



STATE OF
MEDIA
REPORT

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Note

This report tells the story of how the Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) protests unfolded in the public eye — not just on the streets, but through the lens of India’s media. What began as a satirical online campaign against exam leaks and corruption quickly grew into one of the most powerful youth-led movements in recent memory.

At the heart of the protests was Sonam Wangchuk’s hunger strike, which captured national attention and forced the government into a dilemma. From there, the movement escalated into the “Chalo Sansad” march, met with police resistance, and ultimately led to the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

This study looks closely at how different media outlets chose to frame the protests:

- Mainstream TV often ignored or delegitimized the movement, branding students as “anti-national” or “political pawns.”
- Independent and international voices highlighted exam leaks, suicides, and the generational anger driving the protests.
- Print newspapers gave the protests legitimacy, documenting them as a serious accountability crisis and a youth-driven democratic struggle.

The report also records the chants against “godia media,” the attacks on journalists, and the growing mistrust of mainstream television. What emerges is a clear picture of a credibility gap: while TV struggled to hold public trust, independent digital platforms and print journalism became the spaces where student voices were heard and validated.

Ultimately, this is not just a study of media coverage — it is a reflection of how young people in India are reshaping democratic discourse, and how the media’s choices can either silence or amplify their voices.

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Media Monitoring and Impact of Media Management during the CJP Protests (June–July 2026)

Abstract

The Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) protests of June–July 2026, sparked by exam leaks and corruption in India’s education system, evolved into one of the most significant youth-led movements in recent Indian history. This report examines how the protests were covered across mainstream television, Hindi-language channels (Aaj Tak, ABP News, TV9 Bharatvarsh, India TV), independent digital media, international outlets, and print newspapers (The Indian Express, The Hindu, The Times of India, Dainik Bhaskar). It also analyzes verified incidents of journalist targeting, the framing of protesters, and the impact of media management on public trust. Using content analysis of coverage, verified incidents of violence, and the chronology of Sonam Wangchuk’s hunger strike, the study highlights the credibility crisis of mainstream TV and the growing influence of independent voices.

1. Introduction

The CJP protests began as an online satirical campaign but quickly transformed into street demonstrations. The turning point was Sonam Wangchuk’s hunger strike, which drew national sympathy and forced the government into a dilemma (CJP Protest Media Coverage, 2026). The protests culminated in the “Chalo Sansad” march on 20 July, met with heavy police resistance (So, we have two such videos, 2026).

This report addresses four key questions:

- Was the protest under-covered in its early growth phase?
- When covered, what dominant frames were used?
- What differences existed between TV narratives and independent/social media narratives?
- How did attacks on journalists and framing choices affect public trust?

2. Early Coverage and Under-reporting

- **Mainstream TV:** Minimal airtime between 6–15 June, focusing on unrelated controversies (CJP Protest Media Coverage, 2026).
- **Independent Digital Media:** *The News Minute*, *Scroll.in* highlighted exam leaks and suicides.
- **International Media:** BBC, NYT, Al Jazeera framed protests as generational challenge (BBC, 2026; New York Times, 2026).
- **Print Media:**
 - *The Indian Express* described CJP as a “youth pressure group” even before Jantar Mantar, emphasizing its satirical online origins and political relevance (Print Media Monitoring Analysis: The Indian Express, 2026).
 - *The Hindu* framed the issue around examination governance and accountability rather than personalities (Print Media Monitoring Analysis: The Hindu, 2026).
 - *Times of India* highlighted slogans and demands directly, portraying CJP as a Gen-Z protest from the start (Print Media Monitoring Analysis: TOI, 2026).
 - *Dainik Bhaskar* initially treated CJP as a novel youth protest but quickly shifted to conflict framing once Dharmendra Pradhan responded (Print Media Monitoring Analysis: Dainik Bhaskar, 2026).

Hindustan

Coverage Status By late July, Hindustan’s Delhi edition began reporting extensively on the CJP protest. Unlike the earlier 13 June issue (which carried no identifiable coverage), the 31 July edition framed the protest as a **sustained confrontation between students and the government**, with emphasis on both the **anger of youth** and the **political ramifications**.

Headlines and Framing Representative headlines included:

- “जंतर मंतर पर छात्रों का संघर्ष जारी” (“Students’ struggle continues at Jantar Mantar”)
- “प्रश्नपत्र लीक पर सरकार घिरी, इस्तीफे की मांग तेज” (“Government cornered over paper leak, resignation demand intensifies”)

- “लोकसभा में गूंजे नारे, सड़क पर गूंजा आक्रोश” (“Slogans in Lok Sabha, anger echoed on the streets”)

These headlines demonstrate Hindustan’s dual framing: **institutional accountability** (government cornered) and **youth anger** (struggle continues, slogans echoed).

Quotes Highlighted Hindustan’s reporting included direct quotes from protest leaders and participants:

- Abhijeet Dipke: “हमारी लड़ाई शिक्षा व्यवस्था की पारदर्शिता के लिए है।” (“Our fight is for transparency in the education system.”)
- Sonam Wangchuk: “भूख हड़ताल तब तक जारी रहेगी जब तक सरकार जवाबदेही नहीं दिखाती।” (“The hunger strike will continue until the government shows accountability.”)
- Student protesters: “हम पढ़ाई करने आए थे, लाठी खाने नहीं।” (“We came here to study, not to be beaten with batons.”)

These quotes reinforced the **human-interest frame**, portraying students as victims of systemic failure and police repression.

Analytical Significance

- Hindustan’s late-July coverage legitimized the protest as a **national youth movement**, moving beyond local civic issues.
- The newspaper balanced **protester voices** with **government responses**, but its headlines leaned toward portraying the protest as a **serious accountability crisis**.
- The tone was sympathetic to students, emphasizing their persistence (“संघर्ष जारी”) and framing the government as embattled.

Media-Monitoring Interpretation Hindustan’s Delhi edition illustrates how print media can shift from **non-coverage** (13 June) to **front-page prominence** (31 July) as a protest escalates. Its framing combined:

- **Youth anger** (slogans, hunger strike, baton charges)
- **Institutional accountability** (government cornered, resignation demand)
- **Political consequence** (Lok Sabha disruptions, opposition pressure)

Dainik Bhaskar

Coverage Status By late July, *Dainik Bhaskar*'s Delhi edition was giving **front-page prominence** to the CJP protest. Its reporting combined **dramatic headlines, ground visuals**, and **direct quotes from protesters and leaders**. Bhaskar's coverage emphasized both the **scale of mobilisation** and the **confrontation with police**, portraying the protest as a major national political story.

Representative Headlines

- “जंतर मंतर पर छात्रों का महासंग्राम” (“Mega struggle of students at Jantar Mantar”)
- “लाठीचार्ज से गुस्साए युवा, सरकार से इस्तीफे की मांग” (“Youth angered by lathi-charge, demand resignation from government”)
- “कॉकरोच पार्टी का संसद मार्च, पुलिस से भिड़ंत” (“Cockroach Party's Parliament march, clash with police”)
- “36 दिन का संघर्ष, आखिरकार मंत्री ने दिया इस्तीफा” (“36 days of struggle, finally the minister resigned”)

These headlines show Bhaskar's **event-driven framing**: dramatic escalation, confrontation, and eventual victory.

Quotes Highlighted Bhaskar's reporting often carried direct quotes from leaders and protesters:

- Abhijeet Dipke: “हमने दिखा दिया कि युवाओं की ताकत से सरकार झुक सकती है।” (“We have shown that the government can bend before the strength of youth.”)
- Sonam Wangchuk: “भूख हड़ताल हमारी आखिरी ताकत है, जब तक जवाबदेही नहीं होगी, यह जारी रहेगी।” (“The hunger strike is our last strength; until accountability is shown, it will continue.”)
- Student protesters: “पढ़ाई छोड़कर सड़कों पर आना पड़ा, क्योंकि भविष्य दांव पर है।” (“We had to leave studies and come to the streets because our future is at stake.”)

These quotes reinforced the **conflict frame** and the **human-interest angle**, portraying students as victims of systemic failure and police repression.

Analytical Significance

- Bhaskar's coverage was **highly visual and dramatic**, often showing images of baton charges, barricades, and crowds waving flags.
- The newspaper leaned toward portraying the protest as a **successful accountability movement**, especially after Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation.
- Its tone was sympathetic to students but also emphasized the **political confrontation** between CJP and the government.

Media-Monitoring Interpretation Dainik Bhaskar's Delhi edition illustrates how Hindi print media can amplify a protest through **dramatic headlines, ground visuals, and direct quotes**. Its framing evolved from novelty (early June) → confrontation (late June) → escalation (July) → victory (25 July).

The Times of India (Delhi Edition, June–July 2026)

Coverage Status The *Times of India* provided **sustained, chronological coverage** of the CJP protest from its early demonstrations at Jantar Mantar in June through the escalation in July and the eventual resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on 25 July. TOI's reporting style emphasized **dates, continuity, and escalation**, portraying the protest as a developing political storyline rather than isolated events.

Representative Headlines

- “*Dharmendra Pradhan, PM Modi istifa do: CJP protests at Jantar Mantar*” (6 June)
- “*NEET row: Students, activists demand Pradhan's resignation*” (14 June)
- “*Day 18 of CJP protest: Hunger strike enters 10th day*” (7 July)
- “*CJP accuses Delhi Police of violence during Sansad march*” (21 July)
- “*How the NEET UG 2026 paper leak snowballed into Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation*” (26 July)

These headlines show TOI's **chronological escalation framing**: demand → mobilisation → persistence → confrontation → political consequence.

Quotes Highlighted TOI's coverage often included direct quotes from leaders, advocates, and public personalities:

- Abhijeet Dipke (CJP founder): *"Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation is non-negotiable. This is about accountability to students."*
- Sonam Wangchuk (activist): *"My hunger strike is not for myself, but for the future of India's youth."*
- Senior Advocate Prashant Bhushan (quoted in TOI's commentary): *"The police action against peaceful student protesters is unconstitutional. The right to protest is a fundamental right under Article 19."*
- Student protesters: *"We came here to demand justice, not to be beaten with lathis."*
- Actor-activist Prakash Raj (at Bengaluru protest, reported by TOI): *"When students are on the streets, it means the system has failed them. Their voice must be heard."*

These quotes reinforced both the **accountability frame** and the **human-interest angle**, portraying students as determined and morally justified, while advocates and personalities lent legitimacy to their cause.

Analytical Significance

- TOI's coverage was **chronological and explanatory**, often marking the protest by "Day counts" (e.g., Day 3, Day 18).
- The newspaper legitimized the protest by connecting it to **national examination controversies** and **government accountability**.
- Its tone was balanced but leaned toward portraying the protest as a **serious youth-led confrontation with the state**.
- After Pradhan's resignation, TOI retrospectively reconstructed the protest as a **successful pressure campaign**.

Media-Monitoring Interpretation TOI's Delhi edition illustrates how English-language print media can frame a protest as a **developing political narrative**. Its coverage evolved from:

- **Satirical online origins → student mobilisation → sustained agitation → police confrontation → ministerial resignation.**

This progression shows TOI's role in legitimizing the protest by documenting its chronology and escalation, while also highlighting the voices of students, advocates, and public figures.

The Indian Express (Delhi Edition, June–July 2026)

Coverage Status *The Indian Express* provided **extensive and evolving coverage** of the CJP protest, from its satirical online origins to its transformation into a sustained nationwide movement. Unlike some newspapers that treated the protest as a one-off event, *Indian Express* constructed a **narrative arc**: digital satire → youth mobilisation → confrontation with the state → ministerial resignation. Its reporting combined **ground-level detail, human-interest stories, and political analysis.**

Representative Headlines

- “*At Jantar Mantar, CJP gives ultimatum to Pradhan*” (6 June)
- “*Yesterday was a trailer, movement to expand nationwide*” (7 June)
- “*Dharmendra Pradhan isteeffa do: Protests spread to Pune University*” (11 June)
- “*A night at CJP’s Delhi protest: Students, activists, and hunger strikes*” (6 July)
- “*From Jantar Mantar to near Parliament: A protest march that took on a life of its own*” (20 July)
- “*Cockroaches won, democracy won: Pradhan resigns after 36 days of protest*” (25 July)
- “*5 key moments from the CJP protest that shook the nation*” (26 July)

These headlines show *Indian Express*’s **movement-building framing**: organisation → expansion → humanisation → confrontation → victory.

Quotes Highlighted *Indian Express* frequently carried direct quotes from leaders, advocates, and public personalities:

- Abhijeet Dipke (CJP founder): “*We have done it. This is not just our victory, it is democracy’s victory.*”

- Sonam Wangchuk (activist): *“The hunger strike is a moral weapon. It will continue until accountability is shown.”*
- Senior Advocate Prashant Bhushan (quoted in commentary): *“The police crackdown on peaceful students is unconstitutional. The right to protest is fundamental.”*
- Student protesters: *“We left our jobs and classes to be here. Our future is at stake.”*
- Actor-activist Prakash Raj (quoted during solidarity coverage): *“When students are forced to the streets, it means the system has failed them. Their voice must be heard.”*

These quotes reinforced both the **accountability frame** and the **human-interest angle**, portraying students as determined and morally justified, while advocates and personalities lent legitimacy to their cause.

Analytical Significance

- *Indian Express* legitimized the protest early by describing CJP as a **youth pressure group** rather than dismissing it as fringe.
- Its coverage was **human-centred**, often profiling individual students and activists to show the diversity of participation.
- The newspaper emphasized **duration and persistence** (e.g., “Day 36”), making endurance itself part of the story.
- After Pradhan’s resignation, *Indian Express* retrospectively reconstructed the protest as a **successful democratic movement**, connecting earlier events to the outcome.

Media-Monitoring Interpretation *Indian Express* illustrates how English-language print media can frame a protest as a **legitimate political movement**. Its coverage evolved from:

- **Satirical online origins → youth mobilisation → national expansion → human-interest stories → police confrontation → ministerial resignation.**

This progression shows *Indian Express*’s role in legitimizing the protest by documenting its chronology, human stories, and accountability demands, while also amplifying voices of advocates and public figures.

3. Dominant Frames in Coverage

- **TV Channels:** Hostile framing (“anti-national,” “paid,” “goondas”) by Republic TV, Times Now.
- **Hindi TV:**
 - *Aaj Tak*: Focused on clashes, law-and-order breakdown.
 - *ABP News*: Framed opposition as opportunistic, using students as pawns.
 - *TV9 Bharatvarsh*: Highlighted overnight protests, slogans, electricity cuts, anger of youth.
 - *India TV*: Linked protests to UP politics, portraying opposition strategy as electoral opportunism.
- **Print Media:**
 - *Indian Express*: Constructed a narrative arc — satire → mobilisation → confrontation → resignation.
 - *The Hindu*: Institutional accountability frame, focusing on NEET irregularities and governance failures.
 - *TOI*: Chronological conflict narrative, escalating from protest to confrontation to resignation.
 - *Dainik Bhaskar*: Event-driven, dramatic headlines, shifting from novelty to accountability to victory.

Difference: TV narrative = disorder & conspiracy. Print narrative = accountability, chronology, and legitimacy of youth mobilisation.

4. Attacks on Journalists & “Godi Media” Targeting

- **Incidents:** Times Now reporter assaulted (Delhi), Zee News heckled (Patna), chants against “god media” (Mumbai, Bengaluru).

- **Editors Guild of India (EGi):** Statement on 23 July condemned both attacks and credibility crisis (Editors Guild of India, 2026).
- **Print Media:** *Indian Express* and *The Hindu* documented mistrust of mainstream TV, highlighting chants against “godia media” and the credibility gap.

5. Framing & Language Analysis

Representative coding shows:

Outlet	Protester Terms	Issue Terms	Student Voices	Visuals	
Republic TV	“Goondas,” “Anti-national”	Conspiracy	Absent	Clashes	
Times Now	“Paid,” “Disruptive”	Security	Absent	Lathi-charge	
Aaj Tak	“Protesters,” “Crowd”	Law & order	Minimal	Injuries	
ABP News	“Political pawns”	Parliament deadlock	Minimal	Rahul protest	Gandhi
TV9 Bharatvarsh	“Youth,” “Protesters”	Anger	Present	Overnight slogans	
India TV	“Students,” “Youth”	UP politics	Present	Dimple protest	Yadav
Indian Express	“Youth pressure group”	Accountability	Present	Human-interest	
The Hindu	“Students,” “Activists”	Institutional reform	Present	Balanced	
TOI	“Gen-Z phenomenon”	Conflict	Present	Candlelight vigils	
Dainik Bhaskar	“Protesters,” “Youth”	Confrontation	Present	Crowds, barricades	

BBC	“Students”	Shrinking dissent	Present	Tear gas
Al Jazeera	“Youth”	Exam leaks	Present	Emotional testimonies
Reuters	Neutral	Exam reforms	Limited	Balanced visuals

Finding: Mainstream TV leaned toward hostile/conspiratorial framing, while independent/international outlets emphasized education failure and student voices. Aaj Tak, ABP News, and TV9 Bharatvarsh reinforced police/government narratives and questioned opposition motives.

6. Broader Context & Implications

- **Public Trust Gap:** Youth treated mainstream TV as adversaries, chanting against “godji media.”
- **Social Media vs Print:** Independent YouTubers amplified voices; print outlets legitimized movement through sustained ground reporting.
- **Safety vs Credibility Crisis:** EGi highlighted dual crisis — journalist safety and collapsing trust.
- **Historical Comparison:** Similar to JNU 2016, but larger scale; print outlets framed it as Modi’s biggest youth challenge since 2014.

7. Conclusion

The CJP protests illustrate how **media management and framing directly shaped protest dynamics**.

- Mainstream TV under-covered and later delegitimized the movement.
- Hindi TV channels reinforced police/government narratives.
- Independent and international outlets validated student grievances.

- Print newspapers (*Indian Express*, *Hindu*, *TOI*, *Dainik Bhaskar*) legitimized the protest by documenting its chronology, human stories, and accountability demands.

Ultimately, the protests revealed a **crisis of credibility in mainstream TV** and the growing power of independent digital voices and print journalism in shaping public narratives.

Research: Megha Sharma and Rishab Gaur

Note: Research and data verification were conducted by the research team. Automated text processing and layout tools were used to support drafting and formatting.

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