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The way to get started
is to quit talking and
begin doing

Walt Disney

Important Issues of the Day

- **Iran dismisses U.S. bid – Page No.1 , GS 2**
- **Nationally Determined Contribution – Page No.1 , GS 3**
- **UDAN scheme – Page No.1 , GS 2**
- **Transgender Persons Amendment Bill – Page No. 6, GS 2**
- **An energy transition – Page No.7 , GS 3**
- **Vande Mataram – Page No. 10, GS 1**
- **Inflation target – Page No. 12, GS 3**

Iran dismisses U.S. bid to end conflict, sets its own terms

Halting aggression, reparations, and 'sovereignty' over Strait of Hormuz part of Tehran's terms; U.S. offers sanctions relief for reopening the Strait

Stanly Johny

Iran on Wednesday dismissed a U.S. proposal to end the war and set out its own terms for peace, even as it continued trading fire with Israel.

The U.S. proposal offered a ceasefire and sanctions relief in return for the Islamic Republic abandoning its nuclear programme and reopening the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran, according to state-run Press TV, has laid down five conditions to end the war, which the U.S. and Israel launched on February 28 with the assassination of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and several other leaders. Tehran is seeking: "a complete halt to aggression and assassinations"; "concrete mechanisms" to prevent future attacks; payment of war damages and reparations; an end to fighting on "all fronts"; and recognition of its "exercise of sovereignty" over the Strait of Hormuz, which it calls its "natural and legal right".

"Iran will end the war



On alert: Security forces and first responders at a site struck by a projectile on the outskirts of Tel Aviv in Israel during the war. AFP

when it decides to do so and when its own conditions are met," a senior security official said, according to Press TV. The official, who is not named in the report, said Washington has put forward proposals through various diplomatic channels that are "excessive" and "disconnected from reality" on the battlefield.

U.S. President Donald Trump, who had backed off from his threat to attack Iran's power infrastructure claiming that Washington and Tehran were in talks, said on Tuesday that Iran

had given him "a very big present worth a tremendous amount of money", adding that "we are dealing with the right people". "I think we're going to end [the war]," Mr. Trump said without elaborating on the "present".

Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters on Wednesday dismissed reports about talks, adding that the U.S. is calling its "defeat" an agreement.

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RELATED REPORTS ON

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India raises clean-energy ambition with 60% non-fossil fuel power goal by 2035

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

Updating its climate goals, India has pledged that by 2035, 60% of its installed electric capacity will comprise non-fossil sources. It also aims to reduce by 47% the intensity of emissions per unit of GDP from 2005 level and to increase its carbon sink to 3.5 billion tonnes – 4 billion tonnes.

These targets make up its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), which are to be communicated to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

“We will easily achieve these goals... [with] the speed with which we are expanding our non-fossil

Green goals

The targets set for 2035 under the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) are part of India's formal climate pledges under the Paris Agreement

- Reduce emissions intensity of GDP by **47%** from 2005 level
- Achieve **60%** installed electric power from non-fossil fuel energy resources
- Create carbon sink of **3.5 to 4.0 billion tonnes** of CO₂ equivalent through forest and tree cover

As a signatory to the Paris Agreement, India was required to update its NDC by 2025 with actions towards curbing fossil fuel and improving energy efficiency

sources,” Union Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said at a briefing on Wednesday following a Cabinet meeting.

As a signatory to the Paris Agreement, India was

required to issue an updated NDC in 2025, which spells out its voluntary actions towards transitioning away from fossil fuel and improving energy-efficiency measures.

At the 30th edition of the Conference of Parties in Belem, Brazil, in November last year, Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav said that India would announce the NDC by the “year-end”.

India’s current NDC, officially conveyed to the United Nations in August 2022, commits to the following by 2030: having 50% of its installed electric power from non-fossil sources; reducing the intensity of emissions per unit of GDP by 44%; and increasing its carbon sink to at least 2.5 billion tonnes to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent.

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- **The Conference of Parties, or CoP, is a body of nations that convenes annually to discuss climate issues and transition their economies away from fossil fuel. India and Argentina were the only two G-20 countries that had not announced a 2035 NDC as of December 31, 2025.**

- **A total of 128 parties, representing about 78% of global greenhouse gas emissions, had submitted new NDCs by that date. These included 21 Small Island Developing States, 19 Least Developed Countries, and 18 G-20 members.**
- **Currently, about 52% of India's installed electric capacity comes from non-fossil fuel sources — a target achieved well before the deadline — though only about 25% of the power generated is non-fossil. These sources include solar, wind, hydropower, biomass, and nuclear power.**
- **As of 2019, say official estimates, India has achieved an emissions intensity of 36% from 2005-2020.**
- **A carbon sink of 1.97 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent had already been created from 2005 to 2019.**
- **However, forest and tree cover accounts for about 24.6% of India's geographical area as of 2021, which is higher than the 21% in 2005, but still less than the national policy goal of 33%.**

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Mains Question

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) lie at the core of global climate governance under the Paris Agreement. In this context, examine the significance of India's updated NDCs and the challenges in achieving its climate commitments.

(250 words / 15 marks)

पेरिस समझौते के अंतर्गत राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर निर्धारित योगदान (Nationally Determined Contributions – NDCs) वैश्विक जलवायु शासन के केंद्र में हैं। इस संदर्भ में भारत के अद्यतन NDCs के महत्व तथा उन्हें प्राप्त करने में आने वाली चुनौतियों का विश्लेषण कीजिए।

(250 शब्द / 15 अंक)

Govt. revamps UDAN scheme with changes in subsidy

Jagriti Chandra

NEW DELHI

In a significant policy shift, the Centre has extended the subsidy period for airlines on select Tier-2 and Tier-3 routes from three to five years, after a large share of those routes fell into disuse. The shift comes under the modified UDAN scheme, approved by the Union Cabinet on Wednesday with a total outlay of ₹28,840 crore.

The subsidy will also shift from a levy embedded in airfares to direct funding from the exchequer.

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- **The subsidy will also shift from a levy embedded in airfares to direct funding from the exchequer.**
- **UDAN aims to democratize aviation and enhance regional connectivity, ensuring that even remote regions of the country are accessible by air.**
- **The scheme was designed under the National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) 2016, with a focus on connecting Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities through a market-driven yet financially supported model.**
- **The Airports Authority of India (AAI) serves as the nodal agency responsible for its implementation.**

- **Viability Gap Funding (VGF):** Financial support to airlines to ensure affordable fares.
- **Regional Connectivity Fund (RCF)** was created to meet the viability gap funding requirements under the scheme.
- **Airfare Cap** to ensure affordability.
- **Reduced taxes on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF)** and other concessions to airlines to make operations viable on regional routes.
- **Collaborative Governance** between the Centre, States, the Airport Authority of India (AAI), and private airport operators.

Mains Question

The Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) scheme aims to enhance regional connectivity and make air travel affordable for the common citizen. Critically examine its achievements and the challenges associated with its implementation in India.

(250 words / 15 marks)

उड़े देश का आम नागरिक (UDAN) योजना का उद्देश्य क्षेत्रीय संपर्क को बढ़ावा देना और आम नागरिक के लिए हवाई यात्रा को सुलभ बनाना है। इसके संदर्भ में, भारत में इसके उपलब्धियों तथा कार्यान्वयन से जुड़ी चुनौतियों का समालोचनात्मक परीक्षण कीजिए।

(250 शब्द / 15 अंक)

Centre asks RBI to keep retail inflation target at 4% till 2031

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Wednesday asked the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to target retail inflation at 4% with a margin of 2% on either side for another five years ending March 2031.

To control the price rise, the government in 2016 gave a mandate to the RBI to keep the retail inflation at 4% with a margin of 2% on either side for five years ending March 31, 2021. Subsequently, in March 2021, the government maintained the same target. This is the second time the government has retained the inflation target.

The Union government, in consultation with the RBI, hereby notifies the inflation target for the period beginning April 1, 2026, and ending on March 31,

The inflation target is for the period from April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2031, as per the notification

2031, a Gazette notification issued by the Department of Economic Affairs dated March 25 said. According to the notification, the inflation target is 4% with an upper tolerance level of 6% and a lower tolerance level of 2%. India adopted the inflation-targeting framework and formally tasked the central bank with it in 2016.

In its first meeting in October 2016, the six-member Monetary Policy Committee was given the mandate to maintain annual inflation at 4% until March 31, 2021, with an upper tolerance of 6% and a lower threshold of 2%.

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Mains Question

Inflation targeting has become a key pillar of monetary policy in India. Discuss the significance of the inflation targeting framework adopted by the Reserve Bank of India and examine the challenges associated with its implementation.

(250 words / 15 marks)

मुद्रास्फीति लक्ष्यीकरण (Inflation Targeting) भारत की मौद्रिक नीति का एक महत्वपूर्ण स्तंभ बन गया है। भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक द्वारा अपनाए गए मुद्रास्फीति लक्ष्यीकरण ढांचे के महत्व पर चर्चा कीजिए तथा इसके क्रियान्वयन से जुड़ी चुनौतियों का परीक्षण कीजिए।

(250 शब्द / 15 अंक)

‘Vande Mataram advisory not a threat to conform’

Ministry's advisory on National Song only prescribes protocol and those who do not sing it will not face any action, says SC; even then, there is burden on those who refuse to sing, argues petitioner

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said the January 28 guidelines issued by Union Home Ministry on playing National Song *Vande Mataram* in full at public and ceremonial occasions are not a “threat to conform” and do not fall foul of constitutional freedoms.

“...it is only an advisory... The Ministry feels the National Song is as much an expression of the national identity. You may have a different point of view. But we feel you have vague apprehensions of discrimination which do not have a clear nexus with the advisory now... But please come immediately to us as and when you feel you have been discriminated against or singled out on the plank of this advisory,” Justice Joymalya Bagchi addressed petitioner Muhammed Sayeed Noori, represented by senior advocate Sanjay Hegde.

Mr. Hegde began his arguments by noting the Ministry's circular made the singing of the National Song “mandatory” and compelled citizens to participate in a social demonstration of loyalty which



goes against one's individual conscience. He pointed out that the circular has instructed the three-minute National Song to be played before the 55-second National Anthem, reducing the status of the latter to an “epilogue”.

Anthem vs. Song

Chief Justice Surya Kant, heading the three-judge Bench, said there was absolutely nothing in the January 28 circular to show that people who did not play or sing the National Song would face penal or adverse action.

“Even if there is no penalty and even if today there is no legal sanction, there is a huge burden on somebody who refuses to sing or stand up,” Mr. Hegde argued.

“What is that burden on

law here? The circular prescribes a protocol of when and how the National Song must be played, what is to be done when it is played, etc. We can understand if somebody sends you a notice saying you did not play or stand up for the National Song and your institution should be closed or derecognised as a result,” the Chief Justice reacted.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta intervened to emphasise that respect for the National Song was organic and, ideally, even an advisory was not necessary. He referred to Article 51A of the Constitution, which made it a fundamental duty to respect the National Flag and National Anthem.

Mr. Hegde said the National Anthem and National Song were distinct from each other. “..It was on Ja-

nuary 24, 1950 that Rajendra Prasad, as President of the Constituent Assembly, ended the controversy by saying *Jana Gana Mana* would be the National Anthem and *Vande Mataram* the National Song. When the Parliament subsequently inserted Article 51A [in the 42nd Constitutional Amendment], it spoke only of the National Anthem,” he explained.

He said India was a country which paid equal respect to all religions and everyone's individual conscience, even that of an atheist. Mr. Mehta retorted that it was not as if people were being compelled to sing *bhajans*.

Justice Bagchi referred to the circular which said, “In all schools, the day's work may begin with community singing of the National Song”. “The expression ‘may’ means you could sing as much as not sing. It allows individual conscience to take the decision,” he said.

Mr. Hegde said patriotism cannot be compelled, provoking the Chief Justice to ask if “patriotism cannot be compelled even for the National Anthem”.

The court refused to entertain the petition, terming it “premature”.

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- **Mr. Hegde said the National Anthem and National Song were distinct from each other. “..It was on January 24, 1950 that Rajendra Prasad, as President of the Constituent Assembly, ended the controversy by saying Jana Gana Mana would be the National Anthem and Vande Mataram the National Song.**
- **When the Parliament subsequently inserted Article 51A [in the 42nd Constitutional Amendment], it spoke only of the National Anthem,” he explained.**
- **When both the National Song and the National Anthem are played at the same event, Vande Mataram (National Song) must be played/sung first, followed by Jana Gana Mana (National Anthem).**
- **This establishes a clear order of precedence for official ceremonies.**
- **Mandatory Respect: The audience must stand to attention whenever the official version of the National Song (approximately 3.10 minutes long) is sung or played.**

- **Origin & Composition:** Vande Mataram (also pronounced Bande Mataram), composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, was first published in Bangadarshan in 1875 and later included in Anandamath (1882).
- It is set to music by Rabindranath Tagore, and it emerged as a powerful symbol of India's cultural and political identity, embodying unity, sacrifice, and devotion.
- **National Status:** On 24th January 1950, Dr Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India, announced that while Jana Gana Mana would be the National Anthem, Vande Mataram, for its key role in the freedom movement, would be honoured equally as the National Song.
- India's Constitution does not explicitly mention a national song. However, Article 51A(a) asks citizens to respect the Constitution, National Flag and National Anthem.

- **Adoption by Congress:** In 1896, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore sang Vande Mataram at the Kolkata session of the Indian National Congress.
- **At the Varanasi session of the Indian National Congress (1905),** the song 'Vande Mataram' was adopted for all-India occasions.
- **Mass Mobilisation & Press:** Bande Mataram Sampradaya (1905) formed in North Calcutta to promote devotion to the motherland.
- **English daily Bande Mataram** launched in 1906 under Bipin Chandra Pal, later joined by Sri Aurobindo. It propagated ideas of Swadeshi, unity, and resistance.
- **Anti-Partition & Student Movements:** Vande Mataram was first used as a political slogan on 7th August 1905 during student processions at Calcutta Town Hall, becoming the rallying cry of the Swadeshi and anti-partition movement.

An energy transition driven by ethics

Page No.7 , GS 3

Fossil fuel dependency is ripping away national security and sovereignty, and replacing it with subservience and rising costs,” UN climate change arm executive secretary Simon Stiell told European Union officials and ministers in Brussels on March 16, against the backdrop of the U.S.-Israel-Iran war. He added that the disruption serves as an “abject lesson” on the pitfalls of banking on fossil fuels.

The war in West Asia has disproportionately affected economies such as India which gets nearly 60% of its crude oil from the region. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has forced state-run refineries to declare force majeure – an act of god. Pushing a country like India to abandon its remaining coal or domestic gas reserves without a take-off ramp could lead to industrial collapse.

Mr. Stiell’s comments are reminiscent of the expressions of impatience by climate negotiators and stakeholders about how slow countries have been to switch away from fossil fuels: in 2021, activist Greta Thunberg called the COP26 talks “blah, blah, blah”.

The West used fossil fuels to build its strategic reserves and today can’t deny India and other countries like it the same opportunities, especially as the latter waits for its renewables infrastructure to mature and expand. At the same time, India’s reliance on fossil fuels from West Asia is obviously why its economy is currently hostage to the region’s geopolitical crisis.

Dependence on minerals

Mr. Stiell et al. have argued that renewables are immune to such blockades, which is true in part: if the flow of fossil fuels stops today – it is pinched in the Strait of Hormuz – the ‘flow’ of energy also stops, because we burn fossil fuels to release energy. With renewables, the critical minerals are not the source of energy itself.



Vasudevan
Mukunth

Short-term gains or geopolitical shocks should not dictate green energy shift

Once the state has set up solar panels and erected wind turbines, their ability to generate energy cannot be embargoed because they will operate as long as the sun shines and the wind blows.

However, critical minerals still represent a significant bottleneck, with additional complications such as the number of industries that need them – from consumer electronics to missile targeting, with the renewable energy sector somewhere in between. The supply chains for many minerals are even more concentrated than oil. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC+) controls around 40% of global oil production. And while the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Australia plus Chile extract most of the cobalt and lithium, respectively, a single country – China – currently processes almost 60% of the world’s lithium, 70% of its cobalt, and 90% of rare-earth elements.

With renewable energy also making intensive use of hardware, a blockade of the required components, whether it be turbine blades or magnets based on rare earth minerals, would be just as effective as one of oil. At that point, it is once again a question of whether war could break out between the world’s primary mineral-processing hubs.

Fossil versus mineral

The “abject lesson” is only so abject because of the prevailing oil situation. If, say, the West Asia conflict had not begun and Brent crude was \$65 a barrel, the trade-off for renewables could return to seeming like a moral luxury – in turn retrenching the value of ‘shock’ events like wars to push the world away from fossil fuels. And to that extent, perhaps Mr. Stiell et al. are smart to seize the chance.

Without a war driving prices up, the high upfront capital expenditure for renewables is less attractive to governments. If oil is cheap, the payback period for a large offshore wind farm might be

15 years; if gas prices jump 50%, this period could shrink to 4-5 years. In other words, sans a war, governments would have continued to place fiscal responsibility before energy sovereignty.

In the same scenario, the world’s dependencies on the critical mineral supply chain presents itself as a scarier prospect. If West Asia is stable and oil is flowing, the U.S. and its allies would likely view the option of trading West Asian oil for Chinese minerals as a net loss in strategic autonomy, which could encourage countries to reshore mineral mining and processing capabilities even before the energy transition picks up pace.

For India, a more stable supply of oil together with its arguably excessive focus on easing business could render its off-ramp into a long and gentle slope with room to continue using its domestic coal and cheap imported gas to power industrial growth while waiting for renewables to mature.

In other words, the Strait of Hormuz blockade could be forcing India to accelerate investments in renewables simply because it has no choice.

Fear not an effective tool

Mr. Stiell is in effect wielding fear as his primary tool, especially when he says “dependency is ripping away national security”. The effects of fear never last – especially when countries imagine new ways to outmanoeuvre these threats. What ultimately matters is ethics. The virtue of renewables should be debated, and adopted, in order to save the planet rather than for saving the economy for another month.

This also matters because when oil is cheap, the environmental damage of mining lithium, or human rights issues in Congolese cobalt mines are scrutinised more heavily by the public – and while this is as it should be, it should not just be because oil is cheap.

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- **The war in West Asia has disproportionately affected economies such as India which gets nearly 60% of its crude oil from the region.**
- **The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has forced state-run refineries to declare force majeure — an act of god.**
- **Pushing a country like India to abandon its remaining coal or domestic gas reserves without a take-off ramp could lead to industrial collapse.**

- **Dependence on minerals**
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- **In the same scenario, the world's dependencies on the critical mineral supply chain presents itself as a scarier prospect.**
- **The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC+) controls around 40% of global oil production. And while the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Australia plus Chile extract most of the cobalt and lithium, respectively, a single country — China — currently processes almost 60% of the world's lithium, 70% of its cobalt, and 90% of rare-earth elements.**

The Transgender Persons Amendment Bill, a flawed fix

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 (Bill No. 79 of 2026), introduced in the Lok Sabha on March 13, 2026, makes several sharp changes to the 2019 Act. It narrows the definition of “transgender person” to only specific socio-cultural identities such as kinner, hijra, aravani, jogta, eunuch, or biologically-defined intersex variations, or persons forcibly compelled into such an identity through mutilation, castration, amputation, or any surgical, chemical or hormonal procedure. It explicitly excludes persons with different sexual orientations and non-heteronormative gender fluid identities.

The Bill removes the right to “self-perceived gender identity” from Section 4(2), replaces the simple District Magistrate process with a medical board “authority” headed by a Chief Medical Officer, and mandates hospitals to report every transgender surgery to the District Magistrate and the authority.

Perpetuating structural problems

The government claims that the new amendments fix the vagueness and implementation failures of the 2019 Act. Every year, thousands of intersex infants are killed or undergo medically unethical, non-consensual sex-selective surgeries that mutilate their bodies without regard for lifelong physical and psychological trauma, all in pursuit of a false “normalcy”. Millions of intersex individuals remain ghosts in our Census systems, their births and deaths unregistered, rendering them invisible to legal protections and social services.

Even the highest authorities fail to grasp the fundamental distinctions between sex identity and gender identity, or between intersex variations and transgender identities, which fuels rampant discrimination. The Bill itself refers to male and female as “gender identity”, which is fundamentally wrong – male and female are sex identities. By clubbing sex identity under the gender column, the Bill creates new problems where it is meant to solve existing ones.

The government does not have reliable data on transgender and intersex persons in India. They want to grant us rights but do not know who we are. Separating sex and gender identity as different categories on official documents would address the root causes of this problem.

Despite the new wording, the Bill still lumps “persons with intersex variations” inside the definition of a “transgender person.” The term “transgender persons” often conflates distinct identities. The Trans Act’s definition includes persons with intersex variations under “transgender”, which erases intersex-specific needs. Intersex is a natural biological spectrum (recorded 1%-2% globally). Transgender identity is a psychological and social construct.



Gopi Shankar Madurai

Special Monitor for Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression and Sexual Characteristics (SOGIESC) Rights, National Human Rights Commission of India

The Bill only deepens the conflation of gender identities and ignores core crises

Retaining this conflation under one label violates rights under Article 21 to bodily integrity and privacy. It leaves out intersex infants without any specific ban on “normalising” surgeries and ignores repeated calls for separate intersex legislation.

The Bill’s definition also contradicts established international standards: the United Nations and the World Health Organization define intersex as innate variations in sex characteristics that do not fit typical male or female binaries, requiring distinct legal recognition and explicit protections against non-consensual medical interventions. By forcing intersex persons into a transgender category, the Bill undermines these global definitions and erodes the very human rights framework that India has committed to uphold.

The Bill leaves the outdated title, National Council for Transgender Persons, and all State Welfare Boards unchanged. It ignores the long-standing proposal to rebrand them as a National GIESC Welfare Council and State GIESC Welfare Boards (GIESC is Gender Identity/Expression and Sex Characteristics). This keeps the entire policy architecture trapped under the problematic “transgender” umbrella instead of creating a scientifically accurate, inclusive framework. The government continues to promote a single identity at the national level.

This heteronormative bill erases the reality that GIESC communities, including transgender persons, may have diverse sexual orientations such as transgay, translesbian, transbisexual, or queer.

Legally empowering exploitative structures

New clauses in Section 18 introduce rigorous imprisonment (between five to 14 years) for forcing adults or children into “transgender presentation” plus begging or servitude. Yet, the Bill does nothing to regulate or dismantle the colonial hijra jamath-gharana system. By targeting only external perpetrators while leaving internal hierarchies untouched, the amendment effectively legitimises and empowers the long-standing hijra jamath-gharana system, codifying it into law. These structures are not inherently traditional; earlier Indic frameworks were more inclusive and rooted in a broader, affirmative understanding of diverse identities, free from later external influences.

At present, chief hijra nayaks control chelas’ earnings from begging and prostitution, trapping gender non-conforming children (often abandoned) in bonded labour. Meanwhile, thousands of gender non-conforming children, abandoned or rejected by families, are thrust into exploitative hijra jamath gharanas, havelis, and dayars, where education is a distant dream; instead, and forced into begging and prostitution.

State police often refuse to register missing

child complaints for gender non-conforming children, and there are no dedicated policies to address their vulnerability to trafficking and abuse. There is also no framework for reform, rehabilitation, or protection of minors within these systems. By protecting these colonial-era identities without evidence-based safeguards, the government is undermining earlier inclusive traditions.

The Bill contains no requirement for genetic counselling by medical geneticists before certification, intersex surgeries and health management. It offers no mandate for India-specific longitudinal studies on “affirming surgeries” and raises serious privacy concerns due to inadequate safeguards.

Instead of addressing the problems faced by diverse GIESC communities such as administrative barriers and unregulated medical practices which include gender-affirming surgeries and hormone therapies (Government of India promotes freely despite severe health risks) the Bill offers only superficial measures with little relevance to their needs. Despite the 2019 UN CRPD recommendations to prioritise intersex welfare and dignity, these concerns remain largely neglected.

No intersectionality

The Bill contains no intersectional lens for caste, disability, poverty or religion. Transgender persons from Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe or disabled backgrounds will continue to face compounded discrimination with zero targeted remedies. It also fails to protect India’s family-dependent societal structures by skipping any requirement for rigorous, evidence-based research before policy changes. Most critically, the Bill is completely silent on civil and marriage rights of diverse GIESC identities. It offers no provisions for marriage, adoption, inheritance, divorce, or succession for transgender persons, leaving them without full legal recognition in family law, and perpetuating their exclusion from the very institutions that define citizenship and dignity in Indian society.

The 2026 Amendment Bill tightens some definitions and increases penalties for forced exploitation, but leaves every core structural flaw untouched – the hetero-normative erasure of diverse SOGIESC identities, the complete neglect of civil and marriage rights, the legal entrenchment of colonial hijra structures at the expense of ancient Indic heritage. India needs a scientific, culturally grounded approach that separates biological sex characteristics from gender identity, prioritises evidence over ideology, bans non-consensual intersex surgeries, ensures equal rights, dismantles exploitative systems, and protects the dignity of intersex persons and gender non-conforming children. The Constitution demands nothing less.

- **The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 (Bill No. 79 of 2026), introduced in the Lok Sabha on March 13, 2026, makes several sharp changes to the 2019 Act.**
- **It narrows the definition of “transgender person” to only specific socio-cultural identities such as kinner, hijra, aravani, jogta, eunuch, or biologically-defined intersex variations, or persons forcibly compelled into such an identity through mutilation, castration, amputation, or any surgical, chemical or hormonal procedure. It explicitly excludes persons with different sexual orientations and non-heteronormative gender fluid identities.**
- **The Bill removes the right to “self-perceived gender identity” from Section 4(2), replaces the simple District Magistrate process with a medical board “authority” headed by a Chief Medical Officer, and mandates hospitals to report every transgender surgery to the District Magistrate and the authority.**

- **New clauses in Section 18 introduce rigorous imprisonment (between five to 14 years) for forcing adults or children into “transgender presentation” plus begging or servitude. Yet, the Bill does nothing to regulate or dismantle the colonial hijra jamath-gharana system.**
- **By targeting only external perpetrators while leaving internal hierarchies untouched, the amendment effectively legitimises and empowers the long-standing hijra jamath-gharana system, codifying it into law.**
- **At present, chief hijra nayaks control chelas’ earnings from begging and prostitution, trapping gender non-conforming children (often abandoned) in bonded labour.**
- **The Bill contains no intersectional lens for caste, disability, poverty or religion. Transgender persons from Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe or disabled backgrounds will continue to face compounded discrimination with zero targeted remedies.**

- **The names of 10.56 lakh voters have been deleted on the draft electoral rolls of Assam which were published on Saturday after a house-to-house verification of the voter lists during the special revision exercise conducted by the Election Commission in the State from November 22 to December 20.**
- **Of the voters whose names were deleted, almost 4.79 lakh are dead, over 5.23 lakh have shifted, and 53,619 were found to have duplicate entries.**
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Thank You!

