

Nepal eases post-demonetisation curbs on INR, allows ₹200 and ₹500 notes

Kathmandu: Nepal has allowed Indian and Nepalese nationals to bring into or take out of the country Indian currency notes of Rs 200 and Rs 500 denominations, ending a nearly decade-long restriction under which only notes of up to Rs 100 denomination were permitted following India's 2016 demonetisation.

The Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), in a notice reissued on Thursday, said Indian and Nepalese nationals may carry Indian currency notes of Rs 200 and Rs 500 denominations issued on or after Nov 9, 2016, up to a limit of Rs 25,000 per person in accordance with the prevailing regulations.

Though the provisions had been notified through a notice published in the Nepal Gazette on Feb 11 after the necessary regulations were framed, the NRB reissued the notice to reiterate the rules and clarify their implementation.

Clarifying the new rules, NRB spokesperson Guru Prasad Paudel said on Saturday that Nepalese nationals cannot bring Indian currency into Nepal from any country other than India. Likewise, they cannot carry Indian currency from Nepal to a third country, except India. He said the revised provision would facilitate Indian tourists visiting Nepal and Nepalese na-

tionals engaged in trade and business with India.

The notice also said Nepalese nationals and foreign visitors can bring up to \$5,000 or its equivalent in other foreign currencies into Nepal without making a customs declaration. Amounts exceeding \$5,000 must be declared to customs upon arrival.

In case of the Indian currency, travellers may bring in an amount up to \$5,000 (approx Rs 4.8 lakh) without making a customs declaration only if the denominations do not exceed Rs 100, Paudel said. However, if the amount exceeds \$5,000, a customs declaration is mandatory, he added. PTI

US pauses attacks for second straight day, Iran follows suit

Trump Giving Iran Talks 'A Little Bit Of Room', US Envoy To UN Says

Dubai/Washington: Iran will halt its own attacks as long as the US maintains its latest pause on air strikes, a senior Iranian official told Reuters on Sunday, after President Trump abruptly called off his two-week-old bombing campaign. After 13 nights of intensifying US air strikes on Iran, the Pentagon abruptly suspended the campaign late on Friday, with no US attacks reported on either Saturday or Sunday.

Iran, which had been following each night of US attacks with its own strikes on neighbouring countries that host US bases, has also so far held fire for two days. The US ambassador to the UN, Mike Waltz, told Fox News on Sunday that Trump had decided to pause US attacks to allow more time for diplomacy. "He's giving talks some space, he's giving it a little bit of room," Waltz said, without providing further details.

The senior Iranian source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said: "Iran's position remains 'attack for attack': if the attacks stop, Iran will also halt its operations. That message has already been conveyed to the US." The source added: "However, Iran is prepared to mount a broad response should the US launch another attack."

Asked about the pause, a se-



A fishing boat sailing the Bab el-Mandeb Strait off Yemen. Yemen's Iran-backed Houthis said Saturday that they fired missiles and drones at Saudi Arabia in response to Saudi airstrikes on the strategic Red Sea city of Hodeida, in an escalation over vital shipping route in West Asia

Concern about US missile defence stocks behind pause: Reports

US forces have been striking Iran nightly in what Washington said was retaliation for Iranian attacks on shipping in the Strait of Hormuz. Iran says it aims to retain control of the strait, the world's most important energy shipping route. The two-week-long US military campaign effectively torpedoed last month's interim agreement aimed at ending the war that the US and Israel launched in Feb.

The New York Times and CNN both reported that Trump had backed off plans to escalate the war with even bigger military options after concerns were raised on Friday by some of his advisers, including over whether **US missile defence stocks were running low from protecting US bases in the region.** CNN and the Times both identified Pentagon chief of staff Dan

Caine as having raised such concerns. CNN said Vice President JD Vance also had expressed reservations.

News site Axios reported that Trump had been receiving plans for strikes on Iran from the Pentagon every afternoon for two weeks and signing off on them each night, until Friday when the latest plan was presented to him and he decided not to go ahead.

Trump's decision to pause strikes has come at a turning point in the war, with both sides testing the boundaries of escalation that they set before a ceasefire ended major fighting in April.

US forces have already struck bridges and tunnels in southern Iran, prompting Iran to strike water desalination plants that nearby Gulf Arab states rely on to make their desert cities habitable. REUTERS

A senior official in Trump's administration said on Saturday that the president "has always been clear that his preference is diplomacy, but he has shown Iran what will happen if they fail to come to the table in a serious way." The senior Iranian source said Tehran did not hold much hope that Trump's decision to pause strikes represented a major shift in the US negotiating position. "There is more skepticism than optimism about the halt in attacks. The prevailing view is that the pause is tactical rather than genuine. Iran has accumulated enough bitter experience with what it sees as US deception," the source said. REUTERS

Iran: Progress in Oman talks on Hormuz management

Iran said on Sunday it had made progress in talks with Oman on management of the Strait of Hormuz, the strategic waterway crucial for oil and gas trade that both countries border. Foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei said several rounds of negotiations were held in Iranian capital Tehran on Friday and Saturday between Iranian and Omani deputy foreign ministers. The discussions focused on "common principles and operational mechanisms" for ensuring the safe passage of shipping through the strait while respecting the sovereign rights of the two states, Baqaei said. He described the talks as "useful" and said progress had been made, adding that "technical and political consultations between the two sides were continuing". AFP

PM taps Aadhaar architect Nilekani for exam reforms

Task Force To Push Tech For 'Clean' System

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New Delhi: On the back of a bill to crack down on paper leaks, PM Narendra Modi anno-

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► PM highlights learning project reported by TOI, P 7

unced Sunday a high-powered task force headed by Infosys co-founder and founding UIDAI chairperson Nandan Nilekani to recommend measures to make India's public exam system leak-proof, transparent and tech-driven.

"The Nilekani committee will give suggestions on maximum use of technology for making exams clean and transparent," the PM said,

SYSTEM GLITCH? ENTER THE TECHNOCRAT TROUBLESHOOTER

► In 2009, Infosys co-founder and chairman Nandan Nilekani became the **architect of Aadhaar**, the world's largest digital identity programme



► PM Modi took office in 2014, tapped Nilekani to deepen use of Aadhaar, paving way for **direct benefit transfer** (DBT), a key

policy lever used by Modi govt in past 12 years

► Helped build India's **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)**. Also instrumental in shaping 'Finternet', global financial system for the future

► Appointed **co-chair of G20 task force (2023) on digital public infrastructure** for economic transformation, financial inclusion and development

► **Electrical engineer from IIT-Bombay** in 1978, Nilekani co-founded Infosys with NRN in 1981. Served as CEO 2002-2007 before returning as chairman in 2017

► Former Isro chairman S Somanath, IIT-Chennai director V Kamakoti & former IB director Tapan Deka also on panel



adding that govt would work on its recommendations to build a "foolproof" system.

The task force has been asked to suggest next-generation exam reforms, with particular focus on technology as well as structural changes in National Testing Agency and wider testing framework.

Govt, sources said, hopes to draw on Nilekani's experience in building technology

platforms at scale. Besides Nilekani, the multidisciplinary panel comprises former Isro chairperson S Somanath, who spearheaded Chandrayaan-3 lunar south pole landing, former Intelligence Bureau director Tapan Deka, IIT-Madras director V Kamakoti, former education secretary and ex-CBSE chairperson Anita Karwal, and logistics expert Amrit Lal Meena.

The choice of Deka is significant as it was under his leadership that IB confirmed NTA's suspicion about the NEET-UG 2026 paper being leaked. Meena's inclusion in the task force appears to have been influenced by the experience of gangs exploiting weak links in logistics related to exams.

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HAT-TRICK OF GOLDS

Mirabai bags yellow metals at 3 consecutive CWG

■ Mirabai gives India the first Gold in this edition of CWG

GLASGOW, July 26 (PTI)

MIRABAI Chanu reminded the world why she remains the undisputed queen of Indian weightlifting, delivering a performance worthy of a champion as she clinched her third successive Commonwealth Games gold medal in the women's 48kg category in Glasgow, on Sunday.

The result was never really in doubt; the only question was how far Mirabai would push the limits. And the Manipuri superstar answered in emphatic style, rewriting the record books with a stunning display of strength and composure.

The 31-year-old shattered the Commonwealth and Commonwealth Games records in the snatch, while also setting new CWG marks in clean and jerk and total. She lifted a commanding 190kg, with a best effort of 85kg in snatch and 105kg in clean and jerk.



Her dominance was such that silver medallist Ruth Asuquo Nyong of Nigeria finished a distant second with a total lift of 168kg, a staggering 22kg behind Mirabai's winning effort.

Chanu's competition began when everyone else in the field was done.

The journey to another golden moment was not without a scare. Mirabai endured a nervous start, failing to register her opening snatch attempt at 82kg.

But true to her champion's temperament, she quickly regained her rhythm, showing the grit and class that have defined her remarkable career.

Even in the clean and jerk, Mirabai faced a brief moment of uncertainty, failing to complete her opening attempt. However, the Olympic medallist responded like a champion, effortlessly hoisting the same 105kg weight in her second attempt.

The lift not only secured the gold but also shattered the Commonwealth Games record in the clean and jerk category and bettered the total lift mark.

With the contest already sealed, Mirabai chose not to take unnecessary risks and skipped her third attempt, keeping in mind the Asian Games, scheduled less than two months away.

Lifter Rishikanta claims SILVER in CWG

GLASGOW, July 26 (PTI)

TWO missed clean and jerk attempts proved costly for India's Rishikanta Singh as he signed off with the silver medal in the men's 60kg weightlifting competition at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, on Sunday.

The Manipuri lifter finished with a total of 264kg (121kg+143kg), matching CWG record in the snatch with a superb opening display before faltering in the clean and jerk. Rishikanta cleared 121kg in the snatch to equal the Games record and entered the clean and jerk in pole position.

However, he could only manage 143kg after failing his last two attempts in clean and jerk, allowing Malaysia's Mohamad Aniq Kasdan to snatch the gold. Kasdan also lifted 121kg in the snatch before producing a Games record of 152kg in the clean and jerk for a winning total of 273kg, rewriting both the clean and jerk and overall Commonwealth Games records.

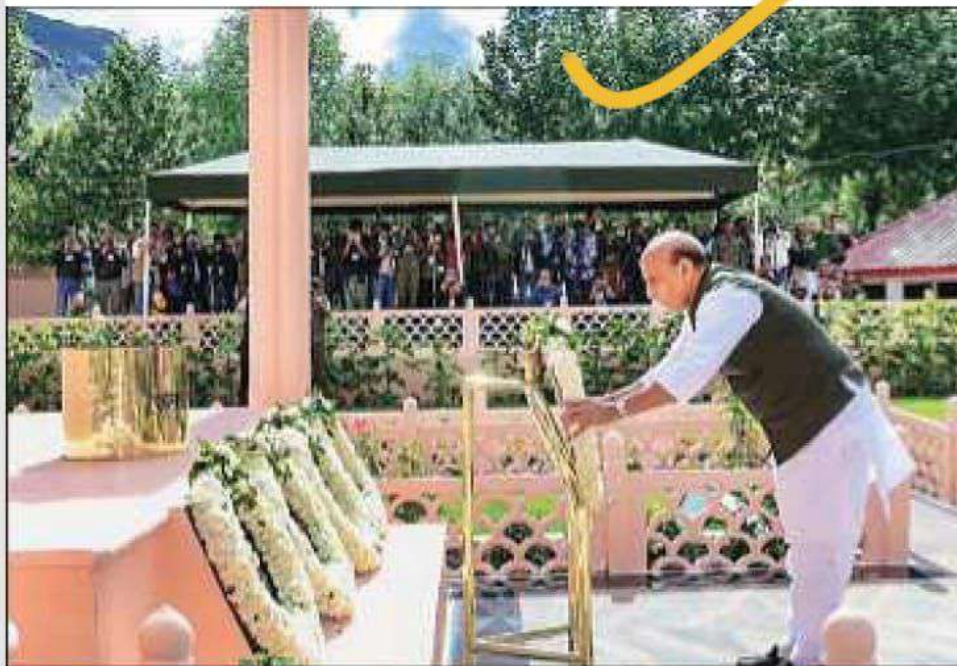
Kenya's Joshua Amunga Mboya claimed the bronze with a total lift of 260kg (115kg+145kg), edging out Lanka's SDSS Wiridu wagle, who managed 244kg (109kg+135kg). The silver was India's first medal in ongoing Games.



India's Rishikanta Singh won silver by lifting total 264kg in the men's 60 kg weightlifting competition during the 23rd Commonwealth Games in Glasgow on Sunday. (PTI)

27TH ANNIVERSARY OF KARGIL VIJAY DIWAS

Talks with Pak only on PoK: Rajnath



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh pays tribute to the fallen soldiers of the 1999 Kargil War on the 27th Kargil Vijay Diwas celebrations, at Drass, in Ladakh. (PTI)

DRAS, July 26 (PTI)

DEFENCE Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday slammed Pakistan for making terrorism a “part of its state policy”, and said there will be no talks with the country other than on Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir, which is a “part of India illegally occupied” by it.

In his address at the Kargil War Memorial here, the Defence

Minister also said that Operation Sindoor clearly demonstrated what will be the fate of those who attempt to threaten India with terrorism, asserting that the country can respond to any misadventure by Pakistan in a manner “beyond their imagination”.

The occasion was the 27th anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas, with Singh describing India’s victory in the Kargil war in 1999 as
(Contd on page 5)

Kargil bravehearts scripted golden history: Army chief

DRAS, July 26 (PTI)

KARGIL Vijay Diwas is an “eternal symbol” of the Indian Army’s indomitable courage, commitment, and supreme sacrifice, Indian Army chief Gen Dhiraj Seth said on Sunday.

The nation on Sunday marked the 27th year of India’s victory in the 1999 Kargil War against Pakistan.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, the Army chief and other military leaders and civil dignitaries laid wreaths at the Kargil War Memorial in Dras in homage to the fallen heroes.

The Indian Army on X shared its top officer’s message. “Kargil Vijay Diwas is an eternal symbol of the Indian Army’s indomitable courage,
(Contd on page 5)



Pralhad Joshi takes charge as Education Minister



NEW DELHI, July 26 (PTI)

NEWLY-APPOINTED Union Education Minister Pralhad Joshi has taken charge, officials said.

Joshi was appointed Education Minister after Dharmendra Pradhan resigned from the post on Saturday. Joshi has been given additional charge of the education ministry besides his role as the consumer affairs minister. Pradhan resigned following the CJP-led student protests across the country, demanding his ouster over the NEET paper leak controversy. In his resignation letter, Pradhan said it was not a matter of “individual prestige” for him, and that he was disturbed to see the series of events that unfolded over the last 10 days.