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SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EDITORIALS

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- 1. Building India's climate resilience with water at the core**
(GS Paper III - Environment & Ecology)
- 2. On the right to die with dignity**
(GS Paper II - Polity)
- 3. Disruption carries a reminder: Policy reforms in fertiliser sector are overdue**
(GS Paper III - Economy)

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
[sanskritiias.com](https://www.sanskritiias.com)

1. BUILDING INDIA'S CLIMATE RESILIENCE WITH WATER AT THE CORE

(GS Paper III - Environment & Ecology)

This editorial 'Building India's climate resilience with water at the core' was published in **The Hindu** on 16th Mar 2026, highlights how India's **climate adaptation strategy** must place **water systems at the centre** of resilience, governance and implementation.

Why water now sits at the centre of adaptation

- **COP 30** in Belém marked a shift in adaptation from abstract resilience to measurable, accountable systems that function under stress.
- **Water** moved from the margins of infrastructure planning to the core of climate survival, with water, sanitation and hygiene integrated into climate accountability.
- This reframes the **water-food-climate nexus** as a practical governance challenge with direct implications for countries such as India.

Climate stress is felt most directly through water

- Climate change is experienced most sharply through **floods**, droughts, glacial melt, saline intrusion and erratic monsoons.
- These stresses submerge cities, weaken rural economies, destabilise Himalayan river systems and threaten **food security**.
- Agriculture is central to the challenge, with rice cultivation, livestock systems and organic waste linked to roughly **40% of anthropogenic methane emissions**.
- This makes water-use efficiency, wastewater reuse, aquifer recharge and resilient **sanitation systems** central to both adaptation and development.

What the Belém indicators require

- The **59 Belém Adaptation Indicators** under the **UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience** signal a new discipline in global governance.
- One cluster focuses on **climate-resilient water and sanitation systems**, including safe drinking water, flood and drought resilience and sanitation that can withstand extreme events.
- Another focuses on **risk governance**, including universal multi-hazard early warning systems by 2027, stronger hydrometeorological services and updated national vulnerability assessments by 2030.
- The underlying test is whether systems continue to **deliver services** when climate stress intensifies.

India already has a foundation, but gaps remain

- India is not starting from scratch, as the **2019** consolidation of water governance under the Ministry of **Jal Shakti** and **Water Vision 2047** already point toward integrated stewardship.
- The **NAQUIM Programme 2.0** has moved beyond aquifer mapping to aquifer-level management plans, linking hydrogeological knowledge to policy action.
- The **National Mission for Clean Ganga** has also expanded beyond sewage treatment into biodiversity, digital monitoring and collaboration, making river systems a buffer against climate volatility.

Three systemic risks can slow progress

- **Water scarcity** remains acute and unevenly distributed, while most climate disasters in India are water-related and **WASH** systems often form the first line of defence.
- Resilience requires climate stress-testing of infrastructure, diversification of water sources and redundancy in service delivery, not just wider **coverage figures**.
- **Adaptation finance** remains fragile, as operational pathways to mobilise large-scale funding are still uncertain and post-disaster recovery can crowd out long-term planning.
- Water projects therefore need explicit classification and funding as **climate investments**.
- A third risk is **digital fragmentation**, where vast hydrological and meteorological data still remain weakly integrated into planning, budgeting and local governance.

Why convergence is the real task

- India's institutional landscape already contains domestic missions corresponding to many global **adaptation targets**, including drinking water, sanitation, irrigation efficiency, urban water reform and climate action plans.
- Climate stress indicators now need to be embedded into **mission dashboards** across Ministries and States.
- India's strength in **digital public infrastructure** creates an opening to integrate hydrological data, crop advisories, insurance and financial flows into interoperable real-time platforms.

- The need is for **convergence**, not reinvention.

A chance for India to lead

- The Belém indicators function less as a bureaucratic checklist than as a **dashboard for survival**.
- If implemented seriously, they can make adaptation the organising principle of development strategy rather than a peripheral conversation.
- India's domestic water reforms, technological capacity and community-led initiatives position it not only as a participant in global climate negotiations but as a possible leader in **operationalising adaptation** at scale.
- Resilience must finally be judged by whether systems keep serving people through the next **flood**, the next drought and the next climate shock.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Need for integrated water governance for climate resilience

- **Treat water as a cross-sector priority:** Climate adaptation must place **water governance** at the centre, as heat, floods, sanitation and agriculture already intersect in **23 heat-prone States** with Heat Action Plans.
- **Align national missions with climate goals:** Existing **water programmes** should embed climate-stress indicators, as **Jal Jeevan Mission** now covers over **15.82 crore** rural households and can carry resilience metrics too.
- **Strengthen basin and aquifer-level planning:** Resilience needs **river-basin** and aquifer management, as **NAQUIM 2.0** now supports aquifer-level plans with high-granularity groundwater data.
- **Integrate data for real-time decisions:** Hydrological, meteorological and agricultural **data systems** must work together, as improved forecasts and digital dissemination are already part of India's weather services.
- **Climate-proof WASH and water infrastructure:** **Water supply** and sanitation systems must function during extremes, as **JJM** now stresses safe and regular rural water delivery, not just connectivity.
- **Expand adaptation finance for water systems:** Water projects should be funded as **climate investments**, as groundwater recharge, aquifer plans and resilience infrastructure need long-term capital, not only relief spending.

2. ON THE RIGHT TO DIE WITH DIGNITY

(GS Paper II - Polity)

This editorial ‘**On the right to die with dignity**’ was published in **The Hindu** on 16th Mar 2026, highlights how the **Supreme Court’s ruling** in the **Harish Rana case** deepens Indian jurisprudence on dignity, autonomy and withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment.

From right to life with dignity to end-of-life dignity

- The constitutional basis was laid in **Gian Kaur vs State of Punjab (1996)**, which held that **Article 21** includes the right to live with dignity, though not a right to die.
- A major turning point came in **Aruna Shanbaug vs Union of India (2011)**, where the Court recognised passive euthanasia in limited cases involving terminal illness and prolonged ineffective treatment.
- That ruling framed interim **guidelines** to address the legislative gap until Parliament enacted a law.
- The **Law Commission** in 2006 and 2012 also examined the issue in depth and supported withholding life support in the patient’s **best interest** without criminal liability.

Common Cause gave the doctrine clearer shape

- The watershed came in **Common Cause vs Union of India (2018)**, where a Constitution Bench held that withdrawal or withholding of medical treatment falls within **Article 21**.
- Refusal of medical treatment was treated as part of dignity, intersecting with **privacy**, autonomy and self-determination.
- The ruling laid down detailed safeguards and procedures, later modified in a similar **2023** decision.
- These are now collectively referred to as the **Common Cause guidelines**, built on two requirements: the intervention must qualify as medical treatment and withdrawal must be in the patient’s **best interest**.

Why the Harish Rana case mattered

- **Harish Rana**, injured in 2013 after a fall, remained in **Persistent Vegetative State** for years and survived on life support without recovery.
- After **13 years** of care with no improvement, his parents approached the Supreme Court seeking withdrawal of life support.

- The case turned the abstract debate on end-of-life care into a concrete question about dignity under **Article 21**.
- It also brought into focus the emotional and moral burden borne by families and doctors in prolonged cases of irreversible **stasis**.

What the Court examined

- Since Mr. Rana was sustained through **Clinically Assisted Nutrition and Hydration (CANH)**, the first issue was whether CANH amounted to medical treatment.
- The Court held that CANH is indeed **medical treatment**, because it requires skilled administration, supervision, periodic evaluation and emergency management.
- The second issue was whether withdrawal of CANH was in Mr. Rana's **best interest**.
- Best interest was assessed through the perspective of stakeholders, especially next of kin and **medical boards**.
- Once recovery was found impossible and treatment no longer capable of conferring therapeutic benefit, continuation was seen as merely prolonging **biological existence**.

The larger legal significance

- The ruling reaffirmed that a doctor's duty to treat continues only so long as treatment can offer some **therapeutic benefit**.
- When recovery is impossible, withdrawal of treatment may better uphold the patient's **dignity** than indefinite continuation.
- The judgment also shows how constitutional morality advances not only through legislation but through adjudication of difficult human questions.
- At the same time, the persistent reference to legislative absence underlines that Parliament still has not enacted a dedicated **end-of-life** law.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Ethical and practical dilemmas in end-of-life care

- **Dignity versus sanctity of life:** End-of-life cases pit **biological survival** against dignified existence, as **Common Cause (2018)** recognised withdrawal of futile treatment under Article 21.

- **Best-interest assessment is complex:** Determining the patient's **best interest** is difficult, as **Harish Rana (2026)** required medical boards to assess futility and irreversible condition.
- **Families face moral burden:** Relatives often bear the weight of **life-support decisions**, as Harish Rana's parents approached the Court after years of irreversible vegetative existence.
- **Doctors may fear liability:** Medical professionals can hesitate in withdrawing **futile treatment**, as the Court itself noted fear of legal reprisal can distort clinical judgment.
- **Risk of misuse remains a concern:** Any end-of-life framework must guard against **abuse**, which is why **Aruna Shanbaug (2011)** insisted on strict medical scrutiny.
- **Hospital capacity is uneven:** Not all institutions have the same **clinical ethics support**, even though these cases demand expert boards, supervision and procedural clarity.
- **Public awareness remains low:** Concepts such as **advance directives** and passive euthanasia remain poorly understood, though **Common Cause (2018)** explicitly recognised them.

3. DISRUPTION CARRIES A REMINDER: POLICY REFORMS IN FERTILISER SECTOR ARE OVERDUE

(GS Paper III - Economy)

This editorial '**Disruption carries a reminder: Policy reforms in fertiliser sector are overdue**' was published in **The Indian Express** on 16th Mar 2026, highlights how the **Gulf conflict** has exposed **India's fertiliser vulnerability** and made long-pending sectoral reforms urgent.

Conflict shock and India's exposure

- The Gulf war has exposed the fragility of India's **energy** and **fertiliser** supply chains despite strong foreign exchange reserves.
- Risks centre on chokepoints such as the **Strait of Hormuz**, through which substantial shares of global oil and gas trade pass.

- For India, crude prices jumped from about **\$66** per barrel before the escalation to nearly **\$120**, before easing to around **\$100** by March 13.
- India imports about two-thirds of its **LPG**, with much of it routed through the same corridor, leading to domestic price increases.

Why fertilisers are especially vulnerable

- India consumes about **40 million tonnes** of urea annually, but domestic output is only about **30 million tonnes**, forcing imports above **10 million tonnes**.
- Nearly **60%** of these imports come from the Gulf region, sharply increasing geopolitical exposure.
- As gas prices surged from about **\$10/mmBtu** to **\$24-25/mmBtu** in two weeks, urea producers faced rising input costs and supply uncertainty.
- By prioritising gas allocation to households and transport under the **Essential Commodities Act**, the government left fertiliser producers with only **70%** of usual six-month consumption.

Import dependence runs deeper than urea

- Natural gas, the key feedstock for urea, is largely imported and supplies about **85%** of gas used in domestic production.
- Once direct urea imports and imported gas feedstock are combined, India's effective import dependence in urea reaches about **55%**.
- Dependence is similarly high for other fertiliser inputs, with over **80%** of ammonia and sulphur imports coming from the Gulf.
- Around **40%** of DAP imports are sourced from **Saudi Arabia**, while India is almost entirely dependent on imported **MOP** and 90-95% dependent on phosphatic raw materials.

Broader economic risk

- When intermediates and feedstocks are added, India depends on global supply chains for about **68-70%** of its fertiliser requirement.
- This leaves both the sector and India's food security highly vulnerable to **geopolitical disruption**, price volatility and supply shocks.
- India also exports agri-products to the Middle East, but the bigger concern is import dependence in **oil, gas and fertilisers**.
- If the crisis persists beyond a month or so, the fertiliser subsidy bill in **FY27** could cross **Rs 2 lakh crore**, above the budgeted **Rs 1.7 lakh crore**.

Why reforms are overdue

- India needs to diversify fertiliser imports and feedstocks beyond the **Gulf** while expanding overseas investments in fertiliser minerals and production assets.
- A dedicated fertiliser investment fund of about **\$1 billion** could help Indian firms acquire equity stakes abroad and improve import-led supply security.
- Domestic reforms are equally urgent, including direct transfer of fertiliser subsidies and gradual **decontrol** of nutrient prices.
- One route is balanced pricing of **N, P and K** with lower fiscal pressure, though this may be difficult in the short run.
- If full reform is not feasible, a fallback is to retain **NBS** for urea as well, align prices across nutrients and promote more balanced fertiliser use.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Structural reforms for long-term fertiliser security

- **Rationalise subsidy design:** India should shift from product-based **subsidy support** toward targeted nutrient policy, as **NBS** already fixes support by nutrient content, not brand.
- **Promote balanced nutrient application:** Policy must curb excess **urea use**, because **NBS** was designed to encourage balanced NPKS use and better soil health.
- **Reduce feedstock vulnerability:** India needs to lower **gas dependence** in fertiliser production, as recent gas-supply prioritisation left fertiliser units with only part of normal demand.
- **Diversify import sources and assets:** Fertiliser security requires wider **global sourcing**, as Jordan already serves as a major supplier of phosphates and potash to India.
- **Expand domestic efficiency and capacity:** India should improve **plant efficiency** and output, as six new urea units have added 76.2 lakh metric tonnes of capacity.
- **Align nutrient pricing more rationally:** Extending coherent **pricing reform** across nutrients can reduce fiscal stress, as **NBS** rates are now revised seasonally for P&K fertilisers.
- **Treat fertiliser security as strategic policy:** Fertilisers must be seen as part of **food security**, as India imported 98 lakh metric tonnes of finished fertilisers by February 2026.