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Most of India's Renewable Energy Pipeline Faces Climate Risk

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CURATED & WRITTEN BY

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WHY IN NEWS

A report by Zurich Kotak (Zurich Resilience (<https://ujjyari.com/vocab/resilience/>) Solutions) found that nearly 90 per cent of India's renewable-energy project pipeline faces high or critical climate-physical risk, exposing about 239 GW of planned capacity worth roughly 55 billion dollars by 2030. The report was released around June 26, 2026.

WHAT THE REPORT FOUND

The study assessed **871 renewable-energy projects**, covering about **90 per cent of India's active project pipeline**. Its central finding is that the very infrastructure being built to fight climate change is itself acutely vulnerable to climate impacts such as extreme heat, floods, cyclones, landslides and changing wind and rainfall patterns.

FINDING	FIGURE
Projects assessed	871 (~90% of active pipeline)
Share facing high or critical risk	~90%
Capacity exposed by 2030	~239 GW
Value of exposed capacity	~\$55 billion
Potential loss if resilience spending added	Cut to ~\$27 billion
Resilience spend needed	~2% of capital expenditure

A key insight is the economics of resilience. The report estimates that spending only about **2 per cent of capital expenditure (capex)** on climate-proofing measures could roughly halve the financial exposure, bringing potential losses down from about 55 billion dollars to around **27 billion dollars**.

THE ADAPTATION PARADOX

The report highlights what is called the **adaptation paradox** (<https://ujiyari.com/vocab/paradox/>): the clean-energy transition infrastructure meant to mitigate climate change is itself at the mercy of a changing climate. Solar farms can be damaged by hailstorms and extreme heat that reduce panel efficiency, wind installations face shifting wind regimes and cyclones, and hydropower in the Himalayas is exposed to glacial floods and landslides.

Hotspot States

The most exposed regions identified include:

- **Arunachal Pradesh** and **Uttarakhand**, where Himalayan terrain raises the risk of landslides and glacial flooding for hydropower.
- **Gujarat** and **Rajasthan**, where large solar and wind capacities face extreme heat, dust storms and cyclonic activity.

INDIA'S RENEWABLE ENERGY TARGETS

India's drive toward clean energy is anchored in the **Panchamrit** (<https://ujiyari.com/terms/panchamrit-climate-goals/>) commitments announced at **COP26 in Glasgow (2021)**. As of **March 2026**, India's **non-fossil installed capacity stood at about 283.5 GW**, against a target of **500 GW of non-fossil capacity by 2030**. Protecting this rapidly growing fleet from climate damage is therefore central to meeting national climate and energy-security goals.

ANALYSIS AND WAY FORWARD

The findings reframe climate resilience from an optional cost to a core investment principle. If a large share of new renewable capacity is damaged or underperforms because of climate stress, the financial case for the energy transition weakens and investor confidence suffers.

The way forward lies in mandating **climate-risk assessments** at the project-planning stage, embedding resilience standards into tender and financing norms, diversifying project locations away from the highest-risk zones, and designing assets to withstand extreme weather. Integrating adaptation with **mitigation** (<https://ujiyari.com/vocab/mitigation/>), rather than treating them separately, will safeguard the returns on India's clean-energy investments and keep the 500 GW goal on track.

UPSC RELEVANCE

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GS Paper 3: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, infrastructure (energy), and disaster management.

Prelims pointers: Panchamrit commitments announced at COP26 Glasgow 2021; 500 GW non-fossil target by 2030; non-fossil capacity about 283.5 GW as of March 2026; report by Zurich Kotak / Zurich Resilience Solutions; concept of the adaptation paradox.

Mains question: “Clean-energy infrastructure is both a tool to fight climate change and a victim of it. Discuss the ‘adaptation paradox’ in the context of India’s renewable-energy pipeline and suggest measures to build resilience.” (15 marks, 250 words)

FACTS CORNER

★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

Report: Zurich Kotak (Zurich Resilience Solutions), released around June 26, 2026.

Scope: 871 renewable projects assessed, about 90 per cent of India’s active pipeline.

Risk: Nearly 90 per cent of projects face high or critical climate-physical risk.

Exposure: About 239 GW (roughly \$55 billion) of capacity exposed by 2030.

Resilience math: Spending about 2 per cent of capex could cut losses to about \$27 billion.

Hotspot states: Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Rajasthan.

Adaptation paradox: Clean-energy infrastructure is itself vulnerable to climate change.

India’s non-fossil capacity: About 283.5 GW as of March 2026.

Target: 500 GW non-fossil by 2030, part of the Panchamrit commitments announced at COP26 (Glasgow, 2021).

Sources: Press Information Bureau (<https://pib.gov.in>), Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (<https://mnre.gov.in>), The Hindu (<https://www.thehindu.com>)

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