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MONTHLY MAGAZINE

MAY 2026 | COMPLETE EDITION



GS I | GS II | GS III | GS IV | ESSAY | PRELIMS

All the month's major stories, with original analysis, maps, charts and practice

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Days and Themes of May 2026

Top stories this month

- **Elections:** a first BJP government in West Bengal, a hung house in Tamil Nadu, change in Kerala, and the Governor's role.
- **Diplomacy:** BRICS and Quad ministers in Delhi, the PM in the UAE and Europe, and a new partnership with Cyprus.
- **Economy:** wholesale inflation at 8.3%, the rupee near 97, and a record RBI surplus.
- **Weather:** a 60% chance of a deficient monsoon, Banda at 48.2 C and deadly storms in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Science and security:** NEET cancelled, Starship V3, an Agni MIRV test and a new CDS.

How to read this magazine

Did you know? | Map | Chart

Prelims pointer | Key points | Revision tick box

About this issue

- The May 2026 issue, our biggest yet: every GS paper, Essay and Prelims, with maps, charts, fact boxes, an ethics case study and practice questions.
- Facts are as reported up to 31 May 2026. The monsoon onset, the NEET re-test and full-year GDP came in June; check later updates.
- Maps are location diagrams (points by latitude and longitude, no boundaries). Use an official Survey of India map for India's boundaries.

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01 | HISTORY GS 1

Tagore at 165: The Poet Who Questioned Nationalism

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Modern Indian history; personalities; literature and the national movement

Context

On **9 May 2026**, Pochishe Boishakh (25 Baishakh in the Bengali calendar), the country marked the 165th birth anniversary of **Rabindranath Tagore**. The Prime Minister called him a writer, thinker and poet of extraordinary brilliance who gave society new thought and cultural confidence.

Year	Milestone
1861	Born on 7 May at Jorasanko Thakurbari, Calcutta
1901	Founded a school (ashram) at Santiniketan
1905	Songs for the anti-Partition Swadeshi movement, including *Amar Shonar Bangla*
1913	Nobel Prize in Literature for *Gitanjali*, the first for an Asian
1919	Gave up his knighthood after Jallianwala Bagh
1921-22	Visva-Bharati University; Sriniketan for rural reconstruction
1941	Died on 7 August

Ideas that still matter

- **A critic of narrow nationalism.** His lectures *Nationalism* (1917) and the novel *Ghare Baire* warned against aggressive, coercive patriotism, even within Swadeshi.
- **Education in freedom.** Learning in the open air, a meeting of East and West at Visva-Bharati, and village self-help at Sriniketan.
- **Cultural reach.** He wrote the national anthems of India (*Jana Gana Mana*) and Bangladesh, and inspired Sri Lanka's.

Did you know?

Santiniketan was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2023. Visva-Bharati became a central university by an Act of Parliament in 1951.

Prelims Pointers

- First Asian Nobel laureate (Literature, 1913).
- Rabindra Jayanti in Bengal follows the Bengali calendar date, so the Gregorian date shifts each year.
- Visva-Bharati's motto, 'Yatra visvam bhavatyekanidam', means 'where the world makes its home in a single nest'.

02 | HISTORY GS 1

Gokhale at 160 and the Moderate Tradition

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Modern Indian history; moderates and extremists; social reform

Context

9 May 2026 was the 160th birth anniversary of **Gopal Krishna Gokhale** (born 1866 at Kotluk, Ratnagiri). The month also marked the 169th anniversary of the Revolt of 1857, which began at Meerut on 10 May 1857.

Key Points

- A leading Moderate in the Congress; presided over the Benares session (1905).
- Founded the **Servants of India Society** in Pune (1905) to train people for selfless public service.
- In the Imperial Legislative Council he dissected budgets and moved a Bill for free and compulsory primary education (1911), which was defeated.
- Gandhi called him his political guru; his own mentor was M.G. Ranade.

	Moderates	Extremists
Leaders	Naoroji, Gokhale, Pherozeshah Mehta	Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal
Methods	Petitions, debate, constitutional reform	Boycott, Swadeshi, mass mobilisation
Faith in British justice	High	Low
Turning point	Surat split, 1907	Surat split, 1907

Why it matters

- The Moderates' **economic critique** of colonial rule (the drain theory of Naoroji and R.C. Dutt) laid the intellectual base of nationalism.
- Gokhale's idea of 'spiritualising politics' and the Servants of India model are useful GS IV examples of probity and service.

Did you know?

The Revolt of 1857 began with sepoys at Meerut on 10 May 1857 and spread to Delhi, where Bahadur Shah Zafar was proclaimed emperor.

03 | HISTORY GS 1

National Technology Day: 28 Years Since Pokhran-II

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Post-Independence India. GS3: Science and technology; nuclear policy

Context

India observed **National Technology Day on 11 May 2026**, the 28th anniversary of the Pokhran-II nuclear tests. The theme was reported as 'Responsible Innovation for Inclusive Growth' (not confirmed in an official release).

Event	Date	Note
Pokhran-I ('Smiling Buddha')	18 May 1974	India's first nuclear test
Pokhran-II ('Operation Shakti')	11 and 13 May 1998	Five devices; India declares itself a nuclear-weapon state
Hansa-3 first flight; Trishul test	11 May 1998	Same day as Pokhran-II
Nuclear doctrine	2003	No First Use; credible minimum deterrence
India-US civil nuclear deal; NSG waiver	2008	End of technology isolation

From strategic autonomy to deep tech

- The 1998 tests brought sanctions but also confidence in home-grown science led by DRDO, DAE and BARC.
- Today's priorities are deep-tech missions: semiconductors, quantum, AI and green hydrogen, plus a Rs 1 lakh crore research and innovation fund.
- **The gap:** India's R&D spending has stayed below 1% of GDP, with a small private share.

Did you know?
National Technology Day has been observed since 1999. The Technology Development Board gives its National Technology Awards on this day.

04 | ART AND CULTURE GS 1

International Museum Day: 'Museums Uniting a Divided World'

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Indian culture; heritage institutions; soft power

Context

The International Council of Museums (ICOM) chose the theme **'Museums Uniting a Divided World'** for International Museum Day on **18 May 2026**. It presents museums as bridges across cultural, social and political divides, linked to SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 16 (peace and strong institutions) and SDG 17 (partnerships).

India's museum landscape

- The Indian Museum, Kolkata (1814), founded by the Asiatic Society of Bengal, is the country's oldest.
- A national museum, 'Yuge Yugeen Bharat', is planned in the North and South Blocks of New Delhi.
- Repatriation of stolen antiquities and digitisation are bringing heritage home and online.

Challenges and way forward

- **Challenges:** small budgets, poor records, few trained conservators and low visitor numbers in State museums.
- **Way forward:** community and tribal museums, accessible galleries, public-private partnerships, and full digital catalogues.

Did you know?
ICOM was founded in 1946, is based in Paris, and has observed International Museum Day on 18 May since 1977.

05 | ART AND CULTURE GS 1

Books, Films and Honours: May's Cultural Calendar

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Art and culture; awards and personalities

International Booker Prize 2026

The prize went to ***Taiwan Travelogue*** by **Yang Shuang-zi**, translated from Mandarin by **Lin King**, reported as the first Mandarin Chinese winner. The novel follows two women across Japanese-ruled Taiwan in the 1930s. The GBP 50,000 prize is shared equally by author and translator.

Cannes Film Festival (12-23 May)

- Palme d'Or: *Fjord*, by Romanian director Cristian Mungiu; jury president Park Chan-wook.
- No Indian film won a major award this year.

India at Cannes	Year	Award
Neecha Nagar (Chetan Anand)	1946	Grand Prix du Festival, then the top prize
Pather Panchali (Satyajit Ray)	1956	Best Human Document
All We Imagine As Light (Payal Kapadia)	2024	Grand Prix

Padma Awards investiture

At the first civil investiture on **25 May**, the President conferred 66 of this year's 131 Padma awards (2 Padma Vibhushan, 6 Padma Bhushan and 58 Padma Shri). The rest were to be given in June.

Did you know?
Indian winners of the International Booker: Geetanjali Shree's *Tomb of Sand* (Hindi, 2022) and Banu Mushtaq's *Heart Lamp* (Kannada, 2025).

06 | ART AND CULTURE GS 1

Sport in May: RCB Retain the IPL, Bronze at the Thomas Cup

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Sports; personalities

Context

Event	Result
IPL 2026 final (31 May, Ahmedabad)	Royal Challengers Bengaluru beat Gujarat Titans by 5 wickets; second title in a row; Virat Kohli 75* was Player of the Match
Thomas Cup (Horsens, Denmark, to 3 May)	China won its 12th title; India took bronze after losing in the semi-final
Uber Cup	South Korea won; India's women went out in the group stage

- The IPL shows how franchise sport has grown into a large media and tourism economy, but also raises questions about player workload and domestic cricket.
- India's Thomas Cup bronze followed its historic title in 2022.

Did you know?
The Thomas Cup is the men's world team badminton championship; the Uber Cup is the women's. India won the Thomas Cup for the first time in 2022 in Bangkok.

07 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

Monsoon 2026: A 60% Chance of a Deficient Season

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Indian monsoon; ENSO and IOD. GS3: Agriculture, food security, disaster preparedness

Context

IMD's second-stage forecast on **29 May 2026** lowered seasonal rainfall to **90% of the Long Period Average (LPA), plus or minus 4%**, down from 92% in April. It gave a **60% probability of a deficient monsoon**. NOAA (14 May) put the chance of El Nino forming in May-July at **82%**, and IMD expects the Indian Ocean Dipole to stay neutral, so no offset is likely.

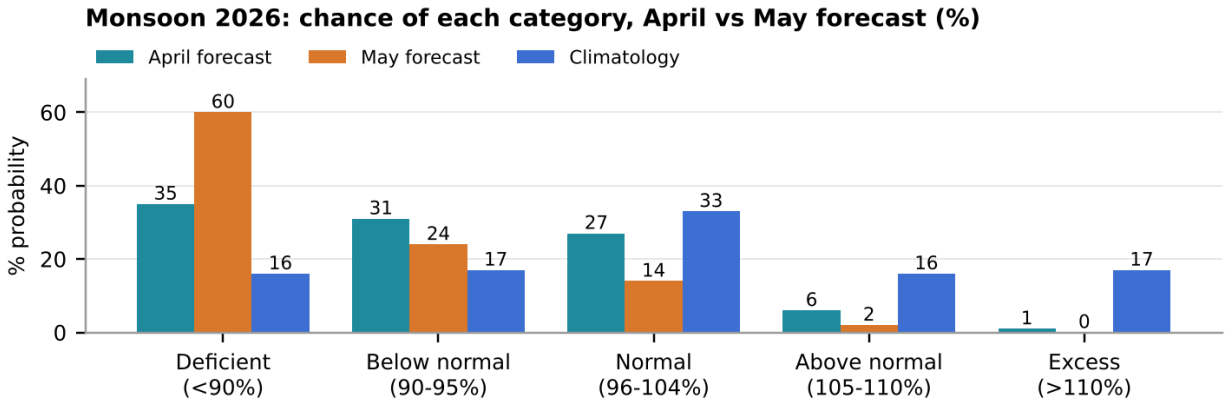


Chart. Only Northeast India is forecast to get normal rainfall; June is expected to be hot with below-normal rain. Source: IMD long range forecasts of 13 April and 29 May 2026.

Onset over Kerala

On 15 May IMD forecast onset over Kerala around **26 May, plus or minus 4 days** (normal date: 1 June). The monsoon did not arrive in May; media reported onset around 4 June, outside the forecast window. IMD declares onset using three criteria: rainfall at 14 stations, the westerly wind field, and outgoing longwave radiation.

Why it matters

- About half of India's sown area is rainfed; kharif sowing, reservoirs, food prices and rural demand are all exposed.
- El Nino years such as 2009, 2014 and 2015 brought deficits.
- June heat is expected to stay above normal in the north and east.

Way forward

- District contingency plans with short-duration pulses and millets.
- Early drought preparation under the Manual for Drought Management; careful reservoir releases.
- Activate Heat Action Plans early.

Prelims Pointers

- Monsoon LPA (1971-2020): 87 cm.
- Niño 3.4 region: 5N-5S, 170W-120W.
- The Somali Jet is the low-level cross-equatorial wind that feeds the monsoon.

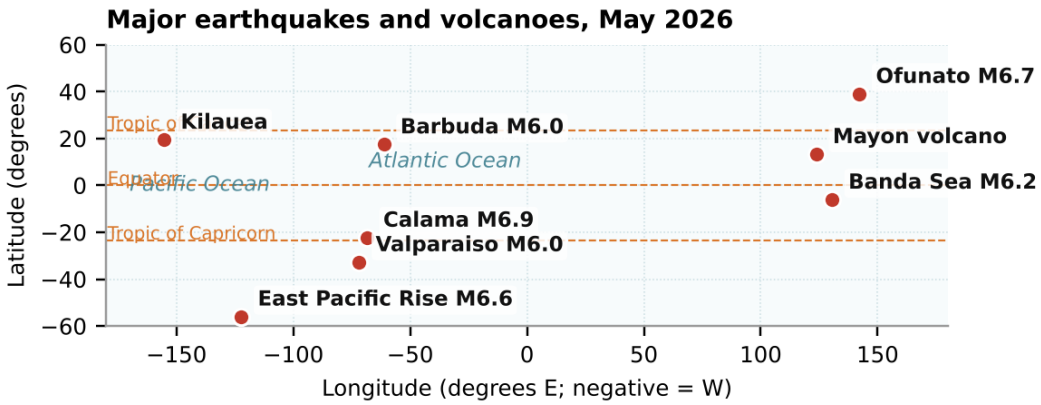
08 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

Ring of Fire in May: Chile, Japan and a Restless Mayon

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Earthquakes and volcanoes; plate tectonics; monsoon of East Asia

Context

The US Geological Survey recorded **ten earthquakes of magnitude 6 or more** in May 2026. The largest was **M6.9 near Calama, Chile (25 May)** at a depth of 109 km. An **M6.7** struck off Ofunato, Japan (15 May), on the Japan Trench, close to April's Sanriku quake.



Location diagram. Points plotted by latitude and longitude; boundaries not shown. Epicentres from the USGS catalogue; volcano points approximate.

Event	Setting	What it shows
Calama M6.9 (109 km deep)	Nazca Plate under South America	Intermediate-depth quake inside the sinking slab
Ofunato M6.7	Pacific Plate under Okhotsk Plate	Same margin as the 2011 Tohoku quake
East Pacific Rise M6.6	Divergent ridge	Shallow quakes where plates move apart
Mayon (Philippines)	Stratovolcano over subduction	Alert Level 3; over 5,000 evacuated (reported)
Kilauea (Hawaii)	Shield volcano over a hotspot	Episode 46 of the summit eruption

In China, heavy May rain in Hunan, Hubei and Guizhou killed 12 people. Such rain comes from the **Meiyu front**, the East Asian monsoon rain belt (called Baiu in Japan and Changma in Korea).

Did you know?
A Wadati-Benioff zone is the sloping band of earthquakes that traces a subducting slab. Each step up in magnitude releases about 32 times more energy.

09 | GEOGRAPHY GS 1

One El Nino, Many Effects: Why the Atlantic Expects Fewer Hurricanes

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Climatology; ENSO and teleconnections; cyclones

Context

NOAA's 2026 Atlantic hurricane outlook (21 May) gave a **55% chance of a below-normal season**, with 8-14 named storms, 3-6 hurricanes and 1-3 major hurricanes. The main reason is a likely El Nino: NOAA expects an 81% chance of a moderate or stronger event in August-October.

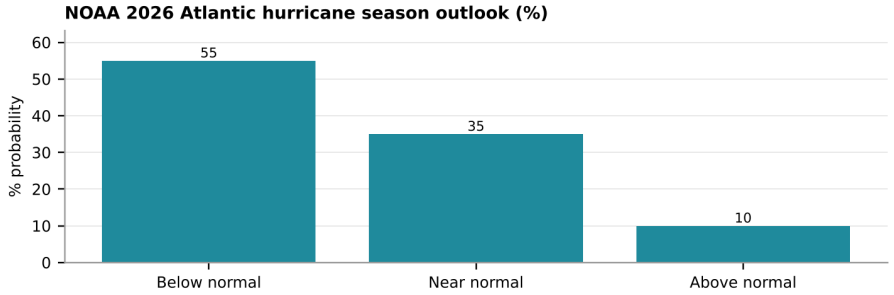


Chart. The season runs from 1 June to 30 November. Source: NOAA Climate Prediction Center, 21 May 2026.

How one ocean affects the world

Region	Typical El Nino effect
India	Weaker south-west monsoon; more heat
Tropical Atlantic	Stronger wind shear that tears young hurricanes apart
Australia and Indonesia	Drought and wildfire risk
Peru and Ecuador	Heavy rain and floods
Global	Higher average temperature the following year

These long-distance links are called **teleconnections**. They explain why a warm patch of the Pacific matters for Indian farmers, Atlantic coasts and global temperature records.

Did you know?
The same storm is called a hurricane in the Atlantic and north-east Pacific, a typhoon in the north-west Pacific and a cyclone in the Indian Ocean. No cyclone formed in the North Indian Ocean in May 2026 (reported).

10 | INDIAN SOCIETY GS 1

Census 2027: Houselisting Widens, 1.44 Crore Households Count Themselves

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Population. GS2: Governance; data and privacy

Context

Field work for the Houselisting and Housing Census widened in May. It began in six States and UTs around 1 May, and on **17 May** in Rajasthan, Meghalaya, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and the MCD area of Delhi, with door-to-door work under way in twelve more. By mid-May more than **1.44 crore households** in 25 States and UTs had used online self-enumeration.

Key Points

- The houselisting schedule has **33 questions** on housing, amenities and assets.
- It is India's first digital census, with a mobile app and a self-enumeration portal.
- Population counting, including caste, follows in February 2027.

Why it matters

- It ends a 16-year data gap that has distorted welfare coverage, such as ration lists still based on 2011.
- It will drive delimitation and the start of women's reservation in legislatures.

Concerns

- The digital divide among the elderly, the rural poor and migrants.
- Confidentiality: Section 15 of the Census Act, 1948 protects individual records.
- Counting homeless and mobile populations accurately.

Did you know?

Census 2027 will be the 16th census overall and the 8th since Independence.

11 | INDIAN SOCIETY GS 1

Jobs Data: Unemployment at 5.2%, Women's Participation Falls Again

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Women and work. GS3: Employment

Context

The PLFS monthly bulletin for April 2026 (released **15 May**) put unemployment for people aged 15 and above at **5.2%**, up for a second month. Female labour force participation fell to **33.9%**, from 35.3% in February.

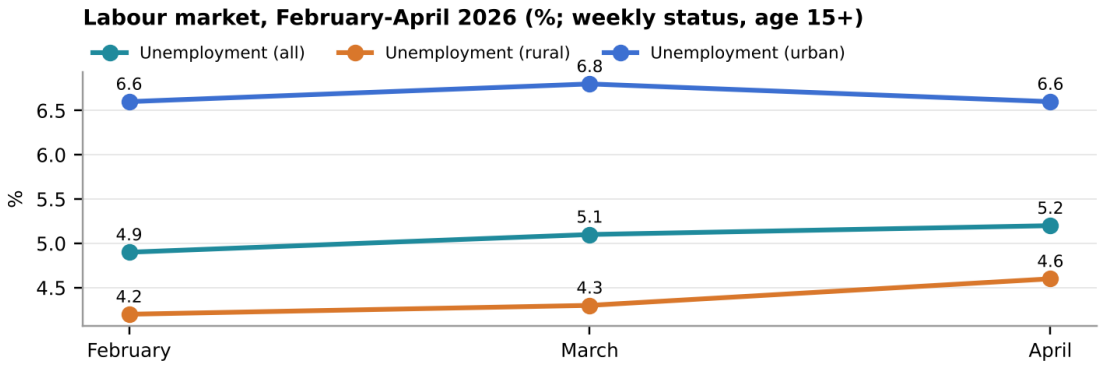


Chart. Female LFPR: 35.3% (Feb), 34.4% (Mar), 33.9% (Apr). Overall LFPR fell to 55.0%. Source: MoSPI PLFS monthly bulletins, April and May 2026.

Reading the numbers

- Rural unemployment rose as the rabi harvest ended; seasonal farm work, often done by women as unpaid helpers, dried up.
- Urban unemployment eased slightly but remains well above rural levels.
- Monthly figures are volatile; small changes may be noise.

The education-employment paradox

In CBSE Class XII results (13 May), girls passed at 88.86% against 82.13% for boys. Yet women's participation in work keeps falling. Unpaid care work, marriage norms, safety and lack of childcare explain much of the gap.

Way forward

- Crèches (Palna under Mission Shakti), safe transport and flexible work.
- Rural non-farm work in the lean season; seasonally adjusted data.

12 | INDIAN SOCIETY **GS 1**

82 Million Displaced Within Their Own Countries

Syllabus Mapping: GS1: Migration; population. GS2: Important international reports

Context

The **Global Report on Internal Displacement 2026** by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), released in May, counted **82.2 million** internally displaced people in 104 countries and territories at the end of 2025, the second-highest ever and more than double the 2016 figure.

Key Points

- For the first time, **conflict** was the main driver of displacement.
- Disaster displacements fell 35% from 2024 but remained above the ten-year average.
- Sudan had the most internally displaced people (9.1 million).
- India: about 1.25 lakh people displaced by clashes near Kashmir, and about 78,000 still displaced in Manipur.

Why it matters for India

- India usually appears in the report for disaster displacement from cyclones and floods; conflict displacement is a newer concern.
- Displaced people risk losing rations, schooling and the vote unless entitlements are portable (One Nation One Ration Card).
- India has no national law on internally displaced persons.

Did you know?
The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998) are non-binding. The African Union's Kampala Convention (2009) is the only binding regional treaty on IDPs.

13 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

BRICS Foreign Ministers in Delhi: No Joint Statement

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Regional and global groupings; India's role as BRICS chair

Context

India, which chairs BRICS in 2026, hosted the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi on **14-15 May**. Members could not agree a joint statement because **Iran and the UAE** wanted opposite condemnations over the West Asia war. India issued a 63-paragraph **Chair's Statement and Outcome Document** instead.

Key Points

- The outcome document covered West Asia, Palestine, Yemen, Syria, UN Security Council reform and trade protectionism.
- On UNSC reform it backed African aspirations (Ezulwini Consensus); no member objected this time (reported).
- EAM Jaishankar said newer members must 'fully appreciate and subscribe to BRICS' consensus'.

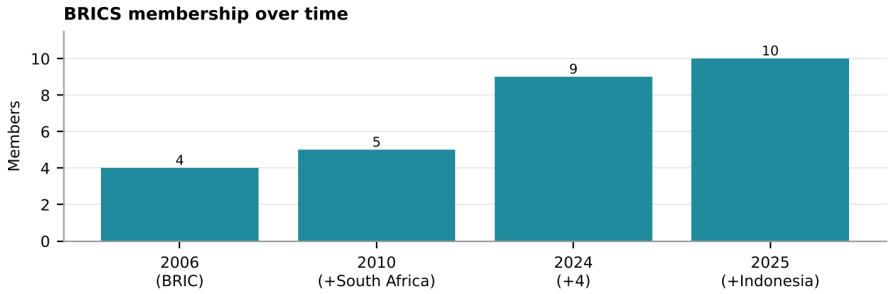


Chart. Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the UAE joined in 2024. Source: Standard membership record.

Debate

- **Concern:** expansion has brought rivals into the same room, weakening consensus and BRICS's claim to speak for the Global South.
- **India's view:** a chair's statement keeps the agenda moving; India's value lies in being able to talk to all sides before it hosts the Leaders' Summit later in 2026.

Did you know?
The New Development Bank, set up by BRICS, is headquartered in Shanghai. The first BRIC summit was held at Yekaterinburg, Russia, in 2009.

14 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

PM in the UAE: Storing Emirati Oil in India

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India and West Asia; energy diplomacy; bilateral agreements

Context

The UAE was the first stop of the Prime Minister's five-nation tour (**15-20 May**). He met President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed on 15 May, saying it was India's 'biggest concern that Hormuz remains free and open'.

Key outcomes (as reported)

- A strategic defence cooperation framework.
- An MoU on strategic petroleum reserves and LPG supply: the Foreign Secretary said the UAE would store up to **30 million barrels** in India's reserves.
- A ship-repair cluster at Vadinar, Gujarat, and a reported US$5 billion for Indian infrastructure.

India's strategic petroleum reserve (Phase I)	Capacity
Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh)	1.33 million tonnes
Mangaluru (Karnataka)	1.50 million tonnes
Padur (Karnataka)	2.50 million tonnes
Total	5.33 million tonnes (roughly 39 million barrels)

Debate

- **For:** oil stored on Indian soil is a hedge against shocks at Hormuz.
- **Concerns:** foreign-owned oil occupies scarce storage; India's dependence on Gulf supply remains structural; defence ties must be balanced against relations with Iran.

Did you know?

The India-UAE CEPA was signed in February 2022 and came into force on 1 May 2022.

15 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

Europe Tour and the Third India-Nordic Summit

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India and Europe; bilateral and multilateral partnerships

Context

After the UAE, the Prime Minister visited the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Italy. In Oslo on **19 May** he attended the **third India-Nordic Summit** with the leaders of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, the first visit to Norway by an Indian PM since 1983.

Country	Outcome (as reported)
Netherlands	Strategic Partnership; ASML-Tata Electronics deal to support the Dholera chip fab
Sweden	Strategic Partnership; aim to double trade and investment in five years; address to European industry leaders
Nordic group	'Trusted Green Technology and Innovation Strategic Partnership'; Finland to host the next summit
Italy	Special Strategic Partnership; maritime and talent-mobility agreements

Why it matters

- Diversifying partners as the India-EU free trade agreement (concluded January 2026) moves to implementation.

- Nordic strengths in green hydrogen, carbon capture, low-carbon shipping and the Arctic match India's net-zero goals.
- The India-EFTA trade agreement (in force since October 2025) carries an investment goal of US$100 billion.

Debate

- Partnership 'upgrades' mean little without delivery.
- EU measures such as the carbon border tax (CBAM) still cause friction; Nordic positions on Russia differ from India's.

Did you know?

India's Arctic station Himadri is at Ny-Alesund, Svalbard (2008). India has been an Arctic Council observer since 2013. Earlier India-Nordic summits: Stockholm 2018 and Copenhagen 2022.

16 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

Cyprus President's State Visit: A New Strategic Partnership

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Bilateral relations; India and the Eastern Mediterranean

Context

President **Nikos Christodoulides** of Cyprus made a state visit on **20-23 May**. Relations were raised from a Comprehensive Partnership to a **Strategic Partnership**.

Key outcomes

- A Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism and a Cybersecurity Dialogue.
- A Defence Cooperation Roadmap for 2026-31 and a search-and-rescue arrangement.
- Both stressed the 'transformational potential' of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC).
- India reaffirmed support for a bizonal, bicommunal federation in Cyprus.

Cyprus is an EU member on the IMEC route and a major source of investment into India. Closer ties also balance Turkiye's support for Pakistan.

Did you know?

Nicosia is the last divided capital in Europe. The UN peacekeeping force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) was set up in 1964.

17 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

Quad Foreign Ministers in Delhi: Minerals, Energy and Ports

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Regional groupings; Indo-Pacific; India and the US

Context

EAM Jaishankar hosted US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Australia's Penny Wong and Japan's Toshimitsu Motegi on **26 May**.

Initiatives (as reported)

- A Quad Critical Minerals Framework and an Indo-Pacific Energy Security Initiative.
- A Quad port project in Fiji and an Indo-Pacific logistics network.
- A partnership on undersea cable connectivity and resilience.
- Opposition to unilateral actions in the East and South China Seas, and to 'measures inconsistent with UNCLOS, including imposition of tolls', an implied reference to Hormuz.

Debate

- **Positive:** the meeting restored momentum after India-US strains over tariffs, and put energy security on the Quad agenda.
- **Sceptical:** no date for the Leaders' Summit; some see the Quad drifting from security to development projects.

Did you know?

The Quad grew out of the 2004 tsunami core group; its first leaders' summit was virtual, in 2021. UNCLOS guarantees transit passage through international straits.

18 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

West Asia in May: A Ceasefire Without Peace

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Effect of policies of other countries on India's interests

Context

The US-Iran ceasefire of 8 April, extended indefinitely on 21 April, held only loosely. Through May the **US naval blockade** stayed, Hormuz remained largely closed with Iran charging tolls, and there were fresh exchanges of fire (reported). No permanent deal was reached.

Effects on India

- Higher oil prices pushed up wholesale inflation and weakened the rupee (see the Economy section).
- LPG supply fell; households and airlines felt the strain.
- The crisis shaped India's diplomacy all month: BRICS, the Quad, the UAE visit and the Nordic summit.

Debate

- **Critics:** India's 'dialogue and diplomacy' line looks like fence-sitting while Pakistan gains weight as mediator.
- **Government:** India's priorities are energy security and the safety of millions of citizens in the Gulf, which need ties with all sides.

Did you know?

The Strait of Hormuz is about 33 km wide at its narrowest. Bandar Abbas is Iran's main port on the Strait.

19 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

Lipulekh Again: Nepal Objects to the Kailash Mansarovar Route

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India and its neighbourhood; boundary disputes

Context

India announced on 30 April that the 2026 Kailash Mansarovar Yatra would use the Lipulekh pass (June-August). On **3-4 May**, Nepal said Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh and Kalapani have been Nepali territory since the **Sugauli Treaty of 1816**. India's External Affairs Ministry called the claims 'unilateral and untenable', noting that Lipulekh has been a Yatra route since 1954, while staying open to dialogue.

- Nepal's 2020 constitutional amendment adopted a new map showing these areas.
- China is part of the picture: India and China named Lipulekh a trade pass in 2015.
- It is an early test of ties with Nepal's new government under Balendra Shah.

Did you know?
Lipulekh is in Pithoragarh district, Uttarakhand, near the India-Nepal-China tri-junction. The Kali (Mahakali) river forms the western India-Nepal boundary.

20 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 2

India-China Border Talks: The 35th WMCC in Beijing

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: India and China; border management

Context

The Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) met in Beijing on **27 May**. Both sides called the talks constructive and forward-looking.

- India pressed for an early meeting of the Expert Level Mechanism on trans-border rivers, important given China's planned Medog dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo.
- They agreed to prepare for the next Special Representatives' talks in China.
- Normalisation since the October 2024 patrolling deal has brought back flights, visas and the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra.

Caution: troops have disengaged but not de-escalated; trade dependence on China and its support to Pakistan remain concerns.

Did you know?
The WMCC was set up in 2012; the Special Representatives mechanism in 2003. The Yarlung Tsangpo becomes the Siang and then the Brahmaputra.

21 | POLITY GS 2

Assembly Results 2026: Change in Bengal and Kerala, Hung Tamil Nadu

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Elections; Representation of the People Act; federalism

Context

Results for West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Assam and Puducherry were declared on **4 May 2026**. The figures below are as compiled from ECI data by secondary sources; check against eci.gov.in.

State/UT (seats)	Result	Chief Minister (oath)
West Bengal (294)	BJP 208, AITC 80; first BJP government in the State	Suvendu Adhikari (9 May)
Tamil Nadu (234)	TVK 108 (largest, short of 118); DMK-led alliance 73; AIADMK-led 53	C. Joseph Vijay (TVK), with Congress support; won floor test 13 May
Kerala (140)	UDF 102, LDF 35, NDA 3	V.D. Satheesan (18 May)
Assam (126)	NDA 102 (BJP 82)	Himanta Biswa Sarma (12 May), second term
Puducherry (30 elected)	AINRC 12 and BJP 4 (NDA 16)	N. Rangasamy (13 May), fifth term

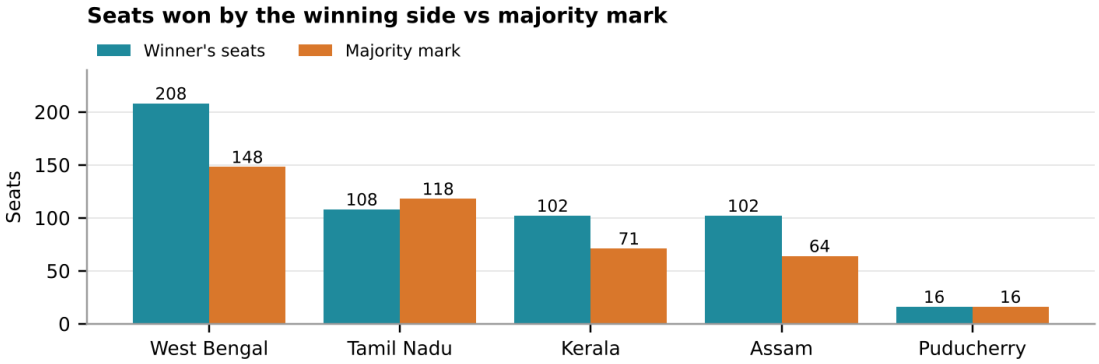


Chart. Tamil Nadu's TVK fell 10 short and formed a government with support from the Congress and others. Source: Results of 4 May 2026 as compiled from ECI data (Wikipedia election pages).

What the verdict tests

- **Record turnouts**, especially in West Bengal, came after large roll revisions; critics question how level the field was, while the ECI points to cleaner rolls.
- Tamil Nadu has its first hung assembly, and the first time a non-Dravidian party has topped the tally since the 1960s (reported).
- On 3 May the Supreme Court declined to stop the ECI from using central staff as counting supervisors in Bengal.

Did you know?

An election petition must be filed in the High Court within 45 days of the result (Section 81, RPA 1951). Puducherry's Assembly has 30 elected members and up to 3 nominated.

22 | POLITY GS 2

The Governor's Role: Bengal's Standoff, Tamil Nadu's Coalition

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Governor; Centre-State relations; parliamentary conventions

Context

In West Bengal, the outgoing Chief Minister refused to resign, alleging the result was a 'conspiracy'. On **7 May** Governor R.N. Ravi **dissolved the Assembly under Article 174(2)(b)**, ending her tenure; the new CM was sworn in on 9 May. In Tamil Nadu, the largest party formed a government with Congress support and outside support from others, and proved its majority on 13 May.

Provision or case	What it says
Article 164(1)	The Governor appoints the CM; ministers hold office during the Governor's pleasure
Article 164(2)	Collective responsibility to the Assembly
Article 174(2)(b)	The Governor may dissolve the Assembly
S.R. Bommai (1994)	Majority must be tested on the floor of the House
Nabam Rebia (2016)	Limits on the Governor's discretion

Arguments

- **For the Governor's step:** a CM who has lost the mandate cannot block a constitutional transfer of power.
- **Outgoing government:** its dispute is with the election itself; the remedy is an election petition.
- **The gap:** the convention that a defeated CM resigns is not written down anywhere.

Way forward

- Codify caretaker conventions and the order of invitation in a hung house (Sarkaria and Punchhi Commissions).
- Set time limits for floor tests.

23 | POLITY GS 2

Sabarimala Reference: Verdict Reserved After 16 Days

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Fundamental rights (Articles 14, 25, 26); judiciary

Context

The nine-judge Constitution Bench led by CJI Surya Kant **reserved its verdict on 14 May** after 16 days and more than 57 hours of hearings that began on 7 April. A decision is expected around October (reported). The challenge to the Bodh Gaya Temple Act was deferred until after this verdict.

Side	Main argument
Reformists	Excluding women of menstruating age violates Articles 14, 15, 17 and 21; constitutional morality must prevail
Devotees and the Devaswom	Ayyappa devotees are a denomination under Article 26; the deity's celibate character is essential; courts should not act as theologians

The central question is whether the 'essential religious practices' test, in use since the Shirur Mutt case (1954), should continue or be replaced by a test of dignity or non-exclusion. Observers noted no consensus on an alternative.

Did you know?
The 2018 Indian Young Lawyers Association judgment (4:1) opened Sabarimala to women of all ages; Justice Indu Malhotra dissented.

24 | POLITY GS 2

Self-Identification on Trial: The Transgender Amendment Act Challenge

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Vulnerable sections; fundamental rights; judiciary

Context

On **4 May** a bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi issued notice on petitions against the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026**, declined an interim stay (partly because the Act had not yet been notified) and sent the case to a three-judge bench.

What the amendment changes (as described by petitioners)

- Self-identification is replaced by assessment from a medical board headed by the Chief Medical Officer, before the District Magistrate issues a certificate.
- The definition of a transgender person is narrowed.
- Hospitals must report gender-affirming surgeries to district authorities.

Arguments

- **Petitioners:** the law undoes the NALSA judgment (2014), which recognised self-perceived gender, and violates Articles 14, 19 and 21.
- **Bench (observation):** the change means 'medical identification instead of self-determination'.
- **Centre:** the criminal provisions target coerced procedures, not voluntary treatment.

Way forward

- Self-declaration with safeguards against fraud; time-bound certificates.
- Strict confidentiality of medical data; consult the National Council for Transgender Persons.

25 | POLITY GS 2

Supreme Court Upholds the Bihar SIR; Phase III Covers 19 States and UTs

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Elections; Election Commission; Representation of the People Act

Context

On **14 May** the Election Commission announced the third phase of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in **16 States and 3 UTs**. On **27 May**, in *ADR v ECI*, the Supreme Court unanimously **upheld the Bihar SIR**.

Key holdings (as reported by SC Observer)

- Article 324 is a 'reservoir of power' that permits extraordinary verification, if it stays consistent with the statute.
- Section 21(3) of the RP Act, 1950 allows a special revision 'in such manner as it thinks fit'.
- 'Accuracy and credibility of electoral rolls bolsters free and fair elections'; the claim of mass exclusion was rejected.

Two views

- **ECI:** rolls must be cleaned of dead, duplicate, shifted and ineligible entries.
- **Petitioners:** the burden of proof shifts to citizens; poor and migrant voters struggle to produce documents.

Way forward

- Fixed timelines for claims and objections; reasons published for every deletion.
- Accept common documents with verification; booth-level social audits.

Did you know?
The voting age was lowered from 21 to 18 by the 61st Amendment (1988). Electoral rolls fall under the RP Act, 1950; the conduct of elections under the RP Act, 1951.

26 | POLITY GS 2

Judges and Accountability: A Bigger Supreme Court and the Varma Report

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Judiciary; appointment and removal of judges; ordinances

A bigger Supreme Court

- The Cabinet on 5 May approved raising the Supreme Court's strength from 33 to 37 judges plus the Chief Justice (38 in all); an ordinance followed.
- On **27 May** the Collegium recommended five names, including Senior Advocate **V. Mohana** directly from the Bar, only the second woman elevated that way after Indu Malhotra (2018).
- Article 124(1) lets Parliament fix the number of judges by law; Article 123 allows ordinances when Parliament is not in session.

The Justice Varma inquiry

On **18 May** the three-member committee under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, chaired by Justice Aravind Kumar, submitted its report to the Lok Sabha Speaker. Justice Yashwant Varma had resigned on 9 April and withdrawn from the proceedings, which continued without him. It is the first statutory inquiry completed after a judge's resignation.

View	Argument
Complete the inquiry	Protects institutional credibility; resignation should not be an escape route
Close it	Removal is no longer possible; findings without the judge's participation raise fairness questions

Did you know?
The original strength of the Supreme Court in 1950 was eight (the CJI plus seven). No judge has ever been removed; the motion against Justice V. Ramaswami failed in 1993.

27 | POLITY GS 2

Personal Liberty in May: Bail, UAPA and Sedition

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Fundamental rights; criminal justice; judiciary

Context

Three Supreme Court orders in May shaped the law on liberty (as summarised by SC Observer).

Date	Order	Significance
4 May	Struck down bail conditions requiring accused to clean police stations as 'degrading and unknown to law'	Noted that such conditions fall hardest on Dalit and Adivasi accused
21 May	Clarified the 2022 sedition order: proceedings may continue if the accused chooses	The challenge to Section 124A IPC and Section 152 BNS is still pending
22 May	Referred the conflict between the UAPA bail bar (Section 43D(5)) and the Najeeb ruling to a larger bench	Najeeb (2021) said strict bail limits 'melt down' when trials are long delayed

The underlying tension

- **State:** terror and security cases need strict pre-trial safeguards.
- **Rights advocates:** long jail terms before trial turn detention into punishment; 'bail is the rule'.

Did you know?
Kedar Nath Singh (1962) upheld sedition but limited it to incitement to violence. The UAPA was enacted in 1967; a 2019 amendment allows individuals to be designated as terrorists.

28 | GOVERNANCE GS 2

Who Picks the Election Commission? The 2023 Act in Court

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Constitutional bodies; Election Commission; separation of powers

Context

In May a Supreme Court bench heard challenges to the **Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023**; the Union asked for a larger bench.

Arrangement	Selection panel
Anoop Baranwal judgment (2023, interim)	Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition and Chief Justice of India
2023 Act	Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition and a Union Cabinet Minister

Arguments

- **Petitioners:** an executive majority on the panel undermines the Commission's independence.
- **Union:** Article 324(2) leaves appointments to a law made by Parliament, and the judgment itself applied only until such a law.

Did you know?
The Election Commission became multi-member in 1989 and permanently so from 1993. The CEC can be removed only like a Supreme Court judge (Article 324(5)).

29 | SOCIAL JUSTICE GS 2

NEET-UG 2026 Cancelled: The Cost of a Leak

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Education; governance; accountability of institutions

Context

About **22.7 lakh** candidates took NEET-UG on **3 May**. After allegations that a 'guess paper' from Sikar, Rajasthan matched many real questions, the National Testing Agency **cancelled the exam on 12 May** and the CBI took over the probe. A re-test was set for **21 June**, and NEET is to move to computer-based testing from 2027 (reported). Teachers, a coaching owner, a headmistress and doctors were among those arrested (reported).

Two views on cancellation

- **For:** if the leak may have been widespread, a merit list based on it has no legitimacy.
- **Against:** honest candidates, especially poor and rural ones, bear the cost; in 2024 the Court did not order a re-test without proof of systemic breach.

Way forward

- Computer-based tests with encrypted papers released only at exam time.
- Enforce the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024; a permanent NTA cadre; vetting of paper-setters.
- On 25 May the Supreme Court asked for a status report on reforms recommended after 2024.

Did you know?
The NTA was set up in 2017 under the Ministry of Education. NEET-UG is the single entrance test for medical courses under the NMC Act, 2019.

30 | SOCIAL JUSTICE GS 2

79th World Health Assembly: Pathogen-Sharing Deal Delayed to 2027

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Health; international institutions. GS3: Pandemic preparedness

Context

The **79th World Health Assembly** met in Geneva from **18 to 23 May** on the theme 'Reshaping global health: a shared responsibility'. It adopted 13 resolutions and over 20 decisions (on stroke, TB, antimicrobial resistance, emergency care, haemophilia and more) and agreed a member-led process to reform global health architecture.

The missing annex

- The **Pandemic Agreement** was adopted in May 2025, but it cannot open for signature until its **Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing (PABS)** annex is agreed.
- Talks failed to finish by 1 May; the deadline moved to no later than **WHA80 (May 2027)**, with the next round on 6-17 July 2026.
- The split: developing countries want guaranteed shares of vaccines and medicines in return for sharing samples and sequence data; rich countries prefer voluntary terms.

India has a double stake: as the world's vaccine factory and as a voice for fair access, as it showed with the COVID-era patent-waiver push.

Did you know?
The World Health Assembly is WHO's decision-making body and meets every May in Geneva. The Nagoya Protocol (2010) is the general framework for access to genetic resources and benefit-sharing.

31 | SOCIAL JUSTICE GS 2

World No Tobacco Day: 'Unmasking the Appeal'

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Health; children and adolescents

Context

WHO's theme for **31 May 2026** was **'Unmasking the appeal: countering nicotine and tobacco addiction'**, targeting flavours, packaging, nicotine pouches and social-media marketing aimed at young people.

Key numbers (WHO)

- 40 million children aged 13-15 use at least one tobacco product.
- 15 million of them use e-cigarettes; where data exist, children are nine times as likely as adults to vape.

India's position

- India banned e-cigarettes in 2019, but online sales and new products such as nicotine pouches sit in grey zones.
- Smokeless tobacco dominates use in India; sales near schools continue despite COTPA.

Way forward

- Amend COTPA to cover new nicotine products; ban flavours; plain packaging.
- Raise taxes towards WHO's benchmark of 75% of retail price; enforce tobacco-free school zones.

Did you know?

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control was adopted in 2003 and entered into force in 2005. World No Tobacco Day began in 1987.

32 | GOVERNANCE GS 2

Crime in India 2024: Lower Crime Rate, More Cybercrime

Syllabus Mapping: GS2: Governance; criminal justice. GS3: Cyber security

Context

The National Crime Records Bureau released **Crime in India 2024** in early May. The overall crime rate fell to **418.9 per lakh people** from 448.3 in 2023. Cybercrime rose by more than 17% (reported).

Reading crime data carefully

- NCRB counts **registered** cases; a rise can reflect better reporting (e-FIRs, zero FIRs), and a fall can reflect under-registration.
- 2024 was the transition year from the IPC to the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (from 1 July 2024), which complicates comparisons.
- Economic offences and drug-overdose deaths reportedly rose.

Way forward

- Cyber forensic labs and wider use of the I4C network and the 1930 helpline.
- Special and fast-track courts; victim-centred policing; timely release of data.

Did you know?

NCRB was set up in 1986 under the Home Ministry. It also publishes 'Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India' and 'Prison Statistics India'.

33 | ECONOMY GS 3

Wholesale Inflation Jumps to 8.3% While Retail Stays at 3.5%

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Inflation; monetary policy; indicators

Context

April data showed a sharp split. Retail inflation (CPI, base 2024=100) edged up to **3.48%** (released 12 May), but wholesale inflation (WPI) jumped to **8.3%** (14 May), a 42-month high, as fuel and power prices soared with the West Asia war.

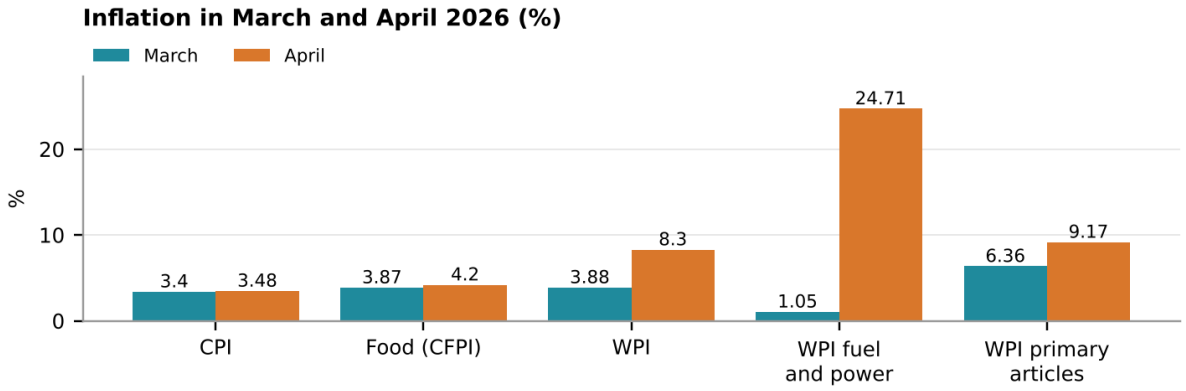


Chart. WPI for manufactured products rose from 3.39% to 4.62%. Source: MoSPI CPI release (12 May 2026); WPI release reported by AIR (14 May 2026).

Inside the numbers

- **CPI:** silver jewellery (+144%), copra (+45%), gold jewellery (+41%) and tomato (+35%) rose fastest; potato (-24%) and onion (-18%) fell.
- **WPI:** fuel and power inflation leapt from 1% to 24.7% in a month.
- The gap of nearly 5 points means firms are absorbing cost increases for now; they may pass them on to consumers later.

Debate

- Should the government cut fuel taxes to cushion the shock, at a fiscal cost, or let prices pass through?
- Is a CPI-only inflation target enough when wholesale pressure builds this fast?

Prelims Pointers

- CPI is compiled by the NSO (MoSPI); WPI by the Office of the Economic Adviser, DPIIT.
- WPI does not cover services.
- The RBI's target is 4% CPI inflation, with a band of 2-6% (Section 45ZA, RBI Act).

34 | ECONOMY GS 3

A Record Rs 2.87 Lakh Crore RBI Surplus for the Government

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Monetary policy; fiscal policy; central banking

Context

On **22 May** the RBI's Central Board approved a surplus transfer of **Rs 2,86,588 crore** to the Centre for 2025-26, about 6.7% more than the year before. It kept the Contingent Risk Buffer at **6.5%** of the balance sheet. The RBI Annual Report (29 May) showed the balance sheet growing **20.6%** to Rs 91.97 lakh crore.

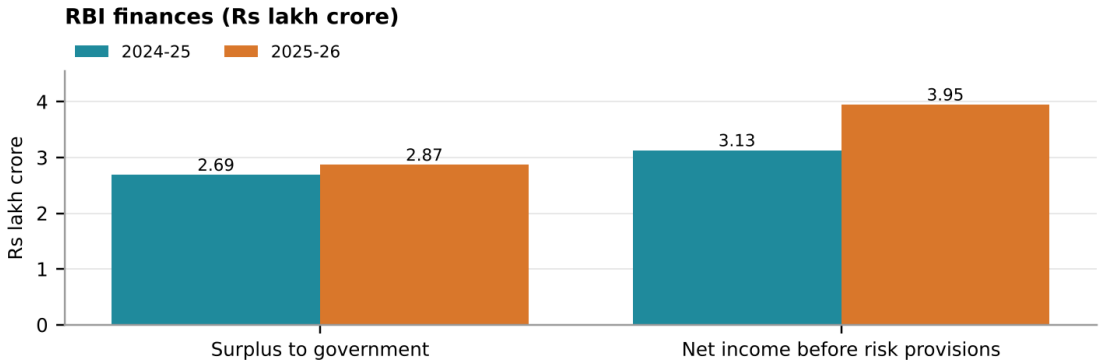


Chart. The balance sheet grew from Rs 76.25 to Rs 91.97 lakh crore. Gold holdings were 880.52 tonnes; their value rose mainly because of higher prices. Source: RBI board decision (AIR, 23 May 2026) and RBI Annual Report 2025-26 as reported.

Why it matters

- It gives the government a cushion for possible fuel-tax cuts, subsidies and credit guarantees during the oil shock.
- Much of the income came from selling dollars at high rupee prices while defending the currency, and from interest on foreign assets.

Debate

- **Supporters:** the central bank's profits belong to the public and should be used.
- **Critics:** relying on volatile forex income risks 'fiscal dominance' and thins the RBI's buffers when risks are high.

Did you know?
Section 47 of the RBI Act requires the RBI to transfer its surplus to the Centre. The Bimal Jalan Committee (2019) designed the Economic Capital Framework.

35 | ECONOMY GS 3

Rupee Near 97 per Dollar, Reserves Fall to $681 Billion

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: External sector; exchange rate; balance of payments

Context

The rupee hit record lows in May, crossing 96 per US dollar mid-month and reaching **96.96** in the week to 22 May. Forex reserves fell **US$7.5 billion** in that week to **US$681.4 billion**, the lowest in over a year, as the RBI sold dollars and gold values fell.

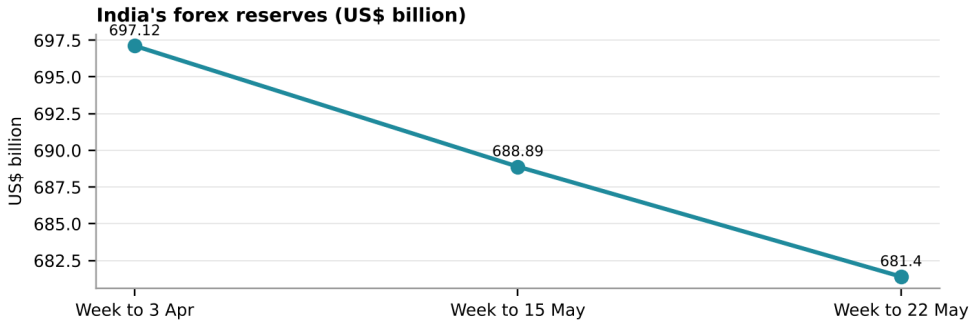


Chart. Analysts estimate RBI dollar sales of US$0.8-2 billion a day (reported). Source: RBI weekly data as reported by AIR (10 April) and Outlook Money (31 May).

Why the rupee fell

- Higher crude prices from the West Asia conflict.
- Foreign portfolio outflows.
- A wider trade deficit, with gold imports up 82% in April.

Defend or let go?

- **Defending** the rupee uses reserves and drains rupee liquidity.
- **Letting it fall** feeds imported inflation and raises the cost of foreign debt.
- Past tools include NRI deposit schemes (2013) and curbs on gold imports.

Did you know?
Forex reserves have four parts: foreign currency assets, gold, SDRs and the reserve tranche position with the IMF.

36 | ECONOMY GS 3

April Trade: Exports at a 49-Month High, Deficit Wider

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: External sector; current account

Context

Goods exports reached **US$43.56 billion** in April (up 14%), a 49-month high, but imports rose to **US$71.94 billion**. The trade deficit widened to **US$28.38 billion** from US$20.67 billion in March.

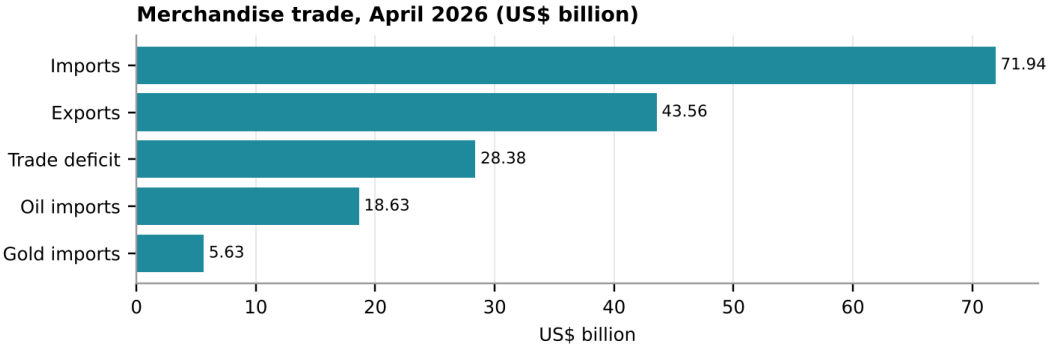


Chart. Gold imports rose 81.7%; petroleum exports hit a 24-month high of US$9.6 billion. Source: Commerce Ministry data via ICRA and BasisPoint, 15 May 2026.

- Higher commodity prices raise both export values and import bills, but imports more.
- ICRA expects the current account deficit to widen to about 2% of GDP in 2026-27.
- Services exports (about US$37 billion in April) continue to offset much of the goods deficit.

Did you know?
The current account covers goods, services, primary income and secondary income (remittances). India is the world's largest recipient of remittances.

37 | ECONOMY GS 3

Record GST, a Met Fiscal Target and ECLGS 5.0

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Fiscal policy; taxation; credit support

GST

Gross GST for April 2026 was a record of about **Rs 2.43 lakh crore** (up 8.7%), released on 1 May. Net GST was about Rs 2.11 lakh crore after refunds. Import-related GST grew 25.8%, much faster than domestic GST, so domestic demand may be softer than the headline suggests.

Fiscal deficit

Provisional figures showed the 2025-26 fiscal deficit at **4.4% of GDP**, meeting the target, achieved partly by cutting spending below revised estimates (released around the end of May; check the date).

ECLGS 5.0 (Cabinet, 5 May)

Feature	Detail
Size	Credit support of Rs 2.55 lakh crore; budget outlay Rs 18,100 crore
Guarantee	100% for MSMEs; 90% for others and airlines; no fee

Feature	Detail
Limits	Up to 20% of peak working capital (cap Rs 100 crore); airlines up to Rs 1,500 crore
Terms	5 years with 1-year moratorium; airlines 7 years with 2-year moratorium
Run by	National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC); sanctions until 31 March 2027

- **For:** earlier ECLGS rounds kept MSMEs afloat during COVID.
- **Against:** it adds contingent liabilities and could store up bad loans; the airline window may look like a bailout.

Did you know?
GST came into force on 1 July 2017 (101st Amendment). The GST Council is set up under Article 279A.

38 | ECONOMY GS 3

UN Cuts India's 2026 Growth Forecast to 6.4%

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Growth; international reports

Context

The UN's mid-2026 World Economic Situation and Prospects update (about 20 May) cut India's 2026 growth to **6.4%** from 6.6%, and world growth to **2.5%**, citing the Iran conflict, higher oil prices and disruption at Hormuz.

- India's buffers, according to the UN: strong consumer demand, public investment, services exports, refining capacity, large reserves and fiscal room.
- The UN forecast is for the calendar year, so it is not directly comparable with India's fiscal-year GDP estimates.

Report	Publisher	Timing
World Economic Situation and Prospects	UN DESA	January; mid-year update in May
World Economic Outlook	IMF	April and October
Global Economic Prospects	World Bank	January and June

Did you know?
Full-year GDP for 2025-26 was released on 5 June, after this issue's period.

39 | AGRICULTURE GS 3

Kharif MSP 2026-27: Oilseeds and Pulses Gain Most

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: MSP; crop diversification; food security

Context

On **13 May** the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs raised the Minimum Support Price for 14 kharif crops for 2026-27. Paddy (common) rose by Rs 72 to **Rs 2,441 a quintal**.

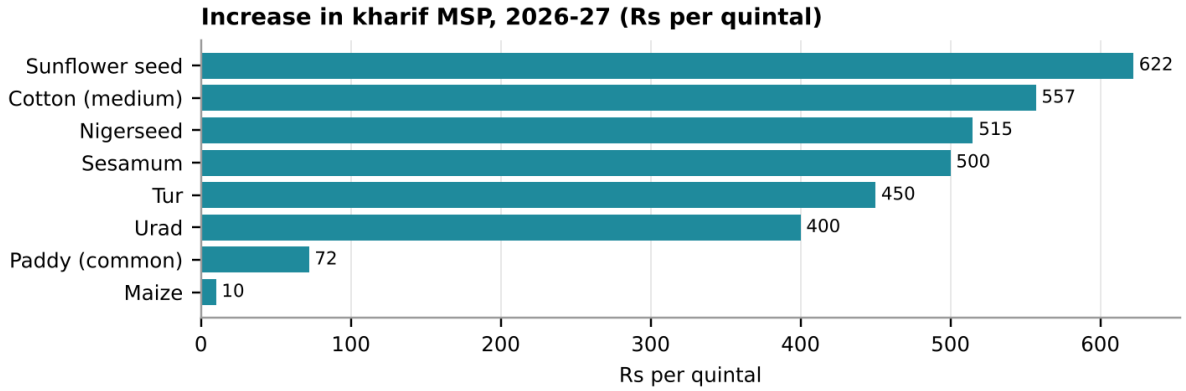


Chart. Moong has the highest margin over cost (61%); most crops are set at 50% above A2+FL cost. Source: CCEA decision of 13 May 2026, as reported by DT Next and IANS.

Reading the signals

- Big increases for oilseeds and pulses support import substitution and move farmers away from water-heavy paddy.
- A Rs 10 rise for maize, after a record harvest, signals no extra push despite ethanol demand.

Debate

- **Supporters:** MSP at 1.5 times cost gives a price floor.
- **Critics:** it uses A2+FL cost, not the fuller C2 cost the Swaminathan Commission proposed; procurement is mainly rice and wheat in a few States, so MSP for pulses and oilseeds is often notional.

Did you know?

MSP covers 22 crops: 14 kharif, 6 rabi and 2 commercial. Sugarcane has a Fair and Remunerative Price instead; the 2026-27 FRP is Rs 365 a quintal.

40 | AGRICULTURE GS 3

A Record 376.6 Million Tonnes of Foodgrain, and a Cotton Mission

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Agricultural production; procurement; cropping patterns

Third Advance Estimates (30 May)

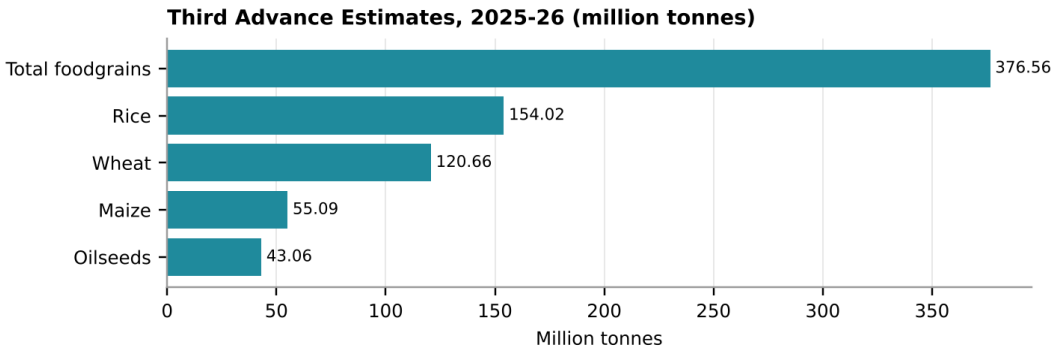


Chart. Foodgrains rose 5.3% from 357.73 million tonnes; maize, mustard, groundnut and sugarcane all hit records. Source: Ministry of Agriculture (DES), 30 May 2026, as reported.

Wheat procurement

Wheat procurement for 2026-27 reportedly crossed **35 million tonnes** by late May, about 17% more than last year, led by Punjab (12.1), Madhya Pradesh (10.4) and Haryana (8.1). Mandi prices below MSP pushed more farmers to sell to the government (reported).

Mission for Cotton Productivity (5 May)

- Outlay of Rs 5,659 crore for 2026-27 to 2030-31; about 32 lakh farmers to benefit.
- Goal: lint yield of 755 kg per hectare and 498 lakh bales.
- **Debate:** yields are low because of pink bollworm and ageing Bt technology; new seed traits await approval.

Did you know?
Bt cotton (2002) is the only GM crop approved for commercial cultivation in India. Cotton is measured in bales of 170 kg.

41 | ECONOMY GS 3

Power, Fuel and Coal: Meeting a Record 257 GW Under an Oil Shock

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Energy security; infrastructure

Record demand

On **18 May** India met a record peak demand of **257.37 GW** at 3:42 pm, beating April's 256.1 GW. The same night it met a record **247.21 GW** outside solar hours, the real test of the grid.

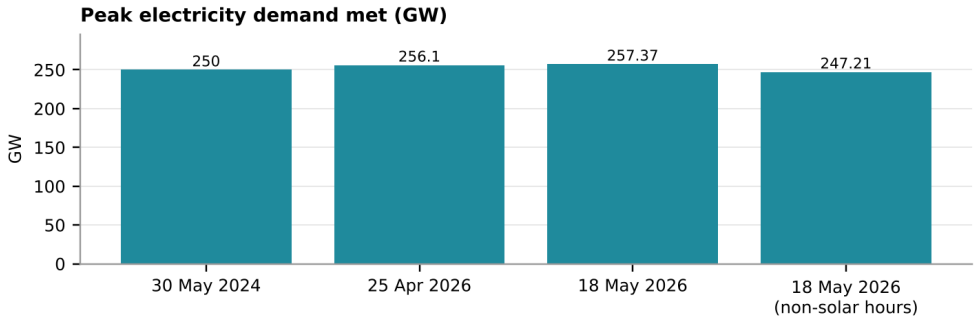


Chart. Evening demand needs storage, hydro and flexible thermal power. Source: Ministry of Power figures as reported by Tribune and SolarQuarter.

LPG and fuel

- Fuel use in May was 19.93 million tonnes, 6.5% lower than a year earlier; LPG demand fell about 20% as Gulf supplies were disrupted (reported).
- India bought spot LPG cargoes from the US and raised domestic output (reported). Its strategic reserves hold crude only, not LPG.

Coal gasification scheme (Cabinet, May)

- Rs 37,500 crore of incentives, up to 20% of plant cost, capped at Rs 5,000 crore per project.
- Aims at about 25 projects and supports the target of gasifying 100 million tonnes of coal by 2030.
- **Debate:** it cuts imports of LNG, urea and methanol, but is carbon-intensive without carbon capture; Indian coal is high in ash.

Did you know?
Syngas from coal gasification is mainly carbon monoxide and hydrogen. Talcher Fertilizers (Odisha) is India's flagship coal-to-urea project.

42 | ECONOMY GS 3

Rail Lines and a Ship Repair Hub: May's Cabinet Approvals

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Infrastructure; railways; ports and shipping

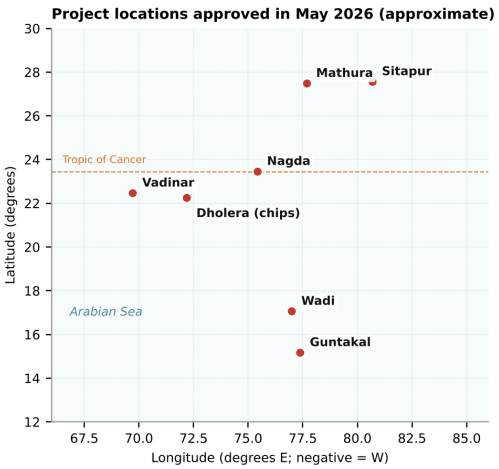
Rail multitracking (CCEA, 5 May)

Project	States	Length	Cost	Extra freight
Nagda-Mathura (3rd and 4th lines)	MP, Rajasthan, UP	568 km	Rs 16,403 crore	27 MT a year
Guntakal-Wadi	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka	230 km	Rs 4,758 crore	17.4 MT a year
Burhwal-Sitapur	Uttar Pradesh	103 km	Rs 2,276 crore	15.5 MT a year

Together, about 901 km and Rs 23,437 crore, planned under PM Gati Shakti to ease the busy Delhi-Mumbai and southern trunk routes.

Ship repair at Vadinar (5 May)

- Rs 1,570 crore for two 300-metre floating dry docks able to repair 34 ships a year, with natural depth over 14 m.
- Indian ships now go to Dubai, Singapore or Colombo for repairs; this saves foreign exchange.
- **Concern:** the Gulf of Kutch is ecologically sensitive (Marine National Park).



Location diagram. Points plotted by latitude and longitude; boundaries not shown. Points are approximate.

Did you know?
The National Rail Plan aims for a 45% rail share of freight by 2030. Marine National Park, Gulf of Kutch (1982) was India's first marine national park.

43 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

WMO: 91% Chance of a Year Above 1.5 C by 2030

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Climate change; international reports

Context

Copernicus reported that **May 2026 was the second-warmest May** on record, 1.42 C above pre-industrial, with sea temperatures also second-highest. On **28 May** the WMO's Global Annual to Decadal Climate Update looked ahead to 2026-2030.

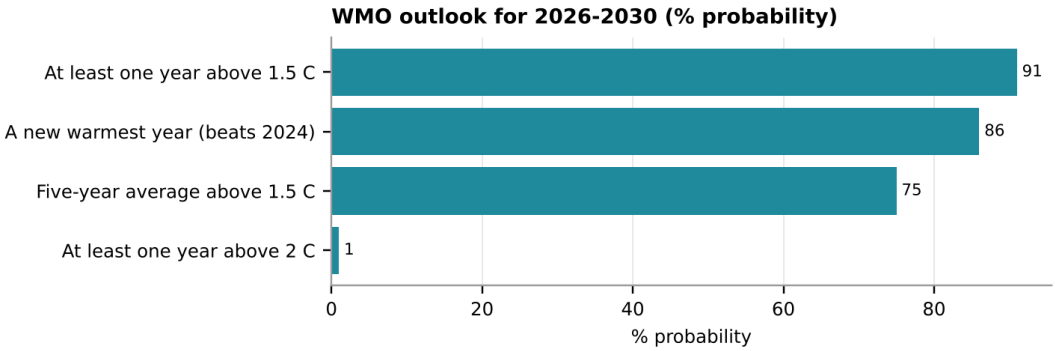


Chart. The 2 C figure is 'less than 1%', shown as 1. Arctic winters are projected to warm 3.5 times faster than the globe. Source: WMO Global Annual to Decadal Climate Update, 28 May 2026.

Why it matters

- Single years above 1.5 C are becoming normal, though the Paris limit refers to a long-term average.
- El Nino on top of record warming raises the risk to India's monsoon, crops, power demand and health in 2026-27.

Did you know?
Copernicus's climate service is run by ECMWF using the ERA5 dataset. WMO's decadal update is produced with the UK Met Office.

44 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

Project Cheetah: Botswana Cats Go Free, Cubs Lost

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Conservation; wildlife management

Context

Female cheetahs brought from **Botswana** in February were released from enclosures into the wild at **Kuno National Park** (Madhya Pradesh) on 11, 13 and 15 May; 16 cheetahs now range free. On 13 May four month-old cubs of a female were found dead, with predation suspected.

- Population estimates differ between sources (about 53-57 in Kuno and Gandhi Sagar, reported).
- Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary is the second site; Nauradehi (Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve) is planned next.
- Sourcing from Namibia, South Africa and now Botswana widens the gene pool.

Challenges

- Predation by leopards and hyenas; heat stress; limited prey and space.
- Cheetahs straying into villages; the need for corridors between sites.

Did you know?
Project Cheetah began on 17 September 2022 with eight cheetahs from Namibia. The cheetah was declared extinct in India in 1952; it is IUCN 'Vulnerable' and in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act.

45 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

Big Cat Alliance Summit Postponed to Link With Africa

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Conservation diplomacy. GS2: India-Africa relations

Context

On **22 May** the Environment Ministry postponed the first **International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Summit**, planned for 1 June in New Delhi, to align it with the deferred Fourth India-Africa Forum Summit so that African range countries could attend.

- IBCA covers seven big cats: tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard, cheetah, jaguar and puma. Five are found in India (all but the jaguar and puma).
- It is India-led conservation diplomacy, like the International Solar Alliance, with strong African links through cheetahs and lions.
- **Challenges:** stable funding, a capable secretariat, and real involvement of Latin American and African members.

Did you know?
The Prime Minister announced IBCA in April 2023 at Mysuru, marking 50 years of Project Tiger. Its headquarters is in India.

46 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

Stray Dogs Ruling: Compassion and Public Safety

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Animal welfare. GS2: Fundamental rights; local governance

Context

In a suo motu case, the Supreme Court on **19 May** upheld the Animal Welfare Board of India's procedure for managing stray dogs.

Key holdings (as reported by SC Observer)

- Article 21 includes the right to move in public spaces without fear of attack.
- Dogs are to be sterilised, vaccinated and returned to their area, but those in schools, hospitals and bus depots go to shelters.
- Euthanasia is allowed for rabid, incurably ill or dangerous dogs; designated feeding spots and helplines are required.

Balancing values

- Compassion for animals (Article 51A(g)) against the safety of children and the elderly.
- India carries a large share of the world's rabies deaths; the goal is zero dog-mediated rabies deaths by 2030.
- Municipal capacity for sterilisation and shelters is the main gap.

Did you know?
The Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023 are framed under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960. The Animal Welfare Board of India was set up in 1962.

47 | ENVIRONMENT GS 3

Biodiversity Days: 'Acting Locally for Global Impact'

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Biodiversity; international conventions

Context

Day	2026 theme
World Migratory Bird Day (9 May)	'Every Bird Counts: Your Observations Matter!'
World Bee Day (20 May)	'Bee together for people and the planet'
International Day for Biological Diversity (22 May)	'Acting locally for global impact'

The biodiversity theme builds towards CBD COP17, which will hold the first global review of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (2022), including the '30x30' target to protect 30% of land and sea by 2030.

Local action in India

- Biodiversity Management Committees and People's Biodiversity Registers under the Biological Diversity Act.
- Pollinator protection and the National Beekeeping and Honey Mission.
- Citizen science, such as bird counts, for monitoring.

Did you know?
22 May marks the adoption of the agreed text of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nairobi, 1992. World Bee Day honours Slovenian beekeeper Anton Jansa, born on 20 May.

48 | DISASTER MANAGEMENT GS 3

Heat in May: Banda at 48.2 C, and Science Links It to Climate Change

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Disaster management; heatwaves; climate attribution

Context

- **Banda** (Uttar Pradesh) recorded **48.2 C** around 20 May, India's hottest place for three days running; IMD issued a red alert.
- **Telangana** reported more than 150 heat deaths in about four days (22-25 May), with Warangal worst hit (reported).
- **World Weather Attribution** (14 May) found climate change made the 15-day heatwave over north-west India and Pakistan about **three times more likely** and about 0.9 C hotter.

Why the plateau and plains bake

Clear skies, a near-overhead sun, hot north-westerly winds from the Thar and sinking air under high pressure heat the land fast. Bundelkhand's rocky, bare soils and Telangana's dry interior air keep nights warm too, which is often deadlier than daytime peaks.

Way forward

- Ward-level Heat Action Plans with budgets; shifted working hours for outdoor workers; cooling centres.
- Standard counting of heat deaths; heat to qualify for disaster relief funds.

Did you know?
Heatwave (plains): maximum at least 40 C and 4.5 C above normal, or 45 C or more. Severe: 6.5 C above normal or 47 C or more. Ahmedabad had India's first Heat Action Plan (2013).

49 | DISASTER MANAGEMENT GS 3

Storms and Lightning: Uttar Pradesh's Deadly 13 May

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Disaster management; lightning; early warning

Context

Thunderstorms, dust storms, hail and lightning swept Uttar Pradesh on **13 May**, killing **89-96 people** (figures differ between reports), mostly in Prayagraj, Bhadohi, Fatehpur and Pratapgarh. Storms and lightning also killed people in Bihar in late May.

How pre-monsoon storms form

- Intense surface heating makes the air unstable.
- Moist air from the Bay of Bengal flows into the Gangetic plain.
- Western disturbances or troughs give the lift; tall cumulonimbus clouds produce squalls and lightning.

Most victims are farmers and labourers caught in the open or sheltering in weak structures. Lightning is India's single biggest natural killer but is not a nationally notified disaster.

Way forward

- Nowcast alerts through the Damini app (IITM Pune) and the Sachet system.
- Lightning conductors on schools and public buildings; awareness drives; States notifying lightning as a local disaster.

Did you know?

Pre-monsoon storms have local names: kalbaishakhi (Bengal), mango showers (Kerala), cherry blossoms (Karnataka) and tea showers (Assam).

50 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

Starship V3 Flies: What Cheap Heavy Lift Means for India

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Space technology; commercial space

Context

SpaceX flew the first Version 3 Starship on **22 May 2026** from Starbase, Texas (reported). On a suborbital flight of about 90 minutes it carried dummy Starlink satellites, relit an engine in space and splashed down in the Indian Ocean. One engine shut down early, but most test objectives were met.

Key Points (reported)

- Height about 124 m; the booster has 33 Raptor 3 engines.
- Designed to carry more than 100 tonnes to low Earth orbit, fully reusable.
- Starship is NASA's chosen lander for the Artemis III Moon landing.

Why it matters for India

- Fully reusable heavy rockets could slash launch prices; ISRO's commercial arm and private firms like Skyroot and Agnikul will face tougher competition.
- It strengthens the case for ISRO's reusable Next Generation Launch Vehicle.
- Bigger Starlink satellites affect India's satellite-internet market and spectrum policy.

Concerns

- Debris risks from failures; dependence on one private company for access to space; orbital refuelling still unproven.

Did you know?
Starship burns liquid methane and liquid oxygen. India signed the Artemis Accords in June 2023.

51 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

Twelve Chip Projects: Two New Units in Gujarat

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Semiconductors; industrial policy; supply chains

Context

On **5 May** the Cabinet approved two more units under the India Semiconductor Mission, worth **Rs 3,936 crore**, taking the total to **12 projects in six States** with about **Rs 1.64 lakh crore** of investment.

Unit	Place	What it will make
Crystal Matrix Ltd	Dholera	Gallium nitride (GaN) compound-semiconductor fab plus packaging, for Mini and Micro-LED displays
Suchi Semicon Pvt Ltd	Surat	Assembly and testing (OSAT) of about 1,033 million discrete chips a year

- Ten projects are under construction and two are already shipping; design support reaches 315 institutions and 104 start-ups.
- During the PM's Dutch visit, ASML and Tata Electronics signed a deal to support the Dholera fab (reported).

Challenges

- Ultra-pure water and stable power; a shortage of fab engineers.
- Imported specialty gases and chemicals; heavy subsidies per job; concentration in Gujarat.

Did you know?
A 'fab' makes circuits on wafers (front end); OSAT or ATMP units cut, package and test them (back end). GaN is a wide-bandgap material used in power electronics, 5G radios and LEDs.

52 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

Shaw Prize 2026: A Leukaemia Cure and the Origin of Elements

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Biotechnology; health; basic science

Context

The Shaw Prizes, worth US$1.2 million each, were announced in Hong Kong on **27 May**.

Field	Laureates	For
Life science and medicine	Anne Dejean, Hugues de The, Zhu Chen	Explaining acute promyelocytic leukaemia (APL) and a targeted cure
Astronomy	Ken'ichi Nomoto, Stanford Woosley	Stellar explosions and the origin of the elements
Mathematics	Emmanuel Candes, Camillo De Lellis	Analysis behind signal processing (compressed sensing) and geometric problems

The science

- **APL** is caused by a fused gene (PML-RARA). Two cheap drugs, all-trans retinoic acid and arsenic trioxide, break down the faulty protein, turning one of the deadliest cancers into one of the most curable.
- **Elements:** stars fuse elements up to iron; heavier ones form in supernovae and neutron-star mergers.
- **Compressed sensing** lets scanners rebuild images from fewer measurements, making MRI faster.

The APL cure is inexpensive and can be taken by mouth, which suits resource-poor health systems like India's.

Did you know?
The Shaw Prize was founded in 2002 by Run Run Shaw; the first awards were made in 2004.

53 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

'Inclusive AI for Viksit Bharat': India's Light Touch

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Emerging technologies. GS2: Governance and digital rights

Context

MeitY and the Indian School of Business held a Governance Summit at Mohali on **23 May** on **'Inclusive AI for Viksit Bharat'**. The MeitY Secretary called for AI models that reflect India's linguistic diversity while ensuring strategic autonomy. Panels covered online safety for women and children, health access and jobs.

Approach	Example
Principles-based, light-touch	India's AI Governance Guidelines (2025); AI Safety Institute
Binding, risk-based law	EU AI Act (2024): unacceptable, high, limited and minimal risk

Issues

- **Sovereign AI:** Indian-language models (Bhashini) reduce dependence on foreign systems.
- **Risks:** deepfakes, child abuse material and gendered harassment online.
- **Constraints:** scarce compute, talent abroad, and fitting AI training to the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023.

Did you know?
The IndiaAI Mission (March 2024) has an outlay of Rs 10,371.92 crore and seven pillars, including compute, datasets (AIKosh) and foundation models.

54 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY GS 3

A Busy Month in Orbit: SMILE, Shenzhou-23 and Psyche

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Space science; international cooperation

Context

Date (reported)	Mission	What it does
11 May	Tianzhou-10 (China)	Cargo to the Tiangong station
15 May	Psyche (NASA)	Mars gravity assist on the way to a metal-rich asteroid
19 May	SMILE (ESA and Chinese Academy of Sciences)	First X-ray and UV images of Earth's whole magnetosphere
24 May	Shenzhou-23 (China)	China's first crewed flight of 2026

Why it matters for India

- SMILE's view of the magnetosphere complements India's **Aditya-L1**, which watches the solar wind from the L1 point; together they improve warnings of geomagnetic storms that threaten satellites and power grids.
- China's steady station traffic sets the pace for Gaganyaan and the Bharatiya Antariksh Station.
- ISRO made no confirmed orbital launch in May after January's PSLV-C62 anomaly.

Did you know?
A gravity assist uses a planet's gravity and motion to change a spacecraft's speed or direction without fuel. Aditya-L1 sits about 1.5 million km from Earth.

55 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

Advanced Agni Tested With Multiple Warheads

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Defence technology; nuclear deterrence

Context

DRDO flight-tested an **Advanced Agni missile with MIRV technology** (multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles) from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island, Odisha, on **8 May 2026**. Ground and ship stations tracked all payloads to impact across the Indian Ocean, and all objectives were met.

- Media describe it as Agni-5 class with a range above 5,000 km and the second MIRV test after Mission Divyastra (March 2024); the official statement did not give range or payload numbers.
- MIRV lets one missile strike several targets, making a second strike more credible and missile defences costlier to build.

Debate

- **Supporters:** it strengthens credible minimum deterrence under No First Use.
- **Concerns:** an arms race with China and Pakistan; the need for survivable command and control and more fissile material.

Did you know?
Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island (formerly Wheeler Island) lies off Bhadrak, Odisha. The Agni series came out of the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (1983).

56 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

Scramjet for 1,200 Seconds and the TARA Glide Kit

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Defence technology; indigenisation

Scramjet test

DRDL Hyderabad ran a full-scale **scramjet combustor for more than 1,200 seconds** (around 9 May, reported), up from 700 seconds in January 2026, using home-grown endothermic hydrocarbon fuel and heat-resistant coatings. The Defence Minister called it a foundation for India's hypersonic cruise missile programme.

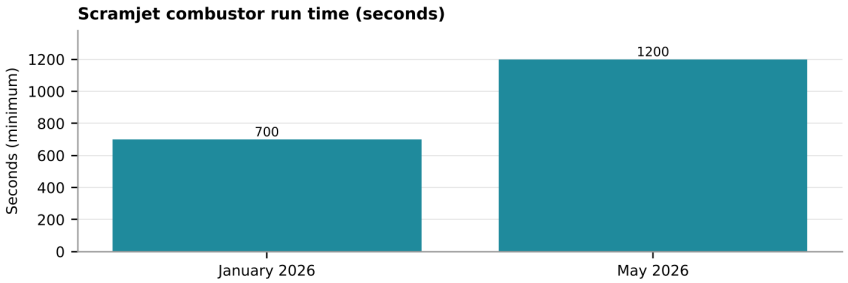


Chart. Both figures are 'more than' values. Source: DRDO via The NewsMill and DRDO press clippings.

TARA glide weapon

DRDO also tested **TARA** (Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation) off Odisha (reported, about 7 May). The kit turns ordinary bombs of 250-500 kg into longer-range precision weapons, reducing reliance on imported kits.

Key term	Meaning
Ramjet	Slows incoming air to subsonic speed before burning fuel
Scramjet	Burns fuel in air moving at supersonic speed; no moving compressor
Hypersonic	Faster than Mach 5, about 6,100 km/h

Did you know?
India's Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV) was flight-tested in September 2020.

57 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

Operation Sindoor at One: Doctrine, Drones and Jointness

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Terrorism; security challenges; defence reforms

Context

7 May 2026 marked a year since Operation Sindoor, India's strikes on terror infrastructure in Pakistan and PoK after the Pahalgam attack. The IAF held an 88-hour commemorative relay run in Delhi (7-10 May), matching the length of the 2025 air operations, and the Army released a video saying India 'will track, identify and punish every terrorist'.

Lessons

- **Doctrine:** major terror attacks treated as acts of war; no tolerance for nuclear blackmail.
- **Air defence:** layered systems (Akashteer, S-400, Akash) against hundreds of drones.
- **Jointness:** the case for theatre commands has grown stronger.
- **Two fronts:** reports of Chinese technical support to Pakistan's air force underline collusion risks (reported).

Did you know?
Akashteer is the Army's automated air-defence control system, made by BEL. The S-400 is called 'Sudarshan Chakra' in Indian service.

58 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

Bastar Declared 'Naxal-Free': From Security to Development

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Left Wing Extremism; development and security

Context

On a visit to **Jagdalpur** around 18-20 May, the Home Minister declared Bastar (and, in some reports, India) free of Naxalism. He credited the District Reserve Guard and CRPF CoBRA commandos and launched the **'Shaheed Veer Gunda Dhur Seva Dera'** project for public services.

Key Points (as reported)
- About 3,000 surrendered Naxals are getting rehabilitation and skills.
- About 70 CAPF camps in Chhattisgarh will become development-focused centres.
- 'Viksit Bharat 2047 cannot be realised without the development of Bastar.'

Holding the gains

- Resolve land, forest-rights and mining grievances under PESA and FRA.

- Rehabilitate surrendered cadres and recover weapons.
- Avoid a security vacuum while moving camps to development work; address rights concerns.

Did you know?
Gunda Dhur led the Bhumkal rebellion of 1910 in Bastar. The CPI (Maoist) was formed in 2004; the SAMADHAN strategy dates from 2017.

59 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

New CDS and Navy Chief as Theatre Commands Wait

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Security forces and their mandate; defence reforms

Context

On **9 May** the government named **Lt Gen N.S. Raja Subramani (retd)** the next Chief of Defence Staff, succeeding Gen Anil Chauhan, whose tenure ended on 30 May, and **Vice Admiral Krishna Swaminathan** as Chief of the Naval Staff from 31 May, succeeding Adm Dinesh K. Tripathi.

- Subramani is a former Vice Chief of the Army Staff and was Military Adviser at the National Security Council Secretariat.
- Swaminathan headed the Western Naval Command and specialises in communications and electronic warfare.
- Three theatre commands (northern, western, maritime) are proposed; formal approval was not confirmed in May.

Did you know?
The CDS post was created in December 2019 and Gen Bipin Rawat took office on 1 January 2020. The CDS heads the Department of Military Affairs; a 2022 rule allows retired Lt Gens under 62 to be appointed.

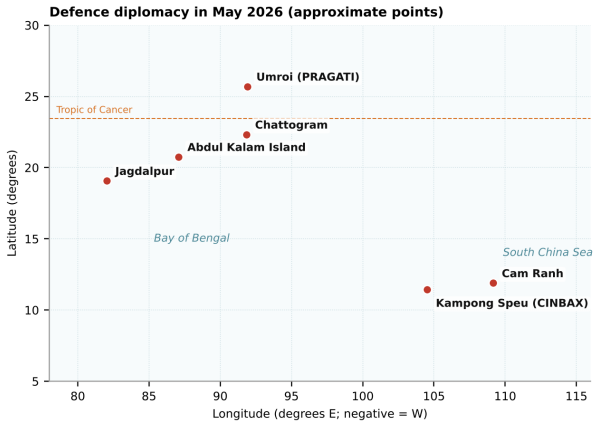
60 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

Exercise PRAGATI: India Hosts 12 Regional Armies

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Security cooperation. GS2: Neighbourhood First; Act East

Context

The Army hosted **PRAGATI 2026** (Partnership of Regional Armies for Growth and Transformation in the Indian Ocean Region) at **Umroi, Meghalaya**, from **20 May**, with Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.



Location diagram. Points plotted by latitude and longitude; boundaries not shown. Points are approximate.

- Focus on counter-terrorism in jungle and semi-mountain terrain, with Indian-made equipment on display.
- Also in May: Exercise CINBAX-II with Cambodia (Kampong Speu), and Navy ship visits to Cam Ranh (Vietnam) and Chattogram (Bangladesh) (reported).

- It puts MAHASAGAR and the Act East policy into practice; Myanmar's participation draws criticism given its military rule.

Did you know?
MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) was announced in Mauritius in March 2025 as the successor to SAGAR (2015).

61 | INTERNAL SECURITY GS 3

Narco-Terror Nexus: 349 kg of Cocaine Seized Near Mumbai

Syllabus Mapping: GS3: Organised crime and terrorism; coastal security

Context

In early May the Narcotics Control Bureau seized about **349 kg of cocaine worth about Rs 1,745 crore** along the Kalamboli-Bhiwandi corridor near Mumbai, breaking a transnational network (named 'Operation White Strike' in some reports). The Home Minister praised the NCB's 'bottom-to-top' approach of tracing small consignments up to the cartel.

- Drug money funds terror and insurgency; ports and logistics hubs are used for smuggling.
- The Coast Guard reportedly inducted **ICGS Achal**, a fast patrol vessel built by Goa Shipyard and based at Vadinar, strengthening watch over the Gulf of Kutch and Sir Creek.

Challenges

- Limited container screening; darknet sales and crypto payments.
- Low conviction rates under the NDPS Act; demand reduction under Nasha Mukt Bharat.

Did you know?
The NCB was set up in 1986 under the NDPS Act, 1985. The Golden Crescent is Afghanistan-Iran-Pakistan; the Golden Triangle is Myanmar-Laos-Thailand.

62 | ETHICS GS 4

Case Study: The Night Before the Exam

Syllabus Mapping: GS4: Integrity; whistle-blowing; conflict of interest; public service values

The case

You are the principal of a government school chosen as a centre for a national entrance exam. The night before the exam, a junior teacher tells you that a colleague, a senior teacher known for running a popular coaching class, has been sharing 'guess questions' with selected students for a fee. She shows you a photo of a handwritten sheet. You cannot be sure it matches the real paper, which is sealed in your strong room. The senior teacher is close to a local politician. If you raise an alarm and it proves false, the exam at your centre could be disrupted for 600 students; if you stay silent and it is true, thousands of honest candidates across the country could be cheated.

Stakeholders

- Candidates and their families, especially those who cannot afford coaching.
- The junior teacher who reported the matter, who needs protection.
- The accused colleague, who is entitled to fair treatment.
- The testing agency, the police and the public, whose trust in exams is at stake.

Ethical issues

- **Integrity and fairness:** a leak turns merit into a commodity.
- **Duty to report versus certainty:** acting on incomplete evidence.
- **Protection of whistle-blowers** and due process for the accused.

- **Pressure and conflict of interest:** political links of the accused.

Option	Merits	Demerits
Stay silent until there is proof	Avoids a false alarm	If true, a national exam is compromised; complicity
Confront the colleague privately	Quick	Tips off a possible network; evidence may vanish
Report at once to the testing agency's observer and the police with the evidence, secure the strong room, protect the informant, and conduct the exam as instructed	Lawful, proportionate and transparent	Possible pressure and disruption; needs courage

A reasoned course of action

Choose the third option. Do not open the sealed paper yourself. Inform the agency's observer and the district police in writing, hand over the photo, and record the junior teacher's statement while keeping her identity confidential. Remove the senior teacher from exam duty without public accusation. Conduct the exam exactly as directed by the agency, which can decide whether the paper must be changed. Afterwards, cooperate with the inquiry and refuse any political pressure, documenting every call.

Ethics vocabulary to use

- **Fiduciary duty:** teachers hold the trust of students and society.
- **Whistle-blowing:** disclosure in the public interest, deserving protection.
- **Procedural justice:** fair process for both the accused and the victims.

63 | ETHICS GS 4

Ethics in the News: Values Behind May's Headlines

Syllabus Mapping: GS4: Ethics in governance, international relations and technology

Why read the news for ethics

These links between May's stories and ethical ideas give ready examples for GS Paper IV. For each, practise a paragraph naming the value, giving the example and balancing it against a competing value.

Story	Ethical question	Concepts to use
NEET-UG leak	Who should bear the cost of an institutional failure?	Fairness; accountability; integrity
Bengal transition	Is a convention binding if it is not written down?	Constitutional morality; grace in defeat
Justice Varma inquiry	Does accountability survive resignation?	Accountability; transparency
Stray dogs ruling	How to balance compassion for animals with human safety?	Compassion; right to life; proportionality
Heat deaths	Do we count every death honestly?	Honesty; dignity; duty of care
Pathogen-sharing talks	What do rich countries owe poor ones in a pandemic?	Global justice; solidarity
AI governance	Innovation or caution?	Responsibility; precaution; inclusion
Transgender amendment	Who decides a person's identity?	Autonomy; dignity; privacy

Thinkers to quote

- **Rabindranath Tagore:** his warning against narrow nationalism. Use it for diplomacy and pluralism.
- **Gopal Krishna Gokhale:** 'spiritualising politics' and selfless public service. Use it for civil-service values.
- **John Rawls:** the veil of ignorance. Use it for exam design and welfare.
- **Peter Singer:** moral concern for animals' suffering. Use it for the stray dogs debate, balanced against human rights.

64 | ESSAY

ESSAY

Essay Corner: Themes from This Month

Three essay themes from May's news, with a sample outline. Write one practice essay (1,000-1,200 words) this week.

Themes to practise

- **Trust is the hidden infrastructure of a nation.** Exams, elections and institutions.
- **A warm ocean, a hungry field.** El Nino, monsoon and food security.
- **Where the mind is without fear.** Tagore's idea of freedom today.

Sample outline: 'Trust is the hidden infrastructure of a nation'

- **Opening:** a student in a small town who studied for two years, only to hear the exam has been cancelled.
- **Meaning:** trust as the belief that rules are fair and applied equally.
- **Institutions:** exams (NEET), elections (roll revisions, results), courts (judicial accountability).
- **Economy:** trust lowers transaction costs; UPI and GST depend on it.
- **Society:** trust between communities and in science, as WHO's World Health Day stressed.
- **Counter-view:** blind trust is dangerous; scrutiny and dissent keep institutions honest.
- **Way forward:** transparency, accountability, technology with safeguards, and civic education.
- **Conclusion:** trust takes years to build and a single leak to break.

Did you know?

Use examples from different fields and regions. Keep a notebook of examples from each month's magazine, grouped by theme.

65 | HISTORY

PRELIMS

History, Culture and Sport: Quick Notes

Anniversaries, heritage, people and sport from May 2026.

Anniversaries

- **Buddha Purnima:** 1 May 2026.
- **Tagore (born 7 May 1861):** 165th anniversary marked on Pochishe Boishakh, 9 May.
- **Gokhale (born 9 May 1866):** 160th anniversary; founded the Servants of India Society (1905).
- **Revolt of 1857:** began at Meerut on 10 May.
- **Pokhran-II:** 11 May 1998; National Technology Day.
- **Anti-Terrorism Day:** 21 May, Rajiv Gandhi's 35th death anniversary.

Culture and people

- **International Museum Day (18 May):** 'Museums Uniting a Divided World' (ICOM).
- **International Booker 2026:** *Taiwan Travelogue* by Yang Shuang-zi, translated by Lin King.
- **Cannes 2026:** Palme d'Or to *Fjord* (Cristian Mungiu).
- **Padma Awards:** 66 of 131 conferred at the first investiture, 25 May.

Sports

- **IPL 2026:** Royal Challengers Bengaluru beat Gujarat Titans in the final (31 May, Ahmedabad); Virat Kohli Player of the Match.
- **Thomas Cup 2026 (Horsens, Denmark):** China champions; India bronze. **Uber Cup:** South Korea.

66 | GEOGRAPHY PRELIMS

Geography: Phenomena in the News

Concepts behind May's geography stories.

Monsoon and ENSO

- **IMD second-stage forecast (29 May):** 90% of LPA plus or minus 4%; 60% chance of a deficient season.
- **Onset criteria:** rainfall at 14 Kerala stations, the westerly wind field and outgoing longwave radiation.
- **NOAA (14 May):** 82% chance of El Nino in May-July.
- **Teleconnection:** El Nino raises wind shear over the Atlantic, so NOAA expects a below-normal hurricane season (55%).

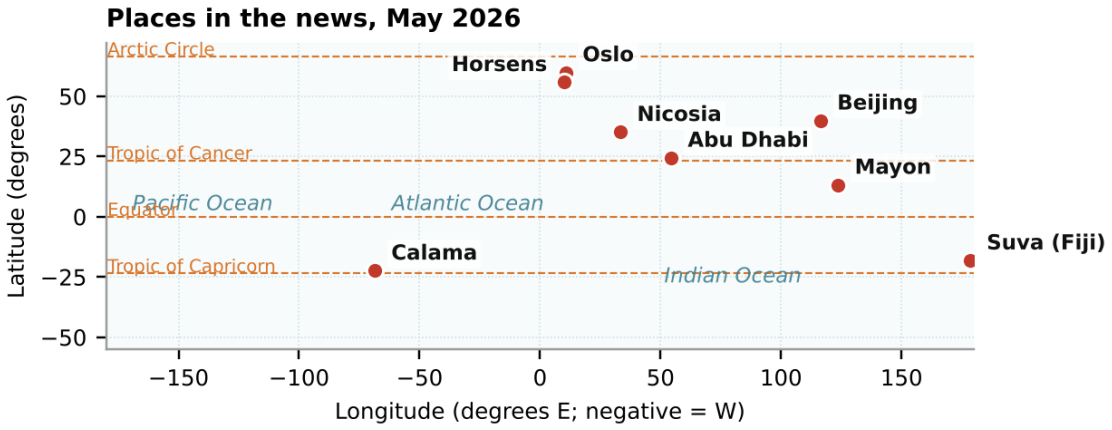
Earth and weather

- **Calama M6.9 (Chile):** intermediate-depth (109 km) quake in the Nazca slab.
- **Mayon:** stratovolcano in Albay, Philippines; Alert Level 3.
- **Meiyu front:** East Asian monsoon rain belt over the Yangtze basin (Baiu in Japan, Changma in Korea).
- **Kalbaishakhi:** pre-monsoon storms in Bengal, Odisha and Assam.

67 | GEOGRAPHY PRELIMS

Places in the News: May 2026 on the Map

Locate each place and learn one fact about it.



Location diagram. Points plotted by latitude and longitude; boundaries not shown. Red dots mark the places; dashed lines mark the Tropics, the Equator and the Arctic Circle.

Abroad

- **Oslo:** third India-Nordic Summit (19 May).
- **Nicosia:** capital of Cyprus; President's state visit to India.
- **Abu Dhabi:** PM's UAE visit; oil storage deal.
- **Beijing:** 35th India-China WMCC (27 May).
- **Suva, Fiji:** site of a Quad port project (reported).
- **Horsens, Denmark:** Thomas and Uber Cup.

India

- **Banda (UP):** 48.2 C, hottest in India.
- **Umroi (Meghalaya):** Exercise PRAGATI.
- **Jagdalpur (Chhattisgarh):** Bastar declared Naxal-free.
- **Vadinar (Gujarat):** ship repair facility.
- **Kuno (MP):** Botswana cheetahs released.

68 | POLITY PRELIMS

Polity and Governance: Quick Notes

Results, rulings and institutions in May 2026.

Elections

- **Results (4 May):** BJP 208/294 in West Bengal; TVK 108/234 in Tamil Nadu; UDF 102/140 in Kerala; NDA 102/126 in Assam; AINRC-BJP 16/30 in Puducherry.
- **Article 174(2)(b):** Governor's power to dissolve the Assembly, used in West Bengal on 7 May.
- **SIR Phase III:** 16 States and 3 UTs (announced 14 May); Bihar SIR upheld (27 May).

Courts

- **Sabarimala reference:** verdict reserved 14 May.
- **Transgender Amendment Act:** notice issued 4 May; no interim stay.
- **Supreme Court strength:** raised to 38 including the CJI.
- **Varma inquiry report:** submitted to the Speaker on 18 May.
- **UAPA bail:** conflict with the Najeeb ruling referred to a larger bench (22 May).

69 | SOCIAL JUSTICE PRELIMS

Society, Health and Welfare: Quick Notes

Reports, days and schemes from May 2026.

Health and education

- **NEET-UG:** held 3 May, cancelled 12 May, re-test 21 June.
- **WHA79 (18-23 May):** 'Reshaping global health: a shared responsibility'; PABS annex deadline moved to May 2027.
- **World No Tobacco Day:** 'Unmasking the appeal'.
- **International Nurses Day (12 May):** 'Our Nurses. Our Future. Empowered Nurses Save Lives'.

Data and reports

- **PLFS (April):** unemployment 5.2%; female LFPR 33.9%.
- **NCRB Crime in India 2024:** crime rate 418.9 per lakh.
- **GRID 2026:** 82.2 million internally displaced worldwide.
- **RSF Press Freedom Index 2026** (released 30 April): India 157th of 180.
- **International Day of Families (15 May):** 'Families, Inequalities and Child Well-being'.

70 | INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PRELIMS

International Relations: Quick Notes

Meetings, visits and groupings from May 2026.

India's diplomacy

- **BRICS Foreign Ministers (New Delhi, 14-15 May):** Chair's Statement instead of a joint statement.
- **PM's tour (15-20 May):** UAE, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Italy.
- **India-Nordic Summit (Oslo, 19 May):** Green Technology and Innovation Strategic Partnership; Finland to host next.
- **Cyprus:** Strategic Partnership; Defence Cooperation Roadmap 2026-31.
- **Quad Foreign Ministers (New Delhi, 26 May):** critical minerals and energy security initiatives.

Neighbourhood

- **Nepal:** objected to the Lipulekh route, citing the Sugauli Treaty (1816).
- **China:** 35th WMCC in Beijing (27 May).
- **Operation Sindoor anniversary:** 7 May.

71 | ECONOMY PRELIMS

Economy: Quick Notes

Indicators, decisions and data from May 2026.

Prices and money

- **CPI (April):** 3.48%; **WPI:** 8.3%, a 42-month high; fuel and power WPI 24.71%.
- **RBI surplus:** Rs 2,86,588 crore; Contingent Risk Buffer 6.5%.
- **RBI balance sheet:** Rs 91.97 lakh crore; gold 880.52 tonnes.
- **Rupee:** record low near 96.96 per dollar; reserves US$681.4 billion (week to 22 May).

Trade, tax and agriculture

- **April trade deficit:** US$28.38 billion; gold imports up 81.7%.
- **April GST:** record of about Rs 2.43 lakh crore.
- **Kharif MSP:** paddy Rs 2,441; biggest increase for sunflower seed (Rs 622).
- **Third Advance Estimates:** foodgrains 376.56 million tonnes.
- **ECLGS 5.0:** Rs 2.55 lakh crore credit support.
- **Peak power:** 257.37 GW on 18 May.

72 | ENVIRONMENT PRELIMS

Environment and Ecology: Quick Notes

Reports, species and days from May 2026.

Climate

- **Copernicus:** May 2026 second-warmest May, 1.42 C above pre-industrial.
- **WMO decadal update (28 May):** 91% chance of a year above 1.5 C by 2030.
- **WWA (14 May):** climate change made the South Asian heatwave about 3 times likelier.

Wildlife and conservation

- **Cheetah:** IUCN Vulnerable; Schedule I; Botswana cheetahs released at Kuno.
- **IBCA:** seven big cats; first summit postponed.
- **Great Indian Bustard:** Critically Endangered; fewer than 150 in the wild (reported).
- **International Day for Biological Diversity:** 'Acting locally for global impact'.
- **Stray dogs ruling (19 May):** ABC Rules 2023 under the PCA Act, 1960.

73 | SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PRELIMS

Science and Technology: Quick Notes

Missions, prizes and policies from May 2026.

Space and tech

- **Starship V3:** first flight 22 May; 33 Raptor 3 engines.
- **SMILE:** ESA-China magnetosphere mission launched 19 May (reported).
- **ISM:** 12 approved projects; GaN fab at Dholera.
- **National Technology Day (11 May):** theme reported as 'Responsible Innovation for Inclusive Growth'.
- **Governance Summit (23 May):** 'Inclusive AI for Viksit Bharat'.

Prizes

- **Shaw Prize 2026:** APL cure (Dejean, de The, Zhu Chen); stellar explosions (Nomoto, Woosley); mathematics (Candes, De Lellis).

74 | INTERNAL SECURITY PRELIMS

Defence and Security: Quick Notes

Tests, exercises and appointments from May 2026.

Tests and platforms

- **Advanced Agni with MIRV:** 8 May, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island.
- **Scramjet:** more than 1,200 seconds at DRDL Hyderabad.
- **TARA:** glide kit for 250-500 kg bombs (RCI Hyderabad).
- **ICGS Achal:** fast patrol vessel based at Vadinar (reported).

People and exercises

- **CDS:** Lt Gen N.S. Raja Subramani (named 9 May).
- **Navy Chief:** Adm Krishna Swaminathan (from 31 May).
- **PRAGATI 2026:** Umroi, Meghalaya; 12 partner armies.
- **CINBAX-II:** India-Cambodia, Kampong Speu.
- **NCB:** 349 kg cocaine seized near Mumbai.

75 | REVISION REVISION

Days and Themes of May 2026

Important days observed in May, with their 2026 themes.

Days with themes

- **World Migratory Bird Day (9 May):** 'Every Bird Counts: Your Observations Matter!'
- **International Nurses Day (12 May):** 'Our Nurses. Our Future. Empowered Nurses Save Lives'.
- **International Day of Families (15 May):** 'Families, Inequalities and Child Well-being'.
- **World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (17 May):** 'Digital Lifelines: Strengthening Resilience in a Connected World'.
- **International Museum Day (18 May):** 'Museums Uniting a Divided World'.
- **World Bee Day (20 May):** 'Bee together for people and the planet'.
- **International Day for Biological Diversity (22 May):** 'Acting locally for global impact'.
- **World No Tobacco Day (31 May):** 'Unmasking the appeal'.

Anniversaries

- **7 May:** Operation Sindoor, one year.
- **9 May:** Tagore (Pochishe Boishakh) and Gokhale.
- **11 May:** National Technology Day.
- **21 May:** Anti-Terrorism Day.

Practice Questions: Prelims and Mains

1. Rabindranath Tagore renounced his knighthood in protest against:

(a) the Partition of Bengal (b) the Jallianwala Bagh massacre (c) the Rowlatt Act (d) the Simon Commission

Answer: (b). He gave it up in 1919.

2. Which of the following was founded by Gopal Krishna Gokhale?

(a) Deccan Education Society (b) Servants of India Society (c) Prarthana Samaj (d) Satyashodhak Samaj

Answer: (b). Founded in Pune in 1905.

3. Consider: 1. Pokhran-I was code-named 'Smiling Buddha'. 2. Pokhran-II tests were held on 11 and 13 May 1998. Which is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both (d) Neither

Answer: (c). Pokhran-I was on 18 May 1974.

4. The only Indian film to win Cannes' top prize, then called the Grand Prix du Festival, is:

(a) Pather Panchali (b) Neecha Nagar (c) Do Bigha Zamin (d) Salaam Bombay

Answer: (b). Chetan Anand's film won in 1946.

5. International Museum Day is observed by which organisation?

(a) UNESCO (b) ICOMOS (c) ICOM (d) ICCROM

Answer: (c). ICOM, founded in 1946, is based in Paris.

6. Which Indian books have won the International Booker Prize?

(a) Tomb of Sand only (b) Heart Lamp only (c) Both Tomb of Sand and Heart Lamp (d) Neither

Answer: (c). Hindi (2022) and Kannada (2025).

7. In IMD's classification, a 'deficient' monsoon is rainfall of:

(a) less than 90% of LPA (b) 90-95% of LPA (c) 96-104% of LPA (d) less than 80% of LPA

Answer: (a). IMD gave this a 60% chance in May 2026.

8. Which of the following is NOT one of IMD's criteria for declaring monsoon onset over Kerala?

(a) Rainfall at designated stations (b) Wind field (c) Outgoing longwave radiation (d) Sea level pressure at Darwin

Answer: (d). Darwin pressure is part of the Southern Oscillation Index.

9. El Nino tends to reduce Atlantic hurricane activity mainly by:

(a) cooling the Atlantic (b) increasing vertical wind shear (c) strengthening trade winds (d) shifting the ITCZ south

Answer: (b). Shear tears apart developing storms.

10. The Meiyu front, which brings May-July rain to the Yangtze basin, is called in Japan:

(a) Changma (b) Baiu (c) Bora (d) Mistral

Answer: (b). Changma is the Korean name.

11. A deep (about 109 km) earthquake near Calama, Chile, occurred within the:

(a) Cocos Plate (b) Nazca Plate (c) Scotia Plate (d) Caribbean Plate

Answer: (b). The Nazca Plate subducts beneath South America.

12. Consider: 1. The Census is in the Union List. 2. Section 15 of the Census Act protects the confidentiality of records. Which is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both (d) Neither

Answer: (c). Census is Entry 69 of the Union List.

13. The only binding regional treaty on internally displaced persons is the:

(a) Cartagena Declaration (b) Kampala Convention (c) Bangkok Principles (d) Dublin Regulation

Answer: (b). Adopted by the African Union in 2009.

14. The Governor of West Bengal dissolved the Assembly in May 2026 under:

(a) Article 163 (b) Article 164(2) (c) Article 174(2)(b) (d) Article 356

Answer: (c). Article 174 deals with sessions, prorogation and dissolution.

15. In S.R. Bommai v Union of India (1994), the Supreme Court held that:

(a) Governors have unlimited discretion (b) majority must be tested on the floor of the House (c) President's Rule is not reviewable (d) the CM must be a member of the Assembly

Answer: (b). The floor test is the proper forum.

16. Puducherry's Legislative Assembly has how many elected members?

(a) 23 (b) 30 (c) 33 (d) 40

Answer: (b). Up to three more may be nominated.

17. The 'essential religious practices' doctrine originated in:

(a) Shirur Mutt (1954) (b) Kesavananda Bharati (1973) (c) Indra Sawhney (1992) (d) Puttaswamy (2017)

Answer: (a). The Sabarimala reference may revisit it.

18. The NALSA judgment (2014) is associated with:

(a) the right to privacy (b) recognition of self-identified gender (c) decriminalising homosexuality (d) passive euthanasia

Answer: (b). Navtej Johar (2018) decriminalised homosexuality.

19. Special revision of electoral rolls is provided for under:

(a) Section 21(3), RP Act 1950 (b) Section 81, RP Act 1951 (c) Article 329 (d) Section 123, RP Act 1951

Answer: (a). The Supreme Court upheld the Bihar SIR on this basis.

20. The number of judges of the Supreme Court is fixed by:

(a) the President by order (b) the Chief Justice (c) Parliament by law (d) the Collegium

Answer: (c). Under Article 124(1); the 2026 ordinance raised it to 38.

21. Under the 2023 Act, the panel selecting Election Commissioners consists of the PM, the Leader of the Opposition and:

(a) the CJI (b) the Speaker (c) a Union Cabinet Minister (d) the Vice-President

Answer: (c). Anoop Baranwal had included the CJI as an interim measure.

22. The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act was enacted in:

(a) 2017 (b) 2020 (c) 2024 (d) 2026

Answer: (c). It covers exams held by UPSC, SSC, NTA and others.

23. The Pandemic Agreement cannot open for signature until which annex is adopted?

(a) IHR annex (b) PABS annex (c) TRIPS annex (d) One Health annex

Answer: (b). The deadline is now WHA80 (May 2027).

24. India banned e-cigarettes through a law passed in:

(a) 2003 (b) 2015 (c) 2019 (d) 2023

Answer: (c). COTPA dates from 2003.

25. Which of these countries is NOT a member of BRICS?

(a) Ethiopia (b) Indonesia (c) Argentina (d) UAE

Answer: (c). Argentina declined its 2023 invitation; Indonesia joined in 2025.

26. India's Arctic research station Himadri is located at:

(a) Greenland (b) Ny-Alesund, Svalbard (c) Tromso (d) Iceland

Answer: (b). It was set up in 2008.

27. Nicosia, the last divided capital in Europe, is the capital of:

(a) Malta (b) Cyprus (c) Greece (d) Kosovo

Answer: (b). UNFICYP has been there since 1964.

28. Nepal's claim to Lipulekh and Kalapani is based on the:

(a) Treaty of Segauli/Sugauli, 1816 (b) Treaty of Peace and Friendship, 1950 (c) Shimla Agreement, 1914 (d) Treaty of Titalia, 1817

Answer: (a). India says the Yatra has used Lipulekh since 1954.

29. Which body compiles the Wholesale Price Index?

(a) NSO (b) RBI (c) Office of the Economic Adviser, DPIIT (d) Labour Bureau

Answer: (c). April 2026 WPI was 8.3%.

30. The RBI transfers its surplus to the Centre under which section of the RBI Act?

(a) Section 7 (b) Section 17 (c) Section 45ZA (d) Section 47

Answer: (d). Section 45ZA deals with the inflation target.

31. Which committee designed the RBI's Economic Capital Framework?

(a) Urjit Patel (b) Bimal Jalan (c) Y.V. Reddy (d) Raghuram Rajan

Answer: (b). It reported in 2019.

32. Which of the following is NOT a component of India's forex reserves?

(a) Gold (b) SDRs (c) Reserve tranche position (d) NRI deposits

Answer: (d). NRI deposits are liabilities of banks.

33. Minimum Support Price is announced on the recommendation of the:

(a) NITI Aayog (b) CACP (c) FCI (d) NABARD

Answer: (b). The CCEA takes the final decision.

34. The only GM crop approved for commercial cultivation in India is:

(a) Bt brinjal (b) GM mustard (c) Bt cotton (d) Golden rice

Answer: (c). Approved in 2002.

35. Syngas produced by coal gasification consists mainly of:

(a) methane and ethane (b) carbon monoxide and hydrogen (c) carbon dioxide and nitrogen (d) ammonia and hydrogen

Answer: (b). It can be turned into urea, methanol or SNG.

36. Marine National Park in the Gulf of Kutch, near the planned Vadinar ship-repair facility, was India's first marine national park, set up in:

(a) 1972 (b) 1982 (c) 1992 (d) 2002

Answer: (b). It lies in Gujarat.

37. The cheetah's status under the IUCN Red List is:

(a) Critically Endangered (b) Endangered (c) Vulnerable (d) Near Threatened

Answer: (c). It is in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act.

38. Which of the seven big cats under IBCA are NOT found in India?

(a) Snow leopard and cheetah (b) Jaguar and puma (c) Lion and puma (d) Jaguar and snow leopard

Answer: (b). India has tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard and cheetah.

39. The Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023 are framed under the:

(a) Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (b) Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 (c) Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (d) Biological Diversity Act, 2002

Answer: (b). The AWBI was set up under it in 1962.

40. Damini, a mobile app for lightning warnings, was developed by:

(a) ISRO (b) IITM Pune (c) NDMA (d) INCOIS

Answer: (b). IITM is under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

41. Acute promyelocytic leukaemia, whose cure won a 2026 Shaw Prize, is treated with all-trans retinoic acid and:

(a) cisplatin (b) arsenic trioxide (c) imatinib (d) methotrexate

Answer: (b). Both drugs break down the PML-RARA protein.

42. A scramjet differs from a ramjet in that it:

(a) uses a rotating compressor (b) burns fuel in supersonic airflow (c) carries its own oxidiser (d) works only at low altitude

Answer: (b). A ramjet slows air to subsonic speed first.

43. MIRV technology, tested with an Advanced Agni missile in May 2026, means:

(a) a reusable missile (b) several warheads aimed at different targets (c) a hypersonic glide vehicle (d) a submarine-launched missile

Answer: (b). India's first MIRV test was Mission Divyastra (2024).

44. Exercise PRAGATI 2026 was hosted at:

(a) Umroi, Meghalaya (b) Mhow, MP (c) Pokhran, Rajasthan (d) Belagavi, Karnataka

Answer: (a). Twelve partner armies took part.

Mains Practice

- **Q1.** Tagore was both a patriot and a critic of nationalism. Explain with reference to his writings. (GS I, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q2.** Assess the contribution of the Moderates to the Indian national movement. (GS I, 10 marks, 150 words)

- **Q3.** Explain how El Nino influences weather in different parts of the world. Why is a 'deficient' monsoon forecast a governance challenge? (GS I, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q4.** Why is internal displacement rising worldwide? What should India's approach be? (GS I, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q5.** Rising female education has not translated into higher female workforce participation in India. Examine. (GS I, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q6.** BRICS expansion has increased its reach but weakened its consensus. Discuss India's role as chair. (GS II, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q7.** How can India's partnerships with Nordic countries support its green transition? (GS II, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q8.** Evaluate the significance of the Quad's focus on critical minerals and energy security. (GS II, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q9.** Boundary disputes with Nepal keep recurring. Suggest a way forward. (GS II, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q10.** Constitutional conventions are as important as written law. Discuss with reference to government formation in 2026. (GS II, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q11.** Should the 'essential religious practices' test be replaced? Critically examine. (GS II, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q12.** Critically examine the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026 in light of the NALSA judgment. (GS II, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q13.** Should the selection of Election Commissioners be insulated from the executive? Discuss. (GS II, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q14.** Repeated leaks in entrance examinations erode public trust. Suggest institutional reforms. (GS II, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q15.** Why has the pathogen access and benefit-sharing annex proved hard to agree? What is India's interest? (GS II, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q16.** A widening gap between wholesale and retail inflation signals future price pressures. Explain. (GS III, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q17.** Large RBI surplus transfers help the government but carry risks. Discuss. (GS III, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q18.** Should the RBI defend the rupee during an external shock? Discuss the trade-offs. (GS III, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q19.** Record harvests coexist with low farm incomes and import dependence in pulses and oilseeds. Examine the role of MSP. (GS III, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q20.** Coal gasification supports energy security but challenges climate goals. Discuss. (GS III, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q21.** The evening peak, not the daytime peak, is India's real power challenge. Explain. (GS III, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q22.** What lessons does Project Cheetah offer for large-carnivore reintroduction? (GS III, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q23.** Climate attribution science can change disaster policy. Discuss with reference to heatwaves. (GS III, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q24.** Lightning is India's biggest natural killer. Why, and what should be done? (GS III, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q25.** How will fully reusable heavy-lift rockets change the global space economy? What should India do? (GS III, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q26.** Assess India's strategy of entering the semiconductor value chain through compound semiconductors and packaging. (GS III, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q27.** Compare light-touch and risk-based approaches to regulating artificial intelligence. Which suits India? (GS III, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q28.** Discuss the strategic significance of MIRV and hypersonic technologies for India. (GS III, 10 marks, 150 words)
- **Q29.** Ending Left Wing Extremism requires sustaining development after security operations. Discuss. (GS III, 15 marks, 250 words)
- **Q30.** 'Integrity in small things builds trust in big institutions.' Discuss with an example from public examinations. (GS IV, 10 marks, 150 words)

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Official Sources to Bookmark

Scan or click to open the official sites used most for monthly current affairs.

Press Information Bureau
https://pib.gov.in
Scan or click to open the official source.

Ministry of External Affairs
https://www.mea.gov.in
Scan or click to open the official source.

Election Commission of India
https://eci.gov.in
Scan or click to open the official source.

Reserve Bank of India
https://www.rbi.org.in
Scan or click to open the official source.

India Meteorological Department
https://mausam.imd.gov.in
Scan or click to open the official source.

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Sources and Notes

- **History and culture:** AIR (Tagore, 9 May; Padma investiture, 25 May; Anti-Terrorism Day); IASGyan (Gokhale); Drishti IAS (National Technology Day, International Booker); ICOM (Museum Day); WION and ETV Bharat (Cannes); Wikipedia (IPL final, Thomas and Uber Cup); Tribune.
- **Geography and disasters:** IMD long range forecast (29 May) and onset forecast (15 May); NOAA CPC ENSO discussion (14 May) and hurricane outlook (21 May); USGS earthquake catalogue; Khaosod and ReliefWeb (Mayon); USGS (Kilauea); AIR (China floods; Banda 48.2 C; Bihar storms); Outlook India and AP (Uttar Pradesh storms); Siasat and ETV Bharat (Telangana heat deaths); World Weather Attribution (14 May).
- **Society:** AIR (Census, 1 and 17 May; CBSE results); MoSPI PLFS bulletin (15 May); IDMC GRID 2026 and Vajiram; Vision IAS and NextIAS (NCRB); UN (Day of Families); WHO (No Tobacco Day, WHA79); Wikipedia, Scroll and Daily Pioneer (NEET).
- **International relations:** BRICS Chair's Statement (ATU BRICS centre), The Wire, AP and Dawn; AIR (PM's tour; Quad); The Week and Punjab Kesari (UAE); Asia Pacific Foundation and Daily Sabah (Europe); Government of Sweden and Regjeringen (India-Nordic joint statement); PMIndia (Cyprus joint statement); Raksha Anirveda and MOFA Japan (Quad); Himalayan Times and Deccan Herald (Nepal); Embassy of India, Beijing (WMCC); Wikipedia (Iran ceasefire).
- **Polity:** Wikipedia election pages compiling ECI results; Business Today, ETV Bharat and Republic World (Bengal); SC Observer monthly review for May 2026 and reports (Transgender Act, SIR, Varma, collegium, liberty, CEC Act); LiveLaw (Sabarimala); SCC Online; The Leaflet; AIR (SIR Phase III; oath ceremonies).
- **Economy and agriculture:** PIB/MoSPI CPI release (12 May); AIR (WPI, 14 May; RBI surplus, 23 May; GST, 1 May; UN WESP, 20 May); Outlook Business and ThePrint (RBI Annual Report); Outlook Money and BasisPoint (rupee, reserves, trade); ICRA (trade); Deccan Herald and ICRA (fiscal deficit); PIB Cabinet briefing (5 May); DT Next and IANS (MSP); Agro and Food Processing and DES (Third Advance Estimates); Daily Pioneer (wheat); Tribune (cotton mission, ECLGS, coal gasification, peak demand); Angel One and Argus (fuel and LPG); The Statesman (rail).
- **Environment:** Copernicus C3S May 2026 bulletin; WMO (28 May); AIR and The Hitavada (cheetahs); AIR and High Commission of India, Lilongwe (IBCA); SC Observer and the Supreme Court judgment of 19 May (stray dogs); CBD notification and Geneva Environment Network (biodiversity days); European Commission and Lloyd's Register (MEPC 84).
- **Science and security:** CislunarSpace, Space.com and ETV Bharat (Starship); PMIndia (semiconductor units); Shaw Prize release; ISB (AI summit); Wikipedia (2026 in spaceflight); ETV Bharat, Raksha Anirveda and DRDO press clippings (Agni MIRV, TARA, ICGS Achal); The NewsMill (scramjet); UNI and WION (Sindoor anniversary); Drishti IAS, Republic World and The Hitavada (Bastar); AIR and Business Standard (CDS and Navy Chief; PRAGATI); Drishti IAS and Swarajya (NCB seizure).

Please verify before use

- **Facts are as reported up to 31 May 2026.** The monsoon reached Kerala in June; the NEET re-test (21 June), the swearing-in of new Supreme Court judges (2 June) and full-year GDP (5 June) fall after the month.
- **Reported, not confirmed from primary documents:** election seat tallies and vote shares (compiled from ECI data by secondary sources); the Tamil Nadu swearing-in date; UAE outcomes (oil storage, US$5 billion); partnership labels in Europe; Quad initiatives; Starship and SMILE details; Telangana heat deaths; Uttar Pradesh storm toll (89-96); wheat procurement figures; LPG demand fall; cheetah population; theatre command status; TARA and ICGS Achal dates; National Technology Day theme; fiscal deficit release date.
- **Figures or dates that differ between sources:** CDS announcement (9 or 10 May); Bastar 'Naxal-free' declaration (18 or 20 May; Bastar or India); NCB seizure (1 or 4 May); April GST (Rs 2.42 or 2.43 lakh crore); Justice Shree Chandrashekhar's High Court; India-Nordic summit date (19 May per joint statement); World Bee Day proclamation year.
- **Supreme Court strength:** stated as 33 plus the CJI raised to 37 plus the CJI (Cabinet, 5 May), the same as 34 to 38 including the CJI; the ordinance date was not confirmed.
- **Approximate map points:** volcano points, project sites and exercise venues are approximate; all maps are location diagrams without boundaries.
- The ethics case study and essay themes are original practice material, not reports of real events.

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