



**Sanskriti IAS**



**THE HINDU**



**The Indian EXPRESS**

# **SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EDITORIALS**

**13th Mar 2026**

## **TOPICS:-**

- 1. Atmanirbharta is managing external dependencies, big-power rivalries**  
(GS Paper II - International Relations)
- 2. Preparing India for a true innovation-led economy**  
(GS Paper III - Science & Technology)
- 3. Justice for all**  
(GS Paper II - Polity)

**DELHI CENTRE:**  
636, Mukherjee Nagar  
New Delhi-110009

**PRAYAGRAJ CENTRE:**  
1/1/8A, Stanley Rd,  
Maharana Pratap Chauraha,  
Civil Lines, Prayagraj, UP - 211002

 **9555-124-124**

 **sanskritiias.com**

# 1. ATMANIRBHARTA IS MANAGING EXTERNAL DEPENDENCIES, BIG-POWER RIVALRIES

*(GS Paper II - International Relations)*

This editorial 'Atmanirbharta is managing external dependencies, big-power rivalries' was published in **The Indian Express** on 13th Mar 2026, highlights how Atmanirbharta must be understood as **India's strategy to reduce external vulnerabilities** and navigate intensifying great-power rivalries.

## How external dependence shaped India's choices

- The weaponisation of India's oil imports by the **United States**, by linking sourcing to bilateral trade, is presented as a reminder that dependence constrains **foreign policy** and national security.
- Independent India began with critical external dependencies in food, **foreign exchange**, defence equipment and energy.
- The **1957-58 foreign exchange crisis**, the **1962 China war**, the food crisis of the mid-1960s and the **1990 Gulf War** exposed how such dependence could shape India's policy choices.
- In the mid-1960s, reliance on imported food gave the **U.S.** leverage, with food aid linked to pressure over India's stand on **Vietnam**.
- The **1991 foreign exchange crisis** eventually pushed India toward major changes in economic and foreign policy under **P.V. Narasimha Rao**.

## Atmanirbharta as strategic self-reliance

- The idea of **Atmanirbharta** is presented as a rediscovery of Nehru's policy of self-reliance, even if the term is often attacked in public debate.
- The **U.S.** is expected to continue weaponising trade, especially in **energy**, defence equipment and access to advanced critical technologies.
- In that context, self-reliance is not described as isolation, but as protection against external **coercion**.
- The optimism reflected in recent India-U.S. formulations such as **COMPACT** and **TRUST** is shown to have been undercut by events of the past year.

## Trust deficits in India-U.S. ties

- The **TRUST** understanding had identified energy security as central to economic growth, social well-being and technical innovation in both countries.

- Yet the reversal of that promise is shown in the disruption of trust created by U.S. actions over **energy supplies** and broader economic pressure.
- Joint positioning with **Israel** and the wider West Asian conflict is seen as carrying serious implications not only for India's energy security but also for its interests in the region.
- India's silence in the face of these developments is treated as a sign of strategic discomfort rather than confident autonomy.

### **New vulnerabilities in a changed world**

- The external environment is described as more difficult, with global uncertainty creating new forms of **vulnerability**.
- Over the past decade, **emigration** has emerged as another external dependence, especially in developed countries and West Asia, where the diaspora is both a source of foreign exchange and a lever of influence.
- Trump's anti-immigration stance and America First politics again exposed the fragile foundations of India's **diaspora advantage**.
- The rise of influence operations and external pressure through aligned domestic elites is shown as a modern extension of older Cold War-era **power rivalries**.

### **The leadership test before India**

- The present era is described as a **three-way contest** among the U.S., Russia and China, with each capable of exploiting India's strategic dependencies.
- Managing this rivalry requires ensuring that none of these powers can use India's external dependence as a **weapon**.
- The comparison with **Indira Gandhi** is used to suggest that strategic autonomy requires visible political courage in confronting external bullying.
- The core demand is not rhetorical nationalism, but leadership that can turn **Atmanirbharta** into a practical shield against coercion.

## **BEYOND EDITORIAL**

### **Policy pillars for strategic autonomy in a coercive world**

- **Reduce critical import dependence:** India must cut **strategic vulnerabilities** in energy and food, as **ISPRL** already anchors 5.33 MMT of crude reserves.
- **Deepen domestic industrial capacity:** Atmanirbharta needs stronger **manufacturing ecosystems**, as **PLI** now spans 14 sectors with 836 approved applications.

- **Diversify external partnerships:** India should avoid overreliance on any one **major power**, since big-power rivalry can narrow diplomatic and economic space.
- **Secure energy resilience:** A stable **energy strategy** needs diversified sourcing and reserves, as Gulf-linked disruptions repeatedly pressure India's import bill.
- **Strengthen technological sovereignty:** India must build capacity in **critical technologies**, as **India Semiconductor Mission** has approved 10 projects across 6 states.
- **Protect diaspora-linked interests:** Foreign policy should account for **migration dependencies**, as remittances to India were about **\$135 billion** last year.
- **Align political resolve with economic preparedness:** Strategic autonomy requires both **leadership** and domestic capability, not rhetoric unsupported by material strength.

## 2. PREPARING INDIA FOR A TRUE INNOVATION-LED ECONOMY

*(GS Paper III - Science & Technology)*

This editorial 'Preparing India for a true innovation-led economy' was published in **The Hindu** on 13th Mar 2026, highlights how **India's innovation push** has gained policy momentum but still suffers from **weak private-sector R&D**, shallow commercialisation and human-capital gaps.

### **Promise in policy, but weak outcomes**

- India's research, development and innovation story shows a paradox: stronger policy intent and funding, but weaker structural **innovation outcomes**.
- Key weaknesses remain low **R&D intensity**, weak research-to-market translation, limited global technological influence and inadequate private-sector participation.
- The broader challenge is no longer policy intent alone, but execution and deeper systemic change, especially from **industry**.
- Headline improvements do not alter the more sobering picture of shallow innovation fundamentals.

## 2026 as a year of opportunity

- The government has reaffirmed support through the **RDI Fund**, a **Rs 20,000 crore** corpus for deep-tech startups, tax incentives and digital infrastructure investment.
- Funding for **Atal Tinkering Labs** has reportedly risen from **Rs 500 crore** to **Rs 3,200 crore**, showing focus on future innovators.
- Removal of the three-year existence condition under the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research's **Industrial R&D Promotion Programme** could widen startup access.
- The lifting of the patenting ban on atomic-energy-related inventions and the **SHANTI Act, 2025** open space for greater private participation in nuclear technologies.
- Yet these reforms will matter only if industry turns policy openings into deployable technologies and sustained **commercialisation**.

## The scale gap in India's innovation system

- India's position in the **Global Innovation Index 2025** improved to **38th among 139 economies**, while patent filings rose from under **59,000** in 2020-21 to over **1,10,000** in 2024-25.
- Domestic filings now account for about **62%** of total patents, but this progress remains recent and policy-driven rather than deeply anchored in industry-led R&D.
- India still invests only **0.65% of GDP** in R&D, far below advanced economies and many peers.
- Patent volume also remains modest globally, with India's **1.8 million** filings far below **China's** scale and below the **U.S.** in annual domestic filings.
- **Patent Cooperation Treaty** applications at **4,547** in 2024, though up **22%** from 2023, still lag far behind China, the U.S., Japan and even Switzerland.

## Private sector as the missing engine

- In most innovation-leading economies, industry drives the bulk of **R&D spending**, but in India the state still bears a disproportionate share.
- This reflects limited private appetite for long-gestation, high-risk **innovation investment**.

- Commercial space and deep tech show promise, but the decisive question is whether private firms will commit patient capital at scale.
- India's innovation transition depends less on startup numbers alone and more on building R&D-driven enterprises capable of globally competitive technologies.

### Human capital and the last-mile failure

- India performs poorly on human-capital indicators tied to innovation, ranking **95** in employment in knowledge-intensive sectors and **80** in full-time equivalent researchers in **GII 2025**.
- Gender diversity is another weakness, with India ranked **101 among 119 economies** in employment of women with advanced degrees.
- Initiatives such as **WIDUSHI** and **WISE-KIRAN** exist, but their impact on inclusion and retention remains uncertain.
- The larger break in the chain lies in weak **industry-led commercialisation**: technology transfer, venture creation, risk capital alignment and research-to-market mechanisms remain underdeveloped.
- Innovation reaches full impact only when ideas move from laboratory to **market**, and that remains India's weakest step.

### A structural faultline

- India's missing large-scale, labour-intensive industrialisation has deepened reliance on **agriculture** and services.
- Even many unicorns draw on abundant labour, such as instant delivery platforms, rather than deep **R&D-led** technological innovation.
- This helps explain the absence of globally significant technologies of Indian origin and the weak bridge between academia, industry and finance.
- The real opportunity lies in building enterprises that tolerate failure, protect intellectual property and sustain long-gestation **technology development**.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### What India must do to build an innovation ecosystem

- **Raise national R&D intensity**: India must increase **R&D spending**, as it still invests only about **0.65% of GDP** despite stronger policy ambition.
- **Make industry the main driver**: Private firms must lead **research investment**, as the new **RDI Fund** was explicitly designed to catalyse private sector-led R&D.

- **Strengthen research-to-market pipelines:** Universities and labs need better **technology transfer**, as India's patent filings have risen sharply but commercial translation remains weaker.
- **Expand patient risk capital:** Deep-tech innovation needs more **long-gestation finance**, as the **RDI Scheme** targets near-commercial and strategic technology projects.
- **Build stronger human capital:** India needs more **researchers and innovators**, as **Atal Tinkering Labs** now have a ₹3,200 crore allocation for future talent-building.
- **Improve inclusion in innovation:** Greater participation of **women scientists** can widen the talent base, as schemes like **WISE-KIRAN** and **WIDUSHI** already seek to address gender gaps.
- **Link policy support with measurable outcomes:** Public incentives should reward **commercialisation and scale**, as India's **GII 2025 rank of 38** still coexists with modest global technology depth.

### 3. JUSTICE FOR ALL

*(GS Paper II - Polity)*

This editorial '**Justice for all**' was published in **The Hindu** on 13th Mar 2026, highlights how the Supreme Court's intervention on **NCERT textbook references** to judicial corruption risks **appearing selective** unless similar standards are applied across all ideologically sensitive content.

#### **Court's intervention and its larger implications**

- The **Supreme Court of India** treated the NCERT reference to judicial corruption as serious enough to risk a miscarriage of justice.
- It held that the textbook team lacked reasonably informed knowledge of the **Indian judiciary** and directed that such persons should not be associated with future curriculum preparation.
- This sweeping direction casts a shadow over the broader exercise of **textbook writing**, because it goes beyond correcting a passage to questioning the credibility of the authors themselves.

- If independent domain experts are required for judiciary-related chapters, the same logic could extend to other sensitive fields, especially **history** and social sciences.

### Selective scrutiny and ideological inconsistency

- The criticism is that the same rigorous standards have not been applied to chapters carrying ideological or cultural **bias**.
- Past objections by the **Bharatiya Janata Party** and allied groups had targeted textbooks as Macaulayan or westernised, leading to efforts to rewrite them along more civilisational lines.
- As a result, references to **Hindu rituals** and beliefs now appear across subjects where they do not naturally belong.
- Examples cited include discussion of **arghyam** in a solar energy context and a geography treatment of India's landmass as a sacred feminine presence.

### History writing and the danger of bigotry

- The same class eight social science text is said to portray **Muslim rulers** as uniformly cruel, despotic and repressive.
- In contrast, **Hindu kingdoms** are presented as benign and as resisting Muslim rule, weakening claims of balance and objectivity.
- Such framing may foster **bigotry**, even if the book carries a disclaimer that today's generation is not to be blamed for past "sins".
- Textbook writing therefore requires not only subject expertise but also intellectual care that promotes inquiry, fairness, equality, peace and **harmony**.

### Why consistency matters

- Language matters, but so does the underlying **intent** of curricular framing.
- Any selective targeting of only judiciary-related chapters can reinforce the perception that the judiciary is protecting **itself**, rather than defending educational standards uniformly.
- A principled standard would require scrutiny of all distortions, whether they concern courts, religion, science or **history**.
- Otherwise, the exercise risks undermining public confidence in both **justice** and textbook reform.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### Need for uniform standards in textbook revision

- **Apply scrutiny across all subjects:** If **judiciary-related** content demands correction, the same standard should apply to history, as **NCERT's 2023 rationalisation** also changed several history and political science portions.
- **Ensure expert-led review mechanisms:** Textbooks should be vetted by credible **domain experts**, as **NCF 2023** itself stresses age-appropriate, evidence-based and pedagogically sound content.
- **Protect academic objectivity:** Curriculum design must prioritise **evidence-based** treatment, as **NCERT** says textbooks should develop critical thinking rather than rote ideological instruction.
- **Preserve constitutional values:** School texts should promote **equality, pluralism and harmony**, as the **National Curriculum Framework** links education with constitutional values and democratic citizenship.
- **Maintain transparency in revision:** Changes in textbooks should carry clear **editorial reasoning**, because **NCERT's rationalisation exercise** drew criticism precisely over opacity and uneven explanation.
- **Avoid selective judicial intervention:** Courts must appear guided by **consistency**, as the **Supreme Court** has repeatedly held that justice must not only be done but be seen to be done.