

EDITORIALS – 18TH JUN 2026

1. Innovate or be eaten

(GS Paper III Science and Technology)

This editorial 'Innovate or be eaten' was published in The Hindu on 18th Jun 2026, highlights India's need to build frontier innovation capacity through patient incubation, predictable policy and talent-friendly conditions.

Innovation Potential and Technology Dependence

- Indian and Indian-origin professionals have proven frontier capability by leading major technology firms and managing complex global businesses.
- Bharat Innovates 2026 showed India can produce competitive innovation when patient incubation and strategic sectoral focus support startups.
- The ban on Anthropic's Claude Mythos and Fable for non-Americans exposed India's technology dependence, as some Indian users and entities were already affected.
- India's middle-power role can become credible only if it innovates up to the global frontier, rather than remaining dependent on external technology ecosystems.

Limits of Capital-Heavy Competition

- Brute-force competition in frontier AI or semiconductors is difficult because each major player may require tens of billions of dollars for incremental advances.
- Becoming an AI deployment powerhouse may be a losing battle if India only seeks knowledge-economy efficiency without deeper innovation capability.

- India still has open opportunities in deep tech fields such as space exploration, defence and material sciences, where frontier competition remains possible.

Capital, Policy and Talent Conditions

- India must remain a stable home for capital and talent, because innovation needs venture funding, exploratory pitches and fair access to cutting-edge opportunities.
- Successful innovators must not be constrained by rent-seeking, as fear of success can push capital and talent away from Indian soil.
- Clear and predictable tax policy is essential because innovators require certainty before taking long-term, high-risk bets.
- Retaining top talent needs better urban conditions, since clean air, green spaces and reliable public transport influence whether professionals build their future in India.

Beyond Editorial

From Startup Success to Strategic Technological Sovereignty

- Strategic autonomy: Frontier innovation must support national power, because dependence on foreign AI models, Nvidia chips or hyperscale cloud can expose India to access shocks.
- Public procurement: Government can become an early buyer for deep-tech products, as iDEX, IN-SPACE and health missions can reduce market uncertainty for startups.
- Mission mode: India needs focused missions in AI, Semicon India, quantum, biotechnology and green hydrogen, rather than scattered small grants across too many areas.
- Research translation: Universities and laboratories must move from papers to patents and prototypes, as IITs, CSIR labs and BIRAC show commercialisation potential.

- Standards power: Countries shaping technical standards gain market influence, so India must engage in 5G, AI safety and green hydrogen standard-setting.
- Cluster depth: Innovation ecosystems need dense labs, firms, finance and skills, as Bengaluru's software base and Hyderabad's Genome Valley show.
- Security lens: Deep-tech policy must treat innovation as strategic infrastructure, because drones, cyber systems and semiconductors now shape wars, supply chains and digital economies.

2. Step forward

(GS Paper I Society)

This editorial 'Step forward' was published in The Hindu on 18th Jun 2026, highlights the Supreme Court's recognition of unpaid domestic work as economically valuable labour in compensation law.

Judicial Recognition of Unpaid Domestic Work

- The Supreme Court in *Shishupal @ Shish Ram vs Surjeet* enhanced compensation for a homemaker's accidental death by assigning ₹30,000 monthly economic value to her unpaid work.
- The ruling builds on *Lata Wadhwa* and *Kirti vs Oriental Insurance*, where the Court held that homemakers' work cannot be discounted merely because it is unpaid or performed by women.
- The judgment fixes a notional floor of ₹30,000 per month, adds a 10% hike every three years, and includes a woman's salary where applicable in MACT compensation.
- The Court clarified that this valuation applies only to compensation calculations, not to salary, wage entitlement, pension, employment status or law-making.

Social and Labour–Economic Significance

- The ruling challenges the normalised undervaluation of women’s work by giving judicial weight to domestic labour as real economic contribution.
- Homemakers seeking maintenance under the Hindu Marriage Act can now cite judicial recognition of their domestic work’s economic value.
- Rural women involved in sowing, harvesting and cattle-tending may use this reasoning to argue that their labour is often wrongly treated as unpaid household work.
- The additive rule may influence disputes around work from home, where paid employment and domestic responsibilities increasingly overlap.

Institutional and Market Implications

- Future litigation may test whether male homemakers can claim equivalent treatment, extending the logic of gender-neutral valuation.
- Higher average claim sizes may pressure low-margin motor insurance, pushing insurers to reassess risk models and settle more cases in Lok Adalats.
- The judgment acts as a corrective to economic erasure, but its impact will depend on how consistently courts apply the valuation standard.

Beyond Editorial

Making the Care Economy Visible

- Time-use data: India needs stronger measurement of unpaid care work, because Time Use Survey 2019 revealed work invisible in income and employment data.
- Policy recognition: Legal valuation of homemakers’ work should inform welfare design, especially where unpaid labour supports children, elderly persons and household productivity.
- Gender budgeting: Budgets must account for care burdens, because Poshan, Jal Jeevan Mission and childcare schemes directly affect women’s unpaid workload.

- Childcare support: Public crèches, Anganwadi strengthening and Palna scheme can reduce care pressure and improve women's labour-force participation.
- Elderly care: Ageing will increase household care demands, making domestic labour central to policy, especially in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh.
- Workplace reform: Employers need flexible work, parental leave and crèche support, because the Maternity Benefit Act links women's work to care infrastructure.
- Agency caution: Valuing unpaid work must not confine women to domestic roles; SHGs and property rights can expand dignity, bargaining power and choice.

3. Exam failures run deeper than Telegram (GS Paper II Governance)

This editorial 'Exam failures run deeper than Telegram' was published in The Indian Express on 18th Jun 2026, highlights that NEET paper-leak failures reflect deeper examination-system vulnerabilities, not merely platform misuse.

Platform Ban and Its Limits

- The temporary Telegram ban followed probes into NEET paper leaks, where investigators found the messaging app was used to circulate leaked papers and misinformation.
- Telegram's cooperation may help identify where illicit papers appeared, but platform removal cannot explain how papers bypassed scrutiny in the first place.
- The NTA's argument may be valid only at the distribution stage, because illegal leaks also involve chain of custody failures in setting, printing, transport and delivery.

Systemic Examination Governance Failure

- The government strengthened coordination between the NTA, cybercrime units and law-enforcement agencies after last month's exam cancellation.
- Investigations widened into the paper mafia, and enforcement agencies claimed action against networks circulating leaked materials through social media.
- The anti-cheating strategy cannot rely on Telegram bans because a blunt restriction affects nearly 150 million users and raises proportionality concerns.
- Stronger action against messaging apps risks executive overreach, especially when the core problem lies in exam integrity rather than communication platforms.

Need for Institutional Reform

- Repeated malpractice over two decades has raised doubts about the examination system's integrity, with last month's medical entrance controversy being the second such case in two years.
- The Radhakrishnan Committee, set up after the Supreme Court's nudge following 2024 irregularities, recommended stronger NTA accountability.
- The agency's use of private vendors drew criticism from parliamentary panels, showing weakness in outsourced governance of high-stakes public examinations.
- Experts stress sustained public investment in examination systems because safeguarding exam sanctity requires institutional capacity, not ad hoc security fixes.

Beyond Editorial

Restoring Merit in High-Stakes Examinations

- **Candidate rights:** Exam failures like NEET-UG 2024 harm honest aspirants through lost time, money and stress, so accountability must centre students.
- **Chain security:** Paper-setting, printing, transport and digital delivery need tamper-proof protocols, because leaks often begin before social-media circulation, as NEET-UG showed.
- **Vendor accountability:** Private vendors handling exams need strict audits and penalties, as NTA outsourcing without oversight can weaken institutional responsibility.
- **Transparent audits:** After failures like NEET-UG and UGC-NET 2024, agencies should publish limited audit findings without compromising future security.
- **Grievance redressal:** Students need time-bound complaints, helplines and retest clarity, because delays hurt poorer candidates travelling for exams like NEET and CUET.
- **Digital proportionality:** Anti-cheating steps must avoid blanket platform bans or excessive surveillance, as Telegram restrictions can affect millions beyond accused networks.
- **Social mobility:** Exam integrity is a meritocracy issue, because leaks like Vyapam and NEET-UG reward organised networks over first-generation aspirants.