

HC seeks report on waste management measures from Corpn.

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The Kerala High Court has sought a report from the Kochi Corporation on actions taken to clear city drains and to prevent dumping and accumulation of plastic and other wastes into drains, rivers, and backwaters.

The court also instructed the secretary of the Local Self-Government department to file an affidavit on agencies handling waste collection and disposal from local authorities, hospitals, and bulk waste generators, detailing the tracking and disposal methods.

The Bench issued the orders while initiating suo motu proceedings following media reports of alleged food poisoning of children at an Anganwadi

in Ponnurunni, Ward No. 48 of the Corporation.

The Bench noted that television visuals showed a drainage adjacent to the Anganwadi overflowing with filth.

It added that the sight of such accumulated filth was an embarrassment for the city. The court also took note of the incident involving the dumping of medical waste from Kerala at Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu.

The Bench, comprising Justices Bechu Kurian Thomas and P. Gopinath, described the disposal of waste generated in Kerala in the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu as alarming, highlighting that it was done haphazardly and in violation of legal requirements.

They stressed that such incidents must be prevented in the future.

ICDS urged to keep anganwadi closed till reason behind health scare is detected

Health department officials suspect contaminated water caused vomiting and diarrhoea among children at anganwadi; 12 students, three parents, and an ayah developed symptoms

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KOCHI

A recommendation has been forwarded to the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) to keep the anganwadi at Ponnurunni East division of the Kochi Corporation shut till the reason behind the food poison-like symptoms developed by its students last week is found out.

The welfare committee of the anganwadi concerned convened an emergency meeting on Sunday and forwarded such a recommendation to ICDS as a precaution to pre-empt

any potential epidemic though nothing suggests that to be the case at the moment.

According to health officials, twelve students, three parents, and an ayah at the anganwadi developed vomiting and diarrhoea on Thursday though it became public only on Saturday. The affected children were now stable after a few of them remained in observation in hospitals for a while.

The health officials from the Corporation had found the water stored in the tank to be contaminated and suspected it to have triggered the problem. The

results of the water samples given for testing are being awaited. However, division councillor Dipin Dileep has since lodged a police petition to look into every possible angle, including potential sabotage and conspiracy, behind the issue.

“The tank water was used both before and after the incident. If contamination was the cause, then it should have recurred in the following days as well. Also, only 12 of the 18 students fell ill. A deeper investigation is necessary,” he said.

Nevertheless, the water tank has since been

drained and cleaned. Considering the festive season, the possibility of external food gifts, such as cake, is also being examined, though the anganwadi reported receiving no such items.

The Palarivattom police are yet to register a case. “We will take action after speaking to the parties concerned and the division councillor. Anyway, it was for the food safety officials to intervene and take action,” police sources said.

However, food safety officials said that they were neither informed by the anganwadi nor aware of the incident.

KIRF set to revolutionise State-level education assessment: Gurukkal

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala State Higher Education Council (KSHEC) vice-chairman Rajan Gurukkal has hailed the Kerala Institutional Ranking Framework (KIRF) as a pioneering initiative, setting a regional model for higher education rankings that maintains national and global quality standards while being uniquely tailored to the State’s geopolitical attributes.

In a statement issued shortly after the release of the first set of rankings under the KIRF, Prof. Gurukkal emphasised the framework’s focus on learning outcomes and teaching quality—criteria that, he claimed, were often overlooked in national rankings such as the NIRF (National Institutional Ranking Framework).

He said the KIRF offered a more reliable, data-driven evaluation system, overcoming biases and subjectivity commonly associated with such rankings.

State-focussed parameters

The KIRF stands out by adapting the national NIRF criteria, while incorporating specific State-focussed parameters, he added.

The KIRF model also promotes collaborative peer pressure rather than fostering unhealthy competition. Instead of demotivating lower-ranked institutions, the ranking framework encourages them to recognise their weaknesses, build on strengths, and adopt effective resource utilisation strategies, Prof. Gurukkal said.

Youth held with alleged narcotic substance

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KOCHI

An IT professional was arrested by the Excise allegedly with 450 grams of hybrid ganja from an apartment in Puleppady on Monday.

The arrested was identified as Karan Vanchani, 29. He had allegedly bought the drug from Bengaluru for ₹50,000 eyeing the Christmas-New Year celebrations. According to the excise, hybrid ganja has become increasingly popular among youngsters. The excise team had in the past also seized the drug during attempted sales after being procured from countries like the US and Thailand by courier, the excise claimed.

Amicus Curiae visits Maradu sites, seeks feasibility report on new apartment construction

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The Amicus Curiae of the Supreme Court in the Maradu apartment case has asked the Maradu Municipality to ascertain whether the construction of apartments would be possible in the holdings where they existed earlier.

The local body shall submit the documents related to the holdings before January 6, suggested Gaurav Agarwal, the Amicus Curiae.

Four apartment complexes that were built on the banks of Vembanad Lake in Maradu in violation of the Coastal Regulation Zone Rules were demolished in 2020. However, the 2019 Rules, which



Gaurav Agarwal, Amicus Curiae of the Supreme Court, visiting the site of Maradu apartments on Monday. THULASI KAKKAT

came into force recently, permit construction in the area along the building line of approved buildings that existed before 2019.

Mr. Agarwal, after meeting the civic representatives and various stakeholders including the representatives of builders and apartment owners, vi-

sited the sites of the apartment complexes.

Maradu Municipal chairperson Antony Asanpambil, Sub Collector K. Meera, Chief town Planner Shiji E. Chandran, and member secretary of the Kerala Coastal Zone Management Authority P.C. Sabu were present.

Hepatitis A outbreak: control measures stepped up in affected wards in Kalamassery

The Hindu Bureau
KOCHI

The superchlorination of water sources, including wells in the wards that had reported a spike in Hepatitis A cases in Kalamassery, has begun as part of the control measures taken to check the outbreak of the disease.

The officials of the Health department and

the municipality visited the households in wards that included Peringazha, HMT Estate, and Kurupra on Monday. The process will continue on Tuesday, according to the health wing of the civic body.

Superchlorination of wells

The superchlorination of wells is part of the remedial measures initiated at

the time of an outbreak. The District Medical Office said that a team of health officials had visited the areas on Monday in connection with a series of measures taken following the spike in suspected and confirmed cases in the three wards.

A medical camp held on December 21 found that nearly 95 of the 135 residents, who attended the

event had shown symptoms of the disease. Their blood samples have been sent for further analysis and the results are awaited.

They have been advised to drink only boiled water and avoid mixing boiled and normal water under any circumstances. They have been told to boil even chlorinated water before drinking.



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