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A growth story that needs women at work

Prelims: General Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance.

Mains: General studies 1

Role of women and women's organization, population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

Why in Focus?

- India's vision of **Viksit Bharat (Developed India) by 2047** faces challenges due to **rising unemployment and low female Work Participation Rate (WPR)**.
- Recent economic shocks have highlighted deeper **structural issues in job creation and inclusive growth**.

Key Highlights:

- Youth unemployment** has increased sharply, nearly doubling compared to 2012, reflecting weak employment generation.
- Economic disruptions due to **Demonetisation (2016)**, issues in **GST (Goods and Services Tax)**, **NBFC (Non-Banking Financial Company) crisis**, and **COVID-19 pandemic** affected growth momentum.
- Structural transformation has reversed, with **increase in farm employment** and decline in manufacturing share in **GVA (Gross Value Added)** and jobs.

Gross Value Added (GVA) is the total value of goods and services produced in an economy after subtracting the **cost of intermediate inputs (raw materials, components, fuel, machinery parts)** used in production.

- Female WPR remains below 30%**, one of the lowest globally, and declined consistently between 1983 and 2018.
- The post-2020 rise in female participation is mainly **distress-driven**, with an increase in **UFL (Unpaid Family Labour)** in agriculture.
- Growth is concentrated in **capital-intensive sectors** like IT and finance, which generate limited employment.
- Regional success seen in **Tamil Nadu - employs over 40% of India's women factory workers**, despite having only **5-6% of India's population**.

Implications:

- Jobless growth:** Economic growth not translating into sufficient employment opportunities..
- Decline in labour-intensive sectors** (textiles, garments, MSMEs) reducing employment avenues for women.
- Rising **educated female unemployment** and increase in **NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training)** population.
- Gender barriers** such as social norms, safety concerns, and limited mobility restricting workforce participation.



- **Regional disparities**, especially between southern and northern states in human development and employment outcomes.

Way Forward:

- Strengthen **labour-intensive manufacturing sectors** to boost large-scale employment generation.
- Enhance **female education, skilling, and job-market alignment** to improve employability.
- Invest in **public health and education**, particularly in underdeveloped regions.
- Improve **safety, transport, and hostel facilities** to increase women's workforce participation.
- Promote **formalisation of employment** and reduce dependence on **unpaid labour** through targeted policies.

Mains Question:

"India's aspiration to become a developed economy by 2047 depends significantly on improving female labour force participation." Discuss the structural challenges affecting women's employment in India and suggest measures to address them. (15 marks, 250 words)

India's foreign policy must look seaward

Prelims : General Studies Paper I

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies 2

Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Why in Focus?

- Recent attacks linked to the **West Asia conflict** have highlighted the **safety and welfare of Indian seafarers** working on commercial ships.

Key Highlights:

- India has about **3.2 lakh seafarers** and contributes over **12% of the global seafarer workforce**, making it the world's second-largest supplier after the Philippines.

- Indian seafarers often **work on foreign-flagged ships**, making it **difficult to determine responsibility** during accidents, conflicts, or abandonment.
- According to the **International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)**, **1,125 Indian seafarers were abandoned in 2025**, the highest among all countries.
- The Government launched the **'Seafarer First'** initiative to track Indian seafarers in **West Asia**, monitor threats, and provide a **liaison officer** for affected families.

Implications:

- Indian seafarers face risks from multiple security threats.
 - » **Wars, missile attacks, drones, piracy, hostage-taking, and mines**, especially in the **Red Sea, Black Sea, Gulf of Aden, West Africa, and the Strait of Hormuz**.
- It is often **unclear who is responsible** for their safety, as different countries may be involved through the **ship's flag, owner, cargo, insurer, and location**.
- India's **bilateral maritime agreements** mainly **focus on jobs and certificate recognition**, with limited provisions for legal assistance and repatriation.
- Recruitment agencies may not always provide complete information about **high-risk routes, sanctions**, or the **ownership history** of ships.

Way Forward:

- Develop a **permanent maritime consular protocol** for faster assistance during emergencies.
- Strengthen **consular support** in major shipping centres with dedicated maritime officers.
- Improve **information sharing** and ensure seafarers are informed about **high-risk voyages** before signing contracts.
- Work with countries such as the **Philippines and Indonesia through the International Maritime Organization and International Labour Organization**.
- **Develop common global standards** for repatriation, detention, and deployment in conflict zones.

Mains Question

Indian seafarers are increasingly exposed to geopolitical and maritime security risks despite their significant contribution to global shipping. Discuss the challenges and suggest measures to strengthen their protection. (250 Words)

On guard: on India and the Qdenga dengue vaccine

Prelims: General Studies Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies 2

Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Why in Focus?

- The **Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)** has approved **Qdenga (TAK-003)**, making it the first dengue vaccine approved in India, amid the country's rising dengue burden and **expanding spread of Aedes mosquitoes**.

Key Highlights

- Qdenga (TAK-003) is a **live-attenuated tetravalent dengue vaccine** developed by Japan-based pharmaceutical company Takeda.
- It is **licensed in over 40 countries** and has received **World Health Organization (WHO)** prequalification.
- Dengue is caused by **four antigenically distinct serotypes : Dengue Virus-1 (DENV-1), DENV-2, DENV-3 and DENV-4** and is primarily transmitted by **Aedes aegypti mosquitoes**.

Aedes aegypti mosquito: A mosquito species that acts as the main carrier (vector) of the dengue virus. It can also spread diseases such as Zika, chikungunya and yellow fever.

- Vaccine development is complicated by **Antibody-Dependent Enhancement (ADE)**.

Antibody-Dependent Enhancement (ADE): A condition where existing antibodies help a virus infect cells more easily instead of protecting the body, making the infection more severe.

- Unlike the earlier Dengvaxia vaccine, **Qdenga can be administered without prior screening for previous dengue infection**.
- Qdenga provides its strongest protection against DENV-2, followed by DENV-1, while uncertainty remains over protection against DENV-3 and DENV-4 among dengue-naïve individuals.
- This is **significant for India as DENV-2 is common, while DENV-3 prevalence is increasing**, potentially affecting vaccine effectiveness.
- Qdenga requires two doses administered three months apart**, making completion of the vaccination schedule crucial.

Implications

- Limited protection against DENV-3 and DENV-4**, especially in people who have never had dengue before.
- Rising DENV-3 prevalence** in India may reduce vaccine effectiveness.
- Two-dose compliance may be difficult among migrant and mobile populations**.
- High vaccine prices may restrict access** for vulnerable populations.
- Aedes mosquitoes are expanding into semi-urban and rural areas**.
- Vaccination cannot replace surveillance, sanitation and vector-control measures**.

Way Forward

- Negotiate affordable pricing** to ensure equitable vaccine access.
- Strengthen surveillance** to guide vaccination strategies.
- Ensure timely completion** of both vaccine doses.
- Improve vector control, sanitation and drainage management**.
- Strengthen post-vaccination surveillance** for safety and effectiveness.



Mains Question

“The introduction of a dengue vaccine can strengthen India’s fight against dengue, but vaccination alone cannot ensure effective disease control.” Discuss the opportunities and challenges associated with the rollout of Qdenga in India. (250 Words)

KEYWORDS

Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana Rasayan (BHAVYA Rasayan) Scheme

- The Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana Rasayan (BHAVYA Rasayan) Scheme **aims to establish three dedicated Chemical Parks in India and was announced in the Union Budget 2026–27.**
- The **scheme has a total financial outlay of ₹3,030 crore and will operate for five years** from FY 2026–27 to FY 2030–31.
- The **Central Government will provide a grant of up to ₹1,000 crore per park, subject to a minimum contribution of ₹500 crore by the concerned State Government.**
- The **three Chemical Parks will be developed by State Governments**
- with each park requiring at least 8 sq. km (2,000 acres) of contiguous, encumbrance-free land.
- The **parks will provide plug-and-play common infrastructure, including Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs), Treatment, Storage and Disposal Facilities (TSDFs), water supply systems, solvent recovery facilities, interconnected pipelines,**
- thereby improving competitiveness and environmental compliance of the chemical industry.

Large Language Models (LLMs)

- Large Language Models (LLMs) are **Artificial Intelligence (AI) programs capable of understanding, interpreting and generating human-like text and other complex data.**
- Examples: **ChatGPT (OpenAI), Gemini (Google), Claude (Anthropic), Llama (Meta), DeepSeek.**

- They are **trained on massive datasets, often containing enormous amounts of text;** the quality of training data significantly affects their performance.
- They **employ deep learning to identify patterns in unstructured data** and can be fine-tuned or prompt-tuned for specific tasks.
- LLMs can **perform tasks such as answering questions, summarising text, translating languages, writing code and generating content,** but face challenges such as high computational requirements, ethical concerns and limitations in understanding context.

Dengue

- **Dengue (break-bone fever)** is a **viral disease** transmitted to humans through the bite of **infected female Aedes mosquitoes,** mainly **Aedes aegypti.**
- It is **more common in tropical and subtropical regions** than in **temperate climates.**
- Most infected people **have no symptoms.** Common symptoms include **high fever, headache, body aches, nausea, and rash.**
- Most patients **recover within 1-2 weeks,** but some develop **severe dengue,** which requires **hospital care** and can be **fatal.**
- **Laboratory-based** and **point-of-care diagnostics** are essential for the **control and management** of dengue, but **unequal laboratory capacity** remains a major challenge.
- **Mosquitoes become infected** when they bite a person with the **dengue virus (DENV)** in their blood and can then transmit the virus to other people

CERT-In (Indian Computer Emergency Response Team)

- It serves as the **national nodal agency for responding to computer security incidents**, operating under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**.
- The agency has **statutory backing under Section 70B of the Information Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008**, which defines its legal mandate and authority.
- Its core functions include **collection, analysis, and dissemination of cyber threat intelligence**, issuing **vulnerability notes**, and **coordinating emergency response** during major cyber attacks.
- It also supports citizens through the **Cyber Swachhta Kendra (Botnet Cleaning and Malware Analysis Centre)**, providing **free tools to detect and remove malware** from devices.

Places in News

Black Sea



- The Black Sea is a **large inland sea located at the junction of Europe and Asia** and is considered a marginal sea of the Atlantic Ocean.
- It is **bordered by Ukraine, Russia, Georgia, Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania**, while the **Crimean Peninsula** projects into it from the north.
- The **Black Sea connects to the Mediterranean Sea through the Bosphorus Strait → Sea of Marmara → Dardanelles Strait → Aegean Sea**, and ultimately to the Atlantic Ocean.
- The **Kerch Strait connects the Black Sea with the Sea of Azov**, while major rivers draining into it include the Danube, Dnieper, Dniester, Southern Bug and Rioni.
- The **Black Sea has lower salinity than the world's oceans and is strategically**

important as a major maritime route for transporting goods from Eastern Europe to global markets.

Sebastia, West Bank



- **Sebastia** is an **archaeological site** in the **occupied West Bank**, located near **Nablus city**.
- It is identified as **ancient Samaria**, the **capital of the biblical Kingdom of Israel**, with a history of **over 3,000 years**.
- **Herod the Great** rebuilt the city, renamed it **Sebastia**, and added monuments that survived through the **Roman, Byzantine, Arab, and Crusader periods**.
- Under the **Oslo Accords**, the **archaeological mound** lies in **Area C** (under **Israeli civil and security control**), while the adjacent town is



in **Area B** (under **shared Palestinian-Israeli administration**).

- UNESCO has added Sebastia to the World Heritage List.

Glasgow



- **Glasgow** is currently in the news as the **host of the 2026 Commonwealth Games**, making history by introducing **medals with Braille and tactile elements** for **visually impaired athletes**.
- Geographically, it is the **largest and most populous city in Scotland**, situated along the banks of the **River Clyde**, which historically provided **crucial access to the Atlantic Ocean** for maritime trade.
- In global environmental diplomacy, it hosted the **2021 UN Climate Change Conference (COP26)**, which resulted in the landmark **Glasgow Climate Pact** and the **Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use**.
- Historically referred to as the **"Second City of the British Empire,"** it was a major global hub for **shipbuilding, marine engineering, and heavy industry** during the **Industrial Revolution**.
- On the cultural front, Glasgow is part of the **UNESCO Creative Cities Network** and was designated as a **UNESCO City of Music (2008)**.