



Sanskriti IAS



THE HINDU



The Indian EXPRESS

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EDITORIALS

25th May 2026

TOPICS:-

1. Coerced consent

(GS Paper II Governance)

2. India's green transition still runs on coal

(GS Paper III Economy)

3. India faces a 1991 moment: It needs to reform, relook at subsidies

(GS Paper III Economy)

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. COERCED CONSENT

(GS Paper II Governance)

This editorial ‘**Coerced consent**’ was published in **The Hindu** on 25th May 2026, and highlights how consent-based continuation of **sedition trials** may weaken liberty protections against a constitutionally suspect speech offence.

Background and Legal Continuity

- The state has repeatedly used **Section 124A** against dissent, prompting the Supreme Court in 2022 to pause fresh sedition cases and coercive measures.
- With the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita** replacing Section 124A through **Section 152**, the editorial views sedition as continuing in a new legal form.

Coerced Consent and Liberty Concerns

- The Court’s May 2026 clarification permits pending **sedition trials** if the accused consents, but such consent may be coerced by prolonged incarceration.
- For under-represented prisoners, consent becomes a **Hobson’s choice** between delayed liberty and trial risk, not a free procedural choice.
- The 2022 stay in **S.G. Vombatkere** enabled bail for frozen sedition cases, but the clarification reverses that liberty-oriented protection.
- The clarification contrasts with the **bail principle** reaffirmed in Syed Iftikhar Andrabi, where liberty should not depend on uncertain trial timelines.
- Politically connected accused may secure bail and await constitutional review, while poorer prisoners may accept trial because **litigation capacity** shapes liberty.

Judicial Burden and State Incentives

- Keeping sedition cases in limbo gives the state a **perverse incentive** to avoid resolving constitutional questions while accused persons remain incarcerated.
- Instead of deciding sedition’s **constitutional validity**, the Court has shifted the burden to accused persons and diluted its own protective role.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Procedural Fairness and Access to Justice in Speech-Offence Cases

- **Legal aid gap:** Poor accused persons often lack robust representation, as seen in undertrial-heavy cases like Siddique Kappan’s custody.
- **Undertrial burden:** Prolonged incarceration can turn trial into punishment, as Kappan’s delayed release showed despite eventual bail.

- **Consent quality:** Consent under custody pressure may not reflect free choice, as Disha Ravi's arrest showed speech cases can create coercive pressure.
- **Article 21 protection:** Fair procedure under **Article 21** requires non-coercive criminal process, as speedy-trial rulings repeatedly stress.
- **Equality concern:** Unequal access to lawyers and bail creates unequal outcomes, visible in Kanhaiya Kumar's quicker bail trajectory.
- **Judicial responsibility:** Courts must test whether procedural choices are voluntary, as **Aseem Trivedi** showed sedition scrutiny needs safeguards.
- **Democratic value:** Speech-offence cases need higher safeguards, as Disha Ravi and JNU sedition cases showed chilling effects on dissent.

2. INDIA'S GREEN TRANSITION STILL RUNS ON COAL

(GS Paper III Economy)

This editorial 'India's green transition still runs on coal' was published in **The Hindu** on 25th May 2026, highlights India's **incomplete energy transition** where renewable capacity is rising but **coal still anchors** actual electricity generation and system reliability.

Renewable Growth and Coal Dependence

- India has rapidly expanded **renewable capacity**, with non-fossil sources reaching 42.4% of installed power capacity by March 2026.
- Yet installed capacity does not equal **electricity generation**, as renewables formed over two-fifths of capacity but produced only 15.5% of power in March 2026.
- Coal's installed share fell from 58.7% to 42.2% since 2017, but its **generation share** stayed high at 71.8% in March 2026.

Structural Limits of the Transition

- Since 2018, India added nearly no **fossil-fuel capacity**, but coal remains the main balancing source because few old plants were retired.
- Solar and wind are **intermittent sources**, so coal provides baseload reliability when weather, time of day and demand fluctuations affect output.
- Without large-scale **battery storage**, flexible grids and adequate balancing capacity, renewable additions supplement rather than displace coal generation.
- Domestic electricity prices remain linked to **global fossil-fuel** markets because coal and other fuels still determine marginal power costs.

Energy Shocks and Ground Reality

- West Asia tensions expose India's **external vulnerability**, as crude imports from Saudi Arabia and Liquefied Natural Gas imports from Qatar remain relevant.
- Fossil-fuel volatility raises **transport costs**, coal prices, electricity tariffs, inflation and fiscal pressure, affecting both industry and households.
- The transition debate overemphasises **installed capacity**, while energy security depends on actual generation and consistent power supply during peak need.
- India's oil and gas share in power is only 4%, while electric vehicles and hybrids reduce oil demand, but **coal exposure** remains central.

System Transformation Agenda

- India's renewable push is significant, but the next phase needs **grid modernisation**, storage infrastructure and market mechanisms for scale integration.
- Coal's persistence reflects a **stabilising role**, not merely policy failure, because renewables cannot yet fully replicate its reliability function.
- India's challenge is not only producing green power, but building a **reliable system** where renewables can substitute fossil fuels in generation.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Just Energy Transition and Federal Preparedness

- **Coal-state dependence:** Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Odisha rely on coal-linked jobs and royalties, as seen in Dhanbad, Korba and Talcher belts.
- **Worker transition:** Green transition needs skilling and income support for coal workers, as Germany's Ruhr region showed through planned industrial diversification.
- **DISCOM readiness:** DISCOMs need financial and technical strengthening, as UDAY and RDSS reflect persistent stress in power distribution reforms.
- **Regional inequality:** Rapid coal reduction without planning can widen gaps, as coal-rich districts like Singrauli and Korba depend on extractive economies.
- **Local livelihoods:** Mining districts need alternative industries and infrastructure, as India's District Mineral Foundation funds already target affected communities.
- **Federal coordination:** Energy transition needs Centre-state alignment on land and transmission, as Green Energy Corridors require state-level grid readiness.
- **Social legitimacy:** Climate action gains acceptance when transition is employment-sensitive, as Just Transition debates in Jharkhand highlight livelihood concerns.

3. INDIA FACES A 1991 MOMENT: IT NEEDS TO REFORM, RELOOK AT SUBSIDIES

(GS Paper III Economy)

This editorial 'India faces a 1991 moment: It needs to reform, relook at subsidies' was published in **The Indian Express** on 25th May 2026, highlights how **rupee weakness** and **external shocks** demand fiscal reform, subsidy rationalisation and market-linked correction.

Macroeconomic Stress and Reform Imperative

- The weakening **rupee** may need \$50-60 billion support, but intervention can only buy time, not solve structural stress.
- West Asia tensions have raised **energy costs**, while oil, Liquefied Natural Gas and urea pressures could widen India's fiscal deficit beyond 5% of GDP.
- Investor withdrawals and weak inflows have slowed the **economy**, with International Monetary Fund projections indicating 6.1% growth and inflation below 6%.
- The crisis offers a **1991 moment** for reforms, especially in energy subsidies, current account pressures and confidence-building measures.

Fertiliser Subsidy Distortions

- India imports 20-25% of its **urea**, while landed costs near \$935/tonne are sold domestically at around \$70/tonne.
- Cheap urea diverts fertiliser to **industrial uses** and neighbouring countries, while Bihar shows major mismatch between official supply and farm use.
- The fertiliser subsidy covers nearly **90% costs**, with the FY27 bill budgeted at Rs 1.71 lakh crore and likely to exceed Rs 2.25 lakh crore.
- The core reform is shifting towards **direct benefit transfer**, integrated with PM-Kisan after resolving land, tenant and Aadhaar-linked farmer identification issues.
- Market-linked prices would curb **leakages**, smuggling and nutrient imbalance, saving at least Rs 40,000-50,000 crore annually.

Subsidy Redesign and Fiscal Prudence

- Nutrient-based subsidies through **cash transfers** could lower phosphatic and potassic fertiliser prices while keeping the subsidy bill near Rs 2 lakh crore.
- The food subsidy bill is budgeted at **Rs 2.28 lakh crore**, despite official poverty estimates falling to 5.3% or around 11% under alternative estimates.

- Rationalising foodgrain coverage under the **National Food Security Act** could save over Rs 50,000 crore annually.
- Avoiding subsidy reform would reflect **continuity**, not fiscal courage, and deepen macroeconomic vulnerability during external shocks.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Political Economy of Subsidy Reform

- **Farmer trust:** Subsidy reform must protect confidence, as the **farm laws** repeal showed abrupt changes can trigger resistance.
- **Electoral sensitivity:** Fertiliser and food subsidies carry political weight, making gradual reform safer than sudden withdrawal, as **PDS** politics shows.
- **Targeting challenge:** Direct benefit transfers need credible land and beneficiary databases, as **PM-Kisan** exclusions exposed identification gaps.
- **Tenant exclusion:** Informal tenants and sharecroppers may lose benefits if delivery links only to ownership, as seen under **PM-Kisan**.
- **Communication deficit:** Reform needs transparent messaging, because welfare rationalisation is often seen as withdrawal, as **LPG subsidy** debates showed.
- **Transition cushion:** Temporary protection for small farmers can ease resistance, as **DBT pilots** in fertiliser showed phased reform is safer.
- **Governance credibility:** Subsidy reform succeeds when savings fund productivity, as **PM-KUSUM** and irrigation schemes link welfare with efficiency.