

Date: 01st -06th May 2024

(Useful for UPSC/WBPSC/SSC Exams.)

- ▶ 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 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



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

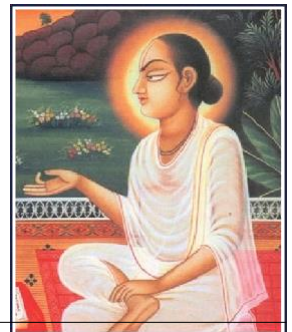
- › Government of India has announced the **buyback of Government Securities** worth Rs 40,000 crore.
- ⊕ Buyback of securities entails the government opting to **retire a portion of its outstanding debt** before its scheduled maturity date. Buybacks **release liquidity** into the banking system.
- › **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 **Champanya 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 **Shudhadvaita** (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 "Eturunagar Wildlife Sanctuary", it was incorrectly mentioned that 'It lies on border of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh.'

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