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THE HINDU



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SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EDITORIALS

21st April 2026

TOPICS:-

- 1. The price of negligence**
(GS Paper II Governance)
- 2. Reform agenda matters more than ranking**
(GS Paper III Economy)
- 3. It's about better representation, not more MPs**
(GS Paper II Polity)

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1. THE PRICE OF NEGLIGENCE

(GS Paper II Governance)

This editorial ‘**The price of negligence**’ was published in **The Hindu** on 21st Apr 2026, highlights the urgent need to minimise **human involvement** and strengthen **safety oversight** in hazardous fireworks industries.

Nature of the problem

- **Virudhunagar** explosions are recurring **negligence** events, not true accidents, because the industry’s hazardous nature and safety risks are already well known.
- In the latest **explosion** on April 19, **25 workers** died and eight were injured, while later blasts also injured policemen and firefighters.
- Over four years, at least **134 deaths** and **89 injuries** in the district show a persistent pattern of preventable industrial disaster.
- Most victims come from **economically weaker** sections, making repeated explosions both a safety failure and a **social justice** issue.
- Union and State **authorities** have largely limited themselves to condolences and **solatium**, instead of meaningfully reducing risk through sustained monitoring.

Regulatory failure and enforcement gaps

- The unit was operating on a **Sunday** holiday without **permission**, exposing weak supervision by enforcement authorities.
- Licence norms allowed only **12 workers**, but about **40 people** were present, showing blatant violation of authorised limits.
- Frequent explosions suggest official **inspections** often became a ritual rather than a meaningful **compliance** exercise.
- Action must target **unlicensed units** and regular **safety violations**, but tighter supervision should not become harassment of lawful operators.

Economic context and way ahead

- The district’s **fireworks industry** supports lakhs in an arid, **rain-fed** region, so regulation must recognise local employment dependence.
- The editorial calls for greater **automation** and lower **human involvement** to reduce risk in inherently hazardous production processes.
- Industry and authorities must balance strict **safety enforcement** with viable **economic continuity**, instead of allowing neglect to repeatedly end in disaster.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Occupational safety as a governance and justice issue

- **State accountability:** Repeated factory explosions, as in **Sivakasi 2012**, show failure of preventive governance despite licensing, inspections, and compliance checks.
- **Labour vulnerability:** Hazardous industries often depend on poor and informal workers, as in **Virudhunagar**, so safety failures hurt the weakest most.
- **Regulatory weakness:** When inspections become paperwork, illegal practices continue until disasters occur, as seen in repeated **Sivakasi** fireworks unit blasts.
- **Rights dimension:** Unsafe workplaces undermine the dignity of labour and worker protection within a welfare state, as the **Bhopal** tragedy starkly showed.
- **Relief bias:** Governance often stops at compensation and condolence, though post-disaster relief cannot replace prior prevention, as after **Bhopal 1984**.
- **Justice concern:** Industrial negligence becomes a social justice issue when profit, weak monitoring, and insecure work expose vulnerable communities, as in **Tamil Nadu** blasts.

2. REFORM AGENDA MATTERS MORE THAN RANKING

(GS Paper III Economy)

This editorial ‘**Reform agenda matters more than ranking**’ was published in **The Indian Express** on 21st Apr 2026, highlights that India’s **temporary slide in GDP rankings** matters less than sustaining domestic economic reforms.

Reasons for the ranking slide

- India slipped to **sixth place** in nominal **GDP** rankings, with Japan and the UK moving ahead in current US dollars.
- The IMF estimated India’s **economy** at \$4.15 trillion for 2026, up from \$3.92 trillion, yet still below the **UK** and Japan.
- One reason is the change in **GDP** estimation under the new **methodology** with base year 2022-23 and updated data sources.
- The revised February estimates gave a more accurate **picture** of the economy and showed earlier 2025-26 **overestimation** by around three to four per cent.

- India's GDP was reassessed from **Rs 357 trillion** to **Rs 345 trillion**, which directly affected its dollar-denominated ranking.
- The second reason is the **exchange rate**, since GDP comparisons in current dollars are heavily shaped by **currency** movements.

Role of currency movement and external shocks

- The **rupee** weakened by almost 10 per cent against the **dollar**, worsening India's comparative position.
- This depreciation was driven by US **tariffs**, trade uncertainty, and the wider search for **dollar** safety.
- India's ranking weakened even though the **US dollar** itself had softened against most other major **currencies**.
- When GDP falls in **rupee terms** and the domestic **currency** also weakens, the gap with Japan and the UK widens further.

Policy message and reform priority

- The IMF still projects India will overtake the **UK** and Japan in 2027 and become the third-largest **economy** by surpassing Germany in 2031.
- The editorial says this temporary slide should not distract from the core **reform** agenda in politically sensitive sectors.
- **Electricity** and **fertiliser** reforms remain crucial domestic priorities despite ranking volatility in international comparisons.
- Policymakers should build **strategies** that account for repeated global and domestic **shocks**, from the pandemic to the Ukraine and Iran wars.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Limits of GDP rankings as a measure of economic strength

- **Exchange-rate distortion:** Nominal GDP rankings in current dollars can shift sharply with currency moves, as India's 2026 slide showed after rupee depreciation.
- **Statistical effect:** Methodological revisions can alter headline rankings, as India's **2022-23 base year** revision did through updated data and estimation methods.
- **Size versus welfare:** Aggregate GDP shows economic scale, but not per capita prosperity or inequality, which is why **GDP per capita** remains separately tracked.

- **Resilience test:** Economic strength is better judged through productivity, investment, and stability, as **OECD** frameworks stress over headline rank alone.
- **Policy distraction:** Ranking obsession can encourage symbolic narratives, even though **MoSPI** revisions and currency changes may drive shifts more than structural change.
- **Comparative caution:** Rank changes must be read carefully because shocks like the **Middle East conflict** can move prices, currencies, and nominal comparisons temporarily.

3. IT'S ABOUT BETTER REPRESENTATION, NOT MORE MPS

(GS Paper II Polity)

This editorial 'It's about better representation, not more MPs' was published in **The Indian Express** on 21st Apr 2026, highlights that delimitation should **improve representation and responsiveness**, not mechanically expand Lok Sabha seats.

Limits of the more-seats approach

- Treating **representation** as a simple people-per-**MP** ratio wrongly assumes that adding seats is the only corrective mechanism.
- The push to raise the **Lok Sabha** from 543 to **850 seats** is being framed as an automatic response to population growth.
- The editorial argues that strain in **population** per constituency does not by itself justify a large, irreversible **institutional** expansion.
- The 1971 benchmark of an MP's **service capacity** cannot be mechanically applied to **2026**, because access conditions have fundamentally changed.
- Representation is not only a question of **headcount** but also of democratic **access**, which is no longer constrained by older communication limits.

Demography, timing and policy choice

- With India's **population** projected to peak in the early **2060s**, a permanent parliamentary expansion risks being based on a temporary demographic phase.
- Even if recent **projections** indicate an earlier peak than the **UN** suggests, the core issue remains the design of representation, not arithmetic alone.
- The key policy question is which mix of **institutions** should carry representational and service-delivery **burdens** across the system.
- A one-time expansion of the **Lok Sabha** could lock India into long-term fiscal and federal **costs** after population growth stabilises.

Strengthening democratic representation beyond Parliament

- India already has a dense democratic **architecture** through over 250,000 panchayats and around 3,700 urban local **bodies**.
- The real challenge is less a shortage of elected **offices** than weak distribution of authority, finances, and problem-solving **capacity** across tiers.
- If delimitation is meant to improve **responsiveness**, strengthening lower tiers with 3.2 million elected **representatives** should form part of the solution.
- India's women's representation problem is not mainly numerical **capacity** but weak political **empowerment** in nominations and winnability.
- In the 2024 **Lok Sabha** elections, 74 women were elected or 13.6 per cent, below the UK, South Africa, and the US in **comparison**.
- Deepening democracy may be more effective through stronger **local bodies** than by treating parliamentary **seats** as a one-way answer.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Delimitation and the challenge of federal legitimacy

- **Federal sensitivity:** Delimitation is not only about equal representation, because it also affects how states perceive fairness within the Union, as current southern concerns show.
- **Regional imbalance:** States that achieved demographic transition may view seat reallocation as a penalty, as PRS estimates Tamil Nadu may fall from 39 to 32 seats and Kerala from 20 to 15.
- **Political trust:** If delimitation is seen as benefiting some regions over others, it can deepen mistrust, especially when Uttar Pradesh may rise from 80 to 89 seats and Bihar from 40 to 46.
- **Constitutional balance:** A durable exercise must reconcile equality with cooperative federalism, especially since **Articles 81 and 82** link seat allocation and delimitation to the census framework.
- **Legitimacy question:** Institutional outcomes gain acceptance only when the process appears transparent and consultative, which is why experts have called for a consensus-based approach.
- **National cohesion:** The real test of delimitation lies not only in arithmetic correction, but in preserving the political compact among states, as the current 2026 debate itself underscores.