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Headlines:

- Women's Workforce Participation: A Key to Viksit Bharat @2047
- Qdenga: India's First Approved Dengue Vaccine
- Ensuring the Safety and Welfare of Indian Seafarers
- U.S. Tariffs on Forced Labour Imports and India's Response
- Supreme Court on Regulation of Live-streamed Court Proceedings



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1. Women's Workforce Participation: A Key to Viksit Bharat @2047

GS Paper III – Indian Economy (Employment, Inclusive Growth & Human Resource Development)

Why in News?

An editorial has highlighted that enhancing women's workforce participation is essential for sustaining high economic growth, addressing unemployment, and achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

Current Scenario

- Despite significant improvements in female education, India's Female Labour Force Participation Rate (FLFPR) remains low by global standards.
- While recent years have witnessed an increase in women's participation, a considerable proportion is concentrated in informal, unpaid family work, particularly in agriculture, with unemployment among educated young women remaining a major concern.

Economic Significance

- Expands the labour force, increasing productive capacity.
- Boosts GDP growth through higher labour force participation.
- Raises household incomes, savings and domestic consumption.
- Enhances productivity, innovation and industrial competitiveness.
- Strengthens India's demographic dividend and long-term economic resilience.

Structural Constraints

- Slow growth of labour-intensive manufacturing limiting employment opportunities.
- High dependence on informal and unpaid family work, especially in rural areas.
- Mechanisation reducing traditional agricultural employment for women.
- Skill mismatch and limited access to industry-relevant skilling and digital training.
- Occupational segregation, gender wage gaps, safety concerns and mobility constraints.

Regional Dimension

- Southern States, particularly Tamil Nadu, have achieved higher female workforce participation through industrialisation, better education, robust manufacturing ecosystems, and improved transport and hostel facilities.
- In contrast, several northern States continue to witness lower participation due to weaker industrial development, lower female mobility and socio-cultural barriers.

Government Initiatives

- **Skill India Mission:** Enhances employability through industry-oriented skill development and vocational training.

- **PM Vishwakarma:** Provides skill upgradation, credit support and market linkages for traditional artisans and craftspeople.
- **PM Mudra Yojana (PMMY):** Offers collateral-free loans to micro and small enterprises, encouraging women-led entrepreneurship.
- **Stand-Up India:** Facilitates bank loans for women and SC/ST entrepreneurs to establish greenfield enterprises.
- **Mission Shakti:** Promotes women's safety, empowerment and socio-economic inclusion through integrated support services.
- **PM Internship Scheme:** Provides industry exposure and practical work experience to improve youth employability.
- **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme:** Promotes domestic manufacturing, attracts investments and generates large-scale employment, particularly in labour-intensive sectors.

Way Forward

- Promote labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, food processing, electronics and footwear.
- Align skilling programmes with industry demand and emerging technologies.
- Expand childcare facilities, safe transport and women-friendly workplaces.
- Encourage women's entrepreneurship, formal employment and financial inclusion.
- Increase investments in education, healthcare and gender-responsive labour policies.

Enhancing women's workforce participation is essential for achieving inclusive, sustainable and employment-led economic growth. It advances SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) while strengthening India's productivity and global competitiveness. Unlocking the economic potential of women will be crucial to realizing the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat @2047.

2. Qdenga: India's First Approved Dengue Vaccine

(GS Paper II – Health | GS Paper III – Science & Technology)

Why in News?

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has approved Qdenga, India's first licensed dengue vaccine, marking a significant milestone in the country's fight against dengue.

About Qdenga

- Developed by Takeda (Japan).
- A live attenuated tetravalent vaccine designed to protect against all four dengue virus serotypes (DENV-1, DENV-2, DENV-3 and DENV-4).
- Administered in two doses, three months apart.
- Can be administered without prior screening for previous dengue infection.
- Has received WHO Prequalification, facilitating global recognition and procurement.

Why is Developing a Dengue Vaccine Challenging?

- Dengue has four distinct serotypes, requiring balanced immunity against all.
- Infection with one serotype offers limited protection against others.
- Risk of Antibody-Dependent Enhancement (ADE) may increase disease severity during subsequent infections.
- Vaccine efficacy may vary depending on circulating serotypes and prior exposure.

Significance

- Strengthens India's dengue prevention strategy alongside vector-control measures.
- Reduces the risk of severe dengue, hospitalisation and disease burden.
- Supports public health preparedness against expanding dengue transmission.
- Enhances India's immunisation ecosystem through access to an internationally approved vaccine.

Challenges

- Protection varies across different dengue serotypes.
- Ensuring completion of the two-dose schedule.
- Affordability and equitable access for vulnerable populations.
- Continued dependence on effective mosquito control and disease surveillance.

Way Forward

- Integrate vaccination with Integrated Vector Management (IVM).
- Ensure affordable pricing and equitable distribution.
- Strengthen surveillance for dengue serotypes and vaccine effectiveness.
- Promote public awareness on source reduction, early diagnosis and timely treatment.

3. Ensuring the Safety and Welfare of Indian Seafarers

(GS Paper II – International Relations (Welfare of Indians Abroad) | GS Paper III – Maritime Security & Blue Economy)

Why in News?

The recent geopolitical tensions in West Asia have exposed the vulnerabilities faced by Indian seafarers working on international commercial vessels, prompting the Government to strengthen monitoring and assistance mechanisms.

Current Scenario

- India is the second-largest supplier of seafarers globally, contributing over 12% of the world's seafaring workforce.
- Indian seafarers serve on vessels owned, managed and flagged by different countries, making legal responsibility and emergency response highly complex.

Key Challenges

- Multi-jurisdictional issues involving flag States, shipowners, insurers and port authorities.
- Threats from armed conflicts, piracy, missile attacks and maritime terrorism.
- Crew abandonment, delayed repatriation and inadequate legal protection.
- Lack of transparency regarding vessel ownership, insurance and operational risks.
- Difficulty in providing timely consular assistance across multiple jurisdictions.

Government Initiatives

- **Seafarer First Initiative:** Tracks Indian seafarers in conflict zones and coordinates emergency assistance.
- **Real-time Monitoring Dashboard:** Monitors vessels, threat levels and crew welfare.
- **Family Liaison Officers:** Provide regular updates and support to affected families.
- **Directorate General of Shipping (DGS):** Issues advisories and restricts deployment in designated high-risk maritime regions.

Way Forward

- Establish a dedicated Maritime Consular Protocol for rapid crisis response.
- Strengthen implementation of the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), 2006.
- Enhance coordination with flag States, port States, shipowners and insurers.
- Improve pre-deployment risk disclosure and ensure safe repatriation mechanisms.
- Promote international cooperation through the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and International Labour Organization (ILO).

Protecting Indian seafarers is integral to India's maritime interests and global shipping leadership. A robust framework for maritime security, labour protection and consular support will strengthen the Blue Economy, safeguard Indian citizens abroad and reinforce India's vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and Viksit Bharat @2047.

4. U.S. Tariffs on Forced Labour Imports and India's Response

(GS Paper II – International Relations (India–U.S. Relations) | GS Paper III – Economy (International Trade & Global Supply Chains))

Why in News?

The United States has announced permanent tariffs on imports from several trading partners following an investigation into forced labour practices. India will continue to face a 10% tariff, after introducing a ban on imports of goods produced using forced labour.

Key Developments

- Tariffs are based on an investigation under Section 301 of the U.S. Trade Act, 1974.
- The U.S. linked market access to compliance with forced labour import prohibitions.

- India's recent notification banning imports of goods produced through forced labour reduced the proposed tariff from 12.5% to 10%.
- A separate U.S. investigation into excess manufacturing capacity remains under consideration.

Significance for India

- Reinforces India's commitment to ethical and responsible trade practices.
- Enhances India's credibility in Global Value Chains (GVCs).
- Promotes compliance with international labour standards, improving export competitiveness.
- Strengthens India's image as a reliable manufacturing and sourcing destination.

Key Concerns

- Additional tariffs may increase the cost of Indian exports in the U.S. market.
- Exporters may face higher compliance and due diligence costs.
- Labour-related trade measures could increasingly act as Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs).
- Future U.S. trade investigations may result in additional trade restrictions.

Way Forward

- Strengthen enforcement against forced labour across supply chains.
- Improve traceability and transparency in exports.
- Diversify export markets and enhance trade resilience.
- Continue bilateral engagement to resolve trade concerns and conclude a balanced trade agreement.

5. Supreme Court on Regulation of Live-streamed Court Proceedings

(GS Paper II – Polity & Governance (Judiciary, Transparency & Administration of Justice))

Why in News?

The Supreme Court has prohibited the unauthorised extraction, editing, dissemination, reposting and monetisation of audio-video recordings of live-streamed court proceedings on social media and digital platforms without prior permission from the concerned court authorities.

Background

- The order was passed in response to concerns over selective clipping, misrepresentation and commercial exploitation of live-streamed judicial proceedings.
- It reinforces the 2022 Model Rules for Live-streaming and Recording of Court Proceedings, which prohibit unauthorised recording and dissemination.

Significance

- Preserves the dignity, integrity and sanctity of judicial proceedings.
- Prevents the spread of misleading or out-of-context courtroom clips.
- Promotes responsible use of digital platforms while maintaining judicial transparency.
- Strengthens public confidence in the administration of justice.

Constitutional & Legal Dimensions

- Upholds the Open Court Principle, which promotes transparency and public access to justice.
- Balances Article 19(1)(a) (Freedom of Speech and Expression) with reasonable restrictions under Article 19(2).
- Ensures that transparency does not undermine the fairness or credibility of judicial proceedings.

Key Challenges

- Rapid dissemination of edited or misleading content through social media.
- Commercial exploitation of judicial proceedings.
- Balancing transparency with privacy, fair trial and judicial independence.
- Monitoring and enforcement across digital platforms.

Way Forward

- Strict implementation of the Model Rules for Live-streaming by all courts.
- Develop clear protocols for the use and sharing of judicial recordings.
- Promote responsible media reporting and digital ethics.
- Enhance public legal awareness while safeguarding the independence and credibility of the judiciary.

Live-streaming has strengthened access to justice and judicial transparency. However, ensuring its responsible use is equally important. A balanced framework that protects open justice, prevents misuse of judicial content and preserves the dignity of courts is essential for strengthening the rule of law and public trust in the judiciary.

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