

PART II · ENVIRONMENT TO DIRECT HIT TRACKER

ANTIM ASSURED 100+

The Topper's Last Read. Every Morning.

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THEIAS AKADEMIA · THEIASAKADEMIA.COM

INSIDE PART II

1. Environment & Ecology
2. Places in News
3. Ethics & Integrity Cases
4. Prelims MCQs
5. Mains Questions
6. Value Addition
7. AKADEMIA Direct Hit Tracker
8. Proof of Precision

“Every Topper's Last Read” — if a card would not survive being the last thing a serious aspirant reads before the exam, it does not belong here.

← Part I covers: Headlines · Polity & Governance · GS1 · International Relations ·
Defence & Security · Science & Technology · Economy

§1 Environment & Ecology

GS3

Biodiversity & Wildlife Conservation — International Institutions

22–24 September 2026 · Source: Down To Earth / The Wire

27 Global Wildlife Groups Demand a Permanent Ban on Vantara's Wild-Animal Imports

Why in News: On 22 September 2026, 27 international conservation and animal-welfare organisations — including the Jane Goodall Institute Global, Pro Wildlife (coordinating the letter), the Animal Welfare Institute, and Four Paws International — sent an open letter demanding that Vantara, the Reliance-backed zoological rescue centre in Jamnagar, Gujarat, permanently end its wild-animal imports, rejecting the one-year voluntary moratorium the facility itself announced in August 2026 as inadequate and reversible. The letter, reported by Down To Earth on 24 September 2026, lists 14 specific demands — including a full public animal inventory, a no-breeding policy, and independent oversight — reopening a dispute that began with CITES itself flagging discrepancies in Vantara's import documentation.

Background: Vantara has imported roughly 60,000 live animals across some 2,000 species in four years, including critically endangered Tapanuli orangutans, Spix's macaws, Galápagos iguanas and shoebills sourced from countries such as South Africa, Venezuela and DR Congo. CITES, the multilateral treaty regulating cross-border wildlife trade since 1975, had flagged “discrepancies between exporter and importer trade data” and warned that insufficient origin checks could allow wild-caught animals to be mislabelled as captive-bred — effectively recommending a pause on new import permits. India's government formally rejected this in a November 2025 submission to CITES as a “premature and disproportionate” de facto suspension, while a Supreme Court-appointed panel had separately cleared Vantara of wrongdoing in September 2025.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- 27 international conservation/animal-welfare organisations sent an open letter on 22 September 2026 (Pro Wildlife coordinating).
- Vantara (Reliance/Anant Ambani's zoological rescue centre, Jamnagar, Gujarat, ~3,500 acres) has imported ~60,000 live animals across ~2,000 species in four years.
- 14 specific demands: permanently end wild imports, publish a full public animal inventory, define 'rescue' criteria, adopt a no-breeding policy, prioritise repatriation, stop paying for acquisitions, allow independent oversight, among others.
- Species imported include critically endangered Tapanuli orangutans, Spix's macaws, Galápagos iguanas and shoebills; one shipment was declared at \$9 million in value.

- CITES flagged “discrepancies between exporter and importer trade data” and warned of insufficient origin checks, effectively recommending a pause on new import permits.
- India formally rejected this (10 November 2025 CITES submission) as a “premature and disproportionate” de facto suspension, citing strengthened inspection mechanisms.
- A Supreme Court-appointed panel had cleared Vantara of wrongdoing in September 2025.
- Vantara’s own August 2026 climb-down — a 12-month voluntary moratorium — is itself under fire from the NGOs as reversible and inadequate.

MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- Sovereignty versus multilateral verification: India’s assertion of sovereign discretion over a private ‘ex-situ conservation’ facility versus CITES’s multilateral trade-data verification mandate.
- Risk of laundering wild-caught animals as captive-bred through large-scale private wildlife imports, however framed as ‘rescue’ — a genuine wildlife-trafficking-governance concern.
- Credibility spillover: large private wildlife-import controversies can undermine India’s own standing as a source/transit-country enforcer of wildlife-trade rules.
- Regulatory-gap angle: the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and Central Zoo Authority regime were designed around domestic zoos, not private import-based ‘rescue’ centres at this scale.
- Way forward: independent, CITES-compliant audit mechanisms and a statutory definition of ‘rescue’ versus acquisition could resolve the ambiguity driving this recurring controversy.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

Ex-situ conservation = OUTSIDE a species’ natural habitat (a zoo/breeding centre); in-situ = INSIDE it (a protected area). Vantara is ex-situ at unprecedented private scale — exactly why CITES, built for cross-border trade verification, is watching it.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3: Examine how ex-situ conservation initiatives by private entities in India are regulated under national law and international conventions, and the risks such initiatives pose to wildlife-trade governance.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is a multilateral treaty regulating cross-border trade in endangered species.
2. Ex-situ conservation refers to the conservation of a species within its natural habitat.
3. The Central Zoo Authority in India functions under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Which of the statements given above 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). Statement 2 is incorrect — ex-situ conservation is OUTSIDE a species' natural habitat; in-situ conservation is within the habitat.

GS3

CITES

Wildlife Protection Act

Ex-situ Conservation

GS1/GS3

Disaster Management; Climatology

24 September 2026 · Source: India Meteorological Department (reported)

Cyclone Arnab — First Named North Indian Ocean System of 2026 — Makes Landfall Near Kalingapatnam

Why in News: A cyclonic system that formed over the north Andaman Sea around 18 September, intensified into a 'deep depression' off the Odisha-Andhra Pradesh coast, and was named 'Arnab' (contributed by Bangladesh under the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones' regional naming list) made landfall in the early hours of 24 September 2026 near Kalingapatnam, at the Andhra Pradesh-Odisha border, with gusts up to 75 kmph and heavy to very heavy rainfall. The IMD classified it only as a 'deep depression' throughout — it never crossed the 34-knot sustained-wind threshold that would formally make it a 'cyclonic storm' — while State disaster authorities evacuated at least 5,000 people and closed schools, delivering a near-zero-casualty outcome despite direct coastal landfall.

Background: North Indian Ocean tropical cyclones are named under a rotating list maintained by the 13-nation WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones, with member countries (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and others) contributing names in sequence; 'Arnab,' meaning 'ocean' in Bengali, was Bangladesh's contribution. India's early-warning and evacuation architecture — coordinated between the IMD, the NDMA and State Disaster Management Authorities — has progressively reduced cyclone casualties over two decades through improved forecasting, pre-emptive evacuation, and shelter infrastructure, a track record this landfall extended.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- System originated as an upper-air cyclonic circulation over north Thailand, emerged into the north Andaman Sea around 18 Sept, intensified into a deep depression off the Odisha-Andhra coast by 23 Sept.
- Name 'Arnab' (Bengali for 'ocean') contributed by Bangladesh under the WMO/ESCAP Panel's regional naming list — the first North Indian Ocean named system since Cyclone Montha (October 2025).
- IMD classified it only as a 'deep depression' — it never crossed the 34-knot/62 kmph sustained-wind threshold defining a 'cyclonic storm.'
- Landfall: early hours of 24 September 2026, between Visakhapatnam and Gopalpur, near Kalingapatnam (Srikakulam district, AP-Odisha border).

- Gusts up to 75 kmph; heavy to very heavy rainfall; 140 landslide-prone sites flagged in Gajapati district, Odisha.
- States affected/on alert: Odisha and Andhra Pradesh (primary); West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Telangana (secondary, rainfall spillover).
- At least 5,000 people evacuated to cyclone/flood shelters ahead of landfall; schools closed in affected districts.
- Naming mechanism: a 13-nation WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones rotating list, with member states contributing names in sequence.

MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- Classification precision: distinguishing 'depression,' 'deep depression' and 'cyclonic storm' by defined wind-speed thresholds is a recurring UPSC trap, since public usage often blurs 'named system' with 'cyclone.'
- Institutional early-warning success: coordinated IMD-NDMA-SDMA action delivering a near-zero-casualty outcome despite direct coastal landfall.
- Naming-convention mechanism: the WMO/ESCAP Panel's rotating multi-nation list is itself testable institutional detail distinct from the meteorology.
- Honest-classification discipline: not disguising a deep depression as a confirmed cyclonic storm reflects the same accuracy-over-drama standard this product applies to all its own sourcing.
- Way forward: continued investment in landslide-risk mapping and last-mile evacuation infrastructure remains the binding constraint on further reducing cyclone casualties.

MEMORY TECHNIQUE — RETURNING TOPIC

Previously covered:

20 & 24 September 2026 editions (tracked only as a developing, unnamed weather system — deliberately not written up as a confirmed cyclone)

What's new today:

Formal naming as 'Arnab' by the WMO/ESCAP Panel and confirmed landfall (24 Sept) near Kalingapatnam as a 'deep depression'

UPSC relevance shift:

Moves from a disaster-management watch item to a confirmed classification-and-institutional-response case study — the materially new development needed to justify full coverage

PYQ LINKAGE

GS1/GS3: Distinguish between the meteorological categories of a 'depression,' 'deep depression' and 'cyclonic storm.' Discuss the institutional mechanism for naming tropical cyclones in the North Indian Ocean region.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. A tropical cyclonic system is classified as a 'cyclonic storm' only when its sustained wind speed crosses 34 knots (approximately 62 kmph).
2. Tropical cyclones in the North Indian Ocean region are named under a rotating list maintained by a WMO/ESCAP Panel comprising multiple member countries.
3. Cyclone Arnab was classified by the India Meteorological Department as a fully-developed cyclonic storm at the time of its landfall.

Which of the statements given above 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). Statement 3 is incorrect — the IMD classified the system only as a 'deep depression' throughout, never as a fully-developed cyclonic storm.

GS1

GS3

Disaster Management

Cyclone Nomenclature

IMD

§2 Places in News

PLACES IN NEWS — FRIDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2026 | ANTIM ASSURED 100+



① Kalingapatnam (Landfall point of Cyclone Arnab (deep depression), ~2:47 am IST, 24 September 2026)

② Jamnagar (Site of Vantara zoo; hit with a 22 September 2026 open letter from 27 global wildlife NGOs demanding a permanent ban on wild-animal imports)

- ③ New Delhi (Venue for Rajnath Singh's Defcon 2026 address, the Arogya Manthan 2026 digital-health launch, and this week's Supreme Court hearings)
- ④ Alwar (Home of Zero mK India Pvt Ltd, the startup partnering DRDO's Technology Development Fund on an indigenous quantum-computing dilution refrigerator)
- ⑤ New York (81st UN General Assembly high-level week — the G4's UNSC-reform statement, the FIPIC-II Foreign Ministers' Meeting, and the Shehbaz Sharif press exchange all unfolded here)
- ⑥ Geneva (India exercised its 'right of reply' at the UN Human Rights Council here on 24 September 2026, rebutting Pakistan on Kashmir and cross-border terrorism)
- ⑦ Suva (Foreign ministers of Fiji and other Pacific/Caribbean states met India at the 2nd FIPIC Foreign Ministers' Meeting on UNGA sidelines, 24 September 2026)
- ⑧ Brussels (Reported venue for the India-EU Free Trade Agreement's signing, expected 16 December 2026 (media-sourced date, not yet officially confirmed))

① Kalingapatnam, Srikakulam dist., Andhra Pradesh – Odisha border, India

Landfall point of Cyclone Arnab (deep depression), ~2:47 am IST, 24 September 2026.

Low-lying Bay of Bengal coast at the AP-Odisha border, sitting on the northeast-monsoon cyclone corridor fed by warm Bay of Bengal sea-surface temperatures.

② Jamnagar, Gujarat, India

Site of Vantara zoo; hit with a 22 September 2026 open letter from 27 global wildlife NGOs demanding a permanent ban on wild-animal imports.

Saurashtra peninsula on the Gulf of Kutch, near India's largest refinery/petrochemical hub — an industrial-conservation land-use overlap.

③ New Delhi, India

Venue for Rajnath Singh's Defcon 2026 address, the Arogya Manthan 2026 digital-health launch, and this week's Supreme Court hearings.

Sits astride the Yamuna floodplain in the Indo-Gangetic plain — India's administrative and judicial capital.

④ Alwar, Rajasthan, India

Home of Zero mK India Pvt Ltd, the startup partnering DRDO's Technology Development Fund on an indigenous quantum-computing dilution refrigerator.

Aravalli-range foothills of northeastern Rajasthan, part of the National Capital Region's expanding deep-tech manufacturing belt.

⑤ New York, United States (UN Headquarters)

81st UN General Assembly high-level week — the G4's UNSC-reform statement, the FIPIC-II Foreign Ministers' Meeting, and the Shehbaz Sharif press exchange all unfolded here.

⑥ Geneva, Switzerland

India exercised its 'right of reply' at the UN Human Rights Council here on 24 September 2026, rebutting Pakistan on Kashmir and cross-border terrorism.

On Lake Geneva at the foot of the Jura mountains — host city to the UN's European headquarters and most human-rights treaty bodies.

Manhattan's East River waterfront — the seat of UN diplomacy and this week's central node of the global diplomatic calendar.

⑦ Suva, Fiji (representing the Pacific Islands Forum/FIPIC grouping)

Foreign ministers of Fiji and other Pacific/Caribbean states met India at the 2nd FIPIC Foreign Ministers' Meeting on UNGA sidelines, 24 September 2026.

A volcanic Fiji archipelago Small Island Developing State, acutely exposed to sea-level rise and El Niño-driven cyclone/drought cycles.

⑧ Brussels, Belgium

Reported venue for the India-EU Free Trade Agreement's signing, expected 16 December 2026 (media-sourced date, not yet officially confirmed).

Seat of the European Commission and Council — the EU's institutional capital, where the bloc's trade-agreement approvals are finalised.

§3 Ethics & Integrity Cases

Epistemic Honesty in Institutional Argumentation

During a constitutional hearing, a senior judge dismisses a widely-repeated institutional claim ('judges appoint judges') as a 'myth,' while the state's counsel uses the same reasoning in reverse to defend a different institution's design. Both arguments are internally logical, yet each serves a specific institutional interest.

Reflective question: *Reflect: when public institutions defend their own legitimacy using selectively-applied logic, what obligation does the arguer have to acknowledge the limits of the analogy, and what obligation does the listening public have to test it?*

Timeliness as a Component of Justice

A statutory body has the power to resolve a dispute but no binding deadline to do so, while the outcome of that delay itself confers a real-world advantage on one party over another (recognition, resources, or public standing) regardless of the eventual merits.

Reflective question: *Reflect: is procedural delay by an otherwise-neutral adjudicator a form of substantive injustice, even where no bias in the final decision can be shown?*

Substantive Equality vs Procedural Uniformity

A uniform national policy is rolled out with a short implementation window, technically giving every institution the same choice-set, but in practice only one option is realistically available to most because of pre-existing infrastructure and staffing gaps.

Reflective question: Reflect: when does formally equal treatment (the same rule for everyone) become substantively unequal in effect, and whose responsibility is it to correct for that gap — the policymaker's, or the implementing institution's?

Institutional Accountability and Transparency in Ex-Situ Conservation

A large, well-resourced private conservation facility positions its wild-animal acquisitions as 'rescue,' while international observers question whether the scale and sourcing pattern resembles acquisition more than rescue, and the facility's own inventory and criteria remain undisclosed.

Reflective question: Reflect: what should a private actor owe the public, and multilateral treaty bodies, by way of transparency, when its stated humanitarian purpose could also serve to obscure a commercial or reputational one?

The Precautionary Principle and the State's Positive Duty to Protect Life

A district administration must decide how aggressively to evacuate a low-lying coastal population ahead of a weather system that forecasters classify only as a 'deep depression' — not yet a confirmed cyclone — knowing that over-evacuation carries real economic and social costs, while under-evacuation risks lives if the forecast proves wrong.

Reflective question: Reflect: how should a public official weigh the certainty of a forecast against the irreversibility of the harm it warns against, when the two are inversely related?

Representative Justice in Global Institutional Design

A group of states argues that an international body's decision-making structure, designed eight decades earlier, no longer reflects today's distribution of population, economic weight, or responsibility — yet the very states advantaged by that structure must consent before it can change.

Reflective question: Reflect: can an institution be expected to reform itself when the people with formal power over the institution's reform are precisely the people who benefit from its current design?

§4 Prelims MCQs (20)

QUESTION 1

Consider the following statements:

1. The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners are selected under the 2023 Act by a committee comprising the Prime Minister, a Union Cabinet Minister, and the Leader of the Opposition.
2. The Supreme Court's interim order in *Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India* (2023) had included the Chief Justice of India in this selection panel.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c) — Both are correct — the 2023 Act replaced the CJI (present in the Court's interim panel) with a Cabinet Minister.

QUESTION 2

Consider the following statements:

1. Paragraph 15 of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968 governs disputes over a party's name and symbol after a split.
2. The Shiv Sena and NCP symbol disputes were both resolved by the Election Commission using the same statutory provision.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c) — Both correct — Para 15's 'test of majority' was applied in Shiv Sena (2022), NCP (2023), and is now under scrutiny again in the TMC dispute (2026).

QUESTION 3

Consider the following statements:

1. The National Education Policy 2020's three-language formula applies from Class 6 under the National Curriculum Framework for School Education, 2023.
2. Education is placed in the Concurrent List of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution.
3. Tamil Nadu has historically implemented a three-language policy identical to the NEP 2020 formula.

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) — Statement 3 is incorrect — Tamil Nadu follows a two-language (Tamil + English) policy, not the three-language formula.

QUESTION 4

Consider the following statements:

1. A State Legislature can adopt any language(s) in use in the State as official language(s) under Article 345.
2. Inclusion of a language in the Eighth Schedule requires a constitutional amendment under Articles 344 and 351.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c) — Both correct — the two statuses rest on entirely different constitutional provisions, exactly the trap in this week's Tulu coverage.

QUESTION 5

Consider the following statements:

1. The 92nd Amendment Act, 2003 added Bodo, Dogri, Maithili and Santali to the Eighth Schedule.
2. The Eighth Schedule to the Constitution currently lists 22 languages.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c) — Both correct.

QUESTION 6

Consider the following statements:

1. The G4 grouping seeking UN Security Council reform comprises India, Brazil, Germany and Japan.
2. Amendment of the UN Charter to expand the Security Council requires ratification by all five permanent members.
3. The Intergovernmental Negotiations framework on Security Council reform was established in 2008.

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: (d) — All three are correct.

QUESTION 7

Consider the following statements:

1. The Ezulwini Consensus is Africa's common position on UN Security Council reform, demanding at least two permanent seats with veto power.
2. India's G4 partners are identical in composition to the BRICS grouping.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) — Statement 2 is incorrect — the G4 (India, Brazil, Germany, Japan) and BRICS (which includes China, Russia, South Africa, and others but not Germany or Japan) are entirely different groupings.

QUESTION 8

Consider the following statements:

1. The Indus Waters Treaty, 1960, was brokered with the involvement of the World Bank.
2. Under the Treaty's dispute-resolution mechanism, a Court of Arbitration can be approached only after recourse to a Neutral Expert in defined circumstances.
3. The Indus Waters Treaty covers only the Indus and Jhelum rivers.

Which of the statements given above 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) — Statement 3 is incorrect — the Treaty covers all six Indus-system rivers: Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej.

QUESTION 9

Consider the following statements:

1. FIPIC (Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation) was anchored to a 12-Point Action Plan announced by the Prime Minister in 2023.
2. The International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure are cited as delivery vehicles for India's Pacific SIDS cooperation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c) — Both correct.

QUESTION 10

Consider the following statements:

1. SAT-SAAW is an air-to-ground precision-guided glide bomb developed by DRDO for anti-airfield strikes.
2. The 'Buy (Indian-IDDm)' category under India's Defence Acquisition Procedure requires a platform to be Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured.
3. SAT-SAAW has approximately 100% indigenous content with no imported sub-systems.

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) — Statement 3 is incorrect — SAT-SAAW carries approximately 60% indigenous content, not 100%.

QUESTION 11

Consider the following statements:

1. India's National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC) functions under the National Technical Research Organisation.
2. CERT-In (the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team) functions under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c) — Both correct — India runs two distinct principal cyber-security institutions under two different administrative homes.

QUESTION 12

Consider the following statements:

1. Dilution refrigerators cool quantum-computing hardware using a mixture of helium-3 and helium-4 to reach millikelvin-range temperatures.
2. India's National Quantum Mission was approved by the Union Cabinet in 2023.
3. DRDO's Technology Development Fund cannot enter into agreements with private startups.

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) — Statement 3 is incorrect — the TDF's pact with Zero mK India Pvt Ltd, a startup, directly disproves this.

QUESTION 13

Consider the following statements:

1. The Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission uses the ABHA ID as the basis for linking an individual's health records.
2. Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY was launched in 2018, five years before the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission.
3. The Secure Data Environment launched under Arogya Manthan 2026 allows unrestricted download of identifiable patient data.

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) — Statement 3 is incorrect — the SDE restricts access to de-identified data or a sandbox environment.

QUESTION 14

Consider the following statements:

1. The OECD's Interim Economic Outlook (September 2026) placed India's FY27 growth forecast above the Reserve Bank of India's own projection.

2. The Reserve Bank of India's inflation-targeting framework operates within a 4% (+/- 2%) band.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c) — Both correct.

QUESTION 15

Consider the following statements:

1. The National Single Window System integrates approvals from both Central Ministries and State Governments on one digital platform.
2. The National Single Window System was launched in 2021.
3. PESO's licensing modules were integrated onto the NSWS as its first complete transaction-level regulator integration.

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: (d) — All three are correct.

QUESTION 16

Consider the following statements:

1. CITES is a multilateral treaty regulating cross-border trade in endangered species.
2. In-situ conservation refers to conservation efforts undertaken outside a species' natural habitat.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) — Statement 2 is incorrect — in-situ conservation is WITHIN the natural habitat; ex-situ is outside it.

QUESTION 17

Consider the following statements:

1. A weather system is classified as a 'cyclonic storm' by the IMD only once its sustained wind speed crosses roughly 62 kmph (34 knots).
2. Tropical cyclone names in the North Indian Ocean are contributed by a rotating list of member countries under a WMO/ESCAP Panel.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c) — Both correct.

QUESTION 18

Consider the following statements:

1. Under the Telecommunications Act, 2023, tampering with a mobile device's IMEI number is a criminal offence.
2. An IMEI's first eight digits form the Type Allocation Code, globally allotted by the GSMA.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c) — Both correct — Section 42(3)(c) of the Telecommunications Act, 2023 criminalises IMEI tampering with up to 3 years' imprisonment and a fine up to ₹50 lakh.

QUESTION 19

Consider the following statements:

1. Justice Dipankar Datta's remark that 'judges appoint judges is a myth' was made in the context of a hearing challenging the Election Commission appointment law.
2. Collegium recommendations for judicial appointments are legally binding on the Executive in every circumstance.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) — Statement 2 is incorrect — Collegium recommendations are advisory; the Executive retains a limited power to return them.

QUESTION 20

Consider the following statements:

1. Vantara, the private zoological rescue centre at the centre of the CITES scrutiny, is located in Jamnagar, Gujarat.
2. Vantara has proposed permanently ending all wild-animal imports in direct response to the 27-NGO letter.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a) — Statement 2 is incorrect — Vantara has so far only announced a 12-month voluntary moratorium, which the NGOs explicitly criticised as inadequate, not a permanent end to imports.

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GS2 · 150 WORDS · Q1

Analyse the constitutional distinction between the Collegium system for judicial appointments and the selection process for the Election Commission under the 2023 Act. Does the analogy between the two hold?

Frame around Anoop Baranwal (2023), Article 324, and the separation-of-powers logic each mechanism actually serves — note where the analogy breaks down.

GS2 · 150 WORDS · Q2

Examine the Election Commission's adjudicatory role in party name/symbol disputes under Paragraph 15 of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, with reference to recent party splits.

Cite the Shiv Sena, NCP and TMC sequence; discuss the 'test of majority' and the cost of adjudicatory delay.

GS1/GS2 · 150 WORDS · Q3

The Three-Language Formula has been a recurring source of Centre-State friction since the 1960s. Discuss with reference to the NEP 2020 and recent developments in school curriculum policy.

Contrast Tamil Nadu's two-language model with NEP 2020's R3; anchor to the Concurrent List and Article 350A.

GS1 · 100 WORDS · Q4

Distinguish between 'official language' status under Article 345 and inclusion in the Eighth Schedule under Articles 344 and 351, with reference to a recent State-level language recognition.

Use the Tulu/Karnataka example; note the different deciding authority and legal effect of each.

GS2 · 150 WORDS · Q5

'Traditional bilateral disputes get little resolved but plenty rehearsed at multilateral human-rights forums.' Discuss with reference to recent India-Pakistan exchanges at the UNHRC and UNGA.

Discuss the limits of 'right of reply' diplomacy and the Indus Waters Treaty's disputed arbitration route.

GS2 · 150 WORDS · Q6

Examine the G4 nations' renewed push for UN Security Council reform. What structural constraints continue to block progress after eighteen years of Intergovernmental Negotiations?

Anchor to Article 108's unanimous-P5-ratification requirement and the tension between the G4 and Africa's Ezulwini Consensus.

GS3 · 150 WORDS · Q7

Discuss India's evolving national security doctrine, from a territorially-bound conception to one addressing 'fluid' threat domains such as cyber warfare and drones.

Use the Defcon 2026 framing; discuss institutional coordination needs across CERT-In, NCIIPC, and the armed forces.

GS3 · 150 WORDS · Q8

Assess the significance of indigenous enabling technologies such as dilution refrigerators for India's National Quantum Mission and its broader technology self-reliance goals.

Distinguish mission-level ambition from enabling-hardware bottlenecks; cite the DRDO-TDF-Zero mK pact as a case study.

GS4 · CASE STUDY · 250 WORDS · Q9

You are the District Disaster Management Officer of a low-lying coastal district. A weather system approaching your coastline has been classified by the IMD only as a 'deep depression,' not a confirmed cyclone, but your models suggest a small but real chance it could still intensify before landfall. A forced, full-scale evacuation would displace thousands of fisherfolk during their peak catch season, causing significant livelihood loss; a partial or delayed evacuation risks lives if the forecast proves conservative. Local community leaders resist a full evacuation, citing past false alarms. (a) Identify the ethical issues involved. (b) What course of action would you adopt, and why?

Weigh the precautionary principle and the State's positive duty to protect life against proportionality and the real economic cost of over-caution; discuss trust-erosion from repeated false alarms as a genuine long-term risk to future compliance.

§6 Answer-Writing Value Addition

The OECD's 7.1% India FY27 growth forecast is the highest of all major agencies tracked — RBI (6.7%), Fitch (6.9%), ADB/S&P/Moody's (7.0% each).

India's IMEI-tampering law (Telecommunications Act 2023, Section 42(3)(c)) carries up to 3 years' imprisonment plus a fine up to ₹50 lakh.

Dilution refrigerators cool quantum-computing qubits to roughly 20 millikelvin — a small fraction of a degree above absolute zero (0 K ≈ -273.15°C).

Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY at 8 years: 60+ crore beneficiaries covered; ABDM at 5 years: 97.8+ crore ABHA IDs created.

Vantara has imported roughly 60,000 live animals across ~2,000 species in four years — the scale now driving CITES scrutiny.

Cyclone Arnab is the first North Indian Ocean named tropical system since Cyclone Montha (October 2025).

The G4 nations (India, Brazil, Germany, Japan) have sought UN Security Council reform through eighteen years of stalled Intergovernmental Negotiations.

The National Single Window System integrates 327 Central and 3,452 State approvals across 32 ministries and 34 States/UTs.

§7 AKADEMIA Direct Hit Tracker

TOPIC	GS PAPER	ONE-LINE CAPSULE	PROBABILITY
Collegium vs EC-appointment 'myth' debate	GS2	Anoop Baranwal (2023) legacy — 2023 Act's panel design under fresh SC scrutiny.	★★★★☆
TMC symbol dispute / Para 15 timeline	GS2	SC presses ECI on Shiv Sena-NCP-TMC symbol-adjudication pattern.	★★★★☆
Three-language policy SC nudge to CBSE	GS1/GS2	NEP 2020 R3 rollout deferred for Class 6; federalism question open.	★★★★☆
Tulu official language status (Art. 345 vs 8th Schedule)	GS1	Karnataka Cabinet order — classic official-language vs Eighth-Schedule trap.	★★★★☆

TOPIC	GS PAPER	ONE-LINE CAPSULE	PROBABILITY
G4 UNSC reform push at UNGA-81	GS2	18 years of IGN deadlock; Article 108's P5-ratification blocker.	★★★★★
India-Pakistan UNHRC/UNGA confrontation	GS2	Right-of-reply diplomacy; Hafiz Saeed question; IWT arbitration dispute.	★★★★☆
FIPIC-II Pacific/Caribbean SIDS diplomacy	GS2	India's 12-Point Action Plan meets Pacific/Caribbean FMs at UNGA.	★★★★☆
SAT-SAAW – BDL ₹810.79-crore contract	GS3	Indigenous anti-airfield glide bomb; Buy (Indian-IDDM) category.	★★★★☆
Rajnath Singh's fluid-threat security doctrine	GS3	'Security beyond geography' — cyber and drones as border-agnostic threats.	★★★★☆
DRDO-TDF dilution refrigerator (quantum)	GS3	First TDF deep-tech pact; National Quantum Mission's cryogenics bottleneck.	★★★★☆
Arogya Manthan 2026 — NHCX & Secure Data Environment	GS2/GS3	8 years PM-JAY, 5 years ABDM; claims-exchange meets privacy-sandboxed research.	★★★★☆
OECD raises India's FY27 growth forecast to 7.1%	GS3	Highest among major agencies; RBI stays most conservative at 6.7%.	★★★★★
National Single Window System — 5-year stocktake	GS3	327 Central + 3,452 State approvals; procedural, not regulatory, reform.	★★★★☆
Vantara wildlife imports / CITES row	GS3	27 NGOs demand permanent ban; sovereignty vs multilateral verification.	★★★★★
Cyclone Arnab landfall	GS1/GS3	First 2026 named system; deep depression, not full cyclone — classification trap.	★★★★☆
IMEI tampering & Telecommunications Act 2023, S.42(3)(c)	GS3	3-year jail/₹50-lakh fine; Sanchar Saathi/CEIR as the citizen-facing tools.	★★★★☆
India-EU FTA — reported 16 December 2026 signing	GS2/GS3	Media-sourced date; largest-ever India FTA by partner GDP, pending confirmation.	★★★★☆
National Quantum Mission's enabling-tech gap (cryogenics)	GS3	Import-dependence in 'invisible' infrastructure caps headline-mission ambition.	★★★★☆

§8 Proof of Precision — Part II

2

Environment News
Items

6

Ethics Cases

20

MCQs Generated

9

Mains Questions

8

Places Mapped

0

Repeated Topics

Environment & Ecology

Disaster Management

Geography

Ethics & Integrity

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