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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED 26.03.2026

GS Paper II: Current Affairs

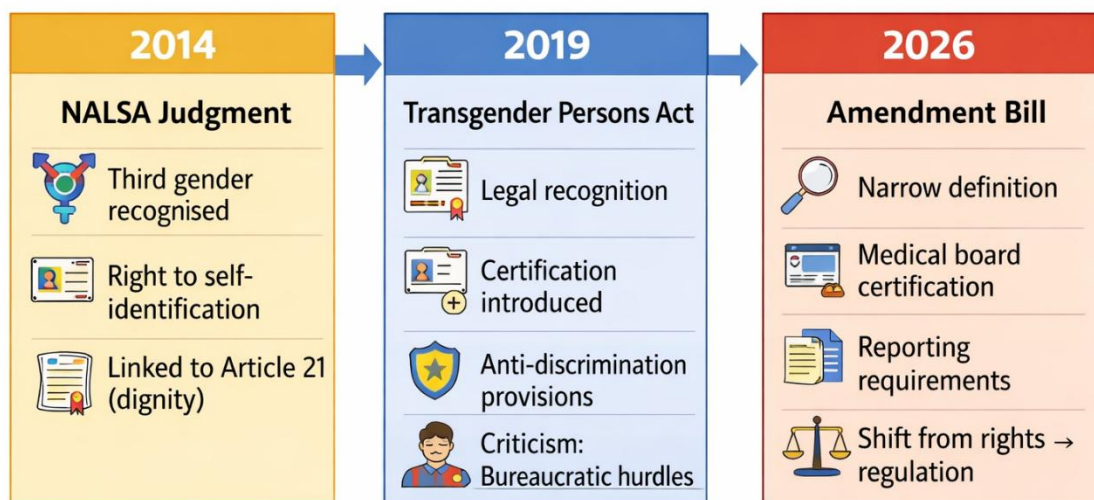
1. Transgender Persons (Amendment) Bill, 2026 – Issues and Implications

a. Introduction

The issue of transgender rights in India is deeply connected to constitutional values such as equality, dignity, and personal autonomy. A landmark moment was the NALSA judgment (2014), where the Supreme Court recognised transgender persons as a third gender and upheld their right to self-identify their gender.

Against this progressive foundation, the Transgender Persons (Amendment) Bill, 2026 has triggered significant debate. While it claims to improve the existing law, many provisions appear to move away from a rights-based approach, raising concerns about inclusion, autonomy, and dignity.

Evolution of Transgender Rights in India



Trend: **Progressive (NALSA)** → **Procedural (2019 Act)** → **Restrictive? (2026 Bill)**

b. Evolution of the Legal Framework

NALSA Judgment (2014)

- Recognised transgender persons as a third gender
- Affirmed right to self-identification of gender
- Linked gender identity to Article 21 — right to life and dignity

Transgender Persons Act, 2019

- Provided legal recognition and anti-discrimination provisions
- Introduced certification by authorities
- Criticised for bureaucratic hurdles

Amendment Bill, 2026

- Proposes changes in definition, certification, and regulation
- Marks a shift from self-identification to institutional control

c. Key Provisions of the Amendment Bill

Narrowed Definition

- Limits recognition to certain identities e.g., hijra, kinner
- Excludes non-binary and gender-fluid individuals

Certification Requirement

- Requires approval from medical board and district authorities
- Removes self-identification as the basis

Medicalisation of Identity

- Links recognition with medical examination or procedures
- Creates barriers and intrusiveness

Reporting Requirement

- Hospitals must report gender-related procedures
- Raises privacy concerns

Penal Provisions

- Strengthens punishment against exploitation
- However, limited in addressing structural issues

d. Core Issues and Criticism

Erosion of Fundamental Rights

- Certification undermines dignity, privacy, and autonomy
- Contradicts NALSA's principle of self-identification

Undermining of Self-Identity

- Gender identity becomes subject to state approval
- Reinforces stigma and delays recognition

Conceptual Confusion

- No clear distinction between sex, gender identity, and intersex status
- Leads to weak and unclear policy design

Neglect of Intersex Rights

- No safeguards for intersex children
- Allows non-consensual medical interventions

Lack of Civil Rights

- No provisions for marriage, adoption, inheritance
- Results in incomplete citizenship rights

Absence of Intersectionality

- Ignores impact of caste, class, disability, religion
- Limits effectiveness of policy

Institutional Weakness

- Welfare bodies lack capacity and reform
- Poor implementation on ground

Persistence of Exploitation

- Does not address coercive social practices
- Leaves community vulnerabilities intact

Data Deficiency

- Lack of reliable data on transgender/intersex population
- Weak evidence-based policymaking

e. Way Forward

Restore Self-Identification

- Align with NALSA judgment
- Ensure autonomy in identity determination

Conceptual Clarity

- Distinguish between transgender, intersex, and sexual minorities
- Design targeted policies

Protect Intersex Rights

- Ban non-consensual surgeries on children
- Uphold bodily integrity

Expand Civil Rights

- Include marriage, adoption, inheritance rights
- Ensure full citizenship

Adopt Intersectional Approach

- Address caste, class, disability-based discrimination
- Provide targeted support

Strengthen Institutions

- Improve capacity and representation
- Ensure effective implementation

Awareness and Sensitisation

- Train police, judiciary, and healthcare workers
- Reduce stigma

Improve Data Systems

- Conduct reliable surveys and research
- Enable evidence-based policymaking

Conclusion

The Transgender Persons (Amendment) Bill, 2026 represents a crucial stage in India's journey towards gender justice. While it attempts to refine the legal framework, several provisions risk diluting the core constitutional principles of dignity, autonomy, and inclusion.

For true progress, India must move beyond procedural recognition towards substantive equality. A rights-based, inclusive, and ethically grounded framework is essential to ensure that transgender persons can live with dignity and enjoy the full spectrum of constitutional rights.

GS Paper III: Economics

2. WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14): Issues, Challenges and India's Role

a. Introduction

The Ministerial Conference is the highest decision-making body of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and plays a crucial role in shaping global trade rules. The upcoming MC14 is especially important because it is taking place at a time when the global trading system is facing serious challenges.

Rising geopolitical tensions, growing protectionism, and weakening multilateral institutions have created uncertainty in global trade. Therefore, MC14 is not just a routine meeting—it is a critical moment for the future of rule-based global trade governance.

b. Changing Global Trade Context

Rise of Geopolitical Rivalries

- Increasing tensions, especially between the US and China
- Trade decisions now linked with national security and strategy

Decline of Multilateralism

- Countries bypass WTO rules
- Shift towards bilateral and regional trade agreements

Rise of Protectionism

- Imposition of tariffs and trade barriers
- Contradicts WTO principles like non-discrimination

Shift in Global System

- Movement from rule-based system to power-based system
- Stronger countries exert more influence

c. Crisis in the Dispute Settlement System

Breakdown of Appellate Body

- Appointments blocked, making it non-functional
- No final authority for dispute resolution

Weak Enforcement

Why MC14 is a Critical Turning Point for Global Trade



Shift: **RULE-BASED** → **POWER-BASED SYSTEM**

- Rules exist but cannot be effectively enforced
- Countries may ignore rulings

Declining Trust

- Reduced confidence in WTO mechanisms
- Undermines predictability of trade

d. Key Issues at MC14

Plurilateral Agreements

- Agreements among a subset of countries
- Favoured by developed nations for faster decisions
- Concerns for India: may weaken multilateralism and equality

E-commerce Moratorium

- No customs duties on digital products
- Developed countries want it permanent
- India's concern: loss of revenue and policy space

Special and Differential Treatment (SDT)

- Flexibility for developing countries
- Developed nations want to limit benefits for large economies
- India's stand: development gaps still exist

Restoration of Dispute Settlement

- Key priority for WTO credibility
- Essential for rule-based trade

e. Structural Challenges of the WTO

Consensus-Based Decision Making

- All members must agree
- Leads to delays and deadlock

Weak Rule-Making Capacity

- Few major agreements in recent decades
- Decline in effectiveness

Rise of Regional Agreements

- Countries prefer FTAs and RTAs
- Fragments global trade system

f. India's Role at MC14

Defender of Multilateralism

- Supports rule-based global trade
- Emphasises fairness and non-discrimination

Voice of Developing Countries

- Protects Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) provisions
- Represents Global South interests

Balanced Approach to Digital Trade

- Supports digital growth
- Retains regulatory flexibility

Advocacy for Dispute Settlement

- Strong supporter of restoring Appellate Body
- Sees it as essential for fair trade

Pragmatic Engagement

- Cautious but open to plurilateral agreements
- Engages where national interest is protected

Coalition Building

- Works with African nations and LDCs
- Acts as bridge between developed and developing countries

g. Significance for India

Sectoral Impact

- Affects agriculture, manufacturing, and digital sectors
- Influences export competitiveness

Integration into Global Value Chains

- Trade rules shape participation in GVCs
- Important for industrial growth

Strategic Importance

- WTO framework shapes global economic order
- Impacts India's development trajectory

h. Way Forward

For WTO

- Restore dispute settlement mechanism
- Make decision-making more flexible
- Preserve inclusiveness of all members

For India

- Balance principles with pragmatic diplomacy
- Strengthen domestic competitiveness
- Actively lead Global South negotiations

Conclusion

The WTO Ministerial Conference (MC14) represents a decisive moment for global trade governance. The organisation must adapt to changing geopolitical realities while preserving its core principles of fairness and predictability.

For India, this is an opportunity to play a constructive and influential role. By balancing national interests with global responsibilities, India can contribute to building a more fair, inclusive, and stable international trading system.

GS Paper III: Environment

3. India's Climate Targets for 2035 (Nationally Determined Contributions)

a. Introduction

Climate change is one of the most serious global challenges today. To address this, the Paris Agreement (2015) created a system where countries submit their own climate action plans called Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

India's climate targets for 2035 must be understood in this context. They aim to strike a balance between two goals: economic growth and environmental sustainability—both crucial for a developing country like India.

b. Understanding Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

Meaning and Nature

- NDCs are country-specific climate action plans under the Paris Agreement
- Countries decide their own targets based on capability and development needs

Key Features

- Flexible approach — not imposed externally
- Must show progression over time — increasing ambition
- Reflect both national priorities and global responsibility

c. India's Key Targets for 2035

Reduction in Emission Intensity

- Target: 47% reduction from 2005 levels by 2035
- Emission intensity = emissions per unit of GDP
- Allows economic growth while reducing pollution

Expansion of Non-Fossil Fuel Capacity

- Target: 60% electricity capacity from non-fossil sources

How NDCs Work under Paris Agreement



- Includes solar, wind, hydro, and nuclear energy
- Indicates gradual shift away from coal

Enhancement of Carbon Sinks

- Target: 3.5–4 billion tonnes CO₂ equivalent through forests
- Carbon sinks absorb more carbon than they emit
- Supports biodiversity and ecological stability

d. India's Progress So Far

Emission Intensity Reduction

- Significant decline already achieved
- On track to meet earlier targets

Renewable Energy Growth

- Non-fossil capacity has crossed 50%
- Rapid expansion of solar and wind energy

Carbon Sink Expansion

- Increase in forest and tree cover
- Ongoing afforestation efforts

e. Significance of the 2035 Targets

Global Importance

- India is a major emitter
- Its actions impact global climate goals

Development–Sustainability Balance

- Avoids strict emission caps
- Ensures growth alongside environmental protection

Energy Security

- Reduces dependence on imported fossil fuels
- Promotes domestic renewable resources

Economic Opportunities

- Boosts innovation and green jobs
- Attracts investment in clean energy

Leadership Role

- Strengthens India's position among developing countries
- Promotes climate justice and equity

f. Concerns and Criticism

Limited Increase in Ambition

- Targets seen as incremental rather than transformative
- May not fully utilise India's potential

Already Achieved Goals

- Some targets e.g., non-fossil capacity nearly achieved
- Raises questions about ambition level

Missing Areas

- Lack of clear targets for climate finance and adaptation
- Limited focus on sustainable consumption

Global Pressure

- Developed countries demand faster reductions
- India stresses equity and historical responsibility

g. Challenges in Achieving the Targets

Rising Energy Demand

- Growing economy increases energy needs
- Difficult to balance demand and emissions

Dependence on Coal

- Coal still major energy source
- Transition is gradual and complex

Financial Constraints

- Clean energy requires large investments
- Limited access to affordable finance

Technological Gaps

- Need for energy storage, smart grids, green hydrogen
- Requires innovation and capacity building

Administrative Issues

- Land acquisition and project delays
- Coordination challenges between governments

h. Way Forward

Accelerate Renewable Energy

- Expand solar and wind capacity
- Invest in emerging technologies like green hydrogen

Mobilise Climate Finance

- Increase domestic investment
- Seek international financial support

Improve Energy Efficiency

- Promote efficient industries and transport
- Reduce emissions without affecting growth

Strengthen Carbon Sinks

- Expand forest cover
- Promote sustainable land use

Promote Sustainable Lifestyles

- Encourage behavioural change e.g., Mission LiFE
- Reduce consumption-based emissions

Enhance Global Cooperation

- Technology transfer from developed countries
- Capacity building for developing nations

Conclusion

India's climate targets for 2035 reflect a balanced and pragmatic approach. They aim to ensure that economic development continues while environmental concerns are addressed.

Although questions remain about the level of ambition, India's overall direction shows steady progress. The key challenge now is effective implementation.

Ultimately, India's climate strategy must achieve inclusive and sustainable development, ensuring that growth does not come at the cost of environmental stability.

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.

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