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THE HINDU



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SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EDITORIALS

18th April 2026

TOPICS:-

1. Deservedly dead

(GS Paper II Polity and Governance)

2. China is the real winner in the Iran conflict

(GS Paper II International Relations)

3. When animals become instruments of power

(GS Paper IV Ethics, GS Paper III Environment)

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**

 **sanskritiiias.com**

1. DESERVEDLY DEAD

(GS Paper II Polity and Governance)

This editorial '**Deservedly dead**' was published in **The Hindu** on 18th Apr 2026, highlights the **political and constitutional failure** of the government's delimitation push.

Why the Bill failed

- The **131st Amendment Bill, 2026** failed despite 298 votes in favour because it needed **352 votes**, or two-thirds of the 528 members present and voting.
- The government's post-vote offer of an **816-member Lok Sabha** with proportional southern representation lacked credibility because the Bill's own text was tied to the **2011 Census**.
- Delimitation based on the latest available census would have reduced the relative share of **southern States** and **northeastern States** due to slower population growth than the Hindi heartland.
- The attempt to fast-track a contentious **constitutional amendment** while the **2026-27 Census** was still pending made the exercise politically and procedurally untenable.
- Linking **women's reservation** to delimitation despite wider political agreement on reservation turned a consensus issue into a divisive legislative package.
- The government's shifting claims, verbal assurances, and offer to redraft the Bill after debate reduced the process to **smoke-and-mirrors** and weakened **parliamentary credibility**.

Political alignments and institutional message

- The **INDIA bloc** voted as one despite internal differences, with Congress, Samajwadi Party, Trinamool Congress, the Left, and DMK ensuring coordinated floor action.
- The support extended by **TDP** and **AIADMK** appeared politically naive because Andhra Pradesh stood to lose five seats and Tamil Nadu eleven under the Bill's own design.
- The defeat should compel the government to follow the **constitutional route** by first implementing **women's reservation** without bundling it to delimitation.
- The editorial favours completing the **2026-27 Census** and then referring delimitation and Lok Sabha expansion to a **parliamentary committee** for wider consensus.
- The two-thirds requirement exists to block major **structural changes** without broad **political agreement**, and this constitutional safeguard worked in this case.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Need for a transparent and federal framework for future delimitation

- **Federal balance:** Delimitation must reconcile equal representation with federal trust, as earlier seat-freeze amendments like the **42nd** and **84th Amendments** sought to do.
- **Population justice:** States that achieved population stabilisation, as seen across much of southern India, should not view delimitation as a political penalty for policy success.
- **Census foundation:** Any fresh exercise should follow **Census 2027**, whose reference dates are October 2026 for snow-bound areas and March 1, 2027 elsewhere.
- **Institutional consultation:** A parliamentary committee or consultative process, instead of a hurried standalone bill like the **131st Amendment Bill**, can reduce regional distrust before decisions.
- **Issue separation:** Women's reservation under the **106th Amendment** should proceed independently, because tying it to delimitation turns a passed reform into a federal flashpoint.
- **Legitimacy safeguard:** Transparency in seat criteria, timelines, and regional effects is essential, because representation changes need political acceptance, not just formal constitutional passage.

2. CHINA IS THE REAL WINNER IN THE IRAN CONFLICT

(GS Paper II International Relations)

This editorial '**China is the real winner in the Iran conflict**' was published in **The Indian Express** on 18th Apr 2026, highlights how **gloeconomics**, not military or diplomatic success, ultimately shaped the outcome of the **U.S.-Iran war** and created strategic gains for China.

War outcome and immediate trigger of de-escalation

- The editorial treats the ceasefire as an "**uneasy truce**", but argues the war is effectively over because neither side can now afford renewed escalation.
- The peak danger came in early **April 7** brinkmanship, when Trump threatened civilisational destruction and Iran mobilised human shields around critical infrastructure.

- The conflict ended not through **diplomacy** but through economics, especially the halt in U.S. bombing and the reopening of the **Strait of Hormuz**.
- Markets immediately signalled de-escalation, with **oil prices** falling to about \$96 per barrel by April 10 and global equities rebounding.
- The editorial's core claim is that apocalypse was postponed by **price signals**, not by statesmen or negotiated political settlement.

Why the main combatants did not truly win

- **Donald Trump** may have overplayed brinkmanship, leaving Republicans exposed to electoral costs from inflation, while Democrats gain from resulting public discontent.
- Iran's posture may appear defiant in **historical glory**, but its military is damaged, infrastructure degraded, and reconstruction costs likely to be enormous.
- Israel is not presented as a winner because it is now being pulled, reluctantly, into negotiations while its strategic aim of fully neutralising **Iran** remains unmet.
- The editorial argues that when both sides loudly claim **victory**, it usually means neither can sustain further conflict and both are masking constraints.

Geoeconomics as the decisive logic

- The contrast with **Ukraine** is central, because that war remained economically containable while the U.S.-Iran war directly threatened the global trade artery of Hormuz.
- Russian oil kept flowing under **price caps** and Ukrainian grain exports were shielded, so the global system absorbed the Ukraine shock more easily.
- Iran, by contrast, sits at a chokepoint of the world economy, and any threat to **Hormuz** rapidly destabilises oil prices and the wider system.
- Even the mere tightening of the strait pushed U.S. inflation above **3 per cent**, which the editorial treats as more consequential than missile damage.
- The larger lesson is that in the current era **geoeconomics** has overtaken geopolitics, with economic disruption now dictating strategic limits.
- The editorial links this shift to the end of the **Cold War**, arguing that ideology once shaped alliances alongside interests, but that logic died with the USSR.
- What replaces it is a colder and less sentimental order in which **economics** determines state behaviour more than values or ideological alignment.

Why China gains most

- China did not need to fire a shot because the conflict's structure already favoured a power able to benefit from instability without entering the battlefield.

- Pakistan is described not as an independent key actor but as a **proxy** whose role helps the U.S. and China avoid direct confrontation.
- The negotiation track from Lebanon to broader regional diplomacy is said to carry unmistakable **Chinese fingerprints**, despite initial resistance from Israel and Washington.
- China's real gain lies in the post-war phase, because reconstruction in **Iran** and parts of the Gulf will create major openings for Beijing.
- For China's slowing **economy**, reconstruction demand is presented as a strategic lifeline, much like U.S. gains from Europe's post-war rebuilding.
- Europe and Gulf states, shaken by recent events, are also likely to deepen dependence on China's industrial base for **stability**, access, and supply chains.
- The editorial concludes that China has already won, not on the **battlefield** but in the only arena that now truly matters, markets and material leverage.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Implications for India's energy security and strategic autonomy

- **Oil vulnerability:** Any crisis around the **Strait of Hormuz** directly affects India, which along with China receives 44 per cent of crude moving through the chokepoint.
- **Trade exposure:** West Asian instability can disrupt shipping and freight conditions, especially because Hormuz carries about 34 per cent of global crude trade headed largely to Asia.
- **Strategic space:** A deeper Chinese role in post-war reconstruction may narrow India's influence, much as Beijing expands economic leverage through crisis-linked regional dependencies.
- **Resilience need:** India must reduce vulnerability through diversified sourcing and reserves, with **ISPRL** already operating 5.33 MMT capacity at Visakhapatnam, Mangalore, and Padur.
- **Autonomy test:** Strategic autonomy now depends on shock absorption too, as seen in India's continued engagement with **Chabahar Port** amid shifting U.S. sanctions conditions.
- **West Asia lesson:** The conflict shows that India's West Asia policy cannot be separated from energy security, because external chokepoint stress quickly feeds domestic inflation and supply risks.

3. WHEN ANIMALS BECOME INSTRUMENTS OF POWER

(GS Paper IV Ethics, GS Paper III Environment)

This editorial 'When animals become instruments of power' was published in **The Indian Express** on 18th Apr 2026, highlights how the state's use of **animals as tools of control** reflects a fortress-based and exclusionary approach to conservation and security.

State use of animals as instruments

- The **BSF** proposal to use snakes and crocodiles on the **India-Bangladesh border** treats animals as state deterrents where fencing is difficult in swamps and river beds.
- Karnataka's plan for canine units in all tiger reserves extends the same **state logic**, turning dogs into instruments of **anti-poaching enforcement**.
- Both measures, despite different contexts, reduce animals to **agents of the state** rather than beings with ecological roles of their own.
- The editorial argues this continues a **colonial view** of animals as beasts to be managed, even though policy has shifted from extermination to protection.

Fortress conservation and its social costs

- Since **Project Tiger** in 1973, relocation of forest-dwelling communities has shown how **tiger protection** often became a state-led displacement policy.
- Even where coexistence is officially invoked, the state still assumes humans cannot live with beasts, making **protected areas** instruments of **exclusion**.
- Adivasi claims of coexistence, including in **Nagarhole Tiger Reserve**, have faced eviction and violence despite long habitation in these landscapes.
- The state confines animals to **protected spaces**, but labels them **problem animals** once they move beyond those boundaries.
- A hierarchy now governs wildlife policy, where tigers are symbolic royalty while crocodiles, snakes, and dogs are assigned **security functions** for human ends.
- People displaced to build conservation fortresses are justified in asking why a **tiger** still appears in their backyard if the **fortress model** was meant to contain it.
- These fortresses are not impermeable because power, money, and ecological movement can breach them, exposing the limits of confinement-based conservation.

Ecological and policy contradictions

- The relocation of **cheetahs** from Namibia, South Africa, and Botswana to **Kuno National Park** illustrates the same flawed assumption that animals will remain within planned enclosures.
- Cheetahs are known for long-distance dispersal, yet the state appears not to have fully planned for movement beyond **Kuno** or into adjoining landscapes.
- The **BSF** proposal also raises unresolved questions about where such animals will come from and what their **ecological impact** will be.
- The burdens of these policies fall on local people, especially those who traverse **swamps** and **river beds** or live near protected landscapes.
- The editorial's central criticism is that the state keeps both confining and unleashing animals, while ordinary people bear the **practical costs** of this logic.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Need for rights-based and community-led conservation

- **Community partnership:** Conservation policy must treat forest-dwelling and Adivasi communities as legitimate stakeholders, as recognised under the **Forest Rights Act, 2006**.
- **Coexistence approach:** Wildlife governance should move beyond fortress conservation and build coexistence-based models, as seen in **community forest resource** provisions under the FRA.
- **Ethical balance:** Human safety, animal welfare, and habitat protection should be addressed together, as **Project Elephant** increasingly emphasises humane conflict management and landscape planning.
- **Consent principle:** Relocation, surveillance, and enforcement should operate through accountability and informed participation, since **NTCA** guidelines require Gram Sabha consultation and voluntary relocation.
- **Landscape planning:** Ecological policy must look beyond isolated protected areas, as the **Elephant Corridors of India 2023** report underlines the need for connected habitats.
- **Justice dimension:** Conservation becomes more durable when it protects biodiversity without externalising burdens onto local people, a concern long visible in relocation-centric **tiger reserve** management.