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SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EDITORIALS

24th April 2026

TOPICS:-

1. High heat

(GS Paper III Environment)

2. Scaling climate adaptation from policy to grassroots

(GS Paper III Environment)

3. Missing piece in pay reform: System to gauge performance

(GS Paper II Governance)

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1. HIGH HEAT

(GS Paper III Environment)

This editorial ‘**High heat**’ was published in **The Hindu** on 24th Apr 2026, highlights **India’s rising vulnerability** to extreme heat and the need for structural adaptation.

Escalating Heat Trends and Climatic Drivers

- Early onset **heatwave** conditions with **IMD** alerts across central and southern regions show seasonal shift from May–June to April.
- Coastal humidity, **urban heat island** effect and warmer nights intensify heat stress by limiting physiological recovery and raising local health burden.
- Reduced **western disturbances** and weak convection, combined with residual **El Niño** effects, have weakened natural cooling and amplified pre-monsoon heat.

Human and Economic Consequences

- Persistent heat raises **cardiovascular risk**, while global loss of 247 billion work-hours in **2024** reflects severe productivity decline.
- Outdoor labour in construction and **agriculture** faces disproportionate exposure, especially during rabi harvest, increasing livelihood vulnerability.
- Accelerated crop maturity under **heat stress** threatens **food security** and contributes to inflationary pressures.

Policy Limitations and Institutional Gaps

- Existing **HAPs** remain reactive, underfunded and focused on emergency response rather than structural interventions.
- Absence of **heat-safety laws** for informal workers and weak investment in urban cooling measures expose governance gaps.
- Heat exposure during elections forced **ECI** to extend polling hours, highlighting limits of short-term administrative responses.

Need for Structural Adaptation and Global Linkages

- Rising temperatures may push regions towards **human survival limits**, making long-term adaptation urgent.
- Strengthening **adaptation finance**, mobile health services and doorstep delivery of essentials can reduce heat-induced income loss.
- Participation in global climate efforts, including forums like Colombia’s coalition, can enhance access to **climate finance**.

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Heat as a public health emergency and urban governance challenge

- **Health emergency:** Heatwaves should be treated as a public health crisis, as Ahmedabad's Heat Action Plan links alerts with hospitals.
- **Mortality tracking:** India needs stronger heat illness reporting, since NCRB and health data often undercount heat-related deaths.
- **Urban design:** Excessive concretisation and shrinking green cover intensify heat, as seen in Delhi's urban heat island effect.
- **Cooling inequality:** Informal workers and slum households face higher exposure, as seen among construction workers and street vendors.
- **Building standards:** Passive cooling and reflective roofs need wider adoption, as Telangana's Cool Roof Policy demonstrates.
- **Primary care:** Heat response should involve PHCs, ASHA workers and emergency services, as Odisha's disaster model shows.
- **Urban missions:** Heat resilience can be mainstreamed into AMRUT, Smart Cities Mission and city climate action plans.

2. SCALING CLIMATE ADAPTATION FROM POLICY TO GRASSROOTS

(GS Paper III Environment)

This editorial 'Scaling climate adaptation from policy to grassroots' was published in **The Hindu** on 24th Apr 2026, highlights the need to **strengthen India's climate adaptation** through financing, institutional reforms and localised implementation.

India's Rising Climate Vulnerability and Policy Response

- India ranks ninth in **climate vulnerability**, with 430 extreme events (1995–2024) causing \$170 billion losses and affecting 1.3 billion people.
- Updated **NDCs** (2031–35) integrate adaptation across sectors like infrastructure, agriculture and biodiversity, aligning with global **COP30** commitments.
- ICAR's **NICRA** spans 448 villages across 151 hotspots, mapping risks in 651 districts and promoting climate-resilient agriculture and capacity-building.
- Economic Survey (2025–26) estimates adaptation spending at **5.6% GDP**, but Union Budget remains tilted towards mitigation.

Financing Constraints and Investment Priorities

- Developing countries face \$284–339 billion annual **adaptation gap** by 2035, as per UNEP Adaptation Gap Report 2025.
- India's draft **Climate Finance Taxonomy (2025)** remains mitigation-heavy, prioritising emission reduction over adaptation financing clarity.
- Quantifying **co-benefits** such as avoided losses and socio-economic gains can attract private and international investment.
- WRI estimates **10x returns** on adaptation investment, strengthening the case for scaling financing and leveraging global capital.
- Integrating **climate budgeting** into State finances with monitoring frameworks can streamline domestic resource mobilisation.

Institutional Gaps and Implementation Challenges

- Weak updating of **SAPCCs** and limited State-level revisions reduce alignment with evolving NDC targets.
- Lack of standardised **vulnerability assessments** at district and block levels weakens planning and targeting.
- Fragmented governance and absence of coordinated **monitoring systems** limit effective adaptation outcomes.
- Adaptation remains infrastructure-focused, neglecting **livelihood diversification** and rehabilitation frameworks.

Localised and Inclusive Adaptation Approach

- Tamil Nadu's **CRV model** demonstrates community-led adaptation across 11 districts with integrated sectoral interventions.
- Strengthening **urban local bodies** and panchayati raj institutions is essential for scaling Locally Led Adaptation (LLA).
- Community participation in planning and implementation enhances **ownership** and context-specific solutions.
- Expanding climate cells and ensuring **inter-departmental coordination** can improve responsiveness and cross-learning.
- Capacity-building and behavioural change are central to long-term **resilience** at grassroots levels.

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Role of private sector and market mechanisms in climate adaptation

- **Blended finance:** Adaptation needs public funds to leverage private capital, as seen in GCF-backed climate resilience projects.
- **Insurance tools:** Parametric insurance can protect farmers and MSMEs, as seen in PMFBY's weather-linked crop insurance model.
- **Resilient infrastructure:** ESG-linked investments can support climate-resilient assets, as seen in green bonds for urban infrastructure.
- **MSME adaptation:** Small firms need incentives for resilient production, as SIDBI's green finance support for MSMEs indicates.
- **Nature-based solutions:** PPPs can scale mangrove restoration, as Odisha's community-led mangrove protection reduced cyclone vulnerability.
- **Data markets:** Climate analytics and satellites can aid adaptation, as ISRO's Bhuvan supports disaster and resource mapping.
- **Regulatory clarity:** Clear taxonomy and disclosures can guide capital, as RBI's climate-risk disclosure framework seeks to do.

3. MISSING PIECE IN PAY REFORM: SYSTEM TO GAUGE PERFORMANCE

(GS Paper II Governance)

This editorial 'Missing piece in pay reform: System to gauge performance' was published in **The Indian Express** on 24th Apr 2026, highlights that **pay reform without a credible system** to measure performance will remain ineffective.

Context and Core Mandate

- The **Eighth Pay Commission** is tasked with aligning pay revision with fiscal prudence and **developmental value**, signalling a push for efficiency in public expenditure.
- Government emphasis on **value for money** is effectively equated with performance-linked pay, but this rests on the assumption that performance can be objectively measured.

Past Attempts at Performance-Linked Pay

- Performance-based remuneration has been repeatedly recommended since 1986, with **PRIS** under the Sixth Pay Commission allowing incentives through budgetary savings.

- PRIS saw limited success, being effectively implemented only in specialised departments like Atomic Energy and Space, reflecting **scalability constraints**.
- The **RFD** framework (2007–2011) attempted sophisticated performance measurement by cascading targets across administrative levels, but eventually faded.
- The Seventh Pay Commission proposed linking RFD outputs with **APARs**, yet these recommendations were diluted and never translated into practice.

Why Performance Measurement Fails in Government

- Performance-linked pay is viable only if **performance metrics** are reliable, but government functions are multi-dimensional and resist simple quantification.
- Unlike the private sector driven by **profitability**, public administration pursues shifting and often intangible policy goals.
- Reform efforts misidentify individual inefficiency as the problem, whereas the core constraint lies in **systemic rigidity**.
- Lateral entry and secondment to private entities, once seen as solutions, have produced mixed outcomes, with cases like **IL&FS** serving as cautionary examples.
- Measurement frameworks often ignore the distinction between officer capability and structural constraints, weakening accountability design.

Designing a Functional System within Existing Structures

- The Seventh Pay Commission's **pay matrix** with levels and cells provides a ready structure to embed performance-linked progression.
- High performers can be accelerated to higher **pay cells** through validated measurement systems, raising promotion ceilings without structural overhaul.
- An RFD-like or econometric system can provide measurable benchmarks, linking performance with **career progression**.
- The focus should shift from broad platitudes to designing a concrete, operational system aligned with administrative realities.

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Balancing performance, equity and administrative neutrality in pay systems

- **Neutrality concern:** Performance-linked pay may weaken neutrality, as target-driven policing can prioritise numbers over fairness.
- **Fair evaluation:** Transparent safeguards are essential, since APAR-based assessments often face concerns of subjectivity and patronage.

- **Public service ethos:** Civil services require intrinsic motivation, as Mission Karmayogi stresses duty, capability and citizen-centric governance.
- **Equity issue:** Uniform pay structures protect fairness, as the Seventh Pay Commission's pay matrix standardised levels across services.
- **Benchmarking problem:** Comparing departments is difficult, since MGNREGA delivery, policing, taxation and education produce different outcomes.
- **Qualitative outcomes:** Measurable targets may neglect trust and inclusion, as CPGRAMS shows grievance quality matters beyond disposal numbers.
- **Balanced reform:** Credible reform must combine incentives with fairness, as RFD experience shows measurement needs institutional backing.