EDITORIALS - 17TH JUL 2026

1. Beyond political reshuffles, renew education in India (GS Paper II Governance)

This editorial 'Beyond political reshuffles, renew education in India' was published in The Hindu on 17th Jul 2026, highlights the need to convert political attention into a bipartisan national education renaissance.

Education crisis and national stakes

- Sonam Wangchuk's indefinite fast transforms education from a private concern into a test of national conscience and public accountability.
- A ministerial resignation or reshuffle cannot resolve systemic failure; institutions endure and require sustained structural renewal.
- India's youthful population can yield a demographic dividend only through thinkers, innovators, ethical professionals and responsible citizens, not enrolment growth alone.

Systemic reform agenda

- Within three years, boards, JEE, NEET, CUET and UPSC should adopt competency-based assessment testing application, reasoning, creativity and ethical judgement.
- Redesigned entrances, multiple examination windows, school performance and student portfolios can reduce coaching dependence and restore childhood.
- A National Teacher Excellence Mission should improve preparation, mentoring and research, while merit-based recruitment fills vacancies within three months.
- Higher education must integrate experiential learning through apprenticeships, research, entrepreneurship, rural immersion, community service and industry exposure.
- Government schools should guarantee equal education until age 13 through qualified teachers and common national minimum standards.
- Institutions need academic freedom to innovate locally, while governments define measurable learning outcomes and ensure accountability.
- A real-time public dashboard should disclose learning, vacancies, infrastructure, research, accreditation, employability and student well-being.
- Public education spending should reach 6% of GDP, alongside research funding of at least 2% of GDP.

- An independent statutory commission should establish benchmarks, audit implementation, report annually to Parliament and ensure outcome-based accountability.

Education as a national mission

- Reform must outlive electoral cycles and become a bipartisan mission, independent of changing governments and ideological divisions.
- The decisive issue is not ministerial leadership but building an education system worthy of children through shared national responsibility.

Beyond Editorial

Federal architecture of education reform

- Constitutional coordination: Education's Concurrent List status requires national standards to operate through sustained Centre-State cooperation, as demonstrated by Samagra Shiksha.
- Differentiated financing: Samagra Shiksha provides 90:10 funding to northeastern and Himalayan States, compared with the usual 60:40 sharing pattern.
- Contextual flexibility: The PM SHRI framework permits State-level adaptation, ensuring that national reform accommodates local languages, institutions and educational conditions.
- Data accountability: UDISE+ tracks enrolment, teachers and school infrastructure, helping governments compare regional gaps and allocate resources more effectively.
- Local scrutiny: PM SHRI selection requires State verification and physical inspection, combining common national benchmarks with decentralised administrative validation.
- District benchmarking: The Performance Grading Index identifies district-level weaknesses, enabling targeted improvement in governance, infrastructure and learning outcomes.
- Capacity support: Weaker States need additional financial and administrative assistance, as differentiated Samagra Shiksha funding already recognises unequal implementation capacity.

2. Ahead of the big deal, strike a careful balance
(GS Paper III Economy)

This editorial 'Ahead of the big deal, strike a careful balance' was published in The Indian Express on 17th Jul 2026, highlights India's need to pursue a US trade agreement without compromising its economic and strategic interests.

Expanding American tariff pressure

- After proposed Section 301 tariffs on 60 countries, India added forced-labour provisions while challenging its 12.5% tariff assessment.
- The existing 10% universal tariff under Section 122 expires on July 24 without Congressional approval, encouraging alternative tariff mechanisms.
- The USTR is separately investigating excess manufacturing capacity in India and other economies, potentially creating additional tariffs.
- A proposed Russia sanctions Bill threatens tariffs up to 100% on major energy buyers, directly affecting India's energy security.
- India has partially addressed US concerns through PSUs agreeing to source 10% of their LPG requirements from the United States.

Trade opportunity and negotiating risks

- Trade agreements with the UK, Australia and EU reflect India's trade diversification, while a US deal could reduce bilateral uncertainty.
- India's large market strengthens its bargaining position, but Washington may demand substantial market concessions, requiring protection of domestic interests.
- Negotiations must carefully balance expanded trade with strategic safeguards amid an unpredictable White House and continuing tariff pressure.

Beyond Editorial

Domestic resilience against tariff shocks

- Sectoral assessment: India should separately evaluate agriculture, dairy, pharmaceuticals, manufacturing and MSMEs because tariff concessions affect domestic sectors differently.
- Export diversification: Districts as Export Hubs identifies local products, removes bottlenecks and connects producers with foreign buyers, reducing concentrated export dependence.
- MSME upgrading: District Export Action Plans support training, workshops, trade fairs and buyer-seller meetings, helping smaller firms enter global markets.

- Origin safeguards: WTO rules of origin determine a product's national source, preventing third-country goods from improperly claiming preferential market access.
- Trade remedies: WTO safeguards permit temporary protection when import surges seriously injure domestic industry, providing firms time for adjustment.
- Supply resilience: The 14-member IPEF creates mechanisms for supply-chain cooperation, reducing excessive dependence on any single trading partner.
- Worker transition: Product-specific training under district export plans can support workers affected by import competition or industrial restructuring.

3. NATO's transformation opens possibilities for India (GS Paper II International Relations)

This editorial 'NATO's transformation opens possibilities for India' was published in The Indian Express on 17th Jul 2026, highlights how India can benefit from NATO's security transformation while preserving strategic autonomy.

NATO's evolving strategic priorities

- The 2026 Ankara Summit established permanent Russia deterrence, greater European responsibility and preparation for prolonged geopolitical rivalry.
- Ukraine exposed weaknesses in defence production and supply chains, making industrial capacity central to modern warfare.
- NATO now prioritises artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, quantum computing, autonomous systems and space capabilities alongside conventional defence.

Opportunities and dilemmas for India

- Europe's defence expansion allows Indian firms to join diversified supply chains as reliable manufacturing partners.
- NATO's wider Indo-Pacific outlook creates cooperation opportunities in maritime security, cyber resilience, critical technologies and defence innovation.
- India must balance growing ties with Europe and the US against Russia's role as a defence partner and energy supplier.
- Guided by strategic autonomy, India should gain technological and security benefits without accepting dependencies that constrain policy choices.

Beyond Editorial

Risks of bloc-based security

- Security dilemma: NATO's partnerships with Japan, Australia, South Korea and New Zealand may intensify strategic competition between China and Western powers.
- Regional marginalisation: Deeper NATO involvement could weaken ASEAN-led security forums by shifting attention towards extra-regional military arrangements and rival blocs.
- Institutional asymmetry: Indo-Pacific partners may shape discussions but lack the decision-making authority reserved for NATO's member countries.
- Guarantee gap: Japan and other NATO partners cooperate extensively but remain outside the collective-defence protection provided under Article 5.
- Technology dependence: Turkey's removal from the F-35 programme after purchasing Russia's S-400 illustrates constraints arising from alliance interoperability requirements.
- Crisis entanglement: NATO's Indo-Pacific partners now support Ukraine-related cyber, healthcare and disinformation projects, widening expectations beyond their immediate region.
- Autonomy safeguard: India should pursue issue-based technological cooperation without accepting alliance obligations that could restrict independent foreign-policy choices.