



**Sanskriti IAS**



**THE HINDU**



**The Indian EXPRESS**

# **SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EDITORIALS**

*16th April 2026*

## **TOPICS:-**

**1. Dry days**

(GS Paper I - Geography, GS Paper III - Environment)

**2. Implications of increasing the size of the Lok Sabha**

(GS Paper II - Polity)

**3. In workers' protests, a test of labour reforms**

(GS Paper III - Economy)

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# 1. DRY DAYS

*(GS Paper I - Geography, GS Paper III - Environment)*

This editorial 'Dry days' was published in **The Hindu** on 16th Apr 2026, highlights the risks of a likely **monsoon deficit** and the need for early drought preparedness.

## Monsoon Outlook and Climatic Signals

- **IMD forecast** projects an 8% **rainfall deficit** for June-September 2026 and its April deficit warnings have often preceded actual drought-like outcomes.
- IMD avoids the term **drought** officially and classifies rainfall below 90% as **deficient**, but past forecasts show such deficits can translate into severe shortfalls.
- In **2015**, IMD projected rainfall at 93% of **Long Period Average**, yet India ended the season at a much weaker 86%.
- IMD expects a **depressed monsoon** in August-September due to **El Nino**, whose central Pacific warming has frequently coincided with deficient monsoons.
- Since 1950, a 1 degree Celsius rise in the **equatorial Pacific** has matched a deficit **monsoon** in 9 out of 16 cases cited by the editorial.
- The impact of **El Nino** depends on timing, because warming outside peak **monsoon months** is presented as less damaging to seasonal rainfall.
- In **2019**, expected El Nino-like conditions did not suppress rainfall because the warming was weaker and India finally received above-normal **rainfall**.
- This year, the **Indian Ocean Dipole** may offset part of El Nino's **drying effect**, though the overall seasonal outlook remains worrying.

## Agricultural Risks and Preparedness

- In a year already clouded by **West Asia** tensions, shortages of gas and **fertilizer** could deepen rural stress alongside weak rains.
- The government should urgently build **fertilizer stocks** and ensure **water distribution** is equitable, especially for stressed reservoirs.
- Timely **advisories** on optimal **sowing practices** are necessary to help farmers adjust early to a potentially weak monsoon.
- The editorial's central message is that two surplus years should not delay **preparedness**, because an early deficit warning warrants immediate **contingency planning**.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### Long-term climate resilience and drought-proofing

- **Structural preparedness:** Monsoon stress should drive durable drought-proofing through watershed works, groundwater recharge and local conservation under PMKSY and Atal Bhujal Yojana.
- **Cropping reform:** Water-stressed regions need gradual diversification away from paddy and sugarcane, as seen in drought-prone parts of Maharashtra and Karnataka.
- **Irrigation efficiency:** Wider use of micro-irrigation, precision water use and better canal management under Per Drop More Crop can ease reservoir stress.
- **Climate-resilient farming:** Drought-tolerant seeds, district contingency plans and local agro-advisories under NICRA can improve resilience to rainfall variability.
- **Risk governance:** Stronger last-mile weather alerts, quicker PMFBY response and village preparedness can reduce the human and economic cost of rainfall deficits.
- **Sustainability link:** Drought management must align food security, livelihood protection and ecological restoration so resilience is built beyond seasonal relief.

## 2. IMPLICATIONS OF INCREASING THE SIZE OF THE LOK SABHA

*(GS Paper II - Polity)*

This editorial ‘**Implications of increasing the size of the Lok Sabha**’ was published in **The Hindu** on 16th Apr 2026, highlights how the **proposed delimitation** and seat expansion Bills could significantly alter parliamentary **composition, federal balance** and legislative functioning.

### Constitutional Changes and Immediate Effects

- The **131st Amendment Bill** raises the **Lok Sabha** ceiling from 550 to 850, with State-wise seat allocation based on population from a Census specified by Parliament.

- The **women's reservation** provision becomes operational only after **delimitation** and the one-third quota will remain valid for 15 years.
- The proposed **Delimitation Commission** broadly follows the 2002 model and requires use of the latest published **Census**, making the next exercise likely based on the 2011 Census.
- A separate Bill extends these **delimitation provisions** to the three Union Territories with **legislatures** Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir and Puducherry.
- Removal of the post-2026 **seat freeze** means State-wise **representation shares** will change immediately once seats are redistributed on the 2011 population base.
- The biggest projected losers are **Kerala** and **Tamil Nadu**, while **Rajasthan**, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh emerge as the main gainers in Lok Sabha seat share.
- Equalising the value of each citizen's **vote** could still raise the influence of **Uttar Pradesh** and Bihar from 22% to 25% of total seats, strengthening their role in national policy.

### Impact on Parliamentary Balance and Functioning

- The amendment gives Parliament flexibility to decide the timing of **delimitation** and which **Census** will be used, since only a simple majority is needed for that decision.
- As the ruling side may command a Lok Sabha majority, it can influence the **delimitation timing** and **Census choice**, though Rajya Sabha passage is still required for the Bill.
- With no proposal to expand the **Rajya Sabha**, increasing Lok Sabha strength shifts the inter-House balance further in favour of the **Lower House**.
- In **joint sittings**, each MP has one vote, so a Lok Sabha of about 815 members would carry around 3.3 times the strength of a 245-member **Rajya Sabha**.
- The editorial illustrates this with a case where a government holding 53% in the **Lok Sabha** and 40% in the **Rajya Sabha** could still pass Bills in a joint sitting through overall majority.
- The same **numerical imbalance** can affect elections to the **President** and Vice-President, where MPs of both Houses vote with equal weight.
- Expanding the Lok Sabha also raises the constitutional cap on the **Council of Ministers**, because the 15% rule would increase the Union cabinet limit from 81 to 122 if House strength reaches 815.
- A larger **Lok Sabha** reduces the probability that individual MPs will be selected for **questions** and zero-hour interventions, especially when Parliament sits for under 70 days a year.

## Comparative Perspective and Need for Deliberation

- The **U.K. House of Commons** has 650 members, but high sittings and a robust **committee system** preserve meaningful participation and scrutiny.
- India is institutionally weaker on this front, since less than one-fifth of **Bills** are referred to **committees**, unlike the routine committee examination seen in the U.K.
- Similar logic could reshape **State legislatures**, because although the Bills are silent on House size, the **Delimitation Commission** may adopt parallel expansion principles.
- If States also expand by 50%, **Uttar Pradesh** could exceed 600 Assembly seats, while **West Bengal** and Maharashtra could reach roughly 450 each.
- The editorial argues these Bills could deeply affect **Parliament's composition and functioning**, yet are being introduced without adequate public discussion.
- Its clear institutional preference is for intensive **deliberation** inside and outside Parliament, with at least referral to a **parliamentary committee** for wider consultation.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### Need for a fair and federal approach to delimitation

- **Democratic-federal balance:** Delimitation must reconcile equal representation with federal trust among States with sharply different demographic paths, as seen between **Uttar Pradesh** and **Tamil Nadu**.
- **Reform disincentive:** States that reduced fertility earlier, such as **Kerala** and **Tamil Nadu**, may see seat loss as a political cost of better social development.
- **Regional trust:** A poorly designed formula can deepen North-South mistrust, much like the wider unease earlier seen during debates around the **15th Finance Commission** formula.
- **Consultative legitimacy:** Wider consultation with States, parties and experts is necessary so delimitation resembles the broader acceptance sought in the **2002 Delimitation Commission** process.
- **National cohesion:** Representation reform should improve democratic fairness without weakening unity across India's linguistic and regional diversity, especially amid southern anxieties already voiced on **delimitation**.
- **Institutional safeguards:** Durable safeguards are needed because the **84th Amendment** freeze ends after 2026, making future seat redistribution politically more contentious than earlier exercises.

### 3. IN WORKERS' PROTESTS, A TEST OF LABOUR REFORMS

*(GS Paper III - Economy)*

This editorial 'In workers' protests, a test of labour reforms' was published in **The Indian Express** on 16th Apr 2026, highlights how the **new labour codes** will succeed only if formal legal reform is backed by enforcement, social protection and wider economic support.

#### Labour codes and their uneven effects

- The four **labour codes** aim to simplify India's fragmented **regulatory framework**, but their impact will vary across sectors, firm sizes and worker categories.
- The reforms may improve **employment quality** and labour **productivity** only incrementally, because most gains depend on implementation rather than legislation alone.
- The **Code on Wages** can reduce wage suppression and lower-end **wage inequality**, but only if the notified floor wage is meaningful relative to market wages and productivity.
- Large firms can absorb **compliance costs** and gain from better worker retention, health and stability, while many **SMEs** may face disproportionate burdens that offset productivity gains.
- Since most effects will arise through shifts in employment type and quality, the real test of the **labour reforms** lies in their **execution**, not in formal codification.

#### Core reforms needed for meaningful impact

- Stronger **enforcement mechanisms** are the top priority because weak enforcement in the **informal sector** keeps minimum wages non-binding, social security inaccessible and safety rules poorly followed.
- The government must invest in **digital compliance** systems, electronic record maintenance and data-driven **inspection systems** to improve monitoring while limiting rent-seeking.
- Targeted **inspections** based on risk profiling, backed by stronger **administrative capacity** at Union and State levels, are needed for credible and consistent enforcement.
- Wage policy must set a national **floor wage** that is binding yet sustainable, accounting for regional **cost variations** and sectoral productivity differences.

- Periodic **wage revisions**, ideally linked to inflation and productivity, can protect real **wages** without imposing sudden shocks on employers.
- A badly calibrated **wage floor**, whether too low or too high, can weaken the objectives of the **Code on Wages**.
- Small and medium **enterprises** need affordable credit and technology access, because unsupported **SMEs** may face regressive reform effects while bigger firms benefit.
- Social protection must expand through wider **EPF** and **ESIC** coverage, with thresholds revised upward and indexed to inflation to remain relevant.
- The provisions for **gig workers** need actual operationalisation through a functional **Social Security Fund**, notified contribution rates and tangible benefit design.
- Policymakers must reduce **threshold-based distortions** that keep firms artificially small, because smoother regulatory **graduation** would support scaling up.

### Complementary support beyond labour law

- Labour reform must be paired with **skill development** and human capital investment, because higher wages and better conditions require sustained **worker productivity** gains.
- Stronger **vocational training**, industry-academia linkages and continuous **skill upgrading** are necessary to translate labour reform into durable employment improvement.
- Labour codes alone cannot drive broad **employment growth** unless supported by industrial policy, trade **liberalisation**, infrastructure development and investment promotion.
- Better **administrative coordination** and institutional integration are needed because single-window movement for compliance and benefits can lower **transaction costs** and improve user experience.
- Greater coordination between the **Centre and States** is essential to avoid regulatory **fragmentation** and ensure uniform implementation.
- Integrated **labour databases**, real-time compliance monitoring and public workplace data can strengthen **transparency**, accountability and evidence-based policymaking.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### Balancing ease of doing business with labour justice

- **Reform equilibrium:** Labour reform must balance enterprise flexibility with worker protection so that competitiveness does not come at the cost of dignity, safety and fair wages under the **four labour codes**.
- **Formalisation challenge:** Excessive compliance burdens can deter smaller firms from formalising, even as easier entry through **Udyam Registration** shows how simpler systems can support compliance.
- **Dualism risk:** Without targeted safeguards, reforms may deepen labour market dualism by protecting formal workers better than informal, migrant and gig workers tracked on **e-Shram**.
- **Social legitimacy:** Labour codes gain durability only when workers see them as fair, especially after the **2020 migrant-worker** crisis exposed the insecurity of informal employment.
- **Tripartite dialogue:** Sustained consultation among governments, employers and worker organisations remains essential, as reflected in India's long **Indian Labour Conference** tradition of tripartite labour dialogue.
- **Development test:** The long-term success of labour reform lies in creating both productive firms and secure workers through wider **ESIC, EPFO** and gig-worker social security coverage.