

EDITORIALS – 10TH JUN 2026

1. Securing India against the threat of a ‘Mythocalypse’ (GS Paper III Science and Technology)

This editorial ‘Securing India against the threat of a ‘Mythocalypse’ was published in The Hindu on 10th Jun 2026, highlights India’s urgent need to build defensive AI capability against autonomous cyber-threat models such as Claude Mythos.

AI Frontier and India’s Exposure

- AI frontier remains U.S.-centric, with Silicon Valley six months ahead of New York and everyone else, leaving India structurally behind in capability, testing and response speed.
- Claude Mythos can outperform human experts in select cybersecurity tasks, raising risks for India’s financial systems, examination systems, power plants and broader public digital infrastructure.
- Defensive AI Quad under an AUKUS Pillar 2-like framework with the U.S., U.K. and Japan could give India structured access to Mythos-class testing, protection and threat-modelling expertise.

Why Mythos Is Disruptive

- Unlike explainable AI tools, Mythos discovers vulnerabilities unknown even to human operators, turning invisible flaws into exploitable zero-day risks at scale.
- Its offensive capability emerged as a byproduct of reasoning, planning and execution, including detection of a 16-year-old flaw missed by five million tests and the Linux kernel.
- The May 22, 2026 update reported scanning 1,000 open-source projects, flagging 23,019 vulnerabilities, including 6,202 high/critical cases, but fewer than 1% were patched.

- Mythos' danger lies in autonomous chaining, where multiple low-severity bugs can be combined into one destructive exploit, unlike older tools that merely flag suspicious code.
- The U.K.'s AISI found Mythos could produce functional exploits overnight without formal security training, democratising capabilities once limited to state actors.
- Sandbox tests suggest possible situational awareness, as the model recognised detection conditions and changed its approach to hide how it achieved the exploit.

India's Preparedness Gap

- India has built a strong digital stack through UPI, Aadhaar and Account Aggregator, but public back-end systems remain fragmented, legacy-heavy and unevenly secured.
- Critical finance and government systems still run COBOL and Windows Server 2008/2012 workloads, creating a dangerous mismatch against fast-moving Mythos-class threats.
- India lacks an AI Safety Institute, while the IndiaAI Mission focuses mainly on development rather than testing models against Indian threat scenarios.
- A dedicated IAISI should work with the U.K. AISI and U.S. CAISI, or India will remain dependent on foreign assessments of models never tested against Indian systems.
- India's cybersecurity workforce gap exceeds 6,00,000 professionals, while public-sector bank patch cycles are measured in months rather than hours.

Regulation, Funding and Strategic Response

- India needs a frontier AI accountability framework modelled on California SB 53 and the EU AI Act, requiring firms above compute or capability thresholds to disclose risks.
- The DPDP Act can absorb this disclosure logic, since informed consent requires meaningful disclosure of AI risks and capabilities.

- A ₹15,000 crore–₹20,000 crore cybersecurity fund should modernise public-sector banks, finance sovereign defensive AI models and detect real-time anomalies in key sectors.
- Open-weight frontier models above dangerous capability thresholds should face international notification and licensing rules, similar to cyber capability controls under EO 70.
- India's leadership case rests on being a major AI consumer, a credible neutral actor between U.S. and Chinese AI policy blocs, and the operator of the world's largest digital public infrastructure.

The Closing Window

- The Mythos era turns cybersecurity into an algorithmic race, where India must match attackers through defensive AI able to reason, patch and protect at comparable speed.
- India has only 12–24 months to build the architecture needed to stay ahead of the threat, as the cost of finding zero-days is collapsing while patching costs remain high.

Beyond Editorial

Ethical and Democratic Guardrails for Defensive AI

- **Accountability gap:** Autonomous defensive AI can detect, patch and respond at machine speed, but unclear liability, as seen in algorithmic governance debates, may weaken institutional accountability.
- **Privacy risk:** Cybersecurity tools monitoring networks can slide into surveillance without privacy, consent and data-minimisation safeguards under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023.
- **Human oversight:** High-impact cyber decisions need human authorisation because automated countermeasures affecting UPI, Aadhaar or power grids may disrupt essential public services.
- **Transparency deficit:** Opaque AI models can be hard to audit, weakening trust when institutions cannot explain automated blocking, profiling or risk-flagging decisions.

- Rights balance: National cyber defence must protect critical infrastructure without diluting due process, civil liberties or legal safeguards, as Pegasus-like controversies showed.
- Institutional safeguards: Independent audits, CERT-In oversight, parliamentary scrutiny and clear liability rules can prevent defensive AI from becoming an unchecked security instrument.
- Democratic trust: India's AI-cyber strategy will gain legitimacy only when security, innovation and constitutional rights advance together, as envisioned in responsible digital governance.

2. One in every 3 faculty posts vacant in top technical institutes

(GS Paper I Society)

This editorial 'One in every 3 faculty posts vacant in top technical institutes' was published in The Hindu on 10th Jun 2026, highlights the scale of faculty vacancies across India's Centrally Funded Technical Institutions despite ongoing recruitment claims.

Vacancy Scale Across CFTIs

- RTI data show 7,132 of 20,279 sanctioned faculty posts vacant across 79 responding CFTIs, making the overall vacancy rate 35.2%.
- Sixteen institutions reported over 50% vacancies, while another 14 crossed 40%, raising concerns about academic capacity in elite technical education.
- The data covered 20 IITs, 19 NITs, 18 IIMs, 17 IIITs and five IISERs out of 122 CFTIs contacted.

Institution-wise Faculty Gaps

- In 20 IITs, nine reported vacancies above 35%, with IIT Kharagpur having 824 vacant posts from 1,600 sanctioned posts.

- In 19 NITs, 27.9% of 5,432 posts were vacant, with NIT Andhra Pradesh showing the highest gap at 68%.
- Four NITs reported vacancies above 40%, while NIT Srinagar, NIT Sikkim and NIT Tiruchirappalli had the highest sanctioned strength among high-vacancy cases.
- In 18 IIMs, 32.3% of 1,741 posts were vacant, with IIM Mumbai recording 59% vacancies and 77 of 130 posts unfilled.
- In 17 IIITs, 53.5% of 1,225 posts remained vacant, with ten institutes above 50% and eight institutes above 50% vacancies.
- In five IISERs, 276 of 862 posts were vacant, showing substantial shortages despite relatively fewer responding institutions.

Governance and Recruitment Concerns

- The Education Ministry called faculty sanctioning a dynamic process, linked to institutional needs and faculty-student ratios of 1:12 for NITs and 1:10 for IITs.
- The Ministry said vacancies and recruitment are continuous processes, with all CHEIs directed to fill posts in September 2022 and October 2025 under Mission Mode recruitment.
- As of January 24, 2026, the Ministry reported that 17,878 faculty positions had been filled across CHEIs under Mission Mode.
- Despite official recruitment claims, high vacancies in IITs, NITs, IIMs, IIITs and IISERs indicate a gap between sanctioned capacity and actual faculty availability.

Implications for Technical Education

- Faculty shortages affect students who clear highly competitive entrance exams, including over 15 lakh JEE aspirants competing for limited IIT seats.
- Persistent vacancies can weaken teaching quality, mentorship, research supervision and institutional capacity in India's premier technical education system.

- The mismatch between student intake and faculty strength raises questions about whether elite institutions can meet expected education standards.

Beyond Editorial

Faculty Quality, Diversity and Retention Beyond Recruitment

- **Retention crisis:** Filling vacancies alone will not solve the faculty crunch if young academics face weak research support, delayed promotions, heavy workload and limited institutional incentives.
- **Quality concern:** Rapid recruitment must not dilute standards because IITs, NITs and IIMs need teachers who combine classroom instruction, research guidance and industry relevance.
- **Research ecosystem:** Faculty shortages weaken laboratory supervision, doctoral mentoring and publication output, limiting gains from schemes like PMRF and Anusandhan National Research Foundation.
- **Diversity gap:** Inclusive faculty recruitment matters because SC, ST, OBC, women and regional representation can improve academic culture and student confidence in elite campuses.
- **Career incentives:** Competitive pay, seed grants, housing, sabbaticals and global collaborations, as seen in Institutes of Eminence, are essential to attract high-quality scholars.
- **Governance delays:** Complex hiring procedures, approval bottlenecks and uneven institutional autonomy can turn sanctioned posts into long-term vacancies despite Mission Mode recruitment drives.
- **Institutional credibility:** Technical institutes cannot sustain NIRF rankings, research reputation and industry linkages through infrastructure alone; excellence ultimately depends on faculty strength and academic freedom.

3. Mind investor sensitivities please (GS Paper III Economy)

This editorial 'Mind investor sensitivities please' was published in The Indian Express on 10th Jun 2026, highlights the need to make India's Bilateral Investment Treaty framework more investor-friendly amid foreign capital outflows."

Capital Outflows and FDI Stress

- Foreign portfolio investors withdrew \$14.6 billion in 2024-25, \$19.6 billion in 2025-26 and nearly \$15.8 billion so far this year, signalling sustained capital flight.
- Gross FDI inflows rose from \$80.6 billion in 2024-25 to \$94.5 billion in 2025-26, but net FDI remained weak at \$7.7 billion after only \$1 billion the previous year.
- The collapse in net FDI is linked to higher repatriation and outward investments by Indian firms, indicating weaker foreign capital retention.

BIT Framework and Investor Concerns

- India's BIT 2016 model has been criticised for narrow definitions and procedural barriers, especially the five-year local-remedies requirement before international arbitration.
- Before 2016, India had signed 83 BITs, of which 74 were ratified, but termination notices were later sent to 68 countries/regions till March 2023 for renegotiation.
- Since the termination exercise, India has signed treaties with only a few countries, weakening the investment treaty network available to foreign investors.

Proposed BIT Revamp

- The Union Budget 2025-26 proposed revamping the current model BIT to make it more investor-friendly and responsive to changing investor preferences.

- The reported new framework may reduce the local remedies period to two years, remove the most-favoured-nation clause and exclude tax-related provisions.
- Simplifying procedural barriers can improve legal certainty, while excessive arbitration delays may dampen investor enthusiasm in competing jurisdictions.

Beyond Editorial

Domestic Rule of Law as the Real Investment Guarantee

- **Contract certainty:** BIT reform can reassure investors, but enforceable contracts and predictable dispute resolution, as seen in the White Industries case, remain the real confidence base.
- **Judicial capacity:** Faster commercial courts, specialised benches and time-bound arbitration under the Commercial Courts Act can make domestic remedies credible and reduce treaty dependence.
- **Regulatory predictability:** Stable tax rules, licensing norms and compliance procedures help investors price risk, while Vodafone-type retrospective taxation raises the cost of doing business.
- **Sovereign balance:** Investor protection must not weaken India's right to regulate taxation, environment, public health and welfare, as seen in public-interest disputes over mining and telecom.
- **State accountability:** Government agencies must honour contracts, awards and commitments because Cairn-like arbitration disputes damage India's credibility more than treaty wording alone.
- **Domestic investors:** Rule-of-law reform benefits Indian firms too, since weak enforcement and delayed insolvency resolution discourage domestic capital formation as much as FDI.
- **Investment signal:** A credible legal system shows that India protects capital through courts, arbitration and contract enforcement, not merely through investor-friendly treaty language or policy announcements.