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# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS





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**1. Concept of sexual equality must be part of syllabus: SC**

**Context:** On Friday (February 21, 2025), the Supreme Court told the Centre that schools should teach students about gender equality and how men should treat women with respect. The court was hearing a writ petition filed by petitioner-in-person and senior advocate Aabid Poonia, who said the root cause for the surge in rape cases and incidents of crimes against women was the lack of education at the basic level about equality among the sexes.

**Key points**

- **Perpetuation of Gender Stereotypes:** Without education promoting gender equality, traditional gender norms that view women as inferior or subordinate to men persist. These stereotypes normalize the control and objectification of women.
- **Lack of Consent Education:** Education about bodily autonomy and consent is often missing from curricula, leading to misunderstandings about boundaries and mutual respect in relationships.
- **Normalization of Violence:** In the absence of gender-sensitive education, violence against women is often normalized or trivialized, reducing the social stigma against perpetrators and discouraging survivors from seeking justice.
- **Failure to Challenge Patriarchal Mindsets:** Without education to challenge patriarchal beliefs, young minds are conditioned to accept gender hierarchies, reinforcing power imbalances that enable violence.
- **Ineffective Implementation of Gender Sensitization Programs:** Despite legal mandates like the POSH Act (2013) and initiatives for gender education, the absence of comprehensive implementation limits public understanding and societal change.
- **Some measures for schools:** *Promote Mutual Respect and Empathy* - Teaching gender equality helps students understand and respect diverse identities, fostering empathy and reducing discriminatory attitudes.  
*Prevents Gender-Based Violence* - Educating students about consent, boundaries, and respectful communication helps prevent harassment and violence from an early age.  
*Challenges Gender Stereotypes* - Curricula that question traditional gender roles empower students to pursue diverse career paths and challenge social biases.
- **Initiatives by government:** *Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013* - Enacted after the Nirbhaya case to expand the definition of rape, introduce stricter punishments, and criminalize stalking and voyeurism.  
*Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP), 2015* - Aims to address the declining child sex ratio and promote the education and welfare of girls.  
*Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012* - Provides legal protection to children against sexual abuse and exploitation.
- **Way forward:** *Integrate Comprehensive Gender Education* - Mandate gender equality and consent education across all educational levels to challenge stereotypes, promote mutual respect, and prevent gender-based violence.  
*Strengthen Implementation and Monitoring* - Ensure effective enforcement of gender-sensitive laws and policies through regular audits, awareness campaigns, and robust monitoring mechanisms to improve accountability and support for survivors.

**2. Stray dog menace and rabies control**

**Context:** Nowadays, because of the growing population of stray dogs, people frequently encounter dog attacks while in a marketplace or during a morning walk or otherwise. Rabies is emerging as one of the deadliest diseases killing 59,000 people worldwide yearly. Women, children and the elderly have been the most vulnerable to dog bites. Gradually, the stigma attached to reporting of dog-bite incidents has apparently faded away and nowadays such incidents are reported often. On an average in India, 350 dog-bite cases per hour are reported as per 2023 data – up from 195 cases per hour in 2022.

**Key points**

- **Population of Stray Dogs in India and Policies to Control them:** At present, there are over 10 million pet dogs in the country and the stray dog population is about 35 million. The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act 1960 mandates that every owner of an animal is responsible for its well-being, and it is illegal to abandon pets or allow them to become strays. The Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules 2001, based on the PCA Act 1960, were first notified by the Union Ministry of Culture.
- **India's Stray Dog Menace:** The increasing population of stray dogs deprives people of their right to life, free movement, and a safe environment. Creates huge conflict between feeders and ordinary residents who must deal with packs of dogs roaming around their neighbourhoods. Dogs are also leading causes of harm to wildlife and cause immense loss of biodiversity.
- **The ABC Rules 2023:** The new Rules prescribe that ABC programmes for sterilisation and immunisation of stray dogs are to be carried out by LSGs for birth control as well as maintenance of stray animals. The Rules also suggest euthanasia for “incurably ill and mortally wounded dogs” as diagnosed by a team appointed by the Local Animal Birth Control Monitoring Committee.
- **Issues with the program:** It does not seem to have any benchmarks or targets. Municipalities set targets for sterilisation based on budgets and available facilities. The other major problem is that the new ABC Rules require people to feed dogs. It is cruel to dogs, since homeless life on the streets is not easy, with accidents, disease, wanton cruelty and constant fear being their normal state.
- **Way forward:** Solving this problem requires a multi-pronged approach and some difficult decisions. The government needs to implement effective animal control measures and waste management to eliminate open litter from the roads. Strict pet ownership laws, a ban on irresponsible feeding in public places, and encouraging adoption and long-term sheltering of homeless dogs will result in win-win solutions. Cities such as Ooty, Chennai and parts of Uttarakhand, Goa and Delhi can be showcased as better models in managing stray dogs.

## GS 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

### 3. Converting court case backlogs into treasure troves

**Context:** Every Chief Justice of India coming into office has the spectre of the legal system's backlog haunting him or her, as does every senior and concerned member of the higher judiciary. It is an ever-present phenomenon — currently, the Supreme Court of India has 82,000 cases, the High Courts over 62 lakhs, and the lower courts close to five crores. Nearly 50 lakh cases have been pending for more than 10 years. Just keeping the judiciary going on a functional mode is a Herculean task—so daunting by itself that reform and restructure, while certainly the subject of well-meaning and some well-thought-out initiatives, rarely gain the prominence and push to make for system game-changing.

#### Key points

- **Data Governance and Litigation Reduction:** Data governance is one field where sensible classification will avoid repetitive engagement and make for quicker disposal. Appointing retired judges to serve in an ad hoc capacity does help to ameliorate the situation to a limited extent.
- **Government's Role in Litigation:** The elephant in the room is, of course, the government. Being a player in nearly half the disputes coming to court, reform will be stunted unless it learns to litigate lessened becomes more amenable to settlement options. There is hope on this latter score, but for now, we move to another possibility for reform.
- **Reasons for Backlog and Justice Delay:** This is the gigantic backlog, the enormous waiting room, with its cavernous vaults and storage shelves and racks bursting with the claims for redress and justice of millions of citizens and causes. Sometimes when the case is dusted for delivery to the judge's table, the cause is forgotten or less crucial, or the original proponents are in another world, hopefully a litigation-free one.
- **Push for mediation:** *Mediation as a Solution* - But there may be a solution. Unlikely as this may sound at first, this may be yet another instance of a problem masking a solution.  
*Process of Mediation* - Mediation started as a nascent and fledgling practice in the 1990s. It began to make its mark in 2005 in India, primarily as an adjunct of the court sector.
- **Encouraging Results and Future Prospects:** The Bar has readily adopted this alternative (now christened as appropriate) method of dispute resolution. Thousands of willing mediators indicate its wide acceptance. Mediation needs to become a full-fledged professional avenue, attracting better usage from business, government, and other disputants.
- **Efficiency and Effectiveness of Mediation:** Most mediation cases take just a handful of sessions. Complex cases take longer, but this is nothing compared to boxes of litigative papers and swallowed calendars. The results achieved in mediation far outweigh those in litigation. It provides not just a practical solution, but often a restoration of relationships.
- **Conclusion:** Perhaps it is time to take the keys and rechristen our chamber of horrors as the birthing place for mediations. Apply the principle by which mediators live and work—turning the problem into the opportunity for solution.

## GS 2: POLITY, GOVERNANCE, SOCIAL JUSTICE, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/INSTITUTIONS

### 4. The U.S. visit, viewed through industry's business lens

**Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi's brief and official working visit to the United States last week was significant in many ways, reiterating the strong bonds between the two nations and igniting a new momentum in the economic relationship. The visit was replete with productive outcomes for industry of both sides, with major announcements across trade, defence, technology and energy. From the perspective of Indian industry, the initiatives announced are likely to help India itself integrate more deeply into global supply chains, boost its technology and innovation attainments, and drive its participation in the defence industrial sector.

#### Key points

- **Overview:** The Prime Minister's brief visit and the announcements made will add momentum to the India-U.S. economic relationship.
- **Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) and Economic Goals:** It is a pivotal decision to initiate the first phase of a Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA). The goal is to reduce trade barriers and streamline regulatory processes.
- **Trade Measures and Export Strategy:** Exports of industrial goods from the U.S. to India and labour-intensive products from India to the U.S. are encouraged. Agricultural products are also included in this trade enhancement plan. Greenfield investments, including those by Indian companies in the U.S., are being encouraged.
- **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Mission 500:** The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) had endorsed this target in its 2020 report. Sectors such as IT, pharma, garments, and textiles stand to gain from the joint commitment to Mission 500.
- **Some U.S.-India Strategic and Technological Partnership:** *TRUST Initiative* - The Transforming the Relationship Utilizing Strategic Technology (TRUST) initiative strengthens the strategic and technological partnership between the two nations. Encourages private sector cooperation with governments and academia.

*AI and Emerging Technologies* - The U.S.-India Roadmap on AI Infrastructure will drive investments in data centres, computing power, and AI models. Supports Indian startups in fintech, Healthtech, and agritech. Encourages global innovation, benefiting India and the Global South.

*Defence Cooperation* - Expands technology transfers, joint production, and industrial collaboration. A 10-year Framework for the U.S.-India Major Defence Partnership marks a significant shift in defence ties.

*India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)* - Joint infrastructure projects will accelerate IMEC development. Plurilateral agreements will fast-track infrastructure creation. Undersea cables between India and the U.S. will boost the digital economy and services exports.

- **Conclusion:** With collaborative spirit and sustained reform, the benefits of this visit can be fully realised, positioning India's economy on a high-growth trajectory. In sum, Mr. Modi's U.S. visit, viewed through industry's business lens, is more than a diplomatic success. It is a blueprint for India to leverage global partnerships in becoming an economic powerhouse, innovating and prospering in tandem with its strategic ally.



**5. The missing growth strategy**

**Context:** In 2007, India joined the ranks of middle-income countries, classified, to be precise, as a lower middle-income economy. Almost 18 years later, it remains in that category. Over these years, the country's per capita income has risen from \$1,022 to about \$2,700. Some have argued that if a country remains a lower middle-income economy for 28 years, then it is caught in a lower middle-income trap. The per capita income now required to join the ranks of middle-income countries is \$4,516. The IMF expects India's per capita income to touch \$4,195 by 2049.

**Key points**

- **High-Performing States (South/West):** *Leading States* - Telangana, with a per capita income of around \$4,306, will probably be the first to achieve that status in the next few years, followed by Karnataka (\$4,021), Haryana (\$3,934) and Tamil Nadu (\$3,807). With an average income of \$5,579. *Growth Drivers* - Diversified economic activities (low-cost manufacturing to high-end services). Investments in semiconductor units, IT, automotive, and skilled services. Benefiting from Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes and capital/labour inflows.
- **Lagging States (East/Central):** Bihar (\$729), Chhattisgarh (\$1780), West Bengal (\$1861) and Odisha (\$1970), moving towards the upper middle-income levels for these states will be a difficult journey.
  - *Challenges* - Lack of manufacturing/services base. Reliance on primary sectors (mining, agriculture). Limited job creation and technological capabilities.
- **Strategic Policy Imperatives:** *Economic Diversification* - Operate across the 'smile curve' (low-value manufacturing to high-end R&D/services). *Trade and Industrial Policies* - Protectionism (e.g. import substitution) vs. freer trade. Risks stifling competition; need for SME support. *Institutional Development* - Strengthen education, R&D, and governance frameworks.
- **Political and Governance Challenges:** *Divergence of Power* - Wealthier states (South/West) contribute more economically but have less political influence. Risk of policy misalignment (e.g. redistribution ≠ growth strategy). *Need for Inclusive Growth* - Targeted investments in lagging states' infrastructure and skill development.
- **Conclusion:** Indian economy has grown at an average of around 6 per cent over the past three decades. And that this growth has been largely maintained despite the ups and downs of the economy under both coalition and majority governments, in the face of a global financial crisis and a pandemic. Well-thought-out policies are needed to even sustain the growth of 6% growth for next two-decades, let alone an 8% growth trajectory needed to achieve high-income status.

Q. Discuss the challenges and opportunities for India in transitioning from a lower middle-income economy to a high-income economy within the next two decades. (পৰৱৰ্তী দুটা দশকৰ ভিতৰত নিম্ন মধ্যম আয়ৰ অৰ্থনীতিৰ পৰা উচ্চ আয়ৰ অৰ্থনীতিলৈ পৰিৱৰ্তনৰ ক্ষেত্ৰত ভাৰতৰ বাবে প্ৰত্যাহ্বান আৰু সুযোগসমূহৰ বিষয়ে আলোচনা কৰক।)

