

Editorial of the Day – 19.11.2025

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1.Excessive dependence – On India's external trade landscape – (TH)

General Studies 3 – Economy Topic – Trade, Balance of Payments (Bop), Exchange Rate.

Introduction – The Need for Structural Trade Transformation

India is facing a critical juncture in its external trade dynamics, highlighted by a record trade deficit in October. This deterioration is not merely cyclical but signals a potential structural shift requiring strategic trade realignment. The combination of falling exports, a surge in safe-haven imports (precious metals), and the imposition of steep U.S. tariffs underlines rising economic uncertainty and stress in key domestic sectors.

Rising Trade Deficit – Scale and Causes

Historic Deficit – India recorded a historic goods trade deficit of \$41.68 billion in October 2025, a sharp rise from \$32.15 billion in September.

Export Slump – Goods exports dropped 11.8% YoY, falling to \$34.38 billion (from \$38.98 billion in October 2024).

Impact of U.S. Tariffs – The deterioration is closely linked to the 50% U.S. tariffs imposed in August. This is significant as the U.S. has been India's largest export destination since 2018–19.

Surge in Precious Metal Imports – The most striking driver of the deficit is the sharp rise in bullion inflows, indicating a flight to safety.

Gold imports nearly tripled compared to the previous October (\$4.92 billion).

Silver imports rose fivefold. This scale suggests the bullion inflows are more than seasonal demand.

Financial Indicators and Economic Uncertainty

Weakening Rupee – The Indian rupee (₹) weakened from approximately ₹85.6/\$ in April to ₹88.4/\$ in October, consequently making imports more expensive.

Foreign Portfolio Outflow – A net foreign portfolio outflow in September, followed by only a partial recovery in October, points to investors hedging against instability.

Safe-Asset Preference – The rising bullion imports are a clear financial indicator of investor preference for safe assets under uncertain economic conditions.

Stress in Labour-Intensive Export Sectors

The decline in exports is most severe in sectors that are heavily dependent on the U.S. market and are vital for employment –

Cotton yarn & handlooms – -13.31%

Readymade garments – -12.88%

Man-made yarn – -11.75%

Engineering goods – -16.71%

Overall U.S.-bound exports fell 9% YoY in October, exacerbating domestic stress in these labour-intensive industries.

Policy Responses and the Road Ahead

Import Dynamics and Competitiveness – A depreciating rupee and lower domestic sourcing indicate a greater reliance on cheaper imported intermediate goods to maintain export price competitiveness.

Government Action – A ₹25,060-crore export promotion package has been announced over six years. The RBI has provided support measures for exporters facing tariff disruptions.

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Need for Trade Realignment – It is premature to label current trends as structural, as trade realignment and market diversification require time. A quick conclusion of an India–U.S. Bilateral Trade Agreement and the rollback of tariffs are seen as immediate measures to ease current pressures.

Emerging Structural Reorientation

Shifts in import patterns—Russia (–27.73%) vs. U.S. imports (+13.89%)—suggest an effort to ease U.S. concerns and reduce reliance on Russian crude (likely a geopolitical/strategic shift). The persistence of the deficit, in the long run, could ultimately signal a long-term reorientation of India's trade structure, aiming to reduce excessive dependence on the U.S. and enhance strategic resilience and autonomy.

Conclusion

While the immediate pressures stem from the external shock of U.S. tariffs, India's evolving trade pattern suggests a deeper structural transition is underway. Policy support, diversified export markets, and diplomatic progress on the India–U.S. trade agreement are crucial for managing the situation. Though challenging in the short term, the process of reducing excessive dependence on a single major market like the U.S. is expected to ultimately strengthen India's economic resilience and strategic autonomy.

Source – <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/excessive-dependence-on-indias-external-trade-landscape/article70295169.ece#~text=But%20the%20main%20cause%20of,silver%20rose%20more%20than%20fivefold.>

2.The strange comforts of being parasocial – (IE)

General Studies 1 – Indian Society **Topic** – Impact of Globalization on Indian Society; Social Empowerment.

Introduction – The Evolving Landscape of Intimacy

The rise of parasocial relationships (PSRs), or one-sided emotional bonds with media figures, is a defining trend of the digital age.¹ Amplified by modern social media, this phenomenon reflects changing patterns of intimacy in a world characterized by hyper-connection and emotional fragmentation.

Defining Parasocial Relationships (PSRs)

Original Definition (Horton & Wohl, 1956) – Defined as an illusion of intimacy created between media figures and their audiences.

Digital Amplification – This illusion is intensified today through – Constant online visibility of creators. Direct messaging features that simulate personal communication. The "performative authenticity" displayed by influencers.

Factors Driving the Increase in PSRs

1.Digital Intimacy & Accessibility Unfiltered Access – Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok grant followers access to creators' daily routines, confessions, and vulnerabilities, fostering a strong sense of closeness.

2. Fragmentation of Real-World Relationships

Urban Isolation – Studies (e.g., APA) point to societal factors driving reliance on online emotional substitutes – Urban isolation, Work pressure.

Reduced in-person socialization

3. Emotional Safety & Low Commitment

Comfort without Complexity – PSRs offer emotional comfort without the complexities, potential conflict, or responsibilities inherent in reciprocal, real-world relationships.

Psychological Dimensions

Emotional Regulation – Individuals use PSRs as a coping mechanism against – Loneliness Anxiety Life disruptions (similar to coping strategies identified by behavioural psychologists).

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Illusion of Reciprocity – Although the bond is one-sided, social media algorithms reinforce attachment by repeatedly showing familiar faces, creating a false feeling of closeness.

Vicarious Living – Followers experience emotional responses (anxiety or aspiration) to events in the celebrity's life (e.g., engagements, breakups), reflecting their own personal anxieties or aspirations.

Risks and Concerns

Overdependence and Withdrawal – Excessive identification with media figures can reduce motivation to foster real, reciprocal relationships, potentially contributing to social withdrawal.

Commercial Exploitation – Influencer marketing heavily leverages the trust built through PSRs, making followers more susceptible to manipulation and commercial messaging.

Emotional Displacement – Overinvestment in celebrity lives can displace energy that should be directed toward personal growth and genuine relationships. The Modern Condition as a Catalyst Sociologists attribute the increased reliance on PSRs to the "modern condition," making these ties a stabilizing force when real life feels unpredictable or overwhelming. Key societal factors include, **Hyper**-individualism, Stressful work cultures, Identity confusion in youth, Lack of meaningful community interactions, Digital fatigue and overstimulation, Balanced Perspective (Not Inherently Harmful), Research (e.g., Pew Research Centre) suggests PSRs are not inherently harmful and can offer benefits.

Emotional Support – They can provide a sense of comfort and support.

Connection for Anxious Individuals – They may help shy or socially anxious individuals feel connected to a wider social sphere.

Community and Creativity – They can spark fandom communities, shared cultural experiences, and creativity.

The Critical Challenge – The key is to maintain boundaries and ensure that PSRs complement—not replace—authentic human connections.

Conclusion

The surge in parasocial relationships highlights deeper social and emotional gaps in modern life. While these digital bonds offer a valuable sense of belonging and reassurance, the ultimate goal for individual well-being and societal health is to remain mindful and grounded in cultivating meaningful, reciprocal, real-life interactions.

Source – <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/editorials/the-strange-comforts-of-being-parasocial-10373255/#~:text=social%2Dmedia%20presence,-.It%20captures%20the%20strange%20comfort%20of%20relationships%20in%20which%20reciprocity,keeps%20stonewalling%20in%20the%20elevator.>