

Part 1: National News, Polity & Governance

Q1. In his budget speech for the financial year 2026–27, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu presented a ₹54,928 crore budget. Which central financial assistance element's discontinuation did he cite as causing an annual loss of over ₹8,000 crore to the state?

- A) Goods and Services Tax (GST) Compensation Cess
- B) Revenue Deficit Grant (RDG)
- C) National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) allocations
- D) Special Central Assistance for Hilly States

Correct Answer: B) Revenue Deficit Grant (RDG)

Detailed Explanation: Himachal Pradesh CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu presented a ₹54,928-crore state budget for FY27. He explicitly noted that the discontinuation of the **Revenue Deficit Grant (RDG)** by the Central Government earlier in the month will lead to a fiscal shortfall of over ₹8,000 crore annually for the state. The RDG is a mechanism provided under Finance Commission recommendations to help fill the gap between a state's estimated revenues and its essential expenditures.

Q2. The Lok Sabha recently extended the tenure of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) examining the 'One Nation, One Election' proposal. Which of the following best describes the nature of a JPC?

- A) A permanent constitutional body
- B) An ad-hoc committee set up for a specific purpose and duration
- C) A judicial body under the Supreme Court
- D) A statutory body regulating elections

Correct Answer: B) An ad-hoc committee set up for a specific purpose and duration

Detailed Explanation: A Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) is an **ad-hoc committee** formed by Parliament for a specific purpose and a limited duration to investigate a particular issue or examine a bill. It features members from both Houses (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha). Once it completes its assigned task and submits its report to Parliament, the committee is dissolved.

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the newly introduced CAPF (General Administration) Bill, 2026:

1. It proposes statutory codification of senior Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) posts for IPS officers on deputation.
2. It completely eliminates IPS deputation in CAPFs up to the rank of Inspector General (IG).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A) 1 only
- B) 2 only
- C) Both 1 and 2
- D) Neither 1 nor 2

Correct Answer: A) 1 only

Detailed Explanation: The CAPF (General Administration) Bill, 2026 seeks to formally codify the rules governing senior leadership roles within the CAPFs (like BSF, CRPF, CISF, ITBP, SSB). Statement 1 is correct because the bill institutionalizes and codifies IPS deputation at senior ranks (IG, ADG, DG). Statement 2 is incorrect because the bill maintains and secures this senior-level deputation structure rather than eliminating it up to the IG level, despite

past demands from cadre officers for quicker promotions within the organizational ranks.

Q4. In March 2026, the Supreme Court of India allowed the clearance of approximately 45,000 mangroves for the completion of which major infrastructure project?

- A) Mumbai Coastal Road Project
- B) Great Nicobar Development Project
- C) Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor
- D) National Waterway 1 Extension

Correct Answer: A) Mumbai Coastal Road Project

Detailed Explanation: The Supreme Court granted permission for the clearing of around 45,000 mangroves to facilitate the final phases and connectivity links of the **Mumbai Coastal Road Project**. While emphasizing infrastructure development, the court mandated strict compensatory afforestation clauses, requiring the executing agency to plant five times the number of destroyed mangroves in designated coastal eco-zones.

Q5. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) under the Ministry of Communications officially rolled out the second edition of which flagship innovation program to build scalable indigenous use-cases?

- A) Bharat 6G Grand Challenge
- B) 5G Innovation Hackathon 2026
- C) Digital India Telecom Sandbox
- D) Quantum Communication Hackathon

Correct Answer: B) 5G Innovation Hackathon 2026

Detailed Explanation: The DoT launched the second edition of the **5G Innovation Hackathon 2026**. Organized under the broader *100 5G Use*

Case Labs Initiative, the program targets startups, academic researchers, and small-scale tech entities to develop scalable, localized solutions using 5G, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and the Internet of Things (IoT) across key sectors like smart agriculture, health tech, and industrial automation.

Part 2: International News & Bilateral Relations

Q6. Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a vital telephonic conversation with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on March 21, 2026. Aside from festive greetings, which core global trade security aspect did PM Modi strongly emphasize during the call?

- A) Unilateral reduction of crude oil import tariffs
- B) Safeguarding the freedom of navigation and ensuring global shipping lanes remain open
- C) Establishing a direct cryptocurrency trading portal between the two nations
- D) Transitioning Chabahar Port management completely to the private sector

Correct Answer: B) Safeguarding the freedom of navigation and ensuring global shipping lanes remain open

Detailed Explanation: Amid escalating geopolitical conflict in West Asia, PM Narendra Modi spoke with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian. In addition to extending Nowruz and Id greetings, PM Modi expressed deep concern over attacks on critical regional infrastructure. He strongly stressed the urgent need to preserve **the freedom of navigation and ensure global shipping lanes (particularly maritime chokepoints like the Strait of Hormuz) remain open** to shield global supply chains and commercial maritime traffic from ongoing disruptions.

Q7. The UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) concluded its 70th session in March 2026. Under which primary UN organ does the CSW function as a functional commission?

- A) United Nations Security Council (UNSC)
- B) United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
- C) United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)
- D) International Court of Justice (ICJ)

Correct Answer: B) United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Detailed Explanation: The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a functional commission dedicated exclusively to gender equality and the empowerment of women. It functions directly under the **United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**, which established the commission in 1946 to monitor and promote women's rights globally.

Q8. The strategically vital South Pars gas field has been heavily featured in global energy security news amid West Asian geopolitical flare-ups. In which body of water is this massive natural gas field located?

- A) Red Sea
- B) Black Sea
- C) Persian Gulf
- D) Caspian Sea

Correct Answer: C) Persian Gulf

Detailed Explanation: The South Pars gas field is located in the **Persian Gulf**. It is the world's largest natural gas field, shared between Iran (South Pars) and Qatar (North Field). Because it sits adjacent to critical maritime transit bottlenecks, any security escalation in the Persian Gulf directly influences global liquefied natural gas (LNG) and energy market pricing.

Q9. The World Trade Organization (WTO) released its "Global Trade Outlook and Statistics – March 2026" report. What is the projected global merchandise trade growth rate for 2026 according to the report, down from 4.6% in 2025?

- A) 3.1%
- B) 2.5%
- C) 1.9%
- D) 0.8%

Correct Answer: C) 1.9%

Detailed Explanation: The WTO's March 2026 Global Trade Outlook report projected that global merchandise trade volume growth will slow sharply to **1.9% in 2026**, compared to the 4.6% growth recorded in 2025. The report cited ongoing geopolitical conflicts in West Asia, extended maritime shipping delays, inflationary pressures, and the normalization of the initial wave of AI-driven tech hardware demand as the primary headwinds slowing down international trade velocity.

Part 3: Economics, Banking & Finance

Q10. In March 2026, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) injected ₹25,101 crore into the banking system to manage transient liquidity mismatches. Which financial market instrument did the RBI utilize to execute this intervention?

- A) Long-Term Repo Operations (LTRO)
- B) Variable Rate Repo (VRR) auction
- C) Open Market Operations (OMO) sales
- D) Marginal Standing Facility (MSF)

Correct Answer: B) Variable Rate Repo (VRR) auction

Detailed Explanation: The RBI injected ₹25,101 crore of liquidity into the domestic banking system via a short-term **3-day Variable Rate Repo (VRR) auction**. VRR operations are tactical market-based tools utilized by the central bank to address temporary or transient liquidity deficits among commercial banks without signaling a permanent shift in the monetary policy stance.

Q11. Under the newly rationalized Tax Collected at Source (TCS) rules implemented under the updated Income Tax Rules 2026, what is the new flat rate applicable to overseas tour packages without any minimum threshold limit?

- A) 5%
- B) 10%
- C) 2%
- D) 7%

Correct Answer: C) 2%

Detailed Explanation: The updated Income Tax Rules 2026 rationalized several Tax Collected at Source (TCS) frameworks to lower compliance burdens. Under the new guidelines, **overseas tour packages are subject to a flat TCS rate of 2% with no minimum threshold** (simplifying the previous multi-tiered 5% and 20% system). Concurrently, foreign remittances under the Liberalized Remittance Scheme (LRS) for medical treatment and education expenses were cut down to 2%.

Q12. The Central Government has permitted an additional 20% allocation of commercial Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) to States and Union Territories, pushing the total allocation to 50%. This priority allocation is aimed at mitigating supply disruptions for which of the following sectors?

- A) Heavy chemical manufacturing industries

B) Hotels, food processing units, dairies, and subsidized canteens

C) Domestic rural households under Ujjwala Yojana

D) Commercial aviation and airport cargo hubs

Correct Answer: B) Hotels, food processing units, dairies, and subsidized canteens

Detailed Explanation: To mitigate energy market fluctuations and supply constraints caused by regional conflicts, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas allowed an **additional 20% allocation of commercial LPG to States and UTs**, bringing the total priority allocation to 50%. The government explicitly directed that this added supply be provided on priority to **hotels, food processing/dairy units, and subsidized public canteens** to check food inflation and ensure business continuity.

Q13. NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) has announced a fresh cross-border expansion plan to deepen the merchant acceptance network of the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in which island nation?

- A) Maldives
- B) Mauritius
- C) Sri Lanka
- D) Seychelles

Correct Answer: C) Sri Lanka

Detailed Explanation: NIPL reaffirmed its **commitment to expanding UPI merchant acceptance across Sri Lanka**. This targeted rollout allows Indian tourists to pay for retail, hospitality, and transport services directly via UPI apps, lowering foreign exchange transaction overheads while integrating Sri Lanka's digital payment ecosystem with India's real-time payment rails.

Part 4: Government Schemes, MoUs & State Initiatives

Q14. The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) launched the RELIEF scheme to support Indian exporters facing supply chain disruptions and surging shipping costs. What does the acronym RELIEF stand for?

- A) Rural Enterprise Logistics and Infrastructure for Export Firms
- B) Resilience and Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation
- C) Regional Energy Linkages and Insurance for External Freight
- D) Retail Export Levies and Industrial Expansion Fund

Correct Answer: B) Resilience and Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation

Detailed Explanation: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry introduced the **RELIEF (Resilience and Logistics Intervention for Export Facilitation)** scheme with a financial allocation of **₹497 crore** under the Export Promotion Mission. The scheme directly supports Indian exporters hit by the West Asia conflict, providing financial buffers and logistical assistance to offset high ocean freight rates and rising insurance premiums caused by shipping diversions around Africa.

Q15. The state government of Punjab has launched "Punjab Sikhya Kranti 2.0", a major long-term educational reform initiative with a total outlay of ₹3,500 crore. Which international financial institution is backing this program with a ₹2,500 crore loan?

- A) Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- B) New Development Bank (NDB)
- C) International Monetary Fund (IMF)

D) World Bank

Correct Answer: D) World Bank

Detailed Explanation: The Punjab Government rolled out "Punjab Sikhya Kranti 2.0", a six-year, ₹3,500 crore school education reform program. The project is supported by a **₹2,500 crore loan from the World Bank**, while the remaining ₹1,000 crore will be provided by the state government. The scheme focuses on upgrading school infrastructure, digital labs, vocational training integration, and training educators across public schools.

Q16. Which Maharatna Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) launched India's first "Automated LPG Teller Machine" (LPG ATM) to provide automated cylinder pick-up options for consumers?

- A) Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL)
- B) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)
- C) Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)
- D) Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL)

Correct Answer: C) Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)

Detailed Explanation: BPCL launched India's 1st Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) Automated Teller Machine (ATM) at Central Park Flower Valley in Sohna, Gurugram (Haryana). The automated setup allows pre-booked consumers to scan a QR code or use an OTP to pick up pre-filled domestic LPG cylinders 24/7 without needing direct human intervention, streamlining the cooking gas distribution chain.

Q17. The Agriculture Insurance Company of India Limited (AIC) launched a year-long national program titled "Krishi Sakhi." What is the central objective of this initiative?

- A) Providing unsecured collateral-free microloans to urban women startups
- B) Empowering women farmers and enhancing their participation in agriculture and crop insurance systems
- C) Funding high-yield organic fertilizer manufacturing hubs run by cooperative societies
- D) Distributing free electric tractors to small-scale farmers

Correct Answer: B) Empowering women farmers and enhancing their participation in agriculture and crop insurance systems

Detailed Explanation: Operating under the Ministry of Finance, the AIC launched the "Krishi Sakhi" program. Aligning with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) designation of 2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer, this year-long program trains progressive women farmers to become certified grass-roots crop insurance advisors. They help local communities understand the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and manage insurance claims.

Q18. Consider the following statements regarding the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY):

1. It provides health coverage of ₹5 lakh per individual per year.
2. It covers both secondary and tertiary hospitalization across public and empanelled private hospitals.
3. It is implemented at the apex national level by the National Health Authority (NHA).

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

Correct Answer: B) 2 and 3 only

Detailed Explanation: Statement 1 is incorrect because PM-JAY provides a health cover of ₹5 lakh per family per year, not per individual. Statement 2 is correct because the scheme covers both secondary and tertiary care treatments without caps on family size. Statement 3 is correct because the National Health Authority (NHA) is the nodal body responsible for implementing India's flagship public health insurance scheme.

Part 5: Appointments & Leadership Changes

Q19. Dormonarth Ch. Sangma has been elected as the new Chief Executive Member (CEM) of a prominent Autonomous District Council in Northeast India following a successful no-confidence motion against Albinush R. Marak. Which council does he now head?

- A) Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council (KHADC)
- B) Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC)
- C) Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council (JHADC)
- D) Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC)

Correct Answer: B) Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC)

Detailed Explanation: In Meghalaya's regional politics, Dormonarth Ch. Sangma was elected as the new Chief Executive Member of the GHADC. The transition occurred after 21 members of the District Council passed a no-confidence motion against the previous CEM, Albinush R. Marak,

over procedural differences regarding policy consultations and the issuance of Scheduled Tribe (ST) certificates.

Q20. In March 2026, the British Council partnered with "SPARK – The 100K Collective" to support 1 lakh women entrepreneurs across India. This initiative is formally backed by which global equity platform?

- A) Alliance for Global Good - Gender Equity and Equality
- B) WE Gate Europe
- C) UN Women Innovation Fund
- D) Global Women's Venture Fund

Correct Answer: A) Alliance for Global Good - Gender Equity and Equality

Detailed Explanation: The British Council partnered with SPARK – The 100K Collective to build capacity and scale operations for **100,000 women entrepreneurs** across India, focusing on mid-tier retail and industrial businesses. The initiative is backed by the **Alliance for Global Good - Gender Equity and Equality**, which was launched originally by India on the sidelines of global economic forums to bridge economic gender parity gaps.

Part 6: Awards, Honors & Sports

Q21. According to Forbes' 40th annual World's Billionaires List 2026, featuring a record 3,428 billionaires globally, who retained the top spot as the world's richest individual?

- A) Bernard Arnault
- B) Larry Page
- C) Elon Musk
- D) Jeff Bezos

Correct Answer: C) Elon Musk

Detailed Explanation: In the **40th annual Forbes World's Billionaires List 2026**, Tesla and SpaceX CEO **Elon Musk** retained the top spot as the world's richest individual. Larry Page and Sergey Brin of Alphabet (Google) secured the second and third positions, respectively, on the global list.

Q22. The World Athletics Council, during its institutional session held in Toruń, Poland, formally awarded the hosting rights for the prestigious "World Indoor Athletics Championships 2028" to India. Which city has been selected to host this global event?

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

Correct Answer: C) Bhubaneswar

Detailed Explanation: In a major milestone for India's sporting ecosystem, India was awarded the official hosting rights for the **World Indoor Athletics Championships 2028**, with **Bhubaneswar** selected as the host city. The event will be hosted at the indoor athletics stadium inside the **Kalinga Stadium complex**, marking the first time this global athletics event will be staged in India.

Part 7: Defense News & Technological Innovations

Q23. The Shipping Corporation of India Ltd. (SCI) entered into a landmark construction agreement with Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) to build which type of green, alternative-fuel platform vessel?

- A) Hydrogen Fuel Cell Inland Cruise Liner
- B) 3000 DWT Methanol Dual Fuel Diesel Electric Platform Supply Vessel (PSV)

- C) Compressed Biogas Powered Cargo Carrier
- D) Ammonia-Ready Ultra Large Crude Carrier

Correct Answer: B) 3000 DWT Methanol Dual Fuel Diesel Electric Platform Supply Vessel (PSV)

Detailed Explanation: SCI signed a milestone shipbuilding contract with Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) for the design, construction, and delivery of a **3000 DWT (Deadweight Tonnage) Methanol Dual Fuel Diesel Electric Platform Supply Vessel (PSV)**. This represents a significant step forward in green shipping, aligning with international maritime goals to cut down carbon emissions by deploying alternative-fuel propulsion systems.

Q24. Under the aegis of the National Quantum Mission (NQM), the Central Government reviewed its structural deployment blueprints. How many academic institutions across India have received formal approval to set up quantum teaching facilities and specialized laboratories?

- A) 10 institutions
- B) 23 institutions
- C) 50 institutions
- D) 35 institutions

Correct Answer: B) 23 institutions

Detailed Explanation: Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh reviewed the progress of the National Quantum Mission (NQM) and confirmed that **23 premier academic institutions across India have received approval to establish specialized quantum laboratories and teaching facilities**. This infrastructure push is designed to build a skilled workforce and support research in quantum computing, communication, and cryptography.

Q25. A team of scientists led by Dr. Akshay Moudgil has made significant advancements in developing flexible, skin-conformal wearable health sensors. This biological-interfacing technology relies primarily on which scientific architecture?

- A) Superconducting Quantum Interference Devices (SQUIDs)
- B) Organic Electrochemical Transistors (OECT)
- C) Carbon Nanotube Field-Effect Transistors
- D) Gallium Nitride Optocouplers

Correct Answer: B) Organic Electrochemical Transistors (OECT)

Detailed Explanation: The research team advanced the field of soft medical electronics by utilizing **Organic Electrochemical Transistors (OECT)**. Unlike traditional, rigid silicon chips, OECT technology is flexible and matches the properties of human skin, making it well-suited for tracking biological signals like heart rate, body temperature, and muscle activity via comfortable, long-term wearable patches.

Q26. Which of the following parameters does the "Octane Number" of premium automotive fuels explicitly signify?

- A) The total energy content per unit volume of fuel
- B) The fuel's chemical resistance to premature knocking during combustion
- C) The exact concentration of lead additives in the compound
- D) The thermal evaporation point inside the carburetor

Correct Answer: B) The fuel's chemical resistance to premature knocking during combustion

Detailed Explanation: The **Octane Number** does not measure energy or calorific content; rather, it indicates an internal combustion fuel's **anti-knock properties**. A higher octane rating indicates that the fuel can withstand greater compression before prematurely detonating (knocking), which is critical for maintaining fuel efficiency and preventing engine wear in high-performance vehicles.

Q27. On March 21, 2026, the patent for the blockbuster anti-obesity and diabetes drug "Semaglutide" officially expired in India, paving the way for generic entry. Semaglutide belongs to which class of drugs?

- A) SGLT2 inhibitors
- B) GLP-1 receptor agonists
- C) DPP-4 inhibitors
- D) Biguanides

Correct Answer: B) GLP-1 receptor agonists

Detailed Explanation: Semaglutide is a **GLP-1 (Glucagon-Like Peptide-1) receptor agonist**. It mimics the GLP-1 hormone to stimulate insulin secretion, slow stomach emptying, and lower appetite. The expiration of its patent in India allows domestic pharmaceutical majors to manufacture affordable generic variants, significantly reducing costs for Type-2 diabetes and obesity management.

Part 8: Important Days, Culture & Books

Q28. A grand technology and cultural exhibition titled 'Gau-Tech 2026' is being hosted from March 20 to 23, 2026, to promote cow-based industries and organic bio-fertilizer commercialization. Which city is hosting this exhibition?

- A) Anand, Gujarat

- B) Pune, Maharashtra
- C) Mathura, Uttar Pradesh
- D) Karnal, Haryana

Correct Answer: B) Pune, Maharashtra

Detailed Explanation: The **Maharashtra Goseva Commission**, in collaboration with the Global Confederation of Cow-Based Industries (GCCBI), launched the grand **'Gau-Tech 2026'** exhibition at the **Agriculture College in Pune**. The event showcases innovations in cow-based products, organic farming technologies, and zero-waste bio-fertilizer extraction methods to support rural livelihoods.

Q29. Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami led the state-level celebrations for the traditional "Phool Dei" festival, which marks the arrival of spring and harvest seasons. In which Indian state is this festival celebrated?

- A) Himachal Pradesh
- B) Uttarakhand
- C) Jammu and Kashmir
- D) Arunachal Pradesh

Correct Answer: B) Uttarakhand

Detailed Explanation: Phool Dei is a traditional spring festival celebrated in the hilly regions of **Uttarakhand**. During the festival, young children go from house to house putting freshly picked spring flowers on doorsteps to wish households prosperity and good health, symbolizing harmony between local communities and nature.

Q30. The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) recently organized nationwide youth mobilization programs for a "Drug-Free India" across 40 distinct locations. Which landmark raising day did the NCB observe in March 2026?

- A) 25th Raising Day

- B) 41st Raising Day
- C) 50th Raising Day
- D) 30th Raising Day

Correct Answer: B) 41st Raising Day

Detailed Explanation: The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) marked its 41st Raising Day in March 2026, celebrating more than four decades of enforcing drug-control laws and preventing substance abuse in India. Established on March 17, 1986, under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, the nodal agency organized public awareness campaigns across 40 locations to promote a drug-free India.

Quick Facts Revision Table

Category	Key Highlight	Detail / Agency
Bilateral Talks	Freedom of Navigation Emphasis	PM Modi & Iran President Masoud Pezeshkian
Govt Scheme	RELIEF Scheme (Logistics Support)	Outlay of ₹497 Crore via DGFT
Banking	Transient Liquidity Injection	₹25,101 Crore via 3-day VRR Auction
International	WTO 2026 Trade Outlook	Merchandise Trade growth drops to 1.9%
Sports	World Indoor Athletics 2028	Awarded to Bhubaneswar, India