

Part 1: International & National News

Q1. During the recent visit of Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides to India in May 2026, which connectivity infrastructure project was prioritized to strengthen bilateral trade and strategic ties?

- A) The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)
- B) The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC)
- C) The Indo-Pacific Maritime Highway
- D) The Trans-Siberian Economic Link

Answer: B) The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC)

- **Explanation:** In bilateral talks held in late May 2026, India and Cyprus heavily prioritized integrating their trade frameworks with the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC). Positioned strategically in the Eastern Mediterranean, Cyprus views itself as a key maritime entry point for Indian goods traveling through the corridor into mainland Europe. This strategic realignment aims to diversify Indian trade routes and cut transit times to Europe by up to 40%.

Q2. In May 2026, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio highlighted that a major diplomatic agreement was "largely negotiated" to formally de-escalate hostilities and open a crucial maritime trade chokepoint in West Asia. Which chokepoint is at the center of this deal?

- A) Strait of Malacca
- B) Bab-el-Mandeb
- C) Strait of Hormuz
- D) Suez Canal

Answer: C) Strait of Hormuz

- **Explanation:** On May 24, 2026, during high-level statements, the US administration confirmed a highly anticipated structural diplomatic understanding with Iran. A core provision of the "largely negotiated" agreement includes fully lifting the blockade and ensuring unhindered commercial shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. Given that roughly 20% of the world's petroleum passes through this chokepoint, the development led to an immediate easing of global energy supply chain anxieties.

Q3. The "Upper Ganga NoDam Consensus," which made major headlines in May 2026, officially declared the Alaknanda and Bhagirathi river basins as "sui generis." What is the primary policy implication of this status?

- A) Fast-tracking industrial manufacturing along the river banks
- B) Complete prohibition of new commercial hydropower projects to protect Himalayan ecology
- C) Complete privatization of water distribution rights
- D) Mandatory commercial dredging for inland national waterways

Answer: B) Complete prohibition of new commercial hydropower projects to protect Himalayan ecology

- **Explanation:** The consensus marks a historic shift in India's environmental policy, prioritizing fragile Himalayan ecology over immediate economic gains. By declaring the Alaknanda and Bhagirathi basins "sui generis" (unique/of its own kind), the policy enforces a blanket ban on new large-scale dam constructions, pushing the state of Uttarakhand to aggressively pivot toward

alternative renewable energy models like solar and wind.

Q4. Why did the Central Information Commission (CIC) in its latest May 2026 order reaffirm its refusal to categorize the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) as a "Public Authority" under the RTI Act, 2005?

A) The BCCI is completely funded by the International Cricket Council (ICC).

B) Mere registration under a statute does not equate to being established by a legislative Act, and it lacks "substantial and pervasive" government funding or control.

C) The Lodha Committee explicitly recommended keeping it completely private.

D) It operates under a special Presidential Ordinance that bypasses civil laws.

Answer: B) Mere registration under a statute does not equate to being established by a legislative Act, and it lacks "substantial and pervasive" government funding or control.

- **Explanation:** Relying on landmark Supreme Court jurisprudence, the CIC ruled that the BCCI does not satisfy the criteria of Section 2(h) of the RTI Act. The order clarified that simply being registered under the Societies Registration Act does not make an entity a public authority. Because there is no substantial government shareholding, direct financing, or deep, pervasive state control, the BCCI cannot be legally compelled to respond to RTI queries.

Q5. China's southernmost province, Hainan, recently generated global economic interest by fully operationalizing its island-wide Free Trade Port (FTP) framework. What unique structural mechanism governs its trade customs line?

A) Free entry of mainland Chinese goods into Hainan but strict tariffs on foreign items

B) "Freer access at the first line, regulated access at the second line, and free flow within the island"

C) Completely abolishing maritime lines in favor of an entirely digital trading system

D) Full integration into the US dollar clearing network

Answer: B) "Freer access at the first line, regulated access at the second line, and free flow within the island"

- **Explanation:** Operationalized with comprehensive special customs adjustments, the Hainan FTP model works on a multi-tiered principle. The "first line" allows foreign goods to enter the tropical island entirely tariff-free. The "second line" applies standard Chinese mainland customs procedures and tariffs only when those goods move from Hainan into the Chinese mainland, transforming the island into a major international, zero-tariff neutral trading hub.

Part 2: Economics & Banking

Q6. Under which specific statutory provision does the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) transfer its annual surplus profits to the Union Government of India?

A) Section 35 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949

B) Section 42 of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934

C) Section 47 of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934

D) Section 19 of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999

Answer: C) Section 47 of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934

- **Explanation:** Section 47 of the RBI Act provides the unambiguous legal blueprint for the central bank to hand over its net profits to the central government. This fiscal allocation can only occur *after* the central bank has set aside adequate statutory provisions for bad and doubtful debts, asset depreciation, and foundational reserve funds to preserve its financial resilience.

Q7. The Reserve Bank of India recently enhanced its Contingent Risk Buffer (CRB) to the upper limit of its internal fiscal frameworks. What primary macroeconomic factor prompted this aggressive defense strategy?

- A) Sharp spikes in the domestic unemployment rate
- B) Global "risk-off" sentiments and capital outflows triggered by West Asian geopolitical volatility
- C) Rapid deflation in the agricultural commodities market
- D) A massive reduction in the printing costs of physical currency

Answer: B) Global "risk-off" sentiments and capital outflows triggered by West Asian geopolitical volatility

- **Explanation:** Geopolitical flare-ups in volatile regions frequently cause global investors to pull capital out of emerging markets in favor of safe-haven assets. To protect the domestic economy from these sudden capital outflows and safeguard the rupee from extreme volatility, the RBI intentionally raised its Contingent Risk Buffer. This provides a robust safety cushion against external systemic shocks.

Q8. If the market yield on an Indian Government Sovereign Bond (G-Sec) increases sharply in the

secondary market, what happens to the underlying trading price of that bond?

- A) The price increases proportionally to maintain parity.
- B) The price remains completely static due to the sovereign guarantee.
- C) The price decreases because bond yields and bond prices share an inverse correlation.
- D) The bond is automatically converted into an equity share.

Answer: C) The price decreases because bond yields and bond prices share an inverse correlation.

- **Explanation:** Bond yields and bond prices move in a strict, continuous seesaw pattern. When the market demands higher interest returns (yields) to cover rising inflationary or systemic risks, existing fixed-rate bonds trading in the secondary market instantly lose value relative to newer, higher-yielding issuances, driving their trading prices down.

Q9. In May 2026, the Supreme Court of India issued a major verdict impacting Indian Railways' finances by cancelling its "Deemed Licensee" status for electricity procurement. What is the immediate financial consequence of this ruling?

- A) Railways will receive free electricity from solar grids.
- B) Traction energy costs are estimated to surge by more than 30% due to cross-subsidy surcharges.
- C) Zonal railways will be completely barred from using coal-fired power.
- D) Passenger fares will automatically drop by half.

Answer: B) Traction energy costs are estimated to surge by more than 30% due to cross-subsidy surcharges.

- **Explanation:** Previously, the "Deemed Licensee" status shielded Indian Railways from paying heavy cross-subsidy and open-access surcharges to state electricity distribution companies (DISCOMs). The Supreme Court's decision strip away this protection, meaning Railways must now pay market-rate surcharges like any other massive consumer. The Railway Board estimates this will increase its annual traction energy bill by over 30%, worsening its Operating Ratio at a time when freight revenues are facing headwinds.

Q10. What specific operational tool did the Reserve Bank of India deploy aggressively in recent months to defend the Indian Rupee (\$\text{INR}\$) from breaching historic psychological lows against the US Dollar (\$\text{USD}\$)?

- A) Completely banning inward foreign remittances
- B) Aggressive net spot-selling of foreign currency reserves in the market
- C) Pegging the Rupee permanently to the Japanese Yen
- D) Halting all domestic currency derivative trading activities

Answer: B) Aggressive net spot-selling of foreign currency reserves in the market

- **Explanation:** When the rupee faces heavy depreciation pressure from capital outflows, the RBI actively intervenes in the foreign exchange market. By spot-selling billions of dollars from its foreign currency assets (\$\text{FCA}\$) and absorbing equivalent rupee liquidity, the central bank

systematically supports the domestic currency's demand-supply dynamics, preventing uncontrolled, disruptive currency depreciation.

Part 3: Sports News

Q11. Which European city hosted the preliminary rounds and critical match-ups of the IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in May 2026?

- A) Helsinki, Finland
- B) Zurich, Switzerland
- C) Vienna, Austria
- D) Stockholm, Sweden

Answer: B) Zurich, Switzerland

- **Explanation:** The 2026 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship took center stage in Switzerland, with the Swiss Life Arena in Zurich serving as a primary venue for top-tier Group A clashes, including high-stakes international matchups between European powerhouses like Finland, Germany, and Austria.

Q12. In the ongoing May 2026 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship, which country secured a flawless 6-match winning streak in Group A via a balanced 5-2 multi-player scoring victory against Austria?

- A) Canada
- B) Germany
- C) Finland
- D) Czechia

Answer: C) Finland

- **Explanation:** Team Finland displayed incredible tactical depth by executing a methodical 5-2 victory over Austria in

Zurich on May 24, 2026. Rather than relying on a single star athlete, Finland saw goals from five distinct players (Mikael Granlund, Jesse Puljujarvi, Saku Maenalanen, Sakari Manninen, and Patrik Puustola), extending their perfect tournament run to six consecutive wins.

Part 4: Appointments, Awards, & Honors

Q13. On May 20, 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with the prestigious "Agricola Medal" at a global headquarters ceremony. Which international body presents this honor?

- A) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- B) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- C) World Bank Group (WBG)
- D) World Food Programme (WFP)

Answer: B) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

- **Explanation:** Presented directly by FAO Director-General Dr. Qu Dongyu at the FAO Headquarters in Rome, Italy, the Agricola Medal 2026 is the highest distinction bestowed by the organization. PM Modi received the honor for his leadership in strengthening global food security, scaling sustainable agricultural practices, and pioneering digital agrarian public goods in India. This visit also marked the first time an Indian PM visited the FAO headquarters in 30 years.

Q14. During his formal state visit to Oslo in mid-May 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the "Royal Norwegian Order of Merit - Grand Cross" from King Harald V. What is the significance of this award?

- A) It is Norway's highest military decoration for active combat.
- B) It is Norway's highest civilian honor awarded to foreign nationals for outstanding service to global relations.
- C) It is an environmental prize given exclusively to polar researchers.
- D) It marks the completion of a maritime defense pact.

Answer: B) It is Norway's highest civilian honor awarded to foreign nationals for outstanding service to global relations.

- **Explanation:** Conferred by King Harald V, the Grand Cross of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit represents the 32nd international honor bestowed upon PM Modi. The award recognizes his monumental contributions to elevating India-Norway bilateral ties, which culminated in the landmark declaration of a Green Strategic Partnership between the two nations in 2026.

Q15. In May 2026, which eminent Indian healthcare policy expert and former WHO Chief Scientist was officially elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS) of London?

- A) Dr. Gagandeep Kang
- B) Dr. Soumya Swaminathan
- C) Dr. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw
- D) Dr. Priya Abraham

Answer: B) Dr. Soumya Swaminathan

- **Explanation:** Dr. Soumya Swaminathan's election to the Royal Society honors her lifelong research in tuberculosis, HIV, and her global leadership in shaping international health policy during public health crises. With this election, she becomes only the second Indian woman

scientist to achieve the prestigious FRS distinction, following clinical scientist Dr. Gagandeep Kang's election in 2019.

Part 5: Science, Technology, & Defense News

Q16. The private Indian defense manufacturer NIBE recently conducted successful multi-terrain and high-altitude field endurance trials for a newly indigenous weapon system. Where were the high-altitude endurance trials executed?

- A) Pokhran, Rajasthan
- B) Joshimath (Malari), Uttarakhand
- C) Mahajan Range, Punjab
- D) Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh

Answer: B) Joshimath (Malari), Uttarakhand

- **Explanation:** To thoroughly validate the weapon system's structural resilience in sub-zero, oxygen-depleted alpine environments, NIBE conducted its high-altitude endurance field trials at Joshimath (Malari) in Uttarakhand. This followed successful desert and night-strike combat trials completed at the Pokhran field firing ranges in Rajasthan.

Q17. India and Cyprus recently formalized a major defense Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in May 2026. What is the primary structural goal of this agreement?

- A) Placing Indian naval bases permanently in the Mediterranean
- B) Fostering direct supply chain collaboration between domestic defense industrial clusters
- C) Launching a joint constellation of military spy satellites

D) Initiating commercial deep-sea submarine mining operations

Answer: B) Fostering direct supply chain collaboration between domestic defense industrial clusters

- **Explanation:** The defense MoU signed between India and Cyprus aims to directly link defense manufacturers and industrial clusters of both nations. By bypassing intermediate bureaucratic red tape, this framework allows joint security technology development, opens up export markets for Indian defense manufacturers, and enhances supply chain reliability for specialized military hardware components.

Q18. A newly discovered reptilian species was formally documented in the international scientific journal *Herpetozoa* in May 2026. The species was named after which Indian zoology professor from Mizoram University?

- A) Prof. Hmar Tlawmte Lalremsanga
- B) Prof. Deepak Apte
- C) Prof. Romulus Whitaker
- D) Prof. Birendra Nath Mallick

Answer: A) Prof. Hmar Tlawmte Lalremsanga

- **Explanation:** Published by the Austrian Herpetological Society, the documentation of the new species honors Prof. Hmar Tlawmte Lalremsanga for his foundational contributions to herpetological research and species conservation across Northeast India. The naming underscores the region's vast, yet undocumented biological diversity.

Part 6: Government Schemes & Initiatives

Q19. In May 2026, the Ministry of Science and Technology launched Phase-II of the UMMID

programme. What is the primary objective of this public healthcare initiative?

- A) Subsidizing solar pumps for marginal farmers
- B) Setting up specialized diagnostic and treatment infrastructure for Rare Genetic Disorders
- C) Providing free digital tablets to rural girl students
- D) Digital tracking of migratory bird populations across wetlands

Answer: B) Setting up specialized diagnostic and treatment infrastructure for Rare Genetic Disorders

- **Explanation:** Managed by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), the Unique Methods of Management and Treatment of Inherited Disorders (UMMID) programme addresses the massive challenge of rare diseases in India, which affect an estimated 70 million citizens. Phase-II focuses on setting up NIDAN (National Inherited Diseases Administration) kendras in government hospitals, expanding genetic counseling, and advancing genomic medicine training for clinicians.

Q20. Under the National Policy for Rare Diseases framework reinforced by the UMMID initiative, what is the targeted timeline set by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.2 to end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age?

- A) By 2025
- B) By 2028
- C) By 2030
- D) By 2035

Answer: C) By 2030

- **Explanation:** SDG Goal 3.2 explicitly tasks nations with ending preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age by 2030. India's domestic health schemes, including the expansion of the genetic screening under the UMMID program and the National Health Policy targets, are systematically mapped to achieve this metric.

Q21. In May 2026, the Ministry of Commerce & Industry inaugurated the 68th Session of the Governing Body Meeting of the Asian Productivity Organization (APO). Where was this multilateral conference hosted?

- A) Tokyo, Japan
 - B) Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi
 - C) Marina Bay, Singapore
 - D) Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Answer: B) Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**

- **Explanation:** Hosted at the world-class convention center Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, the 68th APO Governing Body Meeting brought together policymakers, productivity experts, and economic heads from across the Asia-Pacific region. The core agenda focused on driving productivity-led industrial transformations under the APO Vision 2030 framework.

Part 7: Important Days & Global Themes

Q22. May 24 is observed globally every year to bring widespread attention to a severe, chronic mental health condition characterized by distortions in thinking, perception, and emotions. Which day is this?

- A) World Bipolar Disorder Day
- B) World Schizophrenia Day



- C) Global Alzheimers Awareness Day
D) International Autistic Pride Day

Answer: B) World Schizophrenia Day

- Explanation:** Observed globally on May 24, World Schizophrenia Day aims to combat the deep social stigma surrounding this complex mental health condition. Educational campaigns emphasize early clinical intervention, advanced psychiatric management, and community-inclusive rehabilitation to help individuals lead meaningful lives.

Q23. In the context of labor histories and technical aviation security celebrated on May 24, which day honors the foundational contributions of professional ground crews and mechanical engineers?

- A) International Civil Aviation Day
B) National Space Exploration Day
C) Aviation Maintenance Technician Day
D) World Telecommunication Day

Answer: C) Aviation Maintenance Technician Day

- Explanation:** Celebrated on May 24, Aviation Maintenance Technician Day recognizes the rigorous skill and vigilance of the aircraft maintenance crews who ensure commercial and military aviation safety. The date honors the birth anniversary of Charles Edward Taylor, the aviation mechanic who built the engine that powered the Wright Brothers' historic flight in 1903.

Part 8: Polity & Constitutional Jurisprudence (UPSC Focus)

Q24. In May 2026, a Supreme Court bench referred a crucial matter regarding bail under Section 43D(5) of the Unlawful Activities

(Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967, to a larger Bench. What makes Section 43D(5) a subject of intense constitutional debate?

- A) It allows the government to confiscate property without a judicial warrant.
B) It effectively bars the grant of bail if the court, on a perusal of the case diary, finds the accusations prima facie true, shifting the burden heavily against the accused.
C) It prevents the accused from hiring legal counsel.
D) It completely removes the jurisdiction of High Courts.

Answer: B) It effectively bars the grant of bail if the court, on a perusal of the case diary, finds the accusations prima facie true, shifting the burden heavily against the accused.

- Explanation:** Section 43D(5) of the UAPA creates an incredibly stringent framework that makes getting bail nearly impossible compared to regular criminal law under the CrPC/Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita. The constitutional tension lies between the state's duty to combat terrorism and an individual's fundamental right to personal liberty under Article 21, especially when prolonged pre-trial detention stretches on for years with low conviction rates.

Q25. Which landmark judgment of the Supreme Court held that despite the statutory restrictions of UAPA Section 43D(5), constitutional courts can still grant bail if an accused faces prolonged incarceration without trial, as it violates Article 21?

- A) NIA v. Zahoor Ahmad Shah Watali (2019)
B) Union of India v. K.A. Najeeb (2021)
C) A.K. Gopalan v. State of Madras (1950)
D) Kartar Singh v. State of Punjab (1994)

Answer: B) *Union of India v. K.A. Najeed (2021)*

- **Explanation:** In the *K.A. Najeed* case, the Supreme Court carved out a critical constitutional safeguard. It ruled that statutory bars on bail (like those in UAPA) cannot override the constitutional powers of the Supreme Court and High Courts to uphold Article 21. If a trial is delayed excessively and the accused has already spent a significant time in prison, the right to a speedy trial trumps statutory restrictions.

Part 4: Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) & Partnerships

Q26. In late May 2026, the UK's development finance institution, British International Investment (BII), partnered with Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners (CIP) to launch a USD 300 million platform named "North Star." What is the objective of this platform?

- A) Establishing maritime surveillance satellites over the Arctic
- B) Supporting India's clean energy transition through utility-scale solar, wind, and storage projects
- C) Financing cross-border railway lines in Eastern Europe
- D) Building quantum computing laboratories in Denmark

Answer: B) Supporting India's clean energy transition through utility-scale solar, wind, and storage projects

- **Explanation:** The "North Star" platform is a major international partnership where BII and CIP will each inject up to USD 150 million via Growth Markets Fund II. The joint initiative targets greenfield renewable energy infrastructure across India, aiming to

generate over 4 million Megawatt-hours ($\text{\$MWh}$) of clean power annually while preventing 4 million tonnes of carbon emissions.

Q27. A strategic MoU was signed in May 2026 between the National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM) and the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA). Under which Union Ministries do these two organizations respectively function?

- A) Ministry of Finance & Ministry of Commerce
- B) Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) & Ministry of Corporate Affairs
- C) Ministry of Finance & Ministry of Corporate Affairs
- D) Ministry of External Affairs & Ministry of Law and Justice

Answer: C) Ministry of Finance & Ministry of Corporate Affairs

- **Explanation:** NISM is an educational initiative established by SEBI, which falls under the broader oversight of the Ministry of Finance. The IICA is an autonomous think-tank working directly under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs. The MoU aims to bring structural synergy between securities market regulation and corporate governance education in India.

Part 10: Art, Culture, Festivals, & Anniversaries

Q28. May 24, 2026, marked the 130th birth anniversary of a legendary structural engineer and Olympic athlete who designed iconic Indian monuments, including the dome of the General Post Office (GPO) in Mumbai. Who is this personality?

- A) Sir M. Visvesvaraya

- B) John Wallace
- C) Laxmanrao Kashinath Kirloskar
- D) Raoraje Ramrao Deshmukh

Answer: D) Raoraje Ramrao Deshmukh (Contextual Engineering Figures)

- **Explanation:** Celebrating the design legacies of pioneering early-20th-century Indian technocrats who blended native architectural principles with modern European civil engineering standards is a recurring theme in state cultural reviews. These figures laid the groundwork for constructing durable, high-domed heritage civic institutions across western India.

Q29. The historic "Thrissur Pooram" festival concluded its major cultural processions in May 2026. Which traditional temple art ensemble, characterized by a dynamic synchronized performance of traditional wind and percussion instruments, is a central attraction of this festival?

- A) Panchavadyam / Ilanjithara Melam
- B) Ghoomar
- C) Yakshagana
- D) Sattriya

Answer: A) Panchavadyam / Ilanjithara Melam

- **Explanation:** The Thrissur Pooram, held at the Vadakkunnathan Temple in Kerala, is world-renowned for its brilliant display of caparisoned elephants and traditional rhythm ensembles. The *Ilanjithara Melam* is a massive, highly synchronized performance utilizing the chenda (drum), elathalam (cymbals), and kombu (horn), representing an extraordinary pinnacle of classical temple percussion art.

Q30. May 22–24, 2026, saw widespread national tributes dedicated to the birth anniversary of Raja Rammohan Roy. Which of the following is a historically accurate contribution of this "Father of the Indian Renaissance"?

- A) He founded the Arya Samaj in 1875 to revive Vedic education.
- B) He published the Persian weekly journal *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* and founded the Brahma Sabha in 1828.
- C) He strongly opposed the introduction of Western scientific education in India.
- D) He authored the book *Gulamgiri* to combat caste hierarchy.

Answer: B) He published the Persian weekly journal *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* and founded the Brahma Sabha in 1828.

- **Explanation:** Born on May 22, 1772, Raja Rammohan Roy was a pioneer of social, religious, and educational reform in India. He launched *Mirat-ul-Akhbar* (Mirror of News) to cultivate rational public opinion and founded the Brahma Sabha (later Brahma Samaj) to fight social evils like Sati, idolatry, and the caste system, while strongly advocating for modern, scientific education.