

NEWS TODAY

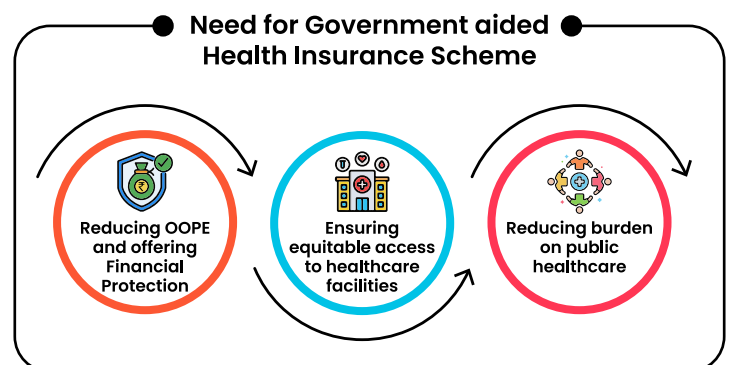
Nepal has decided to introduce a new currency note featuring Indian territories

- Nepal cabinet has recently approved printing of new denominations of 100 of Nepalese currency featuring a map that includes Indian territories of **Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh, and Kalapani**.
 - ⊕ Previously, in 2020, **Nepal passed its second Constitution Amendment Bill** which provided legal status to its claims over these territories.
- **Kalapani is the largest territorial dispute** between Nepal and India and is a **tri-junction** between India, Nepal and Tibet (China).
- **Origin of the dispute**
 - ⊕ **Treaty of Sagauli (1816)** between British East India Company and the then Nepali Gurkha rulers demarcated **Uttarakhand's Kumaon with River Kali as a boundary between India and Nepal**.
 - ⊕ Key to the disagreement is the **origin of River Kali**.
 - ◆ **Nepal considers the river which flows to the west of Kalapani as the main River Kali**, originating at either **Limpiyadhura** or the nearby **Lipulekh pass**. Hence, justifying the area as inherent part of Nepal.
 - ◆ **India, however, argues that River Kali originates from a smaller rivulet named Pankhagad**, lying on the southern portion of **Kalapani** and the subsequent ridge on the eastern part of this area as true border.
- **India's stand on the dispute:** All these three territories **belong to India** and termed Nepal's constitutional amendment as **unilateral act, artificial enlargement and untenable**.



Study by researchers from State health resource centre in Chhattisgarh analysed PM-JAY implementation

- Study found that patients incurred significant **Medical Out-Of-Pocket Expenditure (OOPE)** when admitted to **private hospitals** empanelled under Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY).
 - ⊕ This was mainly due to **dual billing** under which private hospitals **charged patients and also claimed reimbursement** under PMJAY.
- **About PMJAY:**
 - ⊕ **Ministry:** Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
 - ⊕ **Genesis:** **Launched in 2018** as a component of **Ayushman Bharat** scheme.
 - ⊕ **Benefit:** Provides hospital **cover of Rs. 5 lakhs/ family/ year for secondary and tertiary care** across public and private empanelled hospitals.
 - ◆ There is **no restriction on family size, age or gender**.
 - ⊕ **Coverage:** Covers up to **3 days of pre-hospitalization and 15 days post-hospitalization** expenses.
 - ◆ It covers all pre-existing medical conditions.
- **Challenges with implementation of PM-JAY:**
 - ⊕ **Capacity deficit** (High number of people per empanelled healthcare provider) in some states and delays in **claim settlements** despite clear guidelines.
 - ⊕ **Lack of essential validation controls** in beneficiary registration
 - ◆ **CAG report** highlighted linking of **>7 Lakh beneficiaries to single mobile number**.
 - ⊕ **Delayed grievance disposal:** CAG report highlighted that only around **~10%** of registered grievances were addressed within 15 days turnaround time.
 - ⊕ **Non-adoption of whistle blower policy** by several states like Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan etc.



Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) participated in "Localizing the SDGs: Women in Local Governance in India Lead the Way" Event

- Held at UN Headquarters (New York), it highlighted role of EWRs in advancing **localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** at the grassroots level.
- **Women in PRIs:** India has more than **1.4 million EWRs, constituting around 46%** of total PRI representatives.
 - ⊕ **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 reserved 1/3rd of electoral seats in the PRIs.**
 - ◆ 22 States and UTs have provided a 50% reservation for women (2021).
- **Significance of EWRs:**
 - ⊕ **Improved developmental outcomes:** EWRs have ensured better distribution of essential public goods.
 - ◆ Critical role in **strengthening sustainable development** at grassroot level.
 - ⊕ **Social Change:** Prioritise policies that contribute to more equitable and responsive local communities.
 - ◆ For instance, EWRs contributed to decreasing Total Fertility Rate, improving median age of marriage for women etc.
 - ⊕ **Other:** Deepening democracy and inclusive governance etc.
- **Concerns**
 - ⊕ **Cultural Constraints:** Undervaluation and neglect of contributions due to patriarchal social norms and stereotypes.
 - ⊕ **Proxy Representation:** Actual decision-making powers with husbands/male family members.
 - ⊕ **Policy of rotation of reserved seats:** EWRs could not extend their learned experience.
 - ⊕ **Other:** Domestic and caregiving responsibilities, apprehensions about ability, digital divide etc.
- **Initiatives:** Leadership and Management Development Programme, Capacity-building Programme for EWRs, Drone Didi, Lakhpati Didi etc.

Localization of SDGs

- SDG localization is the process of **transforming the SDGs into reality at the local level**, in coherence with the national frameworks and in line with communities' priorities.
 - ⊕ SDGs are a global agenda adopted by the UN in 2015, comprising **17 goals and 169 targets**.
- Localisation relates both to how local governments can support SDGs achievement through **bottom-up action** as well as how SDGs can provide a **framework for local development policy**.

Online radicalisation continues to pose significant challenge to global security: India at 19th Interpol Conference of Heads of National Central Bureaux

- **Radicalisation** is a process in which an individual/group embraces a radical ideology that **accepts, uses or condones violence**, including acts of terrorism, to reach specific political or ideological purpose.
 - ⊕ **Internet platforms, including social media**, have been exploited by terrorists as **effective tool for radicalisation, indoctrination, recruitment and terror financing**.
- **Role of Internet in challenging National Security**
 - ⊕ Use of social media as **echo chamber to spread propaganda, disinformation, conspiracy theories, hate speech**, and incite violence.
 - ◆ **Kozhikode arson case** highlights online radicalization triggering violence.
 - ⊕ Enables **terror fundraising campaigns**, enhancing their reach and utilizing virtual or crypto assets making them difficult to track.
 - ⊕ **Micro-targeting** using data collection for psychological profiling and strategically tailoring radical content.
 - ⊕ Increase **cybercrimes and organized crimes** such as human trafficking, drug smuggling, money laundering etc.
- **Challenges in addressing security concerns arising from internet:** Associated anonymity, use of deepfakes, different cross-border jurisdictions, difficulties in enforcing laws due to privacy concerns etc.
- **Way Forward:**
 - ⊕ **Targeted counter-narrative campaigns** that debunk misinformation, disrupting echo chambers.
 - ⊕ **Implementing content moderation** and fact-checking.
 - ⊕ **Promoting international cooperation** among law enforcement agencies, intelligence agencies, and policymakers
 - ⊕ **Strengthen Cybersecurity** and regulating virtual and crypto assets.



Interpol (International Criminal Police Organization)



Lyon, France

- **Genesis:** An inter-governmental organization established in 1923.
- **Purpose:** To facilitate information-exchange between national police forces.
- **Members:** 196 member countries (including India)
- **Organizational structure:** General assembly, General secretariat, Executive committee and National central bureaux (NCB).
 - ⊕ **NCB is a country's focal point** for all Interpol activities and **Central Bureau of India (CBI) is India's designated NCB**.

Supreme Court (SC) directed 33% reservation for women in SC Bar Association (SCBA) Posts

- An order issued by a 2-Judge bench of the SC directed the implementation of reservation including the ensuing elections for 2024-25.
 - ⊕ It may increase the pool of women candidates to be appointed as judge in the SC.
- **Current status of Women in Higher Judiciary**
 - ⊕ Only 11 out of 268 Judges ever appointed in SC, since independence, are Women.
 - ◆ Justice Fathima Beevi was the first women judge to serve the SC in 1989.
 - ⊕ There were 35% women judges in subordinate courts while just 13% in High Courts (HCs). (India Justice Report, 2022)
 - ⊕ Only 15% of the practising lawyers are women.
- **Reasons for inadequate women representation:** Patriarchal societal norms which discourage women from pursuing legal profession, lack of transparency in appointment processes, Judicial 'glass-ceiling', etc.
- **Significance of better representation of Women in judiciary**
 - ⊕ **Gender Sensitivity:** Greater empathy and understanding towards gender-related issues, such as domestic violence, sexual harassment, discrimination, etc.
 - ⊕ **Legitimacy and Public Confidence:** Diversity in judiciary will make the institutions more representative and lend legitimacy to them.
 - ⊕ **Role Models and Inspiration:** Encourage more women to pursue careers in the legal profession and aspire to positions of decision-making.

Initiatives/ Reports to boost representation of women in Indian Judiciary

- States like Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, etc., provide for reservation for women in lower judiciary.
- Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances and Law and Justice recommended adding provision related to adequate number of women in judicial appointment in the Memoranda of Procedure (MoP) for appointment of judges to SC and HCs.

45-day payment Rule creates hurdles for MSMEs

- **Finance Act 2023** amended the Income Tax (IT) Act to stipulate that any payments owed to MSMEs, not resolved within 45 days, will not qualify for tax deductions until the payment is made.
 - ⊕ It is applicable to transactions that involve the purchase of goods/ services from enterprises registered under the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Act, 2006.
 - ⊕ The amendment came into force w.e.f. April 01, 2024.
- **Unintended consequences of these amendment**
 - ⊕ Large companies canceling orders to registered MSMEs and placing these with unregistered MSMEs.
 - ⊕ Many smaller MEME entities are opting to surrender their registration to survive and retain businesses.
 - ⊕ Reclassifying MSMEs from 'manufacturing entity' to 'trading entity', etc.
- **Other challenges faced by MSMEs in India**
 - ⊕ **Access to finance:** Many MSMEs struggle to access finance due to stringent lending norms, lack of collateral, insufficient credit history, etc.
 - ⊕ **Infrastructure bottlenecks:** Leads to higher operational costs, production delays, etc.
 - ⊕ **Regulatory:** Complex and uncertain regulatory frameworks, including taxation, environmental regulations, etc., increase compliance costs.
- **Significance of MSMEs:** Employment generation (as MSMEs are labor-intensive), contribution to GDP (~30%), rural industrialization, balanced regional development, export promotion, etc.

Definition of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

Parameters	Micro	Small	medium
Investment in Plant and Machinery	≤ 1 Crore INR	≤ 10 Crore INR	≤ 50 Crore INR
Annual Turnover	≤ 5 Crore INR	≤ 50 Crore INR	≤ 250 Crore INR

Also in News



Endosymbiotic Theory

- Recent research papers related to nitrogen fixation and nitroplast generated interest in the endosymbiotic theory.
- **About Endosymbiotic theory**
 - ⊕ It posits that some eukaryotic cell organelles, such as mitochondria and plastids, evolved from free-living prokaryotes.
 - ◆ Eukaryotic cells have a membrane-bound nucleus which stores the genetic information.
 - ◆ In prokaryotes, DNA is bundled together in the nucleoid region, but it is not stored within a membrane-bound nucleus.
 - ⊕ Some of these organisms ingested prokaryotic cells that then survived within the organism and developed a symbiotic relationship.



Areca Nut

- An Areca Research Centre in Karnataka has declared Thirthahalli Arecanut as the best quality Areca in the state.
- **About Arecanut:**
 - ⊕ Tropical horticultural and commercial crop
 - ⊕ **Ideal temperature:** 14-36 degree Celsius
 - ⊕ **Rainfall:** 750-4500 mm
 - ⊕ **Ideal altitude:** 1000 M above mean sea level
 - ⊕ **Ideal soil type:** Laterite, loamy, clayey, alluvial.
 - ⊕ Karnataka produces around 80% of the country's produce followed by Kerala and Assam.
 - ⊕ India imports arecanut from Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Indonesia.
 - ◆ The Centre has levied a Minimum Import price on it to curb illegal imports.

Section 498A of the IPC

- Citing the misuse of Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) the Supreme Court requested the Parliament to bring necessary changes in corresponding sections in the **Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita (BNS), 2023**.
 - ⊕ Court also observed that the **Sections 85 and 86 of the BNS** is a verbatim reproduction of the Section 498A.
 - ⊕ BNS 2023 is to come into force w.e.f. July 01, 2024.
- **About Section 498A**
 - ⊕ **Introduced in 1983 to address domestic violence and harassment** faced by married women in India by their husband or his relatives.
 - ⊕ Punishment includes a **jail term of up to 3 years or fine**.

Goldene

- Scientists have developed a sheet of Gold, called Goldene, which is just one-atom thick.
- **About Goldene**
 - ⊕ Created by **sandwiching silicon between titanium carbide layers**, depositing gold, allowing gold atoms to replace silicon, forming monolayer.
 - ⊕ They are roughly **100 nanometres thick**, approx. 400 times thinner than the thinnest commercially available gold leaf.
 - ⊕ **Potential applications:** Catalyst in the electronics industry, carbon dioxide conversion, hydrogen generation, water purification, etc.

Eta Aquarid meteor shower

- Eta Aquarid meteor shower **peaks during early May** each year.
 - ⊕ Meteors are space rocks that enter Earth's atmosphere burning and causing streak of light.
 - ⊕ Meteors come from **leftover comet particles** and bits from broken asteroids.
- **About ETA Aquarid meteor shower**
 - ⊕ It occurs when the Earth passes through orbital plane of Halley's Comet, which takes about **76 years** to orbit the Sun.
 - ⊕ Eta Aquarid meteors are **known for their speed**.
 - ⊕ **Southern Hemisphere is preferable** for viewing Eta Aquarids as its radiant – **Aquarius Constellation** – is higher up in Sky in Southern Hemisphere.

FWD-200B

- Bengaluru-based company unveiled FWD-200B, India's first indigenous bomber unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV).
- **About FWD-200B**
 - ⊕ It is a **medium-altitude, long-endurance UAV**.
 - ⊕ It can carry a maximum take-off weight of **498 kg** and has an **operational altitude of 9,000 ft** above mean sea level.
 - ⊕ It comes with **optical surveillance payloads** and is **integrated with missile-like weapons** for precision air strikes.

Mullaperiyar Dam

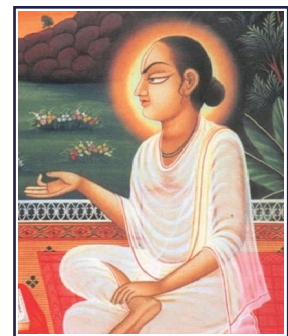
- Tamil Nadu moves Supreme Court, alleging that Kerala is obstructing in strengthening work of Mullaperiyar Dam.
- **About Mullaperiyar dam:**
 - ⊕ Constructed during **1887-1895**, Mullaperiyar Dam is located within the **Periyar Tiger Reserve in Idukki district of Kerala**.
 - ⊕ It is a **composite gravity structure**, built at the confluence of Mullayar and Periyar rivers.
 - ⊕ **Purpose:** To divert the waters of west-flowing River Periyar eastward to arid rain shadow regions of Tamil Nadu (Vaigai basin).
 - ⊕ It is **operated and maintained by Tamil Nadu**, as per the 99-year lease agreement made in 1886 and another agreement of 1970.

Government Securities

- Government of India has announced the **buyback of Government Securities** worth Rs 40,000 crore.
 - ⊕ Buyback of securities entails the government opting to **retire a portion of its outstanding debt** before its scheduled maturity date.
 - ⊕ Buybacks **release liquidity** into the banking system.
- **About Government Securities (G-Secs)**
 - ⊕ It is a **tradeable instrument** issued by the central government or the state governments.
 - ⊕ It **acknowledges the Government's debt obligation**.
 - ⊕ Such securities are **short term** (usually called **treasury bills**) or **long term** (usually called **government bonds**).
 - ⊕ **G-Secs carry practically no risk of default**.

Personality in news **Vallabhacharya (1479 -1531)**

- Recently, 545th birth anniversary of renowned scholar and saint Vallabhacharya was celebrated.
- **About Vallabhacharya**
 - ⊕ Was a **Uttaradhi Tailang Brahmin born in Champaranya in Raipur** Central Province.
 - ⊕ He was one of pioneers of Bhakti movement and **contemporary of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu**.
- **Key Contributions**
 - ⊕ Established **Pushti Marg** (the path towards the grace) **tradition with Brahmasutra, Srimad Bhagwat, and Geeta** as its literature.
 - ⊕ Established **Shhudhadvaita** (pure non-dualism) **school of thought** based on Vedanta.
 - ⊕ **Important literary works:** Anubhashya on Brahma Sutra, Subhodhini Vyakhya of Bhagavat, Siddhanta-Rahasya, Bhagavat Leela Rahasya, Ekanta-Rahasya, Vishnupada, etc.
- **Values:** Selfless Service, Devotion, Social Justice and Equality, etc.



Errata: In 'News Today' dated **28th March, 2024**, in 'Also in News' on "**Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary**", it was incorrectly mentioned that 'It lies on border of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh.'

The **correct information** is '**Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary** lies on border of **Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Telangana.**'

