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SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EDITORIALS

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TOPICS:-

1. Making scholarships integral to India's academic culture

(GS Paper I - Society)

2. Timely inaction

(GS Paper III - Economy)

3. CBSE's AI curriculum - lofty goals, little clarity

(GS Paper I - Society, GS Paper III - Science and Technology)

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1. MAKING SCHOLARSHIPS INTEGRAL TO INDIA'S ACADEMIC CULTURE

(GS Paper I - Society)

This editorial 'Making scholarships integral to India's academic culture' was published in **The Hindu** on 10th Apr 2026, highlights the need to move **scholarships** from a peripheral support tool to the institutional core of **higher education** in India.

Why scholarships matter beyond seat expansion

- India's **Gross Enrolment Ratio** target of 50% cannot be met by adding **institutions** alone, because access does not guarantee completion.
- Higher educational institutions increased from 51,534 in 2014-15 to over 70,000, yet national **GER** stood at only **29.5%** in 2022-23.
- For many students, especially in second- and third-tier towns, the real barrier is not aspiration but the **cost** and **risk** of participation.
- Scholarships must become an embedded pathway into higher education because **access, affordability**, and academic quality must operate together.
- They can unlock widely distributed **talent** now constrained by distance, uncertainty, and weak confidence in the returns from **enrolment**.

What a scholarship ecosystem should do

- Scholarships are not just financial **support** tools; they can shape a student's academic life, **leadership** growth, and career direction.
- Current schemes show progress, including the **Central Sector Scheme** offering up to 82,000 scholarships annually, but their scale remains limited.
- Most scholarships still function as financial **plug-ins**, whereas the deeper need is to connect students with **community** and mentorship.
- The editorial argues that scholarships should sit at the intersection of **equity**, academic quality, and institutional **growth**.

Lessons from history and policy design

- India's **Takshashila** tradition showed that ability should not be denied for lack of **means**, and institutions must actively welcome talent.
- Scholarships can be redesigned as multi-year **commitments** instead of annual renewals, giving students greater academic **stability**.

- Region-focused **scholarships** can target under-served States and districts, while programme-linked **pathways** can support national and regional needs.
- Public policy can encourage this shift through tax-linked **endowments**, matching funds, and long-term **philanthropy**.

Institutional examples and final shift needed

- **Ashoka University** separates financial need from admission decisions, and about 20% students receive free education through **scholarships**.
- **ISB** has built a donor-supported scholarship ecosystem across categories, including armed forces and development-sector candidates, with 250 to 280 awards annually.

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Why scholarships matter for social justice and demographic dividend

- **Inter-generational mobility:** Scholarships weaken inherited disadvantage by helping first-generation learners, as seen in **post-matric** support for SC and ST students.
- **Gender inclusion:** Financial support improves girls' continuation into colleges, as seen in **AICTE Pragati** for women in technical education.
- **Social equity:** Scholarships widen access for SCs, STs, OBCs, minorities, and rural students through the **National Scholarship Portal**.
- **Regional balance:** Targeted support can help students from remote and lagging regions, as seen in the **Aspirational Districts Programme** focus on education.
- **Human capital formation:** Scholarships convert dispersed talent into skilled capacity, as seen in **DST INSPIRE**, which supports science students with mentorship.
- **Demographic dividend:** India's young population becomes productive only when capable students are not pushed out by cost, especially in **low-GER** regions.
- **Nation-building role:** A strong scholarship ecosystem broadens representation and mobility by linking students and institutions through the **NSP** architecture.

2. TIMELY INACTION

(GS Paper III - Economy)

This editorial ‘**Timely inaction**’ was published in **The Hindu** on 10th Apr 2026, highlights why the **RBI** was right to keep **interest rates** unchanged amid slowing growth and rising inflation.

Why unchanged rates were justified

- The **MPC** retained rates because the **repo rate** affects growth and inflation in opposite directions.
- A rate hike to curb **inflation** would have hurt **growth**, while a cut to boost growth could have worsened prices.
- The West Asia **war** has simultaneously raised **costs** and weakened economic momentum through supply disruptions.
- At this juncture, any rate change could have worsened conditions and further damaged **economic sentiment**.

Economic uncertainty and weak growth signals

- RBI Governor **Sanjay Malhotra** projected **GDP** growth at 6.9% for 2026-27, but the estimate may change sharply.
- Forecast uncertainty remains high because West Asia tensions persist and shipping firms still hesitate over the **Strait of Hormuz**.
- The RBI cut first-quarter **growth** projections by 0.1 percentage points, though even that may prove **optimistic**.
- The **World Bank** expects industrial growth to slow during this financial year.
- Both **consumer demand** and **government demand** are expected to weaken as spending tightens.

Why inflation did not warrant tightening

- The RBI expects **inflation** to accelerate to **4.6%**.
- Even so, the MPC did not raise rates because the inflationary pressure comes mainly from **supply** conditions, not **demand**.
- Higher rates would have slowed growth further without effectively addressing the main source of **price pressures**.

Conditions for future policy action

- Monetary action requires more clarity on the **war**, U.S. **tariff** investigations, and a possible El Nino impact on the monsoon.
- Until these factors play out, a **wait-and-watch** approach remains the most prudent **policy** response.

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Limits of monetary policy in tackling supply-side inflation

- **Structural limitation:** Monetary policy works best against demand-led inflation, but is less effective when prices rise from **monsoon** and global supply shocks.
- **War-linked disruption:** Rate hikes cannot directly resolve shipping bottlenecks or energy-price pressures, as seen in recent **Red Sea** and West Asia disruptions.
- **Growth-inflation trade-off:** Tightening rates during fragile growth can suppress investment and demand, especially for **MSMEs**, without easing supply-driven price pressures.
- **Policy mismatch:** When inflation comes from fuel, food, or logistics constraints, repo-rate changes may miss causes, as seen in **edible oil** and onion spikes.
- **Need for coordination:** Supply-side inflation needs fiscal, trade, buffer-stock, and administrative support, as seen in **onion export** curbs and stock management.
- **Targeted response:** Food and fuel shocks are often handled better through calibrated action, such as **stock limits** and fuel-tax adjustments, than broad tightening.
- **Macro lesson:** Central-bank credibility depends not on constant action, but on using the right instrument for the right **inflation** problem.

3. CBSE'S AI CURRICULUM - LOFTY GOALS, LITTLE CLARITY

(GS Paper I - Society, GS Paper III - Science and Technology)

This editorial 'CBSE's AI curriculum - lofty goals, little clarity' was published in **The Indian Express** on 10th Apr 2026, highlights mismatch between CBSE's proposed

AI curriculum and the conceptual, pedagogic, and contextual **readiness** needed in middle school education.

Stated objectives and core ambiguity

- The **CBSE** proposes **Computational Thinking** and AI literacy for Classes III to VIII from 2026-27.
- It aims to build logical thinking, problem-solving, pattern recognition, and understanding of **Artificial Intelligence** in **daily life**.
- The editorial questions whether the curriculum is primarily about **AI literacy** or about advancing **CT** goals.
- Schoolchildren already interact with AI tools and social media, making **safety** and **privacy** concerns educationally relevant.
- Yet the curriculum's larger promise remains unclear because its stated **objectives** exceed its visible **design**.

Age-inappropriate learning expectations

- For Classes VI to VIII, the curriculum introduces advanced **CT** and foundational **AI** with AI ethics.
- Class VI asks students to explain differences between machine and **human intelligence**, a concept requiring significant **maturity**.
- It also expects understanding of automation and AI through practical **real-world** cases at a very early **stage**.
- Differentiating supervised, unsupervised, and reinforcement **learning** is difficult even for many **undergraduates**.
- Class VII includes regression, classification, and clustering as key predictive **techniques**, though these are taught in undergraduate **Data Science**.
- Even if terms are simplified for 12-year-olds, the curriculum does not show how students will grasp them in actual **AI contexts**.
- Class VIII's "no-code tools" focus on real-world problems and utility, but does not address children's changing **perception** of **AI**.

Weak conceptual framing

- The syllabus barely engages with the concern that vulnerable children may see **AI** as all-knowing and **human-like**.
- Children may treat AI as a companion that answers and judges, but this behavioural **risk** is largely **ignored**.

- The connection drawn between **CT** and **AI** in the curriculum document is conceptually weak.
- The claim that **CT** is the underlying foundation for **AI** and **ML** is treated as insufficiently explained.
- Symbolic algorithmic thinking differs fundamentally from **neural-network** based **learning** systems.
- Existing research on school-level **AI education** is too limited to justify such broad **curricular** claims.

Implementation and systemic limits

- Computational thinking is already meant to be integrated into **Mathematics** for Classes III to **VIII**.
- Its extension across Science and Social Studies remains under review internationally, limiting confidence in wider **curricular integration**.
- India's deep **digital divide** leaves outreach efforts ill-prepared around both **AI** and digital tools.
- A system still struggling to move beyond rote learning may not sustain the proposed **information overload** from separate **CT-AI** insertion.

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Principles for age-appropriate and ethical AI education in schools

- **Foundational sequencing:** AI education should begin with digital literacy and online safety, as seen in **CBSE's Cyber Safety** guidance for schools.
- **Age appropriateness:** Curriculum design must match cognitive maturity, as seen in **NCF** stage-wise progression from simpler to deeper understanding.
- **Critical use:** The focus should be on questioning outputs and using tools responsibly, not only learning terms from **chatbots** and apps.
- **Ethical grounding:** Privacy, bias, misinformation, and manipulation should be central, as reflected in official **cyber safety** material for children.
- **Teacher preparedness:** No curriculum can succeed unless teachers are trained, as seen in **DIKSHA's** nationwide digital teacher-capacity architecture.
- **Equity concern:** AI education must account for India's digital divide, which **PM e-Vidya** was designed to bridge through multi-mode access.
- **Curricular balance:** AI should enrich learning without overload, especially when schools are already adapting to broader **NCF 2023** reforms.