

Part 1: National Polity & Governance

Q1. To address rising case pendency, the Union Government promulgated the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Ordinance, 2026. What is the newly sanctioned strength of the Supreme Court including the Chief Justice of India (CJI)?

- (a) 34
- (b) 36
- (c) 38
- (d) 40

Answer: (c) 38

Explanation: On May 18, 2026, the President of India promulgated the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Ordinance, 2026, which increases the sanctioned judicial strength from 34 to 38 judges (including the CJI).

- Under Article 124(1) of the Constitution, Parliament is empowered to prescribe the number of judges.
- As Parliament was not in session, the executive route via Article 123 was utilized to fast-track appointments and clear a massive backlog of pending cases.

Q2. During a prominent judicial review on May 18, 2026, the Supreme Court reiterated that "Bail is the rule, jail is an exception," clarifying that this legal doctrine holds true even under which stringent anti-terror law?

- (a) National Security Act (NSA)
- (b) Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)
- (c) Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act (COFEPOSA)

- (d) Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)

Answer: (b) Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)

Explanation: The Supreme Court of India, while reviewing a narco-terrorism case from Jammu and Kashmir, explicitly ruled that the principle "Bail is the rule, jail is the exception" is not an empty slogan and must be applied judiciously even in complex cases registered under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), ensuring that prolonged incarceration without trial does not violate Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty).

Q3. Following the 2026 Kerala Legislative Assembly elections, which senior political leader officially took the oath of office as the Chief Minister of Kerala at the Central Stadium in Thiruvananthapuram on May 18, 2026?

- (a) Pinarayi Vijayan
- (b) V.D. Satheesan
- (c) Ramesh Chennithala
- (d) K. Sudhakaran

Answer: (b) V.D. Satheesan

Explanation: Senior Congress leader V.D. Satheesan was formally sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Kerala on May 18, 2026, leading a 20-member Council of Ministers. This marked a major political shift in the state as the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) took charge, unseating the Left Democratic Front (LDF) administration.

Q4. In May 2026, a Parliamentary Panel decided to thoroughly review the structural implementation of reforms inside the National Testing Agency (NTA). Who is the current Chairperson of the NTA summoned for this deliberation?

- (a) Pradeep Kumar Joshi
- (b) Vineet Joshi
- (c) Subodh Kumar Singh
- (d) Manoj Soni

Answer: (a) Pradeep Kumar Joshi

Explanation: A high-level Parliamentary standing panel officially summoned NTA Chairperson Pradeep Kumar Joshi and other top bureaucrats to review institutional changes, digital security mandates, and the handling of the NEET-UG examination framework on May 21, 2026.

Q5. Delhi's Central Ridge was recently heavily highlighted in environmental current affairs after being strictly enforced as a "reserved forest." The Delhi Ridge functions as the northernmost extension of which ancient mountain range?

- (a) Vindhya Range
- (b) Satpura Range
- (c) Aravalli Range
- (d) Shivalik Range

Answer: (c) Aravalli Range

Explanation: The Delhi Ridge is a prominent geographical feature that represents the northernmost extension of the ancient Aravalli Range, dating back millions of years. It acts as a green lung for the National Capital Region (NCR) and protects the plains from the desert sands of Rajasthan.

Part 2: International Relations & Global Affairs

Q6. On May 18, 2026, Iran officially announced the formation of a brand-new maritime administrative body to exercise absolute

control and regulate commercial transits over which strategically vital global choke point?

- (a) Bab-el-Mandeb
- (b) Strait of Malacca
- (c) Strait of Hormuz
- (d) Suez Canal

Answer: (c) Strait of Hormuz

Explanation: Amidst severe regional conflict, Iran's top security apparatus announced the creation of the **Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA)** on May 18, 2026. This newly formed administrative body mandates that all commercial vessels seeking transit through the vital energy waterway of the Strait of Hormuz must receive official clearance and comply with strict regulations issued by the PGSA.

Q7. Which country acted as the crucial intermediary and diplomatic channel through which Iran submitted its new 14-point peace proposal to the United States in mid-May 2026?

- (a) Oman
- (b) Qatar
- (c) Pakistan
- (d) Switzerland

Answer: (c) Pakistan

Explanation: Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei confirmed that despite severe geopolitical hostilities and a looming U.S. naval blockade, active diplomatic communications are being channeled through **Pakistan** to handle corrections and proposals between Tehran and Washington.

Q8. Prime Minister Narendra Modi concluded a highly successful five-nation global tour in mid-May 2026. During his diplomatic stops, India formally elevated its bilateral relations to a



"Strategic Partnership" with which European nation?

- (a) Netherlands
- (b) Norway
- (c) Denmark
- (d) Finland

Answer: (a) Netherlands

Explanation: A major takeaway from PM Modi's mid-May 2026 European tour was the formal adoption of the **India-Netherlands Strategic Roadmap (2026–2030)**, elevating bilateral ties to a full-scale Strategic Partnership. The roadmap primarily covers deep-tech collaborations in semiconductors, green hydrogen, and advanced maritime logistics.

Q9. Under the newly signed India-Netherlands Strategic Roadmap, which global Dutch industry leader agreed to establish a dedicated tech service and training center in India?

- (a) Philips
- (b) ASML
- (c) Shell
- (d) NXP Semiconductors

Answer: (b) ASML

Explanation: The Netherlands-based **ASML** holds a near-monopoly on advanced Extreme Ultraviolet (EUV) lithography machines required to manufacture microchips below 7nm. As part of the strategic roadmap, ASML's entry to build specialized infrastructure in India marks a giant leap for the India Semiconductor Mission.

Q10. A powerful magnitude 5.2 earthquake struck the southwestern region of which global country on May 18, 2026, forcing thousands to evacuate the city of Liuzhou?

- (a) Japan
- (b) Indonesia
- (c) China
- (d) Philippines

Answer: (c) China

Explanation: On May 18, 2026, a destructive 5.2 magnitude earthquake rocked the **Guangxi region in Southwest China**. The seismic event caused building collapses and led to the emergency evacuation of over 7,000 residents in Liuzhou city due to structural integrity concerns and transport disruptions.

Part 3: Economics, Banking & Finance

Q11. In India, the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation data is officially compiled and released on a monthly basis by which of the following bodies?

- (a) National Statistical Office (NSO)
- (b) Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
- (c) Office of the Economic Adviser (DPIIT)
- (d) Department of Financial Services

Answer: (c) Office of the Economic Adviser (DPIIT)

Explanation: The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) in India is calculated and published by the **Office of the Economic Adviser**, which operates under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry. It tracks bulk commodity price movements at the factory gate.

Q12. Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have frequently engaged with Indian tax regulators regarding "Withholding Tax" (WHT) structures.

What is WHT more commonly referred to in standard Indian domestic taxation?

- (a) Goods and Services Tax (GST)
- (b) Tax Deducted at Source (TDS)
- (c) Securities Transaction Tax (STT)
- (d) Capital Gains Tax (CGT)

Answer: (b) Tax Deducted at Source (TDS)

Explanation: Withholding Tax (WHT) is an ambient global financial term for an amount withheld by the payer of an income and paid directly to the government. In the context of India's Income Tax Act, it is directly equivalent to Tax Deducted at Source (TDS).

Q13. According to data tracked on May 18, 2026, public sector banks are increasingly relying on short-term liquidity windows and emergency funding lines from the RBI to support credit growth. What is the primary structural reason for this?

- (a) Rapidly falling interest rates
- (b) Deposit growth lagging significantly behind credit demand
- (c) A sudden drop in corporate bond investments
- (d) Excessive reduction in Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) mandates

Answer: (b) Deposit growth lagging significantly behind credit demand

Explanation: Banking data highlights a widening systemic gap: credit expansion (loan disbursement) is growing at a robust clip, but retail deposit mobilization has remained sluggish. To plug this asset-liability mismatch, commercial banks have been forced to draw from surplus funds and short-term market borrowings.

Q14. The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) finalized a major highway asset monetization plan worth ₹35,000 crore for the next financial phase. Which Indian state accounts for the highest value of highway stretches listed in this asset pool?

- (a) Uttar Pradesh
- (b) Rajasthan
- (c) Haryana
- (d) Maharashtra

Answer: (c) Haryana

Explanation: Under the National Monetization Pipeline (NMP), NHAI prepared a comprehensive list of operational highway stretches to be leased out to private concessionaires. Out of the designated target, Haryana accounts for the largest chunk of high-value transport assets, closely followed by Uttar Pradesh.

Q15. Speaking at an institutional forum on May 18, 2026, who emphasized that Indian capital markets have demonstrated extreme resilience against global macro headwinds and volatility?

- (a) Madhabi Puri Buch
- (b) Tuhin Kanta Pandey
- (c) Shaktikanta Das
- (d) K.V. Kamath

Answer: (b) Tuhin Kanta Pandey

Explanation: The Chairperson of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Tuhin Kanta Pandey, reassured global investors that despite geopolitical turbulence and energy supply disruptions in West Asia, Indian equity indices and financial buffers have remained securely within manageable risk parameters.

Part 4: Environment, Species & Biodiversity

Q16. India's very first satellite-tagged Ganges soft-shell turtle (*Nilssonina gangetica*) was successfully released into the wild in mid-May 2026. In which of the following protected areas was it released?

- (a) Manas National Park
- (b) Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve
- (c) Orang National Park
- (d) Namdapha National Park

Answer: (b) Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve

Explanation: In a landmark milestone for freshwater wildlife conservation, India's first satellite-tagged **Ganges soft-shell turtle** was released into the protected waters of **Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve** in Assam. This will allow wildlife scientists to track its migratory path, habitat preferences, and behavioral survival metrics in real-time.

Q17. The Palamu Tiger Reserve (PTR) was heavily cited in eco-mapping and wildlife conservation field briefs on May 18, 2026. In which Indian state is this reserve located?

- (a) Chhattisgarh
- (b) Odisha
- (c) Jharkhand
- (d) Madhya Pradesh

Answer: (c) Jharkhand

Explanation: The **Palamu Tiger Reserve** is located in the Latehar and Palamu districts of **Jharkhand**. It is historically significant as one of the original 9 tiger reserves constituted at the launch of Project Tiger in 1973. It features a rich

basement of gneissic rock formations and is highly vulnerable to seasonal droughts.

Q18. The "Panzath Nag Spring Conservation Festival" was celebrated with traditional fervor in mid-May 2026. This unique participatory water conservation festival belongs to which Union Territory/State?

- (a) Ladakh
- (b) Jammu and Kashmir
- (c) Himachal Pradesh
- (d) Uttarakhand

Answer: (b) Jammu and Kashmir

Explanation: The Panzath Nag festival is an indigenous, centuries-old community-led water body cleaning festival celebrated annually in the Anantnag district of **Jammu and Kashmir**. Hundreds of rural citizens gather to clear weeds and silt from natural springs, creating a stellar model for participatory environmental sustainability.

Part 5: Appointments & Corporate Leadership

Q19. In a major corporate consolidation update on May 18, 2026, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) carried out high-profile asset investigations and arrested Deepak Singla. He is a senior leader belonging to which political organization?

- (a) Indian National Congress (INC)
- (b) Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)
- (c) Trinamool Congress (TMC)
- (d) Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS)

Answer: (b) Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)

Explanation: On May 18, 2026, the federal anti-money laundering agency (ED) formally placed

senior **Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)** leader Deepak Singla under arrest following extensive investigative raids tied to financial accounting irregularities.

Q20. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) made headlines on May 18, 2026, by arresting Shivraj Raghunath Motegaonkar, the founder of Renukai Chemistry Classes (RCC), in connection with an examination paper leak case. In which city was this action concentrated?

- (a) Pune
- (b) Nagpur
- (c) Latur
- (d) Amravati

Answer: (c) Latur

Explanation: The ongoing federal probe into the high-profile NEET-UG paper leak case led the CBI to arrest academic center founder Shivraj Raghunath Motegaonkar in **Latur, Maharashtra**, aiming to unearth the deeper inter-state institutional nexus behind examination malpractice.

Part 6: Awards, Honors & Corporate Milestones

Q21. Which Indian Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) mega-corporation declared an exceptional 47% year-on-year surge in its Q4 standalone net profit, reaching ₹1,835 crore on May 18, 2026?

- (a) Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL)
- (b) Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)
- (c) National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC)
- (d) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)

Answer: (b) Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)

Explanation: Maharatna PSU **Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)** reported a stellar financial turnaround on May 18, 2026, with net quarterly profits surging 47% to ₹1,835 crore, backed by strong domestic infrastructure steel demand and optimized operational revenue generation of over ₹30,813 crore.

Q22. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's international honors list grew to 31 distinct decorations in mid-May 2026. He achieved the historic distinction of becoming the very first Asian leader to receive the "Royal Order of the Polar Star" from which nation?

- (a) Norway
- (b) Sweden
- (c) Netherlands
- (d) Iceland

Answer: (b) Sweden

Explanation: PM Modi was decorated with Sweden's highest civilian/state honor, the **Royal Order of the Polar Star (Commander Grand Cross)**, making him the first Asian statesman to receive the medal. The award ceremony coincided with Sweden and India elevating their industrial and green tech ties to a Strategic Partnership.

Part 7: Science, Technology & Defense

Q23. In May 2026, the World Health Organization (WHO) held emergency briefings tracking rare, highly virulent strains of the Ebola virus. Which rare strain, first isolated in Uganda in 2007, was the focus of global health surveillance?

- (a) Zaire Ebolavirus

- (b) Sudan Ebolavirus
- (c) Bundibugyo Ebolavirus
- (d) Reston Ebolavirus

Answer: (c) Bundibugyo Ebolavirus

Explanation: The **Bundibugyo strain** is one of the rare and lethal variants of the Ebola virus. First identified in the Bundibugyo district of Uganda in 2007, its tracking by the WHO in mid-2026 highlights the continuous imperative for global epidemiological surveillance and rapid vaccine deployment.

Q24. Two advanced U.S. Navy electronic warfare fighter jets collided and crashed during an aerial demonstration at the Mountain Home Air Force Base on May 17-18, 2026. What model of aircraft were involved?

- (a) F/A-18E Super Hornet
- (b) F-35C Lightning II
- (c) EA-18G Growler
- (d) F-22 Raptor

Answer: (c) EA-18G Growler

Explanation: The crash involved two **EA-18G Growlers** attached to the Electronic Attack Squadron 129 based out of Whidbey Island. Fortunately, all four specialized aircrew members successfully and safely ejected before the aircraft impacted the ground.

Q25. To eliminate structural bottlenecks in renewable power grids, the Ministry of Power indicated it is developing financial support mechanisms for "LDES" technologies to be rolled out by FY28. What does "LDES" stand for?

- (a) Low-Demand Energy Systems
- (b) Long-Duration Energy Storage
- (c) Lithium-Driven Electricity Supply

- (d) Linear Digital Energy Solutions

Answer: (b) Long-Duration Energy Storage

Explanation: As India pushes its renewable footprint past critical thresholds, standard battery grids fall short during extended dark or low-wind periods. The government is backing **Long-Duration Energy Storage (LDES)** systems (such as pumped hydro and chemical flow batteries) to ensure continuous baseline grid stability.

Part 8: Government Schemes & MoUs

Q26. A massive digital inclusion and public welfare access platform named "Haqdarshak" was heavily highlighted under the Digital India initiative on May 18, 2026. Who is the prime institutional backer providing philanthropic "risk capital" to this social innovation platform?

- (a) Reliance Foundation
- (b) Azim Premji Foundation
- (c) Tata Trusts
- (d) Adani Foundation

Answer: (c) Tata Trusts:
Explanation: The digital platform **Haqdarshak**, which streamlines and enables marginalized rural citizens to easily map out and claim central and state government welfare schemes, is actively funded and scale-supported by the tech-philanthropy arm of **Tata Trusts**.

Q27. India and Norway expanded their "Green Strategic Partnership" in mid-May 2026. Which of the following is a primary pillar of this cooperation given Norway's unique geographical standing?

- (a) Himalayan Glacial Mapping
- (b) Arctic Research and Blue Economy

- (c) Thar Desert Solar Grid Integration
- (d) Deccan Plateau Soil Revitalization

Answer: (b) Arctic Research and Blue Economy

Explanation: Norway is a prominent Arctic Council nation, while India holds official Observer status. The core pillars of the **India-Norway Green Strategic Partnership** heavily feature deep-sea mining exploration, green shipping corridors, zero-emission merchant fleets, and polar scientific research.

Q28. The multi-thousand crore "Kalpasar Project" in Gujarat, which stands to benefit from Dutch water-engineering expertise under a newly signed MoU, aims to accomplish what objective?

- (a) Digging a canal connecting the Arabian Sea to the Ganges
- (b) Creating a massive fresh-water reservoir by damming the Gulf of Khambhat
- (c) Constructing an underground solar-powered irrigation network across Kutch
- (d) Desalination of the entire coastal belt of Saurashtra

Answer: (b) Creating a massive fresh-water reservoir by damming the Gulf of Khambhat

Explanation: The **Kalpasar Project** is a monumental water resource initiative in Gujarat that proposes building a massive sea-dam across the Gulf of Khambhat. This will establish a giant freshwater reservoir to address the severe drinking and agricultural water crises in the Saurashtra region.

Part 9: Historical Current Affairs & Important Days

Q29. The "Leiden Copper Plates" were highlighted in bilateral cultural restitution talks between India and Europe on May 18, 2026. These ancient copper inscriptions provide invaluable historical records regarding which prominent Indian dynasty?

- (a) Maurya Dynasty
- (b) Gupta Dynasty
- (c) Chola Dynasty
- (d) Pallava Dynasty

Answer: (c) Chola Dynasty

Explanation: The Leiden Copper Plates (also known as the Anaimangalam grants) are crucial historical Chola-period inscriptions written in Tamil and Sanskrit. They detail the reign of legendary kings like Raja Raja Chola I and are central to modern India-Europe diplomatic frameworks concerning the repatriation of heritage artifacts.

Q30. International Museum Day is celebrated globally every year to raise awareness about the role of museums in cultural exchange and enrichment. On which date is it observed?

- (a) May 16
- (b) May 17
- (c) May 18
- (d) May 19

Answer: (c) May 18, **Explanation:** **International Museum Day** is celebrated worldwide on **May 18** each year. Coordinated by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the day highlights the importance of museums as institutions that preserve collective human history and foster mutual understanding and peace among diverse cultures.