- Secure integration with national data-verification systems can improve beneficiary authentication and reduce leakages in subsidy delivery.
- Existing e-Kerala systems embedded across village offices can provide an institutional foundation for improving real-time administrative awareness.

Governance Significance

- The proposed shift moves administration from retrospective review of departmental performance towards continuous monitoring and early intervention.
- Cross-departmental data integration can improve coordination where policy outcomes depend on multiple agencies rather than a single department.
- Greater visibility of government expenditure and programme implementation can strengthen institutional credibility and public accountability.
- AI-assisted governance can support decentralised institutions without replacing their decision-making role, provided human oversight remains central.

Safeguards

- Algorithmic transparency is essential because automated alerts and risk classifications can influence administrative decisions affecting citizens.
- Auditable AI systems are necessary to establish how an alert was generated and to identify errors or discriminatory outcomes.
- Data protection safeguards must accompany greater inter-departmental data sharing to prevent unauthorized access and misuse of personal information.
- Human oversight remains necessary because AI-generated predictions should assist administrative judgment rather than become an unquestionable basis for public decisions.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q. With reference to AI-enabled governance, consider the following statements:

1. Integration of real-time departmental data can help identify implementation gaps before they become major administrative failures.
2. Algorithmic transparency is important where AI-generated alerts influence government decision-making.
3. AI-based governance necessarily requires replacing human decision-making with automated decisions.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Q. AI-enabled governance can transform public administration from retrospective monitoring to real-time and predictive governance. Discuss its potential and examine the safeguards required to ensure that technological efficiency remains consistent with transparency, accountability and citizens' rights. (15 Marks, 250 Words)

2.No Renewable Energy Project Within 1 km of Border

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has issued new national security guidelines for renewable energy projects near international borders, prohibiting solar, wind and hybrid projects within 1 km of the International Border, Line of Control (LoC) and Line of Actual Control (LAC), while projects within 50 km will require security clearance.

Key Provisions

- The guidelines designate the area within 1 km of the international border, LoC and LAC as a restricted zone where renewable energy projects cannot be established.
- Renewable energy projects proposed within 1–50 km of the border will require security clearance from the MHA.
- Projects located between 1 km and 20 km from the border will additionally require a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Ministry of Defence (MoD).
- The security clearances will be examined on a case-by-case basis, considering the location and security implications of individual projects.
- Project developers must submit proposals through the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), rather than approaching the MHA or MoD directly.

Security Restrictions

- The guidelines restrict foreign participation in renewable energy projects located in sensitive border areas.
- Staff from Pakistan, Bangladesh and China cannot be engaged for such projects without prior MHA permission.
- Transfer of land to foreign companies for renewable energy projects requires prior Central government approval along with MHA security clearance.
- Project layouts must avoid long stretches of construction running parallel to the international border, reducing their potential security vulnerability.
- Roads developed for projects should be designed so that they can also be used by armed forces and border security personnel during emergencies.

Construction Restrictions

- Structures between 1 km and 8 km from the border are subject to a height limit of 3 metres.
- Structures between 8 km and 20 km are subject to a height limit of 5 metres.

- Structures between 20 km and 50 km are subject to a height limit of 15 metres.
- Core renewable energy infrastructure such as wind turbines is exempt from these specific height restrictions.

Security Measures

- Renewable energy projects in the specified zones will require comprehensive security arrangements because of their proximity to sensitive border areas.
- Anti-drone systems operated by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and State Police are among the security measures specified for project proposals.
- The guidelines have been introduced amid a rise in renewable energy project applications in border regions and the need to balance clean-energy expansion with national security requirements.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q. With reference to the new security guidelines for renewable energy projects near India's borders, consider the following statements:

1. Renewable energy projects are prohibited within 1 km of the International Border, LoC and LAC.
2. Projects within 50 km of these borders require security clearance from the Ministry of Home Affairs.
3. Projects between 1 km and 20 km require a No Objection Certificate from the Ministry of Defence.
4. Project developers can directly submit applications to the Ministry of Defence for security clearance.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1 and 4 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (a)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Q. The expansion of renewable energy infrastructure in border regions involves a trade-off between energy security and national security. Discuss the rationale behind regulating

such projects and the challenges involved in implementing these restrictions. (15 Marks, 250 Words)

3. India Formally Names 27 Places in Arunachal Pradesh on Official Map

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

India has formally identified 27 places in Arunachal Pradesh on the official maps of the Survey of India, including strategically significant locations such as Long Ju and Thag La. The move comes in response to China's repeated attempts to assign its own names to places in Arunachal Pradesh.



Key Development

- The Union Home Ministry formally identified 27 locations in Arunachal Pradesh on August 7, 2026, in consultation with the Government of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The identified locations include land areas, passes, a lake and a monument, providing formal recognition of their names on official Indian maps.
- The move counters China's attempts to rename locations in Arunachal Pradesh, which Beijing refers to as "Zangnan" or "South Tibet".

Strategic Significance

- Long Ju is located along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and was an early India-China flashpoint in 1959 when Chinese forces entered the area.
- Thag La is a strategically important high-altitude pass and witnessed one of the opening battles of the 1962 India-China war.
- Other locations identified include Bisa village, Dzo La, Riza La, Pukur La and Jairampur, which is an important logistics hub.

India-China Territorial Dispute

- India has consistently rejected China's attempts to assign names to places in Arunachal Pradesh, maintaining that such naming exercises cannot change the territorial status of the region.
- China has issued several lists of purportedly standardised names for places in Arunachal Pradesh, beginning in 2017 and followed by further lists in 2021 and 2023.
- India's latest mapping exercise reinforces its position that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India and that unilateral renaming cannot alter this position.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q. With reference to the recent identification of places in Arunachal Pradesh on India's official maps, consider the following statements:

1. Long Ju is located along the Line of Actual Control.
2. Thag La was associated with the India-China conflict of 1962.
3. The Survey of India carried out the formal mapping in consultation with the Government of Arunachal Pradesh.
4. China first issued its list of purportedly standardised names for Arunachal Pradesh in 2023.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1 and 4 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (a)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Q. The naming and mapping of geographical features can acquire strategic significance in territorial disputes. Discuss the significance of India's formal identification of locations in Arunachal Pradesh in the context of the India-China boundary dispute. (10 Marks, 150 Words)

4.Implementation of National Mission on Edible Oils–Oil Palm (NMEO-OP)

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Rajya Sabha written reply

Why in News?

The Government is implementing the National Mission on Edible Oils–Oil Palm (NMEO-OP) with an outlay of ₹11,040 crore to expand oil palm cultivation, improve productivity and reduce India's dependence on imported edible oils.

Key Features of NMEO-OP

- The National Mission on Edible Oils–Oil Palm (NMEO-OP) was launched in 2021-22 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- The mission aims to increase the area under oil palm cultivation and raise productivity to strengthen domestic edible oil production.
- The mission has a financial outlay of ₹11,040 crore, including a Government of India share of ₹8,844 crore.
- The mission targets bringing 6.5 lakh hectares under oil palm cultivation by 2025-26 across 15 States.
- The government provides price assurance to oil palm farmers through a Viability Gap Payment (VGP) mechanism to reduce the risk associated with fluctuations in market prices.
- The mission provides assistance for planting material, maintenance of plantations, intercropping, drip irrigation and processing infrastructure.

Progress Under NMEO-OP

- The government brought 2.73 lakh hectares under oil palm cultivation between 2021-22 and 2025-26.
- The Centre released ₹1,447.21 crore to the implementing States during this period.
- The Annual Action Plans for 2026-27 have been approved for implementing States with an allocation of ₹1,143.9 crore.

National Mission on Edible Oils–Oilseeds

- The government launched the National Mission on Edible Oils–Oilseeds (NMEO-OS) on October 3, 2024, for a seven-year period to increase domestic oilseed production.

- The mission focuses on improving the availability of quality planting material and promoting improved indigenous varieties and hybrids of oilseeds.
- The government provides 100% support for breeder seeds to strengthen the seed production chain.
- The mission includes 60 Seed Hubs and 50 specialised seed storage units for breeder seed production.

Significance

- The two missions seek to expand domestic production of edible oils through both oil palm and conventional oilseed cultivation.
- Increased domestic production can reduce dependence on imported edible oils and strengthen India's edible oil security.
- The focus on planting material, irrigation, processing and seed infrastructure addresses productivity as well as supply-side constraints in the edible oil sector.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Q. With reference to the National Mission on Edible Oils–Oil Palm (NMEO-OP), consider the following statements:

1. It was launched in 2021-22 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
2. It provides a Viability Gap Payment mechanism for price assurance to oil palm farmers.
3. It seeks to expand oil palm cultivation across 15 States.
4. It is implemented entirely as a Central Sector Scheme.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 1 and 4 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (a)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Q. India's dependence on imported edible oils has implications for both agricultural incomes and food security. Discuss how initiatives such as NMEO-OP and NMEO-OS can contribute to reducing this dependence. (10 Marks, 150 W)

5.Sowa-Rigpa Must Emerge as a Globally Recognised Evidence-Based Healthcare System: Union Minister Shri Prataprao Jadhav

Source: The Hindu

Why in News?

Union Minister Prataprao Jadhav outlines strategic roadmap for Sowa-Rigpa's global recognition as an evidence-based healthcare system, focusing on research and institutional development.

Key Highlights:

- Union Minister Shri Prataprao Jadhav chaired the 2nd Governing Body Meeting of the **National Institute of Sowa-Rigpa (NISR)** in New Delhi.
- The meeting outlined a strategic roadmap to establish **Sowa-Rigpa** as a globally recognized, evidence-based healthcare system.
- Focus areas include strengthening scientific research, promoting international standards, and expanding **Sowa-Rigpa**'s reach across the **Indian Himalayan Region (IHR)**.
- Key initiatives proposed include establishing an independent research council and digitizing/translating **Bhoti** language manuscripts.
- **Dr. Padma Gurmet**, Director of **NISR**, was congratulated for being conferred the **Padma Shri** in 2026 for his contributions to **Sowa-Rigpa**.

Detailed Insights:

- The goal is to move beyond infrastructure development to integrate traditional wisdom with scientific excellence through evidence-based research.
- **NISR** is envisioned as the custodian of the medical heritage for the entire **Indian Himalayan Region**.
- Emphasis is placed on sustainable cultivation of rare medicinal plants, bio-prospecting, agroforestry, and conservation of medicinal biodiversity.
- Digitisation and translation of **Bhoti** manuscripts are crucial for preserving and making this rich knowledge accessible to researchers and the public.

- The Ministry of **Ayush** is committed to supporting **NISR** in building strong institutions and advancing traditional medical knowledge.
- **Sowa-Rigpa**, meaning "Knowledge of Healing," is one of the world's oldest traditional medicine systems, recognized under the **Ayush** framework.
- It is also known as the **Amchi system of medicine** and is practiced across the **Indian Himalayan Region** and neighboring countries.

