

EDITORIALS - 10TH OCT 2026

1. Delivery completed (GS Paper III Economy)

This editorial '**Delivery completed**' was published in **The Hindu** on 10th Oct 2026, highlights **GST reforms** aimed at simplifying **compliance**, reducing administrative **discretion** and strengthening taxpayer **trust**.

Shift in GST Administration

- The **57th GST Council meeting** signals greater **taxpayer trust** and reduced revenue anxiety, moving away from complex compliance and aggressive enforcement.
- Stable **gross collections** over 2 years, taxpayer familiarity after 9 years and earlier **slab rationalisation** created conditions for administrative reform.
- **Automation** of registration and refund verification, fewer small-business returns and reduced officer powers simplify processes from registration to litigation, limiting **human discretion**.
- **Enforcement** should follow demonstrable **non-compliance**, replacing the presumption of taxpayer guilt.

Relief for Businesses

- Denial of **input tax credit (ITC)** until suppliers file returns blocks genuine businesses' **working capital** despite taxes paid; a committee must devise a solution implementable by April 1.
- Removing officers' **arrest powers** and tightening **inspection, search and seizure** rules aim to reduce taxpayer harassment.
- **Faceless assessment** for **Central GST**-registered companies adopts the income-tax model to reduce direct administrative intervention.
- Annual **rate reviews**, with changes effective only at the start of **financial years**, reduce uncertainty associated with frequent Council meetings.

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Implications of GST reforms for fiscal federalism

- **Revenue autonomy:** Common GST rates constrain States' independent tax choices; alcoholic liquor for human consumption remains outside GST, preserving a separate State revenue source.
- **Fiscal stability:** Revenue protection supports State budgeting; the GST compensation framework guaranteed 14% annual growth over the 2015–16 revenue base for 5 years.
- **Unequal fiscal impact:** Compensation requirements vary across States; the pending June 2022 balances announced in February 2023 included ₹689 crore for Andhra Pradesh and ₹92 crore for Bihar.

- **Emergency support:** Revenue shocks require coordinated financing; compensation shortfalls prompted Centre-backed loans of ₹1.1 lakh crore in 2020–21 and ₹1.59 lakh crore in 2021–22.
- **Council representation:** Collective decision-making protects federal participation; States hold two-thirds of weighted GST Council votes, the Centre one-third, with a three-fourths majority required for approval.
- **Administrative coordination:** Shared administration needs clear jurisdiction; the Council's 2017 taxpayer-division guidelines sought a single interface through coordination between Central and State tax authorities.
- **Federal accountability:** Transparent settlement sustains trust; in February 2023, the Centre announced ₹16,982 crore from its own resources to clear provisionally admissible compensation for June 2022.

2. BRICS in a fragmented world order, a test of relevance (GS Paper II International Relations)

This editorial 'BRICS in a fragmented world order, a test of relevance' was published in **The Hindu** on 10th Oct 2026, highlights how **internal divisions** and **power imbalances** limit BRICS despite diplomatic consensus.

New Delhi Summit: Consensus and Priorities

- The **18th BRICS Summit**, held on September 12–13, 2026, unanimously adopted the **New Delhi Declaration**, reconciling 11 members' divergent positions under India's chairmanship.
- Economic proposals included **local-currency trade**, interoperable cross-border payments, the Economic Partnership Strategy 2030 and a **Global Value Chain Action Plan 2026–2030**.
- **Global governance reform** sought stronger developing-country representation in the United Nations and financial institutions; trade commitments defended the **World Trade Organization** and its two-tier dispute settlement mechanism.
- **West Asia** commitments supported de-escalation, humanitarian access in Gaza and Palestinian self-determination through an **international law**-based settlement.
- **Artificial intelligence** cooperation prioritised governance, computing access, research, skills and innovation for growth, public services and **sustainable development**; Modi sought 10 global governance reform proposals.
- Consensus reflected India's **strategic autonomy** and multi-alignment; UAE–Iran participation without mutual recrimination reinforced an approach centred on **dialogue** and dispute settlement.

Structural Limits to BRICS

- Since the first summit at Yekaterinburg in **2009**, shifting global alignments have favoured **variable geometry**, ad hoc cooperation and shared-interest coalitions over durable, value-based alliances.
- Foundational demands for **institutional reform**, including changes to the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and United Nations, remain unfulfilled; **South–South cooperation** has not sufficiently reduced Western financial dependence.
- Better trade opportunities have not produced an **integrated economic bloc** capable of challenging the **Bretton Woods institutions**, limiting BRICS’ capacity to advance a multipolar order.

China’s Dominance and Internal Tensions

- China’s **economic preponderance** has translated into disproportionate **political influence**, creating a serious imbalance among BRICS members.
- China’s great-power position raises doubts about its **Global South** identity and commitment to opposing **Western hegemony**, weakening the grouping’s shared political rationale.
- Despite diplomatic calm and no serious conflict since **Galwan in 2020**, uneasy **India–China relations** constrain BRICS’ cohesion and future effectiveness.

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Developmental utility of BRICS for India

- **Infrastructure financing:** The New Development Bank (NDB) provides additional project funding; it approved a \$260 million loan for Mumbai Metro Lines 2 and 7 in 2018.
- **Rural connectivity:** Development finance can improve access to services and markets; an independent evaluation found that NDB’s \$500 million Madhya Pradesh district-roads project achieved its goals overall.
- **Clean-energy investment:** BRICS-linked financing can support India’s energy transition; NDB extended a \$300 million loan to REC Limited for renewable-energy development.
- **Crisis financing:** Alternative multilateral lenders widen emergency funding options; NDB fully disbursed a \$1 billion loan to India in May 2020 to combat COVID-19.
- **Livelihood protection:** Cooperation can support recovery beyond infrastructure; a separate \$1 billion NDB programme financed India’s economic recovery through the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.
- **Space cooperation:** Shared satellite data can strengthen disaster management and environmental monitoring; BRICS space agencies signed a remote-sensing data-sharing agreement under India’s chairmanship in August 2021.
- **Business partnerships:** Institutional dialogue can help firms explore commercial opportunities; the BRICS Business Council brings entrepreneurs together through sector-specific working groups, although dialogue alone cannot guarantee investment.

3. India's 'WorldSkills' medals reflect patient investment (GS Paper III Economy)

This editorial 'India's 'WorldSkills' medals reflect patient investment' was published in **The Hindu** on 10th Oct 2026, highlights how **sustained investment** in **vocational training** has improved India's global **skills performance**.

India's WorldSkills Performance

- **WorldSkills**, held biennially, tests practical competence through international experts; over **1,400 participants** from about 70 countries and regions compete across traditional and advanced trades.
- India's **ranking** improved from 39th in 2011 to 19th in 2017, 13th in 2019 and 2024, and **10th in Shanghai, September 2026**, entering the top 10 for the first time.
- Its largest contingent, **70 competitors across 63 skills**, secured a record **26 awards**: 6 silver medals and 20 Medallions for Excellence, improving upon its previous best of bronze.
- Debut participation in **11 skills** yielded **3 silver medals**: Mohamed Salam in dental prosthetics, Kovid Gangrade in digital interactive media design and Saniya Joshi in retail sales.
- Other **silver medallists** were Smriti Nambiar in bakery, Parth Vohra in industrial design technology and Mehrunissa Begum in **logistics and freight forwarding**.

Talent Development Ecosystem

- **IndiaSkills** attracted over 3.65 lakh registrations across 63 skills; district, State and 5 regional competitions led to about 650 **national finalists**, from whom 70 representatives were selected.
- The ministry, National Skill Development Corporation, States and industry experts provided **coordinated training**; Kaif Khan's car-painting award followed workshop learning, Maruti Suzuki–Axta training and **international exposure** in Germany and Denmark.
- **Medallions for Excellence** recognised Md. Seraj in automobile technology, Pavan Bharati Suresha in additive manufacturing, Mallinath–Suhan Mascarenhas in Industry 4.0 and Abhishek Somanna Shigihalli–Vinay Muttayya Hiremath in **robot systems integration**.

Investment Priorities and Social Recognition

- **Skill-Ex**, deliberate investment in people, complements capital expenditure and operating expenditure by developing the **workforce** needed to keep infrastructure and industrial assets productive.
- The **Pradhan Mantri Skilling and Employability Transformation through Upgraded ITIs (PM-SETU)** scheme invests **₹60,000 crore** to upgrade 1,000 government Industrial Training Institutes into 200 hubs and 800 spokes, with industry-managed clusters.
- Employers must prioritise **skills investment** alongside asset creation and operations; public recognition of vocational achievements can give **skill-based careers** dignity comparable to academic pathways.

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Barriers to converting skills into employment

- **Insufficient suitable jobs:** Education cannot compensate for weak labour demand; the International Labour Organization–Institute for Human Development’s India Employment Report 2024 recorded 29.1% unemployment among young graduates in 2022.
- **Skill mismatch:** Qualifications may exceed available job requirements; the same report found nearly two-fifths of technically qualified youths working in occupations that did not match their qualifications.
- **Limited workplace exposure:** Classroom learning needs practical reinforcement; the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme-2 supports paid workplace training through government stipend contributions capped at ₹1,500 monthly per apprentice.
- **Weak wage returns:** Poor earnings can reduce training’s economic appeal; the employment report documented declining average real monthly earnings for regular salaried workers between 2012 and 2022.
- **Regional disparities:** Employment opportunities remain geographically uneven; the report found higher youth employment probabilities in India’s more economically dynamic northern, western and southern regions.
- **Gender barriers:** Unpaid responsibilities restrict time for employment; the Time Use Survey 2024 recorded 289 daily minutes of unpaid domestic work among female participants, compared with 88 among males.
- **Weak outcome tracking:** Certification alone cannot establish employment success; the government reported 43% placement among short-term-training-certified candidates through Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 3.0, while placement was delinked under version 4.0.