Editorials - 10th Nov 2026

1. THE NEXT TEST FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY (GS PAPER III ECONOMY)

This editorial '**The next test for renewable energy**' was published in **The Hindu** on 10th Nov 2026, highlights the need to make renewable energy **reliable, secure** and **digital** for an effective energy transition.

Energy transition: Expansion and integration gaps

- India combines near-universal **electricity access** with the world's third-largest **renewable energy capacity**; COP31 hosts propose raising electricity's share in global final energy consumption to 35% by 2035.
- Global **renewable capacity** reached 5,149 GW in 2025, adding 692 GW, nearly 97% solar and wind; despite 80% growth since 2020, the **2030 tripling goal** remains distant.
- **Deployment disparities** persist: China accounted for nearly two-thirds of annual additions, Africa only 1.6%; about 560 million people in **Sub-Saharan Africa** lack electricity.
- The central challenge has shifted from renewable **economic viability** to **system integration**: centralised grids constrain delivery, concentrated intellectual property and supply chains create dependencies, and AI-driven demand strains energy, water and climate.

Reliability and energy security

- India had only 9 GWh of installed **battery storage** in mid-2026; contracts reward energy delivered rather than **flexibility**, reliability or dispatchability, risking underused capacity and costs for distributors and consumers.
- Replace rigid **25-year contracts** with real-time trading and contracts for difference; conduct **technology-agnostic auctions** through integrated system plans and reduce permitting delays and grid-connection queues.
- **IRENA** estimates annual global grid investment must roughly double from $0.5 trillion to $1 trillion; India approved about $19 billion for State transmission and **50 GWh storage**, enabling evacuation of up to 135 GW by 2032–33.
- **Energy security** gains weaken if clean energy merely replaces one dependency with another; China dominates **cleantech manufacturing investment**, accounting for 70%, according to the IEA.
- India's **manufacturing capacity** reached about 262 GW for solar modules and 37 GW for cells; its Critical Minerals and Green Hydrogen Missions support mineral processing and electrolysers, while **multilateral institutions** should tailor manufacturing, supply-chain and skills support to national conditions.

Digital grids and resource-efficient demand

- India's approximately **54 million smart meters** provide a foundation for **digital grids**, enabling grid-edge storage, energy-flow optimisation and digital public infrastructure for energy.
- **AI** can forecast renewable output, optimise grids and unlock flexibility markets; however, **data-centre electricity demand** could rise from 485 TWh to 950 TWh by 2030, doubling its global share from 1.5% to 3%, while annual water use could more than double.
- Locate large loads using projected **heat and water stress**; require data centres to disclose power, water and carbon intensity, making **resource efficiency** a condition of viability.

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Ecological footprint of the clean energy transition

- **Land-use conflicts:** Renewable projects can disrupt customary livelihoods; World Bank assessments identified seasonal grazing on government land allocated to Rewa Solar Park.
- **Biodiversity loss:** Transmission infrastructure can threaten wildlife, as illustrated by Great Indian Bustard deaths from collisions with overhead power lines in renewable-rich regions.
- **Mining damage:** Indonesia's nickel expansion illustrates the ecological costs of battery minerals, with the IEA documenting deforestation, farmland clearance and difficult tailings management.
- **Water stress:** Lithium extraction in Chile's Atacama salt flat can reduce freshwater availability for ecosystems and communities through evaporation-driven changes in groundwater flows.
- **Waste accumulation:** Retired panels require dedicated disposal systems; India's E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022 prescribe inventories and regulated storage of solar waste generated up to 2034–35.
- **Lifecycle emissions:** Solar electricity has substantially lower emissions than fossil generation, but IEA-PVPS assessments identify manufacturing as its principal lifecycle emissions source.
- **Resource circularity:** Recycling reduces dependence on fresh extraction; the IEA identifies recovered lithium, nickel and cobalt as valuable secondary supplies for clean-energy technologies.

2. WALKING THE FISCAL TIGHTROPE WON'T BE EASY (GS PAPER III ECONOMY)

This editorial '**Walking the fiscal tightrope won't be easy**' was published in **The Indian Express** on 10th Nov 2026, highlights fiscal slippage risks from **subdued tax revenue** and **rising subsidies** despite stronger **disinvestment receipts**.

Revenue performance and disinvestment

- **Gross tax collections** grew 6.1% during April–September, marginally below budgeted annual growth; **direct taxes** remained healthy, with corporate taxes outpacing personal income taxes.
- Fuel duty cuts reduced **excise revenue** to ₹1.07 lakh crore from ₹1.38 lakh crore a year earlier; **customs collections**, up 16.5% in H1 FY2027, could partly offset the shortfall, according to ICRA.
- **Disinvestment** receipts of ₹55,757 crore and **asset monetisation** of ₹6,366 crore, supplemented by the government's IDBI sale proceeds, could exceed the ₹80,000 crore target; Fairfax was selected to acquire a 60.72% bank stake for ₹52,878 crore.

Expenditure pressures and fiscal implications

- **Capital expenditure** growth slowed sharply from 23.7% in Q1 to 2.8% in **Q2**, weakening spending momentum.
- CareEdge Ratings projects **fertiliser subsidies** at ₹2.5–2.7 trillion against the budgeted ₹1.7 trillion, increasing **fiscal deficit** pressures.
- **CareEdge Ratings** forecasts a deficit of 4.3–4.5% of GDP against the 4.3% target; **SBI economists** estimate a ₹1.2 lakh crore increase from excise revenue losses and higher fertiliser and petroleum/LPG subsidies.

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Distributional consequences of fiscal consolidation

- **Welfare compression:** Cutting progressive public spending can widen inequality; the IMF's 2014 assessment found spending-based consolidation generally worsened inequality more than revenue-based adjustment.
- **Subsidy withdrawal:** Compensatory transfers can cushion vulnerable households; Indonesia accompanied its 2005 fuel-price increases with cash assistance covering approximately 15.5 million poor and near-poor households.
- **Tax inequity:** Adjustment through regressive consumption taxes can deepen inequality, a risk identified in IMF analysis of the distributional effects of fiscal policy.
- **Employment losses:** An IMF working paper examining 17 OECD countries during 1978–2009 associated fiscal consolidation with higher long-term unemployment and declining wage-income shares.
- **Regional disparities:** Protecting poorer States requires redistributive transfers; the Fifteenth Finance Commission assigned 45% weight to income distance in its horizontal tax-devolution formula.
- **Gendered burdens:** Cuts to care services risk increasing women's unpaid work; ILO estimates identified care responsibilities as keeping 708 million women outside the labour force in 2023.
- **Intergenerational trade-offs:** Deficit reduction can strengthen sustainability, but investment cuts weaken future growth; IMF evidence favours protecting infrastructure, education and health during consolidation.

3. COURT'S RELOOK AT DETENTION PROTECTS LIBERTY (GS PAPER II POLITY)

This editorial '**Court's relook at detention protects liberty**' was published in **The Indian Express** on 10th Nov 2026, highlights **constitutional safeguards** against prolonged **police custody** and **judicial protection** of personal liberty.

Custody and constitutional safeguards

- In Sujit Das and Others v Union of India, the **Supreme Court** overturned Tripura High Court's bail denial in an **NDPS Act** case, rejecting the detention–arrest distinction used to bypass constitutional protections.
- The **24-hour limit** for production before a magistrate begins when police take a person into custody, rather than upon formal arrest; **Article 22** safeguards cannot be diluted by describing custody as temporary.
- **Magistrates** must scrutinise every arrest and test investigating agencies' claims, since prolonged detention increases **human rights** violations.
- In Prabir Purkayastha v State of Delhi (2024), an arrest under the **UAPA** was invalidated for violating **procedural safeguards**, reinforcing judicial scrutiny of custody.

Bail jurisprudence under special laws

- In NIA v Zahoor Ahmad Shah Watali (2019), the Court required **prima facie acceptance** of the prosecution's version when deciding **UAPA bail**, restricting judicial assessment at that stage.
- Union of India v K A Najeeb (2021) recognised **prolonged trials** when applying restrictive bail provisions; Sheikh Javed Iqbal v State of Uttar Pradesh (2024) clarified that Watali cannot justify **automatic bail denial**.

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Socioeconomic barriers to accessing justice

- **Unaffordable bail:** Poverty can prevent release despite bail orders; the Support to Poor Prisoners Scheme provides financial assistance towards eligible prisoners' bail amounts and fines.
- **Representation gaps:** Timely counsel is essential; Khatri v State of Bihar established that free legal aid begins at first production before a magistrate, rather than trial alone.
- **Legal illiteracy:** Rights remain ineffective without awareness; Suhas Chakma v Union of India (2024) reinforced prison legal-awareness measures and access to legal-aid institutions.
- **Language barriers:** Unfamiliar legal language limits accessibility; the Supreme Court's e-SCR translation initiative makes judgments available in regional languages to improve public understanding.
- **Social discrimination:** Institutional prejudice compounds exclusion; Sukanya Shantha v Union of India (2024) invalidated prison-manual provisions prescribing caste-based segregation and work allocation.

- **Geographical exclusion:** Distance restricts access to lawyers; Tele-Law connects citizens with pre-litigation advice through Common Service Centres, telephone facilities and its mobile application.
- **Prolonged incarceration:** Delayed trials compound hardship for poor defendants; Hussainara Khatoon v State of Bihar (1979) recognised speedy trial and free legal aid within Article 21 protections.