

PART II · ENVIRONMENT TO DIRECT HIT TRACKER

ANTIM ASSURED 100+

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR UPSC PRELIMS & MAINS

Saturday, 13 June 2026

MORNING EDITION · THEIAS AKADEMIA

"From News to Questions, From Questions to Selection"

PART II — SECTION INDEX

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Surha Taal, Ballia — India's 100th Ramsar Site: Wetland Conservation Milestone

GS3

ENVIRONMENT

PYQ LINKED

WHY IN NEWS

On World Environment Day (June 5, 2026), Surha Taal (also called Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary) in Ballia district, Uttar Pradesh, was designated as India's 100th Ramsar site under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

BACKGROUND

The Ramsar Convention (1971, Iran) is an international treaty for wetland conservation. India became a signatory in 1982. India now holds the most Ramsar sites in Asia and ranks 3rd globally, trailing UK (176) and Mexico (144).

PRELIMS FACTS

- India's 100th Ramsar site: Surha Taal / Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary, Ballia, Uttar Pradesh.
- Designated on: World Environment Day, June 5, 2026.
- India's Ramsar global rank: 3rd (after UK 176 sites, Mexico 144 sites); highest in Asia.
- India's total forest & tree cover: 8,27,357 sq km = 25.17% of geographical area (latest data).

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- Wetland policy gap: Wetland (Conservation & Management) Rules 2017 vs. actual enforcement in UP floodplains.
- Ramsar designation vs. ground reality: how listing protects or fails to protect sites from encroachment and pollution.
- Climate co-benefits: wetlands as carbon sinks, flood buffers, and biodiversity corridors.

UPSC SYLLABUS

GS3: Biodiversity, wetlands, environmental conventions, climate change mitigation.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2019: Ramsar Convention — significance for India's wetland conservation policy.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Consider: (1) India ranks 1st in Asia in number of Ramsar sites. (2) Surha Taal is located in Ballia district, Uttar Pradesh. (3) The Ramsar Convention was signed in 1971 in Iran. Which are correct?

Answer: All three — (1), (2), and (3) are correct.

PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

"India's 100th Ramsar site is a symbolic achievement — but the real test is wetland governance." Examine India's wetland conservation framework critically. (250 words)

AKADEMIA TEACHING HOOK

The Surha Taal question will appear in Prelims — know the EXACT location (Ballia, UP), the global rank (3rd), and that it is also called Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary. Never confuse Surha Taal with Kanwar Jheel or Kabartal.

GS3

RAMSAR

WETLAND

UP

BIODIVERSITY

§2

Places in News — 13 June 2026

↑ PLACES IN NEWS — 13 JUNE 2026 | ANTIM ASSURED
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- ① Nice, France (PM Modi G-7 visit & Rafale deal)
- ② New Delhi (FCRA Bill, RBI policy)
- ③ Ballia, UP (100th Ramsar site — Surha Taal)
- ④ Ankara, Turkey (New Indian Ambassador)
- ⑤ Kohima, Nagaland (AFSPA withdrawal)
- ⑥ Chandipur, Odisha (DRDO Electronic Warfare)

① Nice, France

Why in News: G-7 Summit 2026 hosted here (June 13–14). PM Modi in bilateral with President Macron; Rafale tech-transfer deal discussions for 114 jets.

GS2 IR angle. Nice is in Alpes-Maritimes department, French Riviera. France is P5 member, NATO ally, India's strategic partner since 1998. G-7: USA, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada + EU.

② New Delhi, India

Why in News: FCRA Amendment Bill 2026 tabled in Lok Sabha. RBI MPC (June 4–6) cut repo rate to 5.5%. Multiple key government announcements.

Capital Territory of India. Seat of Central Govt, Parliament, Supreme Court. RBI HQ: Mumbai. Note: Delhi ranks 2nd globally among capitals for bird diversity (Delhi Bird Atlas 2026).

③ Ballia, Uttar Pradesh

Why in News: Surha Taal / Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary designated India's 100th Ramsar site on June 5, 2026 (World Environment Day).

Ballia is the easternmost district of UP on the Ganga-Ghaghra confluence. Surha Taal is an oxbow lake. India now ranks 3rd globally and 1st in Asia for Ramsar sites.

④ Ankara, Turkey (Türkiye)

Why in News: India appointed Rudra Gaurav Shresth as Ambassador to Türkiye (June 11, 2026), signalling continued diplomatic engagement.

Ankara is the capital (Istanbul is largest city). Türkiye is NATO member, straddles Europe & Asia. India-Türkiye trade ~\$11 billion. Türkiye has historically backed Pakistan on Kashmir.

⑤ Kohima, Nagaland

Why in News: HM Amit Shah's AFSPA withdrawal announcement covers Nagaland and Manipur as remaining states where AFSPA is still operational.

Kohima: capital of Nagaland. AFSPA still covers several districts of Nagaland and Manipur. Tirap, Changlang, Longding in Arunachal Pradesh also under AFSPA.

⑥ Chandipur, Odisha

Why in News: Integrated Test Range (ITR) Chandipur — India's premier missile and weapons testing facility. DRDO tests multiple weapon systems including SFDR technology from here.

Chandipur is on the Bay of Bengal coast, Balasore district, Odisha. ITR is the primary test site for Agni, BrahMos, SFDR, and other strategic weapon systems.

§3

Ethics & Integrity Cases

Case 1 — The Silenced NGO: FCRA, Civil Courage and Bureaucratic Ethics

A grassroots NGO working on tribal rights in central India received foreign funding for legal aid. After FCRA registration cancellation under the 2026 Amendment, its assets were frozen by the Designated Authority pending inquiry. Field workers were left unpaid, and beneficiaries lost legal support mid-case. The IAS officer administering the order followed the letter of the law but ignored the human cost.

GS4 Mapping: Integrity · Rule of Law vs. Justice · Accountability · Compassionate governance · Ethical dilemma in public service

Case 2 — The AFSPA Zone: When Security Law Meets Human Dignity

An Army officer in a NE state used AFSPA immunity to conduct a search-and-detain operation in a village, leading to wrongful detention of civilians. State police filed a complaint but the Army invoked AFSPA immunity. The Army officer's superior, facing pressure from both sides, chose to initiate an internal inquiry but did not share findings publicly — balancing institutional loyalty with accountability.

GS4 Mapping: Probity · Public service values · Moral courage · Accountability · Rule of law · Emotional intelligence

Case 3 — Data Silence: Missing Indicators in NFHS-6 and the Ethics of Omission

Researchers noted that NFHS-6 omitted tracking indicators for two flagship PM schemes, shielding them from evidence-based scrutiny. A senior Ministry official who flagged this was transferred. The data teams complied with instructions to exclude these metrics, choosing job security over scientific integrity.

GS4 Mapping: Integrity in public administration · Whistle-blowing · Intellectual honesty · Moral courage · Ethics in research

Case 4 — The Wetland Buffer: Developer Pressure on a Ramsar Site

After Surha Taal's Ramsar designation, a district collector received a request from a politically connected developer to approve a resort project within the eco-sensitive buffer zone. The collector approved it citing 'economic development.' The Forest Department officer who objected was overruled but documented her dissent in writing.

GS4 Mapping: Probity · Conflict of interest · Environmental ethics · Moral courage · Accountability · Integrity under pressure

§4

Prelims MCQs — 13 June 2026

Q1.

India's 100th Ramsar site is: (a) Kanwar Jheel, Bihar (b) Kabartal Wetland, Bihar (c) Surha Taal, Uttar Pradesh (d) Loktak Lake, Manipur

(a) Kanwar Jheel

(b) Kabartal Wetland

(c) Surha Taal, UP ✓

(d) Loktak Lake

Explanation: Surha Taal (Jai Prakash Narayan Bird Sanctuary), Ballia, UP — designated June 5, 2026. **Easy**

Q2.

With respect to the Ramsar Convention, consider: (1) Signed in 1971 in Iran. (2) India joined in 1982. (3) India ranks 1st globally in number of Ramsar sites. Select correct:

(a) 1, 2 only

(b) 1 and 2 only ✓

(c) 1, 2, 3

(d) 2, 3 only

Statement 3 is wrong — India ranks 3rd globally (UK 1st, Mexico 2nd). **Moderate**

Q3.

The FCRA Amendment Bill 2026 proposes which of the following? (1) A 'Designated Authority' to manage NGO assets post-cancellation. (2) Complete ban on foreign funding to Indian NGOs. Select correct:

(a) 1 only ✓

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither

Statement 2 is incorrect — FCRA regulates but does not ban all foreign funding.

Moderate

Q4.

The Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) in India: (1) Is the floor of the LAF corridor. (2) Was introduced in 2022. (3) Pays interest to banks parking funds with RBI. Select correct:

(a) 1 only

(b) 2, 3 only

(c) 1, 2, 3 ✓

(d) 1, 3 only

SDF introduced April 2022; all three statements correct. **Hard**

Q5.

AFSPA has been completely withdrawn from which NE states? (1) Tripura (2) Meghalaya (3) Assam (4) Mizoram — Select correct:

(a) 1, 2 only

(b) 1, 2, 4 ✓

(c) 1, 3, 4

(d) All four

Assam still partly under AFSPA. Tripura (2015), Meghalaya (2018), Mizoram (1980s). **Moderate**

Q6.

NFHS-6 (2023–24) is conducted by which institution? (a) NSSO (b) IIPS (c) NHRC (d) ICMR

(a) NSSO

(b) IIPS ✓

(c) NHRC

(d) ICMR

IIPS = International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai, under MOHFW.

Easy

Q7.

Which country hosted the G-7 Summit 2026? (a) Germany (b) USA (c) Japan (d) France

(a) Germany

(b) USA

(c) Japan

(d) France ✓

G-7 Summit 2026 held in Nice, France. India is an invited partner, not a G-7 member. **Easy**

Q8.

SPECS scheme relates to: (a) Skill development (b) Solar equipment (c) Semiconductor/electronic component manufacturing (d) Space exploration

(a) Skill dev.

(b) Solar

(c) Semiconductors ✓

(d) Space

SPECS = Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors. **Moderate**

Q9.

The BRICS members that joined in January 2024 include: (1) Saudi Arabia (2) UAE (3) Indonesia (4) Iran — Select correct:

(a) 1, 3, 4

(b) 2, 3 only

(c) 1, 2, 4 ✓

(d) All four

Indonesia did not join BRICS in 2024. Saudi Arabia, UAE, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia joined. **Hard**

Q10.

India's first Rafale deal (2016) was for how many aircraft at approximately what cost? (a) 36 jets, ₹59,000 cr (b) 114 jets, ₹3.25 lakh cr (c) 24 jets, ₹20,000 cr (d) 48 jets, ₹1 lakh cr

(a) 36 jets ✓

(b) 114 jets

(c) 24 jets

(d) 48 jets

2016 deal: 36 Rafale jets at ₹59,000 crore. 2026 deal under negotiation: 114 jets at ₹3.25 lakh crore. **Moderate**

Q11.

World Environment Day is observed on: (a) June 1 (b) June 5 (c) June 8 (d) June 21

(a) June 1

(b) June 5 ✓

(c) June 8

(d) June 21

June 5 = World Environment Day (since 1974). India's 100th Ramsar site announced on this day. **Easy**

Q12.

Surha Taal wetland is an: (a) Estuarine wetland (b) Coastal lagoon (c) Oxbow lake (d) High-altitude lake

(a) Estuarine

(b) Coastal lagoon

(c) Oxbow lake ✓

(d) High-altitude

Surha Taal is an oxbow lake formed by meanders of the Ghaghra River in eastern UP. **Hard**

Q13.

India's current Repo Rate after June 2026 MPC decision is: (a) 5.25% (b) 5.50% (c) 5.75% (d) 6.00%

(a) 5.25%

(b) 5.50% ✓

(c) 5.75%

(d) 6.00%

Repo rate cut to 5.5% in June 2026 MPC — third consecutive cut since Feb 2025.

Moderate

Q14.

ITR (Integrated Test Range) used by DRDO for missile tests is located in: (a) Pokhran, Rajasthan (b) Chandipur, Odisha (c) Sriharikota, AP (d) Navi Mumbai

(a) Pokhran

(b) Chandipur ✓

(c) Sriharikota

(d) Navi Mumbai

ITR Chandipur, Balasore district, Odisha — primary DRDO weapons test range.

Moderate

Q15.

Delhi Bird Atlas 2026 was developed by: (1) Delhi Forest Department (2) Bird Count India (3) WWF-India — Select correct:

(a) 1 only

(b) 1, 2 only

(c) 2, 3 only

(d) 1, 2, 3 ✓

All three institutions collaborated. Delhi ranks 2nd globally among capitals for bird diversity after Nairobi.

Hard

GS2

"The FCRA Amendment Bill 2026 represents a structural shift in how the Indian state regulates civil society — from oversight to control." Critically examine. (250 words)

Hints: FCRA evolution (2010→2020→2026) · Designated Authority provision · Art. 19(1)(c) implications · Comparative (CSR Act, PMLA) · Way forward: Parliamentary oversight of DA.

GS2

"India's progressive withdrawal of AFSPA from the Northeast is both a peace dividend and a democratic obligation." Analyse. (250 words)

Hints: AFSPA history (1958) · States freed vs. still under AFSPA · Supreme Court Nagaland civilian killing judgment · Art. 21 · NE peace indicators · Tribal rights framework.

GS2

"The India-France Rafale-Marine deal signals a new era where defence procurement doubles as strategic diplomacy." Evaluate in the context of India's Make in India defence policy. (250 words)

Hints: ToT significance · 55–60% indigenous content · India-France strategic partnership 1998 · Compare with India-US DTTI and India-Russia joint ventures · G-7 engagement.

GS3

"India's Semiconductor Mission 2.0 is as much a geopolitical hedge as an industrial policy." Critically examine its design and challenges. (250 words)

Hints: ISM 2021 vs ISM 2.0 · CHIPS Act comparison · 13 approved projects · SiC, OSAT, logic fabs · Infrastructure gaps (water, power) · Skill ecosystem · China-Taiwan supply risk.

GS3

"India's 100th Ramsar site designation is symbolic; effective wetland governance requires legal teeth and local community ownership." Discuss. (250 words)

Hints: Wetland Rules 2017 · CRZ notification · Oxbow lakes vs. coastal wetlands governance · Community-based conservation · NWCP (National Wetland Conservation Programme) · Climate co-benefits.

GS3

"The RBI's shift to a 'neutral' monetary policy stance in June 2026 signals the end of India's easing cycle. What are the implications for growth, credit, and the banking sector?" Analyse. (250 words)

Hints: LAF corridor · SDF-Repo-MSF rates · Monetary transmission lag · NBFC credit flow · Inflation vs. growth trade-off · Viksit Bharat credit demand · Real interest rate dynamics.

\$6

Answer Writing Value Addition

Quote Bank — 13 June 2026

"Wetlands are the kidneys of the landscape — filtering water, storing carbon, and nurturing biodiversity."

— Ramsar Secretariat | Use in: Environment answers on wetland conservation

"The armed forces must exist to defend the Constitution, not to be defended from it."

— Justice Jeevan Reddy Committee (1995) on AFSPA | Use in: Security vs. Rights answers

"Technology is the new currency of geopolitics — those who make chips make the rules."

— Contemporary strategic analysis | Use in: Semiconductor / S&T governance answers

"Monetary policy is a blunt instrument — it can cool inflation but cannot cure structural unemployment."

— RBI Annual Report framing | Use in: Economy / Monetary policy Mains answers

Key Data Points Table

Topic	Data Point	Source
Ramsar Sites — India	100 sites; 3rd globally; 1st in Asia	MoEFCC / Ramsar Secretariat
NFHS-6 — Child Marriage	Fell from 23.3% to 16.7%	MOHFW / IIPS, 2024
NFHS-6 — Hospital births	Rose to 90.6% (from 88.6%)	MOHFW / IIPS, 2024
Repo Rate (June 2026)	5.5% — 3rd consecutive cut	RBI MPC, June 2026

ISM 2.0 Budget

₹1,000 crore for FY 2026–27

Union Budget 2026–27

Defence Budget 2026–27

₹7.85 lakh crore; 75% capital for domestic

Ministry of Defence

India defence exports

Surged 60%+ in 2025–26

MoD / DRDO Annual Report

AFSPA-free NE states

3 fully free: Tripura, Meghalaya, Mizoram

MHA, June 2026

\$7

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2

POLITY &
GOVERNANCE CARDS

2

IR
CARDS

1

DEFENCE
CARD

1

SCIENCE & TECH
CARD

1

ECONOMY
CARD

1

ENVIRONMENT
CARD

6

4

PLACES
IN NEWS

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CASES

15
PRELIMS
MCQS

6
MAINS
QUESTIONS

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