



**Sanskriti IAS**



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# **SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EDITORIALS**

**5th May 2026**

## **TOPICS:-**

- 1. A round of elections that signals structural dominance**  
(GS Paper II Polity)
- 2. Welfare alone doesn't win elections, it's just the floor**  
(GS Paper II Governance)
- 3. Opposition should go back to drawing board, reimagine politics, rewire machine**  
(GS Paper II Polity)

**DELHI CENTRE:**  
636, Mukherjee Nagar  
New Delhi-110009

**PRAYAGRAJ CENTRE:**  
1/1/8A, Stanley Rd,  
Maharana Pratap Chauraha,  
Civil Lines, Prayagraj, UP - 211002

 **9555-124-124**  
 **sanskritiias.com**

# 1. A ROUND OF ELECTIONS THAT SIGNALS STRUCTURAL DOMINANCE

*(GS Paper II Polity)*

This editorial 'A round of elections that signals structural dominance' was published in **The Hindu** on 5th May 2026, highlights how recent **State election results** indicate the BJP's structural dominance through organisation, state power, ideology and electoral - professional mobilisation.

## Structural Dominance Beyond Modi-Centric Mobilisation

- The election cycle in Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry strengthens the claim of **BJP dominance** as durable structural power, not merely a Narendra Modi-led electoral surge.
- Unlike **2014-16** charisma or **2019-21** pro-poor appeal, the BJP's latest victories and advances reflect organisation, Sangh networks, State institutions and regional political engineering.
- In Haryana and Maharashtra, **RSS mobilisation** helped blunt anti-incumbency by consolidating Hindu support, especially among Dalits, after long ruling-party fatigue.
- In West Bengal, the **Sangh Parivar** converted caste and community grievances, including Matuas and Rajbanshis, into a coherent State-wide narrative of Hindu exclusion.
- The BJP has built a **natural party** architecture by controlling institutions, restructuring rivals, breaking opposition factions and absorbing leaders into its expanding political system.

## Assam, West Bengal and the Limits of Opposition Counter-Hegemony

- In Assam, the Himanta Biswa Sarma government embedded the **Bangladeshi immigrant** category into bureaucracy, policing, land regulation and access to public resources.
- This category was operationalised through **NRC**, D-voter classification, detention centres, delimitation, eviction drives, surveillance and policing.
- The Assam model turned **indigenous-outsider** distinctions into an organising principle of governance, making Hindutva central to everyday statecraft and public imagination.
- In West Bengal, the BJP's campaign relied on **central agencies** and paramilitary deployment, while the Special Intensive Revision allegedly removed many TMC-leaning Muslim voters.

- The TMC survived by combining **Bengali pride** with cash transfers, women's mobilisation and Muslim consolidation, securing a fourth consecutive term.
- Congress failed in Assam by relying on **Gogoi dynasty** politics and caste-led alignments, while regional parties and Congress declined due to organisational weakness.
- The opposition's failure reflects absence of **counter-hegemony**, as welfare schemes or caste consolidation cannot match BJP's ideological-state machinery.

### Electoral-Professional Politics and Southern Adaptations

- The editorial identifies the rise of the **electoral-professional** party, organised around consultants, campaign managers and pollsters rather than ideologically committed cadres.
- This model fits a developmental paradigm where State governments pursue **big capital**, social welfare, pro-business reforms and large infrastructure projects.
- Technology-enabled cash transfers transformed catchall politics into **electoral-professional** politics, linking welfare leaders directly with broad voter constituencies.
- In Tamil Nadu, **DMK cadres** have been repurposed from benefit delivery to election mobilisation under M.K. Stalin's CEO-style leadership.
- In Kerala, Pinarayi Vijayan transformed **CPI(M)** into a disciplined electoral-professional machine, while Mamata Banerjee similarly professionalised TMC politics.
- The weakness of managerial politics is **ideological thinness**, which can push parties towards populist outsider strategies or Hindu nationalist solutions.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### Federal Safeguards Against One-Party Centralisation

- **Constitutional balance:** One-party dominance becomes risky when Union electoral strength converts into administrative centralisation, as seen in frequent Centre-State tensions over Governors.
- **Federal autonomy:** Competitive federalism requires respect for State mandates, especially when States pursue distinct models like Kerala's welfare or Tamil Nadu's social justice politics.
- **Institutional neutrality:** Agencies, Governors, election authorities and fiscal bodies must appear neutral, because partisan perception weakens trust in constitutional federalism.

- **Fiscal fairness:** Fair tax devolution, GST compensation and scheme flexibility are essential, since financial dependence can reduce State-level policy autonomy.
- **Regional pluralism:** Strong regional parties preserve democratic diversity when parties like DMK, TMC or BJD combine local identity with governance credibility.
- **Policy diversity:** States should remain governance laboratories, where Delhi's education model, Odisha's disaster management or Kerala's health system can compete democratically.
- **Democratic safeguard:** India's party system needs national cohesion without reducing State politics to extensions of central party strategy or institutional pressure.

## 2. WELFARE ALONE DOESN'T WIN ELECTIONS, IT'S JUST THE FLOOR

*(GS Paper II Governance)*

This editorial 'Welfare alone doesn't win elections, it's just the floor' was published in **The Indian Express** on 5th May 2026, highlights that **welfare delivery** becomes **electorally durable** only when embedded in organisation, alliances and political incorporation.

### Welfare as Electoral Floor, Not Ceiling

- The 2026 results show **welfare delivery** alone does not win elections, as BJP won Assam and West Bengal, DMK lost Tamil Nadu, and UDF won Kerala.
- Welfare has become the **baseline expectation** because every party promises continuity, making voters judge durability through organisation, alliances and future opportunity.
- Around 2015, Bihar showed that **Nitish Kumar's** welfare record on bicycles, scholarships, prohibition and self-help groups could not alone protect his alliance choices.
- A student receiving Bihar's **scholarship benefits** still supported BJP-led NDA, showing welfare gave the floor while voters sought political upward movement.

## Organisation Converts Delivery into Durability

- West Bengal's welfare regime remained strong because **TMC organisation** routed schemes such as Kanyashree, Lakshmir Bhandar and allowances through local networks.
- Mamata Banerjee's **didi image** converted rule-based transfers into personal political gifts, binding welfare with trust, access and emotional ownership.
- BJP's weak **local structure** in Bengal meant universal welfare blunted anti-incumbency, as workers shifted from redistribution to gatekeeping and attribution.
- In 2026, BJP's **polarisation push** failed because central institutions and communal mobilisation could not overcome TMC's organisationally embedded welfare regime.

## Assam's Shift from Welfare to Incorporation

- Assam in 2016 looked different because welfare entered volatile politics marked by **candidate realignments**, thin opposition structures and anti-incumbency against Congress.
- BJP built beyond delivery by using **SHG networks**, unemployed youth allowances and tea-garden outreach as contact points for political incorporation.
- Peace accords, return of **former militants** and citizenship politics brought households into BJP's political community, though access remained uneven and selective.
- Welfare in Assam became a tool of **beneficiary incorporation**, not simple redistribution, deciding who felt securely included and who remained politically suspect.

## Tamil Nadu and the Limits of Elaborate Welfare

- Tamil Nadu offers the cleanest test because **DMK welfare** was extensive, copied nationally and rooted in one of India's most elaborate delivery systems.
- Despite ByTheTextbook welfare delivery, the regime lost because **durability** did not emerge against a new entrant exploiting different political cleavages.
- The case shows that welfare from an originating **Dravidian regime** may still fail when voters do not see organisational renewal or political expansion above delivery.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### Welfare as Human Capital Formation, Not Electoral Transaction

- **Capability building:** Welfare becomes transformative when schemes like PM-POSHAN improve nutrition, education, health, skills and women's participation beyond cash transfers.
- **Mobility focus:** Direct benefits provide immediate security, but long-term legitimacy depends on jobs, dignity and mobility through skilling, MSMEs and rural livelihoods.
- **Public goods:** Welfare gains deeper value when linked with schools, hospitals, transport, digital access and local infrastructure, as seen in Kerala's health model.
- **Women's agency:** Women-centred schemes and SHGs become meaningful when they create credit access, livelihoods and bargaining power, as seen under DAY-NRLM.
- **Outcome measurement:** Welfare should be assessed through learning levels, health access, employment outcomes and livelihood security, not only beneficiary numbers or DBT coverage.
- **Rights approach:** Citizens should receive welfare as predictable entitlement with grievance redressal, as under NFSA, rather than personalised local patronage.
- **Democratic value:** A mature welfare state converts beneficiaries into capable citizens who participate better in markets, institutions and public life.

## 3. OPPOSITION SHOULD GO BACK TO DRAWING BOARD, REIMAGINE POLITICS, REWIRE MACHINE

*(GS Paper II Polity)*

This editorial 'Opposition should go back to drawing board, reimagine politics, rewire machine' was published in **The Indian Express** on 5th May 2026, highlights the **Opposition's electoral decline** and the need to rebuild strategy, organisation and democratic credibility.

## Opposition's Shrinking Electoral Space

- The Lok Sabha opportunity has closed, Bengal marks BJP's advance towards **total dominance**, and routine opposition politics risks irrelevance without strategic renewal.
- Kerala and Tamil Nadu do not prove Opposition resurgence, as both outcomes reflected **anti-incumbency** and regional power cycles rather than national political recovery.
- In Kerala, UDF benefited from accumulated unease with LDF, while in Tamil Nadu, DMK's dominance weakened due to **complacency** and search for alternatives.
- Vijay's TVK became a franchise for BJP in Tamil Nadu, filling the vacuum created by Dravidian fatigue through **anti-DMK** appeal without replacing the State's political model.

## Bengal and Assam as Strategic Failures

- In Bengal, the Left-led front was seen as giving a walkover to BJP, while Congress damaged the **TMC margin** in a high-stakes anti-BJP contest.
- The Bengal verdict was not simple popular will, as BJP's campaign was shaped by **central government** intervention and Election Commission-enabled contest management.
- BJP had no capacity to defeat TMC after its **2024 setback**, but central agencies, welfare programme shutdowns and election-time oversight revived its campaign.
- The deletion of 27 lakh electors, including 9 lakh enumeration-form absentees, made **citizenship documents** central and allegedly harmed TMC more than BJP.
- In Assam, delimitation helped BJP at an unprecedented scale, giving it around **10 extra seats** and reshaping constituency boundaries to its advantage.
- Himanta Biswa Sarma's campaign targeted the **miyan community**, while the Election Commission and Supreme Court watched without sufficient corrective intervention.

## Governance, Credibility and Democratic Integrity

- Opposition parties underestimated public anger with governments, as voters often punished poor **local governance** and leaders' conduct more than ruling-party ideology alone.

- The BJP exploited governance failures in States such as **Punjab**, Karnataka, Telangana and Himachal, forcing Opposition-ruled States to introspect before claiming moral high ground.
- The Opposition failed to act like it had something to lose, as corruption charges, including the **Zubeen Garg** issue, did not trigger strong political response.
- The sharpest challenge is not only electoral defeat but the fall of Indian elections below minimum **electoral integrity**, making acceptance of curated verdicts increasingly difficult.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### Rebuilding the Opposition's Information and Cadre Architecture

- **Booth presence:** Opposition parties need permanent booth-level structures, because BJP's panna-pramukh model shows election-time mobilisation cannot replace year-round voter contact.
- **Local intelligence:** Data systems, voter feedback and grievance tracking can help parties read local concerns, as AAP used mohalla-level feedback in Delhi.
- **Cadre training:** Workers need civic engagement and welfare-monitoring skills, not merely rallies and slogans, as CPI(M) cadres historically showed in Kerala.
- **Leadership pipeline:** Regional leadership should be cultivated continuously, because over-centralised command weakened Congress responses to State-level caste, class and livelihood shifts.
- **Social anchoring:** Parties need links with panchayats, unions, students and civil society, as Dravidian parties built through social reform networks.
- **Narrative discipline:** Opposition messaging must connect livelihood, federalism and social harmony with voter experience, as Bharat Jodo Yatra attempted through everyday issues.
- **Organisational renewal:** Electoral revival needs cadres, credible leaders, digital feedback and issue-based mobilisation, similar to TMC's booth networks in Bengal.