



Sanskritii IAS



THE HINDU



The Indian EXPRESS

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EDITORIALS

24th Mar 2026

TOPICS:-

- 1. The evolving diagnostic landscape for tuberculosis**
(GS Paper III - Science and Technology)
- 2. Surplus heat is new climate challenge**
(GS Paper III - Environment and Ecology)
- 3. For transgenders, law makes them ask who they are**
(GS Paper II - Polity)

DELHI CENTRE:
636, Mukherjee Nagar
New Delhi-110009

PRAYAGRAJ CENTRE:
1/1/8A, Stanley Rd,
Maharana Pratap Chauraha,
Civil Lines, Prayagraj, UP - 211002

 **9555-124-124**

 **sanskritiiias.com**

1. THE EVOLVING DIAGNOSTIC LANDSCAPE FOR TUBERCULOSIS

(GS Paper III - Science and Technology)

This editorial ‘**The evolving diagnostic landscape for tuberculosis**’ was published in **The Hindu** on 24th Mar 2026, highlights how India’s expanding **TB diagnostic toolbox** can improve early detection, treatment outcomes and elimination efforts.

Expanding community-based TB detection

- **WHO** has endorsed new **point-of-care molecular tests**, tongue swabs and sputum pooling, marking a major shift in TB diagnosis.
- Portable **chest X-ray** with **AI** has become the most visible screening advance, now used in India through community-based efforts.
- Under **NTEP** and the **Pradhan Mantri TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyan**, portable CXR machines are being used to take active TB screening into communities.
- Mobile AI-enabled screening reduces dependence on hospital-based technicians and radiologists, making access more convenient.
- On-the-spot **sputum collection** after abnormal CXR findings is necessary to reduce attrition in the diagnostic cascade.
- CXR screening can also identify non-TB lung conditions, enabling referral for other respiratory illnesses.
- Better **microplanning** can help target vulnerable groups, especially in urban and tribal settings.

Shift from smear microscopy to molecular testing

- India long relied on **sputum smear microscopy**, despite its low sensitivity and inability to detect drug resistance.
- Molecular scale-up began in **2016** with **CBNAAT** and later expanded through the indigenous **Truenat** in 2020.
- With more Indian products now available, decentralised molecular testing has become central to the TB programme.
- Access to upfront **NAAT** before treatment remains uneven, despite the need for universal pre-treatment molecular testing.
- India must strengthen sample collection and transport, especially for the elderly, persons with disabilities and people in hard-to-reach areas.

- Faster first-line and second-line **drug-resistance testing** is needed so drug-resistant patients start the correct regimen early.

A wider diagnostic toolbox, not a single solution

- WHO's endorsement of NPOC-NAAT expands molecular testing options at primary-care level with lower infrastructure dependence.
- Non-sputum samples such as **tongue swabs** are especially useful for people unable to produce good sputum samples, including children.
- No single new test is a complete solution; the value lies in combining tools within an optimised diagnostic network.
- Diagnostic planning must decide which tools suit which settings and where they should be placed to keep care accessible and affordable.
- India must field-test these tools through **implementation research** so scale-up decisions match real-world conditions.
- Future diagnostic algorithms should combine **AI-enabled CXR** and molecular tests to detect TB and antibiotic resistance more efficiently.

Research gaps in infection, asymptomatic TB and children

- Innovation assessment and procurement pathways should be streamlined while keeping evidence review rigorous through **ICMR** and health technology assessment.
- For TB infection and **TPT**, India needs cheaper, easy-to-use biomarkers that identify people at high risk of progression.
- The **National TB Survey** shows asymptomatic TB is a serious problem, making symptom-based screening alone inadequate.
- Greater access to chest X-ray helps, but faster and less invasive tools using saliva and other **non-sputum samples** are still needed.
- Childhood TB remains difficult to diagnose because children often cannot produce sputum and usually have low bacterial load.
- Stool-based testing in children has been tried in some countries, but needs more implementation research.

The unresolved burden of extra-pulmonary TB

- Diagnosing **extra-pulmonary TB** remains difficult, costly and often inaccessible, despite its large share in India's TB burden.

- Misdiagnosis and delayed diagnosis increase both poor outcomes and **catastrophic costs** for families.
- Some global pilots are using **AI-enabled portable ultrasound** with molecular testing for EPTB.
- India still needs country-specific evidence, including on **cost-effectiveness**, before such approaches can be adopted at scale.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Need for an equity-centred public health approach to tuberculosis

- **Last-mile gaps persist:** Tribal and urban-vulnerable groups still face delayed TB care, which is why **TB Mukh Bharat Abhiyan** prioritises high-risk populations and early screening.
- **Children remain under-served:** Childhood **TB** is harder to confirm because children often cannot produce sputum and tend to have low bacterial load, a gap recognised in national guidance.
- **Age and disability create barriers:** The elderly, persons with disabilities and the very sick often struggle with sample submission and travel, which is why differentiated-care guidance stresses assisted access.
- **EPTB remains exclusionary:** **Extra-pulmonary TB** often needs more referrals, imaging and specialist evaluation, making diagnosis slower and costlier than routine pulmonary TB.
- **Household costs stay high:** TB still imposes serious social and economic strain on families, a concern long highlighted in India's TB programme documents.
- **Care quality is uneven:** Access to timely, patient-centred TB services still varies across districts and vulnerable groups, which is why India has issued **Differentiated TB Care** guidance.
- **Technology is not enough:** New diagnostics help, but untreated TB can still infect **10 to 15 people a year**, so inclusive follow-up and continuity of care remain essential.

2. SURPLUS HEAT IS NEW CLIMATE CHALLENGE

(GS Paper III - Environment and Ecology)

This editorial ‘**Surplus heat is new climate challenge**’ was published in **The Indian Express** on 24th Mar 2026, highlights how **accumulated excess heat** in the Earth system has become a deeper **climate threat** despite advances in clean energy.

Rising emissions and worsening atmospheric imbalance

- **WMO’s State of Climate Report** confirms the last 10 years were the hottest on record, with the last decade ending at a historic peak.
- Atmospheric **carbon dioxide** is about 50 per cent above pre-industrial levels, showing continued greenhouse gas accumulation.
- In **2025**, even as renewables became the leading source of electricity, global emissions still reached record levels.
- Current decarbonisation progress is far too slow to match the world’s rising energy demand.
- **Carbon dioxide** has reached its highest level in 2 million years, while **methane** and **nitrous oxide** are at their highest in 800,000 years.
- The report adds a new warning that record **GHG** levels have already disturbed Earth’s energy equilibrium.

Surplus heat is the central climate danger

- Ideally, incoming radiation and outgoing heat should remain broadly balanced, but that equilibrium has been disrupted.
- Excess **heat** has accumulated over the last six decades, creating a long-duration warming burden.
- Even if **GHG emissions** stopped completely, the planet would continue warming because of this stored heat.
- The seas and oceans have become the main repositories of excess energy trapped by greenhouse gases.
- Warming oceans are already creating conditions for stronger **tropical storms**.
- Melting ice is raising sea levels and weakening the planet’s ability to reflect solar radiation back into space.
- This feedback further worsens the underlying **energy imbalance**.

Policy response must be long-term and insulated from politics

- Incremental changes are unlikely to alter the trajectory of **extreme weather events**.
- Green production alone is insufficient; governments must also build more resilient infrastructure.
- Greater investment in **early warning systems** is necessary to protect vulnerable populations.
- Because the energy imbalance may unfold over decades, policy must support sustained **long-term investments** and research.
- Governments must show the resolve and creativity to treat climate risk as a structural challenge, not a temporary disruption.
- The editorial's political message is that **climate policy** must be insulated from short-term politics.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Climate change as a crisis of risk governance and adaptation capacity

- **Losses are compounding:** Climate extremes now destroy homes and critical infrastructure more frequently, and **WMO** says 2024 saw the highest annual new displacements since **2008**.
- **Adaptation is underfunded:** Resilience remains weaker than the risk, as **UNEP** estimates the adaptation finance gap at **\$284-339 billion** a year in 2023.
- **Cities face cascading risk:** Urban climate impacts are no longer isolated, because **IPCC AR6** notes cities face compounding and cascading risks from climate change plus urbanisation.
- **Vulnerability is unequal:** Climate shocks hit poorer and fragile regions harder, with **WMO** noting hazards are far deadlier in places with lower resilience and capacity.
- **Warnings are not enough:** Early warning remains incomplete, since only about **half of countries** have adequate multi-hazard early warning systems.
- **Planning still lags risk:** Adaptation is still not embedded deeply enough in development choices, even as **IPCC** highlights urban greening, wetlands and forests as proven risk-reduction options.

3. FOR TRANSGENDERS, LAW MAKES THEM ASK WHO THEY ARE

(GS Paper II - Polity)

This editorial 'For transgenders, law makes them ask who they are' was published in **The Indian Express** on 24th Mar 2026, highlights how the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026** may dilute the constitutional principle of gender self-identification.

Constitutional basis of gender identity

- India's constitutional engagement with gender identity reached a defining moment in **NALSA (2014)**.
- The **Supreme Court** recognised the right of transgender persons to determine gender identity as part of dignity, autonomy and equality.
- **NALSA** rejected biological determinism and treated gender identity as rooted in self-perception and lived experience.
- By linking gender identity with **Articles 14, 15, 19 and 21**, the Court gave self-identification a constitutional foundation.
- The judgment recognised that gender identity does not depend on **medical** or surgical validation.

How the Amendment Bill alters the definition

- The **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026** seeks to fundamentally recast the statutory meaning of "transgender person".
- The redefinition of **Section 2(k)** restricts transgender identity to two groups.
- One category covers those linked to historically recognised socio-cultural communities such as **hijra, kinner, aravani and jogta**.
- The second covers persons with congenital variations in **sex characteristics**.
- This marks a clear departure from the **2019 Act**, which covered persons whose gender identity does not correspond with assigned sex at birth, irrespective of medical transition.
- The Bill's **Statement of Objects and Reasons** says protection should not extend to those claiming gender identity on self-perceived characteristics alone.

Tension with NALSA's rights-based framework

- The Bill sits uneasily with NALSA, which decisively rejected biology as the definitive marker of sex or gender.
- The editorial invokes **Corbett vs Corbett (1970)** as an example of the biological approach that NALSA refused to follow.
- By grounding recognition in congenital variation or community membership, the Bill privileges **biological determinism**.
- This risks shifting the framework from recognition of rights to **state verification** of identity.
- A rights-based promise grounded in **autonomy** may thus be transformed into a conditional legal status.
- Administrative convenience, the editorial argues, cannot override **constitutional guarantees**.

Broader legal and legislative concerns

- The amendment reflects a deeper conceptual difficulty in law's understanding of **gender identity**.
- Scholarly work treats "transgender" as an umbrella term covering diverse identities and experiences, including those without medical transition.
- Legal definitions based mainly on biology can collapse distinctions between **intersex variations**, gender identity and socio-cultural communities.
- Such conflation can restructure legal recognition around **pathology** rather than personhood.
- The editorial argues that meaningful **consultation** with transgender communities is essential for legitimate law-making.
- Earlier phases of transgender legislation in India, including the road to the **2019 Act**, were already criticised for insufficient engagement.
- The real legislative challenge is to design institutions that implement rights without undermining **self-determination**.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Citizenship, personhood and the limits of state recognition

- **Identity cannot rest only on State approval:** When legal recognition depends on official certification, dignity risks being reduced to administrative permission, contrary to **NALSA (2014)**.

- **Personhood is wider than biology:** Constitutional rights flow from personhood, not anatomy alone, as **NALSA** rejected biological determinism in gender recognition.
- **Citizenship must protect autonomy:** A constitutional democracy must secure selfhood and choice, much like **Puttaswamy (2017)** linked privacy with decisional autonomy.
- **Verification can erode equality:** Once the State moves from recognition to verification, access to rights can become selective and exclusionary under **Articles 14 and 21**.
- **Marginalised groups face greater scrutiny:** Communities already facing stigma are more vulnerable to harassment when identity depends on bureaucratic validation, as seen in many welfare-document disputes.
- **Constitutional morality demands inclusion:** Rights-based law should widen recognition of lived realities, just as **Navtej Johar (2018)** privileged dignity over social prejudice.