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SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EDITORIALS

29th April 2026

TOPICS:-

- 1. A recusal test the Delhi High Court failed**
(GS Paper II Polity)
- 2. The RTE Act and the idea of social inclusion**
(GS Paper II Governance)
- 3. What we forget to teach our students**
(GS Paper I Society)

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1. A RECUSAL TEST THE DELHI HIGH COURT FAILED

(GS Paper II Polity)

This editorial 'A recusal test the Delhi High Court failed' was published in **The Hindu** on 29th Apr 2026, highlights how **judicial recusal standards** are essential to preserve impartiality, fairness and public confidence in courts.

Context and recusal dispute

- Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma refused to recuse from the **Delhi liquor** case despite Arvind Kejriwal alleging prior adverse findings and reasonable apprehension of bias.
- Kejriwal's plea cited the judge's alleged **ideological proximity**, attendance at ABAP events and family-linked professional association with the Centre's legal side.
- The editorial treats the refusal as a deviation from India's **recusal jurisprudence**, especially because politically sensitive cases require visible judicial neutrality.
- Since recusal law is **uncodified** in India, ethical conventions, judicial precedents and comparative standards remain central to protecting fairness.

Legal standards on judicial impartiality

- The **Bangalore Principles** require judges to avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in all judicial activities.
- In **Ranjit Thakur**, the Supreme Court held that recusal must be judged from the litigant's reasonable apprehension, not the judge's own view of bias.
- In **P.K. Ghosh and Davinder Pal Singh Bhullar**, the Court held that reasonable suspicion and appearance of bias can invalidate judicial action.
- In **Supreme Court AOR Association**, the Court asked whether the adjudication would create reasonable doubt in a fair-minded litigant and public.
- The editorial invokes Cardozo's warning on subjective perception to stress that no judge should decide matters involving one's **own cause**.

Process failure and institutional concern

- Justice Sharma should have either **recused herself** or placed the plea before another judge for objective evaluation of Kejriwal's allegations.
- The judgment wrongly framed recusal as **litigant preference** versus judicial duty, instead of applying the test of reasonable apprehension.
- Its comments on politicians' children entering law and the judge's event attendance appeared **self-defensive**, argumentative and accusational.
- The verdict substituted settled recusal law with a requirement to prove **actual bias**, making the standard stricter and legally erroneous.
- The outcome may become an embarrassing precedent for a **court system** already facing crisis over public trust and institutional confidence.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Institutionalising Recusal Through Transparent Judicial Rules

- **Codified standards:** Clear recusal rules, as seen in the Bangalore Principles, can reduce judge-specific discretion in politically sensitive conflict-of-interest cases.
- **Independent review:** Serious recusal pleas may go before another judge, avoiding the concern raised in Indore Development Authority about judges deciding their own recusal.
- **Disclosure norms:** Early disclosure of professional, familial or institutional links, as expected in U.S. federal practice, can help parties assess possible bias.
- **Reasoned orders:** Recusal decisions should explain reasonable apprehension clearly, as Ranjit Thakur made public perception central to bias assessment.
- **Case allocation:** Transparent roster practices matter after the 2018 Supreme Court judges' press conference raised concerns over allocation of sensitive cases.
- **Ethics training:** Judicial academies can integrate the Bangalore Principles, which stress independence, impartiality, integrity, propriety, equality and competence.
- **Public confidence:** Institutionalised recusal norms strengthen legitimacy by ensuring justice is not only done but visibly seen to be done, as stressed in *R v Sussex Justices*.

2. THE RTE ACT AND THE IDEA OF SOCIAL INCLUSION

(GS Paper II Governance)

This editorial 'The RTE Act and the idea of social inclusion' was published in **The Hindu** on 29th Apr 2026, highlights how **Section 12(1)(c) of the RTE Act** advances social inclusion through integrated schooling.

Constitutional vision of inclusive schooling

- The Supreme Court's January 2026 judgment reaffirmed **Section 12(1)(c)** as a constitutional strategy to make shared classrooms accessible to disadvantaged children.

- The provision reserves **25% seats** in private schools for economically weaker and socially disadvantaged students, linking education with equality of status.
- The Court framed inclusion through a powerful **social mobility** idea, where children from unequal backgrounds can study on the same bench.
- Stories such as **Prem's admission** show that the provision can alter family trajectories by opening access to academics, sports and peer networks.
- The editorial stresses that the real issue is not only where a child studies, but whether **birth circumstances** continue to define social boundaries.

Misreading of Section 12(1)(c)

- Critics mischaracterise **RTE inclusion** as promoting private schooling or allowing the state to outsource its constitutional duty to public education.
- The editorial argues that **public investment** remains essential, while private schools also participate in fulfilling the mandate of free and compulsory education.
- Section 12(1)(c) does not create a **zero-sum contest** between public and private schools, but seeks integrated learning spaces.
- Rising private enrolment predates the **RTE Act**, with ASER 2006 noting movement towards private schools due to concerns over infrastructure, teacher presence and quality.
- Falling government school admissions reflect deeper **systemic gaps**, not the inclusion mandate under Section 12(1)(c).

Evidence, benefits and implementation gaps

- Since rollout, over **five million children** have entered previously inaccessible schools, with retention rates averaging over 90%.
- In cities such as **Delhi and Ahmedabad**, blended classrooms are becoming more normal, showing that social integration can move beyond isolated exceptions.
- Research cited in the editorial finds **mixed classrooms** improve generosity, reduce discrimination and strengthen pro-social behaviour without harming academic outcomes.
- For disadvantaged children, these classrooms create **social capital** through aspirations, peer networks, confidence and wider institutional exposure.
- Implementation still faces **hidden costs**, delayed reimbursements, uneven state performance, grievance gaps, last-mile weaknesses and resistance by some private schools.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

From Access to Belonging in Inclusive Classrooms

- **Social integration:** RTE admission must move beyond seat allocation, as Delhi's EWS admissions show inclusion needs acceptance inside classroom spaces.
- **Anti-discrimination safeguards:** Schools need protocols against exclusion, as Right to Education rules prohibit discrimination, segregation and differential treatment of children.
- **Parental inclusion:** First-generation learner families need structured communication, as Kendriya Vidyalayas use parent-teacher meetings to bridge school-home gaps.
- **Bridge support:** Academic mentoring and language support, as seen in Navodaya Vidyalaya remedial classes, can make inclusion meaningful.
- **Hidden costs:** Uniforms, transport and books need support, as Delhi's reimbursement disputes show free admission can still become exclusionary.
- **Peer sensitisation:** Classroom activities should build empathy, as NCERT's inclusive education guidelines stress respect for diversity and cooperative learning.
- **Dignity metrics:** Section 12(1)(c) success should track belonging and confidence, as NEP 2020 links education with equity and dignity.

3. WHAT WE FORGET TO TEACH OUR STUDENTS

(GS Paper I Society)

This editorial 'What we forget to teach our students' was published in The Indian Express on 29th Apr 2026, highlights the need to teach emotional resilience, help-seeking and self-regulation alongside academic preparation.

Academic pressure and mental distress

- The article uses recent **NIT Kurukshetra** student suicides to question whether competitive systems prepare teenagers for emotional strain after admission.
- Students often survive intense preparation for **JEE** or IIT entry, but later struggle with relationship issues, academic pressure and personal setbacks.
- Campus support systems such as **TeleMANAS** and helplines exist, yet distress persists because students may not know how to seek help.
- The larger gap is not only institutional support, but the absence of training in **coping skills** before students enter demanding campuses.

Need for emotional regulation

- Distress is a **universal experience**, and the aim should be regulation rather than unrealistic elimination of pain or discomfort.
- For one student, distress may arise from academic self-doubt, while for another it may come from **income insecurity** or failed relationships.
- The goal is to keep distress within **tolerable limits**, so it does not consume a life that still has meaningful possibilities ahead.
- Students must be taught to speak when emotions become heavy and to practise **compassion** for themselves and others.

Life skills beyond achievement

- Years spent preparing for exams often create the **arrival fallacy**, where students assume happiness will automatically follow success.
- When setbacks arrive after major milestones, students may feel cheated because they were never taught that **difficulties continue** after achievement.
- Education must move from supply-driven support systems to **demand-driven** systems where students recognise needs and actively ask for help.
- Classrooms should teach uncertainty, graceful loss, shame-free help-seeking and self-compassion alongside conventional **problem-solving** skills.

BEYOND EDITORIAL

Embedding Socio-Emotional Learning in India's Education System

- **Curriculum reform:** Emotional regulation, failure management and help-seeking should enter regular learning, as NEP 2020 stresses socio-emotional development.
- **Teacher capacity:** Teachers need training to identify distress signals, as CBSE's counsellor guidelines require sensitive referral and student support.
- **Peer support:** Student-led support groups can reduce isolation, as IIT Madras's wellness programmes use peer volunteers for campus mental health.
- **Assessment pressure:** Schools must balance achievement with well-being, as NCERT's National Curriculum Framework 2023 discourages high-stakes exam pressure.
- **Early intervention:** Mental health education should begin early, as WHO's life-skills framework stresses coping, empathy and decision-making before crisis stages.
- **Parental role:** Families need sensitisation to reduce comparison pressure, as Manodarpan includes parent guidance for student well-being.
- **Campus culture:** Institutions must normalise conversations on failure, as UGC's student wellness guidelines stress counselling, mentoring and early support.