

- **Significance for UPSC/SSC:** P4M acts as a bridge between the Global South and middle powers, complementing India's existing multilateral commitments in BRICS, the G20, and the G4.

United States Announces "AI Force" Initiative

- **Context:** The United States administration announced plans to form a dedicated **AI Force** and appoint an **AI Czar** to streamline national security and technological integration.
- **Impact:** Highlights the accelerating militarization and geopolitical competition surrounding Artificial Intelligence infrastructure and governance standards.

2. National News & Governance

Proposed Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026

- **Context:** The Ministry of Home Affairs introduced key provisions under the **FCRA Amendment Bill, 2026** to regulate foreign funding to NGOs.
- **Key Provisions:**
 1. **Deemed Cessation:** Automatic cancellation of FCRA registration if renewal applications are denied or unresolved prior to license expiration.
 2. **Asset Vesting:** Assets acquired using past foreign funds face government oversight if the NGO's FCRA status lapses.
- **Policy Dilemma:** While intended to curb unmonitored foreign influence, experts note it creates an "exit dilemma" for NGOs wanting to shift entirely to domestic philanthropy.

Mandatory Biometric Aadhaar Authentication for LPG Subsidies

- **Context:** The Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas mandated **Biometric Aadhaar Authentication (BAA)** for domestic LPG consumers seeking subsidized refill pricing, taking effect October 1, 2026.
- **Objective:** Elimination of ghost accounts and diversion of commercial LPG cylinders through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBTL) verification.

3. Economics, Business & Banking

Indian Manufacturing & The "Assembly Trap" (UPSC GS-3 Economy)

- **Context:** A macroeconomic study on India-China trade relations highlighted that total bilateral trade reached **\$167.6 billion**, with Indian imports from China reaching **\$149.5 billion**.
- **Understanding the "Assembly Trap":**
 - **Import Composition:** Intermediate goods (e.g., electronic components, active pharmaceutical ingredients) constitute ~70% of total imports, and capital goods make up 22%.
 - **The Paradox:** Schemes like Production-Linked Incentives (PLI) have successfully scaled downstream assembly (e.g., smartphones). However, without deep backward integration in precision components, every unit increase in domestic output drives a surge in intermediate imports—known as the Assembly Trap.

Forbes 2026 Wealth Ranks & Corporate Updates

- **Global Wealth Ranking:** India ranked **3rd globally** with 229 billionaires, trailing only the US and China.
- **Microsoft AI & Datacenter Expansion:** Microsoft launched its 4th Indian cloud

datacenter region—**India South Central** in Hyderabad—designating it as a strategic AI hub for Asia and the Global South as part of its \$20.5 billion investment roadmap.

4. Defense News

Exercise SLINEX-2026 (India - Sri Lanka Maritime Exercise)

- **Type:** Annual Bilateral Maritime Exercise.
- **Location:** Gulf of Mannar and Palk Strait region.
- **Focus:** Interoperability in seamanship, counter-piracy, surface firing drills, and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations.
- **Strategic Relevance:** Direct alignment with India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision and Neighbourhood First doctrine.

5. Sports News

Asian Games 2026 Highlights

- **Smriti Mandhana Record:** India women's cricket team vice-captain **Smriti Mandhana** became the highest run-scorer in Women's T20 Internationals (4,788 runs), passing the mark during the semi-final clash against Bangladesh.
- **Elavenil Valarivan:** Secured **two Silver Medals** in the Women's 10m Air Rifle individual and team shooting events.

6. Appointments & Govt Schemes

- **World Food Programme (WFP):** **Luke Lindberg** appointed as the new Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme.
- **I-2SEA Subsea Fiber-Optic Cable Consortium:** A 3,600 km submarine cable linking Machilipatnam and South Chennai in

India directly to Malaysia and Singapore, enhancing cross-border bandwidth for AI workloads.

7. Important Days, Art, Culture & Anniversaries

Important Days (21 September)

- **International Day of Peace (World Peace Day):** Established by UN General Assembly Resolution 36/67 in 1981 to reinforce the ideals of non-violence and ceasefires globally.
- **World Alzheimer's Day:** Observed to raise awareness around dementia, cognitive decline, and caregiver support networks.

Art, Culture & Environment

- **Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve Botanical Mapping:** A specialized research initiative cataloged **3,261 flowering plant species** in the Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve located across the Western Ghats (Kerala & Tamil Nadu).

Historical Anniversaries

- **Kwame Nkrumah (Birth Anniversary - 21 Sept 1909):** The founding President of Ghana, pivotal figure in African independence, and co-founder of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Exam-Oriented Practice MCQs

Question 1 (UPSC / State PCS - Economy)

Which of the following best describes the term 'Assembly Trap' recently discussed in economic reviews?

- A) A situation where high corporate taxes prevent companies from re-investing profits.
- B) A scenario where scaling downstream assembly operations increases dependence on

imported intermediate components rather than domestic manufacturing.

C) The failure of small-scale industries to transition into medium enterprises due to labor compliance rules.

D) An international trade tariff barrier imposed on agricultural exports from developing nations.

Answer: B

Explanation: The 'Assembly Trap' occurs when incentive schemes boost final assembly (e.g., electronics assembly) without local upstream supply chain integration, forcing manufacturers to rely on imported semi-knocked-down (SKD) kits.

Question 2 (Banking / SSC - International Fora)

Which newly launched grouping at the United Nations involves non-superpower nations advocating for UN structural reform and multilateral cooperation?

A) Global South Alliance (GSA)

B) Partners for Multilateralism (P4M)

C) Democratic League for Reform (DLR)

D) Multilateral Peace Initiative (MPI)

Answer: B

Explanation: 'Partners for Multilateralism' (P4M) was launched by leaders of the EU, Brazil, Canada, and Kenya, with participation from India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar.

Question 3 (Defense / Railways - Bilateral Exercises)

Exercise 'SLINEX' is a bilateral maritime exercise conducted between India and which country?

A) Singapore

B) Seychelles

C) Sri Lanka

D) Somalia

Answer: C

Explanation: SLINEX is the annual bilateral naval exercise between the Indian Navy and the Sri Lanka Navy, focused on enhancing maritime safety in the Indian Ocean Region.

Question 4 (Sports - SSC CGL / IBPS)

Who recently became the highest run-scorer in Women's T20 International (WT20I) cricket history?

A) Meg Lanning

B) Suzie Bates

C) Smriti Mandhana

D) Harmanpreet Kaur

Answer: C

Explanation: Smriti Mandhana scripted history during the Asian Games 2026 semi-final against Bangladesh by surpassing 4,788 runs in WT20Is.

Section 1: International News

Q1. In September 2026, air travel and security advisories were triggered in Saudi Arabia following a drone/missile attack targeting its capital city, Riyadh. Which group was responsible for this attack?

(A) Hezbollah

(B) Houthi Movement (Ansar Allah)

(C) Hamas

(D) Islamic State

• **Correct Answer:** (B) Houthi Movement (Ansar Allah)

• **Detailed Explanation:** Yemen's Houthi movement launched an attack on the Saudi capital, Riyadh, causing flight cancellations and disruptions at King Khalid International

Airport. The attack highlighted ongoing regional tensions near the Bab el-Mandeb and Arabian Peninsula, affecting international shipping routes and air safety in the Middle East.

Q2. United States President Donald Trump announced a major initiative in September 2026 to create a specialized defense and governance body dedicated to artificial intelligence. What is this new initiative termed?

- (A) AI Defense Corps
- (B) AI Force
- (C) Cyber-AI Command
- (D) Tech Guard

- **Correct Answer: (B) AI Force**
- **Detailed Explanation:** US President Donald Trump announced plans to establish an "AI Force" and appoint an AI Czar to oversee strategic development, integration, and oversight of artificial intelligence technologies.

Q3. External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar visited New York in September 2026 to represent India at the High-Level Week of which session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)?

- (A) 78th Session
- (B) 79th Session
- (C) 80th Session
- (D) 81st Session

- **Correct Answer: (D) 81st Session**
- **Detailed Explanation:** EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar traveled to New York, USA, to represent India during the High-Level Week of the **81st Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 81)**, focusing on Global South representation, multilateral reforms, and global security.

Q4. On September 21, 2026, three sovereign nations celebrated their National Independence Days. Which of the following sets of countries share September 21 as their Independence Day?

- (A) Malta, Belize, Armenia
- (B) Cyprus, Guyana, Georgia
- (C) Malta, Jamaica, Kazakhstan
- (D) Fiji, Belize, Moldova

- **Correct Answer: (A) Malta, Belize, Armenia**
- **Detailed Explanation:** September 21 marks the Independence Day for three distinct nations: **Malta** gained independence from the UK in 1964; **Belize** secured sovereignty from Britain in 1981; and **Armenia** voted to restore independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

Section 2: National News

Q5. The Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas has mandated Biometric Aadhaar Authentication (BAA) for domestic LPG consumers seeking subsidized refills. What is the implementation deadline for this mandate?

- (A) September 25, 2026
- (B) October 1, 2026
- (C) November 15, 2026
- (D) January 1, 2027

- **Correct Answer: (B) October 1, 2026**
- **Detailed Explanation:** The Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas announced that effective **October 1, 2026**, all domestic LPG consumers seeking LPG refills at regulated Retail Selling Prices (RSP) with applicable subsidies must complete **Biometric Aadhaar Authentication (BAA)** to prevent leakage and fraudulent bookings.

Q6. According to the Forbes 2026 Billionaires List released in September 2026, where does

India rank globally in terms of the total number of billionaires?

- (A) 1st
- (B) 2nd
- (C) 3rd
- (D) 5th

• **Correct Answer: (C) 3rd**

• **Detailed Explanation:** The Forbes 2026 global report identified **229 billionaires in India** (out of 3,332 globally). This places India **3rd worldwide**, behind the United States (1st) and China (2nd).

Q7. In September 2026, which Indian state initiated process to declare over 200 tehsils as drought-affected due to erratic monsoon patterns?

- (A) Maharashtra
- (B) Karnataka
- (C) Rajasthan
- (D) Gujarat

• **Correct Answer: (B) Karnataka**

• **Detailed Explanation:** Deputy Chief Minister of Karnataka, G. Parameshwara, announced that more than 200 tehsils across Karnataka are being declared drought-affected. 101 taluks were identified in the first phase, followed by 24 in the second phase.

Section 3: Economics & Banking

Q8. The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, introduces a critical structural change regarding foreign-funded NGOs. What does "Deemed Cessation" mean under this proposed amendment?

- (A) Freeze on foreign bank transfers exceeding ₹10 lakh

(B) Automatic termination of registration if renewal applications are unresolved or denied before license expiry

(C) Mandatory conversion of non-profits into public listed entities

(D) Transfer of NGO governance directly to District Collectors

• **Correct Answer: (B) Automatic termination of registration if renewal applications are unresolved or denied before license expiry**

• **Detailed Explanation:** The FCRA Amendment Bill, 2026 introduces the provision of **Deemed Cessation**. Under this clause, an NGO's registration automatically ceases if renewal applications are denied, not submitted, or unresolved prior to the expiration date of the existing license.

Q9. What economic phenomenon describes India's situation where growing domestic assembly line production (e.g., smartphones) leads to higher imports of capital components from China?

- (A) The Tariffs Trap
- (B) The Assembly Trap
- (C) The Dutch Disease
- (D) The Substitution Fallacy

• **Correct Answer: (B) The Assembly Trap**

• **Detailed Explanation:** "The Assembly Trap" describes a manufacturing paradox where efforts to expand domestic downstream assembly lines cause a proportional surge in imported intermediate and capital goods (primarily from China) due to the lack of a domestic precision-component manufacturing ecosystem. Total India-China bilateral trade reached \$167.6 billion in 2025.



Q10. The United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) announced a nationwide bank strike scheduled for late September 2026. What are the proposed dates for this strike?

- (A) September 22 to September 24
- (B) September 25 to September 27
- (C) September 28 to September 30
- (D) October 1 to October 3

- **Correct Answer: (C) September 28 to September 30**
- **Detailed Explanation:** UFBU, an umbrella body of bank unions, called for a three-day nationwide strike from **September 28 to September 30, 2026**. Major public sector banks, including the State Bank of India (SBI), issued advisories requesting clients to complete transactions in advance.

Section 4: Defense News

Q11. Indian Naval Ships INS Sahyadri and INS Kulish arrived at Subic Bay in September 2026 to participate in a joint maritime cooperation exercise. In which country is Subic Bay located?

- (A) Vietnam
- (B) Philippines
- (C) Indonesia
- (D) Malaysia

- **Correct Answer: (B) Philippines**
- **Detailed Explanation:** INS Sahyadri and INS Kulish docked at Subic Bay, **Philippines**, on September 20, 2026, to take part in the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) Joint Cooperation Activity. This deployment forms part of India's Act East Policy and the MAHASAGAR vision.

Q12. What is the name of the 13th bilateral maritime exercise conducted between the

Indian Navy and the Sri Lanka Navy in Visakhapatnam in September 2026?

- (A) VARUNA
- (B) SLINEX
- (C) SAMUDRA SHAKTI
- (D) JIMEX

- **Correct Answer: (B) SLINEX**
- **Detailed Explanation:** The 13th edition of the **SLINEX** bilateral maritime exercise between India and Sri Lanka was conducted off the coast of Visakhapatnam. It focused on anti-piracy, inter-operability, HADR operations, and maritime domain security across the Palk Strait.

Q13. In mid-September 2026, INS Trishul completed a successful port call and passage exercise (PASSEX) in the Mediterranean Sea with which nation's Navy?

- (A) Greek Navy
- (B) Egyptian Navy
- (C) Italian Navy
- (D) French Navy

- **Correct Answer: (B) Egyptian Navy**
- **Detailed Explanation:** INS Trishul concluded a strategic port call at Alexandria and conducted joint passage exercises (PASSEX) with the **Egyptian Navy**, expanding India's maritime outreach in the Western Indian Ocean and Mediterranean region.

Section 5: Government Schemes

Q14. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister state-reviewed the 'Vettri Payanam' scheme in September 2026. What is the primary objective of this scheme?

- (A) Free coaching for civil service aspirants
- (B) Zero-cost public bus transport for women

(C) Financial aid for women micro-entrepreneurs

(D) Free healthcare coverage for single mothers

• **Correct Answer: (B) Zero-cost public bus transport for women**

• **Detailed Explanation:** The 'Vettri Payanam' scheme provides free public bus transport for women across Tamil Nadu. Under its expanded phase, 12,692 buses (69% of the state transport fleet) are covered, benefiting over 84.3 lakh women daily.

Q15. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) opened applications for its Internship Programme 2026-27. What is the maximum age limit for eligible applicants?

(A) 21 years

(B) 23 years

(C) 25 years

(D) 28 years

• **Correct Answer: (C) 25 years**

• **Detailed Explanation:** The MEA Internship Programme (running from October 2026 to March 2027) is open to final-year college students or recent graduates who are under 25 years of age.

Section 6: MoUs & Bilateral Agreements

Q16. The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between New Zealand and India was ratified on September 21, 2026. On which date will this agreement formally enter into force?

(A) October 1, 2026

(B) October 20, 2026

(C) November 1, 2026

(D) January 1, 2027

• **Correct Answer: (B) October 20, 2026**

• **Detailed Explanation:** The New Zealand-India Free Trade Agreement was officially ratified on September 21, 2026, and is set to enter into full legal force on **October 20, 2026**, expanding bilateral market access and trade in services and agriculture.

Q17. The XVIII (18th) BRICS Summit was hosted under India's presidency in September 2026 in New Delhi. What was the core theme of the summit?

(A) Partnering for Inclusive Growth and Digital Transformation

(B) Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation, and Sustainability

(C) Fostering South-South Cooperation for Global Stability

(D) Strengthening Multilateralism for Equitable Development

• **Correct Answer: (B) Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation, and Sustainability**

• **Detailed Explanation:** The 18th BRICS Summit concluded in New Delhi with the adoption of the New Delhi Declaration. The official theme was **"Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation, and Sustainability"**.

Section 7: Appointments & Personalities

Q18. Nila Vikhe Patil made headlines in September 2026 by getting elected to the national Parliament of which European nation?

(A) Germany

(B) United Kingdom

(C) Sweden

(D) Norway

• **Correct Answer: (C) Sweden**

• **Detailed Explanation:** Nila Vikhe Patil (niece of Maharashtra Minister Radhakrishna

Vikhe Patil) was elected to the **Swedish Parliament** (Riksdag). This marks an entry for the second-generation Indian diaspora into Scandinavian national legislatures.

Q19. Who served as the Chairperson of the African Union during the 18th BRICS Summit held in New Delhi in September 2026?

- (A) Azali Assoumani
- (B) Évariste Ndayishimiye
- (C) Macky Sall
- (D) Cyril Ramaphosa

- **Correct Answer: (B) Évariste Ndayishimiye**
- **Detailed Explanation:** President of Burundi Évariste Ndayishimiye, attending in his capacity as the Chairperson of the African Union, held bilateral discussions with PM Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the 18th BRICS Summit in New Delhi.

Section 8: Awards, Honors, Books & Authors

Q20. Which independent Indian feature film gained international attention in September 2026 by qualifying for the official Oscar race despite not being selected as India's official submission?

- (A) All We Imagine as Light
- (B) Angh
- (C) Kantara
- (D) Pather Panchali II

- **Correct Answer: (B) Angh**
- **Detailed Explanation:** The film 'Angh' successfully qualified for the Oscars race through direct general-release qualification pathways, despite not being chosen as India's official entry by the Film Federation of India.

Q21. September 21 marks the birth anniversary of pioneering author H. G. Wells (born September 21, 1866). Which classic science-fiction novel was authored by him?

- (A) Brave New World
- (B) 1984
- (C) The Time Machine
- (D) Fahrenheit 451

- **Correct Answer: (C) The Time Machine**
- **Detailed Explanation:** Herbert George Wells (H. G. Wells) was born on September 21, 1866. Widely regarded as a "father of science fiction," his notable works include **The Time Machine** (1895), **The War of the Worlds** (1898), and **The Invisible Man** (1897).

Section 9: Sports

Q22. Indian cricket star Smriti Mandhana created history in September 2026 during the Asian Games semi-final against Bangladesh. What milestone did she achieve?

- (A) Fastest century in Women's ODI history
- (B) All-time highest run-scorer in Women's T20 International cricket
- (C) First female cricketer to hit 200 T20I sixes
- (D) First Indian cricketer to score 5,000 runs in T20Is

- **Correct Answer: (B) All-time highest run-scorer in Women's T20 International cricket**
- **Detailed Explanation:** India Women's cricket team vice-captain **Smriti Mandhana** became the highest run-scorer in Women's T20Is history, accumulating **4,788 runs** during her innings against Bangladesh in the Asian Games 2026 semi-final.

Q23. Shooter Elavenil Valarivan won two Silver medals for India at the 2026 Asian Games. In

which shooting discipline did she achieve this victory?

- (A) Women's 25m Pistol
- (B) Women's 50m Rifle 3 Positions
- (C) Women's 10m Air Rifle (Individual and Team)
- (D) Women's Skeet Shooting

- **Correct Answer: (C) Women's 10m Air Rifle (Individual and Team)**
- **Detailed Explanation:** Elavenil Valarivan secured two silver medals for India at the Asian Games, finishing on the podium in both the individual and team events of the **Women's 10m Air Rifle** competition.

Section 10: Important Days (National & International)

Q24. What is the official global theme for World Alzheimer's Day observed on September 21, 2026?

- (A) "Remember Me: Innovation in Dementia Care"
- (B) "Never Too Early, Never Too Late"
- (C) "The Earlier You Know, The More You Can Do: A Dementia Diagnosis Matters"
- (D) "Know Dementia, Know Alzheimer's"

- **Correct Answer: (C) "The Earlier You Know, The More You Can Do: A Dementia Diagnosis Matters"**
- **Detailed Explanation:** World Alzheimer's Day is celebrated annually on **September 21**. Coordinated by Alzheimer's Disease International (ADI) and WHO, the 2026 theme emphasizes early clinical diagnosis and stigma reduction: "The Earlier You Know, The More You Can Do: A Dementia Diagnosis Matters."

Q25. The International Day of Peace (World Peace Day) is observed annually on September 21. In which year did the UN General Assembly declare it a fixed date of global ceasefire and non-violence?

- (A) 1981
- (B) 1995
- (C) 2001
- (D) 2010

- **Correct Answer: (C) 2001**
- **Detailed Explanation:** First established in 1981, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 55/282 in **2001** establishing **September 21** as a fixed annual calendar date dedicated to 24 hours of global ceasefire and non-violence.

Section 11: Art, Culture & Festivals

Q26. For the first time in South Asia, the World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF 2026) was organized in Gujarat. In which city was this summit hosted?

- (A) Ahmedabad
- (B) Gandhinagar
- (C) Surat
- (D) Vadodara

- **Correct Answer: (B) Gandhinagar**
- **Detailed Explanation:** The World Circular Economy Forum (WCEF 2026) was hosted at **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**, centering on the theme "Circular Economy: Transition for Sustainable Growth", bringing international environmental strategists to South Asia for the first time.

Q27. September 21, 2026, marks the 100th Birth Anniversary (Centenary) of legendary playback singer Noor Jehan. By what honorific

title was she celebrated across the subcontinent?

- (A) Swar Kokila
- (B) Malika-e-Tarannum
- (C) Nigah-e-Musaqir
- (D) Bulbul-e-Hind

- **Correct Answer: (B) Malika-e-Tarannum**
- **Detailed Explanation:** Born Allah Rakhi Wasai on September 21, 1926, in Kasur, **Noor Jehan** was titled "**Malika-e-Tarannum**" (**Queen of Melody**). She was an iconic screen legend and classical vocalist in pre-partition Hindi cinema films like **Anmol Ghadi** and **Jugnu**.

Section 12: Historical Events & Anniversaries

Q28. On September 21, 1857, British officer Major William Hodson arrested the last Mughal Emperor, concluding the Mughal Dynasty. At which historic site in Delhi was Bahadur Shah Zafar captured?

- (A) Red Fort
- (B) Qutub Minar
- (C) Humayun's Tomb
- (D) Purana Qila

- **Correct Answer: (C) Humayun's Tomb**
- **Detailed Explanation:** Following the recapture of Delhi during the 1857 Revolt, British Major William Hodson arrested 82-year-old Emperor **Bahadur Shah Zafar** at **Humayun's Tomb** on September 21, 1857, marking the formal end of the 331-year-old Mughal Empire.

Q29. What is the name of the traditional 60kg Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) athlete who assured a historic medal for India at the 2026 Asian Games?

- (A) Suchika Tariyal
- (B) Pooja Kadian
- (C) Roshibina Devi
- (D) Anupama Swain

- **Correct Answer: (A) Suchika Tariyal**
- **Detailed Explanation:** **Suchika Tariyal** assured a medal for India by advancing to the semi-finals in the women's traditional 60kg Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) event at the Asian Games 2026.

Q30. Under India's Digital Public Infrastructure framework, which platform is being prioritized to enable transparent retail micro-donations to non-profits and reduce reliance on foreign funding?

- (A) Bharat BillPay
- (B) Social Stock Exchange (SSE)
- (C) National Digital Repository
- (D) NITI NGO Darpan

- **Correct Answer: (B) Social Stock Exchange (SSE)**
- **Detailed Explanation:** To mitigate dependence on foreign donations governed by the FCRA, policy guidance emphasizes leveraging India's **Social Stock Exchange (SSE)** and Unified Payments Interface (UPI) to enable direct, transparent micro-donations from domestic retail philanthropists to NGOs.