

From filing FIRs to convictions, women's cases tend to lag longer than men in India: Study

- A pioneering study by a London School of Economics professor found **discrimination against women** at every stage of **police and judicial processes**.
- **Key highlights**
 - ⊖ **Reduced Burdens for Men:** Men who file cases on behalf of a female face **fewer "burdens or exclusions"** than a woman complainant.
 - ⊖ **Extended wait for VaW Cases:** Registration of FIR for Violence against women (VaW) cases are delayed 2 hours longer than other complaint.
 - ⊖ **Conviction Disparities:** Women's complaints are less likely to proceed from police to the judiciary.
 - ◆ Also, **conviction rate is 5% for female complainants** compared to **17.9% for male complainants**.
 - ⊖ **Misuse notion:** Conviction disparities are due to notion that women often **misuse protective legislation** like Domestic Violence Act or rape laws,
 - ⊖ **Socio-cultural hindrance:** Women's complaints, like dowry issues, can be seen as a **threat to societal norms and marriage**.
 - ◆ Gender disparities in **education and workforce participation** can affect access to justice.
 - ⊖ **Single-stage policy intervention:** Policy like creating **more police stations**, fast-track courts, etc. may not address these disparities.
- **Recommendations:** **Charting multi-stage discrimination** as it helps identify how disparities accumulate and where problems occur.

Initiatives taken by India to enhance access to justice for women

- **"Mission Shakti"** has two sub-schemes **"Sambal"** and **"Samarthya"**.
 - ⊖ **"Sambal"** focuses on **women's safety and security**, encompassing **One Stop Centre, Women Helpline, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, and Nari Adalats**.
- **Free legal aid to women** under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.
- **Pink Booth** initiative by Delhi Police to boost security for the city's women and girls and to offer guidance to them.

Court in Hague rejects Indian govt plea against compensation to Devas investors

- Mauritius investors of Devas Multimedia were **awarded \$111 million in compensation** by the **UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)** tribunal over a failed 2005 deal with Antrix Corp.
 - ⊖ Under the deal, **ISRO was supposed to lease two communication satellites** for 12 years to Devas Multimedia.
 - ⊖ **The cabinet terminated the agreement** due to security reasons in 2011.
 - ⊖ Antrix is the **commercial arm of ISRO**.
- Indian government approached the **district court of Hague for cancellation of the UNCITRAL award** citing a 2022 Indian Supreme Court (SC) order.
 - ⊖ SC ruled for the **liquidation of Devas Multimedia** on the charge of fraud.
- An award made under **UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules is binding** on all parties to the proceeding.
- **Arbitration laws in India**
 - ⊖ **India's Arbitration and Conciliation Act 1996** (last amended in 2021) has been modeled on lines of the UNCITRAL framework of laws.
 - ◆ It aims to **modernize Indian arbitration law** and bring it in line with the best global practices and also make India a global hub for arbitration.
 - ⊖ **New Delhi International Arbitration Centre Act, 2019** established the New Delhi International Arbitration Centre later renamed India International Arbitration Centre.

United Nations Commission On International Trade Law



Secretariat: Vienna



About: It is the core legal body of the UN system in the field of international trade law.



Genesis: Established in 1966 by UN General Assembly resolution.



Mandate: To remove legal obstacles to international trade by progressively modernizing and harmonizing trade law.



Composition: 70 Member state elected by General Assembly

- ◆ Members are elected for terms of six years.
- ◆ Currently, **India is a member**.

World Metrological Organisation (WMO) Releases State Of Climate Services report for 2023

- This year the annual report focuses on health.
- **Key highlights**
 - ⊕ **Impact of Climate change:** Climate change may reverse decades of progress towards better health particularly in the most vulnerable communities.
 - ⊕ **Financing gap for air pollution:** Air pollution is the fourth biggest killer by health risk factor yet only 2% of international climate finance commitments go to tackle it.
 - ⊕ **Underutilisation of climate information:** Climate information enhances public health prevention strategies and preparedness to save lives.
 - ◆ 74% of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services provide climate data to health actors, but utilization of these data remains limited.
 - ⊕ **Climate services for health:** It includes collaboration among partners to identify access, generate, and use reliable climate knowledge for better health decisions. Such services are facing:
 - ◆ research and knowledge gaps,
 - ◆ lack of access to sufficient local meteorological observations
 - ◆ insufficient human and institutional capacity, etc.
- **Recommendation:** There is a need for tailored climate information and services to support the health sector. This can be achieved through:
 - ⊕ Developing in-country capacities to improve local knowledge.
 - ⊕ Policy mandates for health and meteorological actors to collaborate.
 - ⊕ Raising.
 - ⊕ Awareness about the importance of climate information.

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
Geneva

About: An intergovernmental organization and a specialised agency of the UN.

Genesis: Established in 1950 and traces origin to International Meteorological Organization (IMO).
◆ 1873 Vienna International Meteorological Congress led the formation of IMO

Objectives: Dedicated to international cooperation and coordination on state and behaviour of Earth's atmosphere, its interaction with the land and oceans, the weather and climate it produces, and the resulting distribution of water resources.

Membership: 193 Member States (Member).

Other reports:

- ◆ State of the Global Climate
- ◆ Air Quality and Climate Bulletin

Bhutan King's visit to India commences with arrival in Assam

- India and Bhutan established formal diplomatic relations in 1968 based on the "Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation" of 1949 (revised in 2007).
- **India-Bhutan relationship:**
 - ⊕ **Trade:** Bilateral trade reached \$ 1.42 Billion in 2021-22, accounting for 80% of Bhutan's overall trade, India is Bhutan's top import and export destination
 - ◆ Trade, Commerce, and Transit Agreement (2016) establishes free trade regime between them and allows Bhutan duty-free transit of goods to/from third countries.
 - ⊕ **Developmental:** India provides scholarships to Bhutanese students, supports Bhutan's Gyalsung Project for skill development, helps in sectors like health, agriculture etc.
 - ⊕ **Hydropower:** India has constructed four major hydroelectric projects in Bhutan and purchases power generated in Bhutan, significantly boosting Bhutan's revenue.
 - ⊕ **Cultural:** Bhutanese pilgrims visit Bodh Gaya, Rajgir, Nalanda, and other Buddhist sites in India.
 - ⊕ **New areas:** Launch of RuPay, and BHIM app in Bhutan, joint development of India-Bhutan SAT, etc.
- **Key challenge:** Bhutan is a landlocked buffer country between China and India.
 - ⊕ While Bhutan does not have diplomatic ties with China, the ongoing Bhutan-China border discussions on the Doklam plateau are a concern for India.



- Doklam trijunction cuts very close to India's Siliguri corridor a narrow area connecting the North Eastern States to the rest of India.
- China has proposed to "swap" areas in Doklam under Bhutanese control with areas in Jakarlung and Pasamlung which China claims.
- India is concerned about China gaining access to this area.

Centre extends Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY) for another 5 years to 2028

- PMGKAY was launched this year to provide free-of-cost food grains for a year under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013.
- It should be noted that this **PMGKAY is different from the PMGKAY that was launched in 2020 as a pandemic relief measure.**
- **About PMGKAY:**
 - ⊖ It was **launched under section 3 of the NFSA, 2013.**
 - ⊖ **Aim:** To provide rice, wheat, and coarse grains free of cost to families belonging to **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)** and **Priority Households (PHH)** categories.
 - ◆ **PHH** are to be identified by **State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations** as per criteria **evolved by them.**
 - ◆ **AAY families** are to be identified by States/UTs as per the criteria **prescribed by the Central Government.**
 - ⊖ It subsumed the **two subsidy schemes of the Department of Food & Public Distribution**
 - ◆ Food Subsidy to Food Corporation of India (FCI).
 - ◆ Food Subsidy for Decentralized Procurement (DCP).
 - ⊖ **Implementation:** the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.
- **Benefits:** free food to around 80 crores people, **ensuring nutrition security, etc.**
- **Challenges:** high cost of subsidy, issue with the identification of beneficiaries, subsidy goes against WTO commitments.

Loss and Damage Transitional Committee reached an agreement for the design of a new Loss and Damage Fund (LDF)

- **Loss and damage** refer to the **negative consequences** that arise from the unavoidable risks of climate change like rising sea levels, prolonged heatwaves, etc.
 - ⊖ Purpose of LDF is to **assist developing countries** vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in **responding to economic and non-economic loss and associated damage.**
 - ⊖ It is designed on the principle of **Common But Differentiated Responsibilities.**
- At the Sharm El-Sheikh climate conference (UNFCCC COP27) in 2022, countries decided to set up a **dedicated fund for loss and damage and a transitional committee for designing the fund.**
 - ⊖ The transitional committee is a 24-member team of negotiators **from developed and developing countries.**
 - ⊖ There were differences between **on location of the fund and sources for funding.**
 - ⊖ The blueprint of LDF will be formally adopted at the **COP28 UN climate summit.**
- **Design of LDF:**
 - ⊖ LDF will be **administered by the World Bank as a World Bank-hosted Financial Intermediary Fund** for an interim period of four years.
 - ⊖ Developing countries gave up their demand for **establishing LDF as a standalone fund.**
 - ⊖ **Developed countries are urged to contribute** to the fund while **developing countries are being encouraged to contribute.**

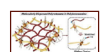


Also in News



Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori)

- Indian researchers have developed a **two-step PCR (polymerase chain reaction) based assay for H. pylori bacteria.**
 - ⊖ It can **help detect H. pylori infection and identify clarithromycin-resistant bacteria in seven hours.**
 - ◆ Currently, it takes weeks to identify drug sensitivity.
 - ◆ There is an **increasing trend of clarithromycin-resistant H. pylori** in India leading to a decreasing success rate in treatment.
- H. pylori infection is major **risk factors for gastric cancer.**
 - ⊖ In India, the infection **affect 60-70% of population.**
 - ⊖ Infection is often **acquired during childhood** and remains in **stomach throughout life if not treated.**



Vitrimers incorporated with polyrotaxane (VPR)

- Scientists in Japan have developed a new version of plastic called VPR which is **based on an epoxy resin vitrimer.**
 - ⊖ Vitrimers are **recent category of plastics** known for strength at low temperatures and **reshaping under heat.**
 - ⊖ However, they **tend to be very brittle.**
 - ◆ To **overcome this**, researchers **added polyrotaxane to the plastic-making process** which resulted in VPR.
- **About VPR:**
 - ⊖ **Stronger and stretchier** than the traditional version.
 - ⊖ **Partially biodegradable.**
 - ⊖ It can **remember complex shapes** which can be **restored once it is heated.**



Lysionotus namchoomii

- **Lysionotus namchoomii** is a new species of epiphytic plant (which grows upon another plant) discovered by Scientists of Botanical Survey of India (BSI).
 - ⊖ Native range of the genus Lysionotus is the Himalayas, Japan and Indo-China.
- New Species bears thick leaves and attractive purple flowers.
 - ⊖ It is named in honour of late Chau Phunkyoo Nomchoon, a social reformer from Arunachal Pradesh's Khapti community.
- BSI established in 1890, is the apex research organization under the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change.
 - ⊖ It carries out taxonomic studies on wild plant resources of country.



Environmental DNA (eDNA)

- Researchers at the Laboratory for the Conservation of Endangered Species (LaCONES) developed a new method for assessing total biodiversity.
 - ⊖ LaCONES is a CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) laboratory.
- Researchers can assess the total biodiversity by sequencing eDNA of samples such as water, soil, or air.
- This method is a non-destructive and non-invasive biological monitoring method.
- eDNA is DNA shed by all organisms into their surroundings through natural processes during their lifetime or after death.



Kamakhya Temple

- Bhutan's King visited Kamakhya Temple.
- Considered the oldest of 51 Shakti Peethas, Kamakhya temple is located in Nilachala Hills in Guwahati, Assam.
- It is an important pilgrimage centre of Tantrik Shaktism cult and Hindus.
- It is dedicated to different forms of Mother Shakti and also houses temples for Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu.
- Ambubachi Mela is held every year to commemorate the yearly menstruation of Goddess Kamakhya.
- The former temple was destroyed by Kala Pahar, which was later reconstructed in 1565 by Chilarai, reigning king of the Koch dynasty.



Maternity Leaves

- The Ministry of Defence has approved the extension of the rules for Maternity, Child Care and Child Adoption Leaves for women soldiers in the Armed Forces.
- Now women in all ranks of the armed forces will be granted maternity leave on par with their civilian counterparts.
- Maternity leave is governed by the Maternity Benefit Act of 1961, amended in 2017
 - ⊖ It allows working women to take paid maternity leave for twenty-six weeks for the first two children.



Enabling Communications on Real-time Environment (ENCORE)

- Election Commission of India (ECI) designed in-house software for complete Candidate and election management through 'ENCORE'.
- It is an end-to-end application for returning officers to digitize the votes polled, tabulate the round-wise data, and then take out various statutory reports of counting.
- Another application called the ENCORE Scrutiny Application allows Returning Officers to scrutinize the nominations filed by the candidates online.
- Through the ENCORE Nodal App, various departments like fire, education, police, environment, etc give 'no objection' certificates for holding rallies, road shows, etc to political parties or candidates



Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)

- The mission has enhanced tap water connection in rural areas from 16% in 2019 to 70% in November 2023.
- **About JJM**
 - ⊖ **Aim:** Envisioned to provide safe and adequate drinking water through Functional Household Tap Connections by 2024 to all households in rural India.
 - ⊖ **Ministry:** Ministry of Jalshakti.
 - ⊖ Launched in 2019, as a centrally sponsored scheme.
- JJM (Urban), under the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs, aims to provide functional taps in all 4,378 statutory towns was announced in the Union Budget 2021-22.

Places in News



Nepal (Capital: Kathmandu)

- India offered assistance to Nepal amidst the Earthquake.
- **Political features**
 - ⊖ Landlocked country.
 - ⊖ **Borders:** India (east, south, and west) and Tibet Autonomous Region of China (North).
- **Geographical features**
 - ⊖ **Mountains:** Home to eight of the world's highest mountains and harbours Mahābhārat Range and Great Himalayan Range of Himalayas.
 - ⊖ **Highest point:** Mt. Everest (8,848 m)
 - ⊖ **Major rivers:**
 - ◆ Gandak (origin: near Dhaulagiri Tibet Nepal border)
 - ◆ Karnali (origin: Macha-khabab of Tibet)
 - ◆ Kosi (formed by confluence of Sun Kosi, Arun Kosi and Tamur Kosi all taking their origin in the Himalayan region of Nepal and Tibet)



AHMEDABAD



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI



SIKAR