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## News Analysis (16 Mar, 2021)

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### Decline in India's Arms Imports: SIPRI

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#### Why in News

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According to a recent report by **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)** India's arms imports came down by a third (about 33%) between 2011-2015 and 2016-2020.

#### Key Point

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- **India Specific Findings:**
  - **Second Highest Importer:**

India remains the **second highest importer, only behind Saudi Arabia.**
  - **Arms Suppliers to India:**
    - **Russia is the largest arms supplier** to India in both periods (2011-2015 and 2016-2020). However, **Russia's** share of Indian arms imports fell from 70% to 49%.
    - **France and Israel** were the **second and third largest** arms suppliers in 2016–20. India's arms imports from **France increased by 709%** while those from Israel rose by 82%.
    - The **USA** became the **fourth largest supplier** for the period 2016-20. It **was the second largest arms supplier to India in 2011–15.**
  - **Indian Export:**
    - India accounted for **0.2% of the share of global arms exports** during 2016-20, making the country the world's 24<sup>th</sup> largest exporter of major arms.
    - This represents an **increase of more than 200%** over **India's export share (0.1%)** during the previous five-year period of 2011-15.
    - **Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Mauritius were the top recipients** of Indian military hardware.
  - **Future Trends:**

Owing to increasing threats from Pakistan-China, and a significant delay in domestic defence manufacturing, India's **arms imports are expected to increase** over the coming few years.
- **Reasons for the Fall in Imports:**
  - **India's Push for Self-Reliance:** The report said that the fall is not attributed to the government's push to make **India self-reliant in defence manufacturing.**
    - Also, over **60% of the capital expenditure** for the armed forces has been allocated for **domestically produced weapons and platforms.**
    - Earlier, the government had announced **a negative imports list of 101 defence equipment** and platforms will provide an opportunity to manufacture the items in the negative list.
  - **Complex Procurement Process:** The drop in Indian arms imports have been mainly due to its **complex procurement processes**, combined with an attempt to **reduce its dependence on Russian arms.**

- **International Transfers:**

- The **top five global arms exporters** were the US, Russia, France, Germany and China in 2016-2020.
- International transfers of major arms **stayed at the same level between 2011–15 and 2016–20**
  - There were **substantial increases** in transfers by **the USA, France and Germany** and it was largely offset by **declining Russian and Chinese** arms exports.
  - The **bulk of Russian export fall** was due to India reducing its imports.
  - Even if Russia substantially increased its **arms transfers to China, Algeria and Egypt** between 2011–15 and 2016–20, this did not offset the large drop in its arms exports to India.
- **Middle eastern arms imports grew** during this period and was majorly driven by Saudi Arabia.

### **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute**

- It is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.
- It was established in **1966 at Stockholm (Sweden)**.
- It **provides data, analysis and recommendations**, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public.

**Source:TH**

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### **Changes in Electoral System of Hong Kong**

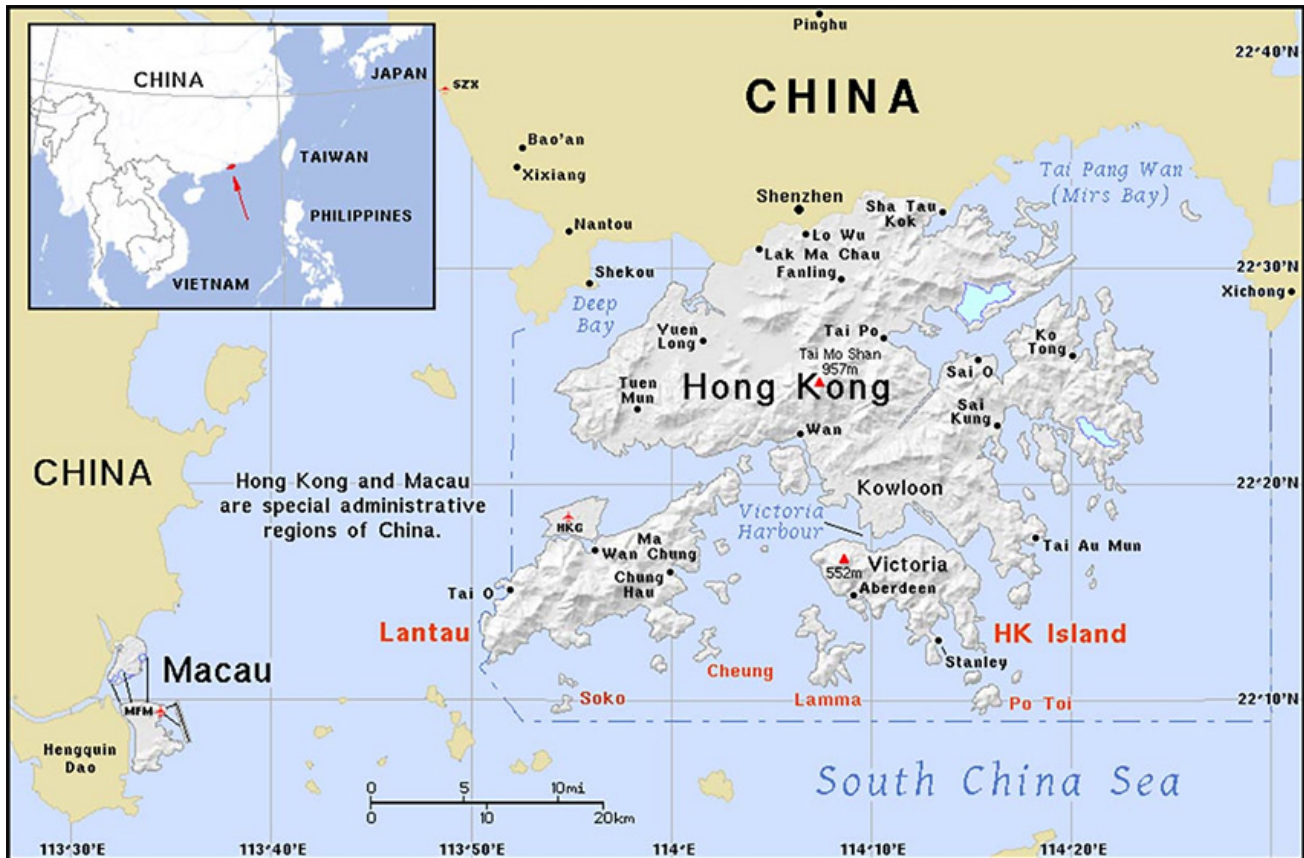
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#### **Why in News**

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Recently, China has made changes in **Hong Kong's electoral system**.

The measures are part of **China's efforts to consolidate its authoritarian grip** over **Hong Kong Special Administrative Region** (HKSAR) following the **imposition of a national security law in June 2020**.



## Key Points

- **The New Electoral System:**
  - **Increased Membership of the Legislative Council:**
    - The number of **Hong Kong’s Legislative Council (HKLC)** members will be **increased to 90**, with the **additional members also nominated**, thereby **reducing the share of elected representatives**.
    - Currently, only half of the 70 members of HKLC are directly elected and the rest are nominated.
  - **Expansion of Election Committee:**
    - The Election committee (**Hong Kong electoral college**) has been expanded to include Beijing-nominated members.
    - The **Election Committee**, as previously, **will be responsible for electing the Chief Executive**, and will also choose some of the members of HKLC.
  - **New Candidate Qualification:**

The selection of “patriots” will be ensured by the setting up of a **new candidate qualification review committee**.

- **Implications:**
  - The change will give **Beijing-appointed politicians a greater say** in running the **Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)**, marking the biggest change since the handover in 1997.
  - An increased number of pro-Beijing officials would **weaken the power of the opposition to influence the city's leadership.**
  - It will erode the political freedoms that distinguished Hong Kong from the mainland under the “one country, two systems” model.
- **Implication for India:**
  - Hong Kong is a destination for **re-export of Indian goods to the global market.**
    - Hong Kong is the **fourth largest export market for India.**
  - India is of the view that **Hong Kong can play an important role in strengthening ties with China**, as it is considered a gateway to China.
  - Thus, global tensions due to **political unrest in Hong Kong carry consequences for India's trade with the rest of the world**, as well as with China.
- **Criticism:**
  - The **European Union** has condemned the change and warned China of broader sanctions.
  - The **G7** termed this move a step towards **eliminating dissenting voices and opinions in Hong Kong.**
  - All major economies such as the **USA, UK, Australia have condemned the move** and have urged **China to allow a more participatory and representative form of system.**
  - The change is **non-compliance with the Sino-British Joint Declaration.**

## **Sino-British Joint Declaration**

- **About:**
  - It is a treaty signed between the **United Kingdom and China in 1985** on Hong Kong under Chinese sovereignty.
  - According to the treaty, **China would reassume control of Hong Kong**, which was occupied by Britain after the **Opium War in 1840**, from July 1, 1997.
    - Opium Wars:** The Opium Wars were two wars **fought between the Chinese Qing dynasty and European powers.** Both the wars were a result of the Qing Dynasty's attempts to curb the opium trade.
      - The **first was fought from 1839-1842** and the **second one from 1856 – 1860.**

- **Provisions:**

- It stated that **China's basic policies regarding Hong Kong "will remain unchanged for 50 years"** and ensured a **high degree of autonomy to Hong Kong**. These policies are stipulated in the **Basic Law**, the city's mini-constitution.
  - Under the Basic Law the Constitution that has governed Hong Kong since 1997 the HKSAR is a part of China but enjoys **"a high degree of autonomy"** and **"executive, legislative and independent judicial power"**, except in foreign policy and defence.
  - It also says **"the socialist system and policies shall not be practised" in Hong Kong for 50 years.**
- It held that **Britain would be responsible for the administration of Hong Kong until 1997** and the Chinese government would give its cooperation.

## Way Forward

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- The new legislation has been seen as the **final nail in the coffin for Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement** and an **erosion of the autonomy** guaranteed to the city when it was handed over to China in 1997.
- With the national security law and the new electoral changes, the **space for the pro-democracy opposition in Hong Kong has been drastically reduced.**
- China must **act in accordance with its legal obligations** and respect fundamental rights and freedoms in Hong Kong.

## Source:TH

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## Inflation Data: February 2021

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### Why in News

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Recently, the Office of the Economic Adviser, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has released the **Wholesale Price Index (WPI)** for the month of February, 2021.

### Key Points

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- **Wholesale Price-Inflation:**

It increased for the second consecutive month to **4.17%**.

- This is the highest since November 2018, when wholesale inflation was at **4.47%**.
- The WPI inflation was **2.03% in January 2021** and **2.26% in February 2020.**

- **Reason:**

Increase in **inflation in food articles, fuel & power** has led to this surge.

- **Food Inflation:** The food articles in February saw **1.36%** inflation which in January stood at (-) 2.80%.
- **Retail inflation:** Based on the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**, it was at **5.03%** in February.

## Wholesale Price Index

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- It **measures the changes in the prices of goods sold and traded in bulk** by wholesale businesses to other businesses.
- Published by the **Office of Economic Adviser**, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- It is the **most widely used inflation indicator** in India.
- Major criticism for this index is that the general public does not buy products at wholesale price.
- The **base year of All-India WPI** has been revised from 2004-05 to 2011-12 in 2017.

## Consumer Price Index

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- It **measures price changes from the perspective of a retail buyer**. It is released by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)**.
- The CPI **calculates the difference in the price of commodities and services** such as food, medical care, education, electronics etc, which Indian consumers buy for use.
- The CPI has several **sub-groups** including food and beverages, fuel and light, housing and clothing, bedding and footwear.
- Four **types of CPI** are as follows:
  - CPI for **Industrial Workers (IW)**.
  - CPI for **Agricultural Labourer (AL)**.
  - CPI for **Rural Labourer (RL)**.
  - CPI (Rural/Urban/Combined).
  - Of these, the first three are compiled by the **Labour Bureau** in the Ministry of Labour and Employment. Fourth is compiled by the NSO in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- **Base Year** for CPI is 2012.
- **The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** uses CPI data to control inflation. In April 2014, the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** had adopted the CPI as its key measure of inflation.

## CPI vs. WPI

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- WPI, tracks inflation at the producer level and CPI captures changes in prices levels at the consumer level.
- **WPI does not capture changes in the prices of services**, which CPI does.

## Inflation

- Inflation refers to the **rise in the prices of most goods and services of daily or common use**, such as food, clothing, housing, recreation, transport, consumer staples, etc.
- Inflation measures the **average price change in a basket of commodities and services over time**.
- Inflation is **indicative of the decrease in the purchasing power** of a unit of a country's currency.  
This could ultimately lead to a **deceleration in economic growth**.
- However, **a moderate level of inflation is required in the economy** to ensure that production is promoted.
- In India, inflation is primarily measured by **two main indices** —WPI & CPI which measure wholesale and retail-level price changes, respectively.

### Source:TH

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## Statue of Unity

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### Why in News

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Recently, the 'Statue of Unity' at Kevadia in Gujarat's Narmada district has crossed the mark of **50 lakh visitors** since its inauguration in **2018**.

India's **first seaplane service** in Gujarat started from **31st October, 2020**. It connects **Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad to the Statue of Unity in Kevadia**.

### Key Points

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- **About:**
  - The **Statue of Unity** is built in honour of **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**. Sardar Patel is credited with **uniting 560 princely states** in pre-independent India hence the name of the **statue is christened as 'Statue of Unity'**.
  - It was inaugurated on **31<sup>st</sup> October, 2018** to mark the **143<sup>rd</sup> birth anniversary of Sardar Patel**.
  - The Statue of Unity is the **tallest statue in the world**. At **182 metres**, it is 23 metres taller than China's Spring Temple Buddha statue and almost double the height of the Statue of Liberty (93 metres tall) in the US.
  - In January 2020, it was added in the '**Eight Wonders**' of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**.



- **Location:**

It is **located** on the **Sadhu Bet island on the Narmada river**, which flows **between the Satpura and the Vindhya mountain ranges**.

- **Designed:**

The Statue of Unity was **designed by Padma Bhushan recipient sculptor Ram V Sutar** and intricate **bronze cladding work** was **done by a Chinese foundry, the Jiangxi Toqine Company (JTQ)**.

## Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel

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- **Born:**

31<sup>st</sup> October 1875 in Nadiad, Gujarat.

- **Achievements:**

- First Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of India.
- Headed various Committees of the Constituent Assembly of India, namely:
  - Advisory Committee on **Fundamental Rights**.
  - Committee on **Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas**.
  - **Provincial Constitution Committee**.
- Integrated the farmer's cause in **Kheda Satyagraha (1918)** and **Bardoli Satyagraha (1928)** with the national freedom movement.
- Women of Bardoli bestowed the title 'Sardar' on Vallabhbhai Patel, which means 'a Chief or a Leader'.
- Known as the "**Iron Man of India**" for playing an important role in unification and integration of Indian princely states into the Indian federation and for convincing princely states to align with the Indian Union.
- Requested the people of India to live together by uniting (Ek Bharat) in order to create a foremost India (Shresth Bharat).
- This ideology still reflects in the **Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative** which seeks to make India self-reliant.
- Remembered as the '**Patron Saint of India's Civil Servants**' as he established the modern all-India services system.

- **Death:**

15<sup>th</sup> December 1950 in Bombay.

### Source -IE

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## Kenya-Somalia Dispute

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### Why in News

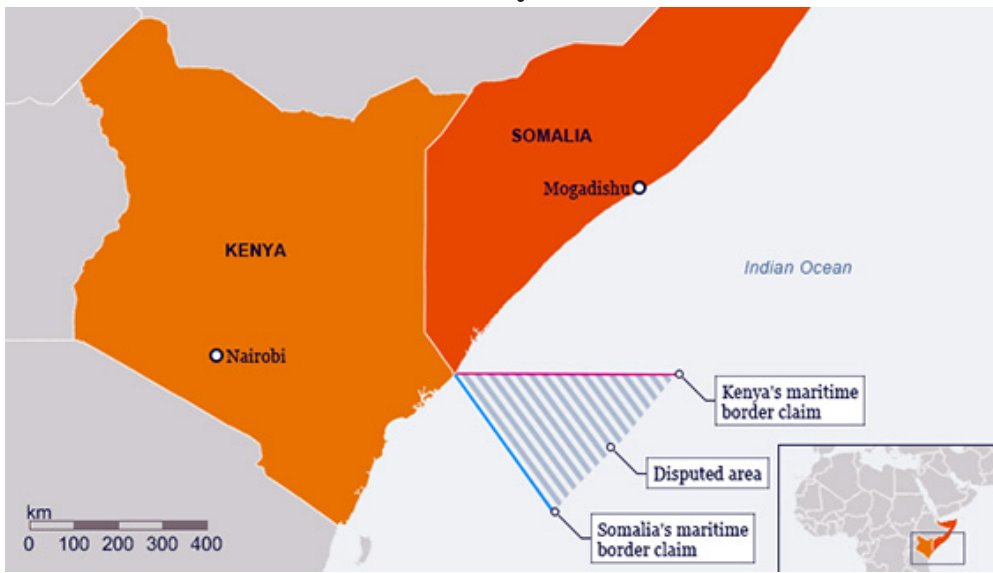
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Kenya has declined to take part in proceedings of the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)** over its maritime border dispute with **neighbouring Somalia**.

## Key Point

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- **Direction of Maritime Boundary:**



The main point of disagreement between the two neighbours is the **direction** in which their **maritime boundary** in the Indian Ocean should extend.

- **Somalia's Stand:**

The sea border should be an **extension of the same direction** in which their land border runs as it approaches the Indian Ocean, i.e. **towards the southeast**.

- **Kenya's Stand:**

The maritime border should **run parallel to the equator**.

- **Importance of Disputed Area:**

- The triangular area thus created by the dispute is around 1.6 lakh sq. km. large, and **boasts of rich marine reserves**.
- It is also believed to have oil and gas deposits.

## International Court of Justice

- ICJ was established in **1945** by the **United Nations charter** and started working in April 1946.
- It is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, **situated at the Peace Palace in The Hague (Netherlands)**.
- It **settles legal disputes** between States and gives advisory opinions in accordance with international law, on legal questions referred to it by authorized United Nations organs and specialized agencies.
- Its **rulings are binding**, though the court has no **enforcement powers** and countries have been known to ignore its verdicts.

**Source:IE**

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# Project RE-HAB

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## Why in News

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A pilot project **RE-HAB (Reducing Elephant-Human Attacks using Bees)** has been launched in Karnataka which entails installing bee boxes along the periphery of the forest and the villages to mitigate **human-elephant conflict**.

These spots are located on the periphery of **Nagarahole National Park and Tiger Reserve**, which is a known conflict zone.

## Key Point

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- **About:**
  - It is intended to create “**bee fences**” to thwart elephant attacks in human habitations using honeybees.
- **Advantages:**
  - The bee boxes will dissuade elephants **without causing any harm** to them.
  - Extremely **cost-effective** as compared to various other measures such as **digging trenches** or **erecting fences**.
  - The initiative will **increase honey production** and **farmers’ income**.
- **Implementing Agency:**
  - Project is an initiative of the **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)**.
  - It is a sub-mission of **KVIC’s National Honey Mission**.
- **Honey Mission:**
  - The KVIC has launched the **Honey Mission** to provide awareness, training and ‘Bee Boxes’ along with Bee Colonies to the farmers.
  - The mission was launched in August 2017 in line with the ‘**Sweet Revolution**’.  
The 'Sweet Revolution' was launched in 2016 to promote beekeeping and associated activities.

## Nagarhole National Park

- **About:**
  - It is also known as **Rajiv Gandhi National Park**.
  - It was established as a wildlife sanctuary in 1955 and was upgraded into a national park in 1988. It was declared as the 37<sup>th</sup> Tiger reserve under **Project Tiger** in 1999.
  - There are 51 Tiger reserves in India.  
The latest addition in this list is **Srivilliputhur Meghamalai Tiger Reserve** of Tamil Nadu, which got approval in 2021.

- **Location:**

The Park lies in the **Western Ghats** and is a part of the **Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve**.

- **Rivers:**

The Nagarahole River flows through the park, which joins the Kabini River which also is a boundary between Nagarahole and **Bandipur National Park**.

- **Flora:**

The vegetation consists mainly of moist deciduous forests with predominating trees of teak and rosewood.

- **Fauna:**

Asian elephants, chital (spotted deer), Indian mouse deer, gaur, stripe-necked and ruddy mongooses, grey langur, bonnet macaque, Asian wild dog, leopard, tiger, sloth bear among others.

## **Khadi and Village Industries Commission**

- KVIC is a **statutory body** established under the **Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act, 1956**.
- The KVIC is charged with the planning, promotion, organisation and implementation of programmes for the development of Khadi and other village industries in the rural areas in coordination with other agencies engaged in rural development wherever necessary.
- It functions under the **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises**.

Source: TH

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## **Kathakali Maestro Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair**

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### **Why in News**

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Recently, the Kathakali actor Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair died at the age of 105 in Kozhikode, Kerala.

He played a significant role in making Indian classical dances popular in Kerala.

### **Key Points**

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- **Born:**

**Guru Chemancheri Kunhiraman Nair** was born on 16<sup>th</sup> June, 1916.

- **Career:**

- He studied at **Kalladikkodan school of Kathakali** and was specialised in “**Kalladikodan**” style.
- The Kalladikodan shailee was created by Chathu Panicker Aasaan, and is one among **the three major styles of Kathakali**. The other two are Vettathu and Kaplingadu.
- **Kalladikodan** style gives equal importance to the three aspects of **nritta** (the dance movements in their basic form), **nriya** (expressional component i.e. mudras or gestures) and **natya** (the dramatic element of the dance i.e. the imitation of characters).
- His one of the most popular portrayals on stage is that of **Lord Krishna and Sudama** (known as Kuchela, mostly in Southern India).

- **Awards:**

Guru Chemancheri was awarded with **Padma Shri in 2017**



- **About Kathakali:**

- Kathakali is one among the **eight classical dances of India**.
  - It is a blend of dance, music and acting. The dance involves dramatisation of stories, adapted mostly from the Indian epics.
  - The roles generally portrayed include kings, gods and demons, the vocalists narrate the legend and the percussionists play the musical instruments.
- Kathakali involves **use of heavy make-up** and stunning costumes (elaborate masks, huge skirts and big head-dresses).

Different facial colours are used to indicate different mental stages & character, for example green- nobility, black- wickedness and red patches- combining royalty & evil.

## **Eight Classical Dances of India**

- Bharatnatyam (Tamil Nadu)
- Kathak (North India)

- Kathakali (Kerala)
- Mohiniyattam (Kerala)
- Kuchipudi (Andhra Pradesh)
- Odissi (Odisha)
- Sattriya (Assam)
- Manipuri (Manipur)

**Source: TH**

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