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Interpreting the 'Rise' of the Cockroach Janta Party

Context

- The rapid rise of the Cockroach Janta Party demonstrates the growing power of **digital politics** in shaping contemporary political participation.
- Within days, online campaigns driven by **memes**, **Instagram reels**, and viral content attracted support that traditional political organisations often take years to build.
- Similar developments in Bangladesh and Nepal reveal how **youth mobilisation** and **collective outrage** can challenge established systems through emotionally charged online networks.
- However, while digital platforms can rapidly create emotional unity, they often struggle to sustain **long-term political commitment** and meaningful collective organisation.

The Rise of Reactive Digital Politics

- **Emotional Participation Through Social Media**
 - Digital platforms allow isolated individuals to experience moments of shared political intensity.
 - A slogan, meme, or viral campaign can create the feeling of collective participation within hours.

- This explains the rapid popularity of decentralised political movements that rely on emotional energy rather than traditional organisational structures.
- Unlike conventional politics based on ideology, leadership, and institutional continuity, modern online mobilisation is frequently driven by immediate reactions and symbolic enemies.
- **Synchronised outrage** spreads quickly because anger is easier to communicate digitally than patience, organisation, or long-term responsibility.
- **Synchronisation vs Solidarity**
 - Digital media is highly effective at producing **emotional alignment** among large groups of people.
 - Millions can react simultaneously to a shared event or enemy. However, emotional synchronisation is temporary.
 - **True solidarity requires continuity, shared memory**, trust, and sustained participation. It depends upon durable social relationships rather than momentary emotional intensity.
 - While synchronisation creates excitement, solidarity builds enduring political communities capable of surviving beyond moments of crisis.

The Erosion of Collective Social Life

- **Decline of Public Institutions**
 - The deeper crisis lies in the weakening of **collective social life**. Earlier political movements developed through institutions such as **trade unions**, campuses, neighbourhood associations, and civic organisations.
 - These spaces encouraged long-term participation and collective identity.
 - Modern societies, however, increasingly produce highly **individualised** citizens who seek belonging but lack the social structures necessary to sustain it.
 - As traditional forms of participation decline, individuals become more dependent on digital platforms for emotional connection and political expression.
- **Modernity and Individualisation**
 - This condition reflects a contradiction within modernity itself. Following the French Revolution, ideas of liberty and emancipation were linked to collective self-rule and public participation.
 - Over time, especially within consumer societies shaped by **fossil-fuel-driven development**, freedom became associated with personal consumption, competition, and private aspiration.
 - As public life weakened and private life expanded, societies became increasingly fragmented.
 - People remained emotionally hungry for collective belonging, making them more vulnerable to emotionally charged online mobilisation.

Cross-Country Comparisons and Structural Contradictions

- **Limits of Decentralised Movements**
 - Comparisons with Bangladesh and Nepal require caution because decentralised political energy rarely remains decentralised indefinitely.
 - In both countries, **reactive movements were eventually redirected**, institutionalised, or exhausted.

- This suggests that the broader problem extends beyond individual nations and reflects global trends such as weakening institutions, social fragmentation, and emotional isolation.
- **Sustainable collective action** requires historical memory, shared commitment, and durable symbolic attachment.

- **Lacan and the Problem of Authority**

- The ideas of Jacques Lacan provide an important insight into revolutionary politics.
- During the May 1968 protests in France, Lacan warned revolutionaries that they would ultimately produce a master.
- Revolt against one authority often creates **another form of authority rather than genuine liberation.**
- Movements organised mainly around opposition depend heavily on the **existence of an enemy.**
- However, once movements enter governance, contradictions emerge, compromises become necessary, and emotional clarity weakens.
- Sustaining collective political life becomes far more difficult than sustaining anger.

The Contradiction of Centralisation

- Modern societies rely upon highly **centralised systems** such as digital platforms, logistics networks, financial institutions, and megacities.
- Even the technologies that facilitate decentralised political mobilisation remain controlled by concentrated centres of economic and technological power.
- This creates a fundamental contradiction within contemporary anti-establishment politics.
- People increasingly desire **decentralisation** emotionally while living within systems structurally dependent on **centralisation.**
- Crowds may challenge authority temporarily, but reorganising power requires engagement with material systems built around scale, concentration, and control.

Conclusion

- The emergence of reactive digital politics demonstrates that **decentralised political energy can develop rapidly** in contemporary societies.
- However, emotional synchronisation alone cannot produce lasting transformation.
- The central challenge of modern politics is whether societies can transform moments of emotional mobilisation into lasting **solidarity** and enduring collective institutions.
- Otherwise, every rupture may simply reproduce new forms of concentration, authority, and domination rather than genuine democratic renewal.

Interpreting the 'Rise' of the Cockroach Janta Party FAQs

Q1. What is reactive digital politics?

Ans. Reactive digital politics is a form of politics driven by online outrage, emotional reactions, and rapid social media mobilisation.

Q2. Why are young people attracted to online political movements?

Ans. Young people are attracted to online political movements because they feel disconnected from traditional political institutions and seek collective participation.

Q3. What is the difference between synchronisation and solidarity?

Ans. Synchronisation creates temporary emotional unity, while solidarity requires long-term commitment, trust, and shared responsibility.

Q4. Why do decentralised political movements often weaken over time?

Ans. Decentralised political movements often weaken because they struggle to maintain unity and organisation beyond moments of emotional intensity.

Q5. How does modern consumer society contribute to political fragmentation?

Ans. Modern consumer society encourages individualism and private aspiration, which weakens collective social bonds and public participation.

Source: **The Hindu**

Cyber Warfare is Outpacing Global Legal Accountability

Context

- Recent tensions involving the United States, Israel, and Iran reveal a significant transformation in the nature of warfare.
- Modern conflicts are no longer fought only through **conventional military action** but increasingly through **cyber operations** targeting communication systems, digital infrastructure, and the **information environment**.
- Cyberattacks on news websites, applications, and essential services demonstrate how digital tools are now integrated into military strategy.

Rise of Cyber Warfare in Modern Conflict

- States and non-state actors use hacking, digital disruption, and information manipulation to weaken opponents before or alongside physical attacks.
- Such operations **target infrastructure**, defence systems, and communication networks, thereby extending conflict beyond traditional battlefields.
- Groups such as the **Handala Hack Team** have reportedly carried out attacks on foreign organisations, including a U.S.-based medical technology company.
- These incidents demonstrate how cyber conflict affects civilian, commercial, and governmental sectors simultaneously.
- Unlike traditional warfare, cyberattacks can occur across borders without direct military confrontation, making them difficult to control or regulate.

The Difficulty is Establishing Threshold

- **Applicability of International Law**

- The prohibition on the use of force under **Article 2(4)** of the **United Nations Charter** and the doctrine of **state responsibility** provide a legal basis for addressing cyberattacks.
- If a cyber operation causes severe disruption to critical systems or essential services, it may qualify as an **internationally wrongful act**.
- However, determining the legal threshold remains extremely difficult.
- Cyberattacks often create indirect, temporary, or non-physical damage that is harder to measure than conventional military destruction.
- As a result, deciding when a cyber operation becomes serious enough to constitute a prohibited use of force remains uncertain.

- **Gap Between Law and Practice**

- Although international law theoretically allows affected states to seek accountability and compensation, legal remedies are rarely successful in practice.
- This creates a growing gap between legal principles and real-world enforcement.
- Cyber incidents frequently cause significant disruption, yet they seldom lead to meaningful legal consequences.

Concerns that hinder litigation

- **The Problem of Attribution**

- Cyber operations are usually conducted through hidden networks and multiple jurisdictions, making it difficult to identify the actual perpetrator.
- Governments may possess intelligence indicating responsibility, but transforming such information into legally admissible evidence is highly challenging.
- This creates a divide between political certainty and legal proof. Without reliable attribution, holding states accountable under international law becomes nearly impossible.

- **Lack of Effective Judicial Forums**

- International institutions such as the **International Court of Justice** generally require state consent before hearing disputes, which states involved in cyber operations rarely provide.
- Domestic courts also face limitations because foreign governments are often protected by **sovereign immunity**.
- As a result, victims of cyberattacks have very limited opportunities to pursue legal remedies or compensation.

- **Political and Strategic Constraints**

- States often avoid legal proceedings due to political and strategic concerns.
- Pursuing litigation may escalate tensions, expose sensitive intelligence capabilities, or provoke retaliation.
- Consequently, many cyber incidents are addressed through diplomacy and political negotiations rather than through courts.

- **Challenges Related to Evidence**

- Cyber litigation also faces evidentiary difficulties. Cyberattacks involve complex technical data, classified intelligence, and complicated chains of causation.
- Courts frequently struggle to establish who conducted the operation, how much damage occurred, and how the attack caused specific harm.
- This makes legal proceedings uncertain and difficult.

International Efforts and Their Limitations

- International initiatives such as the **Budapest Convention on Cybercrime** and the **United Nations Convention against Cybercrime** aim to improve cooperation against cybercrime.
- However, these frameworks mainly focus on criminal activities and law enforcement rather than geopolitical conflict or state-sponsored cyber warfare.
- As cyber operations become more frequent and damaging, the absence of strong international mechanisms for accountability highlights the limitations of current global legal systems.

India's Necessity and Role in Shaping Cyber Norms

- **India's Growing Vulnerability**
 - For India, the issue is especially important because of its increasing dependence on digital infrastructure in sectors such as finance, governance, communication, and energy.
 - Greater digital connectivity also increases vulnerability to cyber threats and attacks on critical systems.
- **Need for Active International Engagement**
 - India must strengthen its cyber resilience while also participating actively in global discussions on accountability, attribution, and responsible state behaviour in cyberspace.
 - Developing stronger legal standards and international cooperation is essential for addressing future cyber conflicts effectively.

Conclusion

- Cyber warfare has become an inseparable part of modern conflict, operating alongside traditional military force.
- Although **international law** formally applies to cyberspace, practical barriers such as attribution problems, lack of judicial forums, political constraints, and evidentiary difficulties prevent effective enforcement.
- If cyber operations continue to expand without credible mechanisms of accountability, the gap between law and reality will continue to widen, **creating a dangerous environment** in which significant harm occurs beyond the effective reach of legal systems.

Cyber Warfare is Outpacing Global Legal Accountability FAQs

Q1. What is cyber warfare?

Ans. Cyber warfare is the use of digital attacks and cyber operations during conflicts to disrupt communication, infrastructure, or information systems.

Q2. Why is attribution difficult in cyberattacks?

Ans. Attribution is difficult because cyber operations are conducted through hidden networks and multiple jurisdictions.

Q3. Which international law applies to cyber operations?

Ans. Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter and the doctrine of state responsibility apply to cyber operations.

Q4. Why do states avoid legal action in cyber conflicts?

Ans. States avoid legal action because it may escalate tensions and expose sensitive intelligence information.

Q5. Why is cyber security important for India?

Ans. Cyber security is important for India because the country increasingly depends on digital infrastructure in finance, governance, and energy sectors.

Source: **The Hindu**

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