

EDITORIALS – 23RD JUL 2026

1. THE COCKROACH DILEMMA FACING INDIA'S POLITICAL PARTIES

(GS Paper II Polity)

This editorial 'The cockroach dilemma facing India's political parties' was published in The Hindu on 23rd Jul 2026, highlights how youth-led apolitical protest challenges BJP dominance and reshapes Opposition strategy.

Politics of public anger

- The CJP mobilisation creates opposing calculations: the BJP expects Congress erosion, while some opponents see anti-government space.
- The Opposition remains divided: the Samajwadi Party and Left favour engagement, while the Congress fears AAP-style cannibalisation.
- Sporadic public anger can produce electoral change or be diffused, depending on its political consolidation.
- The Anna movement channelled anti-UPA anger towards the BJP; Congress now seeks similar anti-BJP mobilisation despite its apolitical character.

Why the present movement differs

- Past farmers' protests remained regionally narrow, while anti-CAA protests were framed as Muslim-centred, limiting wider electoral impact.
- The urban middle class largely avoided farmers' agitation and sometimes opposed anti-CAA protests, reflecting persistent social fragmentation.
- Present youth anger extends beyond examination irregularities to price rise, question-paper leaks and shrinking income opportunities.
- Unlike sectional agitations, CJP protesters cut across the young Hindu-Hindi belt, resisting easy communal polarisation.

- Earlier anti-corruption movements, including Navnirman, JP and Anna, united diverse interests against the Congress system.

Electoral and democratic implications

- Despite securing 37% vote share in 2019, the BJP can isolate sectional protests or generate counter-consolidation.
- Changing voter loyalties and durable Hindutva appeal protect the BJP, alongside possible gains from Lok Sabha delimitation.
- Traditional mobilisation tools appear weaker against an Instagram generation that did not inherit its parents' political allegiance.
- The CJP protests could gain critical mass but cannot unsettle the BJP without effective Opposition leadership.
- Unlike earlier agitations, this apolitical movement confronts a BJP strengthened by ideology, organisation and state power.
- Recurring apolitical protests erode trust in India's liberal-secular middle ground, becoming symptoms of democratic disarray, not remedies.

Beyond Editorial

Institutionalising Youth Participation

- Youth platforms: MY Bharat engages citizens aged 15–29 through volunteering, mentorship and civic participation; district youth councils could convert this engagement into regular policy inputs.
- Campus democracy: The Lyngdoh Committee examined criminalisation, expenditure limits, candidate eligibility and dispute resolution, providing a framework for transparent student-union elections.
- Parliamentary exposure: NYPS 2.0 permits institutional, group and individual participation, which could be linked with legislative committees for substantive youth consultation.
- Policy pipelines: Recommendations from the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue influenced the Union Budget 2026, showing how structured youth forums can inform policymaking.

- Digital consultation: MyGov uses discussions, tasks, polls and surveys for policymaking; publishing government responses would make its citizen engagement more accountable.
- Civic service: NSS volunteers participate in sanitation, literacy, environmental conservation and disaster-management activities, creating practical pathways for youth leadership and social responsibility.
- Grievance redressal: CPGRAMS guidelines prescribe 21-day resolution and detailed action-taken reports, a model that youth-focused grievance platforms could replicate.

2. BURIED QUESTIONS

(GS Paper III Disaster Management)

This editorial 'Buried questions' was published in The Hindu on 23rd Jul 2026, highlights the safety failures and environmental costs of infrastructure projects in the fragile Himalayan region.

Teesta tunnel tragedy

- A suspected methane burst damaged the Teesta Stage-VI tunnel in Sikkim, killing at least 15 of approximately 25 workers.
- Methane is a recognised excavation hazard, while the seismically active Teesta basin contains young, fractured rock and concealed gas pockets.
- Critical questions concern how the pocket was breached, whether risks were modelled and whether gas-detection and ventilation safeguards functioned.

Recurring underground risks

- An illegal Meghalaya coal-mine explosion killed about 30 workers in 2026, exposing persistent dangers in underground work.

- The Silkyara tunnel collapse trapped 41 workers for 17 days in 2023, highlighting the hazards of construction in difficult terrain.
- Hydropower projects along the 400-km Teesta have varying environmental-clearance histories but share exposure to the fragile Himalayas.
- The South Lhonak glacial-lake outburst destroyed Teesta-III in 2023 and killed over 100 people downstream.
- NHPC Limited absorbed Teesta-VI after private developers became insolvent amid escalating project costs.

Relief and accountability

- Immediate priorities are rescue operations and relief for affected workers, including every effort to reach those still trapped.
- After rescue, the government must order an independent review of whether the project's environmental-clearance conditions were actually followed.

Beyond Editorial

Himalayan Infrastructure Resilience Framework

- Carrying capacity: The NGT-directed assessment by the G.B. Pant Institute examined tourism pressures across the Himalayas, offering a model for infrastructure approval limits.
- Cumulative assessment: The Beas sub-basin cumulative-impact study provides a precedent for evaluating the combined ecological effects of multiple Teesta hydropower projects.
- Hazard mapping: GSI has mapped 4.3 lakh sq. km of landslide-prone terrain and recorded 91,000 historical landslides, creating a scientific basis for project siting.
- Resilient engineering: The Z-Morh tunnel design includes a parallel egress tunnel and cross-passages, illustrating the evacuation redundancy required in Himalayan underground projects.

- Worker protection: The Silkyara collapse prompted a government investigation, reinforcing the need for independent verification of ventilation, sensors, escape routes and rescue preparedness.
- Compliance oversight: PARIVESH enables online compliance reports and geo-tagged inspections; public dashboards can expose delayed safeguards and strengthen post-clearance accountability.
- Community preparedness: The ₹150-crore National GLOF Risk Mitigation Project covers four Himalayan States and combines early warning, remote sensing and community-level preparedness.

3. BEYOND THE PROTESTS, THREE EDUCATION INITIATIVES (GS Paper II Governance)

This editorial 'Beyond the protests, three education initiatives' was published in The Indian Express on 23rd Jul 2026, highlights why accountability for examination leaks must strengthen, not eclipse, deeper education reforms.

Core education reforms

- The examination leak demands accountability, but resignation-focused debate obscures wider education transformation involving knowledge, language and opportunity.
- The NCERT Class IX mathematics textbook expands Indian mathematical traditions through Baudhayana, Brahmagupta, Madhava, Sulba Sutras and the Kerala School.
- Greater Indian representation corrects an inherited imbalance without rejecting Western knowledge represented by scholars such as Euclid and Newton.
- Indian history should replace colonial assumptions with evolving multidisciplinary evidence from archaeology, genetics, linguistics and texts.
- The CBSE's three-language approach recognises languages as carriers of memory, thought and civilisational knowledge.

- Additive multilingualism should combine strong Indian-language foundations with competent English proficiency as a global bridge.
- The K. Radhakrishnan Committee proposed stronger data security, biometric safeguards, reliable centres, local involvement and gradual computer-based testing.

Accountability and entrenched interests

- Technology alone cannot secure examinations, but vulnerable legacy systems require comprehensive institutional modernisation.
- India's coaching market was estimated at ₹64,244 crore in 2022 and projected to reach ₹1.80 lakh crore by 2030.
- Around 12.54 lakh Indian students studied abroad, reflecting institutional weaknesses that effective education reform could address.
- Reforms may disrupt established commercial interests, though genuine student grievances prevent treating every critic as politically motivated.
- Government accountability requires identifying failures, punishing those responsible and ensuring student protection without abandoning reform.

Beyond Editorial

Equity-Centred Education Reform

- Federal consultation: NEP 2020 received over two lakh suggestions from 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats, demonstrating how decentralised consultation can improve reform legitimacy.
- Teacher preparedness: Around 12.97 lakh teachers received foundational-learning training under NISHTHA, showing that curricular reform requires extensive capacity-building before classroom implementation.
- Digital inclusion: NTA established about 3,400 Test Practice Centres across 622 districts to provide rural candidates free experience with computer-based examinations.

- Disability access: CBSE permits scribes, computers and compensatory time for candidates with disabilities, providing a practical model for inclusive examination reform.
- Social equity: KGBVs provide residential education up to Class XII for girls from SC, ST, OBC, minority and BPL households.
- Institutional capacity: The PM SHRI scheme targets more than 14,500 schools with upgraded laboratories, libraries, technology and accessible infrastructure to demonstrate NEP implementation.
- Outcome evaluation: PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan 2024 assessed nearly 23 lakh students across 87,619 schools, enabling competency-based comparison across regions and socioeconomic backgrounds.