

LEGAL CURRENT AFFAIRS & CENTRAL ENACTMENTS

MONTHLY DIGEST: MARCH 2026

Structure: 25 High-Yield Questions & Answers (Single-Page Layout)

Core Focus: Supreme Court Judgements, Central Bills, Decriminalisation Acts, and Public Policy Reforms

Usage: Professional Legal Reference & Public Competitive Examinations

PART I: CONSTITUTIONAL & LANDMARK JUDGEMENTS

Q1. Discuss the landmark ruling of the Supreme Court in *Harish Rana v. Union of India* (March 2026) regarding passive euthanasia and the Right to Die with Dignity.

DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:

In the path-breaking case of *Harish Rana v. Union of India (2026)*, a Division Bench of the Supreme Court consisting of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and K.V. Viswanathan allowed the withdrawal and withholding of life-sustaining treatment for a 32-year-old patient who had been in a Persistent Vegetative State (PVS) for 13 years.

The Apex Court held that the constitutional **Right to Life with Dignity under Article 21** naturally encompasses the right to a dignified exit when life is sustained solely through mechanical intervention without any cognitive capacity. The Court declared that artificial nutrition and hydration constitute a form of "medical treatment" rather than basic care, and if such treatment offers no therapeutic benefit, it may be withheld or withdrawn in the patient's "best interest" based on rigorous medical board evaluations.

PART I: CONSTITUTIONAL & LANDMARK JUDGEMENTS

Q2. What procedural mandates did the Supreme Court lay down in the Harish Rana case to ensure that the process of passive euthanasia is not misused?

DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:

To insulate the process from foul play, commercial greed, or family collusion, the Supreme Court mandated that passive euthanasia must adhere to strict institutional guidelines:

- **Medical Board Examination:** A specialized board composed of at least three medical experts (neurologists, intensive care specialists, etc.) must review the medical history and certify that the patient is in an irreversible persistent vegetative state.
- **Judicial Oversight:** The medical board's report must be placed before a High Court or a designated judicial authority for final approval before any life-support systems are formally disconnected.
- **End-of-Life Care Standards:** The Court emphasized that the withdrawal process must not be marred by pain or agony, directing that proper palliative and end-of-life (EOL) sedation protocols be strictly maintained throughout the transition.

PART I: CONSTITUTIONAL & LANDMARK JUDGEMENTS

Q3. Explain the Supreme Court's decision in *Hamsaanandini Nanduri v. Union of India* concerning the maternity benefits of adoptive mothers under the Social Security Code, 2020.

DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:

In *Hamsaanandini Nanduri v. Union of India (2026)*, the Supreme Court delivered a progressive verdict struck down a restrictive clause in Section 60(4) of the *Social Security Code, 2020*. The impugned provision had restricted maternity benefits only to adoptive mothers who adopt a child below the age of three months.

The Bench comprising Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan declared this age restriction as ****arbitrary, discriminatory, and violative of Articles 14 and 21**** of the Constitution. The Court held that an adoptive mother's requirement for bonding, care, and adjustment with a newly adopted child does not depend on the biological age of the infant. The ruling grants an absolute right of 12 weeks of maternity leave to all adoptive mothers, irrespective of the adopted child's age.

PART I: CONSTITUTIONAL & LANDMARK JUDGEMENTS

Q4. On what constitutional principles did the Supreme Court rely to equalize the rights of adoptive mothers with biological mothers in the Hamsaanandini Nanduri case?

DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:

The Supreme Court expanded reproductive autonomy and gender equality using two core constitutional axes:

- **Article 14 (Reasonable Classification Test):** The Court found that creating a sub-classification among adoptive mothers based solely on the child being under or over three months old has zero rational nexus with the primary objective of maternity protection laws, making it a case of hostile discrimination.
- **Article 21 (Dignity and Family Autonomy):** The Bench ruled that parenthood via adoption is a fundamental part of an individual's personal choices and reproductive liberty. Forcing an artificial age cap penalizes families who adopt older or orphaned children, acting as a direct deterrent to child welfare and institutional adoptions.

PART I: CONSTITUTIONAL & LANDMARK JUDGEMENTS

Q5. What did the Supreme Court rule in March 2026 regarding the Scheduled Caste (SC) status of individuals who convert to Christianity?**DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:**

In an appeal challenging the quashing of criminal proceedings under the SC/ST Act (*State of Andhra Pradesh, March 2026*), the Supreme Court reaffirmed that **religious conversion to Christianity results in an immediate and absolute loss of Scheduled Caste status**.

The Bench noted that under the *Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950*, no person who professes a religion different from Hinduism, Sikhism, or Buddhism can be deemed a member of a Scheduled Caste. Consequently, a person born into an SC community who converts to Christianity cannot claim protections under the *Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989*, as the caste system is conceptually alien to Christian theology.

PART I: CONSTITUTIONAL & LANDMARK JUDGEMENTS

Q6. What parameters did the Supreme Court establish for the re-acquisition of Scheduled Caste status upon re-conversion back to Hinduism?**DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:**

The Supreme Court clarified that if an individual who converted to Christianity decides to re-convert to Hinduism, the restoration of their original Scheduled Caste status is not automatic or mechanical. It is subject to two strict evidentiary tests:

1. **Unequivocal Renunciation:** The individual must establish a complete, public, and verifiable renunciation of their previous converted faith.
2. **Community Acceptance:** The most crucial parameter is that the specific SC community/ caste into which the person was born must formally accept them back into the fold and recognize them as a member of that social caste group. State governments or caste certificates cannot override these constitutional prerequisites.

PART I: CONSTITUTIONAL & LANDMARK JUDGEMENTS

Q7. Detail the Supreme Court's directive in *Rachana Gangu v. Union of India* (March 2026) regarding compensation for deaths linked to COVID-19 vaccinations.

DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:

In the case of *Rachana Gangu v. Union of India (2026)*, the Supreme Court dealt with a batch of public interest petitions seeking accountability for deaths allegedly caused by serious adverse effects following COVID-19 immunization.

The Supreme Court directed the Union of India to formulate a ****comprehensive, uniform No-Fault Compensation Policy**** to address serious adverse events and fatalities following mandatory or mass public health vaccinations. While the Court refused to legally attribute individual deaths to vaccines in the absence of absolute clinical proof, it recognized that under Article 21, when the State rolls out mass public health interventions, it owes a socioeconomic duty of care and financial safety nets to affected citizens.

PART I: CONSTITUTIONAL & LANDMARK JUDGEMENTS

Q8. What legal notice did the Supreme Court issue in March 2026 concerning the controversial IT Rules, 2023 and Fact-Check Units?**DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:**

On March 10, 2026, the Supreme Court issued formal notice in an appeal filed against the Bombay High Court's judgment that had struck down the *Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2023*.

The core issue revolves around the constitutionality of a state-authorized ****Fact-Check Unit (FCU)****. The High Court had ruled that allowing a government body to unilaterally flag online content as "fake, false, or misleading" created an unconstitutional chill on free speech, bypassing the reasonable restrictions permitted under **Article 19(2)**. The Supreme Court's intervention brings this critical intersection of digital media regulation and civil liberties under national judicial scrutiny.

PART I: CONSTITUTIONAL & LANDMARK JUDGEMENTS

Q9. Why did a 9-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court review the historical Bangalore Water Supply case in March 2026?**DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:**

In mid-March 2026, a 9-judge Constitution Bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant reserved its judgment on the precise legal definition of *****"industry"***** under Section 2(j) of the *Industrial Disputes Act, 1947*.

The Bench set out to determine the absolute correctness of the historical 1978 precedent, ***Bangalore Water Supply & Sewerage Board v. A. Rajappa***, which had given an extremely wide definition to "industry", pulling educational institutions, research labs, and charitable trusts under its ambit. The 9-judge review will establish a definitive interpretive roadmap to balance modern corporate flexibility, sovereign state functions, and statutory labor rights across commercial fields.

PART I: CONSTITUTIONAL & LANDMARK JUDGEMENTS

Q10. What action did the Supreme Court take against NCERT textbook authors in March 2026 regarding passages on judicial corruption?**DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:**

On March 11, 2026, a Bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant took strong institutional action by **blacklisting specific academic authors** responsible for a chapter in the NCERT Class 8 Social Sciences textbook.

The textbook contained sweeping, non-factual references attributing judicial backlogs to systemic "corruption in the judiciary." The Apex Court observed that while constructive academic criticism of judicial processes is completely protected under free speech, making unverified, inflammatory allegations in standard textbooks textually misleads impressionable children and undermines public faith in constitutional institutions, violating basic educational standards.

PART I: CONSTITUTIONAL & LANDMARK JUDGEMENTS

Q11. Summarize the Supreme Court's ruling in Rohith Nathan (March 2026) regarding the determination of "Creamy Layer" status for OBC candidates in the Civil Services.

DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:

In *Rohith Nathan v. State (2026)*, the Supreme Court decided a batch of civil appeals dealing with the criteria used to identify the "creamy layer" among Other Backward Class (OBC) candidates appearing for elite public services.

The Court held that ****treating employees of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and private firms differently from regular government employees holding equivalent ranks amounts to hostile discrimination under Articles 14 and 16****. The Bench ruled that income-equivalence metrics must be standardized based on structural rank parity rather than gross salary calculations, ensuring that the benefit of reservation reaches truly backward classes without bureaucratic distortions.

PART I: CONSTITUTIONAL & LANDMARK JUDGEMENTS

Q12. What directive did the Supreme Court issue to the Legal Services Authorities of Assam and Manipur in March 2026?**DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:**

On March 24, 2026, the Supreme Court pulled up state executives for delaying a structural order passed on February 26 regarding access to justice in conflict-torn zones.

The Apex Court directed the ****Manipur and Assam State Legal Services Authorities**** to immediately assign at least one dedicated legal aid counsel to every single victim or victim's family affected by ethnic conflicts. Crucially, the Court mandated that the assigned counsels must be completely conversant in local native languages, ensuring that communication gaps do not leave vulnerable families legally isolated or unable to track FIRs and compensation claims.

PART II: COMMERCIAL, CRIMINAL & INSOLVENCY LAWS

Q13. Can confessional statements recorded by Customs Officers be admitted as primary evidence? Explain the Supreme Court's March 2026 clarification.

DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:

In the case of *Amad Noormamad Bakali v. State of Gujarat & Ors. (2026)*, the Supreme Court settled a critical debate under criminal and revenue jurisprudence. The Court held that ****confessional statements recorded by customs officers are admissible in evidence**** as primary proof.

The Court clarified that customs officials are not "police officers" within the statutory meaning of Section 25 of the Indian Evidence Act (now Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam). Therefore, confessions made before them do not face an absolute statutory bar. However, the Court carefully qualified that the admissibility of such statements strictly hinges on their voluntariness, and any verifiable trace of coercion, torture, or duress will render the statement invalid upon a challenge on facts.

PART II: COMMERCIAL, CRIMINAL & INSOLVENCY LAWS

Q14. What did the Supreme Court rule in *Ramesh Chandra Bhagchandaka v. State of UP* concerning the quality and length of judicial orders?**DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:**

In *Ramesh Chandra Bhagchandaka v. State of Uttar Pradesh (2026)*, the Supreme Court emphasized the vital requirement of well-reasoned judicial decision-making, coining the rule that **"Brevity cannot replace completeness"**.

The Apex Court observed that a rising trend of passing cryptic, unreasoned, or overly brief orders severely damages judicial transparency and cripples effective appellate scrutiny. The Court reiterated that recording clear legal reasons and addressing core arguments are basic requirements of **"Natural Justice"** and serve as a necessary constitutional shield against arbitrariness in lower courts and statutory tribunals.

PART II: COMMERCIAL, CRIMINAL & INSOLVENCY LAWS

Q15. Who bears the statutory penalty for delayed payment under the Employees' Compensation Act—the Employer or the Insurance Company?**DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:**

In *New India Assurance Co. Ltd. v. Rekha Chaudhary (2026)*, the Supreme Court interpreted the financial liability allocation under labor and social security laws.

The Court held that ****any penalty imposed for a delay in paying statutory compensation under the Employees' Compensation Act must be borne exclusively by the employer**, not the insurer. The Bench explained that an insurance company's liability is strictly limited to indemnifying the actual claim amount under the insurance contract. Since statutory interest and penalties are punitive actions resulting directly from the employer's personal administrative negligence and default, they cannot be passed on to the insurer.**

PART II: COMMERCIAL, CRIMINAL & INSOLVENCY LAWS

Q16. Can a corporate debtor use the defense of a "pre-existing dispute" to defeat an insolvency application filed by a Financial Creditor under Section 7 of the IBC?

DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:

No. In *Catalyst Trusteeship Ltd. v. Ecstasy Realty Pvt Ltd (2026)*, the Supreme Court reaffirmed the strict structural separation between operational and financial debts under the *Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)*.

The Court ruled that the defense of a **pre-existing dispute is strictly limited to proceedings initiated by operational creditors under Section 9 of the IBC**. When it comes to a financial creditor under Section 7, the code only requires proving a default on a financial debt. The presence of secondary disputes or counter-claims between the parties cannot be used as a valid ground to stall or reject the initiation of the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP).

PART II: COMMERCIAL, CRIMINAL & INSOLVENCY LAWS

Q17. Can asset attachment orders passed under the Benami Transactions Prohibition Act be challenged or overridden by insolvency forums under the IBC?**DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:**

In *S. Rajendran v. Deputy Commissioner of Income Tax (Benami Prohibition)* (2026), the Supreme Court addressed the overlapping jurisdiction between economic crimes and insolvency regimes.

The Court held that **attachment or confiscation orders passed under the Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act cannot be questioned or stayed by insolvency forums (like the NCLT) under the IBC**. The Court clarified that the IBC's general override clause (Section 238) does not give it power over specialized penal and anti-corruption statutes. Criminal or penal actions targeting tainted assets operate in a completely separate field from civil debt resolution processes.

PART III: CENTRAL ENACTMENTS, BILLS & POLICY RULES

Q18. What are the key amendments introduced in the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026 passed by Parliament in March 2026?**DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:**

The *Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026*, passed by both Houses of Parliament in late March, introduces substantial structural shifts to the original 2019 Act:

- **Removal of Absolute Self-Identification:** Moving away from an unverified self-identification model, the law requires identity certificates to go through an official verification channel.
- **Medical Screening Board:** The Bill establishes mandatory state-level medical screening boards. The District Magistrate will issue the formal identity certificate only after examining the official recommendations of this medical panel.
- **Enhanced Penalties:** It introduces strict penal clauses, specifying that forcing a transgender person into begging, servitude, or bonded labor will attract mandatory imprisonment of 5 to 10 years for offences against adults, and up to 14 years if the victim is a minor.

PART III: CENTRAL ENACTMENTS, BILLS & POLICY RULES

Q19. Explain the overarching framework of the newly enacted Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026 regarding corporate regulatory compliance.

DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:

The *Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026* represents a massive regulatory update designed to advance the "**Ease of Doing Business**" and remove criminal penalties from minor compliance matters. The Act introduces comprehensive changes across **79** Central Acts administered by 23 Union Ministries, covering 784 specific provisions.

The core legislative framework focuses on **decriminalizing 717 minor offences**. It replaces heavy criminal sentences and arrest threats with structured, predictable civil financial penalties. This ensures that businesses and entrepreneurs are not exposed to criminal prosecution for minor paperwork lapses, clerical delays, or technical reporting mistakes, shifting India's regulatory style toward a trust-based system.

PART III: CENTRAL ENACTMENTS, BILLS & POLICY RULES

Q20. Detail the specific decriminalisation changes made by the Jan Vishwas Act, 2026 to the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and the National Highways Act, 1956.

DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:

The Jan Vishwas Act replaced traditional criminal prosecutions with structured financial penalties in several commercial sectors:

- **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940:** Previously, manufacturing or selling cosmetics in violation of minor procedural standards carried up to one year of imprisonment. The 2026 law removed the jail term for these specific cosmetic standard non-compliances, replacing it with a civil penalty of ₹1 lakh or three times the total value of the confiscated stock, whichever is higher.
- **National Highways Act, 1956:** Acts that technically made a highway less safe or impassable previously attracted up to 5 years of criminal jail time. The reform converted this into a strict civil penalty ranging between ₹10 lakh and ₹1 crore, managing infrastructural safety through heavy fiscal liability rather than criminal trials.

PART III: CENTRAL ENACTMENTS, BILLS & POLICY RULES

Q21. How did the Jan Vishwas Act, 2026 amend the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 to provide procedural relief to daily commuters and ordinary drivers?

DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:

The Jan Vishwas Act brought several high-impact, consumer-friendly changes to the *Motor Vehicles Act, 1988*:

- **Driving Licence Grace Period:** The law introduces a statutory **30-day** grace period post-expiry during which a driving license remains legally valid. This shields ordinary drivers from instant, arbitrary roadside fines and gives them a reasonable window to complete renewals.
- **Extension for Accident Claims (Section 166):** Acknowledging the physical and emotional trauma faced by accident victims, the amendment allows individuals to approach the Claims Tribunal up to **12 months** beyond the standard period, provided they show sufficient cause for the delay.
- **Decriminalisation of Ticket Violations (Section 178):** Traveling on public transport without a valid ticket has been reclassified from a criminal offence into a pure administrative civil violation with a maximum fine of ₹500.

PART III: CENTRAL ENACTMENTS, BILLS & POLICY RULES

Q22. Discuss the constitutional significance of repealing Section 102(c) of the Delhi Police Act, 1978 under the Jan Vishwas reforms.

DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:

The Jan Vishwas Act, 2026 made a major step toward protecting civil liberties by ****completely abolishing Section 102(c) of the Delhi Police Act, 1978****.

This colonial-era rule allowed police to arrest and imprison an individual for up to three months if they were found outdoors or inside a vehicle between sunset and sunrise without providing a "satisfactory explanation." By repealing this clause, the legislature removed an arbitrary mechanism prone to abuse. This aligns local policing powers with modern constitutional guarantees of free movement and personal liberty under Article 21, shifting the focus to objective evidence rather than vague suspicion.

PART III: CENTRAL ENACTMENTS, BILLS & POLICY RULES

Q23. What are the key features of the Sacred Bond (Parent Care Leave) Bill, 2026 introduced in Parliament in March 2026?**DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:**

Introduced in Parliament as Bill No. XXV of 2026 on March 13, 2026, the *Sacred Bond (Parent Care Leave) Bill, 2026* addresses an important social security gap for working professionals caring for aging families.

The Bill mandates that every employee working on a regular, temporary, or contractual basis in any public or private establishment is entitled to ****Parent Care Leave not exceeding 45 days in aggregate**** across their entire service tenure. This leave is specifically meant to let employees attend to the medical, health, and well-being requirements of biological, step, adoptive, or foster parents (including parents-in-law) who have crossed 60 years of age. Denying this leave without a valid cause exposes employers to a minimum statutory penalty of ₹50,000, which can extend up to ₹2 lakh.

PART III: CENTRAL ENACTMENTS, BILLS & POLICY RULES

Q24. Explain the "Graded Enforcement Mechanism" and the introduction of "Improvement Notices" under the Jan Vishwas Act, 2026.**DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:**

A central feature of the Jan Vishwas Act, 2026 is the shift away from immediate penalties, introducing a user-friendly ****Graded Enforcement Mechanism**** across commercial laws:

- **Advisories and Warnings:** For example, under the **Apprentices Act, 1961**, initial minor violations like working an apprentice overtime will first result in an official advisory for the first instance and a warning for the second instance, before any financial penalties are applied.
- **Improvement Notices:** Under the **Legal Metrology Act, 2009**, using or selling non-standard weights will first trigger an "Improvement Notice." This gives the business owner a specific timeframe to fix the compliance gap. Civil penalties are only applied if the business fails to comply within that window.

PART III: CENTRAL ENACTMENTS, BILLS & POLICY RULES

Q25. What major statutory updates did the Jan Vishwas Act bring to the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) Act, 1994 regarding municipal governance and taxation?

DETAILED LEGAL ANSWER:

The Jan Vishwas Act, 2026 introduced significant structural updates to the *New Delhi Municipal Council Act, 1994* to simplify urban governance:

- **Standardisation of Property Tax:** The amendment removes the outdated rateable-value taxation system, replacing it completely with the transparent **Unit Area Method** across all properties. It specifies that property tax will consist of a clear building tax and a vacant land tax.
- **Municipal Valuation Committee:** The law sets up an official valuation committee to recommend objective base values for land and buildings, along with a dedicated **Hardship and Anomaly Committee** to address citizen grievances.
- **Decriminalisation of Public Water Rules:** Under Section 295, using water from public wells or tanks in violation of municipal rules has been changed from a criminal case to a fixed civil penalty of ₹1,000. It also completely removes old advertising tax provisions.