



Sanskriti IAS



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SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EDITORIALS

9th May 2026

TOPICS:-

- 1. The elephant in India's data room**
(GS Paper II Governance)
- 2. In Tamil Nadu, Governor's delay did not do justice to the verdict**
(GS Paper II Polity)
- 3. Nuclear restraint hinges on diplomacy, not force**
(GS Paper II Polity)

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1. THE ELEPHANT IN INDIA'S DATA ROOM

(GS Paper II Governance)

This editorial 'The elephant in India's data room' was published in **The Hindu** on 9th May 2026, highlights how **fragmented and non-standardised** public data weakens governance, fiscal efficiency and evidence-based policymaking.

Fragmented Public Data Architecture

- Parliamentary questions often seek basic facts that should already exist in a clear, standardised and publicly accessible **data system** for **public accountability**.
- Questions asked during the **17th Lok Sabha** on youth employment show that India's data remains fragmented, non-interoperable and weakly acknowledged.
- NITI Aayog's **NDAP vision** noted that Ministries lack shared standards for basic indicators, including time period and region.
- India generates abundant data, but **Ministry-specific databases** often cannot be integrated, making consolidation slow, labour-intensive and error-prone.

Fiscal, Policy and Economic Costs

- Welfare database duplication creates **fiscal leakages** that inflate spending by **4%-7%** annually, reducing expenditure efficiency.
- Deleting 17.1 million ineligible **PM-KISAN** names was expected to save **₹90 billion** in FY2024.
- Removing 35 million bogus **LPG connections** could save ₹210 billion, while eliminating 16 million fake ration cards may save **₹100 billion** annually.
- Duplicate health records across **HMIS**, surveillance networks and immunisation registries create conflicting estimates and weaken policy targeting.
- Missing or outdated Indian data in **Global Innovation Index 2024** affects perception, with two indicators missing and eight using old figures.
- Better public-sector data availability could add up to **1.5% of GDP**, rising to **2.5%** with private-sector data.

Standardisation and Institutional Reform

- The National Data Governance Framework Policy sees **IDMO** as the reform keystone for common standards, protocols and definitions.

- The IDMO needs **binding authority** to enforce standards, audit compliance and resolve methodological disputes across Ministries and States.
- Aligning economic indicators with the **UN System of National Accounts** can harmonise definitions and practices across India's **statistical system**.
- A **National Statistical Standards Manual** could unify definitions and reduce inconsistencies across Ministries and States.
- India's open data platform, **data.gov.in**, should become a centralised, schema-consistent repository with **district-level data** access.

Accountability and Governance Benchmarking

- NITI Aayog's **Data Governance Quality Index** should become an annual benchmark linked to performance reviews and incentives.
- Data standardisation is the **grammar of governance**, not a technical exercise, for making India's data fit for a **\$5 trillion economy**.

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Data Federalism and Citizen-Centric Privacy Safeguards

- **Federal balance:** Data standardisation must respect State autonomy, as States maintain frontline NFHS, UDISE+ and welfare records.
- **Privacy protection:** Centralised data systems need DPDP Act, 2023 safeguards to prevent welfare databases like Aadhaar from enabling surveillance.
- **Purpose limitation:** Government data sharing must follow Puttaswamy's privacy test, reducing risks of profiling through function-creep.
- **Consent architecture:** Citizen platforms must provide consent, correction and grievance systems, as DigiLocker and ABDM increasingly handle sensitive records.
- **Exclusion risk:** Over-reliance on databases can exclude vulnerable citizens when Aadhaar authentication failures disrupt PDS or pension access.
- **Local accountability:** Panchayats and municipalities need usable district-level data, as GPDP planning depends on accurate local deprivation indicators.
- **Rights-based reform:** Data reform should improve DBT delivery and transparency, not centralise administrative control over citizens and States.

2. IN TAMIL NADU, GOVERNOR'S DELAY DID NOT DO JUSTICE TO THE VERDICT

(GS Paper II Polity)

This editorial 'In Tamil Nadu, Governor's delay did not do justice to the verdict' was published in **The Indian Express** on 9th May 2026, and highlights how **gubernatorial delay** in inviting the **single-largest party** undermined constitutional convention, democratic norms and the spirit of the Supreme Court verdict.

Governor's Role and Constitutional Convention

- The Governor represents the **state**, not a party, making non-partisan conduct central to constitutional administration.
- Under **Article 164(1)**, the Chief Minister is appointed by the Governor, while the ministry remains collectively responsible to the Assembly.
- Constitutional convention requires the **majority claimant** to prove support on the floor of the House, not before Raj Bhavan.
- In fractured mandates, the Governor must only assess whether the claimant can win a **confidence vote** under constitutional conditions.

Tamil Nadu Verdict and Raj Bhavan Delay

- The Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam won **108 seats**, giving clear public rejection to the incumbent DMK without producing majority rule.
- As the **single-largest party**, TVK should have been invited first to form government and test support in the Assembly.
- The Governor delayed action while Congress and the Left explored support for **DMK**, allowing post-poll manoeuvring before TVK's claim.
- Since TVK and BJP contested separately, a later alliance would have been **constitutional**, unlike Congress-Left support to DMK after contesting together.

Precedents and Constitutional Morality

- In **S.R. Bommai**, the Supreme Court rejected pre-poll and post-poll alliances as automatically equal in political legitimacy.
- Karnataka 2018 showed a contrary precedent, where the Governor invited **B.S. Yeddyurappa** despite a post-poll Congress-JD(S) claim.

- Earlier cases, including Bihar 1996, show that single-largest parties were often invited despite lacking a clear **House majority**.
- The Governor's delay, therefore, weakened **constitutional morality** by permitting partisan uncertainty after the people's verdict.

Misreading Majority and Vote of Confidence

- Lok Bhavan's claim that Vijay lacked **absolute majority** misunderstands confidence, which depends on those present and voting.
- A government can survive through **simple majority** in a confidence motion if abstentions or absences reduce the effective mark.
- Judicial guidance says gubernatorial discretion must be reasoned, bona fide and constitutional, not arbitrary or guided by **partisan interest**.

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Uncodified Discretion and Risks in Hung Assemblies

- **Rule ambiguity:** Absence of clear written norms after fractured verdicts, as in **Goa 2017**, enables partisan readings of convention.
- **Floor-test delay:** Delayed confidence votes, as in **Karnataka 2018**, increase uncertainty, horse-trading and avoidable constitutional litigation.
- **Invitation confusion:** Unclear priority between pre-poll alliances and post-poll coalitions, seen in **Manipur 2017**, creates discretionary ambiguity.
- **Judicial inconsistency:** Raj Bhavan conduct varies despite **S.R. Bommai** and later floor-test rulings requiring majority proof in the House.
- **Federal distrust:** Discretionary choices, as alleged in **Maharashtra 2019**, make Governors appear as Union instruments, not neutral constitutional heads.
- **Democratic distortion:** Voters' mandate weakens when delay permits political engineering, as seen during repeated post-poll coalition disputes.
- **Institutional overreach:** Excessive discretion lets Raj Bhavan shape government formation, instead of merely enabling a constitutionally mandated floor test.

3. NUCLEAR RESTRAINT HINGES ON DIPLOMACY, NOT FORCE

(GS Paper II Polity)

This editorial ‘Nuclear restraint hinges on diplomacy, not force’ was published in **The Indian Express** on 9th May 2026, and highlights how **coercive counterproliferation** weakens nuclear restraint, while diplomacy sustains non-proliferation norms.

Counterproliferation and Its Limits

- The nuclear order rested on great-power control over **fissile material** and technology, but the 1990s shifted U.S. policy toward aggressive **counterproliferation**.
- Counterproliferation used sanctions, military threats and interdiction to stop **WMD proliferation**, linking nuclear policy with the wider **War on Terror**.
- Coercive policies failed to prevent **North Korea** from building an arsenal, while Iraq and Iran faced force despite disputed or incomplete **nuclear evidence**.
- The **2003 Iraq invasion** was justified through suspected enrichment and reprocessing revival, but lacked hard proof of an active **weapons programme**.

Iran, Safeguards and Selective Coercion

- Iran, as an **NPT signatory**, maintained peaceful intent and allowed intermittent **IAEA inspections** despite sanctions and isolation.
- Iran signed the **Tehran Declaration** and Additional Protocol in 2003, followed by the Paris Agreement with **EU-3** in 2004.
- Iran’s 2005 offer for limited enrichment for **civilian use** was rejected, while later U.S. sanctions and JCPOA withdrawal halted **negotiations**.
- The narrative of imminent acquisition allowed selective intelligence to reach top decision-makers, creating space for **pre-emptive war** and **unverified claims**.

Credibility Crisis in the Non-Proliferation Regime

- U.S. counterproliferation shows distrust between **IAEA** processes and domestic agencies, weakening objective oversight through predetermined **policy goals**.
- Iraq and Iran showed partial compliance with **international safeguards**, yet were met with unilateral strikes rather than transparent **verification diplomacy**.
- North Korea’s NPT withdrawal and 2006 test drew engagement and sanctions, while **India-Pakistan** nuclear advances were handled through wider **geopolitical accommodation**.

- Selective application of counterproliferation has eroded **non-proliferation credibility**, sometimes fuelling ambitions in Iran and wider **surveillance cycles**.
- Coercive measures undermine **Article IV** rights to peaceful nuclear energy, weakening the bargain at the heart of the **NPT**.

Diplomacy and the NPT's Future

- Non-proliferation has been conflated with **counterproliferation**, legitimising coercion over diplomatic engagement and alienating states whose cooperation remains **essential**.
- The ongoing **NPT Review Conference** faces fragile consensus as Japan and South Korea consider nuclear capability amid weak trust in **U.S. assurances**.
- American unilateralism remains a major obstacle, making renewed emphasis on **diplomacy** essential to preserve incentives for **NPT commitment**.

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India's Stake in a Rule-Based Nuclear Order

- **Strategic autonomy:** India benefits from stable nuclear norms, as Iraq 2003 showed unilateral coercion narrows diplomatic space for independent decisions.
- **Responsible deterrence:** India's credible minimum deterrence and No First Use posture gain legitimacy when governance rewards restraint over selective coercion.
- **Energy security:** Civil nuclear cooperation after the 2008 NSG waiver supports India's clean-energy transition and long-term baseload power needs.
- **Global South equity:** India can argue that non-proliferation rules should not deny developing countries civilian nuclear access, as seen in IAEA technical cooperation.
- **IAEA credibility:** Impartial safeguards serve India's interest by separating verification from intelligence claims, unlike contested WMD assessments in Iraq.
- **Regional stability:** Diplomacy-led restraint helps prevent escalation in Asia, where India faces nuclear risks from Pakistan and China.
- **Normative leverage:** A rule-based order lets India oppose proliferation, as with North Korea, without endorsing discriminatory regimes or coercive interventions.