

Part 1: International News & Bilateral Relations

Q1. India recently relaxed its Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) norms to permit a minority stake of up to what percentage from China-based entities without prior government approval in specific non-controlling sectors like electronics and solar manufacturing?

- A) 5%
- B) 10%
- C) 15%
- D) 25%

Correct Answer: B) 10%

Detailed Explanation: In a significant policy shift aimed at boosting the domestic manufacturing ecosystem, the Government of India has relaxed its FDI guidelines. It now permits up to a **10% Chinese minority stake** through the automatic route, provided it is a non-controlling stake. This is designed to ease supply chain bottlenecks in high-growth manufacturing sectors like electronics, semiconductors, and solar components. However, full government approval remains mandatory for any controlling stakes or direct investments by Chinese state-backed corporations. A new fast-track 60-day approval system has also been introduced to handle cases that fall outside the automatic route.

Q2. Senior diplomats, agribusiness leaders, and policymakers from over ten nations formally convened in New Delhi to launch which institutional platform aimed at strengthening South-South trade, investment, and technology transfer?

- A) Global South Agri Conclave (GSAC)
- B) Asia Africa Agri Alliance (AAAA)

- C) Indo-African Food Security Forum (IAFSF)
- D) Afro-Asian Sustainable Farming Initiative (AASFI)

Correct Answer: B) Asia Africa Agri Alliance (AAAA)

Detailed Explanation: The **Asia Africa Agri Alliance (AAAA)** was formally launched as a **Section 8 not-for-profit organisation** in New Delhi. The primary objective of this multinational coalition is to build a modern commercial pipeline between the agricultural sectors of Asia and Africa. It emphasizes technology transfer (such as crop genetics, smart irrigation, and climate-resilient farming techniques), joint ventures, and seamless cross-border commodity trade to bolster food security and supply chain independence across both continents.

Q3. In March 2026, several major Gulf energy producers declared 'force majeure' on certain oil and gas shipments. In the context of international trade and contract law, what does the legal term 'force majeure' mean?

- A) A unilateral modification of pricing due to currency fluctuations
- B) A government-mandated financial penalty on defaulting buyers
- C) A legal clause allowing the suspension of obligations due to unpredictable events beyond the parties' control
- D) An emergency cross-border trade tariff applied during peacetime

Correct Answer: C) A legal clause allowing the suspension of obligations due to unpredictable events beyond the parties' control

Detailed Explanation: *Force Majeure* (literally meaning "greater force") is a standard legal clause embedded within commercial contracts.

It frees both parties from liability or obligation when an extraordinary, unforeseeable event occurs—such as war, strikes, riots, crimes, or natural disasters—preventing them from fulfilling their obligations. The term entered the news because regional escalating tensions and shipping chokepoint disruptions forced international oil conglomerates to declare force majeure on multi-million dollar shipping agreements.

Q4. Which international organization's report on global religious freedom was officially rejected by India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) as a biased document based on selective narratives?

- A) Amnesty International
- B) Human Rights Watch (HRW)
- C) United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)
- D) European Parliament Intergroup on FoRB

Correct Answer: C) United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)

Detailed Explanation: India's Ministry of External Affairs officially rejected the latest country report released by the USCIRF. The MEA categorized the commission as an organization driven by selective narratives with a fundamental misrepresentation of India's constitutional and statutory protections. India has maintained a consistent foreign policy posture of rejecting the locus standi of external bodies passing unilateral judgments on domestic legislative matters.

Part 2: National News, Polity & Governance

Q5. In a landmark judgment addressing gender equality and reproductive autonomy under Article 21, the Supreme Court of India ruled that

which category of mothers is entitled to 12 weeks of paid maternity leave, completely stripping away the restrictive "under 3 months old" age rider?

- A) Surrogate Commissioning Mothers
- B) Adoptive Mothers
- C) Single Biological Mothers
- D) Daily Wage Unorganized Sector Workers

Correct Answer: B) Adoptive Mothers

Detailed Explanation: Under the older provisions of the Maternity Benefit Act of 1961, adoptive mothers were only granted 12 weeks of paid maternity leave if they legally adopted an infant younger than 3 months old. Recognizing that structural delays within the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) make adopting a child under 3 months nearly impossible, the Supreme Court struck down this age cap. The apex court ruled that **all adoptive mothers are legally entitled to 12 weeks of paid leave, irrespective of the child's age.** The court declared that maternal bonding and child development are core facets of a woman's right to dignity and reproductive autonomy under **Article 21** of the Constitution.

Q6. The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) functions as a statutory body under which Union Ministry of the Government of India?

- A) Ministry of Law and Justice
- B) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- C) Ministry of Women and Child Development
- D) Ministry of Home Affairs

Correct Answer: C) Ministry of Women and Child Development

Detailed Explanation: CARA is a autonomous statutory body operating under the **Ministry of**

Women and Child Development. It acts as the nodal agency for the adoption of Indian children and is mandated to monitor and regulate both in-country and inter-country adoptions. CARA is also the designated central authority to handle affairs under the Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption, 1993, which India ratified in 2003.

Q7. The Lok Sabha recently passed Supplementary Demands for Grants for the financial year 2025–26, which included allocations for the newly formed Economic Stabilisation Fund (ESF). Supplementary Demands for Grants are constitutional instruments enabled under which Article?

- A) Article 110
- B) Article 112
- C) Article 114
- D) Article 115

Correct Answer: C) Article 115

Detailed Explanation: Article 115 of the Indian Constitution governs Supplementary, Additional, or Excess Grants. When the money authorized by Parliament through the Appropriation Act for a specific service in the Union Budget is found to be insufficient for the current financial year, the executive presents Supplementary Demands for Grants. Article 112 relates to the Annual Financial Statement (Budget) itself, while Article 110 defines Money Bills.

Q8. The Government of India formally withdrew the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025 from Parliament. What was the explicit legislative objective behind withdrawing this bill?

- A) To completely abandon the decriminalization of commercial offenses

B) To introduce key modifications and improvements based on parliamentary panel feedback

C) To merge it with the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)

D) Due to an absolute lack of majority in the upper house

Correct Answer: B) To introduce key modifications and improvements based on parliamentary panel feedback

Detailed Explanation: The Jan Vishwas Bill was originally conceptualized to advance the Ease of Doing Business framework by decriminalizing minor procedural lapses, turning minor imprisonment offenses into monetary penalties across dozens of central laws. The executive withdrew the 2025 version to integrate constructive legislative adjustments, broaden its scope, and present a more legally watertight draft in the subsequent parliamentary session.

Part 3: Economics, Banking & Finance

Q9. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was awarded the international "Initiative of the Year 2026" accolade by *Central Banking*. For which structural cybersecurity initiative did the RBI secure this recognition?

A) Launch of conversational payment features via 'Hello UPI'

B) Mandatory roll-out of the highly secure ".bank.in" top-level domain

C) Commercial deployment of offline Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC)

D) Architecture of the unified cardless cash withdrawal network

Correct Answer: B) Mandatory roll-out of the highly secure ".bank.in" top-level domain



Detailed Explanation: The RBI achieved international recognition by winning the 'Initiative of the Year 2026' award from the global journal *Central Banking*. The award highlights India's step to mandate a dedicated, authenticated cryptographic domain extension—.bank.in—for all commercial banking institutions. Developed alongside the National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) and the IDRBT, this system ensures that consumers can instantly verify the legitimacy of a digital portal, mitigating phishing, spoofing, and online identity theft.

Q10. As per the revised commercial lending guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India, what is the maximum permissible cap on bank financing for corporate acquisitions?

- A) 50% of the total transaction value
- B) 60% of the total transaction value
- C) 75% of the total transaction value
- D) 90% of the total transaction value

Correct Answer: C) 75% of the total transaction value

Detailed Explanation: In its updated prudential framework for asset-liability management, the RBI capped the quantum of direct bank loans allowed for corporate acquisitions at **75% of the transaction value**. This measure forces corporate buyers to bring a minimum of 25% equity contribution to the table, shielding the domestic banking sector from over-leveraged corporate takeovers and keeping non-performing assets (NPAs) in check.

Q11. Which international credit rating agency, in its latest "Global Economic Outlook – March 2026" report, upwardly revised India's projected Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth forecast for FY26 to 7.5%?

- A) S&P Global Ratings

B) Moody's Ratings

C) Fitch Ratings

D) S&P Crisp Ratings

Correct Answer: C) Fitch Ratings

Detailed Explanation: In its Global Economic Outlook report released in March 2026, **Fitch Ratings** raised India's real GDP growth projection for the fiscal year 2025–26 (FY26) from 7.4% to **7.5%**. Fitch credited this revision to sustained domestic consumer demand, strong capital expenditure (Capex) investments by the central government, and buoyant core infrastructure indicators.

Q12. According to the comprehensive "State of Working India 2026" report published by Azim Premji University, what percentage of unemployed youth in the 20–29 years age bracket held a graduate degree in 2023?

- A) 32%
- B) 45%
- C) 67%
- D) 81%

Correct Answer: C) 67%

Detailed Explanation: The "State of Working India 2026" report highlights a structural mismatch in the domestic labor market, revealing that **67%** of unemployed individuals between 20 to 29 years of age were university graduates. This data points to a high rate of educated unemployment, emphasizing the urgent need for vocational upskilling, industry-aligned curricula, and job creation in high-value service and manufacturing sectors.

Q13. A recent policy paper released by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) reveals that what percentage of India's aggregate fertilizer value

chain is currently dependent on imports, leaving it exposed to global geopolitical shocks?

- A) 45.2%
- B) 55.0%
- C) 68.6%
- D) 82.4%

Correct Answer: C) 68.6%

Detailed Explanation: The ICRIER analytical brief warns that 68.6% of India's critical fertilizer supply chain depends on international imports. With ongoing geopolitical instability in West Asia and shipping delays through maritime chokepoints like the Strait of Hormuz, the report recommends urgent structural reforms, such as expanding domestic nano-urea production and bringing urea under the Nutrient-Based Subsidy (NBS) regime.

Part 4: Environment, Science & Technology

Q14. India submitted its first interim National Report (NR1) covering 2017–2025 to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). This report showcases India's leadership under which international treaty that governs Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) of genetic resources?

- A) Cartagena Protocol
- B) Nagoya Protocol
- C) Kyoto Protocol
- D) Montreal Protocol

Correct Answer: B) Nagoya Protocol

Detailed Explanation: Prepared by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) alongside the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), the report highlights that India has issued over 60% of the world's Internationally Recognized Certificates of

Compliance (IRCC). This demonstrates India's robust legal framework under the Nagoya Protocol, which ensures that indigenous and local communities receive fair commercial royalties when external corporations utilize local biological materials and traditional ecological knowledge.

Q15. Scientists at the CSIR-National Chemical Laboratory (NCL), Pune, have successfully tested which chemical compound as a clean, sustainable, and eco-friendly blending alternative to domestic Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)?

- A) Methanol
- B) Dimethyl Ether (DME)
- C) Compressed Biogas (CBG)
- D) Liquefied Hydrogen

Correct Answer: B) Dimethyl Ether (DME)

Detailed Explanation: In a breakthrough for India's clean energy transition, researchers at CSIR-NCL Pune developed an indigenous catalyst to process Dimethyl Ether (DME). DME is a clean-burning fuel that generates near-zero particulate soot emissions. NCL's tests confirmed that DME can be safely blended up to 8% into conventional domestic LPG cylinders without requiring any structural modifications to existing infrastructure, pipelines, or kitchen burners.

Q16. Researchers from Gauhati University have discovered a new flowering plant species featuring distinct purple-pink blossoms in Manas National Park. They named it *Osbeckia zubeenii* after which famous personality?

- A) Dr. Bhupen Hazarika
- B) Zubeen Garg
- C) Jadav Payeng

D) Himanta Biswa Sarma

Correct Answer: B) Zubeen Garg

Detailed Explanation: A team of botanists from Gauhati University identified this new plant species belonging to the genus *Osbeckia* within the diverse ecosystem of Manas National Park in Assam. The species was named *Osbeckia zubeenii* in honor of Assam's iconic singer, composer, and actor Zubeen Garg, recognizing his ongoing advocacy for environmental conservation and cultural preservation in Northeast India.

Part 5: Defense News & Security

Q17. The Indian Navy deployed its long-range maritime reconnaissance and anti-submarine warfare aircraft, the P-8I Poseidon, to participate in the multinational "Exercise Sea Dragon 2026." Which country hosted this exercise?

- A) Japan
- B) Australia
- C) United States
- D) France

Correct Answer: C) United States

Detailed Explanation: Exercise Sea Dragon 2026 is a premier, multinational Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) training exercise hosted annually by the **United States Navy**. The 2026 edition was held at the strategic **Andersen Air Force Base in Guam** in the Western Pacific. The exercise brought together aircrews and naval assets from India, the US, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand to practice tracking underwater threats and improve tactical interoperability in the Indo-Pacific.

Q18. The Department of Defence Production under the Ministry of Defence is organizing the "National Defence Industries Conclave (NDIC)

2026" on March 19–20. Which city is hosting this defense ecosystem summit?

- A) Bengaluru
- B) Hyderabad
- C) New Delhi
- D) Gandhinagar

Correct Answer: C) New Delhi

Detailed Explanation: The **NDIC 2026** is being hosted in **New Delhi** to bring together defense MSMEs, indigenous startups, policymakers, and military leaders. The conclave focuses on integrating emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), robotics, 3D printing, and digital twins into India's domestic defense manufacturing ecosystem, advancing the goal of *Aatmanirbharta* (self-reliance) in national security hardware.

Part 6: Appointments & Mergers

Q19. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has cleared the appointment of Kompella Venkata Ramana Murthy (K.V. Ramana Murthy) to which regulatory post for a fixed tenure of 3 years?

- A) Managing Director of National Stock Exchange (NSE)
- B) Whole-Time Member (WTM) of SEBI
- C) Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India
- D) Chairperson of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI)

Correct Answer: B) Whole-Time Member (WTM) of SEBI

Explanation: The ACC officially appointed K.V. Ramana Murthy as a Whole-Time Member of the **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** for a 3-year term. With this addition, SEBI's apex board comprises 9 members—including the



Chairperson, senior institutional representatives from the Union Finance Ministry, and a nominee from the RBI—who collectively regulate India's capital markets.

Q20. Global apparel major UNIQLO India has officially announced the appointment of which prominent Indian sports personality as its newest corporate brand ambassador for its daily 'LifeWear' campaign?

- A) Rohit Sharma
- B) Jasprit Bumrah
- C) Neeraj Chopra
- D) PV Sindhu

Correct Answer: B) Jasprit Bumrah

Detailed Explanation: Japanese global retailer UNIQLO signed Indian premier fast bowler **Jasprit Bumrah** as its brand ambassador in India. Bumrah will lead promotional campaigns highlighting the brand's 'LifeWear' philosophy, which focuses on simplicity, functionality, and comfort in daily clothing.

Part 7: Awards, Honors & Sports

Q21. Which Indian animated short film won the prestigious "Best Director Award" (Winter 2026) at the New York Short Animation Festival (NYSAF)?

- A) Schirkoa
- B) CHYIMI
- C) Tokri
- D) Wade

Correct Answer: B) CHYIMI

Detailed Explanation: The Indian animated short film "**CHYIMI**" won the Best Director Award at the **New York Short Animation Festival (NYSAF)**, a premier global platform that

honors original craftsmanship in animation. This international recognition highlights the growing capabilities of India's domestic animation, VFX, and original content creators.

Q22. Renowned Indian mountaineer Arpita Patra successfully climbed "Nevado Ojos del Salado," the world's highest active volcano. In which mountain range is this peak located?

- A) The Rockies
- B) The Alps
- C) The Andes
- D) The Atlas Mountains

Correct Answer: C) The Andes

Detailed Explanation: Arpita Patra successfully summited **Nevado Ojos del Salado**, which stands at **6,893 meters (22,615 feet)** along the international border between Chile and Argentina. Located in the **Andes Mountain Range**, it is recognized as the highest active volcano on Earth and the second-highest mountain peak in the Western Hemisphere, after Mount Aconcagua.

Q23. Who among the following cricket icons was conferred with the Board of Control for Cricket in India's (BCCI) highest honor, the Colonel (Col.) C. K. Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award, during the recent BCCI Awards ceremony?

- A) Sachin Tendulkar & Sourav Ganguly
- B) Roger Binny & Rahul Dravid
- C) Mithali Raj & Jhulan Goswami
- D) Sunil Gavaskar & Kapil Dev

Correct Answer: B) Roger Binny & Rahul Dravid

Detailed Explanation: The BCCI honored former Indian captain and head coach **Rahul Dravid** alongside current BCCI President **Roger Binny**

with the **Col. C. K. Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award** for their career contributions to Indian cricket. Concurrently, legendary former captain **Mithali Raj** was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award (Women) for her trailblazing contributions to the women's game.

Part 8: Government Schemes & MoUs

Q24. The World Bank, the Government of India, and the State Government of Uttar Pradesh signed a \$299.66 million loan agreement to fund which sustainable regional development program?

- A) Uttar Pradesh Solar Energy Grid Expansion Project
- B) Uttar Pradesh Clean Air Management Program (UP-CAMP)
- C) Purvanchal Ground Water Rejuvenation Mission
- D) Bundelkhand Organic Agriculture Corridor

Correct Answer: B) Uttar Pradesh Clean Air Management Program (UP-CAMP)

Detailed Explanation: This \$299.66 million agreement aims to improve air quality across Uttar Pradesh. The program focuses on transitioning over 700 traditional brick kilns to cleaner technologies, expanding electric public transport (buses and 3-wheelers), helping 3.9 million rural households shift to clean cooking solutions, and supporting agricultural practices that curb crop residue burning.

Q25. In March 2026, the Union Government approved the setting up of a dedicated Special Economic Zone (SEZ) for the Information Technology (IT) sector, spanning 21.30 acres of land, in which Union Territory?

- A) Ladakh

- B) Puducherry
- C) Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- D) Jammu and Kashmir

Correct Answer: B) Puducherry

Detailed Explanation: The Government of India approved a ₹1,250 crore IT Special Economic Zone (SEZ) near Thattanchavady in Puducherry. This 21.30-acre eco-friendly project will feature "Plug-and-Play" office infrastructure, smart waste management, and sustainable green buildings. It is projected to create 30,000 jobs and drive IT service exports over the next decade.

Q26. Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh announced the sanction of an Integrated Aqua Park project worth ₹100 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY). Where is this park being built?

- A) Kochi, Kerala
- B) Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh
- C) Jammu and Kashmir
- D) Puri, Odisha

Correct Answer: C) Jammu and Kashmir

Detailed Explanation: The Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying sanctioned a ₹100 crore Integrated Aqua Park for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Funded via the PMMSY, this project is designed to scale up cold-water fisheries, introduce modern hatcheries, create job opportunities for local youth, and support regional aquaculture startups.

Q27. The India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched a specialized capacity-building program at Hotel Samrat, New Delhi. Which

segment of entrepreneurs does this initiative target?

- A) Tribal Handicrafts Exporters
- B) Tribal Homestay Owners
- C) Indigenous Herbal Medicine Manufacturers
- D) Forest Produce Logistics Operators

Correct Answer: B) Tribal Homestay Owners

Detailed Explanation: This collaborative program is designed to train **tribal homestay owners** in hospitality, digital marketing, hygiene, and hospitality management. The goal is to promote sustainable eco-tourism in tribal regions, allowing travelers to experience indigenous culture while creating direct livelihoods for tribal communities.

Q28. Which state government launched the "Gaudham Yojana" in March 2026 to manage stray and abandoned cattle by establishing 1,460 animal shelters across its development blocks?

- A) Madhya Pradesh
- B) Chhattisgarh
- C) Uttar Pradesh
- D) Rajasthan

Correct Answer: B) Chhattisgarh

Detailed Explanation: Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai launched the **Gaudham Yojana** from Bilaspur. The scheme mandates the construction of **1,460 specialized cattle shelters (Gaudhams)** across the state—averaging roughly 10 shelters per development block. The initiative focuses on the care of abandoned cattle, public safety on highways, and the commercial production of organic bio-fertilizers from cattle waste.

Part 9: Important Days, Books & Obituaries

Q29. Global Recycling Day is observed annually on March 18. What is the central message promoted by environmental organizations regarding the materials we recycle on this day?

- A) They represent the primary driver of marine microplastics
- B) They should be recognized as the planet's 'Seventh Resource'
- C) They must be processed exclusively via commercial incineration
- D) They should replace organic agricultural fertilizers by 2030

Correct Answer: B) They should be recognized as the planet's 'Seventh Resource'

Detailed Explanation: Observed globally on **March 18**, Global Recycling Day aims to raise awareness about the importance of recycling in a circular economy. The day promotes the concept that recycled materials constitute the world's **'Seventh Resource'**, joining the planet's six primary natural resources: Water, Air, Oil, Natural Gas, Coal, and Minerals.

Q30. Kandiyoor Narayana Panikkar (K. N. Panikkar), who passed away recently, was a highly acclaimed Indian scholar who made major contributions to which field?

- A) Nuclear Physics & Quantum Mechanics
- B) Modern Indian History & Historiography
- C) Classical Carnatic Music Composition
- D) Constitutional Law & Jurisprudence

Correct Answer: B) Modern Indian History & Historiography