

Theyyam dance of Kerala

March 8, 2022

In news– The ritual dance Theyyam, performed at the Kaliyattam festival began in Kerala recently.

About the dance-

- *Theyyam* is a performing art form that embodies myth, dance, drama, music, art and architecture.
- The word **Theyyam comes from Deivam that stands for God in Malayalam.**
- Myth of the *Theyyam* **relates to tribal worship of ancestors, heroes, Mother Goddess**, animals, serpents and trees with rituals differing in each form.
- **A performer of Theyyam is considered as a medium between the supernatural and the mortals.**
- **The story is sung in the form of narrative songs by the performer** to the accompaniment of the chenda (traditional percussion) and ilathalam (traditional cymbals) prior to the performance.
- *Theyyams* come in dazzling costumes, marked by headgears of varying size and a predominance of red colour for the facial make-up.
- The performers resort to a unique dialect.
- The costumes of each performer would vary according to the role and myth of the forms.
- The facial make-up itself would speak volumes about the nature of a particular Theyyam.
- All the costumes are prepared by the artists themselves by using locally available materials.
- **In the Malabar region of Kerala, the districts of Kannur and Kasaragod are where one would come across various forms of Theyyams.**
- The most prominent among these are Raktha Chamundi, Kari Chamundi, Muchilottu Bhagavathi, Wayanadu Kulaven, Gulikan and Pottan.

- In Malabar, every year, from December to May, the many sacred groves attached to the ancestral houses (tharavadu) and temples in the region come alive with the sound of anklets, signaling the arrival of Theyyams.