

Topics of Discussion

1. Why Rs 10,000 or the mahila vote don't tell the full story of this dramatic victory
 2. \$300 mn committed for health impacts of climate at COP30
 3. How 27th Amendment cements Pakistan Army's stranglehold over power
 4. Centre notifies data protection rules, paves way for India's first privacy law
 5. Iran seizes tanker in Strait of Hormuz, US official says, as tensions remain high
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Why Rs 10,000 or the mahila vote don't tell the full story of this dramatic victory

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Current events of national and international importance

Mains Examination: General Studies-II: Parliament and State legislatures—structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these

What's the ongoing story: It can often be difficult for a four-term government to return to power, let alone with a two-thirds majority. But that's exactly what the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) achieved under the leadership of [Nitin Kumar](#) in Bihar on Friday (November 14).

Key Points to Ponder:

- How elections are conducted in the state?
- Who is responsible for conducting elections in the state?
- How is the government formed after the results are declared?
- What is the difference between a coalition government and a majoritarian government?
- How are women becoming a decisive factor in winning elections?
- What does it mean to Indian democracy?
- What is anti-incumbency?

— What are the various women specific welfare schemes of Nitish Kumar?

Key Takeaways:

— The strong “badlav” or change vote that made itself seen and heard on the Bihar ground in this election campaign was addressed overwhelmingly to the 20-year-old incumbent.

— Be it on corruption or price rise, unemployment or afsarshahi (rule of the bureaucrat), the wayward policy of prohibition, or most of all, the missing “factory” responsible for the unstanched “palayan” or migration from the state, voters said they wanted better and more — from nine-time Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, not from his challengers.

— An outsized section of punditry attributes the NDA victory to the election-eve transfer of Rs 10,000/- to women under the Mahila Rojgar Yojana, a first instalment in a scheme that aims to promote female entrepreneurship.

— While the cash transfer only days before the election was problematic, pointing to the need for stricter norms and protocols on last-minute offers made by ruling parties, it may not quite be the election-winner it is painted to be.

— It disregards the fact that the Nitish government’s Mahila Rojgar Yojana was not a one-off or standalone scheme, that it came on the top of a long series of policies and measures which were, and were seen to be, pro-women.

— From bicycles for schoolgirls in 2006 to reservation in panchayats and government jobs, from entrenching the Jeevika network of women’s self-help groups across the state, to, despite its excesses and misdirections, the prohibition policy.

— Going ahead, the burden of change is on the victorious incumbent. In his new term, Nitish must give priority to a new and so far neglected set of themes – from urbanisation to industrial investment and tourism, not in that order necessarily.

— As he confronts the task that lies ahead, he will surely draw immense succour and encouragement from the JD(U)-[BJP](#) sweep in an election in which voters said that Tejashwi stands for caste and family, Prashant Kishor for “bhashan (speeches)”, and that “kaam (work)” is associated only with Nitish.

Do You Know:

- The Governor is duty-bound to swear in the elected members as members of the Assembly, as soon as their election is notified under the Representation of the People Act 1951.
- The Governor could not initiate the process of the formation of the Government without constituting the Assembly by swearing in the newly elected members and without the election of at least the Speaker (if not the Deputy Speaker) from amongst themselves, as provided in Article 178 of the Constitution.
- It is only when the Assembly is so constituted that the Governor calls upon the leaders of the political parties in the Assembly to form the government. If there is a party that has an undisputed majority, he appoints the leader of such a party as the Chief Minister.
- However, if there is no party with such a majority, then the party that has a larger number of members and stakes its claim to form the Government is given the first opportunity to form the government.
- If, however, at the very time when such a party stakes its claim, the other parties coming together form a Front and show that the Front has a larger number of members, the Governor will be justified in inviting such a Front to form the government, instead of the single party with a majority.

Previous year UPSC Prelims Question Covering similar theme:

(1) With reference to the Legislative Assembly of a State in India, consider the following statements: (UPSC CSE 2019)

1. The Governor makes a customary address to Members of the House at the commencement of the first session of the year.
2. When a State Legislature does not have a rule on a particular matter, it follows the Lok Sabha rule on that matter.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Previous year UPSC Mains Question Covering similar theme:

“While the national political parties in India favour centralisation, the regional parties are in favour of State autonomy.” Comment. (UPSC CSE 2022)

\$300 mn committed for health impacts of climate at COP30

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Current events of national and international importance

Mains Examination: General Studies-II: Important International institutions, agencies and fora-their structure, mandate

What's the ongoing story: About 80 countries and organisations came together at COP30 in Belem, Brazil to launch the Belem Action Plan for Health and Climate Adaptation, aimed at strengthening global health systems to cope better with impacts of climate change.

Key Points to Ponder:

- What are the key points of the 2025 Lancet Countdown Report on Health and Climate Change?
- How is climate change impacting human health?
- What are the steps needed to be taken to address it?
- What does the latest Adaptation Gap Report tell about climate finance?
- “The large deficits in global-warming mitigation mean that countries have to invest more in shielding people from extreme weather events.” Elaborate.
- What is the significance of COP30?

Key Takeaways:

— Meanwhile, about 35 philanthropies, under the banner of Climate and Health Funders Coalition, announced an initial commitment of US \$300 million for integrated action to deal with both the causes of climate change as well as its consequences on human health.

— This money would also support the implementation of the Belem Health Action Plan and be used for accelerating health solutions where they are needed the most, a statement said.

— At an event organised by the COP30 organisers, Global Climate and Health Alliance and Carbon Copy, speakers highlighted the acute finance gap for adaptation and even lesser for health-focused adaptation plans.

— The 2025 Lancet Countdown Report on Health and Climate Change, which has documented the global health impact of climate change, is the basis for the Belem Action Plan on Health.

— This report, published last month, had revealed that the number of climate change-related deaths was in the millions, and millions more were affected by extreme heat, extreme rainfall and flooding, ever more vicious storms and creeping desertification.

— The discussion at the Belem event highlighted that the health finance gap was a critical component of the overall adaptation finance gap, and the world's inaction was further compounding the situation and the cost.

— The latest Adaptation Gap Report had estimated that developing countries' requirements would be in the range of US \$310-365 billion a year by 2035. The international community is struggling to mobilise the US \$40 billion annual flows that was promised in Glasgow in 2021.

Do You Know:

— The year 2024 was the hottest on record, with catastrophic consequences for the health, lives, and livelihoods of people across the globe, says a new report of The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change.

— Worldwide, the average person was exposed to a record extra 16 health-threatening hot days owing directly to climate change, with the most vulnerable (those aged under 1 year and over 65 years) experiencing, on average, an all-time high of 20 heatwave days—a 389% and 304% increase, respectively, from the 1986–2005 yearly average.

— In 2024, people in India were exposed to 19.8 heatwave days each, on average. Of these, 6.6 days of exposure would not have been expected to occur without climate change.

— The UNEP's Adaptation Gap Report 2025 released in the run-up to COP 30, shows that developing countries will need \$310 billion annually between now and 2035 to protect people from searing heat, rising seas, rivers in spate and deadly storms — this is nearly 12 times the finances currently allocated for adaptation.

Previous year UPSC Prelims Question Covering similar theme:

(2) "Climate Action Tracker" which monitors the emission reduction pledges of different countries is a: (UPSC CSE 2022)

- (a) Database created by coalition of research organisations
- (b) Wing of "International Panel of Climate Change"
- (c) Committee under "United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change"
- (d) Agency promoted and financed by United Nations Environment Programme and World Bank

Previous year UPSC Mains Question Covering similar theme:

Describe the major outcomes of the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)? What are the commitments made by India in this conference? (UPSC CSE 2021)

How 27th Amendment cements Pakistan Army's stranglehold over power

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Current events of national and international importance

Mains Examination: General Studies-II: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora

What's the ongoing story: Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday (November 13) signed the 27th Amendment to the 1973 Constitution into law; it was passed by the Senate that very day and the National Assembly a day earlier.

Key Points to Ponder:

- Who is Asim Munir?
- How is an unpeaceful neighbour a cause of concern for India?
- What is the role of the military in Pakistan's state of affairs?
- What is the status of India-Pakistan relationship?
- What are the steps taken by India to strengthen its border security post-pahalgam terror attack?
- What is Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)?
- What is the difference between soft state and hard state?

Key Takeaways:

— The Amendment has already been widely analysed as demolishing Pakistan's current constitutional framework. It brings sweeping changes to the country's civil-military and inter-services setup, and its federal character.

— Key changes include:

- * the establishment of the Chief of Defence Forces office which will always be held by the Army Chief who will effectively also command the Pakistan Navy (Article 243), and Air Force
- * complete legal immunity to five-star rank officers even after demitting office (a privilege not granted to either the President or Prime Minister in Article 248),
- * supersession of the Supreme Court of Pakistan (SCP) through a new Federal Constitutional Court which usurps the SCP's power to hear constitutional matters.

— Ultimately, however, the Amendment represents three crucial aspects:

- (i) the logical fulfillment of Asim Munir's quest to make Pakistan a "hard state"

(ii) the maturity of Pakistan's "hybrid model" of governance that has kept the military in charge while redirecting formal accountability to a civilian administration (especially since 2018)

(iii) the institutionalisation of the military's centrality to Pakistan's foreign policy.

— The Pakistan Army's dominance of the country's political and economic structures is historic and well known. However, the domestic popularity of the military within Pakistan evidently touched new lows, especially during and after the removal of former Prime Minister [Imran Khan](#).

— However, it is also clear that the Pakistan Army under Asim Munir used two specific catalysts to set up the eventual strengthening of the military's hold on power.

— **The first catalyst was internal.** Parallel to the downturn in Pakistan's democratic character, there has been a sharp rise in militant and terrorist attacks in the country, with over 2,300 attacks since early 2021. This includes the resurgence of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which has benefited immensely from the Afghan Taliban's return to power in neighbouring Afghanistan.

— **The second catalyst was external.** Provoking a bilateral crisis with India in April/May of 2025 evidently allowed the military to rally more popular support for itself. Notwithstanding the fact that the Pakistan Air Force briefly threatened to crowd the Army out of the spotlight during the crisis, Asim Munir's rapid elevation to Field Marshal (a rank ceremonially held for life) allowed the Army to substantially refocus attention towards itself.

— The 27th Amendment to the Pakistani Constitution evidently stands in sharp contrast to the directions that Pakistan's last Army Chief Qamar Bajwa had issued in 2022 when he asserted that the armed forces had distanced themselves from politics, "and wanted to continue to do so".

— However, given the rich lessons that the Pakistan Army has drawn from past periods of direct military rule, it has long been evident that the military has been on a fresh learning curve that allows it to nourish the hybrid model instead of formally taking power.

— Since Pervez Musharraf demitted office, the nascent stages of this hybrid model featured at least some internal limits, given the Pakistan Army's learning that formal military rule could potentially trigger even wider popular unrest.

— Finally, the 27th Amendment has also ensured that the judiciary (as the last pillar of a democratic state) does not undermine the military's consolidation of power.

— The security of the Pakistan Army's predominant domestic position through the 27th Amendment is also vital for the institution to fully leverage its role for Pakistan's new relationships with both old and new partners.

— These include new regional security architectures, such as the Saudi-Pakistan Strategic Mutual Defense Agreement, which the Saudi state can leverage to build its own nascent indigenous defence capabilities in return for economic assistance to Islamabad.

— Here, the Pakistan military's unique position as a significant partner to major defence manufacturers such as China and Turkey allows it to channel both military equipment and knowledge to third states such as Saudi Arabia or Azerbaijan.

Previous year UPSC Mains Question Covering similar theme:

The scourge of terrorism is a grave challenge to national security. What solutions do you suggest to curb this growing menace? What are the major sources of terrorist funding? (UPSC CSE 2017)

Centre notifies data protection rules, paves way for India's first privacy law

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Current events of national and international importance

Mains Examination: General Studies-II: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation

What's the ongoing story: The Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) Friday notified the long awaited data protection rules, paving the way for India to have a functional privacy law, eight years after the Supreme Court ruled it as a fundamental right. The notification of the rules comes over two years after the Digital Personal Data Protection Act (DPDP Act) received the President's assent in August 2023.

Key Points to Ponder:

- What are the key features of the Digital Personal Data Protection Act?
- What is the Right to Information (RTI) Act?
- Why is data protection law criticised for diluting the RTI Act?
- What is data localisation?
- Why are big tech companies opposed to data localisation?
- Who are data fiduciaries?
- Why is there a need for data protection law?
- Which other countries have data protection law?

Key Takeaways:

- While the law is now operational, only parts of it are currently in force, as some of the most important protections available to citizens under the law will take longer — between 12 to 18 months — to be implemented.
- For instance, the requirement for entities to seek informed consent from users before processing their personal data, using their personal data only for specified legitimate uses, and for entities to notify data breaches to users, will all only be operationalised after 18 months.
- Effectively, the Data Protection Board of India (DPB), which will act as the key adjudicatory body to ensure entities comply with the law, has been implemented, along with a controversial provision which amends the Right to Information (RTI) Act to disallow disclosure of personal information about public officials even when it is justified in larger public interest.
- The government has separately notified that the DPB will have four members, and that its head office will be based in New [Delhi](#). It had issued a draft of the data protection rules in January this year.

— The DPDP Rules, 2025, say that the Centre will specify the kind of personal data which can be processed by “significant data fiduciaries” subject to the restriction that such personal data and traffic data related to its flow is not transferred outside the territory of India.

— A committee, to be formed by the government, will determine it. This is effectively a data localisation requirement, which the industry has previously resisted. Big tech companies are expected to push back on this provision.

— A significant data fiduciary will be determined on the basis of the volume and sensitivity of personal data they process, and the risks they might have on sovereignty and integrity of India, electoral democracy, security, and public order.

— Tech majors including Meta, [Google](#), [Apple](#), [Microsoft](#), and Amazon are expected to be classified as significant data fiduciaries.

— Under the rules, tech companies are required to implement a mechanism for collecting “verifiable” parental consent before processing personal data of children.

— Effectively, the government has refrained from proposing a mechanism from its side, and has left it to the companies to adopt a system of their choice, after social media companies complained that it could be a difficult provision to implement.

— In the event of a data breach, data fiduciaries will have to intimate impacted individuals “without delay” a description of the breach, including its nature, extent and the timing and location of its occurrence; the consequences relevant to the impacted user, that are likely to arise from the breach; and the measures implemented and being implemented to mitigate risk among other things.

— The penalty for failing to have adequate safeguards for preventing a data breach could go as high as Rs 250 crore.

— The Data Protection Act had come under scrutiny for granting wide-ranging exemptions to the government or its agencies while processing citizens’ personal data on grounds of ‘national security’, ‘friendly relations with other states’, and ‘public order’, among other things.

— Under the rules, a data fiduciary — an entity (either private or public) that collects and processes users' data — will also have to implement reasonable security measures to protect personal data, including encryption, access control, monitoring for unauthorised access, and data backups.

Do You Know:

— In the year 2017, the central government established a Committee of Experts on Data Protection, which was led by Justice B. N. Srikrishna. The primary objective of this committee was to investigate and analyse matters pertaining to data protection within the country. The report was submitted by the Committee in July 2018.

— The DPDP Act propose to amend the Section 8(1)(j) of the RTI Act, 2005. This section prevents a public authority from sharing anyone's personal information on two main grounds – that the disclosure will have no bearing on any public activity, and that revealing such information would cause unwarranted invasion of the privacy of an individual, unless such disclosure is justified in larger public interest.

— According to the proposed DPDP law, the two key grounds, that such information could be disclosed provided it serves a larger public interest, have been done away with.

— The RTI Act, which came into force in October 2005, was seen as a significant development towards [freedom of information](#). It gave ordinary citizens the right to request information from government bodies, making authorities accountable for their actions and decisions.

Previous year UPSC Prelims Question Covering similar theme:

(3) Which of the following adopted a law on data protection and privacy for its citizens known as 'General Data Protection Regulation' in April 2016 and started implementation of it from 25th May, 2018? (UPSC CSE 2019)

(a) Australia

(b) Canada

(c) The European Union

(d) The United States of America

Previous year UPSC Mains Question Covering similar theme:

Describe the context and salient features of Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023. (UPSC CSE 2024)

Iran seizes tanker in Strait of Hormuz, US official says, as tensions remain high

Syllabus:

Preliminary Examination: Current events of national and international importance.

Mains Examination: General Studies-I: Salient features of the world's physical geography

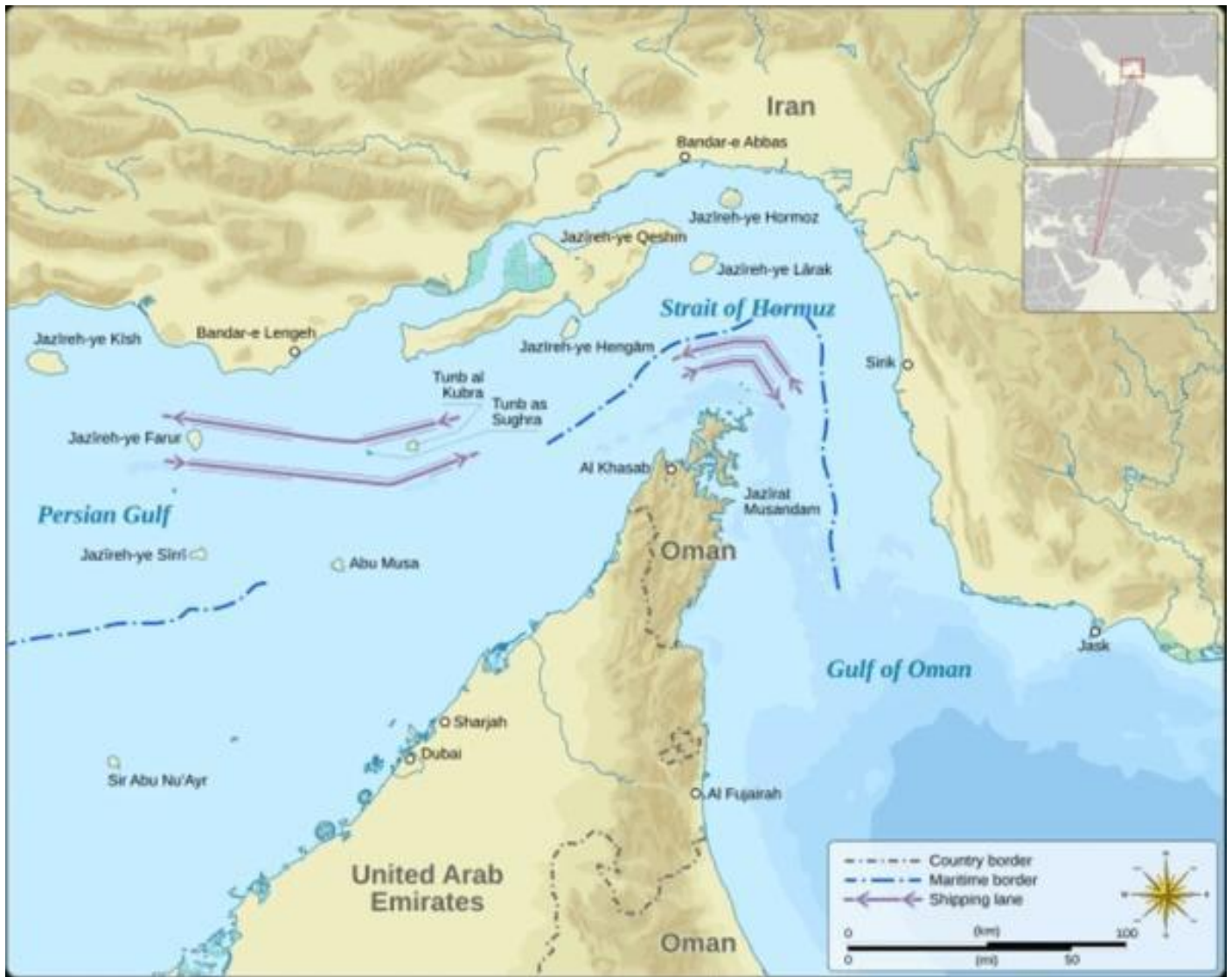
What's the ongoing story: Iran's Revolutionary Guards reportedly intercepted the Talara, a Marshall Islands-flagged oil products tanker, and directed it towards Iranian waters on Friday, maritime security sources told news agency Reuters.

Key Points to Ponder:

- Where is the Strait of Hormuz located?
- What is the significance of the Strait of Hormuz?
- What is the difference between strait and bay?
- What are the recent issues with this strait?
- Which international law governs the Strait of Hormuz?

Key Takeaways:

- The tanker had been carrying high-sulphur gasoil from Sharjah to Singapore and was sailing off the United Arab Emirates' coast when contact was lost, the vessel's manager, Columbia Shipmanagement, told *Reuters*.
- Britain's UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) agency said the incident "is believed to be state activity", reporting that the tanker was moving into Iranian territorial waters.



The Strait of Hormuz connects the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. (Photo: Wikimedia Commons)

— A US defence official told the *Associated Press* (AP) that Iranian forces seized the *Talara* as it travelled through the Strait of Hormuz from Ajman to Singapore. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence findings.

— US Navy MQ-4C Triton drone observed the incident for several hours. Private security firm Ambrey told AP that three small boats approached the tanker during the seizure.

— Around one-fifth of the world's traded oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz. The US Navy's Bahrain-based Fifth Fleet continues patrols to keep the waterway open.

Do You Know:

— The strait of Hormuz lies between Oman and Iran. It links the Gulf north of it with the Gulf of Oman to the south and the Arabian Sea beyond.

— It is 21 miles (33 km) wide at its narrowest point, with the shipping lane just two miles (three km) wide in either direction. It is a key passage through which 20–25 per cent of global oil supply transits, as well as a critical corridor for LNG shipments from Qatar and the UAE. Qatar, notably, is among the top LNG suppliers to India.

— Because of its geographic location, there is no sea route alternative to the Strait of Hormuz. So if the passage of ships through the strait were to be disrupted, it would have ramifications for oil and LNG trade worldwide, and prices would shoot up. Any fluctuation in oil prices has a trickle-down effect on the prices of many other goods and commodities.

Previous year UPSC Prelims Question Covering similar theme:

(4) Which one of the following can one come across if one travels through the Strait of Malacca?
(UPSC CSE 2010)

- (a) Bali
- (b) Brunei
- (c) Java
- (d) Singapore



Govt revokes QCOs on 7 key minerals after industry push back

The Ministry of Mines on Friday revoked seven more quality control orders (QCOs) on key minerals, including nickel, copper and aluminium, after months of push back by the domestic industry. This came a day after 14 QCOs ranging from chemical intermediates, synthetic fibres to polymer resins that were adversely impacting the textile sector supply chain were rolled back in the backdrop of steep US tariffs hurting exports of labour intensive sectors.

On Birsa Munda's birth anniversary, let's celebrate his fight for dignity

From the Ulgulan movement led by Birsa Munda to the fierce resistance of Alluri Sitarama Raju, Tantia Bhil, Veer Gundadhar, Rani Gaidinliu, Ramji Gond, Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh, Sidhu-Kanhu, and others, it demonstrated that tribal movements were not isolated revolts; they were sustained, powerful counter-narratives to colonial oppression. Their struggles have not only safeguarded tribal rights but also strengthened the broader fight for the nation's freedom and equality.

A historic decision was taken in 2021 by Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) to commemorate the birth anniversary of Birsa Munda (November 15) as Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas to recognise these Janjatiya leaders and their struggle. This monumental decision is a significant milestone, as it instils pride and knowledge about the rich heritage and struggles of tribal freedom fighters across generations.

RBI trade relief measures: From loan moratorium to credit tenor extension, central bank offers support to exporters amid global trade disruptions

In a move aimed at providing relief to exporters facing debt servicing issues caused by global trade disruptions, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday rolled out a set of trade relief measures, including debt moratorium, effective immediately, the central bank said on Friday.

The measures — including moratorium to eligible borrowers, extension of export credit tenor and relaxation in asset classification — are applicable to RBI's regulated entities, including commercial banks, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), primary co-operative banks, all-India Financial Institutions.

The announcement comes days after US President [Donald Trump](#) said the US will bring down tariffs on India, and that Washington is "pretty close" to reaching a "fair trade deal" with New [Delhi](#). India currently faces 50 per cent tariffs, the highest on any country globally, primarily due to the 'penalty' duty of 25 per cent for purchasing Russian oil.

PRELIMS ANSWER KEY

1. (c) 2. (a) 3. (c) 4.(d)

