

PrepAlpine

The Next-Generation UPSC Institution

Where Research Meets Mentorship & Precision



Preparation Meets Precision

A Next-Generation Learning Institution

Copyright © 2025 PrepAlpine

All Rights Reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means—whether photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods—without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law.

For permission requests, please write to:

PrepAlpine

Email: info@PrepAlpine.com

Website: PrepAlpine.com

Disclaimer

The information contained in this book has been prepared solely for educational purposes. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, PrepAlpine makes no representations or warranties of any kind and accepts no liability for any errors or omissions. The use of any content is solely at the reader's discretion and risk.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED 06.04.2026

GS Paper II: Current Affairs

1. Transgender Rights and the 2026 Amendment Act – From Recognition to Control

a. Introduction

The issue of transgender rights in India goes far beyond welfare policies. It is deeply linked to core constitutional values such as dignity, autonomy, equality, privacy, and freedom of expression. Over time, Indian courts have moved towards a rights-based approach where gender identity is treated as a deeply personal matter belonging to the individual.

However, the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026 has sparked controversy because it appears to reverse this direction. Instead of strengthening self-identification, it introduces state control, medical scrutiny, and bureaucratic certification, raising concerns that the law is moving away from constitutional principles.

Transgender Rights Debate: Identity vs State Control

Constitutional Vision (Judiciary)	2026 Amendment Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-identification• Identity = personal autonomy• Dignity-based recognition• Minimal state role <p>Rights under Articles 14, 15, 16, 19, 21</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certification-based identity• Identity = administrative approval• Medical scrutiny (boards)• High bureaucratic control• Conditional recognition

Shift: Recognition → Regulation → Control

b. The Core Constitutional Issue

Who Determines Gender Identity?

- Judicial view: Gender identity is intrinsic and must be determined by the individual.
- State's role: Limited to recognition and protection.

Shift Introduced by the 2026 Amendment

- Moves from self-identification to certification by officials and medical boards.
- Changes identity from a matter of personal liberty to administrative approval.

Thus, the conflict is between:

- Identity as personal freedom and dignity, and
- Identity as subject to state verification.

c. Judicial Journey of Transgender Rights in India

NALSA Judgment, 2014: The Foundation

- Recognised transgender persons as a third gender.
- Linked gender identity to Fundamental Rights:
 - Article 14 (Equality)
 - Articles 15 & 16 (Non-discrimination)
 - Article 19(1)(a) (Expression)
 - Article 21 (Dignity, Privacy, Autonomy)
- Established right to self-identify gender.

This marked a shift from verification to recognition.

Navtej Singh Johar, 2018: Expanding Identity Rights

- Recognised sexual orientation and gender identity as innate.
- Introduced concept of constitutional morality — rights over social prejudice.
- Reinforced that identity cannot depend on state or societal approval.

Role of High Courts

- Allowed change of gender in documents.
- Protected against forced medical tests.
- Recognised relationships and participation in public life.

Overall trend: Normalisation and inclusion of transgender identity.

d. Legal Position Before 2026

Early Legislative Efforts

- 2015 Private Member Bill (Tiruchi Siva) – more rights-oriented.
- 2016–18 drafts – criticised for screening committees.

2019 Act: Partial Progress

- Removed formal screening committees.
- Still required administrative certification.
- Surgery required for recognition as male/female.

Thus, even before 2026, the law did not fully match the constitutional vision.

e. Continued Judicial Push After 2019

Focus on Implementation

- Courts emphasised real access, not just formal rights.
- Addressed bureaucratic delays and barriers.

Jane Kaushik Case, 2025

- Highlighted “omissive discrimination” — discrimination through inaction.
- Stressed that delay and paperwork can deny rights.

This reinforced the idea that State must enable, not obstruct identity recognition.

f. Key Deviations in the 2026 Amendment

Weakening of Self-Identification

- Reduces importance of self-perceived identity.
- Makes recognition dependent on external validation.

Medical Board-Based Certification

- Identity certification via District Magistrate and medical board.
- Reintroduces medicalisation — identity as medical issue.
- Contradicts dignity and autonomy principles.

Narrowing of Identity Categories

- Removal of terms like trans-man, trans-woman, genderqueer.
- Reduces inclusivity and recognition of diversity.

Surgery Requirement

- Mandatory surgery for gender change recognition.
- Violates bodily autonomy.
- Excludes those unable or unwilling to undergo surgery.

Overall Shift in Approach

Earlier model:

- Recognition
- Dignity
- Autonomy

New model:

- Scrutiny
- Certification
- State control

g. Constitutional Implications

Autonomy

- Identity is central to personal choice.
- State control weakens individual freedom.

Dignity

- Certification reduces identity to an object of scrutiny.

Privacy

- Gender identity is deeply personal.
- Medical and bureaucratic processes intrude into private life.

Equality

- Cisgender persons face no such certification.
- Extra burden on transgender persons.

Freedom of Expression

- Gender expression is part of Article 19(1)(a).
- State control indirectly restricts expression.

h. Broader Social Consequences

Impact on Daily Life

- Difficulty in accessing identity documents.
- Barriers in education, employment, welfare.

Risk of Exclusion

- Reduced access to:
 - Healthcare
 - Housing
 - social security
- Increased marginalisation.

Existing Vulnerabilities

- High stigma and unemployment already present.
- Legal barriers may worsen social exclusion.

i. Judicial Trajectory vs 2026 Model

Judicial Approach

- Self-defined identity
- Rights-based
- Inclusive and broad
- Minimal state interference

2026 Amendment Approach

- Certified identity
- Procedure-based
- Narrow definitions
- High state control

j. A Balanced Perspective

State's Justification

- Need for uniform records and documentation.
- Prevention of misuse.

Constitutional Limitation

- Documentation should aid recognition, not restrict it.
- State can record identity, but should not define it.

k. The Way Forward

Restore Core Principles

- Self-identification must remain central.

Reduce Intrusion

- Avoid mandatory medical boards.
- Remove surgery requirements.

Align with Judicial Vision

- Follow NALSA, Navtej, and later judgments.

Inclusive Policymaking

- Consult transgender community.
- Ensure humane procedures.

Administrative Reform

- Simple, accessible, non-intrusive processes.
- Focus on enabling rights, not controlling identity.

Conclusion

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026 represents a critical moment in India's constitutional journey. While courts since NALSA (2014) have consistently moved towards recognising gender identity as a matter of dignity, autonomy, and freedom, the amendment appears to reintroduce medical scrutiny, bureaucratic control, and conditional recognition.

Thus, the debate is not merely about procedure. It is about a deeper constitutional question: whether identity will continue to be treated as a fundamental right of the individual, or become subject to state regulation and approval.

A balanced, rights-based approach is essential to ensure that India's democracy remains both inclusive and constitutionally faithful.

GS Paper III: Economics

2. World Trade Organization Crisis: Why the WTO Is Struggling in the Contemporary World

a. Introduction

The World Trade Organization (WTO) was created to ensure that international trade would be governed by rules rather than raw power. Its basic promise was simple: even weaker countries would have a forum where trade disputes could be settled lawfully, predictably, and peacefully. For many years, this helped bring stability to the global trading system.

Today, however, the WTO is facing a serious institutional crisis. This crisis is not just about one failed meeting or procedural issue—it reflects a deeper breakdown in global economic cooperation. The 14th Ministerial Conference (MC14) in March 2026 ended without a final outcome, reinforcing the perception that the WTO is increasingly unable to deliver meaningful decisions. At the same time, its dispute settlement system is weakened, and countries are moving towards unilateral or group-based trade arrangements instead of multilateralism.

b. What the WTO Was Meant to Do

The WTO, established in 1995, replaced the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). It was designed to perform three core functions:

Rule-Making Function

- Create global trade rules
- Promote fair competition
- Reduce trade barriers

Monitoring Function

- Ensure compliance with agreements
- Promote transparency in trade policies
- Review national trade measures

Dispute Settlement Function

- Provide legal mechanism to resolve disputes
- Prevent escalation into trade wars
- Ensure enforcement of rules

The WTO now has 166 members, reflecting its global reach. It plays a crucial role in protecting smaller countries and providing predictability in global trade.

This foundational role highlights why its current dysfunction is deeply concerning.

WTO: Intended Functions vs Present Dysfunction			
Core Function	What It Meant	Current Problem	Result
Rule-making	Create global trade rules, reduce barriers	Deadlock in negotiations (MC14 failure)	No new rules, stagnation
Monitoring	Ensure transparency and compliance	Weak enforcement, limited oversight	Reduced credibility
Dispute Settlement	Binding legal resolution of disputes	Appellate Body non-functional	Rise of unilateral actions

c. What Is Meant by the WTO Crisis

The WTO crisis refers to the institution’s growing inability to perform its core functions effectively. This crisis has multiple dimensions:

Institutional Failure

- Inability to conclude major multilateral agreements
- Weak enforcement mechanisms
- Procedural gridlock

Structural Changes in Global Economy

- Rise of digital trade and services
- Complex global value chains
- New issues like climate-linked trade

Shift in State Behaviour

- Increasing unilateral actions
- Preference for selective group agreements
- Declining faith in multilateralism

Thus, the crisis is both institutional (how WTO works) and conceptual (what WTO stands for).

d. Failure of Multilateral Negotiations

Multilateralism—where all members negotiate together—is the core principle of the WTO. However, this system faces serious challenges.

Consensus-Based Decision Making

- Every member must agree, slows decisions
- Diverse interests make consensus difficult

Diverging Interests

- Developed countries — focus on new trade rules
- Developing countries — focus on development concerns
- Emerging economies — mixed priorities

Recent Evidence

- MC14 (2026) ended without agreement
- Increasing frequency of deadlocks

Multilateralism is inclusive but often inefficient. This paralysis in negotiations naturally weakens the institution's overall credibility.

e. Breakdown of the Dispute Settlement System

The dispute settlement system was once the strongest pillar of the WTO.

Earlier Strength

- Independent panels to resolve disputes
- Appellate Body for final decisions
- Binding rulings ensured compliance

Current Problems

- Appellate Body is non-functional
- Members using temporary alternatives
- Delays and uncertainty in dispute resolution

Consequences

- Weak enforcement of rules
- Reduced trust in WTO system
- Shift towards unilateral retaliation

Without enforcement, even the best rules lose meaning. This leads directly to the rise of unilateral actions.

f. Rise of Unilateralism

Unilateralism refers to countries taking trade actions independently.

Nature of Unilateral Actions

- Imposing tariffs
- Export restrictions
- Trade sanctions

Reasons for Rise

- Frustration with WTO delays
- Strategic and geopolitical competition
- Desire for quick outcomes

Impact

- Shift from rule-based to power-based system
- Increased vulnerability of smaller countries
- Erosion of global trade discipline

This shift represents a fundamental reversal of WTO's original vision.

g. Stress on Core WTO Principles

The crisis also involves disagreements over fundamental principles.

Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) Principle

- Equal treatment to all trading partners
- Prevents discrimination

Special and Differential Treatment (SDT)

- Flexibility for developing countries
- Supports development needs

Emerging Conflict

- Developed countries question SDT
- Developing countries demand policy space
- Rise of North–South divide

Thus, the crisis is not just technical—it reflects deeper ideological disagreements. These tensions push countries to explore alternative approaches like plurilateralism.

h. Rise of Plurilateralism

Plurilateral agreements involve only a subset of WTO members.

Why Countries Prefer It

- Faster negotiations
- Like-minded participants
- Flexible rule-making

Examples

- Digital trade negotiations
- Investment Facilitation Agreement

Risks

- Exclusion of weaker countries
- Fragmentation of global trade rules
- Reduced centrality of WTO

Plurilateralism may solve short-term problems but can weaken the long-term unity of the system.

i. Inability to Handle New-Age Trade Issues

The WTO framework was designed for an older trade environment.

Traditional Focus

- Goods and tariffs
- Quotas and subsidies

New Challenges

- Digital trade and data flows
- E-commerce regulations
- Climate-related trade measures
- Intellectual property in technology

Key Example

- Disagreement over custom duties on electronic transmissions
- Difficulty in extending earlier consensus

This highlights a mismatch between old rules and new realities.

j. The Real Nature of the WTO Crisis

At a deeper level, the crisis reflects a conflict between three models:

Multilateralism

- Inclusive and fair
- Slow and complex

Unilateralism

- Fast decision-making
- Power-driven and unequal

Plurilateralism

- Practical and flexible
- Risk of fragmentation

The WTO crisis is essentially a struggle over which model will dominate future trade governance.

k. Why the Crisis Matters for the World

A weakened WTO has serious global implications.

Economic Impact

- Increased uncertainty
- Reduced trade and investment

Impact on Smaller Countries

- Loss of legal protection
- Reduced bargaining power

Systemic Impact

- Fragmentation into trade blocs
- Rising geopolitical tensions

These effects show why the WTO crisis is not just institutional but global in significance.

1. Why the WTO Matters for India

Despite its problems, the WTO remains important for India.

Strategic Importance

- Protects interests in agriculture and food security
- Ensures policy space for development

Legal Advantage

- Enables dispute resolution through law
- Reduces direct confrontation with powerful countries

India's Position

- Supports reform but with safeguards
- Emphasises development concerns
- Acts as voice of Global South

Thus, India's interest lies in reforming—not abandoning—the WTO.

m. Way Forward

The WTO can still be revived through careful reforms.

Institutional Reforms

- Restore dispute settlement system
- Improve decision-making mechanisms

Policy Reforms

- Update rules for digital and modern trade
- Address environmental and technological issues

Structural Reforms

- Balance developed vs developing interests
- Ensure inclusivity in plurilateral agreements

India's Role

- Act as bridge between North and South
- Promote fair and balanced reform

These reforms are necessary to restore credibility and relevance.

Conclusion

The WTO crisis reflects a larger transformation in the global economy. Multilateral cooperation is weakening, while geopolitical rivalry and economic nationalism are rising. The WTO is therefore facing not just a functional crisis, but a crisis of purpose and adaptability.

However, abandoning the WTO is not a viable option. For developing countries, a reformed rule-based system is still better than a power-driven order. The real challenge is to modernise the WTO while preserving its core promise—fair, predictable, and law-based trade.

Reader's Note — About This Current Affairs Compilation

Dear Aspirant,

This document is part of the PrepAlpine Current Affairs Series — designed to bring clarity, structure, and precision to your daily UPSC learning.

While every effort has been made to balance depth with brevity, please keep the following in mind:

1. Orientation & Purpose

This compilation is curated primarily from the UPSC Mains perspective — with emphasis on conceptual clarity, analytical depth, and interlinkages across GS papers.

However, the PrepAlpine team is simultaneously developing a dedicated Prelims-focused Current Affairs Series, designed for:

- factual coverage
- data recall
- Prelims-style MCQs
- objective pattern analysis

This Prelims Edition will be released separately as a standalone publication.

2. Content Length

Some sections may feel shorter or longer depending on topic relevance and news density. To fit your personal preference, you may freely resize or summarize sections using any LLM tool (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.) at your convenience.

3. Format Flexibility

The formatting combines:

- paragraphs
- lists
- tables
- visual cues

—all optimised for retention.

If you prefer a specific style (lists → paras, paras → tables, etc.), feel free to convert using any free LLM.

4. Monthly Current Affairs Release

The complete Monthly Current Affairs Module will be released soon, optimized to a compact 100–150 pages — comprehensive yet concise, exam-ready, and revision-efficient.

PrepAlpine