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# **SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EDITORIALS**

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## **TOPICS:-**

- 1. An alternative to Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhithan Bill**  
(GS Paper II - Governance)
- 2. Bolstering deterrence through submarine dominance**  
(GS Paper III - Security)
- 3. A modest plea for constitutional morality**  
(GS Paper II - Polity)

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# 1. AN ALTERNATIVE TO VIKSIT BHARAT SHIKSHA ADHISTHAN BILL

*(GS Paper II - Governance)*

This editorial 'An alternative to Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhistan Bill' was published in **The Hindu** on 11th Apr 2026, highlights the **need to replace** a centralised **higher-education bill** with a federal, State-sensitive governance framework.

## Centralisation and constitutional overreach

- The **VBSA Bill** converts limited Union coordination into sweeping control over **higher education** standards, inspection, and governance.
- Entry 66 of the **Union List** gives Parliament only limited power, but the Bill expands **central authority** far beyond coordination.
- The Bill gives Union-controlled councils sole discretion to determine **standards** and exercise independent, unlimited **regulatory powers**.
- The **Education Ministry** also usurps fund-allocation authority, concentrating both finance and **governance** in the **Centre**.
- The Bill excludes **HEIs** from decision-making and embeds **bureaucratic overreach** into each provision.
- By weakening UGC consultation norms, the Bill reduces the autonomy of **universities** and premier **institutions** such as IITs and IIMs.

## Autonomy, knowledge and social-justice concerns

- In the name of **Bhartiya Knowledge**, the Bill is seen as enabling **Hindutva ideology** and weakening India's multicultural knowledge traditions.
- It favours **prescriptive regulation**, centralised accreditation, and output-linked control rather than **innovation** and self-reliance.
- The Bill promotes hyper-globalisation and legitimises regulation through **global rankings** rather than national **public purpose**.
- It allows the Centre to withdraw from publicly funded **higher education** and push dependence on **loans**.
- The Bill does not provide for enforcement of **affirmative action** and reservation in higher education.
- It also neglects **social justice**, inter-regional equity, and the broader public role of **education**.

## Justice to States and role of SHECs

- The proposed NRF does not provide block grants to State universities for integrated **teaching-research-outreach** scholarship.
- **SHECs** should be represented on all three proposed councils and enabled to shape a jointly agreed **governance direction**.
- They should have a clear mandate to influence the future of **HEIs** and incorporate feedback from **senates-academic councils**.
- The Bill should explicitly recognise the role of students, teachers, and non-teaching staff in **higher-education governance**.
- Since education lies in the **Concurrent List**, uniform provisions imposed on all States ignore **federal realities**.
- Standards for higher education must be shaped sector-wise and State-wise, not fixed solely by a Delhi-based **Standards Council**.

## Regulatory and accreditation redesign

- The **Regulatory Council** should not give the Centre unchecked powers over recognition, authorisation, and **institutional closure**.
- No institution should be closed without the consent of the concerned **State government** where that **institution** is located.
- The proposed **Accreditation Council** should not outsource accreditation to third-party networks that bypass **deliberative processes**.
- Technology-driven **quality assessment** cannot replace context-sensitive and process-oriented **regulation**.
- Output-based evaluation focused on patents and publications may miss socially desirable **outcomes** and broader **impact**.
- Regulation should be deliberative and outcome-centric, not merely **prescriptive** and technology-led **compliance**.

## Alternative federal framework

- Standards, **accreditation**, and regulation cannot be determined through a top-down **model**.
- The amended Bill should give **50% weightage** each to **SHECs** and Union councils in regulation, accreditation, and standards-setting.
- Regulation should focus on **inter-regional equity**, linguistic-cultural autonomy, social justice, and emerging **technologies**.

- The Bill should also create **regional councils** to address ecological and socio-technical **diversity**.
- A separate **HEGC** should disburse funds for integrating teaching, research, and **outreach**.
- The **HEGC** should support laggard State institutions to bridge historical discrimination, structural gaps, and research **deficits**.
- The three councils should be run by **academics-professionals**, have separate budgets, and operationalise **shared responsibility**.
- Public purposes of **higher education** should be clearly specified so allocations serve equity, local development, and **social contribution**.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### Why cooperative federalism in education matters

- **Context sensitivity:** Education policy works best when States shape implementation, as Tamil Nadu and Nagaland face very different linguistic and social realities.
- **Democratic legitimacy:** Reforms gain greater acceptance when they emerge from Centre-State consultation, as seen in federal negotiation under the GST model.
- **Administrative feasibility:** Shared decision-making improves execution, because States run most public universities, colleges, and recruitment systems on the ground.
- **Regional diversity:** Cooperative federalism allows universities to reflect local histories and economies, as in marine studies in Kerala or hill ecology in Himachal.
- **Policy innovation:** States often serve as laboratories of reform, as Karnataka's skill initiatives and Kerala's higher-literacy model have shown.
- **Balanced accountability:** When both Union and States share responsibility, failure cannot be deflected easily, as seen in school education outcomes under Samagra Shiksha.
- **Constitutional coherence:** Since education lies in the Concurrent List after the 42nd Amendment, a cooperative model better reflects India's federal design.

## 2. BOLSTERING DETERRENCE THROUGH SUBMARINE DOMINANCE

*(GS Paper III - Security)*

This editorial ‘**Bolstering deterrence through submarine dominance**’ was published in **The Hindu** on 11th Apr 2026, highlights how India’s **expanding submarine programme** is reinforcing credible **sea-based deterrence** amid a changing strategic environment.

### India’s submarine milestone

- The likely commissioning of **INS Aridhaman** marks the third submarine in India’s **SSBN programme**, after **INS Arihant** and **INS Arighat**.
- **INS Aridhaman** has greater firing power than its predecessors, indicating a gradual capability upgrade in the **Arihant class**.
- The 7000-tonne vessel can reportedly carry up to 24 **K-15 Sagarika** missiles and up to eight nuclear-tipped missiles.
- Earlier submarines carried 12 **K-15 missiles** and four **K-4 missiles**, showing **Aridhaman’s** expanded strike potential.
- Its induction further strengthens India’s **nuclear triad**, or its capacity for strategic nuclear delivery from land, sea, and air.

### Why sea-based deterrence has gained urgency

- Strengthening **sea-based deterrence** is especially critical because it deepens India’s **nuclear capability** under a worsening maritime environment.
- India’s nuclear outlook remains anchored in **no first use**, but the Indian Ocean is becoming more contested.
- Rising **Chinese presence** and dual-use research vessels increase risks of surveillance and **intelligence gathering** in the region.
- Sea-based deterrence is therefore necessary to forestall adversarial manoeuvres by **China** and even **Pakistan**.
- The old assumption of a dormant **Indian Ocean** is weakening as modern warfare increasingly cuts across multiple domains.
- The West Asia conflict shows how a war that began in the air can quickly assume a decisive **maritime dimension**.
- The growing importance of the **Strait of Hormuz** illustrates how sea lanes can shape the future course of conflict.

- **Operation Sindoor** also showed that even a counter-terror campaign against Pakistan could potentially acquire a naval dimension.
- Since wars no longer remain confined to isolated domains, strengthening deterrence across **land-air-sea** has become essential.

### Strategic and industrial significance

- Expanding **nuclear submarine** capability will remain a priority for India's broader **national security** architecture.
- The SSBN project has also strengthened India's push for **self-reliance** in **defence production**.
- Ongoing conflicts and stressed **defence supply chains** have reinforced the logic of reducing external dependence.
- For India, the prolonged **Russia-Ukraine war** has accelerated this shift despite Moscow's importance as a defence partner.

### Future trajectory and constraints

- Plans to induct a fourth **Arihant-class** vessel indicate continued momentum in India's **SSBN programme**.
- New Delhi also plans to commission its first indigenously designed **SSN** by 2036 and a second by 2038.
- The rapid expansion of this programme signals that **submarine dominance** is becoming central to India's **deterrence strategy**.
- The key challenge will be balancing **resource allocation** between submarine modernisation and induction of new technologies.
- The Navy must also integrate **Artificial Intelligence** and **autonomous systems** into submarine design and production.
- As Indian naval assets are continually measured against **China**, maintaining pace with **Beijing** will remain critical.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### Limits of submarine-centric deterrence

- **System dependence:** Submarine deterrence remains credible only when backed by secure communications, surveillance networks, and reliable command-and-control systems, as shown by Cold War SSBN practices.
- **Capability integration:** A strong submarine fleet cannot substitute for wider maritime capacity such as anti-submarine warfare, air cover, and surface readiness, as seen in U.S. carrier-submarine coordination.

- **Operational sustainability:** Long-term effectiveness depends not only on induction, but also on maintenance cycles, crew training, and continuous technological upgrades, as reflected in Russia's recurring submarine upkeep challenges.
- **Resource trade-offs:** Heavy investment in submarines can constrain spending on other naval priorities, including aircraft, escorts, and logistics support platforms, as Britain's force-balance debates have shown.
- **Industrial depth:** Strategic autonomy requires domestic ecosystems for design, repair, components, and munitions, not merely a few high-profile inductions, as France's naval-industrial model illustrates.
- **Doctrinal balance:** Sea-based deterrence is vital, but it must remain integrated with India's larger land, air, and conventional deterrence posture, as in the logic of the nuclear triad.
- **Strategic signalling:** Maritime dominance becomes more credible when submarine capability is aligned with diplomacy, regional partnerships, and Indian Ocean strategy, as seen in QUAD-linked maritime cooperation.

### 3. A MODEST PLEA FOR CONSTITUTIONAL MORALITY

*(GS Paper II - Polity)*

This editorial 'A modest plea for constitutional morality' was published in The Indian Express on 11th Apr 2026, highlights the risks of turning constitutional morality into an expansive judicial tool that can override constitutional discipline, institutional limits, and parliamentary space.

#### **Meaning and misuse of constitutional morality**

- The term constitutional morality has become central in legal debate, but its meaning remains indeterminate and contested.
- The editorial argues that it is often defined only against societal morality, making it a vague and catch-all judicial category.
- In this usage, it stops reflecting historically evolved constitutional norms and becomes a device for asserting judicial authority over society.
- The criticism is not of the Constitution itself, but of using the term as an open-ended standard of adjudication.

### Its limited but valid role

- The author accepts that **constitutional morality** can indicate the virtues of a proper **constitutional sensibility**.
- These include self-restraint, respect for **plurality**, scepticism toward authority, and commitment to **public criticism**.
- In that sense, the term can guide questions raised in cases like **Sabarimala**, without itself yielding a binding **rule of decision**.
- It helps identify tensions between **liberty-equality** and institutional autonomy, but does not by itself resolve them.

### Why judicial overreach is the real concern

- The deeper worry is not mere **vagueness**, but that the term increasingly legitimises **judicial nihilism**.
- It casts light on a Court trajectory where **procedural discipline** and predictable legality appear weakened by **ad hocism**.
- The concern is that outcomes begin to depend less on settled grounds and more on **contingent judicial choice**.
- Thus, **constitutional morality** can become an instrument through which courts extend authority without clear constitutional limits.

### Against the societal morality objection

- Invoking **societal morality** in this context is said to be a **false contrast**, not a serious defence.
- The objection to constitutional morality is not that it protects regressive **social practices**, but that it can bypass **constitutional method**.
- In cases like **Navtej Singh Johar** and **Indian Young Lawyers Union**, the real issues were freedom, equality, and anti-discrimination.
- Whatever its vagueness, constitutional morality at least gestures toward these **constitutional values**, which explains part of its **appeal**.

### Recent judicial drift and institutional costs

- The editorial argues that recent weeks have shown several **Rubicons** being crossed by the **Supreme Court**.
- One example cited is the Court's handling of an **NCERT** textbook episode, where judicial sensitivity appeared to harden into **absurdity**.

- A more serious concern is the apparent disenfranchisement of **lakhs of voters** in West Bengal without full due process.
- If no serious **constitutional injury** occurs when citizens lose an absolute vote because their documents are rejected, the term loses coherence.
- Here, **constitutional morality** remains useful only as a diagnostic of arbitrariness, unaccountable power, and suspended **equality-reason**.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### Need for institutional balance in a constitutional democracy

- **Constitutional equilibrium:** A stable democracy depends on balance among the judiciary, legislature, and executive, with each respecting the limits of its role, as envisaged in **Kesavananda Bharati**.
- **Judicial restraint:** Courts protect rights most effectively when they act with discipline, rather than expanding open-ended doctrines into general governing tools, as cautioned in the **NJAC case** debate.
- **Legislative space:** Elected institutions must retain room for democratic deliberation, especially on morally contested questions involving social reform and public policy, as seen in the **Sabarimala** aftermath.
- **Rights protection:** Institutional balance does not weaken liberty, because judicial review remains essential when laws or actions violate constitutional guarantees, as affirmed in **Maneka Gandhi**.
- **Separation of powers:** Excessive judicial innovation can blur constitutional boundaries and create friction with bodies that possess democratic or administrative legitimacy, as seen in concerns over **policy directives**.
- **Democratic legitimacy:** Public trust improves when constitutional disputes are resolved through clear method, reasoned limits, and respect for institutional competence, as reflected in **Puttaswamy's** structured reasoning.
- **Long-term stability:** Constitutional democracy is strengthened not by judicial supremacy, but by a durable balance between accountability, restraint, and rights enforcement, as the **Basic Structure** doctrine implies.