

# NEWS TODAY

## NITI Aayog & KPMG Publishes a Report on Impact Assessment of Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana

Report has analyzed **performance and contribution** of the **PM Mudra Yojana** under the Ministry of Finance towards Micro, small, medium enterprises (MSMEs).

### Key Findings of Study

- **Overall Performance:** Since its launch in 2015, scheme has provided **credit support to 35 crore Micro and Small entrepreneur Accounts.**
- **Financial Inclusion:** Women held around 71% of the total number of accounts (FY 2022). Sanctioned amount for **new entrepreneurs** has also increased.
- **Encourages small businesses:** Majority loan accounts (80%) are in the **Shishu category** (FY 2021).
- **Regional variation:** Number of accounts & amount sanctioned for the Northeast region is not only the lowest but is also decreasing.

### Challenges associated with Scheme

- **Scheme Design**
  - ⊖ **Lack of collateral** increases fear of NPA among banks.
  - ⊖ **High refinancing rates**
  - ⊖ Ceiling of 15% on pay out under **Credit Guarantee Fund for Micro Units (CGFMU)** is not feasible and restricts benefits of banks.
- **Institutional Mechanism**
  - ⊖ **Poor credit penetration** to weaker sections & remote areas
  - ⊖ **Lack of centralized database** for collecting information about customers
- **Key recommendations for scheme**
  - ⊖ **A Portal** enabling real-time upload of beneficiary data.
  - ⊖ **Increasing digitization** e.g. Use of Chatbots for query redressal.
  - ⊖ **A recognition mechanism** is needed for different **Micro Lending Institutions (MLIs)** based on their scale of operation and performance.

### About PM Mudra Yojana

- **Type:** Central Sector Scheme
- **Purpose:** To create an inclusive, sustainable and value based entrepreneurial culture
- **Loan categories:**
  - ⊖ **Shishu** (loans up to INR 50,000)
  - ⊖ **Kishore** (loans above INR 50,000 and up to INR 5 lakhs)
  - ⊖ **Tarun** (loans above INR 5 lakhs and up to INR 20 lakhs)
- **Credit Guarantee:** To eligible micro units through CGFMU.

## Security Concerns at the Russian controlled Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP)

A fire broke out at Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant which Russia characterized as an **act of nuclear terrorism.**

- Zaporizhzhia, the **largest nuclear plant in Europe**, is located in southeast Ukraine on the eastern bank of the **Dnipro River**. It is currently under the **control of Russia.**

### Nuclear Terrorism

- It is **unauthorized use or threat to use** nuclear explosive devices, nuclear materials, nuclear fuel, radioactive products or waste, nuclear facilities and installations for endangering lives, property and environment.
- It is a **transnational threat and can take at least four forms:**
  - ⊖ Detonation of intact nuclear weapon,
  - ⊖ Theft or purchase of fissile material leading to detonation of improvised nuclear device,
  - ⊖ Unauthorized acquisition of radiation-dispersal device or "dirty bomb", and
  - ⊖ Sabotage of nuclear facilities and release of radioactivity.

### International regulations for Nuclear Security

- **UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy** calls upon Member States to Combat smuggling of radiological and nuclear materials.
- **International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT)** which criminalizes unlawful possession of radioactive material.
- **IAEA's** (International Atomic Energy Agency) **Seven pillars for nuclear safety and security during conflict.**
- **Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM)** establishes legal obligation for parties.

### India's approach to Nuclear Safety

- **Governance Framework:** Atomic Energy Act 1962 and Weapons of Mass Destruction Act (2005).
- **Institutions:** Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) focusing on security of civilian facilities.
- **Nuclear Security Practice & Culture:** National Design Basis Threat Document (NDB) and Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) etc.
- **Technology:** Closed fuel cycle with 'reprocess to reuse' of plutonium.
- **International cooperation:** Party to all 13 anti-terrorism conventions including CPPNM and ICSANT.

## Tungabhadra Dam's Crest Gate Collapses

**Rising water pressure** after heavy rain caused the failure of crest gate (**controls overflow of reservoir**). It has raised concerns of floods as well as **of dam safety** in Karnataka.

### About Tungabhadra or Pampa Dam

- It is a **multipurpose dam** (Completed in 1958) built across Tungabhadra River in Hospet, Ballari district (Karnataka).
- M. Visvesvaraya** was chairman of board of engineers for Dam construction.

### About Tungabhadra River:

- Derives its name from **two streams viz. Tunga and Bhadra** which originates in western ghats and confluences near Shimoga to form Tungabhadra. It is a **tributary of Krishna River**.

### Concerns associated with dam safety in India

- Aging dams:** 80% of large dams in India are already over 25 years old.
- Seismic vulnerability:** E.g. earthquake in **Bhuj (Gujarat) in 2001**, led to liquefaction in foundation of Chang Dam.
- Flood/Excessive rain:** E.g. **Chunghang Dam** Sikkim's highest dam was washed away during flash floods. (**Oct 2023**)
- Other concerns:** Overtopping (gully erosion) failures, Sedimentation etc.

### Steps Taken for Dam Safety:

- Dam Safety Act 2021**
- Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP)**
- Web-based tool **Dam Health and Rehabilitation Monitoring Application (DHARMA)**

### Dams in India (According to National Register of Large Dams, 2023)

- There are **6138** completed and operational specified dams.
- Out of them, there are **234 large dams (More than 100 years old)**.

### Dam Failure

- It is collapse of **part of a dam/ its foundation**, such that the dam cannot retain water.
- Examples: **Machchu (Gujarat) dam failure (1979), Tiware dam (Maharashtra) failure in 2019.**

## International Labour Organization published its report "Global Employment Trends (GET) for Youth 2024"

The report represents the **20<sup>th</sup> anniversary publication** of get for Youth and focuses on achievements, challenges and outlook for youth employment.

### Key Highlights of Report

- Post Covid recovery:** **Global youth unemployment rate in 2023 is 13%**, the lowest in 15 years, and **64.9 million unemployed youth**, the lowest since 2000.
- NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) Status:** 20.4% of youth were in NEET in 2023, indicating broader labour market exclusion.
  - 2 in 3 young NEETs are women.**
- Global Challenges:**
  - Inequalities of Opportunity:** 4 in 5 young adult workers are in regular paid job in high-income countries, compared to 1 in 5 in low-income countries.
  - Regional disparities:** Growth in youth labour force in Africa by 2050 while all other regions face contraction.
    - Also, 1 in 3 youth in Arab states and North Africa are unemployed.
  - Youth well-being concern:** Many young people are stressed about job loss, state of economy, and lack of social mobility across generations.
  - Educational Mismatch:** 2 in 3 young adult workers in developing economies hold qualifications that do not match well to their job.

### Recommendations from the report

- Enhance education and training to **improve school-to-work transitions** and address skill mismatches.
- Target labour market policies to **support disadvantaged youth**.
- Promote entrepreneurship** and self-employment among young people.
- Amplify the policy focus on job creation through **gender-responsive** macroeconomic and sectoral policies.
- Emphasize **youth inclusion in policy making**, improve international cooperation and enhance public-private partnerships.

## SC issues directions for implementing National Commission for allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHP) Act, 2021

Apex court noted that despite act **being in force for 3-4 years**, many of its provisions have not been implemented.

- Court further noted that **out of 28 states** and union territories, **only 14 have set up state councils**. Even these councils are **not functioning properly**.

### Supreme Court Directions on matter:

- Union and States should take necessary steps to **implement NCAHP Act within 2 months**.
- Health Ministry** shall within 2 weeks **convene online meeting** to lay down roadmap for implementing Act;
- Infrastructure** is set up by all states & **provisions of act** are made functional
- Court had also directed all states and union territories to **submit a compliance report** on next hearing.

### Issues arising out of Non-implementation of act:

- No uniformity in qualifications** prescribed for allied & healthcare professional courses by private organizations.
- Lack of properly regulated healthcare** training institutions seriously **jeopardizes patients' Medicare**.
- Mushrooming of unregulated institutions** providing courses in allied and healthcare aspects of medical treatment.
  - Allied health professionals** are associates/technologists trained to **support the diagnosis and treatment of diseases**.

### Key provision of NCAHP Act, 2021

- Specifies certain **categories of allied and healthcare professions** as recognized categories.
- National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions:** It frames **policies** for regulating education and practice, creates an **online Central Register of all registered professionals** and provides for a uniform **entrance and exit examination**
  - Professional Councils** will be constituted by Commission for every recognized category of allied and healthcare professions.
- State Allied and Healthcare Councils:** It will enforce professional conduct & code of ethics, provide permission for establishing institutions etc.

## AUKUS members signed an agreement for cooperation related to naval nuclear propulsion

Agreement will enable AUKUS members UK and US to **transfer submarine-specific material and equipment for Australia's future nuclear powered (SSN) submarines.**

### Key highlights of Agreement

- It will be central to transfer of **Virginia-class nuclear submarines from US to Australia** and transfer of equipment from UK for use in SSN-AUKUS submarines.
- Agreement **rules out enriching uranium** or reprocessing spent nuclear fuel in Australia and prevents AUKUS partners contravening **international non-proliferation obligations.**
- **Australia** would be responsible for **nuclear waste management** generated by its submarines.

### AUKUS

- It is a **trilateral security partnership** between Australia, US and UK signed in **2021** to strengthen security and defence interests.
- It consists of **two pillars**, demonstrating its capabilities and strengths:
  - ⊕ **Pillar 1:** Supporting Australia to acquire its first conventionally armed, SSN submarine fleet.
  - ⊕ **Pillar 2:** Cooperation in **eight advanced military capability areas:** AI, quantum technologies, innovation, information sharing, and cyber, undersea, hypersonic and counter-hypersonic and electronic warfare domains.

### Impact of AUKUS in Indo-Pacific region

- **Balance of power:** It aims at countering Chinese influence and **redefining security architecture** with increased involvement of western powers.
- **India:** It can be a tool in strengthening India's idea of '**strategic autonomy**' in Indo-Pacific and can complement **Quad grouping.**
- **Nuclear proliferation concerns:** Exchange of nuclear materials and knowledge can have strategical implications.

## Also in News



### Mission Karmayogi

Recently, **Amrit Gyan Kosh portal and Faculty Development portal** were launched under **Mission Karmayogi.**

- **Amrit Gyan Kosh portal:** A **shared learning resources knowledge bank** for access to India-centric case studies.
- **Faculty Development portal:** Training of Practitioners and faculties for better delivery of knowledge to civil servants.

### National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (Mission Karmayogi):

- Launched in 2020, it aims to create a **competent civil service** rooted in Indian ethos.
- It has **six key pillars** including Policy Framework, Institutional Framework, Competency Framework, Digital Learning Framework (IGOT-Karmayogi), the electronic Human Resource Management System (e-HRMS) and the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.



### Spintronics

Researchers developed a **transparent conducting interface** between two insulating materials using **spintronics.**

- This breakthrough can **significantly speed up data transfer** between different parts of electronic devices and **increase amount of data that can be stored** in quantum devices.

### About Spintronics

- It is a technology that utilizes both the **intrinsic spin of an electron as well as its charge in transport devices.**
- Spintronic systems are of particular interest in field of **quantum computing, nano-electronic devices and modern electronic storage devices.**



### Geneva Conventions of 1949

Geneva Conventions of 1949, the cornerstone of international humanitarian law, completed **75 years of their adoption.**

- **Four Geneva conventions** and their additional protocols contain most important rules **limiting the barbarity of war.** Four Conventions protects:
  - ⊕ Wounded and sick soldiers on land.
  - ⊕ Wounded, sick and shipwrecked military personnel at sea.
  - ⊕ Prisoners of war.
  - ⊕ Civilians, including those in occupied territory.
- Additional Protocols of **1977 and 2005** supplement the conventions.
- India has **ratified all four Geneva conventions 1949.**



### NIRF Ranking 2024

Ministry of Education released the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2024

### About NIRF

- **Launched in 2015**
- It outlines a methodology to rank educational institutions across the country.
- **Five parameters:** Teaching, Learning and Resources, Research and Professional Practices, Graduation Outcomes, Outreach and Inclusivity, and Perception.
- **Implementing Agency:** National Board of Accreditation (NBA) in collaboration with the INFLIBNET Centre in Gandhinagar.
  - ⊕ **New addition for ranking:** Open Universities, State Public Universities and Skill Universities.
  - ⊕ **IIT Madras** is best education institution in country for sixth time (Since 2019), followed by IISC Bangalore.





### Gurmar (*Gymnema sylvestre*)

Researchers have discovered anti-diabetic medicinal herb Gurmar on Gaya's Brahmayoni Hill.

#### About Gurmar

- It is a slow-growing, perennial, woody climber found in **central and southern India and tropical Africa.**
- **Pharmacological Properties:**
  - ⊕ **Gymnemic acid** an active component isolated from leaves of *G. sylvestre* has **antiobesity and antidiabetic properties;**
- It causes **decrease in body weight** and inhibits **glucose absorption.**
- **Applications:**
  - ⊕ Used in dietary supplements for reducing **body weight, blood cholesterol, and triglyceride levels.**
  - ⊕ Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) utilized Gurmar to develop **anti-diabetic drug BGR-34.**
- Earlier, **first diabetes drug Metformin** was also derived from a medicinal plant, **Galega.**



### Silicosis

Researchers claim that **present limits of daily exposure to silica dust** can pose **serious risks of developing silicosis.**

- **Permissible Exposure Limit** for silica dust in India is set at **0.15 mg/m<sup>3</sup>**, which is high.

#### About silicosis:

- It is a **long-term lung disease**, caused by **prolonged inhaling of crystalline silica dust.**
- It causes **hardening of lungs, shortness of breath and can be fatal.**
- Silicosis is a **progressive disease and has no cure.**

#### About Silica:

- Silica is naturally found in various **types of rocks like quartz, soil etc.**
- **Industries associated:** Construction, mining, oil and gas extraction, pottery and sculpting, glass manufacturing etc.



### Housing Finance Companies (HFCs)

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) tightened norms related to public deposit acceptance by HFCs.

- **Ceiling for quantum of public deposits** has been **reduced** from 3 times to 1.5 times of HFC's net owned fund (NoF).

#### About HFCs:

- They are corporate entities incorporated under **Companies Act, 1956.**
- **Aim:** providing **housing loans** and finance in a **streamlined manner.**
- **Regulation:** Regulated by the **RBI.** (earlier regulated by National Housing Bank (NHB))
- **Types:** Deposit-taking HFCs and Non-deposit taking HFCs
- There are **97 HFCs** in the country.
- **Advantages:** Flexible loan approval compared to banks, consideration of lower credit scores.

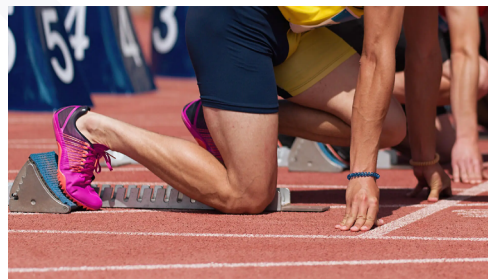


### Technological doping

Recently some experts have raised concern of Technological doping.

#### About Technological doping:

- Technological doping is the practice of gaining a competitive advantage using sports equipment.
- **E.g. Speedo LZR Racer swimsuits** of 2008 Olympic (Later banned)
- **Regulation:** World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) considers prohibiting technologies if they are "performance-enhancing" or "being against the spirit of the sport".



## Places in News



### Zambia (Capital: Lusaka)

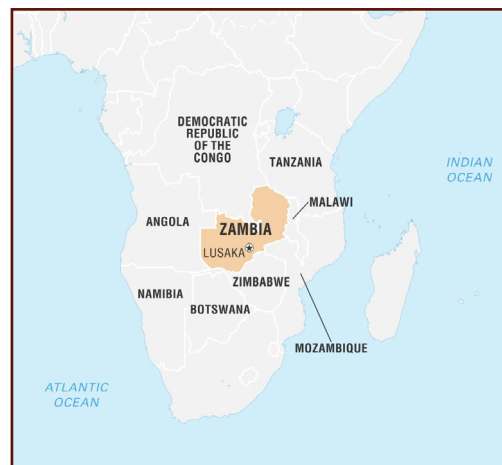
Zambia is set to reopen its closed border with Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

#### Political Features:

- **Landlocked country** in south-central Africa.
- **Bordering Countries:** Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania to the north, Malawi and Mozambique to east, Zimbabwe and Botswana to the south, and Namibia and Angola to the west.
- It is also a **member of the commonwealth.**

#### Geographical Features:

- **Climate:** Subtropical climate with three seasons: a hot and dry season, a wet rainy season and a cool dry season.
- **Minerals:** Major producer of **cobalt and copper.**
- **Rivers:** Kafue River, Luangwa River and Zambezi River (**Creates Victoria fall**).
- **Lakes:** Lake Bangweulu, Lake Kariba, Lake Mweru & Lake Tanganyika.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI