Editorial of the Day – 24.04.2026

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1. Scaling climate adaptation from policy to grassroots (TH)

GS Paper III: Environment & Ecology

Topic: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation; Disaster and disaster management; Investment models.

Sub-Topic: Climate Adaptation vs. Mitigation Finance.

1. Introduction

India stands as the ninth most climate-vulnerable nation globally. Between 1995 and 2024, the country grappled with 430 extreme weather events, resulting in an economic drain of $170 billion and affecting 1.3 billion lives. In response, India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for 2031–35 have shifted focus toward "mainstreaming" climate resilience. The transition from reactive disaster management to proactive adaptation is now a core pillar of India's development strategy, aiming to safeguard both the economy and vulnerable livelihoods.

2. Strengthening the Adaptation Framework (NDCs 2031–35)

The updated NDCs emphasize a multi-sectoral approach to resilience:

Key Pillars: Focus on coastal resilience, resilient infrastructure, disaster preparedness, heat mitigation, and biodiversity conservation.

Global Alignment: India's goals align with the COP30 adoption of the Belém Adaptation Indicators and the global pledge to triple adaptation finance by 2035.

Implementation Needs: Success hinges on institutionalizing adaptation from national policies down to the "last mile" at the grassroots level.

3. Models of Excellence: NICRA and Tamil Nadu's CRV

India is leveraging pilot programs to create scalable blueprints for resilience:

NICRA (National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture): An ICAR initiative spanning 448 villages across 151 hotspots. It maps risks in 651 districts, focusing on climate-smart farming and capacity building.

Tamil Nadu's CRV Programme: Recognized by the Economic Survey 2025-26, the Climate Resilient Villages model (supported by WRI India) operates across 11 vulnerable districts.

Holistic Interventions: The TN model integrates water management, renewable energy, waste management, and alternate livelihoods through local community consultation.

4. The Financing Challenge: Adaptation vs. Mitigation

Despite the high stakes, financing remains a significant bottleneck:

The Global Gap: UNEP's 2025 Adaptation Gap Report estimates that developing countries face a financing deficit of $284–$339 billion annually through 2035.

Domestic Spending Disparity: While India's adaptation spending was approximately 5.6% of GDP in FY22, the Union Budget 2026–27 remains heavily skewed toward mitigation (emission reduction).

Taxonomy Issues: The 2025 Draft Framework of Climate Finance Taxonomy is criticized for focusing on "emission avoidance" rather than specific adaptation typologies.

The Economic Case: A WRI study suggests a ten-fold return (10x) on adaptation investments, as they prevent "avoidable losses" and generate significant socio-economic co-benefits.

5. Institutionalizing Adaptation: Governance Reforms

To sharpen the focus, the following structural changes are proposed:

Climate Budgeting: State Finance Departments should mandate "Climate Budgeting" through annual budget circulars to track and streamline spending.

SAPCC Revisions: Most states have not yet updated their State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCCs) to reflect the 2030 and 2035 NDC targets.

Localized Vulnerability Assessments: Moving beyond state-level data to regular assessments at the district and block levels, integrating socio-economic and livelihood factors.

Dedicated Workforce: Strengthening or establishing Climate Change Cells at the district level with a dedicated, skilled workforce to manage rehabilitation and skill development.

6. Facilitating Locally Led Adaptation (LLA)

Adaptation is most effective when it is place-based and context-specific:

Decentralized Action: Institutional mechanisms must extend to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).

Community Ownership: COP30 highlighted LLA as central to people-centric action. Resilience planning should be "co-developed" with communities—from management to leadership.

Behavioural Change: A "whole-of-systems" approach is required, where national commitments are met through grassroots awareness and ownership of climate interventions.

Conclusion

India's path to becoming a developed economy by 2047 is inextricably linked to its climate resilience. While pilot models like Tamil Nadu's CRV provide hope, the "scattered" nature of current efforts must be replaced by a standardized, well-funded, and decentralized adaptation architecture. By prioritizing the "Care Economy" of the environment and empowering local communities, India can turn its climate vulnerability into a blueprint for sustainable global leadership.

Source: https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/scaling-climate-adaptation-from-policy-to-grassroots/article70898407.ece

Question

"While India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) for 2031–35 emphasize climate resilience, adaptation remains the 'poor cousin' of mitigation in terms of financial and institutional focus. Critically analyze the structural bottlenecks in India's adaptation strategy and suggest a roadmap for mainstreaming resilience at the grassroots level." (250 Words, 15 Marks)

1. Introduction

India is the ninth most climate-vulnerable country globally, having faced $170 billion in losses due to extreme weather events between 1995 and 2024. Despite the NDCs (2031–35) prioritizing adaptation, India's climate strategy remains lopsided. While mitigation (reducing emissions) attracts global and private capital, adaptation (building resilience) struggles with scattered efforts and a massive funding deficit.

2. Structural and Financial Bottlenecks

The "adaptation gap" in India is driven by several systemic issues:

Mitigation-Skewed Finance: The Union Budget 2026–27 continues to prioritize mitigation. While adaptation spending was 5.6% of GDP in FY22, the lack of a clear Climate Finance Taxonomy means most funds are directed toward "emission avoidance" rather than building resilient communities.

Quantification Challenges: Unlike mitigation, where success is measured in CO_2 tonnes, the benefits of adaptation (avoidable losses, socio-economic stability) are harder to quantify. This makes adaptation projects less "bankable" for private investors.

Institutional Fragmentation: Adaptation efforts are currently scattered across various missions. Many states have yet to update their State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCCs) to align with the post-2030 targets.

Top-Down Planning: Vulnerability assessments are often performed at the national or state level, missing the micro-realities of the district and block levels.

3. The roadmap: Mainstreaming Resilience at the Grassroots

To turn NDCs into reality, India must adopt a "Whole-of-Systems" approach:

Institutionalizing Locally Led Adaptation (LLA): Resilience planning must be "co-developed" with Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). As seen in Tamil Nadu's Climate Resilient Villages (CRV) model, local ownership ensures that interventions in water and waste management are context-specific.

Climate Budgeting: The Ministry of Finance should mandate a Climate Budgeting framework through State Finance Departments. This would ensure that every department tracks its resilience-building activities through annual budget circulars.

Developing a 'Resilience Workforce': Establishing dedicated Climate Change Cells at the district level to manage rehabilitation, skill development, and alternate livelihoods for affected populations.

Standardizing Taxonomy: Creating a clear typology for adaptation finance. Recognizing the 10-fold return on investment (WRI estimate) can help leverage international and private funds into sectors like climate-smart agriculture (NICRA).

4. Conclusion

For India to become a developed economy by 2047, climate resilience can no longer be a "by-product" of development; it must be its foundation. Transitioning from a mitigation-heavy focus to a grassroots-led adaptation model is essential to protect the 1.3 billion people most at risk. Only by empowering local bodies and institutionalizing climate finance can India bridge the gap between global commitments and local survival.

Source: https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/scaling-climate-adaptation-from-policy-to-grassroots/article70898407.ece

2. India's Goldilocks moment is over, macro situation will worsen (IE)

GS Paper III: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development, and employment.

Topic: Effects of liberalization on the economy; changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

Sub-Topic: Macroeconomic Stability and External Sector Vulnerabilities.

1. Introduction

In the first half of 2026, India's economy is transitioning out of its celebrated "Goldilocks phase"—a rare period characterized by high growth, low inflation, and stable fiscal fundamentals. The intensifying crisis in West Asia, coupled with surging global crude prices and volatile capital flows, has exposed the structural vulnerabilities of the Indian economy. As GDP growth projections recalibrate from 7.6 % to 6.7%, the focus of Indian policymakers has shifted from "growth acceleration" to "macro-resilience" in the face of global economic fragmentation.

2. The "Goldilocks" Concept and the Current Erosion

Definition: A "Goldilocks Economy" describes a state of optimal performance: moderate growth and low inflation that prevents both overheating (inflation) and recession.

India's Pre-Crisis Fundamentals: Real GDP growth sustained at ~7.6%.

1. Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation anchored near 2%.
2. Current Account Deficit (CAD) kept manageable at 1% of GDP.

The Transition: The current geopolitical shock in West Asia has disrupted this "perfect" balance, leading to a period of "Triple Challenges": Higher Inflation, Lower Growth, and Widening Deficits.

3. Impact of West Asia Crisis on Energy Security

High Import Vulnerability: India remains one of the world's largest energy consumers, importing approximately 88% of its crude oil requirements.

Sourcing Concentration: Nearly 50% of these imports originate from West Asia. Any disruption in the Strait of Hormuz or regional instability directly translates to supply-side shocks for Indian refineries.

Supply Chain Disruptions: Beyond crude, the crisis has increased the "landed cost" of fertilizers, LNG, and critical industrial inputs, impacting the primary and secondary sectors alike.

4. Inflationary Pressures and Monetary Challenges

Price Surge: Crude oil prices have stabilized at a high band of 85–90 per barrel, representing a ~40% increase from previous lows.

Cost-Push Inflation: This serves as a classic "cost-push" trigger, where rising input costs for transportation and fuel increase the prices of essential goods.

CPI Outlook: Headline inflation is projected to rise to 4.6%, approaching the upper threshold of the RBI's 4% pm 2% tolerance band.

Monetary Tightening Risk: To prevent "second-round effects" (where fuel price hikes lead to generalized wage/price increases), the RBI may be forced to maintain a hawkish stance, potentially dampening private investment.

5. Balance of Payments (BoP) and External Sector Stress

The external sector is currently the primary area of concern for macroeconomic stability.

Indicator	Pre-Crisis (Baseline)	2026-27 Projection
GDP Growth	7.6%	~6.7%
CAD (% of GDP)	~1 %	~2.1%
Crude Price	$70/bbl.	85-90/bbl.
FPI Flows	Net Positive	17$ billion Outflow

Widening CAD: Driven by a bloated oil import bill and slowing global demand for Indian exports.

Currency Pressure: The mismatch in BoP puts the Indian Rupee (INR) under depreciation pressure, which further increases the cost of "imported inflation."

Forex Buffer: While India's 700$ billion forex reserves offer $~8$ months of import cover, the adjusted reserves are declining as the RBI intervenes to prevent excessive volatility.

6. Capital Flows and Investment Climate

FPI Flight to Safety: Global risk aversion has led Foreign Portfolio Investors to withdraw 17$ billion in the 2025-26 cycle, seeking safer havens in US Treasuries.

Weak FDI Performance: Net Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) plummeted to 1.7$ billion, primarily due to:

1. Increased profit repatriation by multinational corporations.
2. Heightened outward investment by Indian firms expanding globally.

Impact on Growth: Declining capital inflows limit the availability of low-cost capital for "Make in India" initiatives and infrastructure projects.

7. Fiscal Challenges and Government Finances

The crisis is stretching the Union and State budgets:

Revenue Loss: To cushion the common man, the government reduced excise duties on petrol/diesel, leading to significant revenue foregone.

Subsidy Spike: Higher global prices for LNG and feedstock have ballooned the Fertilizer and Food subsidy burden.

Fiscal Deficit Impact: The estimated fiscal cost of the crisis is approximately 0.5% of GDP, making it harder to adhere to the fiscal consolidation path (4.5 % by FY26).

Crowding Out: Higher government borrowing to cover these costs could "crowd out" private sector credit, further slowing the growth engine.

8. Structural Reforms: The Way Forward

To regain the "Goldilocks" stability, India must transition from a "reactive" to a "proactive" policy framework:

Energy Diversification: Aggressive expansion of Green Hydrogen, Solar, and nuclear energy to reduce the "Oil-linked" BoP vulnerability.

Strategic Reserves: Building underground crude storage (Strategic Petroleum Reserves) to provide at least 90 days of cover.

Resilient Supply Chains: Promoting "Friend-shoring" and diversifying trade partners beyond the West Asian corridor.

Investment Policy: Rationalizing FDI norms and improving the "Ease of Doing Business" to ensure that capital stays in India despite global volatility.

Conclusion

The end of the "Goldilocks phase" in 2026 is a structural warning for the Indian economy. While India remains a "bright spot" relative to global peers, its heavy reliance on imported energy and volatile capital flows creates a "ceiling on growth." Sustainable macroeconomic stability will depend on India's ability to decouple its domestic growth story from West Asian geopolitical shocks through energy self-reliance and fiscal prudence.

Source: https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/indias-goldilocks-moment-is-over-macro-situation-will-worsen-10652660/'

Question

"The erosion of India's 'Goldilocks' macroeconomic phase highlights that external sector stability remains the 'Achilles' heel' of the Indian growth story. Comment." (250 Words, 15 Marks)

1. Introduction

In economic parlance, a "Goldilocks phase" refers to an ideal state where growth is robust and inflation remains low—a "neither too hot, nor too cold" scenario. By early 2026, India's exit from this phase, triggered by the West Asia crisis and escalating crude prices ($\$85-90$/barrel), underscores a persistent reality: while India's domestic "engine" is powerful, its "fuel supply" and "financial lubricants" (capital flows) are vulnerable to global friction.

2. The External Sector as the "Achilles' Heel"

The recent transition highlights three primary vulnerabilities in India's external sector:

The Energy Chokepoint: India imports 88% of its crude oil, with 50% sourced from West Asia. A 40% surge in oil prices acts as an "unintended tax" on the economy, widening the Current Account Deficit (CAD) from 1% to a projected 2.1%.

The Capital Flow Paradox: Despite being the world's fastest-growing major economy, India remains reliant on volatile "hot money." The withdrawal of 17 billion by FPIs in the 2025-26 cycle demonstrates how external shocks can trigger capital flight even when domestic fundamentals are stable.

Imported Inflation: Higher energy costs lead to "cost-push" inflation. This limits the RBI's ability to cut interest rates to support growth, effectively allowing global geopolitical events to dictate domestic monetary policy.

3. Domestic Resilience: The Counter-Narrative

However, labelling the external sector as a terminal weakness overlooks India's internal "shock absorbers":

Forex Reserves as a Shield: India's 700 billion forex buffer provides ~ 8 months of import cover, preventing the kind of currency "free-fall" seen during the 2013 Taper Tantrum.

Domestic Demand Base: Unlike export-led economies (like East Asian "Tigers"), India's 6.7% growth is largely driven by domestic consumption and government Capex, providing a cushion against global trade slowdowns.

Fiscal Consolidation: The rationalization of GST and improved tax compliance have created a fiscal floor that allows the government to absorb some fuel shocks through excise duty cuts without a total collapse of budgetary discipline.

4. Way Forward: Moving Beyond the Vulnerability

To ensure the "Goldilocks" phase isn't just a fleeting memory, India must address the "Achilles' heel" through structural shifts:

Energy Sovereignty: Reducing the "oil-weight" of the GDP by accelerating the Green Hydrogen Mission and expanding Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) to 90 days.

Deepening FDI: Transitioning from volatile FPI to stable, long-term FDI by addressing the weak net FDI inflow (1.7 billion) through better profit-repatriation norms and ease of doing business.

Trade Diversification: Reducing the 38% remittance and 15% export dependency on West Asia by exploring newer markets in the Global South.

Conclusion

In 2026, India's macroeconomic story is one of "Internal Strength vs. External Stress." While the Goldilocks phase has weakened, the economy is not in a crisis. However, the current episode proves that India cannot be truly "Atmanirbhar" (self-reliant) until it decouples its macro-stability from the volatile corridors of West Asia. Long-term resilience lies in converting the external "Achilles' heel" into a "Strategic Shield" through energy diversification and fiscal prudence.

Source: https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/indias-goldilocks-moment-is-over-macro-situation-will-worsen-10652660/'

3. Gender Gap In Parliament (Dh)

General Studies Paper: General Studies Paper II – Governance

Topic: Representation of women in legislatures

Sub-Topic: Issues relating to equality and social justice

Introduction

Women's representation in Parliament remains limited despite constitutional guarantees of equality. The persistence of the gender gap reflects not structural inevitability but a political choice shaped by party strategies, electoral incentives, and institutional design.

1. Nature of Gender Gap in Parliament

1. Women constitute a significantly lower proportion of legislators compared to their population share.
2. Representation is uneven across states and political parties.
3. The gap persists despite increasing female participation in education and workforce.

2. Structural and Political Causes

Party-Level Constraints

1. Political parties often hesitate to nominate women due to perceived electoral risks.

Patriarchal Norms

1. Societal biases influence candidate selection and voter preferences.

Electoral Dynamics

1. First-past-the-post system discourages experimentation with new candidates.

Resource Inequality

1. Women face constraints in campaign finance, networks, and political exposure.

3. Limitations of Voluntary Measures

1. Incremental increases in representation have been slow and inconsistent.
2. Reliance on party goodwill has not ensured adequate inclusion.
3. Without institutional mandates, progress remains uneven and reversible.

4. Role of Reservation and Institutional Reform

Women's Reservation

1. Legislative quotas can ensure a critical mass of women representatives.

Delimitation Linkages

1. Implementation delays tied to delimitation processes may postpone impact.

Global Experience

1. Countries with quotas show significantly higher female representation.

5. Implications for Governance

1. Greater representation enhances policy inclusivity and responsiveness.
2. Women legislators often prioritise social sector issues such as health and education.
3. Improves democratic legitimacy and participatory governance.

6. Challenges in Implementation

1. Risk of proxy representation or tokenism.
2. Need for capacity building and political empowerment.
3. Balancing reservation with merit-based selection debates.

7. Way Forward

1. Expedite implementation of women's reservation in legislatures.
2. Encourage political parties to adopt internal quotas.
3. Strengthen leadership training and financial support mechanisms.
4. Promote societal change to address gender biases in politics.

Conclusion

Bridging the gender gap in Parliament requires deliberate political commitment and institutional reform. Ensuring meaningful representation of women is essential for achieving substantive democracy and inclusive governance.

Source: https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/gender-gap-in-parliament-is-a-political-choice-3977387

Question

Q. "The gender gap in legislative representation is more a political choice than a structural constraint." Critically examine in the Indian context. Suggest measures to improve women's participation in Parliament. **(250 words)**

Introduction

Women's representation in India's Parliament remains disproportionately low despite constitutional guarantees of equality. This gap reflects political decisions in candidate selection and institutional design rather than purely structural limitations.

Nature of the Problem

1. Women are underrepresented in legislatures relative to their population share.
2. Representation varies across regions and political parties.
3. Progress has been gradual and insufficient.

Reasons for Gender Gap

1. Political parties often avoid fielding women due to perceived electoral risks.
2. Patriarchal norms influence both candidate selection and voter behaviour.
3. The first-past-the-post system discourages experimentation with new candidates.
4. Women face constraints in access to finance, networks, and political exposure.

Why It Is a Political Choice

1. Parties control nominations and can increase representation if they choose.
2. Evidence shows women candidates have comparable success rates when fielded.
3. Countries with mandated quotas demonstrate rapid improvements in representation.

Measures to Improve Participation

1. Implement women's reservation in Parliament and State Assemblies.
2. Introduce internal party quotas for candidate selection.
3. Provide financial and institutional support for women candidates.
4. Promote leadership training and capacity building.

Conclusion

Addressing the gender gap requires proactive political will and institutional reforms. Enhancing women's representation will strengthen democratic inclusiveness and improve governance outcomes. Source: https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/gender-gap-in-parliament-is-a-political-choice-3977387

4. Why Nuanced Oversight of Social Media Platforms Matter (TP)

General Studies Paper: General Studies Paper II – Governance

Topic: Role of media and social media in democracy

Sub-Topic: Government policies and regulation of digital platforms

Introduction

Social media platforms have transformed communication but also created new governance challenges, including misinformation, algorithmic bias, and weak accountability. This necessitates a nuanced regulatory framework that balances freedom of expression with democratic stability.

1. Expanding Role of Social Media in Governance

1. Social media acts as a primary source of information dissemination and public discourse.
2. It influences political opinions, electoral behaviour, and policy debates.
3. Platforms increasingly function as gatekeepers of information, replacing traditional media roles.

2. Key Challenges Posed by Social Media

Misinformation and Fake News

1. Rapid spread of unverified content undermines informed decision-making.

Algorithmic Amplification

1. Engagement-driven algorithms promote sensational or polarising content.

Opacity in Content Moderation

1. Lack of transparency in takedown decisions and moderation policies.

Jurisdictional Issues

1. Global platforms operate beyond national regulatory boundaries.

3. Limitations of Existing Regulatory Framework

1. Laws struggle to keep pace with technological advancements.
2. Enforcement mechanisms remain weak due to data asymmetry and platform power.
3. Risk of overregulation leading to censorship and restriction of free speech.

4. Need for Nuanced Oversight

Balancing Freedom and Accountability

1. Regulation must protect free speech while curbing harmful content.

Transparency Requirements

1. Platforms should disclose algorithmic functioning and moderation practices.

Platform Responsibility

1. Greater accountability for content dissemination and user safety.

Multi-Stakeholder Approach

1. Collaboration between government, industry, and civil society.

5. Role of Judiciary and Institutions

1. Courts have increasingly emphasised accountability and proportional regulation.
2. Institutional mechanisms must ensure checks without excessive control.
3. Independent regulators may help maintain balance.

6. Implications for Democracy

1. Unchecked misinformation can erode public trust and polarise society.
2. Effective oversight strengthens democratic resilience and informed citizenship.
3. Poor regulation may either lead to digital anarchy or authoritarian control.

7. Way Forward

1. Develop clear, transparent, and adaptive regulatory frameworks.
2. Strengthen digital literacy to combat misinformation.
3. Promote algorithmic accountability and ethical AI practices.
4. Ensure safeguards against misuse of regulatory powers.

Conclusion

Nuanced oversight of social media is essential to protect democratic values while preserving digital freedoms. The challenge lies in achieving a balanced approach that ensures accountability without undermining openness.

Source: https://dailypioneer.com/news/why-nuanced-oversight-of-social-media-platforms-matter

Question

Q. *"Social media platforms pose both opportunities and challenges for democratic governance." Discuss the need for nuanced regulation of these platforms in India.* (250 words)

Introduction

Social media platforms have become central to democratic discourse by enabling rapid information exchange and citizen engagement. However, their unregulated expansion has raised concerns regarding misinformation, accountability, and governance.

Opportunities

1. Social media enhances citizen participation and democratic engagement.
2. It facilitates rapid dissemination of information and awareness.
3. It provides a platform for diverse voices and public debate.

Challenges

1. Spread of misinformation and fake news undermines informed decision-making.
2. Algorithm-driven amplification promotes polarisation and sensationalism.
3. Lack of transparency in content moderation reduces accountability.
4. Jurisdictional complexities limit effective regulation of global platforms.

Need for Nuanced Regulation

1. Regulation must balance freedom of expression with the need to curb harmful content.
2. Transparency in algorithms and moderation practices is essential.
3. Platforms must be held accountable for content dissemination without stifling innovation.
4. A multi-stakeholder approach involving government, industry, and civil society is necessary.

Conclusion

A calibrated regulatory framework is essential to harness the benefits of social media while mitigating its risks. Ensuring accountability, transparency, and protection of democratic values will be key to effective governance in the digital age.

Source: https://dailypioneer.com/news/why-nuanced-oversight-of-social-media-platforms-matter