The Hindu

Front Page

India ranks 135 out of 146 in Gender Gap Index (Page no. 1)
(GS Paper 2, Governance)

India ranks 135 among a total of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2022 and is the worst performer in the world in the "health and survival" sub-index where it is ranked 146.

The Global Gender Report 2022, which includes the Gender Gap Index, says it will now take 132 years to reach gender parity, with the gap reducing only by four years since 2021 and the gender gap closed by 68.1%.

But this does not compensate for the generational loss between 2020 and 2021 as the trends leading up to 2020 showed that the gender gap was set to close within 100 years. South Asia will take the longest to reach gender parity, which is estimated to be likely in 197 years.

India also ranks poorly among its neighbours and is behind Bangladesh (71), Nepal (96), Sri Lanka (110), Maldives (117) and Bhutan (126). Only Iran (143), Pakistan (145) and Afghanistan (146) perform worse than India in south Asia. In 2021, India ranked 140 out of a total 156 countries on the index.

The Global Gender Gap Index benchmarks gender parity across four key dimensions or sub-indices — economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. It measures scores on a 0 to 100 scale, which can be interpreted as the distance covered towards parity or the percentage of the gender gap that has been closed.

India ranks 146 in health and survival, 143 in economic participation and opportunity, 107 in educational attainment and 48th in political empowerment.

The report notes that India's score of 0.629 was its seventh-highest score in the last 16 years. India also "recovered" ground since 2021 in economic participation and opportunity though the report goes on to add that the labour force participation shrunk for both men (by -9.5 percentage points) and women (-3 percentage points).

The gender parity score for estimated earned income improved because even though the values for both men and women diminished, the decline was more for men. India recorded a declining score on political empowerment due to the diminishing share of years women have served as head of state for the past 50 years, says the report.

City

Panel revamps plan to curb pollution (Page no. 3)
(GS Paper 3, Environment)

Emergency measures to control air pollution in Delhi-NCR will now be implemented based on predictions of worsening of air quality, three days in advance, rather than after the air quality deteriorates beyond a particular threshold as was being done until now.

The new measures also include a proposal to ban BS-IV diesel four-wheelers if the air quality index (AQI) turns "severe".

Following directions from the Supreme Court, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in NCR and Adjoining Areas released a revised Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP).

"Actions under Stages II, III and IV shall be invoked at least three days in advance of the AQI reaching to the projected levels of that stage, based on the dynamic model and weather/meteorological forecast to be provided to the Commission," reads the revised GRAP.

GRAP is a set of emergency measures to be taken to reduce air pollution depending on the current levels of air pollution. It was notified by the Union Environment Ministry in 2017 to fight air pollution based on the Supreme Court's directions. These are not long-term solutions, but short-term measures to provide quick relief from high pollution levels.

The GRAP is now classified under four different stages of prediction of adverse air quality in Delhi: Stage I - 'Poor' (AQI 201-300); Stage II - 'Very Poor' (AQI 301-400); Stage III - 'Severe' (AQI 401-450); and Stage IV - 'Severe Plus' (AQI >450).

Under Stage III, the revised GRAP says, State governments in NCR/GNCTD may impose restrictions on BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel LMVs (4-wheeled vehicles).

But an official of the Commission said it was not mandatory. "NCR States have been implementing GRAP for the past many years and we are leaving this to the discretion of the States whether they want to impose this particular ban.

The State governments may consider additional emergency measures like closure of schools/colleges/ educational institutions, plying of vehicles on odd-even basis etc," reads a similar direction under Stage IV.

Editorial

Scale up the India-South Korea bilateral partnership (Page no. 6)
(GS Paper 2, International Relations)

Indo-Pacific turbulence has reached an all-time high, to the point where it rivals the diverse foreign policy challenges across the United States and Europe.

At a time when the international rules-based order is getting increasingly contested, the options available to governments in the foreign, economic, and security policy areas (including maritime security), are under serious stress.

During the past five years, India and South Korea have experienced considerable divergence in their respective national objectives. There was a clear drift by South Korea away from multilateral security initiatives led by the United States, such as the Quad (the U.S., Australia, India and Japan); meanwhile, India has been actively participating in them.

The newly elected Korean President, Yoon Suk Yeol, has brought about a paradigm shift in South Korean foreign and security policies. He has proposed that South Korea should step up to become a "global pivotal state, anchored in liberal values and a rules-based order", that "advances freedom, peace, and prosperity through liberal democratic values and substantial cooperation". South Korea's new willingness to become a global pivotal state and play an active role in regional affairs is bound to create multiple opportunities for a multi-dimensional India- Korea partnership.

In the last few years, India and South Korea have faced serious blockades to their economic ties. Trade between the two countries was sluggish and there was no major inflow of South Korean investment into India.

India and South Korea were also trying to upgrade their Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) agreement, but to no avail.

South Korea's strategic policy shift to correct its heavy tilt towards China is bound to bring new economic opportunities for both countries.

Both nations will now be in a better position to understand and accommodate the other's trade investments and supply chain needs. The trade target of $50 billion by 2030, which looked all but impossible a few months ago, now seems within reach.

The emerging strategic alignment is creating a new convergence of capabilities and closer synergy in new areas of economic cooperation such as public health, green growth, digital connectivity, and trade, among others.

In 2020, India and South Korea signed a Roadmap for Defence Industries Cooperation between the Republic of India and the Republic of Korea (ROK) deal.

However, due to the lack of political and strategic alignment, nothing came of it. With the strategic shift in South Korea's defence orientation, new doors of cooperation for defence and security have emerged.

Advanced defence technologies and modern combat systems are the new domains for the next level of defence cooperation between the two countries.

OPED

The President is not a mere rubber stamp (Page no. 7)
(GS Paper 2, Polity and Governance)

India is going to elect its new President on July 18. The new President will be sworn in on July 25. Choosing the presidential candidate is an intensely political exercise.

Deep political calculations go into it. It is for this reason that the country is often taken by surprise by the choice the ruling party makes.

But once the President is elected, the excitement subsides and for the next five years not much attention is paid to the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Nevertheless, in the prevailing political atmosphere, the question 'what kind of President does India need?' assumes great significance. It is true that the nominee of the ruling alliance is going to be the next President.

Still, the stature, the moral standing and the level of acceptability of the person are important considerations when the country chooses a new President.

Let us first take a closer look at the President who emerges from the Constitution. There was a great deal of debate in the Constituent Assembly on the President.

The main question debated therein was whether India should have a directly elected President or an indirectly elected one. The Assembly opted for an indirectly elected President.

There were members such as Professor K.T. Shah who strongly argued for a directly elected President. He asked a rhetorical question, which was whether the Assembly wanted the president to be a "sort of mere gramophone of the

Prime Minister." Dr. B.R. Ambedkar said: "Our President is merely a nominal figurehead. He has no discretion; he has no powers of administration at all."
But is the President of India a mere figurehead? Article 53 of the Constitution says that "the executive power of the Union shall be vested in the President and shall be exercised by him either directly or through officers subordinate to him in accordance with this Constitution." It means the President exercises these powers only on the aid and the advice of the Council of Ministers.
So, it makes sense for the people to ask why we should have a President who signs on the dotted line. The way some of our Presidents have acted in the past reinforces that public perception.
But we must not forget that some of our Presidents did live up to the implications of the office of the President of the Republic. So, we come back to the question of how crucial this office is to the governance of the country.
To answer this question, we need to first take a closer look at the method of election of the President. It is an indirect election in the sense that the people do not directly elect the President.

The Sputnik V conundrum (Page no. 7)
(GS Paper 2, Polity and Governance)
The Supreme Court recently dismissed a plea seeking modification of the Indian government's COVID-19 policy to allow voluntary re-vaccination of persons who have been vaccinated with Sputnik V. The petitioner, a recipient of Sputnik V, is unable to go overseas since the World Health Organization (WHO) had not yet certified Sputnik V in its approved list of vaccines.
The petitioner was directed to make a representation before the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in this respect.
The court did not fully appreciate the existing constitutional jurisprudence while dismissing the writ petition. The right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution does not have a mere black-and-white legal meaning.
Whilst undoubtedly referring to an individual's right to live, it means much more than the right of an individual to survival.
A person must embrace all of life's facets in order to fully live. The right to live a fulfilling and respectable life is known as the right to life.
In *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India* (1978), the Supreme Court said "personal liberty" in Article 21 is "of the widest amplitude" covering "a variety of rights which go to constitute the personal liberty of man".
Earlier, in *Satwant Singh Sawhney v. D. Ramarathnam Assistant Passport Officer* (1967), the right to travel abroad was read as an intrinsic part of Article 21. The Supreme Court has time and again reiterated this right to travel abroad.
As recently as 2020, the Supreme Court, in *Parvez Noordin Lokhandwalla v. State of Maharashtra*, held that the right to travel abroad is a part of the fundamental right to dignity and personal liberty.
Interestingly, the Supreme Court in *Satish Chandra Verma v. Union of Indi*a (2019), whilst reiterating the right to travel abroad, went on to equate it to be a basic and as genuine a human right as the right to marry and have a family.
Thus, there is no doubt that it is settled jurisprudence that an Indian citizen has the freedom to go anywhere, work anywhere, and live anywhere. The only way this may be restricted is if the law forbids someone from doing so.
Such a law too would be subject to scrutiny by the court under the constitutional parameters of 'reasonableness'. This well settled Indian jurisprudence of the right to travel abroad finds support in international law as well.
Article 12 of the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantees freedom of movement, including the right of persons to choose their residence, to leave and return to a country.

Explainer

In high-res: unfolding mysteries of the night sky (Page no. 8)
(GS Paper 3, Science and Technology)
On November 30, 1609, Galileo turned his telescope towards the night sky. This singular act revolutionised astronomy. Until then, scholars held that celestial objects were without any kind of blemish.
Galileo showed that the Moon had craters and mountains. All celestial objects, including stars, were thought to go around the Earth. The telescope, by observing phases of Venus firmly established that planets go around the Sun and not the Earth.
The Milky Way, a haze in the dark night teemed with hundreds of stars, established that the cosmos is immense and beyond our imagination.
Galileo revolutionised astronomy using a crude telescope which by today's standards is merely a toy. The first five images released by NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) on July 11, captured by the James Webb

Space Telescope (JWST) is no less momentous in the history of astronomy than the day Galileo turned his telescope toward the heavens.
The deep field image of the SMACS 0723 cluster of galaxies has images that date back to times when the first stars were born. The images from Carina Nebula vividly show the birth of new stars.
In contrast, the Southern Ring Nebula image details a dying star. In Stephan's quintet, the JWST has captured the cataclysmic cosmic collision of galaxies.
By analysing the spectrum of the radiation from WASP-96 b, an exoplanet (a planet orbiting a distant star), the telescope has shown conclusively the presence of water vapour in the atmosphere of this hot, puffy gas giant planet orbiting a distant Sun-like star.
With its sharp vision, more light-collecting area and ability to see in the invisible infrared regions, the JWST is sure to expand our understanding of the cosmos.
Peering back in time About 13.8 billion years ago, through the Big Bang, our Universe emerged. The first stars and galaxies were born around 300 million years after the Big Bang.
To know more about the formation of these stars and galaxies, we do not need a time machine or time travel. As light travels with a velocity of about 3,00,000 km per second, light from a distant object will take time to reach us on Earth. Hence, when we see a distant stellar object, we see it as if it were far back in time. Powerful telescopes are therefore, like time machines

News

Assessing juvenility a 'delicate task': SC (Page no. 12)
(GS Paper 2, Judiciary)
The "delicate task" of deciding whether juveniles aged between 16 and 18, accused of heinous offences such as murder, can be tried like adults should be based on "meticulous psychological investigation" rather than be left to the discretion and perfunctory "wisdom" of juvenile justice boards and children's courts across the country, the Supreme Court held in a judgment.
Section 15 of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act of 2015 requires a "preliminary assessment" to be done of the mental and physical capacity of juveniles, aged between 16 and 18, who are involved in serious crimes.
The assessment is meant to gauge a child's ability to understand the consequences ofthe offence and the circumstances in which he or she allegedly committed the offence.
If the Juvenile Justice Board is of the opinion that the juvenile should not be treated as an adult, it would not pass on the case to the children's court and hear the case itself. In that case, if the child is found guilty, he would be sent to juvenile care for three years.
On the other hand, if the Board decides to refer the case to the children's court for trial as an adult, the juvenile, if guilty, would even face life imprisonment.
"The report of the preliminary assessment decides the germane question of transferring the case of a child between 16 and 18 years of age to the children's court.
This evaluation of 'mental capacity and ability to understand the consequences' of the child in conflict with law can, in no way, be relegated to the status of a perfunctory and a routine task.
The process of taking a decision on which the fate of the child in conflict with law precariously rests, should not be taken without conducting a meticulous psychological evaluation," a Bench of Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Vikram Nath observed.
The court discovered that there were neither guidelines nor a specific framework in place for conduct of the preliminary assessment.
It appears expedient that appropriate and specific guidelines are put in place… We leave it open for the Centre and the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights and the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights to consider issuing guidelines or directions in this regard.
The court said the Board which conducts the assessment of the child should have at least one child psychologist. It should further take the assistance of experienced psychologists or psychosocial workers.
The apex court's judgment came while dismissing the appeals filed by the CBI and the relative of a Class 2 child who was allegedly found murdered in the washroom of his Gurugram school in 2017.

'India has achieved clean energy targets 9 years before deadline (Page no. 12)
(GS Paper 2, Environment)

India has achieved clean energy targets nine years ahead of schedule, Union Power Minister R.K. Singh said at the Sydney Energy Forum in Sydney on Wednesday.
India has installed 162 GW (1 GW is 1,000 MW) of renewable energy capacity, which is 41% of the 402 GW of electricity installed.
"We reached this target on November 2021 and what our Prime Minister did was ask us to raise our ambition and so in Glasgow (at the UN COP-21) our Prime Minister committed to installing 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030, which would then be 50% of the installed capacity.
Despite having among the lowest per capita emissions in the world, we have invested in this energy transition because our traditions teach us to respect and care for our environment. We are not doing this for economic reasons," Mr. Singh said.
In 2015, India committed to ensuring that 40% of its energy would be from renewable sources by 2030 as part of its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).
Ministers from the United States, Japan, India, Indonesia, and the Pacific Island nation of Samoa are attending the forum along with leaders of major companies that are committed to low emissions technologies.
The forum, said a statement from the Australian government, will "foster connections between investors, business and government with a focus on innovations in key clean energy technologies such as solar, hydrogen, critical minerals and batteries".
The energy crisis that has gripped the world has been "some time in the making" and not only due to the Russia-Ukraine war but because of the "cartelisation in the fossil fuel industry."
He said that renewable energy promised to break these cartels though it was possible that there would be newer such cartels forming in manufacturing and the equipment and the world would have to take steps to ensure that these do not coalesce.

Push for wider use of genomics in all countries (Page no. 12)
(GS Paper 2, Science and Technology)
The World Health Organization's Science Council, in its first report, has called for accelerating access to genomics across the world.
The report argues that it is not justifiable ethically or scientifically for countries with lesser resources to gain access to such technologies long after the rich countries do.
The field of genomics tries to use human genetic material to study and research cures and treatments for medical conditions, and is used in a wide range of applications in animal sciences, and agriculture.
After the WHO constituted the Science Council of experts in April 2021 to provide guidance on the science and research strategy of the organisation, it identified genomics as the focus of its first report.
The report calls for expanding access to genomic technologies, particularly in low- and middle-income nations, by addressing shortfalls in financing, laboratory infrastructure, materials, and highly trained personnel.
Noting that the costs of setting up genomic technologies are definitely heading south, making them all that more affordable, it is essential to lower them further.
Harold Varmus, a Nobel Laureate and former Director of the U.S. National Institutes of Health, who also chairs the Science Council said: "It is already clear that genomics can make enormous contributions to human health, from surveying populations for infectious agents, such as the virus that causes COVID-19, to predicting and treating a wide variety of diseases, such as cancers and developmental disorders.
Genomic technologies are driving some of the most ground-breaking research happening today. Yet the benefits of these tools will not be fully realised unless they are deployed worldwide.
Only through equity can science reach its full potential impact and improve health for everyone, everywhere. The report also makes a series of recommendations addressing four themes — advocacy, implementation, collaboration, and associated ethical, legal and social issues — to promote wider use of genomics.

World

I2U2 can become a regional feature like the Quad: Jake Sullivan (Page no. 13)
(GS Paper 2, International Relations)
The U.S. believes that 'I2U2', a group comprising India, Israel, the U.S., and the UAE, can become "a feature" of the West Asian region, just like the Quad is for the Indo-Pacific.
This idea was articulated by U.S. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan on board Air Force One, *en route* to Israel with U.S. President Joe Biden.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to meet virtually with Mr. Biden, Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid and UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan .

And we think I2U2 can become a feature of the broader region, just as the Quad has become a central pillar of the Indo-Pacific strategy of the United States," Mr. Sullivan told the travelling press as per a transcript released by the White House.

His remarks were made in response to a question on what the objective was in bringing India "into so many issues" such as the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, the Quad and I2U2.

Mr. Sullivan said India was one of the most "strategically consequential countries" in the Indo-Pacific and therefore "should" play a central role in U.S. strategy. India also had a long-standing relationship with the Gulf countries and Israel, he said, adding that the U.S. was looking forward to Mr. Modi's participation in the I2U2 summit.

India and the West Asian countries in I2U2 could come together and work on agricultural technology, an example of Mr. Biden's vision for West Asia, according to Mr. Sullivan.

He said Mr. Biden had a vision for a globally integrated West Asian region, one that is not "just focused on issues that have been top of mind for American foreign policymakers over the last 20 years — terrorism and wars".

Mr. Sullivan said there would be a "significant" announcement around food security and agricultural technology from the I2U2 meeting, as this was an area where there was a current crisis that the four countries could come together to address.