

**The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE**

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On the sidelines of the BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Bangladesh's Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus for the first time after the regime change in Dhaka. The meeting marks a significant diplomatic engagement amidst recent tensions in bilateral relations.

# Modi, Yunus set aside differences, hold talks on border security, minorities, Sheikh Hasina

**Suhasini Haidar**  
NEW DELHI

Setting aside the tensions of the past eight months in their first meeting since the regime change in Dhaka, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh's Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus held talks on the sidelines of the BIMSTEC regional summit in Bangkok on Friday.

While both leaders raised contentious issues – including India's call for the protection of minorities in Bangladesh, Dhaka's demand for the extradition of former Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina, and border security issues – during the meeting, they met on cordial terms and exchanged commitments to bilateral ties. Bangladesh will host the BIMSTEC summit next year, and Mr. Modi congratulated Mr. Yu-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets Bangladesh Chief Advisor Muhammad Yunus, in Bangkok on Friday. ANI

nus for assuming its chairmanship.

The Modi-Yunus meeting on Friday was held just after the conclusion of the sixth summit of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), a seven-nation grouping that links South Asia and South East Asia.

Mr. Modi also met with Myanmar junta comman-

der and PM General Min Aung Hlaing for the first time since the military came to power in 2021, and Nepal PM K.P. Sharma Oli, on the sidelines of the meeting. All three leaders have chosen to visit China, while New Delhi has not issued invitations to them, due to tensions over a number of issues, and concerns over the legitimacy of the governments in Dha-

ka and Naypyitaw.

Mr. Modi expressed India's support for a "democratic, stable, peaceful, progressive and inclusive Bangladesh", and "urged that rhetoric that vitiates the environment is best avoided", according to a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs.

During talks with Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, the Prime Minister "underlined the importance of early restoration of the democratic process in Myanmar, including through credible and inclusive elections", the MEA said. The General thanked India for its assistance with ongoing relief efforts after devastating earthquakes hit Mandalay and other parts of the country last week.

Mr. Modi said in a social media post that his meeting with Mr. Oli had been "productive". The two

leaders discussed the "India-Nepal friendship, especially in sectors like energy, connectivity, culture and digital technology".

New Delhi and Dhaka gave no indication of whether Mr. Yunus – whose office had also told *The Hindu* about asking to visit India – had received an invitation from Mr. Modi either.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said that the Prime Minister had expressed concern over the "safety and security of minorities, including Hindus", who were targeted in the aftermath of Ms. Hasina's departure from Dhaka. "[The PM] expressed his hope that the [Bangladesh] government would fulfil its responsibilities with seriousness and ensure that these matters are properly investigated and addressed," he added.

## Key Issues Discussed:

- Minorities' Safety in Bangladesh:
  - India expressed concern about violence against minorities (especially Hindus) post the exit of Sheikh Hasina.
  - PM Modi urged Bangladesh to ensure accountability and protection of minority communities.
  - This aligns with India's broader emphasis on human rights and regional stability.
- Extradition of Sheikh Hasina:

- Bangladesh demanded extradition of the former PM, showing the political volatility in Dhaka and its international dimensions.
- India's stance remains cautious, indicating a wait-and-watch policy due to legitimacy concerns.
- **Border Security:**
  - Both sides reaffirmed cooperation on curbing cross-border crimes, smuggling, and infiltration.
  - Ensuring border stability is crucial given the dense population and cultural links across borders.

### **Diplomatic Tone and Future Engagements:**

- Despite contentious topics, the tone of the meeting was cordial and cooperative.
- Mr. Modi congratulated Bangladesh for chairing the next BIMSTEC summit, a move reflecting diplomatic continuity.
- No clarity was provided on whether Yunus had received an invitation to visit India, indicating limited formal recognition.

### **Wider Regional Diplomacy:**

- PM Modi also met with:
  - Myanmar's General Min Aung Hlaing – India pushed for democratic restoration and thanked for earthquake relief coordination.
  - Nepal PM K.P. Sharma Oli – Focus on connectivity, energy, digital tech, and cultural ties.

All three leaders have shown leanings towards China, underscoring India's strategic concerns in its neighborhood.

### **Geopolitical Implications:**

- India is recalibrating ties in a region where authoritarianism and political transitions are becoming frequent.
- Balancing democratic values with strategic interests (e.g., border stability, counter-China influence) remains a major foreign policy challenge.

### **UPSC Mains Practice Question**

**Ques :** Discuss the recent developments in India-Bangladesh relations in the context of the regime change in Dhaka. What are the implications for regional stability and India's strategic interests? **(250 words)**

In a sharp retaliation to the U.S. tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump, China announced a 34% tariff on all U.S. goods, effective April 10, 2025. This marks a renewed escalation in the U.S.-China trade war, with broader implications for global trade, strategic sectors, and multilateralism.

# China hits back with 34% tariff on U.S. goods

Beijing retaliates against Trump's 'Liberation Day' tariff increase of 34% on Chinese exports

It plans to curb export of rare earth elements, vital in production of high-tech products

Donald Trump criticises China's move; they have 'played it wrong, they panicked', he says

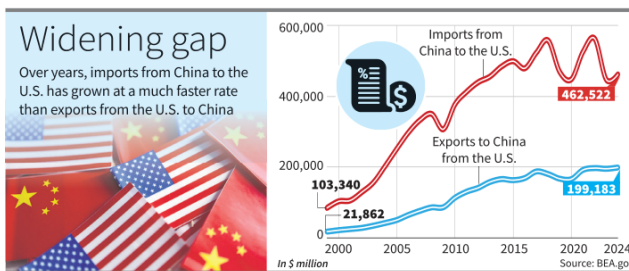
Associated Press  
Reuters  
BEIJING

China announced on Friday that it will impose a 34% tariff on imports of all U.S. products beginning April 10, part of a flurry of retaliatory measures following U.S. President Donald Trump's "Liberation Day" slate of double-digit tariffs.

The new tariff matches the rate of the U.S. "reciprocal" tariff of 34% on Chinese exports that Trump ordered this week.

The Commerce Ministry in Beijing also said in a notice that it will impose more export controls on rare earth elements, which are materials used in high-tech products such as computer chips and electric vehicle batteries.

Included in the list of minerals subject to con-



controls was samarium and its compounds, which are used in aerospace manufacturing and the defence sector. Another element called gadolinium is used in MRI scans.

### 'China panicked'

In his response, Mr. Trump said China "played it wrong".

"China played it wrong, they panicked – the one thing they cannot afford to

do!" Mr. Trump wrote in all caps in a post on his social media platform.

China's customs administration said it had suspended chicken imports from some U.S. suppliers after it detected furazolidone, a drug banned in China, in shipments from those companies.

Separately, it said it had found high levels of mold in the sorghum and salmonella in poultry meat from

some of the companies. The announcements affect one company exporting sorghum, C&D Inc., and four poultry companies.

### 'Bullying practice'

The Chinese government said it had added 27 firms to lists of companies subject to trade sanctions or export controls.

Among them, 16 are subject to a ban on the export of "dual-use" goods.

## India tariff cut to 26%

Press Trust of India  
NEW DELHI

The U.S. has revised the import duties to be imposed on India from 27% to 26%, according to a White House document. These duties will come

into force from April 9. Industry experts said 1% would not have much of an impact. From 2021-22 to 2023-24, the U.S. was India's largest trading partner. The U.S. accounts for about 18% of India's total goods exports.

High Point Aerotechnologies, a defence tech firm, and Universal Logistics Holding, a publicly traded transportation and logistics company, were among those listed.

Beijing also announced it filed a lawsuit with the World Trade Organization over the tariffs.

"The United States' imposition of so-called 'reciprocal tariffs' seriously violates WTO rules, seriously

damages the legitimate rights and interests of WTO members, and seriously undermines the rules-based multilateral trading system and international economic and trade order," the Commerce Ministry said.

"It is a typical unilateral bullying practice that endangers the stability of the global economic and trade order. China firmly opposes this," it said.

Other actions include

the launch of an anti-monopoly investigation into DuPont China Group Co., a subsidiary of the multinational chemical giant, and an anti-dumping probe into X-ray tube and CT tubes for CT scanners imported from the U.S. and India.

In February, China announced a 15% tariff on imports of coal and liquefied natural gas products from the U.S. It separately added a 10% tariff on crude oil, agricultural machinery and large-engine cars.

Dozens of U.S. companies are subject to controls on trade and investment, while many more Chinese companies face similar limits on dealings with U.S. firms. The latest tariffs apply to all products made in the U.S., according to a statement from the Ministry of Finance's State Council Tariff Commission.

## Key Developments:

- **Tit-for-Tat Tariff Hike:**
  - U.S. imposes 34% tariffs on Chinese exports (termed "Liberation Day tariffs").
  - China responds with equivalent 34% tariffs on all U.S. products, significantly expanding the scope of the trade conflict.
- **Export Controls on Rare Earth Elements:**
  - China announced curbs on exports of rare earths like samarium and gadolinium.
  - These materials are critical for semiconductors, EV batteries, medical imaging, and defense equipment.
  - Signals China's use of strategic resources as leverage in global tech competition.
- **Non-Tariff Measures:**

- Suspension of U.S. chicken and sorghum imports citing health violations.
- Addition of 27 U.S. companies to trade sanction and export control lists, including:
  - High Point Aerotechnologies (defense)
  - Universal Logistics Holding (transportation)
- Launch of WTO complaint against U.S. tariffs and investigations against DuPont and others.

### **Strategic and Economic Implications:**

#### 1. Impact on Global Trade and WTO:

- Both nations are accusing each other of WTO violations, risking further weakening of the rules-based multilateral trading system.
- The dispute fuels trade protectionism, possibly undermining global supply chains.

#### 2. Rare Earths as Strategic Assets:

- China controls more than 70% of global rare earth production.
- Export controls can disrupt global tech and defense industries, especially in the West.
- Raises concerns over resource weaponization, echoing past energy conflicts.

#### 3. Political Messaging:

- Trump's comment - "China panicked" - reflects the election-year posturing and political narrative of strength.
- Beijing's counteraccusations of "bullying" portray the U.S. as undermining global economic stability.

#### 4. Risk to Multinational Corporations:

- Trade barriers, sanctions, and investigations create uncertainty for global firms.
- May accelerate decoupling trends, with companies diversifying supply chains out of China (e.g., to India, Vietnam).

### **India's Strategic Perspective:**

- Opportunities:
  - India could benefit from supply chain shifts, attracting firms in semiconductors, electronics, and rare earth processing.
  - Potential to expand exports in agriculture, IT, and pharmaceuticals to fill U.S. and Chinese market gaps.
- Challenges:

- Global economic slowdown due to trade tensions could affect India's exports and FDI inflows.
- Pressure to balance relations with both major powers amid geopolitical rivalries.

**UPSC Mains Practice Question**

**Ques :** Discuss how the U.S.-China trade war reflects a shift from economic interdependence to strategic decoupling. What implications does this have for India's trade and foreign policy?



The first Budget Session of the 18th Lok Sabha concluded with notable legislative productivity but also political friction. Key highlights include the passage of 16 Bills, record-breaking sessions, and debates on contentious issues like the Waqf (Amendment) Bill and the President's Rule in Manipur.

## First Budget Session of the 18th Lok Sabha concludes with record productivity

**The Hindu Bureau**  
NEW DELHI

The first Budget Session of the 18th Lok Sabha concluded on Friday, with both Houses of Parliament passing the controversial Waqf (Amendment) Bill.

The session that was marked by high productivity saw disruptions on the last day, with adjournments in both Houses.

In the Rajya Sabha, the Treasury benches began the protests, flagging the Supreme Court judgment upholding the Calcutta High Court's decision cancelling *en bloc* a "tainted" selection process which saw the appointments of nearly 24,000 teachers and non-teaching staff in government and aided schools in West Bengal.

Speaking amid the din, Trinamool Congress's Rajya Sabha leader Derek O'Brien said, "People of In-



Kiren Rijju

dia are seeing that BJP MPs in the Treasury benches are disrupting Parliament... we are not allowed to raise a single issue in Parliament." The Trinamool's demand to hold a debate on duplication of Electoral Photo Identity Cards was not heeded to.

### 'History created'

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju, said the session was a success. At the customary press conference held on conclusion of the session, he told re-

porters that the productivity of Lok Sabha during the session was 118% and that of the Upper House was 119%.

He said history was created and old records were broken in the Rajya Sabha when it sat without a break for 17.02 hours from 11 a.m. on Thursday till 4.02 a.m. on Friday to clear the Waqf Bill, besides endorsing the President's Rule in Manipur. A total of 16 Bills were passed by both Houses of Parliament.

Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar also lauded the high productivity in the Rajya Sabha.

In his concluding remarks, he said, "After a long gap, the House witnessed welcome wit, humour, sarcasm and repartee, apart from intellectual fusion while ensuring parliamentary decorum, cross-party collaboration, and legislative rigour."

### Key Developments:

- High Legislative Productivity:
  - Lok Sabha productivity: 118%
  - Rajya Sabha productivity: 119%

- Rajya Sabha worked non-stop for 17.02 hours to pass important legislation — a record in recent history.
- Key Bills Passed:
  - Waqf (Amendment) Bill: A controversial legislation seeking changes to governance and property rights related to Waqf assets.
  - Endorsement of President's Rule in Manipur
  - A total of 16 Bills cleared by both Houses.
- Disruptions and Political Protests:
  - Trinamool Congress protested non-acceptance of a debate on Electoral Photo Identity Card duplication.
  - Disruptions by Treasury benches in Rajya Sabha over the Supreme Court's validation of the Calcutta HC verdict that cancelled thousands of teacher appointments in West Bengal.
  - Allegations of Treasury benches themselves stalling Parliament, which is uncommon.

### **Institutional Observations:**

- Remarks by Leaders:
  - Kiren Rijiju called it a "historic" session, citing productivity and legislative output.
  - Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar praised the tone and quality of debates, highlighting "wit, repartee, and intellectual fusion".

### **Parliamentary Functioning:**

- High productivity indicates institutional robustness, but the value of such productivity is also measured by quality of debates and consensus.
- Non-stop sessions, while record-breaking, raise questions on procedural scrutiny and time available for democratic deliberation.

### **Role of Opposition and Debate:**

- Repeated instances of denial of discussion requests point to concerns over parliamentary democracy and opposition rights.
- Allegations of Treasury bench disruptions are unusual and reflect growing politicisation of procedural tools.

### **Legislation without Discussion:**

- Despite high productivity, fast-track passage of controversial Bills (e.g., Waqf Amendment Bill) without in-depth debate may be viewed as undermining deliberative democracy.



### **Judiciary vs Legislature Dynamics:**

- Rajya Sabha protests against a judicial decision reveal ongoing tensions between constitutional organs.

### **UPSC Mains Practice Question**

**Ques :**High productivity in Parliament does not always reflect quality in law-making. Critically examine this statement in the context of the recent Budget Session of the 18th Lok Sabha.



CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL), for the first time, has signed a Technology Transfer (ToT) agreement with a private firm — Pioneer Clean AMPS Pvt Ltd — to manufacture HANSA-3 NG trainer aircraft in India.

# CSIR-NAL signs technology transfer deal with firm to make HANSA trainer-planes

**Jacob Koshy**  
NEW DELHI

In a first, the National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) – a Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) body – has signed a technology transfer agreement with a private company to manufacture trainer airplanes in India. This would be the first time that the aircraft would be manufactured in India based on technology fully designed and developed indigenously.

The HANSA-3 NG aircraft is a two-seater aircraft and is the latest iteration of the HANSA planes that have been made by NAL since 1998. Fourteen HAN-



Union Minister Jitendra Singh during the announcement of ToT partner for HANSA-3 (NG).

SA planes have been made over the years by NAL and used by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Indian Institutes of Technology. “We have now managed to seal a partnership with a private company which will manufacture these planes,” said N. Kalaiselvi,

Director-General, CSIR.

The company, Pioneer Clean AMPS Pvt Limited, is expected to set up manufacturing facilities as well as handle marketing, servicing and after-sales, though NAL would be closely involved in the initial years to help them with various aspects of the manufacturing and operations, said Abhay Pashlikar, Director, CSIR-NAL.

The HANSA-NG is powered by a Rotax Digital Control Engine with features such as a composite light weight airframe, a glass cockpit, a bubble canopy with wide panoramic view, and electrically operated flaps, among other features, a brochure says.

## Key Highlights:

- Indigenous Development:
  - The HANSA-3 NG is fully designed and developed indigenously by CSIR-NAL — marking a significant milestone in India's self-reliance in aerospace technology.

- First Private ToT in Aerospace:
  - This is the first time a private company will manufacture trainer aircraft using technology transferred from a CSIR body.
- Features of HANSA-3 NG:
  - Two-seater aircraft.
  - Powered by a Rotax Digital Control Engine.
  - Lightweight composite airframe.
  - Glass cockpit and bubble canopy for panoramic visibility.
  - Electrically operated flaps and other modern avionics.
- Role of the Private Firm:
  - Pioneer Clean AMPS will set up manufacturing units.
  - Responsible for marketing, servicing, and after-sales support.
  - CSIR-NAL will support operations in the initial phase.

### Significance:

- 1. Boost to Atmanirbhar Bharat:
  - Demonstrates the success of indigenous R&D and promotes Make in India in the critical aviation sector.
  - Reduces reliance on foreign trainer aircraft and imports.
- 2. Public-Private Collaboration:
  - Reflects a maturing ecosystem where public R&D institutions collaborate with private industry for technology commercialization.
  - Encourages innovation and entrepreneurship in aerospace.
- 3. Strategic and Economic Impact:
  - Enhances India's capability in civil aviation training infrastructure.
  - Opens potential for exports and economic returns from indigenous technologies.
- 4. Skill Development and Employment:
  - Likely to create jobs and boost technical skills in aircraft manufacturing and servicing.

### Challenges Ahead:

- Ensuring quality control and certification for mass production.
- Market competition from established foreign aircraft manufacturers.
- Need for sustained policy and financial support to scale indigenous efforts.

### Way Forward:

- Encourage more such technology transfers from labs to industry.

- Strengthen linkages between R&D institutions and MSMEs/startups.
- Invest in aviation research infrastructure and certification capabilities.
- Explore regional and global markets for export opportunities.

### UPSC Mains Practice Question

**Ques :**The transfer of indigenous aerospace technologies to private players marks a new era in India's self-reliance journey." In the context of the HANSA-3 NG aircraft, discuss the significance of public-private collaboration in promoting indigenous technology and innovation in India.



**In News : Ionian Islands**

- A groundbreaking archaeological find in Lefkada, Greece, has unveiled the first-ever ancient Greek theater discovered in the Ionian Islands.



**About Ionian Islands**

- The Ionian Islands are a group of islands that are located off the western coast of Greece in the eastern part of the Ionian Sea.
- Collectively, the Ionian islands occupy a total land area of 2,306.94 sq.km. and comprise seven major islands and several smaller islands.
- These islands are also often referred to as "Heptanese" or "Seven Islands."
- The major islands in the Ionian Island group include Kerkyra (Corfu), Paxi, Lefkada, Ithaki, Kefalonia, Zakynthos, and Kythira.
- Kefalonia/Cephalonia is the largest among all the Ionian islands.
- Mount Ainos, which rises to an elevation of 1,628 m, is the highest point on Ionian Island.
- History:
  - Controlled by Venice in the 15th and 16th centuries, they were taken by Russian and Turkish forces in 1799.
  - In 1815 the Treaty of Paris placed them under the control of Britain; the British ceded them to Greece in 1864.

**UPSC Prelims Practice Question**

**Ques :**The Ionian Islands, recently in news, are situated in which of the following seas?

- A. Aegean Sea
- B. Adriatic Sea
- C. Tyrrhenian Sea
- D. Ionian Sea

**Ans : D)**



# A people still waiting to move out of the margins

International Transgender Day of Visibility, which is observed on March 31, highlights the challenges that transgender individuals face. Despite legal advancements such as the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, social stigma, economic exclusion and discrimination persist. There are barriers to education, employment and health care. Workplace biases and financial discrimination hinder economic empowerment, while bullying and unsupportive environments restrict education. Health-care systems fail to address transgender-specific needs, worsening marginalisation. True inclusion requires strong policy implementation, anti-discrimination enforcement, and societal change. Governments, businesses and communities must ensure financial inclusion, equal opportunities and support, fostering empowerment beyond mere visibility.

## Legal recognition versus ground reality

Weak implementation of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, hampers access to welfare schemes. As of December 2023, the National Portal for Transgender Persons received 24,115 identity card applications. However, only 15,800 certificates were issued, with over 3,200 pending beyond the mandated 30-day period. In Delhi, despite a transgender population of approximately 4,200 (2011 Census), only 23 identity cards had been issued by April 2022. The Act's bureaucratic certification process delays recognition by contrasting global standards of self-determination. It also lacks provisions for addressing police harassment, family rejection, and social exclusion.

Economic empowerment remains a challenge in India due to systemic barriers in employment and entrepreneurship. A 2018 National Human Rights Commission of India (NHRC) report found that 92% of transgender individuals were excluded from economic activities, forcing many



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Transgender individuals continue to face barriers to acceptance, education, employment and health care

to engage in sex work. A 2022 study reported a transgender unemployment rate of 48%, far above the national average of 7%-8%.

Discrimination starts at hiring, where biases lead to exclusion, and those employed face workplace hostility, a lack of gender-neutral facilities, and resistance from colleagues. While Tata Steel has hired over 100 transgender employees, the industry-wide adoption of such policies is limited. In 2024, the Finance Ministry clarified that LGBTQ+ individuals could open joint bank accounts and nominate partners as beneficiaries, yet broader financial exclusion persists. There need to be workplace inclusion policies, diversity hiring, targeted financial programmes, and government-backed loans to ensure economic empowerment.

## Hurdles in education, health-care access

Education is crucial for inclusion and the economic empowerment of transgender individuals in India, but systemic discrimination leads to significant disparities. The 2011 Census reported a transgender literacy rate of 56.1%, when the national average was 74.04%. In Kerala, 58% dropped out due to bullying, harassment, and unsupportive environments. But some States have introduced inclusive policies – Maharashtra has transgender cells in colleges and the University of Kerala has reserved seats and hostel facilities. However, nationwide policies remain weak. Ensuring equal opportunities requires gender-sensitive curricula, inclusive learning spaces, financial aid and vocational training.

Transgender individuals in India face major health-care challenges owing to systemic discrimination, financial barriers, and inadequate medical infrastructure. Despite the National Health Policy (2017) and the Ayushman Bharat, accessibility remains limited. A National Legal Services Authority survey found that 27% were denied health care due to their gender identity. Gender-affirming treatments remain costly

(between ₹2 lakh to ₹5 lakh) with limited insurance coverage. While the 'Ayushman Bharat TG Plus' card offers ₹5 lakh annual coverage, implementation gaps persist. The lack of trained health-care professionals results in substandard care, and mental health support is severely inadequate. Solutions include mandatory transgender health-care training; inclusion of gender-affirming treatments in insurance; dedicated transgender health clinics, and expanded mental health services.

## Steps to help mainstream

Changing societal perceptions of transgender individuals in India requires genuine inclusion in the media, education, workplaces, and policies. While visibility has increased, portrayals often reinforce stereotypes. Deep-rooted prejudices in families, schools, and workplaces are another factor. Initiatives such as the 'I Am Also Human' campaign by the Humsafar Trust help, but broader efforts are needed. Gender sensitisation in schools, universities, and workplaces is essential. The media must depict transgender individuals in diverse roles, while cultural events such as Tamil Nadu's Koovagam Festival can promote acceptance.

International Transgender Day of Visibility underscores the need for policy reforms, social acceptance, and economic inclusion. Discrimination persists in employment, education, health care, and public spaces. Many face identity documentation issues, financial barriers, and workplace biases. Addressing these issues requires awareness campaigns, inclusive media representations, and gender sensitisation in schools and workplaces. Beyond symbolism, enforcing anti-discrimination laws, inclusive hiring, and supporting transgender entrepreneurs are also essential. True equality demands collective action to dismantle institutional barriers and to ensure dignity, empowerment, and integration.

## Paper 02: Social Justice

**UPSC Mains Practice Question:** Despite legal recognition and policy initiatives, transgender individuals in India continue to face systemic discrimination and exclusion. Critically analyze the gaps between legal provisions and ground realities. Suggest measures for genuine inclusion. (250 words)

### Context :

- The article, published around International Transgender Day of Visibility (March 31), highlights the persistent social, economic, and institutional discrimination faced by transgender individuals in India despite progressive legal frameworks like the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.

### Legal and Policy Frameworks:

- Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019:
  - Aimed at protecting the rights and dignity of transgender individuals.
  - Mandates identity cards, welfare schemes, and prohibition of discrimination.
- Challenges:
  - Bureaucratic hurdles in certification.
  - Weak enforcement.
  - Inadequate addressal of issues like police harassment and family rejection.
- Other Positive Initiatives:
  - Ayushman Bharat TG Plus: ₹5 lakh health coverage for transgender individuals.
  - Finance Ministry Clarification (2024): LGBTQ+ persons can open joint accounts and nominate partners.

### Persistent Challenges:

- Education:
  - Transgender literacy rate is 56.1% (2011 Census), well below the national average.
  - High dropout rates due to bullying and harassment (Kerala: 58% dropout).
  - Limited implementation of inclusive education policies.
- Employment & Economic Empowerment:
  - 48% transgender unemployment rate (2022 study).
  - 92% excluded from economic activities (NHRC 2018).
  - Discrimination in hiring, lack of gender-neutral facilities, and workplace hostility.
  - Positive example: Tata Steel's transgender hiring initiative, but not widespread.
- Financial Inclusion:
  - Many transgender persons lack access to bank accounts, credit, and insurance.
  - Joint accounts and nominee rights granted recently, but broader exclusion continues.
- Health Care:
  - 27% denied medical care due to gender identity.
  - Cost of gender-affirming surgeries: ₹2–5 lakh.
  - Lack of trained health-care professionals and poor mental health support.
  - Ayushman Bharat TG Plus exists but suffers from poor implementation.

### Efforts at Inclusion:

- State-level interventions:



- Maharashtra: Transgender cells in colleges.
- Kerala University: Reserved seats and hostels.
- Campaigns:
  - 'I Am Also Human' by Humsafar Trust.
  - Tamil Nadu's Koovagam Festival – promotes cultural acceptance.
- Media and Society:
  - Need for positive, non-stereotypical representations.
  - Gender sensitisation in schools and workplaces is essential.

### Way Forward:

- Policy & Implementation:
  - Streamline ID card processes and shift toward self-identification models.
  - Ensure affirmative action in education and employment.
  - Strengthen anti-discrimination laws with enforcement mechanisms.
- Education & Awareness:
  - Introduce gender-inclusive curricula.
  - Train educators and HR professionals on gender sensitivity.
- Healthcare Reform:
  - Establish dedicated transgender clinics.
  - Include gender-affirming care in insurance.
  - Expand mental health support networks.
- Economic Inclusion:
  - Promote diversity hiring, skill training, and entrepreneurship support.
  - Provide targeted government loans and financial literacy.