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PART II • ENVIRONMENT TO DIRECT HIT TRACKER

Tuesday, 21 July 2026

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National CAMPA 7th Governing Body: Snow Leopard, Gangetic Dolphin, Rhino & Wild Water Buffalo Conservation Plans + Aastha Van ₹3,000 Crore Approved

Why in News: The 7th Meeting of the Governing Body of National CAMPA, chaired by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav at CASFOS Coimbatore, approved four new national-level species conservation projects and the Aastha Van Sanrakshan Yojana (₹3,000 crore, 2026–31) for 15,000 sacred groves — representing a comprehensive biodiversity push under the Compensatory Afforestation Fund.

Background: National CAMPA (Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority) manages funds collected when forests are diverted for non-forestry purposes under the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980. The Supreme Court mandated a centrally managed CAMPA fund in its 2002 order; the CAMPA Act 2016 created the statutory authority. Funds are shared 90% with States for afforestation and wildlife conservation.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Snow Leopard: 2nd nationwide population estimation (first yielded 718 individuals per SPAI 2024) + community-based conservation in 5 Himalayan states; funded via CAMPA.
- Gangetic River Dolphin: Conservation and Recovery Action Plan (2022–2047) finalised with WII + Aaranyak + Assam Forest Dept; Brahmaputra river focus; links to Project Dolphin (2020).
- Indian Rhinoceros (Greater One-Horned): corridor development + anti-poaching in Assam, West Bengal; IUCN Vulnerable; 4,014 individuals (India census 2022).
- Aastha Van Sanrakshan Yojana: ₹3,000 crore (2026–31); conservation + restoration of 15,000 sacred groves (devvans/devrais) across India — recognising their role as community biodiversity hotspots.

Sacred groves = India's oldest conservation tradition. Aastha Van Sanrakshan Yojana gives government funding to what communities have protected for centuries. CAMPA fund = "polluter pays" in forestry — diverting forest means paying into CAMPA. UPSC Prelims frequently asks: who manages CAMPA? (Answer: National CAMPA under MoEFCC, with CEC chaired by the Environment Minister.)

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2019: "What is the significance of the CAMPA fund? How has it been used for wildlife conservation?" | GS3 2021: "Discuss India's major conservation programmes and their effectiveness in protecting flagship species."

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. The Aastha Van Sanrakshan Yojana, approved in 2026, specifically aims to conserve: (a) Tiger corridors (b) Sacred groves (c) Mangrove forests (d) Coastal wetlands. **Answer: (b) Sacred groves.** ₹3,000 crore for 15,000 sacred groves under National CAMPA 2026–31.

GS3

CAMPA

Sacred Groves

Snow Leopard

Gangetic Dolphin

Indian Rhino

ENV

Static Species · High Himalayas

Static UPSC Topic · Source: IUCN Red List + SPAI 2024 + WII

Snow Leopard (*Panthera uncia*) — India's High Altitude Predator Under CAMPA Protection

Why in News: The National CAMPA 7th Governing Body (July 10) approved the 2nd nationwide Snow Leopard population estimation project. The 1st estimation (SPAI 2024 — Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India) found 718 individuals — making India home to ~17% of the global snow leopard population (~4,000–6,500).

Background: Snow leopards are the apex predators of the High Himalayan and Trans-Himalayan ecosystems. India is a signatory to the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programme (GSLEP) launched at the Bishkek Declaration (Kyrgyzstan, 2013), committing 12 range nations to protecting snow leopard landscapes.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Scientific name: *Panthera uncia*; Family Felidae; Genus *Panthera* (same as tigers, lions, leopards — not a "true" leopard — different species!).
- IUCN Status: Vulnerable (downlisted from Endangered in 2017); CITES Appendix I; Schedule I WPA 1972 (highest protection).
- India distribution: Ladakh (highest density), Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh — 5 states.
- GSLEP "Secure 20" goal: protect at least 20 snow leopard landscapes globally; India has identified 3 large landscape mosaics as priority areas.

💡 TEACHING HOOK

Snow leopard ≠ common leopard (*Panthera pardus*). The snow leopard is *Panthera uncia* — its tail is as long as its body (used for balance on rocky terrain and to wrap around itself for warmth). It is called the "ghost of the mountains" — rarely seen. For UPSC Prelims: remember it is Vulnerable (NOT Endangered) since 2017 — a common trap question.

📄 PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2020: "Discuss the significance of Project Snow Leopard and the challenges faced in conserving this species in the trans-Himalayan region." | GS3 2022: "What is GSLEP? How does India contribute to its 'Secure 20' goal?"

ENV

Snow Leopard

GSLEP

IUCN Vulnerable

SPAI 2024

Himalayan Ecology

§2 · PLACES IN NEWS — 21 JULY 2026

📌 PLACES IN NEWS — 21 JUL 2026 | ANTIM ASSURED 100+



- ① New Delhi (Parliament / PARIVARTAN / MPMS) ● ② Geneva, Switzerland (WTO Fisheries Subsidies)
- ③ Coimbatore, TN (CAMP 7th Meeting) ● ④ Darwin, Australia (Exercise Pitch Black 2026)
- ⑤ Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (GSLEP Snow Leopard 2013) ● ⑥ Sriharikota, AP (ISRO GISAT-1A NET July 31)

INDIA

① New Delhi

Parliament Monsoon Session Day 2 —
Delimitation + Women's Reservation debate;
NCP-SP support signal. Delhi Cabinet approved
PARIVARTAN scheme (July 20). CCEA approved
MPMS + Semicon 2.0 + NIPU-2026 (July 15).

EUROPE

② Geneva, Switzerland

WTO Headquarters — India deposited its
Instrument of Acceptance for the Agreement on
Fisheries Subsidies on July 20, becoming the
123rd member. First multilateral WTO
environmental agreement, adopted at MC12
(June 2022).

INDIA

③ Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu

CASFOS (Central Academy for State Forest
Service) — venue for the 7th Governing Body
Meeting of National CAMP (July 10). 4 species

AUSTRALIA

④ Darwin, Australia

RAAF (Royal Australian Air Force) Base Darwin —
Exercise Pitch Black 2026 launched July 20, runs
to August 7. IAF's 4 Rafale aircraft in India's first

conservation plans approved; Aastha Van ₹3,000 crore sanctioned.

Rafale overseas combat exercise; 19 nations. Reflects India-Australia CSP depth.

CENTRAL ASIA

⑤ Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Origin of the GSLEP (Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programme) — Bishkek Declaration (2013) committed 12 snow leopard range nations to the "Secure 20" goal. India has identified 3 priority landscape mosaics under GSLEP. Links to CAMPA's 2nd Snow Leopard census.

INDIA

⑥ Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh

Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC SHAR) — ISRO's GSLV-F18 carrying GISAT-1A (EOS-05) is in T-10 countdown operations. NET July 31, 2026. India's first geostationary Earth observation satellite since GISAT-1 was lost in August 2021.

§3 · ETHICS & INTEGRITY CASES (GS4)

CASE 1 — FISHERIES & LIVELIHOODS VS. INTERNATIONAL LAW

The IUU Fishing Dilemma

Scenario: A regional fisheries officer discovers that a major cooperative (5,000 families) is engaged in IUU (Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated) fishing. With India now a WTO Fisheries Agreement signatory, reporting this will trigger subsidy suspension, devastating livelihoods. The state fisheries minister instructs him to "delay the report for two more years."

Values at stake: Rule of law vs. welfare (Art. 39); international treaty obligations; civil servant neutrality; whistleblower duty; consequences-based vs. duty-based ethics.

CASE 2 — DELIMITATION & DEMOCRATIC INTEGRITY

The Census Boundary Pressure

Scenario: A Census officer mapping delimitation boundaries receives oral instructions from a district-level party functionary to adjust population data for two villages to increase the representation of a dominant community. The officer's superior informally supports this "for development."

Values at stake: Integrity of democratic process (Art. 324 Election Commission); statistical accuracy; political neutrality; moral courage; Art. 14 equality.

Approach: Refuse the adjustment; document the oral instruction; escalate in writing to the Registrar General of India. The census officer is

Approach: Report to the Ministry in writing; propose a structured transition plan for the cooperative (PMMSY alternative livelihood); do NOT suppress the report. Duty-based reasoning demands compliance with the law; utilitarian reasoning supports a managed transition — both converge on transparency.

a constitutional functionary — political interference in delimitation data is a threat to democratic representation itself.

CASE 3 — CAMPA FUNDS & ECOLOGICAL CONSCIENCE

The Sacred Grove vs. Resort

Scenario: A DFO (Divisional Forest Officer) is directed by the PCCF to divert Aastha Van Sanrakshan Yojana funds earmarked for a sacred grove (devvana) to provide infrastructure for a politically connected developer's eco-resort on adjacent land. The DFO knows the sacred grove has endemic plant species.

Values at stake: Ecological stewardship; public trust in CAMPA; Art. 48A (protect environment); accountability; Art. 51A(g) fundamental duty to protect natural environment; corruption vs. civil service courage.

Approach: Decline to sign the diversion order; file a written objection citing WPA 1972 and CAMPA Act 2016; alert the National CAMPA authority and if necessary invoke RTI documentation. Ecological corruption uniquely harms future generations.

CASE 4 — SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY & RESEARCH ETHICS

The Quantum Authorship Question

Scenario: A BITS Pilani researcher central to the landmark 120-qubit quantum advantage demonstration discovers that a key algorithmic technique was inadvertently derived from a rival lab's unpublished working paper, accessed through a peer-review process. The achievement has already received global "active" QAT status and national media coverage.

Values at stake: Scientific integrity; attribution and academic honesty; national reputation vs. individual ethics; courage to self-correct; long-term credibility of India's NQM.

Approach: Disclose the unintentional overlap to the journal and collaborators; offer co-authorship to the originating researchers; issue a correction notice. Short-term reputational cost is outweighed by the long-term credibility of India's quantum research ecosystem.

THEIAS AKADEMIA GS4 Ethics case studies bridge theory and real governance. **EMP (Ethics & Moral Philosophy)** at TheIAS Akademia uses live case-study workshops to sharpen your answer framework — details at theiasakademia.com.

§4 · PRELIMS MCQS — 15 QUESTIONS

Q1. India became the _____ member to accept the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies on July 20, 2026.

(a) 100th (b) 115th (c) 123rd (d) 130th

Answer: (c) 123rd. Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agarwal deposited India's Instrument of Acceptance at WTO Geneva on July 20, 2026.

Q2. The WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies was adopted at which Ministerial Conference?

(a) MC10 Nairobi (b) MC11 Buenos Aires (c) MC12 Geneva (d) MC13 Abu Dhabi

Answer: (c) MC12 Geneva, June 2022. It is the first WTO multilateral agreement with an environmental sustainability focus.

Q3. IUU fishing stands for:

(a) Intensive, Unrestricted, Unmonitored (b) Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated (c) Inland, Upstream, Uncertified (d) International, Unrestricted, Unlicensed

Answer: (b) Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated. The WTO Agreement prohibits subsidies for IUU fishing and for fishing of overfished stocks.

Q4. Under Delhi PARIVARTAN scheme, Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs) replacing old BS-IV vehicles MUST be:

(a) BS-VI CNG only (b) Electric only (c) BS-VI petrol or CNG (d) Either BS-VI CNG or EV

Answer: (b) Electric only. LGVs must be electric under PARIVARTAN; buses may be BS-VI CNG or EV.

Q5. Under MPMS (Mobile Phone Manufacturing Scheme), the additional incentive for domestic component procurement is:

(a) 1% (b) 1.5% (c) 3% (d) 5%

Answer: (b) 1.5%. The scheme provides 2.25–5% base incentive on eligible sales, 1.5% for domestic components, and 3% for design/R&D.

Q6. What is the total outlay approved for Semicon 2.0 in July 2026?

(a) ₹62,500 crore (b) ₹76,000 crore (c) ₹1.275 lakh crore (d) ₹2 lakh crore

Answer: (c) ₹1.275 lakh crore. Semicon 2.0 covers design, fabrication, ATMP, R&D. ISM 1.0 was ₹76,000 crore. MPMS was ₹62,500 crore.

Q7. In BITS Pilani's quantum achievement, the 120-qubit processor completed the SU(2) simulation in:

(a) 2 seconds (b) 20 seconds (c) 2 minutes (d) 20 minutes

Answer: (b) 20 seconds. The classical supercomputer required ~2 hours for the same computation. This is the definition of quantum advantage.

Q8. What is the IUCN Red List status of the Snow Leopard (*Panthera uncia*)?

(a) Critically Endangered (b) Endangered (c) Vulnerable (d) Near Threatened

Answer: (c) Vulnerable. It was downlisted from Endangered to Vulnerable in 2017 due to improved population data. This is a frequent UPSC trap question.

Q9. The SPAI 2024 census estimated how many Snow Leopards in India?

(a) 450 (b) 600 (c) 718 (d) 900

Answer: (c) 718. SPAI = Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India; India holds approximately 17% of the global snow leopard population.

Q10. The Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programme (GSLEP) was launched in:

(a) New Delhi, 2010 (b) Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 2013 (c) Kathmandu, Nepal, 2015 (d) Thimphu, Bhutan, 2017

Answer: (b) Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 2013. The Bishkek Declaration brought 12 range nations together under the "Secure 20" goal.

Q11. The 7th Governing Body Meeting of National CAMPA was held at:

(a) New Delhi (b) Bengaluru (c) Coimbatore (d) Dehradun

Answer: (c) Coimbatore. Held at CASFOS (Central Academy for State Forest Service), Coimbatore, on July 10, 2026.

Q12. Aastha Van Sanrakshan Yojana (2026–31) allocates _____ for conservation of 15,000 sacred groves:

- (a) ₹1,000 crore (b) ₹2,000 crore (c) ₹3,000 crore (d) ₹5,000 crore

Answer: (c) ₹3,000 crore. Approved by National CAMPA Governing Body (7th meeting, July 10, 2026) under MoEFCC.

Q13. GISAT-1A will be placed in which orbit?

- (a) Low Earth Orbit (LEO) at ~500 km (b) Sun-Synchronous Orbit (SSO) at ~600 km (c) Geostationary Orbit (GEO) at 35,786 km (d) Medium Earth Orbit (MEO) at ~20,000 km

Answer: (c) GEO at 35,786 km. This enables a 30-minute revisit over India — far faster than LEO remote sensing satellites that revisit every few days.

Q14. Exercise Pitch Black 2026 is being conducted at:

- (a) RAAF Base Williamtown, NSW (b) RAAF Base Darwin, Northern Territory (c) RAAF Base Edinburgh, South Australia (d) RAAF Base Pearce, Western Australia

Answer: (b) RAAF Base Darwin, Northern Territory. Darwin's proximity to Southeast Asia makes it strategically valuable for Indo-Pacific air exercises.

Q15. The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill 2026 failed its first vote in Lok Sabha in April 2026. How many votes were cast in its favour?

- (a) 250 (b) 272 (c) 298 (d) 310

Answer: (c) 298 votes in favour vs. 230 against. The bill required a 2/3 majority of members present and voting under Art. 368 — 298 was insufficient.

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§5 · MAINS QUESTIONS (6)

GS2 — Polity

Q1. The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill 2026 seeks to simultaneously address gender under-representation and delimitation imperatives. Critically examine the constitutional, federal and political challenges involved. (250 words)

Hint: Art. 368 (2/3 majority threshold) + federalism (southern states concern) + Art. 330A (women's reservation) + coalition politics dimension + comparison with 73rd/74th Amendments' women reservation at local level.

GS2 — IR / GS3 — Economy

Q2. India's acceptance of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies represents both a global commitment and a domestic policy challenge. Evaluate the implications for India's fisheries sector, coastal communities and international trade obligations. (250 words)

Hint: IUU fishing + UNCLOS + fisherfolk welfare + India's Blue Economy + PM-MFSY + PM-MATSYA SAMPADA Yojana + shrimp export opportunity + aquaculture exclusion from agreement scope.

GS3 — Economy / Industry

Q3. India has approved MPMS (₹62,500 crore), Semicon 2.0 (₹1.275 lakh crore) and NIPU-2026 simultaneously. How does this integrated approach address India's strategic supply-chain vulnerabilities? (150 words)

Hint: Electronics self-reliance + semiconductor ecosystem (design→fab→ATMP) + urea import dependence → link to China decoupling strategy + Atmanirbhar Bharat + ISM 1.0 achievements + CG Semi OSAT Sanand.

GS3 — Environment

Q4. The CAMPA framework is India's primary tool for compensatory afforestation. Critically examine its design flaws and the potential of the Aastha Van Sanrakshan Yojana in addressing India's sacred grove biodiversity. (250 words)

Hint: CAMPA Act 2016 + Forest Conservation Act 1980 + "net forest loss" paradox + sacred groves as community-managed biodiversity hotspots + tribal rights (PESA/FRA) + Article 48A + IUCN biodiversity hotspot.

GS3 — Science & Technology

Q5. What is quantum advantage? Assess the strategic significance of India's first quantum advantage achievement (BITS Pilani, 2026) for the National Quantum Mission and India's emerging technology ecosystem. (150 words)

Hint: Define superposition + entanglement + decoherence + quantum advantage definition + NQM ₹6,003 crore + 4 Technology Innovation Hubs + IBM Quantum partnership + implications for cryptography, drug discovery, materials science.

GS4 — Ethics

Q6. A city development authority engineer is pressured to certify a fleet of commercial vehicles under PARIVARTAN that do not meet BS-VI standards, in exchange for clearing a backlog of pending approvals. Examine the ethical dimensions. What should he do? (250 words)

Hint: Art. 21 clean air right + M.C. Mehta doctrine + duty-based vs consequences-based ethics + Nolan Principles (integrity, accountability) + Whistleblower Protection Act 2014 + WPA norms under MoRTH + civil servant moral courage.

§6 · ANSWER WRITING VALUE ADDITION

QUOTE — FISHERIES & SUSTAINABILITY

"The ocean is a common heritage of mankind — its protection is a shared responsibility. No subsidy policy that destroys the resource can be called a genuine support." — UNCTAD, 2022 (WTO Fisheries context)

DATA POINT — SNOW LEOPARD INDIA

718 snow leopards (SPAI 2024); India = ~17% of global population (~4,000–6,500); 5 states; territory per individual: 100–1,000 sq km; tail length = body length (unique among big cats for balance on rocky terrain).

DATA POINT — SEMICONDUCTOR SELF-RELIANCE

India's current semiconductor import: ~\$30 billion/year (2025); ISM 1.0 outcome: CG Semi OSAT Sanand, India's first chip packaging plant (2025); Semicon 2.0 (₹1.275 lakh crore) aims for full-stack capability by 2030.

CONCEPT — SACRED GROVES

India has 100,000–150,000 sacred groves (devvans, devrais, kovils) — one of the world's largest community-managed conservation networks predating any forest law. 12 states have legal recognition. Aastha Van (₹3,000 crore) is the first government programme to fund them at scale.

§7 · AKADEMIA DIRECT HIT TRACKER

WTO Fisheries Subsidies

GS2 / GS3

123rd member; IUU fishing; MC12 Geneva 2022; aquaculture outside scope



131st Constitution Amendment Bill

GS2

33% women; LS ~850 seats; Art. 368 2/3; NCP-SP support; Monsoon Session



Delhi PARIVARTAN Scheme

GS2 / GS3

2.07 lakh vehicles; LGVs → EV mandatory; 100% tax waiver 10 yrs; Art. 21



MPMS + Semicon 2.0

GS3

₹62,500 cr + ₹1.275 lakh cr; ISM 2.0; 60,000 jobs; ATMP → FAB roadmap



NIPU-2026 (Urea Policy)

GS3

Gas-based urea plants; Atmanirbhar; CCEA; 7–8 MMT import reduction target



BITS Pilani Quantum Advantage

GS3

120 qubits; SU(2) simulation; QAT active; NQM ₹6,003 cr; IBM Quantum



Snow Leopard (*Panthera uncia*)

ENV / GS3

IUCN Vulnerable; 718 SPAI 2024; GSLEP Bishkek 2013; 5 states; Schedule I

National CAMPA + Aastha Van

GS3 / ENV

₹3,000 cr; 15,000 sacred groves; 4 species plans; Coimbatore meeting



GISAT-1A / EOS-05

GS3

GEO 35,786 km; 30-min India revisit; CE20; GSLV-F18;
NET July 31



Exercise Pitch Black 2026

GS2 / DEF

Darwin RAAF; 19 nations; IAF 4 Rafale; India-Australia
CSP; SAGAR



IUU Fishing Definition

GS3

Illegal+Unreported+Unregulated; ~\$23B/year
globally; UNCLOS + WTO nexus



National Quantum Mission (NQM)

GS3

₹6,003 cr; 2023–2031; 50–1,000 qubits; 4 Tech
Innovation Hubs; IIT+IISc



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7

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A SINGLE DOCUMENT

6

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