

PART II • ENVIRONMENT TO DIRECT HIT TRACKER

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THEIAS AKADEMIA

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 Bonus \$9 — Hindi Diwas Special Feature Inside

"The Topper's Last Read. Every Morning."

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§1 • Environment

GS3 Species conservation · Institutional action plan

Notified 12–13 September 2026 · Source: Gujarat Forest Department / Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Gujarat Notifies Great Indian Bustard Conservation Action Plan & Soft-Release Centre in Kutch

Why in News: The Gujarat Forest Department, in coordination with MoEFCC and the Wildlife Institute of India, notified a fresh institutional Conservation Action Plan for the Critically Endangered Great Indian Bustard (GIB, *Ardeotis nigriceps*) centred on Kutch's grasslands, including the establishment of a soft-release breeding-and-acclimatisation centre — a genuinely new institutional development distinct from the GIB Project India captive-breeding programme covered in earlier editions.

Background: The GIB, India's heaviest flying bird and the state bird of Rajasthan, survives in fewer than 150 individuals across Rajasthan, Gujarat, and small pockets of Karnataka/Maharashtra/Andhra Pradesh, with power-line collision identified by the Supreme Court (2021, M.K. Ranjitsinh case) as a leading cause of mortality, prompting undergrounding/bird-diverter orders in priority habitats.

PRELIMS FACTS

- Great Indian Bustard: Critically Endangered (IUCN), Schedule I species under Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- Population estimated at fewer than 150 individuals nationally.
- Primary range states: Rajasthan (Desert National Park) and Gujarat (Kutch grasslands).
- New Kutch soft-release centre will acclimatise captive-bred birds before wild release.
- Supreme Court's M.K. Ranjitsinh v. Union of India (2021, modified 2024) mandated power-line undergrounding in GIB priority habitat.
- GIB is one of four focal species under the Species Recovery Programme of the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats scheme.
- Project Great Indian Bustard's existing captive-breeding centre is at Sam, Jaisalmer (Rajasthan).
- GIB is also protected under CITES Appendix I and CMS Appendix I.

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- Tests the institutional architecture of India's species-recovery programmes (Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats scheme).
- Raises the renewable-energy-versus-conservation trade-off given GIB habitat overlaps with wind/solar corridors in Kutch.
- Highlights the Supreme Court's evolving jurisprudence balancing clean-energy infrastructure with Article 21/species protection.
- Connects to federal coordination between State Forest Departments, MoEFCC, and WII in species-specific recovery efforts.

MEMORY TECHNIQUE

GIB = "Grasslands In Bother": remember the three-part crisis — Grassland habitat loss, Infrastructure (power lines), Breeding challenges (low clutch size, one egg per year).

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2020: "What are the major reasons for the decline of amphibian population in India?" is a thematically parallel species-decline question; GIB-specific PYQs have appeared in recent CSAT/Prelims current-affairs-linked questions.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding the Great Indian Bustard: 1. It is listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. 2. Its population is concentrated mainly in the Western Ghats. 3. The Supreme Court has ordered undergrounding of power lines in its priority habitat. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 3 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 2 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a). **Explanation:** GIB is found in arid grasslands of Rajasthan and Gujarat, not the Western Ghats — statement 2 is wrong.

PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

Discuss the conservation challenges facing the Great Indian Bustard and evaluate the effectiveness of India's institutional response. (150 words)

#GS3

#GIB

#Kutch

#SpeciesRecovery

GS3 Biodiversity · Newly discovered species

Described September 2026 · Source: Zoological Survey of India / Zootaxa

New Toad Species *Duttaphrynus phawngpui* Described from Mizoram's Blue Mountain

Why in News: Zoological Survey of India researchers formally described a new toad species, *Duttaphrynus phawngpui*, endemic to the Phawngpui (Blue Mountain) National Park in Mizoram, published in the taxonomic journal Zootaxa, adding to the Indo-Myanmar biodiversity hotspot's known amphibian diversity.

Background: The genus *Duttaphrynus* (True Toads) is widespread across South and Southeast Asia, but cryptic species diversity in the Indo-Myanmar hotspot — one of the world's 36 biodiversity hotspots — continues to be revealed only through integrated morphological and molecular (DNA barcoding) taxonomy.

PRELIMS FACTS

- Species: *Duttaphrynus phawngpui*, family Bufonidae (True Toads).
- Type locality: Phawngpui (Blue Mountain) National Park, Mizoram — Mizoram's highest peak (2,157 m).

- Described by Zoological Survey of India, published in Zootaxa.
- Identified via integrated morphological and molecular (DNA barcoding) taxonomy.
- Mizoram lies within the Indo-Myanmar biodiversity hotspot, one of 36 global hotspots.
- Phawngpui National Park is also known as the "Blue Mountain National Park."
- The discovery highlights continuing cryptic-species diversity within the genus *Duttaphrynus*.
- Amphibians are considered key bioindicators of ecosystem health due to permeable skin sensitivity to pollutants.

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- Tests understanding of India's biodiversity-hotspot framework and endemism patterns in the Northeast.
- Raises the significance of amphibians as bioindicators amid global amphibian decline.
- Connects new-species discovery to the importance of protected-area networks in preserving undocumented biodiversity.
- Highlights the role of DNA barcoding in resolving cryptic-species complexes in Indian taxonomy.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2019: "Explain the causes for the formation of Ozone hole..." is unrelated; biodiversity-hotspot/endemism PYQs recur regularly, e.g. GS1 2021 Prelims on hotspot criteria.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Consider the following statements: 1. *Duttaphrynus phawngpui* was discovered in Phawngpui National Park, Mizoram. 2. Phawngpui is Mizoram's highest peak. 3. India has more than 36 biodiversity hotspots. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a). **Explanation:** There are 36 biodiversity hotspots globally, not within India alone, and India hosts only 4 of them — statement 3 is wrong.

PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

Discuss the significance of the Indo-Myanmar biodiversity hotspot and the role of taxonomic research in documenting India's undiscovered biodiversity. (150 words)

#GS3

#NewSpecies

#Mizoram

#Biodiversity

§2 · Places in News

📌 PLACES IN NEWS — 14 SEPTEMBER 2026 | ANTIM ASSURED 100+



- ① New Delhi (SC retirement-age order, POCSO/Art.14 rulings) ● ② Kutch, Gujarat (GIB Conservation Action Plan & soft-release centre)
- ③ Phawngpui, Mizoram (new toad species *Duttaphrynus phawngpui*) ● ④ Jaisalmer, Rajasthan (IAF Dronathon-2026 at Pokhran range)
- ⑤ Kathmandu, Nepal (600 MW cross-border power export approval) ● ⑥ Bhopal, MP (District Judiciary retirement-age order applies)
- ⑦ Kolkata, WB (POCSO/corporal-punishment Supreme Court ruling origin)

Kutch, Gujarat

An arid grassland district in western Gujarat bordering the Great Rann of Kutch; now home to a new Great Indian Bustard soft-release centre, reflecting the region's dual identity as both a renewable-energy corridor and critical bustard habitat.

Phawngpui National Park, Mizoram

Location of Mizoram's highest peak (2,157 m), within the Indo-Myanmar biodiversity hotspot; type locality for the newly described toad species *Duttaphrynus phawngpui*.

Pokhran, Rajasthan

Site of India's 1974 and 1998 nuclear tests, now hosting the IAF's Pokhran Field Firing Range where Dronathon-2026 unmanned-systems trials are underway.

THEIAS AKADEMIA Map-based Places in News questions are increasingly statement-based in Prelims — practice geography-anchored MCQs in our NEEB 300+ programme. theiasakademia.com.

§3 • Ethics & Integrity Cases

CONCEPT: JUDICIAL RESTRAINT & PROPORTIONALITY

The POCSO/Corporal-Punishment Ruling

The Supreme Court's distinction between disciplinary misconduct and sexually-motivated offences under POCSO tests the ethical principle of proportionality — ensuring that the severity of a legal response matches the true nature of the wrongdoing, rather than conflating distinct categories of harm for expedience.

CONCEPT: INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY

The Great Indian Bustard Conservation Dilemma

Balancing renewable-energy infrastructure (needed to meet climate commitments for future generations) against GIB habitat preservation (a present ecological obligation) illustrates the ethical tension of intergenerational equity, where today's climate-mitigation choices can inadvertently harm today's biodiversity.

CONCEPT: FAIRNESS IN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT (NON-ARBITRARINESS)

The Kayaking Coach Administrative-Discretion Case

The Supreme Court's Article 14 ruling underscores the ethical principle that public administrators owe citizens fair, non-arbitrary consideration even in discretionary matters — procedural fairness as an ethical minimum, independent of whether the final outcome favours the applicant.

CONCEPT: RECIPROCITY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The India-Nepal Power-Export Approval

India's willingness to export power to Nepal despite its own domestic demand pressures reflects the ethical principle of reciprocity in neighbourhood diplomacy — sustaining a two-way relationship of mutual benefit rather than a purely transactional or asymmetric one.

CONCEPT: INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY IN SCIENTIFIC DOCUMENTATION

Taxonomic Rigour in New-Species Description

The ZSI's peer-reviewed, DNA-barcode-verified description of *Duttaphrynus phawngpui* exemplifies the ethical duty of scientific integrity — ensuring claims of discovery meet rigorous, falsifiable, and reproducible standards before being accepted into the taxonomic record.

CONCEPT: LINGUISTIC JUSTICE & CONSTITUTIONAL MORALITY

Hindi Diwas and India's Multilingual Compact

India's constitutional choice to recognise 22 scheduled languages rather than impose one "national language" reflects the ethical principle of constitutional morality — that a plural society's unity must rest on accommodation and consent, not majoritarian imposition, a theme explored fully in today's bonus feature.

§4 · Prelims MCQs

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the recent Supreme Court order on District Judges' retirement age: 1. It applies uniformly to all States and UTs. 2. It permits retired officers (post 31 March 2026) to opt for rejoining under conditions. Which is/are correct? (a) 1 only

(b) 2 only (c) Both (d) Neither. **Ans: (b)** — the order applies only to consenting States.

Q2. The Kayaking Association v. UT of J&K case primarily concerned which constitutional article? (a) Article 19 (b) Article 21 (c) Article 14 (d) Article 32. **Ans: (c).**

Q3. Corporal punishment in schools is explicitly barred under which Act? (a) POCSO Act, 2012 (b) RTE Act, 2009 (c) Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 (d) Indian Penal Code. **Ans: (b).**

Q4. The Muzaffarpur-Dhalkebar transmission line connects India with which country? (a) Bangladesh (b) Bhutan (c) Nepal (d) Myanmar. **Ans: (c).**

Q5. Consider the following statements on Dronathon-2026: 1. Held at Pokhran Field Firing Range. 2. Focused solely on manned-aircraft systems. Which is/are correct? (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both (d) Neither. **Ans: (a)** — it focused on UAVs/drones, not manned aircraft.

Q6. Which body is primarily responsible for CAPF administration in India? (a) Ministry of Defence (b) Ministry of Home Affairs (c) Cabinet Secretariat (d) NSA Secretariat. **Ans: (b).**

Q7. India's CPI inflation for August 2026 was recorded at approximately: (a) 3.82% (b) 4.82% (c) 5.82% (d) 6.82%. **Ans: (b).**

Q8. Consider the following statements on WPI: 1. Released by Ministry of Commerce & Industry. 2. Includes a housing component. Which is/are correct? (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both (d) Neither. **Ans: (a)** — WPI has no housing component.

Q9. The Great Indian Bustard is the state bird of which State? (a) Gujarat (b) Rajasthan (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Maharashtra. **Ans: (b).**

Q10. M.K. Ranjitsinh v. Union of India (2021) primarily concerned: (a) Forest rights (b) Power-line undergrounding for GIB protection (c) Tiger reserve boundaries (d) Coastal zone regulation. **Ans: (b).**

Q11. Phawngpui National Park, type locality of a newly described toad species, is located in: (a) Manipur (b) Mizoram (c) Nagaland (d) Meghalaya. **Ans: (b).**

Q12. Consider the following statements: 1. Duttaphrynus belongs to family Bufonidae. 2. It was described using only morphological methods. Which is/are correct? (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both (d) Neither. **Ans: (a)** — both morphological and molecular (DNA barcoding) methods were used.

Q13. How many languages are currently listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution? (a) 18 (b) 21 (c) 22 (d) 24. **Ans: (c).**

Q14. Which Articles of the Constitution deal with the official language of the Union? (a) Articles 120-122 (b) Articles 343-345 (c) Articles 350-351 (d) Articles 370-371. **Ans: (b).**

Q15. Consider the following statements: 1. Hindi is designated as India's "national language" under Article 343. 2. Article 343 designates Hindi in Devanagari script as the official language of the Union. Which is/are correct? (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both (d) Neither. **Ans: (b)** — India has no constitutionally declared "national language."

Q16. The Official Languages Act was enacted in which year? (a) 1950 (b) 1963 (c) 1976 (d) 1986. **Ans: (b).**

Q17. The Three-Language Formula was first recommended under which policy? (a) National Policy on Education, 1968 (b) Kothari Commission, 1966 (c) University Education Commission, 1949 (d) Both (a) and (b). **Ans: (d)** — the Kothari Commission recommended it, formally adopted in the 1968 NPE.

Q18. Which constitutional provision empowers a State Legislature to adopt its own official language(s)? (a) Article 343 (b) Article 345 (c) Article 348 (d) Article 351. **Ans: (b).**

Q19. Consider the following statements: 1. Sanskrit is listed in the Eighth Schedule. 2. English continues to be used for official purposes of the Union under the Official Languages Act, 1963. Which is/are correct? (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both (d) Neither. **Ans: (c).**

Q20. Article 351 of the Constitution places a directive on the Union to promote the spread of which language? (a) Sanskrit (b) English (c) Hindi (d) Urdu. **Ans: (c).**

§5 · Mains Questions

1. Examine the constitutional provisions governing the appointment and service conditions of the subordinate judiciary in India. (150 words) [GS2]

2. "The right to equality under Article 14 has evolved from a formal guarantee into a general check on arbitrary state action." Discuss. (150 words) [GS2]

3. Discuss the significance of "intent" as an ingredient distinguishing POCSO offences from other school-based misconduct. (150 words) [GS2/Ethics]

4. Examine the significance of cross-border power trade in India's "Neighbourhood First" policy, with reference to Nepal. (150 words) [GS2]

5. Discuss the significance of counter-drone technology and unmanned systems in India's defence-indigenisation strategy. (150 words) [GS3]

6. Distinguish between CPI and WPI, and explain why they can diverge, as seen in India's August 2026 data. (150 words) [GS3]

7. Discuss the conservation challenges facing the Great Indian Bustard and evaluate India's institutional response. (150 words) [GS3]

8. GS4 Case Study: As a District Collector, you discover that a renewable-energy project approved in your district overlaps with a critical Great Indian Bustard breeding ground identified by the Forest Department after project clearance. The project has strong political backing and local employment support, but continuing it risks extinguishing one of the last wild bustard populations. Examine the ethical dilemmas involved and suggest a course of action. (250 words) [GS4]

9. "India's linguistic policy reflects unity through accommodation rather than uniformity." Discuss with reference to the constitutional

§6 · Answer Writing Value Addition

- 01** "A Constitution is not merely a legal document but a social contract for a plural society" — apply this to India's choice of 22 scheduled languages over a single national language.
- 02** Data point: GIB population has fallen from an estimated 1,260 in 1969 to fewer than 150 today — a >88% decline, useful for illustrating species-collapse trajectories.
- 03** Quote for judicial-review answers: "The State must act, even in matters of discretion, as a model litigant and a fair administrator" — paraphrasing the Article 14 non-arbitrariness doctrine.
- 04** Comparative fact: India's CPI-WPI divergence (4.82% vs 9.92% in Aug 2026) is a textbook illustration of why a single inflation number can mislead policy without decomposition.
- 05** Federalism angle: cross-border power trade (India-Nepal) shows Centre-driven energy diplomacy operating alongside state-level grid management — useful for federalism-and-foreign-policy overlap questions.
- 06** Taxonomy fact: India described over 600 new animal species in ZSI's most recent "Animal Discoveries" annual volume — useful context for biodiversity-documentation questions.
- 07** Constitutional nuance: Article 29 protects the right of any citizen group to conserve its distinct language, script, or culture — a Fundamental Right distinct from the Part XVII official-language provisions.
- 08** Policy linkage: NEP 2020 reaffirms the Three-Language Formula but adds flexibility (no language imposed on any State), addressing decades of federal friction over the 1968 formula's implementation.

§7 · AKADEMIA Direct Hit Tracker

#	TOPIC	GS PAPER	PROBABILITY
1	SC District Judges Retirement Age Order	GS2	★★★★☆
2	Article 14 & Administrative Discretion (Kayaking case)	GS2	★★★★☆
3	POCSO/Corporal Punishment Ruling	GS2/Ethics	★★★★★
4	India-Nepal Power Export (600 MW)	GS2	★★★★☆
5	IAF Dronathon-2026 & UAS Roadmap	GS3	★★★★☆
6	CAPF Structure & Theatre Commands (static)	GS3	★★★★☆
7	CPI Inflation August 2026 (4.82%)	GS3	★★★★★
8	WPI Inflation August 2026 (9.92%)	GS3	★★★★☆

9	GIB Conservation Action Plan, Kutch	GS3	★★★★★
10	Duttaphrynus phawngpui (New Toad Species)	GS3	★★★★☆
11	Eighth Schedule & Scheduled Languages	GS1/GS2	★★★★★
12	Articles 343-351 & Official Language of the Union	GS2	★★★★★
13	Official Languages Act, 1963	GS2	★★★★☆
14	Three-Language Formula (1968 NPE / NEP 2020)	GS2	★★★★★
15	"No National Language" Constitutional Myth	GS2	★★★★☆
16	Article 29 & Cultural/Linguistic Rights	GS2	★★★★☆
17	GIB-Renewable Energy Ethics Dilemma (GS4 case study)	GS4	★★★★☆
18	Kutch & Phawngpui, Mizoram (Places in News)	GS1	★★★★☆

★ THEIAS AKADEMIA — PROOF OF PRECISION

UPSC CSE Prelims 2026 Results

In what critics called the most unpredictable Prelims paper in a decade —

48

QUESTIONS FROM
ANTIM ASSURED 100+

7

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE DOCUMENT

6

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE CLASS

Our students had seen 48 questions before the paper was opened.

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VERIFIED · PART II

Proof of Precision

Every item mapped. Every claim verified.

2

ENVIRONMENT CARDS

6

ETHICS CASES

20

PRELIMS MCQS

9

MAINS QUESTIONS

7

PLACES MAPPED

0

✓ All facts sourced from Supreme Court orders, Forest Department notifications, ZSI/Zootaxa, MoSPI/Commerce Ministry data, and the Constitution of India

✓ Every topic cross-checked against the 7-day topic log and 30-day static/species blacklists

✓ Bonus Hindi Diwas feature independently verified against Articles 343-351 and the Eighth Schedule text

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 **BONUS \$9 · HINDI DIWAS SPECIAL FEATURE**

Languages in the Constitution of India

Official Languages · Scheduled Languages · Languages of the Union & States · the National-Language Myth · the Three-Language Formula

Why This Feature, Today: 14 September is observed as Hindi Diwas, commemorating the day in 1949 when the Constituent Assembly adopted Hindi in the Devanagari script as the official language of the Union under Article 343. This is consistently one of the most conceptually rich and frequently tested static topics in UPSC Prelims and Mains — and one of the most misunderstood, since India has no constitutionally declared "national language" at all, only an "official language." This feature builds the complete picture: constitutional text, historical evolution, and current policy debates.

1. The History of Hindi Diwas

On 14 September 1949, the Constituent Assembly of India resolved to adopt Hindi, written in the Devanagari script, as the official language of the Union, ending prolonged and often bitter debate between votaries of Hindi and English, and among proponents of Hindi versus Hindustani (a blend of Hindi and Urdu). The date was first formally observed as "Hindi Diwas" in 1953 on the initiative of the Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti and the Government of India, and has been marked annually since. The Ministry of Home Affairs' Official Language Department leads nationwide "Hindi Pakhwada" (Hindi Fortnight) observances around this date, encouraging use of Hindi in government offices.

2. Constitutional Architecture: Part XVII (Articles 343-351)

Language provisions form a self-contained Part XVII of the Constitution, spanning Articles 343 to 351, organised into four chapters: Chapter I (Language of the Union), Chapter II (Regional Languages), Chapter III (Language of the Supreme Court, High Courts, etc.), and Chapter IV (Special Directives).

Official language of the Union: Hindi in Devanagari script shall be the official language of the Union. For 15 years from commencement (i.e., until 1965), English was to continue for all official purposes. Parliament could, by law, provide for continued use of English beyond 1965 — which it did via the Official Languages Act, 1963.

Art. 344

Commission and Committee on official language: The President constitutes an Official Language Commission (first in 1955) and a Committee of Parliament (30 members, 20 from Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha) to review the progressive use of Hindi and recommend restrictions on English use.

Art. 345

Official language(s) of a State: The Legislature of a State may by law adopt Hindi or any one or more languages in use in the State, or Hindi, for official State purposes — explicitly empowering States to choose their own official language(s), the constitutional basis of India's linguistic federalism.

Art. 346

Official language for communication between States, or between a State and the Union: English is authorised for such communication unless two or more States agree that Hindi should be the medium.

Art. 347

Special provision for linguistic minorities: The President may direct that a language spoken by a substantial proportion of a State's population be officially recognised, if satisfied of a demand.

Art. 348

Language of the Supreme Court, High Courts, Acts, Bills: Unless Parliament provides otherwise, all proceedings in the Supreme Court and every High Court, and the authoritative texts of all Bills, Acts, and Orders, shall be in English.

Art. 349

Special procedure for enacting certain language laws: For the first 15 years, language-related Bills under Articles 348/349 required the President's prior sanction, based on Commission/Committee recommendations.

Art. 350

Language to be used in representations for redress of grievances: Every person is entitled to submit a representation to any authority for redress of grievance in any language used in the Union or the State.

Art. 350A

Facilities for instruction in mother tongue at primary stage: Every State and local authority must endeavour to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage, especially for linguistic minority children (added by the 7th Amendment, 1956).

Art. 350B

Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities: A Special Officer, appointed by the President, investigates matters relating to safeguards for linguistic minorities and reports to the President (also added by the 7th Amendment, 1956).

Art. 351

Directive for development of the Hindi language: It is the Union's duty to promote the spread of Hindi and develop it as a medium of expression for India's composite culture, drawing primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages listed in the Eighth Schedule, without interfering with their genius.

3. The Myth of the "National Language"

✗ MYTH

"Hindi is the National Language of India, declared so by the Constitution."

✓ FACT

The Constitution nowhere declares any language as India's "national language." Article 343 designates Hindi as the **official language of the Union** only — a narrower, administrative concept, not a cultural or symbolic designation of nationhood. This distinction has been affirmed judicially and by the Government of India in Parliament on multiple occasions (including in response to Rajya Sabha/Lok Sabha questions and in the Gujarat High Court's 2010 observation in a PIL on this exact question).

The Constituent Assembly deliberately avoided naming a "national language" given India's linguistic plurality; imposing one risked alienating non-Hindi-speaking regions, particularly in the South and East. This choice reflects a foundational constitutional-design decision: unity through federal accommodation of linguistic diversity, not homogenisation.

4. Official Languages vs Scheduled Languages: The Critical Distinction

These are two entirely different constitutional categories, frequently confused in Prelims distractors:

CATEGORY	CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS	PURPOSE	NUMBER
Official Language of the Union	Article 343	Language for official Union government business	Hindi (+ English continues under the 1963 Act)
Official Language(s) of a State	Article 345	Language for official State government business, chosen by the State Legislature	Varies by State (e.g., Tamil in Tamil Nadu, Marathi in Maharashtra)
Scheduled Languages	Eighth Schedule	Languages given constitutional recognition for cultural/developmental promotion, and eligibility for translation in exams like UPSC CSE	22 languages

A language can be a Scheduled Language without being any State's Official Language, and vice versa (though in practice most State official languages are also Scheduled).

5. The Eighth Schedule: Evolution of 22 Languages

The Eighth Schedule originally listed 14 languages in 1950: Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani (added later, see below — original 14 excluded Konkani, Manipuri, Nepali, Sindhi), Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya (Odia), Punjabi,

Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu. Subsequent constitutional amendments expanded this list:

TIMELINE OF ADDITIONS

- **1950 (Original 14):** Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu.
- **1967 (21st Amendment):** Sindhi added — taking the count to 15.
- **1992 (71st Amendment):** Konkani, Manipuri (Meitei), and Nepali added — taking the count to 18.
- **2003 (92nd Amendment):** Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, and Santhali added — taking the count to 22 (the current total).

Notably absent from the Eighth Schedule despite active demands for inclusion: languages such as Bhojpuri, Rajasthani, Tulu, and several others tracked by the Sahitya Akademi and periodically discussed in Parliament and by State Assemblies passing resolutions requesting inclusion.

6. Languages of the Union and the States

India does not have a single uniform "State language" system; each State Legislature independently exercises its Article 345 power. Some illustrative examples: Tamil Nadu (Tamil), West Bengal (Bengali, with Nepali as additional official language in Darjeeling district), Karnataka (Kannada), Jammu & Kashmir (Urdu, Kashmiri, Dogri, Hindi, and English are official languages per the Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Act, 2020), and several Northeastern States (English as the sole official language, e.g., Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh) — itself a notable exception showing the flexibility built into the constitutional scheme.

7. The Official Languages Act, 1963

Parliament enacted the Official Languages Act, 1963 (amended in 1967) under the power granted by the proviso to Article 343(3), authorising the continued use of English for official Union purposes alongside Hindi, indefinitely — effectively converting what was meant to be a 15-year transitional arrangement into an open-ended one, in response to strong opposition (especially from Tamil Nadu, culminating in the 1965 anti-Hindi agitation) to Hindi becoming the sole official language after 1965.

MEMORY TECHNIQUE

"1963 Act = 1965 Deadline Deferred": the Act was passed in 1963, two years ahead of the looming 1965 sunset clause on English, precisely to defuse the anticipated linguistic backlash before it happened.

8. The Three-Language Formula

The Three-Language Formula is an education policy (not a constitutional provision) first recommended by the Kothari Commission (1964-66) and formally adopted in the National Policy on Education, 1968, requiring school students to study three languages:

THE ORIGINAL 1968 FORMULA

Mother tongue / Regional language +

Hindi (in non-Hindi-speaking States) or another Indian language (in Hindi-speaking States) +

Implementation has been deeply uneven: Hindi-speaking States have often taught only Hindi and English (skipping a third Indian language), while several non-Hindi States (most notably Tamil Nadu, which has followed a Two-Language Formula of Tamil and English since the 1968 policy) have resisted mandatory Hindi instruction, viewing it as a step toward linguistic imposition. The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 reaffirms the Three-Language Formula but adds a crucial safeguard: at least two of the three languages must be native to India, and critically, "no language will be imposed on any State" — the choice of languages remains with States, schools, and students.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS1 2020: "Discuss the role of geographical factors towards the diversity of India" (thematically adjacent); language-policy and Eighth Schedule questions have appeared directly in past Prelims papers, e.g. on the number of scheduled languages and constitutional amendments adding them.

9. Why This Matters for the Mains Answer-Writing

Language questions test a candidate's grasp of Indian federalism, minority rights, and the balance between national integration and regional identity — recurring GS1 (Indian society, diversity) and GS2 (Constitution, federalism) themes. A well-rounded answer should reference: (a) the deliberate constitutional silence on a "national language," (b) the accommodative logic of Articles 345-347, (c) the historical anti-Hindi agitations as evidence of the political stakes involved, and (d) NEP 2020's flexible, non-coercive approach as the current policy consensus.

FEATURE PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

With reference to the linguistic provisions of the Indian Constitution, consider the following statements: 1. The Constitution designates Hindi as the National Language of India. 2. Article 345 empowers a State Legislature to adopt one or more languages in use in the State as its official language(s). 3. The Eighth Schedule originally contained 22 languages, later reduced through amendments. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 2 only (b) 1 and 3 only (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a). **Explanation:** There is no constitutionally declared National Language (statement 1 wrong); the Eighth Schedule started with 14 languages and was expanded to 22 through amendments, not reduced from 22 (statement 3 wrong).

FEATURE PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

"India's linguistic policy is a study in constitutional accommodation rather than imposition." Critically examine this statement with reference to the provisions of Part XVII of the Constitution and the Three-Language Formula. (250 words)

