



Sanskriti IAS



THE HINDU



The Indian EXPRESS

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EDITORIALS

1st May 2026

TOPICS:-

1. On May Day, a workforce in India without a floor

(GS Paper III Economy)

2. Gulf within

(GS Paper III Economy, GS Paper II - International Relations)

3. Should the PIL jurisdiction be reconsidered?

(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. ON MAY DAY, A WORKFORCE IN INDIA WITHOUT A FLOOR

(GS Paper III Economy)

This editorial 'On May Day, a workforce in India without a floor' was published in **The Hindu** on 1st May 2026, highlights how India's **new labour regime** weakens wage security, workplace safety, inspections and collective bargaining.

Labour distress and wage-floor crisis

- The Noida hosiery strike arose from a **35% hike** in Haryana's minimum wage, as Uttar Pradesh workers earned about ₹435 daily against ₹585 in Haryana.
- Workers demanded a **₹20,000 wage floor**, while Uttar Pradesh's 21% hike set wages at ₹13,690 for unskilled and ₹16,868 for skilled workers.
- The editorial frames the wage gap as a **survival issue**, linking wages directly to rent, food, school fees and dignified urban life in the NCR.
- The Singhitari boiler rupture exposed **subcontracted labour**, where all 20 deceased workers were contract employees rather than Vedanta's own workforce.

Industrial safety and enforcement collapse

- Chhattisgarh recorded **296 deaths** in three years, while official factory and labour institutes reported 3,331 factory deaths during 2018 to 2020.
- IndustriALL counted over **400 fatalities** in 2024, including 220 in the chemical sector, showing systemic safety failure beyond isolated accidents.
- The Telangana explosion at Sigachi Industries killed **44 migrant workers**, with the State fire department finding absence of basic alarms and heat sensors.
- The editorial links workplace deaths to **weak oversight**, arguing that safety failures and wage stagnation are two ends of the same labour system.

Labour codes and structural deregulation

- The four **labour codes** adopted in November 2025 replaced 29 central laws, though the Indian Labour Conference had not met since 2015.
- The Industrial Relations Code raises the **layoff threshold** from 100 to 300 workers, enabling most factory units to retrench without administrative scrutiny.
- The OSHWC Code expands the statutory definition of **factory coverage**, removing many small manufacturing units from mandatory safety oversight.
- Labour economists warn this technical reclassification affects **worker coverage**, as many small textile, food-processing, garment and hosiery units employ fewer than 20 workers.

- The OSHWC Code shifts inspections to an **Inspector-cum-Facilitator** model with randomised, web-based allocation and employer self-certification through the Shram Suvidha portal.

Collective action and union concerns

- Industrial action now faces **procedural limits**, including 60 days' notice, bans during conciliation and restrictions weeks after tribunal proceedings.
- Mass casual leave by over **50% workforce** is deemed a strike, which unions say makes lawful industrial action almost impossible.
- Ten central trade unions, excluding **BMS**, called November 26, 2025 a "Black Day" against codes they described as deceptive reforms.
- Union objections focus on **deferred protection**, especially factory exclusions, advance inspection intimation, retrenchment permissions below 300 workers and strike restrictions.

Old laws, new workforce realities

- The editorial accepts the need for **labour reform**, noting the Factories Act, 1948 and Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923 predate today's economy.
- Consolidation should not become **legal dilution**, because gig workers, platform workers, digital-media workers and informal workers need updated protection.
- The central question is not whether old laws should change, but **what changed** when reform lowered protections for vulnerable workers.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Productivity, Formalisation and Labour Welfare as a Shared Reform Agenda

- **Balanced reform:** Labour codes should protect workers while enabling enterprises to grow, as the OSH Code links worker welfare with ease of doing business.
- **Formalisation push:** Wider registration through e-Shram, especially for contract and platform workers, can extend social security without treating informal labour as invisible.
- **Skill-linked wages:** Minimum wages should be paired with PMKVY-type skilling, so workers gain bargaining power while industries receive a productive workforce.
- **Compliance simplification:** Shram Suvidha can reduce inspector raj, but it must not replace physical checks in high-risk sectors such as chemicals and construction.

- **Safety investment:** Workplace safety should be treated as productivity infrastructure, as Sigachi-type accidents disrupt output, raise liability and destroy worker trust.
- **MSME support:** Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises need credit, technology and compliance handholding, so worker protection does not become a burden they evade.
- **Social dialogue:** Regular forums like the Indian Labour Conference can align government, employers and unions, preventing one-sided reforms and industrial conflict.

2. GULF WITHIN

(GS Paper III Economy, GS Paper II - International Relations)

This editorial '**Gulf within**' was published in **The Hindu** on 1st May 2026, highlights how the **UAE's exit from OPEC** reflects cartel tensions, Gulf geopolitics and risks to global energy security.

UAE's exit and oil-market calculus

- The UAE quit **OPEC** and OPEC+, seeking freedom from Saudi-led production constraints despite being the cartel's fourth-largest producer.
- The UAE produced **3.12 mbd** and exported 2.88 mbd in 2025, behind Saudi Arabia and Iraq.
- The closure of the **Strait of Hormuz** caused the largest oil-supply disruption, though Brent prices barely moved initially.
- After the crisis eases, the UAE may raise output by nearly **1 mbd** through reopening or pipeline routes bypassing Hormuz.
- Saudi Arabia preferred **price stability** through supply restraint, while the UAE pushed higher output to finance AI infrastructure and diversification.

Gulf rifts and geopolitical alignments

- The exit reflects dissatisfaction with weak **cartel coordination** after Iran's missile and drone attacks on Gulf oil and military facilities.
- UAE-Saudi differences sharpened over **Yemen** and Sudan, while Iran's OPEC membership complicated cartel unity.
- The UAE seeks closer **Israel ties**, unlike most Gulf states uneasy with Israel's actions in Gaza, Iran and Lebanon.
- Washington's pressure for higher **oil production** shaped UAE calculations, though Trump's transactional policy offers limited guarantees.

OPEC's declining pricing power

- OPEC's share of **global crude** fell to 36.7% in 2025, weakening its ability to dictate prices.
- With Hormuz blocked, short-term pricing power shifted to **American producers**, not OPEC.
- OPEC may survive institutionally, but its **price-setting** capacity is likely to shrink further.

Implications for India and energy security

- For oil-importing countries like **India**, the immediate threat is not OPEC's internal split but the Hormuz blockade and fragile Iran-U.S. ceasefire.
- Without Iran-Gulf détente, persistent **volatility** may threaten energy security regardless of OPEC's future direction.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

India's Energy Resilience Beyond West Asian Supply Shocks

- **Supplier diversification:** India must widen crude sourcing beyond West Asia, as Russian and U.S. supplies can reduce exposure to Hormuz-linked conflicts and regional production cuts.
- **Strategic reserves:** India's 5.33 MMT petroleum reserves should be expanded and efficiently released, so Gulf disruptions do not immediately transmit into domestic fuel prices.
- **Payment flexibility:** India-UAE rupee-dirham settlement can reduce dollar exposure, sanctions risk and payment shocks, especially during politically sensitive energy transactions.
- **Gas transition:** Liquefied Natural Gas and pipeline diplomacy, including Qatar LNG contracts, can bridge India's transition away from excessive crude-oil dependence.
- **Renewable scale-up:** Solar, wind and green hydrogen can gradually cut fossil imports, with India targeting 5 MMT green hydrogen production by 2030.
- **Critical minerals:** India's 30-mineral critical list shows clean-energy security also needs reliable lithium, cobalt, nickel and rare earth supply chains.
- **Demand efficiency:** Energy security must include efficient appliances, public transport and energy audits, because reduced demand remains the cheapest buffer against import shocks.

3. SHOULD THE PIL JURISDICTION BE RECONSIDERED?

(GS Paper II Polity)

This editorial ‘Should the PIL jurisdiction be reconsidered?’ was published in **The Hindu** on 1st May 2026, highlights the need to preserve **PIL’s access-to-justice role** while curbing misuse, overreach and weak compliance.

Access, standing and democratic purpose

- Public Interest Litigation emerged in the **1970s** to widen access to justice by relaxing strict locus standi for poor and marginalised groups.
- Hussainara Khatoon and **S.P. Gupta** marked the shift from aggrieved-party litigation to representative standing for those unable to approach courts.
- Anuj Bhuwania warns that broader standing can become **indeterminate**, so PIL should be invoked by directly affected persons or those with clear interest.
- Talha Abdul Rahman argues restrictive standing ignores **structural barriers**, as displaced or marginalised persons may lack capacity to seek judicial redress.

Judicial overreach and institutional limits

- PILs often involve **polycentric disputes**, where courts may enter executive or legislative domains without institutional competence.
- The Supreme Court’s refusal to direct enactment of specific hate-speech laws shows **institutional restraint**, recognising limits of judicial remedies.
- Courts need robust **amicus assistance** and adversarial presentation to handle complex PILs without excluding key stakeholders.
- Pollution-related PILs linked to **M.C. Mehta** show that long-running litigation can widen intervention but also create implementation gaps.

Misuse, compliance and procedural safeguards

- “Ambush PILs” arise from **poorly drafted petitions** seeking early dismissal, sometimes blocking genuine litigants from approaching courts later.
- The **Supreme Court Rules, 2013** require writ petitions to disclose violated fundamental rights, allowing the Registry and courts to deter weak filings.
- Courts may impose **costs** on suspicious petitions, but misuse is rooted in PIL’s open nature rather than a fully removable defect.
- Compliance with **PIL directives** often depends on monitoring by the Bench, but enforcement gaps emerge when cases end after final judgment.
- The Supreme Court should retain some **post-judgment oversight**, including contempt proceedings, where authorities ignore PIL directives.

Amicus role and reform direction

- Amicus curiae participation can threaten **procedural fairness** when it expands into petitioner-like advocacy, as seen in T.N. Godavarman-related proceedings.
- Amici should provide **neutral assistance**, presenting arguments on all sides rather than taking partisan positions unless role-specific guidelines permit it.
- PIL admission should require **well-researched pleadings** confined to public injury, not policy choices or personal grievances.
- PIL legitimacy depends on **habeas corpus logic**, protecting those unable to appear before court rather than enabling anyone to represent everyone.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Balancing Judicial Innovation with Democratic Accountability

- **Rights protection:** Public Interest Litigation must protect citizens unable to approach courts, as Hussainara Khatoon secured relief for undertrial prisoners.
- **Institutional restraint:** Courts should avoid managing every policy failure, as Narmada Bachao Andolan reflected caution in development-policy choices.
- **Clear standing:** PIL access should remain broad but disciplined, as Balwant Singh Chaufal warned against publicity-oriented and private-interest litigation.
- **Procedural safeguards:** Disclosure of petitioner credentials and public harm can reduce frivolous petitions, as PIL guidelines require bona fide public interest.
- **Executive responsibility:** Judicial directions should not replace administration, as Delhi pollution orders needed agencies to enforce CNG and fuel-transition measures.
- **Legislative space:** Courts may fill legal vacuums, as Vishaka did before the POSH Act, but should not routinely bypass legislatures.
- **Public trust:** PIL will retain legitimacy only when cases like M.C. Mehta combine access, fairness and respect for separation of powers.