

THEIAS AKADEMIA PRESENTS

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The Topper's Last Read. Every Morning.

PART II · ENVIRONMENT TO DIRECT HIT TRACKER

Morning Edition · 08:00 IST · Friday, 16 October 2026

— *The Topper's Last Read* —

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GS3

Wetland Conservation · Ramsar Convention

16 October 2026 · Source: PIB; Ramsar Convention Secretariat; MoEFCC

India's Ramsar Tally Hits 103 With Chandigarh's Sukhna Wetland and UP's Sauj Jheel

Why in News: India's count of Ramsar Sites (Wetlands of International Importance) rose to 103 on 16 October 2026 with the addition of Chandigarh's Sukhna Wetland (Ramsar Site No. 2602) and Uttar Pradesh's Sauj Jheel in Mainpuri district (Ramsar Site No. 2603), Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Kirti Vardhan Singh announced, with both designations also confirmed on the Ramsar Convention Secretariat's own site list.

Background: India has added Ramsar sites steadily since joining the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971) in 1982, with the pace accelerating sharply after 2019 as the MoEFCC pushed States to nominate ecologically significant wetlands; Uttar Pradesh alone now holds the largest share of any State's Ramsar sites. Sukhna is a man-made reservoir created in 1958 at the Shivalik foothills to supply water to Chandigarh and control flash flooding from the Sukhna Choe stream — Chandigarh's first-ever Ramsar designation — while Sauj Jheel makes Mainpuri the first and only district in India with two Ramsar sites.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- New national total: 103 Ramsar Sites as of 16 October 2026.
- Sukhna Wetland, Chandigarh: Ramsar Site No. 2602; a man-made reservoir created in 1958 on the Shivalik foothills; Chandigarh's first Ramsar site.
- Sukhna hosts threatened species including the Pallas's Fish Eagle and the Black Pond Turtle.
- Sauj Jheel, Mainpuri (Uttar Pradesh): Ramsar Site No. 2603; supports over 30,000 waterbirds, including the vulnerable Sarus Crane — India's only resident breeding crane and Uttar Pradesh's state bird.
- Mainpuri is now the only district in India with two Ramsar sites.
- Uttar Pradesh's Ramsar count rises to 14 with this addition — the highest of any Indian State.
- Designated under: the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat (1971; India acceded 1982).

- Significance: wetlands provide flood control, groundwater recharge, carbon sequestration and biodiversity habitat; Ramsar status brings international recognition and commits India to the Convention's "wise use" principle.
- Criticism: Ramsar designation carries no binding domestic legal protection by itself — that comes separately from the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 — leaving a gap between international recognition and enforceable on-ground protection, especially for encroachment-prone urban wetlands like Sukhna.
- Conceptual angle: Sukhna's status as a 1958 man-made reservoir, not a "natural" wetland, shows Ramsar designation turns on ecological function and waterfowl-habitat value, not origin.
- Federal angle: the sharp post-2019 acceleration in India's Ramsar count reflects deliberate Centre-State coordination, contrasting with the much slower pace in the three decades after 1982.
- Way forward: conservationists want every new Ramsar site paired with an updated, legally binding management plan under the 2017 Wetland Rules, not the international label alone.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

Remember Mainpuri's distinction with 'two is rare': it is India's only district with two Ramsar sites — an instant recall cue whenever a question names Mainpuri or Sauj Jheel.

PYQ LINKAGE

Ramsar sites and India's wetland-conservation framework are an almost-annual GS3 Prelims theme; revise alongside the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 and the Montreux Record of "at risk" Ramsar sites.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements regarding India's Ramsar Sites:

1. India's Ramsar Site count stood at 103 as of October 2026.
2. Legal protection for a wetland under India's domestic law automatically follows from its Ramsar designation.
3. Sukhna Wetland is a naturally formed lake, unlike most other Ramsar sites in India.

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

Answer: a. Statement 2 is wrong — domestic legal protection comes separately from the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017. Statement 3 is wrong — Sukhna is a man-made reservoir created in 1958.

PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

Ramsar designation brings international recognition but not automatic domestic legal protection for a wetland. Discuss, with reference to India's expanding Ramsar network and the Wetlands

GS3

International Environmental Agreements · Climate Change

10th anniversary, 15 October 2026 (adopted 15 Oct 2016) · Source: UNEP Ozone Secretariat

Ten Years of the Kigali Amendment: The Climate Fix for Ozone's Fix

Why in News: 15 October 2026 marked ten years since the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol was adopted in Kigali, Rwanda, binding signatories to a phased reduction in hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) — potent greenhouse gases used mainly as refrigerants — with the UNEP Ozone Secretariat and the Multilateral Fund marking the anniversary even as implementation enters its more demanding phase for developing-country parties, including India.

Background: The 1987 Montreal Protocol successfully phased out ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), but the HFCs that largely replaced them, while ozone-safe, turned out to be extremely potent greenhouse gases with global-warming potentials hundreds to thousands of times that of carbon dioxide. Proposed in 2009 by the Federated States of Micronesia and Mauritius, the Kigali Amendment addressed this “substitution problem” by bringing HFCs under the Montreal Protocol's binding phase-down framework; it entered into force on 1 January 2019 and is projected to avoid up to 0.3-0.5°C of global warming by 2100 if fully implemented.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Adopted: 15 October 2016, Kigali, Rwanda; entered into force: 1 January 2019.
- Amends: the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987), itself under the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (1985).
- Target: an 80-85% reduction in HFC consumption/production over roughly three decades relative to a baseline.
- Projected climate benefit: avoiding 0.3-0.5°C of global warming by 2100.
- Proposed by: Federated States of Micronesia and Mauritius, in 2009.
- India's classification: Article 5, Group 2 (developing country, later schedule); ratified the Amendment in 2021.
- India's binding schedule: freeze HFC consumption at baseline in 2028, cut 10% by 2032, cut 85% by 2047.
- Financing: the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol supports developing countries' transition to low-GWP alternatives.

🎯 MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- Significance: often cited as the single most effective global climate measure of the past decade, operating through the Montreal Protocol's proven, binding compliance architecture rather than a more voluntary model.
- Criticism: developing countries including India must balance rising air-conditioning/refrigeration demand against a binding freeze-then-cut HFC schedule, raising cost and technology-access concerns around low-GWP alternatives.
- Conceptual angle: a textbook “regrettable substitution” case — fixing ozone depletion via CFCs created a climate problem via HFCs — a reasoning pattern applicable to other substitution debates.
- Analytical angle: India's 2028-2032-2047 schedule gives it more transition time than developed countries, reflecting the Protocol's “common but differentiated responsibility” design, also central to the UNFCCC/Paris architecture.
- Way forward: meeting the 2028 freeze depends on the India Cooling Action Plan (2019) scaling natural refrigerants and energy-efficient alternatives to commercial cost parity.

🧠 LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

Remember the ozone-to-climate pivot as ‘C-H-K’: CFCs (ozone problem, Montreal 1987) → HFCs (climate problem) → Kigali Amendment (2016, fixes the fix) — three layers of the same treaty family.

📋 PYQ LINKAGE

The Kigali Amendment and HFC phase-down are a recurring GS3 theme, often paired with the India Cooling Action Plan (2019); revise alongside the Montreal Protocol's ozone-layer success story.

🎯 PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the Kigali Amendment:

1. It amends the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer directly.
2. It addresses hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), which are potent greenhouse gases but do not deplete the ozone layer.
3. India, as an Article 5 Group 2 country, is required to freeze its HFC consumption baseline in 2028.

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

Answer: a. Statement 1 is wrong — the Kigali Amendment amends the Montreal Protocol, not the Vienna Convention directly.

📌 PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

The Kigali Amendment illustrates how fixing one environmental problem can inadvertently create another. Discuss this “regrettable substitution” dynamic with reference to the shift from CFCs to HFCs, and evaluate India's preparedness to meet its HFC phase-down commitments. (150 words)

#KigaliAmendment

#MontrealProtocol

#HFCPhaseDown

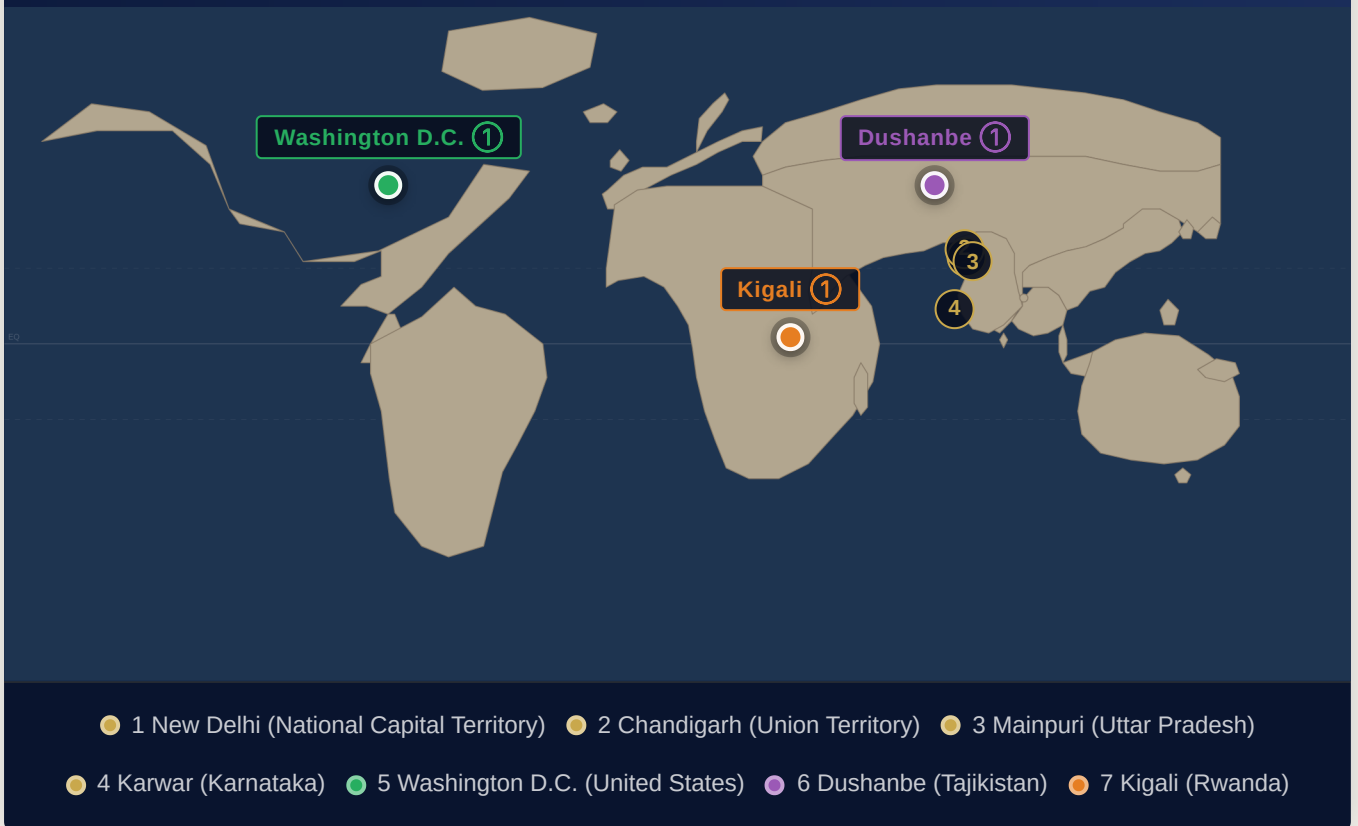
#ClimateChange

#OzoneLayer

2 PLACES IN NEWS

7 PINS

PLACES IN NEWS — FRIDAY, 16 OCTOBER 2026 | ANTIM ASSURED 100+



1. New Delhi · National Capital Territory

Seat of the Supreme Court Bench that delivered the backward-class conversion ruling, and venue of the Commerce Ministry's National Strategic Trade Command Centre launch at Vanija Bhawan.

On the Yamuna's west bank in the Indo-Gangetic Plain; as the seat of all three Union organs, nearly every institutional/policy story in this edition traces back here.

2. Chandigarh · Union Territory

Home to the newly designated Sukhna Wetland Ramsar site (Ramsar Site No. 2602), the Union Territory's first.

A planned city at the Shivalik foothills, jointly serving as the capital of Punjab and Haryana; Sukhna Lake was engineered in 1958 to catch monsoon runoff from the adjoining Sukhna Choe stream.

3. Mainpuri · Uttar Pradesh

Now home to Sauj Jheel, India's newest Ramsar site, making Mainpuri the only Indian district with two Ramsar wetlands.

Located in the central Ganga-Yamuna Doab of western Uttar Pradesh, within the Sarus Crane's core breeding range.

4. Karwar · Karnataka

Site of INS Kadamba, where the Vice President commissioned INS Samarthak, the Navy's first indigenous Multi-Purpose Vessel.

A natural harbour town on Karnataka's Konkan coast, developed since the 1980s under Project Seabird into the Western Naval Command's principal forward base.

5. Washington D.C. · United States

Where the first tranche of the India-US trade agreement was finalised and now awaits legal drafting and signature.

Seat of the US federal government on the Potomac River; the United States remains India's single largest export destination.

6. Dushanbe · Tajikistan

Capital of Tajikistan, India's principal rival for the 2028-29 UN Security Council non-permanent seat, backed by the OIC and Central Asian blocs.

Located in the Gissar Valley of the Pamir-Alay mountain system in Central Asia; Tajikistan's candidacy draws on its Central Asian and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation support base.

7. Kigali · Rwanda

The city that lent its name to the 2016 Kigali Amendment on HFC phase-down, marking its tenth anniversary this week.

Rwanda's capital in the African Great Lakes region, at an elevation of roughly 1,567 m on the Congo-Nile watershed divide.

3

ETHICS & INTEGRITY CASES

6 CASES

Equality before law vs. identity-based entitlement (fairness in administration)

1. The Certifying Officer's Dilemma

A district welfare officer processing backward-class certificates after the Supreme Court's conversion ruling encounters an applicant who converted to Islam years ago, from a genuinely disadvantaged family, and now faces loss of backward-class certification — even though her lived economic condition is unchanged.

Should an officer exercise any discretion in such borderline cases, or does fidelity to a Supreme Court ruling demand strict, uniform application regardless of individual hardship?

Institutional neutrality during transitions (bureaucratic impartiality)

2. The Booth Level Officer Under Pressure

A Booth Level Officer managing the shift from SIR to Annual Summary Revision in a politically contested constituency faces pressure from rival party workers, each citing procedural technicalities, to expedite or delay specific additions and deletions ahead of a possible bypoll.

How should a frontline election official balance procedural correctness against intense local political pressure to maintain genuine institutional neutrality?

Dual loyalty — professional duty versus sectoral conviction

3. The Trade Negotiator's Private Doubt

An Indian trade negotiator working on the harder, deferred second tranche of the US trade talks privately believes that opening India's dairy sector, as the US side is pushing, would hurt millions of small dairy farmers — but political leadership wants the broader deal signed quickly to capture tariff relief for struggling export sectors.

Where should a civil servant draw the line between candidly flagging sectoral harm and executing lawful political direction once a decision is made?

4. The Pollution Board Engineer and the Wetland Buffer

A state pollution board engineer assessing a commercial project near the newly designated Sukhna Wetland Ramsar site finds the project holds valid clearances under older rules, but its location in the buffer zone could affect the wetland's hydrology now that it carries international recognition; blocking it would invite political and investor backlash.

Should Ramsar designation alone be sufficient ground for an officer to apply a stricter precautionary standard even without a formal rule change?

5. The Compressed Trials Schedule

A naval officer overseeing INS Samarthak's early weapons-testing trials is under pressure to meet a symbolic commissioning-anniversary date, which could mean skipping one precautionary safety check that has never previously caused an issue.

How should an officer weigh symbolic or ceremonial timelines against the duty of care owed to the testing crew?

6. The Cooling-Transition Trade-Off

A state environment official drafting the state's HFC-alternative cooling roadmap under the Kigali Amendment's 2028 freeze deadline must decide how aggressively to push small businesses — for whom cheaper, familiar HFC-based equipment remains attractive — toward costlier, compliant low-GWP alternatives.

How should a policymaker balance present-day affordability for small businesses against the long-term, intergenerational climate cost of delaying the transition?

Under which Article of the Constitution does the Election Commission of India derive its power of superintendence, direction and control over electoral rolls and elections?

- (a) Article 320 (b) Article 324 (c) Article 356 (d) Article 280

Answer: (b) Article 324. Article 324 vests the ECI with superintendence, direction and control of elections, including electoral roll preparation.

Q2 · STATEMENT-BASED

Consider the following statements: 1. The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 currently extends SC status to Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists. 2. A State's backward-class list under Article 16(4) can recognise religious converts only through an individualised finding of continuing backwardness. Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 1 only (c) 2 only (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (a) 1 and 2. Both reflect the Supreme Court's October 2026 reservation-conversion ruling and the existing 1950 Presidential Order framework.

Q3

How many non-permanent members does the United Nations Security Council have, and for what term are they elected?

- (a) 5 members, 3-year term (b) 10 members, 2-year term (c) 10 members, 3-year term (d) 15 members, 2-year term

Answer: (b) 10 members, 2-year term. The UNSC has 15 total members: 5 permanent and 10 non-permanent, the latter elected for staggered two-year terms.

Q4 · STATEMENT-BASED

Consider the following statements regarding India's recent Free Trade Agreements: 1. The India-UAE CEPA came into force before the India-UK FTA. 2. The EFTA TEPA involves a bloc that includes Switzerland and Norway. 3. India's trade agreement with the US in 2026 covers all sectors in a single comprehensive tranche. Which is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only. Statement 3 is wrong — the US deal proceeds through phased tranches, not one comprehensive agreement.

Q5

Under which procurement category of the Defence Acquisition Procedure was INS Samarthak built?

- (a) Buy (Global) (b) Buy and Make (Indian) (c) Buy (Indian) (d) Strategic Partnership Model

Answer: (c) Buy (Indian). This category reserves warship construction contracts for domestic (typically private) shipyards.

Q6 · STATEMENT-BASED

Consider the following statements about the National Quantum Mission: 1. It was approved in April 2023 with an outlay exceeding ₹6,000 crore. 2. Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) and Post-Quantum Cryptography (PQC) are the same technique under different names. 3. The Technology Development Board provides growth-stage funding to companies under the Mission. Which is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 3 only. Statement 2 is wrong — QKD is a physics-based eavesdropping-detection technique, while PQC is classical mathematics resistant to quantum attack; they are distinct.

Q7

The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee formally targets inflation as measured by which index?

- (a) Wholesale Price Index (WPI) (b) Consumer Price Index (CPI) (c) GDP Deflator (d) Producer Price Index (PPI)

Answer: (b) Consumer Price Index (CPI). The MPC's flexible inflation-targeting mandate is anchored to CPI inflation at $4\% \pm 2\%$.

Q8 · STATEMENT-BASED

Consider the following statements regarding India's strategic trade control: 1. The SCOMET list covers dual-use items with both civilian and military applications. 2. India became a member of the Missile Technology Control Regime in 2016. 3. India is not a member of the Wassenaar Arrangement. Which 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) 1 and 2 only. Statement 3 is wrong — India joined the Wassenaar Arrangement in December 2017.

Q9

Which of the following best describes a Ramsar Site?

- (a) A UNESCO World Heritage natural site (b) A wetland designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (c) A Biosphere Reserve under UNESCO's MAB Programme (d) A National Park notified under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

Answer: (b). Ramsar Sites are wetlands designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention, a distinct instrument from UNESCO's World Heritage or Biosphere Reserve designations.

Q10 · STATEMENT-BASED

Consider the following statements: 1. The Sarus Crane is India's only resident breeding crane species. 2. The Sarus Crane is listed as 'Critically Endangered' on the IUCN Red List. 3. Uttar Pradesh is the state bird of the Sarus Crane. Which is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 1 and 3 only. Statement 2 is wrong — the Sarus Crane's IUCN status is 'Vulnerable,' not 'Critically Endangered.'

Q11

The Kigali Amendment, which marked its tenth anniversary in October 2026, primarily deals with the phase-down of which substance?

(a) Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) (b) Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) (c) Sulphur hexafluoride (SF6) (d) Methane

Answer: (b) Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). HFCs are potent greenhouse gases used mainly as refrigerants, targeted for phase-down under the Kigali Amendment.

Q12 · STATEMENT-BASED

Consider the following statements regarding India's UNSC candidature for 2028-29: 1. India contests non-permanent UNSC seats under the Asia-Pacific regional group. 2. A 'clean slate' election means only one candidate contests for the available seat(s) in that regional group. 3. India has never lost a contested election for a non-permanent UNSC seat. Which is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only. Statement 3 is wrong — India lost contested races to Pakistan (1975) and Japan (1996).

Q13

INS Samarthak was commissioned at which naval base?

(a) INS Kadamba, Karwar (b) INS Shivaji, Lonavala (c) INS Dronacharya, Kochi (d) INS Angre, Mumbai

Answer: (a) INS Kadamba, Karwar. INS Kadamba is the Western Naval Command's main base, developed under Project Seabird.

Q14 · STATEMENT-BASED

Consider the following statements: 1. Wholesale Price Index (WPI) measures prices at the producer/wholesale level. 2. The current WPI series uses 2011-12 as its base year. 3. A rising WPI-CPI wedge typically indicates producers are passing on the full cost increase to consumers. Which 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) 1 and 2 only. Statement 3 is wrong — a widening WPI-CPI wedge usually means producers are absorbing costs rather than fully passing them on.

Q15

The National Strategic Trade Command Centre, launched in October 2026, functions under which Ministry/Department?

- (a) Ministry of External Affairs (b) Department of Commerce (c) Ministry of Defence (d) Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade

Answer: (b) Department of Commerce. It operates with the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) under the Department of Commerce.

Q16 · STATEMENT-BASED

Consider the following statements regarding the Lion-tailed Macaque-style canopy-dependent species logic applied to wetland birds: 1. The Pallas's Fish Eagle is a threatened species recorded at the Sukhna Wetland. 2. The Black Pond Turtle is also recorded at Sukhna Wetland. 3. Both species indicate healthy, undisturbed wetland ecosystems. Which is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 1, 2 and 3. All three statements are consistent with Sukhna Wetland's documented biodiversity profile.

Q17

Which committee's recommendation on wetland/forest protection is associated with a smaller proposed protected area than the other, in the Western-Ghats-style ESA debates generally?

- (a) Gadgil Committee recommended a smaller area than Kasturirangan (b) Kasturirangan Committee recommended a smaller area than Gadgil (c) Both recommended identical areas (d) Neither committee specified an area

Answer: (b). The Kasturirangan Committee (2013, ≈59,940 sq km) recommended a smaller protected area than the Gadgil Committee (2011, ≈1,29,037 sq km).

Q18 · STATEMENT-BASED

Consider the following statements regarding India's Technology Development Board (TDB): 1. It is a statutory body constituted under the Technology Development Board Act, 1995. 2. It functions under the Department of Science and Technology. 3. It exclusively funds academic research grants, not private companies. Which is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only. Statement 3 is wrong — TDB specifically provides growth-stage funding to companies commercialising deep-tech research, such as its October 2026 agreement with QNu Labs.

5 MAINS QUESTIONS

9 QUESTIONS

GS1

1. Discuss the Archaeological Survey of India's systematic excavation programme at sites such as Rakhigarhi, Dwarka and Lothal, and its contribution to understanding India's pre-historic and proto-historic civilisations.

Frame around the Harappan/Indus timeline, underwater archaeology at Dwarka, and the institutional role of the ASI under the AMASR Act, 1958.

GS2

2. “Reservation under Article 16(4) is tied to the continuing social backwardness of an identifiable class rather than to an individual's claimed inherited disadvantage.” Discuss with reference to the Supreme Court's 2026 ruling on backward-class status for converts to Islam in Tamil Nadu.

Cover Article 16(4), the 1950 SC Order's religion bar, Indra Sawhney (1992), and the secular-effect-of-conversion debate.

GS2

3. India's electoral roll maintenance combines periodic intensive revisions with routine annual upkeep. Discuss the rationale for this two-track system and the administrative and legal challenges it has generated in 2026.

Distinguish SIR from Summary Revision; mention Article 324, the Registration of Electors Rules 1960, and the pending SIR litigation.

GS2

4. India is simultaneously pursuing a non-permanent UN Security Council seat for 2028-29 and long-term permanent-seat reform. Examine whether these two tracks of India's UNSC diplomacy are complementary or contradictory.

Use India's 2010/2020 uncontested wins, the 1975/1996 defeats, the G4 push, and OIC-backed Tajikistan's 2028-29 candidacy.

GS3

5. India's trade negotiations with developed economies increasingly proceed through phased, tranche-based agreements rather than single comprehensive treaties. Discuss this trend with reference to the India-US trade talks, weighing its advantages and risks against the comprehensive FTA model.

Cite UAE CEPA, EFTA TEPA, UK FTA as comprehensive deals vs the US tranche-based approach; mention the 2025 reciprocal-tariff trigger.

GS3

6. Dedicated test-and-evaluation platforms such as Multi-Purpose Vessels are often overlooked in discussions of naval modernisation that focus on frontline combatants. Discuss their role in India's defence-indigenisation ecosystem, with reference to INS Samarthak.

Explain the MPV's testing/surveillance/target-recovery roles, the "Buy (Indian)" category, and shipbuilding-timeline challenges.

GS3

7. India's National Quantum Mission has moved from policy approval to funding individual deep-tech companies. Discuss the strategic importance of quantum-safe cybersecurity for critical infrastructure, and evaluate India's preparedness in this domain.

Distinguish QKD from PQC; discuss the NQM's four Thematic Hubs and the TDB-QNu Labs funding as a commercialisation milestone.

GS3

8. A widening gap between wholesale (WPI) and retail (CPI) inflation has distinct implications for corporate margins, monetary policy and the common consumer. Discuss,

with reference to India's September 2026 inflation data.

Explain the WPI-CPI conceptual difference, the MPC's CPI-only mandate, and margin-absorption versus pass-through dynamics.

GS4

9. “Institutional neutrality is tested most severely not in calm times but during periods of procedural transition.” Discuss this statement with examples from today's edition (electoral roll revision, wetland-buffer clearance, and trade-negotiation advice), and outline the ethical principles a civil servant must apply.

Draw on the ethics cases above — bureaucratic impartiality, precautionary principle, dual loyalty — to build a composite answer on institutional integrity during transitions.

6

ANSWER-WRITING VALUE ADDITION

8 ITEMS

India's reservation framework separates two tracks: the religion-locked SC list (1950 Presidential Order, limited to Hindus/Sikhs/Buddhists) and a State's more flexible OBC/backward-class list under Article 16(4).

The Election Commission's “Summary Revision” and “Special Intensive Revision” are often confused in answer-writing — the first updates an existing roll, the second rebuilds it from scratch.

India's last two uncontested UNSC wins came with overwhelming margins: 187 of 191 votes (2010) and 184 of 192 votes (2020) — a benchmark against which any contested 2028-29 race will be measured.

L&T's Kattupalli shipyard, which built INS Samarthak, reflects the growing role of private shipyards in India's “Buy (Indian)” naval procurement category alongside the public-sector Mazagon Dock/GRSE/Cochin Shipyard ecosystem.

The National Quantum Mission's ₹6,003-crore outlay (2023-31) is modest next to the multi-billion-dollar quantum investment programmes of the US and China — a recurring “funding adequacy” debate in India's deep-tech policy.

WPI and CPI answer different questions: WPI tracks what producers receive, CPI tracks what consumers pay — the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee targets only the latter.

SCOMET licensing is India's domestic mechanism for honouring its membership of the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Missile Technology Control Regime, and the Australia Group.

The Kigali Amendment's projected 0.3-0.5°C avoided-warming by 2100 makes it one of the most consequential climate instruments ever negotiated, despite being legally a Montreal Protocol amendment rather than a UNFCCC/Paris instrument.

7

AKADEMIA DIRECT HIT TRACKER

16 ROWS

TOPIC	GS PAPER	CAPSULE	PROBABILITY
SC Conversion-to-Islam Backward Class Ruling	GS2	Article 16(4) vs religion-locked SC list	★★★★☆
ECI SIR-to-Summary-Revision Transition	GS2	Two-track roll maintenance; Article 324	★★★★☆
India-US Trade Deal First Tranche	GS2	Tranche-based diplomacy; tariff clarity pending	★★★★☆
India's UNSC 2028-29 Bid vs Tajikistan	GS2	129-vote threshold; OIC-backed rival	★★★★☆
INS Samarthak Commissioned	GS3	Buy (Indian); MPV role; naval indigenisation	★★★★☆
TDB-QNu Labs Quantum Agreement	GS3	National Quantum Mission; quantum-safe security	★★★★☆
WPI Inflation 49-Month High	GS3	WPI vs CPI; RBI MPC targeting	★★★★☆
National Strategic Trade Command Centre	GS3	SCOMET; DGFT; export-control modernisation	★★★★☆
India's Ramsar Sites Reach 103	GS3	Sukhna Wetland; Sauj Jheel; Wetland Rules 2017	★★★★☆
Kigali Amendment 10th Anniversary	GS3	HFC phase-down; India's 2028/2032/2047 schedule	★★★★☆

UNSC Composition & Voting Procedure	GS2	15 members; two-thirds majority; G4 reform	★★★★★
Reservation Jurisprudence (Indra Sawhney Legacy)	GS2	50% ceiling; creamy layer; Article 16(4)	★★★★★
National Quantum Mission Architecture	GS3	Four Thematic Hubs; TDB funding role	★★★★★
India's Export-Control Regime (SCOMET/MTCR/Wassenaar)	GS3	Strategic trade control pillars	★★★★★
Naval "Buy (Indian)" Procurement Category	GS3	DAP categories; private shipyards	★★★★★
Montreal Protocol-Kigali Amendment Family	GS3	Ozone vs climate; regrettable substitution	★★★★★

★ 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.

This is not luck. This is TheIAS Akademia.

JOIN ANTIM ASSURED 100+ →

Environment

Places in News

Ethics

Prelims

Mains

✓ Environment coverage follows the two-card rule: both Ramsar-103 and the Kigali Amendment anniversary are genuine current/dated stories, neither repeated from the last 7/30 days per ANTIM_TopicLog.txt.

✓ All 7 map pins are anchored to a substantive card in this edition, each carrying physical/strategic geography context beyond the news hook.

✓ This file is GoDaddy-compliant: no external JavaScript, a single embedded stylesheet, and same-directory asset references only (inline SVG map used, as no dated map_16Oct2026.jpg was found in the output folder).

← Part I covers: Headlines · Polity & Governance · IR · Defence · S&T · Economy

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