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**THE HINDU**



**The Indian EXPRESS**

# **SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EDITORIALS**

*4th April 2026*

## **TOPICS:-**

**1. Fear of the foreign**

(GS Paper II - Polity)

**2. Lessons unlearned**

(GS Paper III - Disaster Management)

**3. Jan Vishwas ethos is about the state placing the citizen first, taking a step back**

(GS Paper II - Governance)

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# 1. FEAR OF THE FOREIGN

*(GS Paper II - Polity)*

This editorial 'Fear of the foreign' was published in **The Hindu** on 4th Apr 2026, highlights that the proposed **FCRA amendments** are unfair, opaque, and violative of procedural and substantive fairness.

## Proposed amendment and asset-control design

- The Bill, introduced in the **Lok Sabha** on March 25, 2026, creates a new **designated authority** to seize, manage, and dispose recipients' assets.
- It enables automatic **state control** over assets once **FCRA** registration ceases, without judicial determination or adjudicatory process.
- Assets built from **foreign funds**, including schools, hospitals, and places of worship, can be taken over and used by the **authority**.
- The Centre can withdraw **FCRA permission** and then benefit from that decision through control of resulting **assets**.
- The measure is framed through **national security** rhetoric, but functions as a mechanism for post-licence **appropriation**.

## Fairness, transparency and natural justice concerns

- The editorial calls the proposal unfair in both **principle** and **procedure** because state action becomes self-serving and immediate.
- A credible regulatory regime must be **transparent** and **even-handed**, but the editorial says the FCRA framework fails that test.
- Parliamentary questions by Rajya Sabha MP **John Brittas** on cancellations, non-renewals, and related **data** have been disallowed since 2024.
- That opacity creates a reasonable inference that only some **actors** are allowed access to foreign **contributions**.
- Built-in favouritism apart, the legislative design is said to violate **natural justice** by penalising legally created **assets** without due process.
- Assets lawfully built before loss of clearance should not, by the editorial's logic, face later **regulatory seizure**.

## Broader context and affected institutions

- The Bill is only **postponed**, not **abandoned**, and the government is expected to persist with the proposal.

- The **FCRA** was first enacted in 1976, reenacted in 2010 under the **UPA**, and amended again in 2020 under Narendra Modi.
- Across these phases, the law has progressively **tightened** rules on receipt and use of foreign **funds**.
- The editorial notes that state policy itself seeks foreign **money** across sectors such as infrastructure, technology, entertainment, and **real estate**.
- **Christian groups** running numerous health and educational **institutions** are portrayed as especially concerned because of overseas contributions.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### Implications for civil society, welfare delivery and democratic pluralism

- **Service disruption:** Sudden control over foreign-funded assets can disrupt welfare delivery, as seen when **Missionaries of Charity** faced **FCRA** non-renewal concerns over programmes for the poor.
- **Associational freedom:** Coercive **FCRA** enforcement can narrow civic space, as seen in the scrutiny and non-renewal issues involving **Oxfam India**.
- **Pluralism risk:** When faith-based or rights-oriented organisations face regulatory uncertainty, as with **Missionaries of Charity** and **Amnesty India**, democratic pluralism can visibly shrink.
- **Welfare vacuum:** If long-running service institutions lose operational autonomy, the burden can shift to weak public systems, especially in sectors like **education** and **healthcare**.
- **Trust deficit:** Opaque decisions such as **FCRA** non-renewals in the cases of **Oxfam India** and **Missionaries of Charity** can deepen mistrust between the state and civil society.
- **Participation chill:** Fear of retrospective penalties may discourage legitimate philanthropy and cross-border collaboration, particularly after visible actions against groups like **Oxfam India**.

## 2. LESSONS UNLEARNED

*(GS Paper III - Disaster Management)*

This editorial ‘**Lessons unlearned**’ was published in **The Hindu** on 4th Apr 2026, highlights that repeated stampedes in India show weak **crowd management** and poor institutional **learning**.

### Nalanda stampede and immediate causes

- At the **Sheela Mata** temple in **Nalanda**, nine persons died and a dozen were injured in a clearly avoidable stampede.
- On the last Monday of **Chaitra**, over **10,000 people** arrived at a temple that usually sees only a few hundred devotees.
- Police cited lack of **forewarning**, though many linked their absence to **bandobust** duty for the President's visit.
- Priests allegedly took **money** for **special darshan** and allowed bribe givers through the exit, which became clogged.
- The **entrance** was blocked as people tried to enter, and one likely fall triggered fatal **panic**.

### What crowd science already knows

- **Crowd science** and **crowd management** are established academic fields in the developed world.
- The literature covers both **planned gatherings** and **unplanned** spontaneous assemblies.
- Such gatherings are often **emotionally charged**, especially during celebrity sightings and **religious events**.
- The editorial notes that religious **crowds** in India are increasingly driven by **digital communities**.
- Crowd management combines **quantitative techniques** with **qualitative methods** and theories.
- If density exceeds **five persons** per square metre, **movement** becomes constrained and intervention is required.
- Qualitative tools such as **mirrors** can reinforce **individual identity** and reduce irrational panic behaviour.

### India's institutional failure

- The editorial says such **stampedes** are routinely avoidable, yet India repeatedly fails to apply known **lessons**.
- The **RCB** celebration in **Bengaluru** in June 2025 similarly showed how crowd build-up can turn deadly.
- Contrary to popular belief, expressive **religious crowds** remain open to **leadership** and guidance.

- In India, police largely learn **crowd control** through field experience and advice shared by **veterans**.
- Veterans describe using **mobile loudspeakers** to maintain **order** through calm and clear instructions.
- Crowd control and **crowd management** must become subjects of serious academic **study**.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### Role of technology, local administration and real-time risk communication in crowd safety

- **Early warning:** Digital monitoring can anticipate dangerous surges, as seen in **Maha Kumbh 2025**, where **AI cameras** and drones were deployed for crowd tracking.
- **Administrative coordination:** Mass gatherings need integrated command systems, as shown by the **seven-tier security** and multi-agency deployment at **Maha Kumbh 2025**.
- **Route management:** Real-time regulation of entry and exit routes is essential when gatherings exceed carrying capacity, a lesson underscored by the **Kumbh** stampede despite heavy preparations.
- **Public messaging:** Timely announcements, digital guidance, and multilingual communication help reduce panic, as seen through **Kumbh app** support and lost-person alert systems.
- **Trigger prevention:** Small failures in queues, exits, or preferential access can turn fatal, showing that **technology** cannot substitute for disciplined **on-ground management**.
- **Data-led deployment:** Surveillance tools work only when matched by personnel, as **Maha Kumbh 2025** paired digital monitoring with over **50,000 security personnel**.
- **Risk communication culture:** Crowd safety improves when communication is treated as a preventive tool, not a post-crisis response, as shown by **digital registration** and social media reunification systems.

### 3. JAN VISHWAS ETHOS IS ABOUT THE STATE PLACING THE CITIZEN FIRST, TAKING A STEP BACK

*(GS Paper II - Governance)*

This editorial ‘Jan Vishwas ethos is about the state placing the citizen first, taking a step back’ was published in **The Indian Express** on 4th Apr 2026, highlights that the **Jan Vishwas** approach seeks citizen-first governance through large-scale **decriminalisation** and voluntary state restraint.

#### Jan Vishwas as a citizen-first regulatory philosophy

- The Prime Minister linked **jan vishwas** with replacing “danda” by **data** so governance advances citizens, dignity, and justice first.
- The policy project has reviewed unjust **jail provisions**, passed the **Jan Vishwas Bill**, notified labour codes, identified obsolete laws, and amended the Companies Act.
- Combined interrogation of jail clauses across **950-plus laws** produced the world’s largest decriminalisation exercise, affecting over **12,500 provisions**.

#### Why criminalisation had become excessive

- Many minor **compliance failures** had attracted **jail** despite weak moral or public-harm justification.
- The article cites offences like **ticketless travel**, stray livestock on private land, publishing without copies to libraries, unpaid bills, and statistical defaults.
- It also questions jail for issues like **canteen norms**, lack of taps or spittoons, missing records, mislabeled cosmetics, and **speeding**.
- The scale of irrationality is visible in **cheque-bouncing** cases accounting for 43 lakh of 5-crore pending **court cases**.

#### How the state multiplies coercion

- Parliament often passes a **jail provision**, after which governments expand it through **rules and regulations**.
- The unelected **bureaucracy** magnifies compliance burdens through rules, circulars, orders, policies, directions, and standard processes.
- One repealed **Central Factories Act** jail clause reportedly generated 8,500-plus **penal obligations** nationwide.

- The 2021 **poultry farm** guidelines under the Environment Protection Act, 1986 created 20-plus criminal consequences from one jail provision.

### Moral and constitutional case for decriminalisation

- The piece argues **liberty** should not be casually curtailed because jail threats had long become part habit, part **malice**.
- Enforced but selective **jail provisions** breed **inequality**, hurting the unconnected poor while the powerful evade consequences.
- Informality of law and **corruption** widen the gap between written rules and coercive **interpretation**.
- The author invokes the **Vishnu Sahasranamam** idea that fear is created so it can be taken away, linking restraint with just governance.

### Phased reform and the unfinished agenda

- Decriminalisation advanced in three phases, starting with principles to identify offences fit for **decriminalisation** and **civil penalties**.
- The next phase compiled an inventory of such provisions, and the third applied those **principles** to the wider **regulatory** landscape.
- The project is incomplete because some Ministries retained **personal liability** clauses even for offences now covered by the **BNS**.
- The article sees **Jan Vishwas 1.0** and **2.0** as principle-based reform, with future phases needing further conscious state withdrawal.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### Economic and investment gains from decriminalised regulation

- **Compliance confidence:** Decriminalisation improves business confidence because firms can face predictable penalties instead of jail risk, the stated logic of the **Jan Vishwas Act, 2023**.
- **Cost reduction:** Lower criminal exposure reduces legal and managerial costs, which is why the government links **Jan Vishwas** reforms with **ease of doing business**.
- **Ease of business:** The 2023 law decriminalised **183 provisions** across **42 Central Acts**, signalling a shift toward lighter but still rule-based compliance.

- **Formalisation boost:** Less punitive regulation can encourage formal participation, just as the 2025 Budget proposed wider **trust-based governance** and fewer compliance bottlenecks.
- **Administrative efficiency:** Replacing prosecution with civil penalties lets the state focus on serious wrongdoing, a rationale extended further in **Jan Vishwas Bill 2.0**.
- **Investment climate:** The government explicitly links decriminalisation with domestic and foreign investment by reducing **regulatory bottlenecks** and improving **predictability**.
- **Productive governance:** Trust-based regulation aims to shift the state from coercive control to facilitative administration, which the Budget framed as supporting **employment** and **investment**.