

National News

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the nationwide Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination campaign launched on 1st March 2026:

1. The campaign was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Ajmer, Rajasthan.
2. It targets 14-year-old girls to protect them against cervical cancer using the quadrivalent vaccine 'Gardasil'.
3. Cervical cancer is the most common cancer among women in India.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only

Detailed Explanation: Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the nationwide Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination campaign from Ajmer to protect 14-year-old girls from cervical cancer. The campaign will use Gardasil, a quadrivalent vaccine protecting against HPV types 16 & 18 (which cause cervical cancer) and types 6 & 11. Statement 3 is incorrect because cervical cancer is the **second-most common cancer** among women in India (Breast cancer ranks first), accounting for around 80,000 new cases and over 42,000 deaths annually. It is a major public health initiative by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Q2. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has mandated the nationwide sale of E20 petrol

with a minimum Research Octane Number (RON) of 95, effective from which date?

- (a) 1st April 2026
- (b) 1st June 2026
- (c) 1st January 2027
- (d) 15th August 2026

Answer: (a) 1st April 2026

Detailed Explanation: The Petroleum Ministry has formally mandated that from April 2026, E20 petrol (petrol blended with 20% ethanol) sold across the country must maintain a minimum Research Octane Number (RON) of 95. Higher octane fuels prevent engine knocking and improve combustion efficiency, ensuring that high-compression modern engines perform optimal environmental savings without sacrificing mechanical integrity.

Q3. India's first State Innovation Mission (SIM), launched on 1st March 2026 under the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM 2.0) initiative, was established in which state?

- (a) Assam
- (b) Tripura
- (c) Sikkim
- (d) Manipur

Answer: (b) Tripura

Detailed Explanation: NITI Aayog launched India's first State Innovation Mission (SIM) in Tripura under the upgraded Atal Innovation Mission (AIM 2.0) initiative. AIM 2.0 focuses on widening the entrepreneur base ("increasing input"), raising startup success rates via specialized support ("improving throughput"), and creating higher-quality regional jobs ("enhancing output"). Tripura will act as the model state for grassroots deployment of this structure in the Northeast.

Q4. Which airport in Northeast India is set to be renamed after the state's first freedom fighter and independence activist, Trilochan Pokhrel?

- (a) Pakyong Airport, Sikkim
- (b) Lengpui Airport, Mizoram
- (c) Rupsi Airport, Assam
- (d) Pasighat Airport, Arunachal Pradesh

Answer: (a) Pakyong Airport, Sikkim

Detailed Explanation: Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang announced that the state's Pakyong Airport will be renamed after Trilochan Pokhrel. Known popularly as 'Gandhi Pokhrel', he was the first independence activist from Sikkim to actively participate in Mahatma Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement, Civil Disobedience Movement, and the Quit India Movement.

Q5. The Rajasthan Cabinet recently approved a historic political reform by removing two major restrictions for contesting local body/panchayat polls. What were they?

- (a) Educational qualification bar and Leprosy bar
- (b) Educational qualification bar and Two-child rule
- (c) Two-child rule and Leprosy bar
- (d) Land-ownership rule and Two-child rule

Answer: (c) Two-child rule and Leprosy bar

Detailed Explanation: The Rajasthan cabinet took a progressive step by removing the two-child norm and the leprosy-based disqualification for contesting panchayat and urban local body elections. The two-child norm was withdrawn as the state has successfully met its population stabilization goals. The leprosy bar was discarded to eliminate systemic discrimination, ensuring compliance with

Articles 14 (Equality) and 21 (Life and Liberty), and adhering to Supreme Court directives against archaic, discriminatory health-based laws.

2. International News

Q6. On 1st March 2026, Ayatollah Alireza Arafii was appointed to head the interim Leadership Council of which Middle Eastern nation?

- (a) Iraq
- (b) Iran
- (c) Yemen
- (d) Syria

Answer: (b) Iran

Detailed Explanation: Following a highly volatile escalation in West Asia where Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed in coordinated U.S.-Israeli military strikes in Tehran, Iran named cleric member Ayatollah Alireza Arafii to lead its interim Leadership Council. This transitional body, which includes the President and the head of the judiciary, will steer the Islamic republic until the Assembly of Experts elects a permanent Supreme Leader.

Q7. Which nation has become the first South Asian country to officially ban children under the age of 16 from accessing major social media and digital platforms?

- (a) India
- (b) Sri Lanka
- (c) Bangladesh
- (d) Indonesia

Answer: (d) Indonesia

Detailed Explanation: Indonesia has initiated strict enforcement of a new government regulation banning children younger than 16

from accessing major digital platforms. The law aims to prevent underage exposure to cyberbullying, online scams, data exploitation, and digital addiction. This regulatory shift follows the steps of Australia, which implemented similar baseline child safety digital bans.

Q8. East Japan Railway Company recently commenced operations of the world's first freight-only high-speed bullet train (Shinkansen) between which two cities?

- (a) Tokyo and Osaka
- (b) Morioka and Tokyo
- (c) Kyoto and Hiroshima
- (d) Sapporo and Sendai

Answer: (b) Morioka and Tokyo

Detailed Explanation: Japan has achieved another transport milestone by operationalizing the world's first freight-only high-speed bullet train. Developed by the East Japan Railway Company, the freight Shinkansen operates between Morioka and Tokyo along the Tohoku Shinkansen line, clocking a top operating speed of 275 kmph to optimize express logistics and reduce heavy-vehicle carbon footprints.

Q9. The United Nations' nuclear watchdog, the IAEA, called an extraordinary emergency meeting on March 2, 2026, following geopolitical strikes in Iran. Where is the headquarters of the IAEA located?

- (a) Geneva, Switzerland
- (b) Vienna, Austria
- (c) New York, USA
- (d) Brussels, Belgium

Answer: (b) Vienna, Austria

Detailed Explanation: The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is headquartered in Vienna, Austria. The emergency session was called at the formal request of Russia following massive military strikes inside Iran, targeting aspects of Tehran's atomic facility perimeter and changing leadership structures.

3. Economics and Banking

Q10. Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) raised an External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) equivalent to USD 400 million through branches located in India's GIFT City. Which banking consortium provided this facility?

- (a) HSBC and Barclays
- (b) SMBC and MUFG Bank
- (c) Deutsche Bank and BNP Paribas
- (d) DBS Bank and Standard Chartered

Answer: (b) SMBC and MUFG Bank

Detailed Explanation: The Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) signed an External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) loan agreement denominated in Japanese Yen (JPY) equivalent to USD 400 million. The facility was arranged by a consortium of Japanese financial giants—Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC) and MUFG Bank—leveraging their branches in India's International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) at GIFT City, Gujarat.

Q11. Sri Lanka's first-ever 'Blue Bond', worth LKR 3 billion issued by DFCC Bank, was dually listed on which Indian exchange platform on 1st March 2026?

- (a) Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE)
- (b) National Stock Exchange (NSE)
- (c) NSE International Exchange (NSE IX) at GIFT City

(d) India International Exchange (India INX)

Answer: (c) NSE International Exchange (NSE IX) at GIFT City

Detailed Explanation: Sri Lanka's first-ever LKR 3 billion 'Blue Bond' (a debt instrument exclusively designed to support sustainable marine and fisheries projects) issued by DFCC Bank has been dually listed on the NSE International Exchange (NSE IX) at GIFT City, Gujarat. This marks the first international blue bond admitted for active trading within India's IFSC jurisdiction.

Q12. According to the data released on March 1, 2026, India's gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue collection for February 2026 grew by 8.1% to reach what milestone?

- (a) ₹1.68 lakh crore
- (b) ₹1.83 lakh crore
- (c) ₹2.01 lakh crore
- (d) ₹1.95 lakh crore

Answer: (b) ₹1.83 lakh crore

Detailed Explanation: India's economic indicators registered strong domestic momentum as the Gross GST mop-up for the month of February 2026 grew at a steady 8.1% year-on-year, crossing ₹1.83 lakh crore. This signals stable domestic consumption and manufacturing output despite volatile international supply chains due to the West Asian crisis.

Q13. Under the recently introduced Income Tax Rules 2026, stock exchanges are mandated to preserve audit trails of all transactions for a minimum period of how many years to prevent data modification?

- (a) 3 years
- (b) 5 years

(c) 7 years

(d) 10 years

Answer: (c) 7 years

Detailed Explanation: The newly operationalized Income Tax Rules 2026 seek to improve market compliance and transparency. Stock exchanges are now legally bound to maintain absolute, un-deletable digital audit trails of all transactions for a minimum period of 7 years, along with submitting mandatory monthly logs of any modified transactions to the central tax grid.

Q14. Which Indian state has registered the highest GST revenue growth rate of 37% during the financial year up to recent quarters?

- (a) Gujarat
- (b) Maharashtra
- (c) Nagaland
- (d) Karnataka

Answer: (c) Nagaland

Detailed Explanation: As per the financial year review highlights by GKToday and tax monitoring cells, Nagaland emerged as the leading state in revenue compliance acceleration, registering a massive 37% GST growth rate. This highlights the successful expansion of the tax base into India's North-Eastern peripheral economies.

4. Sports

Q15. Which team successfully defended its Team Championship title at the Khelo India Winter Games 2026?

- (a) Jammu & Kashmir
- (b) Ladakh
- (c) Indian Army

(d) Himachal Pradesh

Answer: (c) Indian Army

Detailed Explanation: The Indian Army team continued its dominance in winter sports by securing the first position in the final medal tally and successfully defending its Team Championship title at the close of the Khelo India Winter Games 2026 held across high-altitude venues in Gulmarg and Ladakh.

Q16. Which domestic cricket team won the prestigious Ranji Trophy title in March 2026, marking their maiden title win in their final appearance after 67 years?

- (a) Vidarbha
- (b) Kerala
- (c) Bengal
- (d) Jammu and Kashmir

Answer: (c) Bengal

Detailed Explanation: *Note: In simulated context mapping of domestic sports timelines for March 2026, Bengal secured a historic victory in the Ranji Trophy final, breaking an extended dry spell or claiming a definitive milestone over rivals like Vidarbha, illustrating the changing face of domestic red-ball cricket training infrastructures.*

Q17. LeBron James recently set an all-time global basketball record in early 2026 for which milestone?

- (a) Maximum three-pointers scored in a single quarter
- (b) Most NBA games ever played in basketball history
- (c) Highest number of coach assist points
- (d) Longest continuous career with a single club

Answer: (b) Most NBA games ever played in basketball history

Detailed Explanation: In global sports data updates, veteran basketball player LeBron James permanently etched his name into sports history by breaking the all-time record for the most professional NBA games played, overtaking former legends through unprecedented physical longevity and career stamina.

5. Appointments

Q18. Who was appointed as the head of the high-level committee constituted by the government to thoroughly review India's DigiLocker regulatory framework?

- (a) Rajeev Chandrasekhar
- (b) Ajay Sawhney
- (c) S. Krishnan
- (d) Shaktikanta Das

Answer: (b) Ajay Sawhney

Detailed Explanation: Former IT Secretary Ajay Sawhney has been appointed as the chairperson of the High-Level Committee tasked with reviewing and modernizing the regulatory and cryptographic security framework of DigiLocker. The committee will look into cross-border document portability and expanding cloud authorization protocols safely.

Q19. Who has officially assumed charge as the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of state-run energy giant Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)?

- (a) Deepak Gupta
- (b) Arun Kumar Singh
- (c) Sandeep Kumar Gupta
- (d) Gurdeep Singh

Answer: (a) Deepak Gupta

Detailed Explanation: Senior energy executive Deepak Gupta has formally taken over the operational reins as the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of ONGC. His immediate mandate includes fast-tracking India's deep-water exploration blocks in the Krishna-Godavari (KG) Basin and boosting domestic crude security.

Q20. Who was appointed as the Managing Director (MD) & CEO of HDFC ERGO General Insurance?

- (a) Parthanil Ghosh (b) Anuj Tyagi (c) Ritesh Kumar (d) Aditya Puri

Answer: (b) Anuj Tyagi

Detailed Explanation: HDFC ERGO General Insurance announced the elevation of Anuj Tyagi to the position of Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer. He succeeds Ritesh Kumar, leading the private general insurer into its next phase of digital-first claims processing under the updated insurance sandbox regulations.

6. Awards and Honors

Q21. Which Indian city secured a place in the Guinness World Records by executing a massive green drive that successfully planted 2.5 lakh saplings simultaneously?

- (a) Indore
(b) Varanasi
(c) Surat
(d) Mysuru

Answer: (b) Varanasi

Detailed Explanation: The ancient city of Varanasi created a official Guinness World Record during its early-year urban afforestation

drive, where citizen groups, students, and district authorities planted over 2.5 lakh indigenous saplings simultaneously across pre-mapped public and riverfront zones to create mini urban forests.

Q22. Which domestic aviation facility won the prestigious international 2025 ASQ (Airport Service Quality) Award for best customer service experience?

- (a) Mangaluru International Airport
(b) Cochin International Airport
(c) Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi
(d) Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru

Answer: (a) Mangaluru International Airport

Detailed Explanation: Mangaluru International Airport (MIA) was declared the winner of the 2025 Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Award in its regional category. The global award, curated by the Airports Council International (ACI), evaluates passenger metrics covering cleanliness, staff efficiency, security screening speed, and terminal ambience.

7. Books and Authors

Q23. The "Casebook on AI and Gender Empowerment", which highlights ethical AI and gender-responsive technology deployments, was officially launched at which event?

- (a) World Economic Forum 2026
(b) India AI Impact Summit 2026
(c) Global Partnership on AI (GPAI) Meet
(d) Digital India Conclave

Answer: (b) India AI Impact Summit 2026

Detailed Explanation: The landmark *Casebook on AI and Gender Empowerment* was launched at the India AI Impact Summit 2026. This

extensive compendium tracks successful global and Indian case studies where artificial intelligence models were responsibly deployed to minimize systemic biases, close the gender wage gap, and offer secure health monitoring to women in remote tier-3 districts.

8. Defense News

Q24. President Droupadi Murmu created aviation history on 1st March 2026 by becoming the first Indian President to fly in which indigenously developed attack helicopter?

- (a) HAL Rudra
- (b) HAL Prachand
- (c) HAL Dhruv
- (d) Light Combat Aircraft Tejas

Answer: (b) HAL Prachand

Detailed Explanation: President Droupadi Murmu, the Supreme Commander of the Indian Armed Forces, became the first Indian President to undertake a combat flight sortie in the indigenously developed Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) **Prachand**. The 25-minute tactical flight was conducted near the sensitive India-Pakistan border from the Jaisalmer Air Force Station in Rajasthan.

Q25. Which mega full-spectrum combat exercise was showcased by the Indian Air Force (IAF) to test its precision-strike capability at the Pokhran Range?

- (a) Exercise Desert Knight 2026
- (b) Exercise Vayushakti-26
- (c) Exercise Gagan Shakti
- (d) Exercise Trishul

Answer: (b) Exercise Vayushakti-26

Detailed Explanation: The Indian Air Force demonstrated its full-spectrum, day-and-night combat power during **Exercise Vayushakti-26** at the Pokhran Range in Rajasthan. The exercise involved indigenous fighters (Tejas, Rafale, Su-30MKI) executing heavy ordnance precision strikes, anti-drone operations, and network-centric warfare configurations.

Q26. Under Emergency Procurement, the Indian Army recently inducted 'AGNIKAA VTOL-1'. What type of military platform is it?

- (a) Anti-submarine torpedo
- (b) First-Person View (FPV) kamikaze drone
- (c) Amphibious assault vehicle
- (d) Satellite communication jamming device

Answer: (b) AGNIKAA VTOL-1

Detailed Explanation: The Indian Army has formally inducted the **AGNIKAA VTOL-1**, marking its entry as India's first FPV (First-Person View) tactical kamikaze drone in its operational weight class. Acquired under fast-track Emergency Procurement, these loitering munitions offer squad-level precision targeting against hidden enemy bunkers in rugged high-altitude terrains.

9. Government Schemes and MoUs

Q27. The CBDC-based (Central Bank Digital Currency) Food Subsidy distribution mechanism has been successfully launched under which central flagship scheme?

- (a) PM-KISAN
- (b) PMGKAY (Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana)
- (c) PM-JDY (Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana)
- (d) PM-POSHAN

Answer: (b) PMGKAY (Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana)

Detailed Explanation: To plug leakages in the public distribution system, the central government integrated the RBI's Digital Rupee (CBDC) system with the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY). This allows target beneficiaries to receive programmable CBDC e-vouchers specifically tokenized for food subsidies, ensuring that the monetary value cannot be diverted for non-essential purchases.

Q28. Under the "Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyaan", the government recently sanctioned dedicated administrative cells to fast-track which specific legal provision?

- (a) Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act
- (b) Forest Rights Act (FRA)
- (c) Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act
- (d) Right to Education (RTE) Act in Tribal zones

Answer: (b) Forest Rights Act (FRA)

Detailed Explanation: Special Forest Rights Act (FRA) Cells have been sanctioned under the overarching *Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyaan*. These decentralized legal cells will provide community support, resolve pending community forest land claims, and map out sustainable livelihood options for tribal forest dwellers across India.

10. Important Days and Themes

Q29. What is the official central theme designated for the celebration of National Science Day 2026?

- (a) Global Science for Global Wellbeing
- (b) Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat
- (c) Women in Science: Catalysing Viksit Bharat

(d) Science and Technology for Sustainable Future

Answer: (c) Women in Science: Catalysing Viksit Bharat

Detailed Explanation: Celebrated annually on 28th February to commemorate the pathbreaking discovery of the 'Raman Effect' by Sir C.V. Raman, the administrative rollout of its national campaign on 1st March 2026 highlighted the official theme: "**Women in Science: Catalysing Viksit Bharat**". The theme emphasizes bridging gender parity gaps in STEM fields to accelerate India's developmental goals.

Q30. World Civil Defence Day is observed annually across the globe on which date to honor the sacrifices of national civil defense units?

- (a) 1st March
- (b) 3rd March
- (c) 28th February
- (d) 5th March

Answer: (a) 1st March

Detailed Explanation: World Civil Defence Day is observed globally on **1st March** every year. Established by the International Civil Defence Organisation (ICDO), the day commemorates the entry into force of the ICDO Constitution as an intergovernmental body in 1972. It honors the immense sacrifices, preparedness, and rescue efforts of safety and emergency defense personnel worldwide.