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**THE HINDU**



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# **SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EDITORIALS**

*1st April 2026*

## **TOPICS:-**

- 1. The West Asia cauldron of conflict and its fallout**  
(GS Paper II - International Relations)
- 2. Unexpected surge**  
(GS Paper III - Economy)
- 3. How Naxal deadline was met with a two-pronged approach**  
(GS Paper III - Security)

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# 1. THE WEST ASIA CAULDRON OF CONFLICT AND ITS FALLOUT

*(GS Paper II - International Relations)*

This editorial ‘**The West Asia cauldron of conflict and its fallout**’ was published in **The Hindu** on 1st Apr 2026, highlights that the **U.S.-Israel war on Iran** risks a prolonged regional conflict with severe geopolitical and economic fallout.

## **Nature of the conflict**

- The editorial treats the present war as **Netanyahu’s war**, intensified by **Donald Trump’s** support and moving beyond the limited **June 2025** 12-day confrontation.
- The conflict began on **February 28, 2026**, when the **U.S.** and **Israel** launched large-scale joint military operations against **Iran**.
- Civilian damage is presented as exceptionally high, with several thousand Iranians killed and more than half of them civilians.
- The war is seen as moving toward a **long campaign**, with possible future ground troop commitment and a drawn-out conflict.

## **Why Iran is not collapsing**

- Despite assassinations of senior leaders, including **Ayatollah Ali Khamenei** and **Ali Larijani**, Iran has survived and its **uranium stockpile** remains safe.
- Iran appears prepared for an extended war and is trying to raise costs for the **U.S.-Israel** combine through regional and economic pressure.
- A possible **Strait of Hormuz** blockade remains a major lever, given that nearly **30%** of world oil shipments pass through it.
- Iran has also offered safe passage through the Strait to friendly countries, while many U.S. allies have refused to back Trump’s appeal to reopen it.
- The regime’s command structure is disrupted, but no internal collapse has occurred; the editorial says time is broadly on **Iran’s side**.

## **Limits of U.S.-Israeli strategy**

- The editorial argues Israel’s strategy of containing Iran from Trump’s shoulders has failed because **Iran** has retaliated with full force.
- The conflict has shifted from quick coercion to **attrition**, where Iran is better acclimatised than its adversaries.
- Within the **U.S.**, signs of war weariness are visible despite continuing military supplies such as **THAAD interceptors** and **Tomahawk missiles**.

- The objective of regime change in Iran is described as unattainable without a **ground invasion**, for which neither the U.S. nor Europe shows appetite.
- **China** and **Russia** are expected to oppose such escalation, while air power alone offers no decisive advantage to the aggressor.

### Economic and global consequences

- The war has entered a phase of no peace and no large-scale war, driven not only by combat but by the weaponisation of global economic infrastructure.
- **Energy prices, shipping lanes** and logistics systems now form the central economic theatre of the conflict.
- The editorial argues the **U.S.** has more to lose than Israel if the world slips into prolonged chaos.
- Economies across the world are already being hit by oil disruption and wider conflict spillovers.
- The world is criticised for remaining a mute spectator despite paying the price through rising oil costs and systemic instability.

### Netanyahu's wider regional objective

- Israel's campaign is linked to a larger ideological project tied to the **Biblical Promise** of the chosen land.
- Backed by Trump, Israel is portrayed as seeking to widen the war across **West Asia**, including **Lebanon, Iraq** and **Syria**.
- The editorial says this expansion continues despite severe maritime disruptions and Iranian retaliation such as closing the **Strait of Hormuz**.
- Israel's latest strike near **Bushehr nuclear plant** is described as a needless and deliberate provocation.

### Shia resistance and political backlash

- Any attempt to overthrow a **Shiite regime** carries a symbolic dimension rooted in the memory of the **Battle of Karbala**.
- Shia political culture is described as centred on patience, sacrifice, resistance and strategic endurance, not only geopolitics.
- External attack could strengthen the religious, political and transnational dimensions of **Shiite Islam** rather than weaken them.
- The war may be seen as an assault on the roots of **political Shiism**, producing wider regional reverberations.

- The appointment of **Mojtaba Khamenei** after Ali Khamenei's killing is presented as likely to deepen, not reduce, revolutionary fervour and Shia militancy.

### International response and final warning

- Outside U.S. support, much of the civilised world has not strongly challenged what the editorial calls an illegal conflict.
- Western military superiority is not seen as guaranteeing strategic victory, regime collapse in Iran, or altered regional outcomes.
- The editorial warns that the U.S. and Israel are entering a spider's web whose costs could engulf not only them but the wider world.
- Unless the policy direction is reversed, the conflict could push the world toward a **third world war** with untold human suffering.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### Implications for India's strategic and economic interests

- **Energy exposure:** Instability in **West Asia** can raise crude prices, as seen after the **Russia-Ukraine war**, enlarging India's import bill and inflation burden.
- **Maritime vulnerability:** Tensions around the **Strait of Hormuz** can disrupt shipping routes, as seen in **Red Sea** diversions, raising freight and insurance costs.
- **Diaspora safety:** A wider regional conflict may endanger Indians across the Gulf, making evacuation readiness critical, as seen in **Operation Kaveri** and **Operation Ajay**.
- **Balancing challenge:** India must preserve ties with **Iran**, **Israel**, the **U.S.**, and Arab partners simultaneously, as reflected in its calibrated response to the **Gaza conflict**.
- **Connectivity risks:** Regional instability can slow India's connectivity interests through Iran, especially **Chabahar Port** and the **INSTC**, by hurting corridor confidence.
- **Macroeconomic spillover:** Higher oil prices and external uncertainty can hurt **macroeconomic stability**, as seen in past imported inflation episodes after major global conflicts.
- **Strategic lesson:** The crisis underlines the need for **strategic autonomy**, diversified energy sourcing, and proactive diplomacy, visible in India's multi-alignment and crude sourcing strategy.

## 2. UNEXPECTED SURGE

*(GS Paper III - Economy)*

This editorial 'Unexpected surge' was published in **The Hindu** on 1st Apr 2026, highlights that Feb 2026 industrial growth was **stronger than expected** but may be temporary amid weak consumer sentiment and rising external risks.

### February IIP surprise

- **Industrial growth** rose to **5.2%** in February 2026, marginally above January and among the best readings in nearly two years.
- The surprise arose because the **Index of Industrial Production** diverged sharply from the earlier **Eight Core Industries** signal.
- The **Eight Core Industries** grew only **2.3%** in February, about half of January's pace, despite carrying roughly **40% weight** in the IIP.
- The divergence implies sectors outside the core industries performed better than expected.

### Sectoral pattern of growth

- **Manufacturing** growth in the IIP accelerated to **6%**, indicating broader support beyond weak core-sector output.
- **Capital goods** growth rose to a **28-month high of 12.5%**, on an already strong base of **8.1%**.
- The editorial reads this as a positive signal for **labour** and **capital** formation.
- However, the demand picture remained uneven, with **consumer durables** growing **7.3%** but **consumer non-durables** contracting **0.6%**.

### Weak consumer sentiment

- The fall in **consumer non-durables** marked the second consecutive February contraction, indicating more than a statistical anomaly.
- Spending on non-durables is treated as a better gauge of **consumer sentiment** because it reflects day-to-day discretionary behaviour.
- The data therefore suggests sentiment remains weak despite the headline industrial improvement.
- This aligns with the new **national accounts** series showing a shrinking contribution of **household expenditure** to GDP.

## Why the divergence matters

- The government should examine why the **IIP** and **Eight Core Industries** moved in opposite directions in February.
- Since the two are normally highly correlated, such a divergence is described as immediately noteworthy.
- February's strong IIP may therefore reflect a narrow or short-lived acceleration rather than durable momentum.

## Outlook and caution

- The editorial expects the February surge to be **short-lived**, as the **West Asia crisis** is already affecting the economy.
- The **Finance Ministry's** monthly economic review says early high-frequency indicators for March point to a **moderation in economic momentum**.
- The longer the war persists, the sharper this moderation is likely to become.
- The upgraded **IIP** data series due in **May** is expected to provide a clearer picture of the economy, just as revised **GDP** and **CPI** series have done.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### What the divergence means for India's growth quality

- **Investment bias:** Strong **capital goods** growth may signal capex-led momentum, as seen in railway, roads, and public infrastructure spending.
- **Consumption weakness:** Weak **consumer non-durables** output suggests uneven household demand, much like past slowdowns marked by softer mass-market spending.
- **Narrow-based growth:** When **IIP** rises despite weak **core sectors**, growth may be concentrated in select segments rather than economy-wide strength.
- **Demand-quality test:** Durable growth needs both **investment** and consumption, since factories cannot sustain expansion on capex alone.
- **Statistical caution:** The revised **IIP series**, like the new **GDP** and **CPI** bases, may change how current momentum is interpreted.
- **Policy reading:** The divergence shows policymakers must track growth quality, not just headline output, especially when core-industry signals weaken first.
- **Macro implication:** If industry stays **investment-heavy** but consumption-soft, growth may persist without equally durable demand-led support.

### 3. HOW NAXAL DEADLINE WAS MET WITH A TWO-PRONGED APPROACH

*(GS Paper III - Security)*

This editorial 'How Naxal deadline was met with a two-pronged approach' was published in The Indian Express on 1st Apr 2026, highlights that the near-elimination of Naxalism in Bastar was achieved through a combined strategy of security intensification and developmental expansion.

#### Deadline-driven security push

- In **August 2024**, **Amit Shah** announced that **Naxalism** would be eliminated from India by **March 31, 2026**, giving security forces a fixed operational deadline.
- Unlike insurgencies in the **Northeast** and **Punjab**, this campaign was pursued through an explicit time-bound political directive.
- The deadline pushed coordinated action by **CRPF**, State police and other **CAPFs**, including **BSF**, **CISF**, **ITBP** and **SSB**.
- The **CRPF**, designated the primary internal security force since the **2001 Group of Ministers** decision, became central to the intensified campaign.

#### Two-pronged strategy

- Success came not only from meeting the **logistical** and **infrastructural** needs of forces, but also from simultaneous regional development.
- The core challenge was **Abujmarh**, where poor road connectivity had long protected Maoist strongholds from state penetration.
- Road construction, initially resisted because it enabled rapid force movement, became the first major enabler of state access.
- Once construction began under **BRO** execution and **CRPF** protection, private contractors joined and work continued at full pace.

#### Infrastructure-led state penetration

- Over the last few years, about **12,000 km** of roads were completed, opening previously cut-off villages to administration and security presence.
- Around **5,000 mobile towers** were installed in Abujmarh and nearby areas, connecting villagers to the outside world and weakening Maoist isolation.
- Over **100 forward operating bases** were established by the **CRPF** deep inside Abujmarh, increasing state reach and villager confidence.

- The combined effect was to erode Maoist territorial control and enable sustained force deployment in former safe havens.

### Intelligence and operational dominance

- As state access improved, **human intelligence** and **technical intelligence** began flowing after Maoists were pushed out of villages.
- This intelligence fusion gave security forces an upper hand and enabled relentless operations with better precision.
- The **21-day** operation by **CoBRA** and **CRPF** in the Karregutta hills on the **Telangana-Chhattisgarh** border became a turning point.
- The operation killed over **31 Maoists** and forced others to disperse into **Telangana** and **Andhra Pradesh**.

### Leadership decapitation and organisational collapse

- The killing of top leaders such as **Nambala Keshava Rao**, **Paka Hanumanthu**, **Kosuru Ramachandra Reddy** and others severely weakened the Maoist structure.
- The surrender of leaders like **Mallojula Venugopal Rao**, **Deva Barse** and **Thippiri Tirupathi** further deepened organisational disarray.
- Leaderless cadres still in the जंगल are expected to join the mainstream through rehabilitation schemes in affected States.
- The movement has been reduced to residual resistance rather than an organised insurgent challenge.

### Extent and limits of success

- The Home Minister described Naxalism as “**more or less wiped out**” rather than fully eliminated.
- Two top leaders, **Muppala Lakshmana Rao** and **Mislr Besra**, are yet to surrender.
- Their surrender is presented as the likely final marker of the end of **Naxalism** in India.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### Lessons for India's wider internal security strategy

- **Integrated model:** Durable counter-insurgency needs **security** and **development** together, reflecting the **National Policy and Action Plan, 2015** approach to Left Wing Extremism.
- **Doctrine clarity:** A clear operational framework improves results, as seen in the **SAMADHAN** approach built around smart policing, aggression, training, intelligence, and technology.

- **Last-mile governance:** Insurgency weakens when the State reaches remote areas through roads, services, and welfare delivery, much like the **Aspirational Districts Programme** in LWE districts.
- **State capacity:** Local police, **special forces**, and fortified stations matter because internal security is state-led even when the Centre provides funding and force support.
- **Intelligence fusion:** Success depends on combining **human intelligence** with technical surveillance, since operations improve once territorial access and local confidence both expand.
- **Rehabilitation track:** Force alone is insufficient, which is why **Surrender-cum-Rehabilitation** policy remains vital for drawing cadres back into the mainstream.
- **Replication caution:** The Bastar template is instructive, but adaptation is essential because **Northeast**, J&K, and urban radicalisation involve different geographies, motives, and conflict structures.