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EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

Balance is Key — Amaravati Capital and Andhra Pradesh Regional Equity

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CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

 [linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

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Balance is Key — Amaravati Capital and Andhra Pradesh Regional Equity

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CONTEXT

Parliament passed the AP Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2026, formally designating **Amaravati as the sole statutory capital** of Andhra Pradesh. The Hindu editorial titled “**Balance is key**” examines the renewed central government backing for the long-stalled capital project, while raising concerns about **regional equity, adequate funding, and the need to balance capital construction with social welfare** across the state’s three distinct regions.

THE EDITORIAL ARGUMENT

- 1 **Capital legitimacy is settled** — Parliament’s legislation ends a decade of uncertainty; Amaravati now has statutory backing under the AP Reorganisation Act
- 2 **Funding remains the critical gap** — the Amaravati master plan (designed by Foster + Partners) requires massive investment; AP’s fiscal position post-bifurcation makes self-funding difficult without substantial central support
- 3 **Regional balance must not be sacrificed** — AP has three distinct regions: Coastal Andhra (where Amaravati is located), Rayalaseema (historically underdeveloped), and Uttarandhra/North Coastal AP (including Visakhapatnam). Capital investment concentrated in Coastal Andhra risks widening regional disparities
- 4 **Lessons from the three-capital episode** — CM Jagan’s proposal, while struck down, reflected genuine regional grievances; these underlying demands for decentralised development must be addressed even within a single-capital model
- 5 **Centre’s responsibility** — the AP Reorganisation Act placed obligations on the Centre, including special assistance; the editorial argues these promises remain largely unfulfilled



AP'S THREE REGIONS — THE EQUITY CHALLENGE

REGION	KEY CITY	CHARACTERISTICS
Coastal Andhra	Vijayawada, Amaravati	Most developed; irrigated Krishna-Godavari delta; industrial base
Rayalaseema	Kurnool, Anantapur	Drought-prone; historically backward; limited industrial presence
Uttarandhra	Visakhapatnam, Srikakulam	Coastal but less developed; tribal hinterland; port-based economy

The editorial's core concern: concentrating the capital in Coastal Andhra (already the most developed region) without parallel investments in Rayalaseema and Uttarandhra would exacerbate AP's internal regional imbalance — the same dynamic that fueled the Telangana movement.

CENTRAL OBLIGATIONS UNDER AP REORGANISATION ACT

The AP Reorganisation Act, 2014 placed specific obligations on the Centre:

OBLIGATION	STATUS
Special Category Status (SCS) for AP	Not granted — Centre offered “special package” instead
New capital construction assistance	Partially funded; Rs 1,500 crore initial grant
Polavaram irrigation project (national project)	Under construction; Centre funds 100%
Dugarajapatnam port development	Pending
Industrial incentives for backward districts	Limited implementation
Railway zone HQ at Visakhapatnam	Established (South Coast Railway, 2019)

The editorial argues that passing the capital legislation without fulfilling these broader obligations is “incomplete federalism.”

UPSC RELEVANCE



GS Paper 2 — Polity & Governance

- Centre-State relations: obligations under reorganisation acts

- State capital designation and Article 3 powers
- Regional equity and balanced development
- AP bifurcation: promises vs delivery

Mains Probable Questions:

- “The designation of Amaravati as AP’s sole capital settles the political question but leaves the developmental question unanswered. Discuss.” (250 words)
- “Examine the Centre’s obligations under the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014. To what extent have they been fulfilled?” (250 words)

FACTS CORNER

- **Amaravati** derives its name from the ancient Satavahana capital — the site has the **Amaravati Stupa** (2nd century BCE), one of the most significant early Buddhist structures
- AP is the **only state** to have had its capital changed three times in modern history: Kurnool (1953-1956), Hyderabad (1956-2024), Amaravati (2026-)
- The **Polavaram project** (on the Godavari River) is classified as a “national project” — the Centre funds 100% but AP executes. It is critical for irrigation in all three AP regions
- **Special Category Status (SCS)** has been a persistent AP demand since bifurcation — the 14th Finance Commission recommended against SCS, instead suggesting “special packages.” AP has never received SCS despite repeated political promises
- The AP Legislative Assembly currently meets in **temporary premises** in Amaravati — a permanent legislature complex is part of the master plan but not yet built

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[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujiyari →](#)<https://ujiyari.com/editorials/2026/04/amaravati-capital-balance-regional-equity/>

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