EDITORIALS - 26TH NOV 2026

1. On cultivating constitutional morality (GS Paper II Polity)

This editorial '**On cultivating constitutional morality**' was published in **The Hindu** on 26th Nov 2026, highlights why India must cultivate **constitutional values** in **public institutions** and **civic life** to sustain democracy.

Constitutional Origins and Principles

- Under the **Cabinet Mission Plan (1946)**, provincial assemblies elected 229 members to the **Constituent Assembly**, while princely states nominated 70. It first met on 9 December 1946.
- The Constitution was adopted on **26 November 1949**, observed as Constitution Day since 2015. Most provisions took effect on **26 January 1950**, recalling the 1930 Poorna Swaraj observance following the Congress's Lahore session.
- Bahrain and North Korea have constitutions, while **constitutionalism** requires limits on state power through the rule of law, separation of powers and checks and balances. **Part III** embodies these limits by protecting fundamental rights and enabling courts to invalidate laws that violate them.
- **Constitutional morality** requires the state and citizens to uphold justice, liberty, equality and fraternity even against majority opinion or social orthodoxy. **Kesavananda Bharati (1973)** referred to it while laying down the basic structure doctrine.
- Later rulings invoked constitutional morality in recognising privacy as a fundamental right in **Puttaswamy (2017)**, allowing women's entry to Sabarimala in *Indian Young Lawyers Association* (2018), and decriminalising consensual same-sex relations in **Navtej Singh Johar (2018)**.

Ambedkar's Warnings and India's Democratic Record

- Drawing on **George Grote**, **B.R. Ambedkar** defended detailed constitutional safeguards for administration, arguing that such details can be left to ordinary legislation once constitutional morality is widely practised.
- Ambedkar warned that political hero-worship could lead to dictatorship, **social and economic inequality** could undermine political equality and provoke revolt, and abandoning **constitutional methods** could lead to anarchy.
- Over 75 years, **periodic elections** have enabled smooth transfers of power, elected governments have pursued **social and economic justice**, and public life has broadly operated within constitutional bounds.

Institutional and Civic Challenges

- Treating an **electoral majority** as unlimited authority weakens checks and individual liberty, while politicising **constitutional institutions** erodes neutrality and prioritising convenience over fairness weakens accountability.
- Religious, caste and linguistic orthodoxies can override **equality and fraternity**, while a weak sense of **public duty** gives individual or sectional interests priority.

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What Should Limit Judicial Reliance on Constitutional Morality?

- **Constitutional grounding**: Courts should identify the specific constitutional guarantee at stake, as *Indra Sawhney* (1992) did by examining public employment reservations within the framework of Article 16.

- **Clear reasons**: Adjudicatory bodies should explain how they reached a decision, as *Kranti Associates* (2010) emphasised, so affected parties can understand the outcome and challenge it on review.
- **Legislative discretion**: Courts should respect Parliament's role in redesigning statutory schemes, as in *Supriyo* (2023), where the Supreme Court declined to rewrite the Special Marriage Act to recognise same-sex marriages.
- **Rights balancing**: Courts should explain how competing constitutional claims interact, as the Sabarimala ruling (2018) illustrates through women's claims to equal access and devotees' claims to religious freedom.
- **Proportionate restrictions**: Public safety measures should go only as far as necessary, as *Anuradha Bhasin* (2020) underscored by holding that indefinite suspension of internet services was impermissible.
- **Limited remedies**: Courts should target the unconstitutional part of a law, as *Navtej Singh Johar* (2018) did by reading down Section 377 insofar as it criminalised consensual sexual acts between adults.
- **Consistency across cases**: Smaller benches must follow larger-bench rulings, as *Aligarh Muslim University v. Naresh Agarwal* (2024) reaffirmed, helping ensure that constitutional interpretation remains predictable across cases.

2. Mind the data centre trap: big investments, little domestic value (GS Paper III Economy)

This editorial '**Mind the data centre trap: big investments, little domestic value**' was published in **The Indian Express** on 26th Nov 2026, highlights why **export-oriented AI data centres** offer India limited **employment, domestic value addition** and **foreign-exchange gains**.

Capital Intensity and Employment

- US midterms upheld **40 of 41 proposals** opposing data centre expansion, raising the prospect of overseas relocation despite Trump's tax threat. **Argentina** is courting investment in Patagonia through tax breaks and regulatory concessions.
- A **200 MW AI data centre** costs about $8 billion, strains land, power and water, and employs only **50–100 people** after construction. The same investment elsewhere is associated with about 10,000 jobs in the US, 150,000 in Malaysia and 400,000 in India.
- AI data centres are estimated to be **4,000 times as capital-intensive** as the rest of India's economy. Over 25 years, capital contributed 4 percentage points to annual growth against **labour's 1.7**, underscoring the job-creation cost of diverting investment to the sector.

Domestic Value and Balance of Payments

- Imported chips and servers account for **over 70% of capital expenditure** and, owing to rapid depreciation, **90% of recurring investment**. FDI largely finances equipment imports, while foreign owners can repatriate profits, helping explain Malaysia's limited balance-of-payments gains despite strong inflows.
- Meeting domestic AI demand locally may shift foreign-exchange outflows from compute imports to **profit repatriation**. India's **comparative advantage** favours importing capital-intensive compute and exporting labour-intensive goods and services.

Strategic Role and Public Spending

- Domestic compute can support **sovereign AI models**, but reliance on imported chips leaves access vulnerable to **US export restrictions**, as recent

curbs affecting firms in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia and Brazil illustrate.

- The case for **subsidised land, power and tax exemptions** is weak when compute primarily serves overseas hyperscalers. Scarce public funds could instead support **education, skilling and health** to prepare workers for AI adoption.

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When Do Domestic Data Centres Deliver Public Value?

- **Lower latency**: Hosting systems closer together reduces the time needed to exchange data, as NSE's co-location facility illustrates by letting trading members place servers near the exchange's trading platform.
- **Disaster recovery**: Backups in separate locations can keep services recoverable after a local disruption, as illustrated by an Indian stockbroker replicating backups from AWS Mumbai to Hyderabad.
- **Shared computing access**: The IndiaAI Compute Portal offers subsidised GPUs to eligible start-ups, researchers and academic institutions, giving them access to advanced computing without having to buy their own equipment.
- **Supplier development**: Data centre investment can generate demand for domestic equipment makers, as Blue Star's specialised chillers illustrate in a sector where facilities need reliable, large-scale cooling.
- **Conditional incentives**: Governments can make access to new capacity conditional on measurable standards, as Singapore did in its 2022 pilot by tying project selection to green building certification requirements.
- **Resource-based siting**: Project location should reflect available grid capacity, as Ireland's 2025 connection policy illustrates by requiring local grid constraints to be considered when assessing proposed data centre sites.

- **Net public returns**: NITI Aayog's 2026 evaluation framework asks states to assess a project's domestic economic value alongside grid readiness and basin-level water stress before supporting expansion.

3. Despite gains, India's anaemia challenge (GS Paper I Society)

This editorial '**Despite gains, India's anaemia challenge**' was published in **The Indian Express** on 26th Nov 2026, highlights **persistent anaemia** among women and adolescent girls despite lower prevalence than in earlier surveys.

Survey Findings and Health Implications

- After **NFHS-6** omitted anaemia estimates, the ICMR–National Institute of Nutrition's **SAMPADA survey** covered over two lakh people using a gold-standard clinical method in place of field-prick tests.
- Anaemia prevalence fell across age groups and severe cases remained below 2% in most age groups, yet prevalence reached **55.9% among non-pregnant, non-lactating women aged 15–49**, 46.3% among adolescent girls aged 10–19, 43.6% among pregnant women and **58.1% among lactating mothers**.
- Reduced oxygen delivery impairs strength, concentration and productivity, raises **pregnancy and childbirth risks**, and threatens **adolescent growth** amid India's double burden of childhood obesity and malnutrition.
- **Iron deficiency** accounts for only about half of cases in vulnerable groups. Other causes include multiple nutrient deficiencies, infection, inflammation, **blood disorders** such as thalassaemia and sickle cell disease, and chronic kidney disorders.

Nutrition and Policy Response

- Nutritional imbalance reflects limited **dietary diversity**, awareness and healthcare access, while **ultra-processed foods** rich in fat, sugar and salt are common across income groups.
- **Targeted screening**, nutritional counselling and dietary diversification must account for **regional disparities**. Prevalence among women of reproductive age reached 81.2% in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, 77.1% in Ladakh and 72.4% in West Bengal.

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How Does Gender Inequality Sustain Anaemia?

- **Unequal food allocation**: Even where food is available, women can receive smaller or less nutritious portions, as UNICEF India documented in households where women eat last in parts of Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
- **Limited control over spending**: Women who struggle to obtain money for treatment may postpone diagnostic tests or follow-up visits, a financial barrier to healthcare that NFHS-5 recorded.
- **Unpaid care burden**: Heavy domestic workloads can leave less time for regular meals and clinic visits. India's 2024 Time Use Survey recorded 289 minutes of unpaid domestic services per day among female participants, compared with 88 among male participants.
- **Restricted mobility**: Needing permission to seek treatment or living far from a health facility can delay screening and disrupt follow-up, both barriers reported by women in NFHS-5.
- **Menstrual stigma**: Taboos documented among Indian schoolgirls can make it difficult to report heavy menstrual bleeding, delaying recognition of a WHO-identified cause of iron-deficiency anaemia.

- **Early marriage and pregnancy**: Pregnancy during adolescence can add to nutritional demands while girls are still growing. NFHS-5 found that 23.3% of women aged 20–24 had married before 18.
- **Gaps in outreach**: School-based delivery can miss girls who have left education, which is why the Weekly Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation programme also reaches out-of-school girls through Anganwadi centres.