

Editorials – 8th Jun 2026

1. Missed call

(GS Paper III Environment)

This editorial ‘Missed call’ was published in The Hindu on 8th Jun 2026, highlights India’s need to prepare for a potentially deficient and uneven southwest monsoon.

Monsoon Outlook and Rainfall Risk

- The southwest monsoon reached Kerala on June 4, three days late and four days behind IMD forecast, marking its first onset misjudgment since 2015.
- A delayed onset is not decisive, as the Kerala arrival date has little statistical link with total rainfall during the next four monsoon months.
- The IMD projects below-normal rainfall, with a 60% probability of an outright deficient year, its most pessimistic pre-season call in a decade.
- Except the northeast, rainfall is expected to be deficient across northwest, central, peninsular and core rain-fed farming zones, making spatial distribution critical.

Agrarian, Climate and Supply-Side Concerns

- Monsoon damage depends on rainfall distribution, as long dry spells after sowing can hurt crops more than the overall seasonal deficit.
- The season is sharper because West Asia conflict and Strait of Hormuz disruption have already strained energy supply and fertilizer production.
- History gives little comfort, as nearly 60% of El Niño years since 1951 saw deficient or below-normal rain; 2002, 2009 and 2014 were severe drought years.

Governance and Preparedness Imperatives

- With El Niño near-certain, the government should not rely on a late Indian Ocean Dipole recovery and must activate Agriculture, Jal Shakti and Consumer Affairs Ministries.
- Advisories should steer farmers toward short-duration pulses, oilseeds and millets over thirsty paddy, while groundwater and reservoirs need disciplined management.
- Procurement, conservation and relief provisioning must be readied as India faces more severe heat, parched lands and pressure on kharif production.
- Record kharif output expectations must account for weak monsoon risks, especially when farm inputs such as nutrients and fuel remain scarce and costly.

Beyond Editorial

From Rainfall Dependence to Climate Risk Governance

- Risk governance: Monsoon planning should shift from seasonal crisis response to year-round risk governance, covering drought, heatwaves, reservoir stress and crop losses like 2009.
- Agro-climatic planning: Cropping patterns must follow rainfall, soil and water conditions, instead of pushing paddy in drought-prone regions like Marathwada.
- Seed resilience: Drought-tolerant, short-duration and heat-resistant seeds like Sahbhagi Dhan can reduce crop losses during delayed rainfall and dry spells.
- Water efficiency: Micro-irrigation under PMKSY, farm ponds, watershed works and aquifer recharge can reduce groundwater pressure during uneven monsoons.
- Data integration: IMD alerts, reservoir levels, soil-moisture data and crop-stress mapping can help issue advisories before farm distress becomes irreversible.
- Insurance protection: PMFBY must ensure faster assessment and timely payment, because delayed compensation weakens protection during repeated climate shocks.
- Institutional coordination: IMD, agriculture departments, CWC, NDMA and State authorities need integrated protocols so monsoon alerts trigger field-level action.

2. India's pension scheme lags in terms of coverage, contribution

(GS Paper III Economy, GS Paper I Society)

This editorial 'India's pension scheme lags in terms of coverage, contribution' was published in The Hindu on 8th Jun 2026, highlights the inadequate coverage and eroded real value of India's flagship old-age pension scheme.

Stagnant Central Support and Uneven State Top-Ups

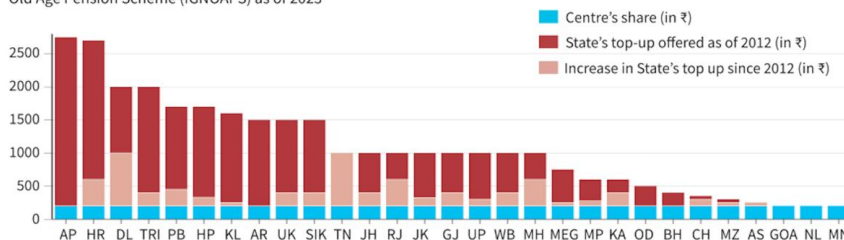
- The IGNOAPS under National Social Assistance Programme needs reform, as the Centre's ₹200 monthly pension for 60-plus beneficiaries has remained unchanged since 2007.
- States and Union Territories add their own top-ups, ranging from ₹150 to ₹2,000, but Goa, Manipur, Nagaland and Andhra Pradesh provide no additional amount.
- The Union contribution has stayed frozen while State contributions increased during 2012–2023, with Telangana and Andhra Pradesh among the highest contributors.

Old and unsupported

The data for the charts were sourced from the Lok Sabha replies, the Ministry of Rural Development's report titled "Impact Assessment and Evaluation of NSAP", and the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation



CHART 1: The monthly pension offered by all States, barring few Union Territories, under the centrally-sponsored Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) as of 2023



Inflation Erosion and Inadequate Assistance

- Inflation has sharply eroded the real value of ₹200, reducing its 2013 purchasing power to nearly ₹99 by 2025.
- The pension should rise to about ₹400 to match 2013 purchasing power, as beneficiaries can now buy only half the earlier food items.
- The latest survey found over 95% beneficiaries cited price rise as the main reason for demanding higher pension support.
- More than 80% respondents said the current pension amount does not meet daily needs, showing deep inadequacy of the assistance.

CHART 2: The erosion of the value of ₹200 as per changes in the Consumer Food Price Index (base year 2012) and the minimum assistance that ought to be paid to match that value

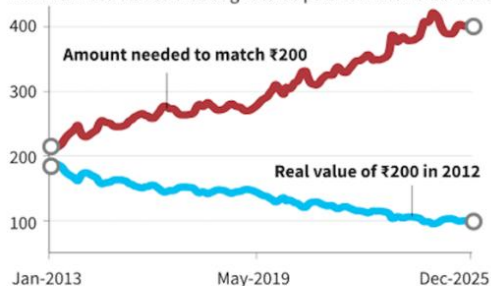


CHART 3: Number of beneficiaries who have remained fairly constant over the years when compared to the projected growth in the elderly population (in crore)

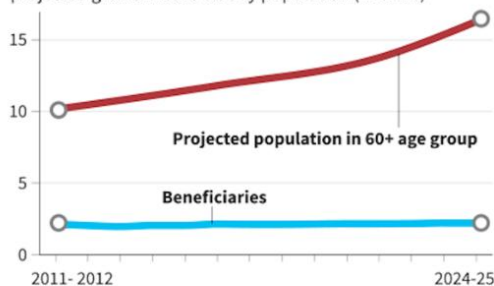


CHART 4: The response of surveyed beneficiaries in nine States and Jammu and Kashmir for a study commissioned by Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) on the adequacy of assistance under IGNOAPS

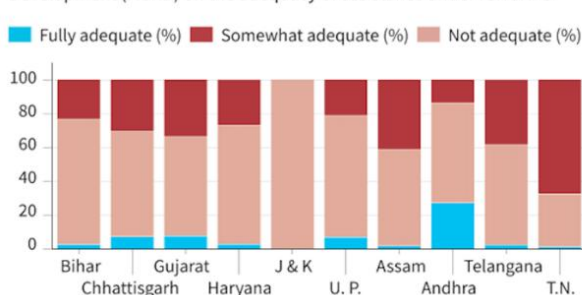
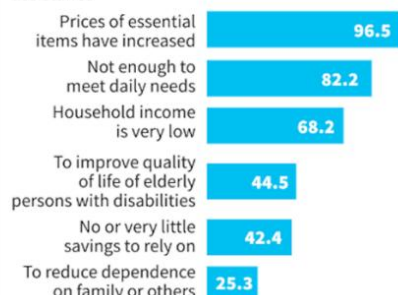


CHART 5: The reasons cited by respondents (%) of the MoRD study for the need to increase IGNOAPS assistance



Coverage Gap and Outdated Beneficiary Base

- The task force report of 2013, PAC's 2025 report and MoRD report recommended wider coverage, as beneficiary ceilings rely on outdated BPL data.
- The MoRD projected IGNOAPS beneficiaries should be nearly 17 crore by 2030, far above the present coverage of about 2.2 crore people.
- Beneficiary numbers have stayed nearly stagnant despite rising elderly population, weakening the scheme's relevance for old-age social security.

Survey Findings on Pension Adequacy

- A survey of 6,000 beneficiaries across 600 Gram Panchayats in 10 States found less than 10% in nine States considered the scheme fully adequate.
- Most beneficiaries rated pension support as only somewhat adequate or inadequate, reflecting weak income protection for the elderly.
- Respondents sought higher assistance because essential prices rose, needs remained unmet, household income stayed low, and family dependence increased.

Beyond Editorial

Silver Economy and Dignified Ageing

- Ageing transition: India's welfare planning must prepare for rising elderly numbers, with Census 2011 already recording 10.38 crore persons above 60.
- Dignity lens: Old-age pension should be treated as social security for dignified ageing, not just survival aid under NSAP.
- Universal floor: A minimum social pension can reduce exclusion errors from outdated BPL lists, as seen in IGNOAPS coverage gaps.
- Gender vulnerability: Elderly women face greater insecurity due to widowhood, unpaid care work and weaker assets, as seen among rural widows.
- Health linkage: Pension reform should connect with NPHCE, disability support, Jan Aushadhi medicines and community-based elderly care.
- Care economy: Families alone cannot absorb ageing burdens, so systems must support home care, day-care centres and Kerala's Vayomithram-like services.
- Social inclusion: Regular pensions can reduce dependence, isolation and neglect among elderly citizens, especially where joint-family support is weakening.

3. Amid global shocks, activate growth drivers within domestic control

(GS Paper III Economy)

This editorial 'Amid global shocks, activate growth drivers within domestic control' was published in The Indian Express on 8th Jun 2026, highlights the need to support domestic growth drivers amid external shocks, inflation risks and shrinking policy space.

Growth Outlook and Domestic Support

- India's growth-inflation mix worsened as West Asia conflict and weak monsoon prospects raised upside inflation risks and downside growth risks.
- GDP growth stayed strong at 7.2% in 2025-26 despite conflict, supported by domestic demand, resilient services and limited impact on fast-growing electronics exports.
- RBI rate cuts, GST rationalisation, income-tax relief and higher State transfers strengthened household purchasing power and business sentiment.
- Private consumption and investment demand became key growth drivers at 7.7% and 8.2% respectively, but this support may weaken with rising risks.
- Crisil expects GDP growth to slow to 6.6% from 7.7%, while RBI retained a 6.6% real growth outlook with unchanged rates and stance.

External Shocks and Export Constraints

- West Asia conflict created a major energy shock, widened trade disruption and raised insurance costs, making the external environment more challenging.
- Slowing demand in major export markets, especially the U.S., Europe and West Asia, may reduce opportunities for India's goods exports.
- Crude oil may average \$90-95 per barrel against \$70 last fiscal, increasing input costs and hurting manufacturing, construction, transport and services.
- A deficient monsoon, forecast at 90% rainfall of the long-period average, could worsen both growth and inflation despite possible Indian Ocean Dipole support.

Inflation Pressure and Policy Constraints

- Tightened financial conditions in March-April reflected capital outflows, rupee depreciation and rising bond yields, raising borrowing costs and investment risks.
- Inflation risks are more visible in WPI inflation at 8.3% in April, while CPI inflation remained benign at 3.5%.
- Crisil expects CPI inflation to rise to 5.1% as higher input costs pass into consumer prices and petrol-diesel prices begin rising.

- Food inflation may rise due to heatwave-hit agriculture, expected weak rainfall and unanchored household inflation expectations.
- Strong corporate balance sheets and a median debt-to-equity ratio of 0.45 offer some cushion for medium and large companies.

Domestic Reform Priorities

- Monetary policy space has narrowed due to rising inflation risks, making fiscal policy costly and difficult amid global shocks.
- Priorities include supporting MSMEs, managing fertiliser subsidies and accelerating energy security and affordability efforts.
- India must activate domestic growth by removing economic bottlenecks, fast-tracking ease of business reforms and utilising recently signed foreign trade agreements.

Beyond Editorial

Strategic Economic Autonomy in a Volatile World

- External resilience: India must reduce exposure to oil, commodity and supply-chain shocks by diversifying imports, as seen after the Russia-Ukraine war.
- Energy security: Renewables, battery storage, strategic petroleum reserves and ethanol blending can lower India's vulnerability to global oil-price spikes.
- Supply-chain depth: Stronger domestic manufacturing through PLI and MSME integration can protect growth when imports turn costlier or markets weaken.
- Export readiness: India must improve PM Gati Shakti logistics, standards compliance and trade facilitation to utilise FTAs like India-UAE CEPA.
- Investment climate: Predictable taxation, faster approvals, IBC resolution and contract enforcement can keep private investment active during global uncertainty.
- Human capital: Skill India, PMKVY and formal employment expansion are essential to sustain domestic demand beyond short-term consumption support.
- Policy autonomy: Strong domestic markets, resilient infrastructure and diversified production give India greater room when global shocks limit fiscal and monetary choices.