

PART II · ENVIRONMENT TO DIRECT HIT TRACKER

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INSIDE PART II

1. Environment & Ecology
2. Places in News
3. Ethics & Integrity (GS4)
4. Prelims MCQs
5. Mains Questions
6. Value Addition
7. AKADEMIA Direct Hit Tracker
8. Proof of Precision

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

§1 Environment & Ecology

GS3/GS2

Conservation & EIA · Tribal Rights · Biodiversity Hotspots

05 Oct 2026 (today) · Source: Supreme Court of India order

SC Declines to Quash Calcutta HC's Great Nicobar PIL; Flags PVTG Culture as a Fundamental Right

Why in News: Today, 5 October 2026, a Supreme Court bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana declined the Centre's plea to quash a Calcutta High Court order that had held maintainable a PIL challenging the Great Nicobar Island infrastructure project. Attorney General R. Venkataramani argued the project is of “great national importance” and that maintainability “goes to the root of the matter,” noting parallel NGT proceedings on its environmental clearance; the Court directed the Calcutta High Court to hear the matter on 25–26 November 2026. Justice Bagchi's observation — that “preservation of culture is a constitutionally protected fundamental right” — frames the case around the Shompen and Great Nicobarese, two Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

Background: The Great Nicobar Island Development Project, approved in 2022 at an original cost of roughly ₹72,000 crore (later estimates vary across reports), comprises a 14.2-MTEU international container transshipment terminal at Galathea Bay, a greenfield international airport, a gas-and-solar power plant and a township. It required denotifying the Galathea Bay Wildlife Sanctuary in 2021 — a major leatherback sea turtle nesting beach — and diverting forest land inside the Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve, a UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve home to the endemic Nicobar megapode, the saltwater crocodile, and the Shompen, one of India's most isolated PVTGs. Petitioners allege the Forest Rights Act, 2006 consent process was not properly followed.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Supreme Court bench: CJI Surya Kant, Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana; order dated 5 October 2026
- Calcutta High Court directed to hear the matter on 25–26 November 2026
- Project components: 14.2-MTEU transshipment port, a greenfield international airport, a gas-and-solar power plant, and a township
- Site: Galathea Bay, inside the Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve (a UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve)
- The Galathea Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, a major leatherback-turtle nesting site, was denotified in 2021 to permit the port
- PVTGs affected: the Shompen and the Great Nicobarese

- Parallel NGT proceedings are separately examining the project's environmental clearance
- The island sits in Seismic Zone V, near the epicentre of the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake-tsunami

🎯 MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- Frames the classic development-versus-conservation trade-off in a seismically active island ecosystem still recovering from the 2004 tsunami
- Tests the constitutional and statutory protection owed to PVTG identity and culture under the Forest Rights Act, 2006 and the criteria used to identify PVTGs
- Carries a clear strategic dimension — proximity to the Malacca Strait sits squarely within India's Indo-Pacific maritime posture
- Raises a judicial-federalism question on how the Supreme Court, High Courts and the NGT divide labour in complex environmental litigation
- Tests the adequacy of the EIA and public-consultation process for mega infrastructure sited inside biodiversity hotspots

🧠 LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

"Galathea's turtles versus the transshipment terminal" — the SC rules that culture is a fundamental right and sends the Shompen's fate to the Calcutta HC for 25–26 November.

📄 PYQ LINKAGE

PVTG identification criteria were tested in UPSC Prelims 2021; the Forest Rights Act and tribal-rights-versus-development tension is a recurring GS2/GS3 Mains theme.

🎯 PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. The Galathea Bay Wildlife Sanctuary was denotified to enable the Great Nicobar transshipment port project.
2. The Shompen are classified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group.
3. The National Green Tribunal has no jurisdiction over any aspect of the Great Nicobar project's environmental clearance.

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 — NGT proceedings on the project's environmental clearance are explicitly ongoing in parallel.

GS2

GS3

PVTG

Great Nicobar

EIA

GS3

Species Conservation · Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

Species in Focus: The Himalayan Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos isabellinus*)

Why in News: This card is a routine, pre-approved static species profile, used because the Environment section's two fresh-news candidates were both held under the 7/30-day blacklists. It is thematically paired with today's Places in News pin on Himachal Pradesh's Kugti Wildlife Sanctuary, a genuine part of this subspecies' range.

Background: *Ursus arctos isabellinus*, a subspecies of the brown bear, is the largest bear found in South Asia, ranging across the western and trans-Himalaya — Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh (notably the Kugti and Tundah wildlife sanctuaries in Chamba) and Uttarakhand, typically above 3,000 metres. It is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972; the species *Ursus arctos* overall is IUCN Least Concern, but the Himalayan subspecies is regionally far more threatened, without a confirmed India-specific IUCN regional tier.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Largest bear found in South Asia; males up to 2.2 metres, females 1.37–1.83 metres
- Sandy to reddish-brown coat; hibernates through the Himalayan winter
- Closely associated with buransh (rhododendron) stands, making habitat loss from buransh harvesting a direct threat
- Omnivorous; in degraded habitats near settlements, studies have found waste forming a large share of its diet
- Threatened by poaching for fur, claws and gall bladder in the traditional-medicine trade, and by livestock-predation conflict leading to retaliatory killing
- Distinct from the Himalayan black bear (*Ursus thibetanus*), found at somewhat lower elevations — a common Prelims distractor pairing
- Most of its range lies outside formally protected sanctuary boundaries, making enforcement difficult

🎯 MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- Illustrates human-wildlife conflict in high-altitude pastoral landscapes tied to transhumance economies
- A clear example of climate change squeezing alpine species as treelines and habitat zones shift upward
- Raises the need for cross-border conservation coordination, since its range extends into Pakistan and China
- Highlights the governance challenge of conserving species whose range lies mostly outside formal Protected Areas
- Points to data gaps in trans-Himalayan wildlife monitoring across Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh

🧠 LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

"The bear that eats buransh and garbage" — Schedule I on paper, data-deficient on the ground.

📄 PYQ LINKAGE

Species-classification questions under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 are a recurring Prelims theme; revise this alongside the standard Schedule I/II distinction rather than one exact past year.

🎯 PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the Himalayan Brown Bear:

1. It is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
2. It is found mainly in the trans-Himalayan region, including Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh.
3. It is smaller in size than, and found at higher elevations than, the Himalayan Black Bear.

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 on both counts — the Brown Bear is the larger of the two species and typically occupies higher, not lower, elevations than the Black Bear.

GS3

Himalayan Brown Bear

Schedule I

Static Rotation

ANTIM 2027

The Great Nicobar case packages EIA law, tribal rights and Indo-Pacific strategy into one card — exactly the kind of cross-paper synthesis ANTIM 2027's integrated GS modules are built to train. theiasakademia.com

§2 Places in News

TODAY'S DATELINE MAP



INDIAN OCEAN · GREAT NICOBAR BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Galathea Bay, Great Nicobar Island

6.75°N, 93.86°E. Southernmost major Indian landmass, in Seismic Zone V near the 2004 tsunami's epicentre; site of today's Supreme Court order on the Great Nicobar transshipment-port project and the Shompen's PVTG rights.

DHAULADHAR RANGE · WESTERN HIMALAYA

Kugti Wildlife Sanctuary, Chamba, HP

32.6°N, 76.6°E. A Chamba-district sanctuary in Himachal Pradesh's buransh-rhododendron belt, among the last strongholds of the Himalayan Brown Bear profiled in this edition.

LUZON ISLAND · SOUTH-CHINA-SEA-ADJACENT COAST

Subic Bay, Philippines

14.82°N, 120.28°E. Former US naval base turned free port on the Philippines' western coast, host this week to AIME-2026, where INS Sahyadri and Kulish exercised with ASEAN navies.

KUMAON HIMALAYAN FOOTHILLS, UTTARAKHAND

Chaubatia (Ranikhet), Uttarakhand

29.65°N, 79.5°E. Site of the Army's Foreign Training Node near Ranikhet, where Indian and UAE land forces began the "Mountain Guardian III" exercise today.

SWISS PLATEAU · CENTRAL EUROPE

Bern, Switzerland

46.95°N, 7.45°E. Seat of Switzerland's federal government; President Guy Parmelin's Delhi visit this week marks the first anniversary of the India-EFTA TEPA.

UPPER BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY, ASSAM

Dibrugarh (Bogibeel Terminal), Assam

27.48°N, 94.91°E. Site of the Bogibeel river terminal, from which India's first international cargo shipment since Independence sailed for Dhaka today on National Waterway-2.

**GANGES-BRAHMAPUTRA-MEGHNA DELTA,
BANGLADESH**

Dhaka, Bangladesh

23.81°N, 90.41°E. Destination of today's Dibrugarh methanol shipment at Pangaon Port, reached via the 1972 Indo-Bangladesh river-trade protocol.

DECCAN PLATEAU, KARNATAKA

Bengaluru, Karnataka

12.97°N, 77.59°E. Seat of the Karnataka High Court, whose 2 October ruling on writs against ED attachment orders features in this edition's Polity section.

§3 Ethics & Integrity (GS4)

Public Trust Doctrine & Institutional Accountability in PPP Governance

PM-SETU hands an Anchor Industry Partner 51% equity control over a public vocational training institution built on public land and public capital. A District Skill Officer overseeing cluster rollout learns that one partner's SPV plans to restrict new-age course seats to its own future employees, narrowing a publicly-funded institute's mandate. Should the officer flag this as a violation of the public-trust character of the asset, even though it falls within the partner's contractual 51% governance rights? This tests whether private-majority governance of public institutions can be reconciled with public trust obligations.

Doctrine of Exhaustion of Alternate Remedies (the Whirlpool Exception)

A businessman facing an ED attachment order genuinely believes his order shows no application of mind — exactly the defect that let a different petitioner's writ succeed weeks earlier — yet the Karnataka High Court's 2 October ruling tells him his own writ may simply not be entertained, leaving him to the statutory Appellate Tribunal instead. He must decide whether to spend months exhausting a remedy he believes inadequate, or press ahead with a writ he has just been told is discretionary. This tests the tension between procedural propriety and substantive access to swift constitutional remedy.

Rawls's Difference Principle versus Substantive Equality under Article 39A

DISHA 2.0's AI chatbot can answer a routine tenancy query in seconds, but a tribal legal-literacy volunteer in a remote district reports that most of her clients cannot read its text responses at all. Funds are limited: expanding voice-based access for the most disadvantaged would mean fewer total consultations served nationally in absolute numbers. Should budget be redirected toward the hardest-

to-reach users even if it reduces the scheme's headline beneficiary count? This tests Rawls's difference principle against a simple utilitarian “maximise total beneficiaries” metric.

The Precautionary Principle under Climate Uncertainty

A State Agriculture Secretary must decide, acting only on the confirmed 2026 monsoon-deficit data but before El Niño's November peak is actually observed, whether to pre-emptively divert irrigation water to the worst-hit southern districts at the cost of delaying festival-season urban water supply. Acting now, on an uncertain forecast, risks urban backlash if the peak turns out milder than feared; waiting for certainty risks a Kharif-already-lost scenario repeating into Rabi. This is a direct test of the Precautionary Principle under genuine scientific uncertainty.

Fairness and Reciprocity in International Rule-Making

An Indian trade negotiator reviewing TEPA's first-year data sees that Swiss gold imports have risen sharply while Indian manufactured exports have stagnated — yet Switzerland is meeting its investment pledge on schedule. Should India publicly flag the imbalance so early in the relationship, risking the appearance of bad faith toward a partner otherwise honouring its binding commitments, or stay silent and let the fifteen-year horizon play out? This tests how much asymmetric early-stage data should shape judgments of reciprocal fairness in a long-horizon agreement.

Ecocentrism versus Anthropocentrism

A Great Nicobar PVTG welfare officer must prepare the Centre's submission to the Calcutta High Court, balancing the leatherback turtle nesting beach's ecological value against the transshipment port's claimed strategic importance and the Shompen's cultural survival. An anthropocentric reading treats the island's ecology as a resource to be managed for human and strategic benefit; an ecocentric reading treats the Biosphere Reserve's ecology as possessing value independent of human use. Which framework should guide the submission, now that Justice Bagchi has signalled that culture itself is a fundamental right — potentially a third value system distinct from either pole?

§4 Prelims MCQs (20)

Q1. PM-SETU scheme

Consider the following statements regarding the PM-SETU scheme:

1. Under its SPV model, the Anchor Industry Partner holds a majority equity stake.
2. The scheme covers only existing ITIs and does not provide for upgrading National Skill Training Institutes.
3. State Governments are required to co-invest alongside the Centre and industry partners.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 2 is incorrect — five NSTIs are being upgraded alongside the ITI network.

Q2. PMLA writ jurisdiction

Consider the following statements:

1. The PMLA, 2002 provides for an Adjudicating Authority and an Appellate Tribunal.
2. A writ petition under Article 226 against an ED attachment order can never be entertained by a High Court.
3. The Supreme Court in Vijay Madanlal Choudhary (2022) upheld the ED's search and attachment powers under the PMLA.

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: (b). Statement 2 is incorrect — such a writ is maintainable, though entertaining it is discretionary.

Q3. DISHA scheme

Consider the following statements regarding the DISHA scheme:

1. It is a State Sector Scheme funded jointly by the Centre and State Governments.
2. Its Tele-Law component is delivered through Common Service Centres.
3. It seeks to give effect to the Directive Principle contained in Article 39A.

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: (b). Statement 1 is incorrect — DISHA/DISHA 2.0 is a fully Centre-funded central-sector scheme.

Q4. El Niño & the monsoon

Consider the following statements regarding El Niño:

1. It refers to the anomalous warming of sea-surface temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean.
2. El Niño years are always associated with a below-normal Indian summer monsoon, without exception.
3. The Indian Ocean Dipole operates independently of, and can offset, El Niño's influence on the Indian monsoon.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 2 is incorrect — the El Niño-monsoon link is strong but not absolute.

Q5. India-EFTA TEPA

Consider the following statements regarding the India-EFTA TEPA:

1. EFTA comprises Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.
2. TEPA includes a legally binding commitment on investment and employment generation, not merely tariff concessions.
3. TEPA entered into force in the same calendar year that it was signed.

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 — TEPA was signed in March 2024 but entered into force only in October 2025.

Q6. PIWTT & Northeast connectivity

Consider the following statements:

1. National Waterway-2 is declared on the river Brahmaputra.
2. The Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade governs river-borne trade between India and Bangladesh.
3. The Siliguri Corridor is the only land route connecting India's Northeast to the rest of the country.

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 overstates the case — it is the principal, not the only, land link.

Q7. AIME-2026 & MAHASAGAR

Consider the following statements:

1. AIME is a bilateral naval exercise between India and Singapore.
2. MAHASAGAR is India's 2025 reformulation of the earlier SAGAR doctrine.
3. The exercise discussed was held at Subic Bay in the Philippines.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 1 is incorrect — AIME is a multilateral ASEAN-India format (the bilateral one with Singapore is SIMBEX).

Q8. Mountain Guardian III

Consider the following statements:

1. "Mountain Guardian" is a joint exercise between the Indian Army and the UAE Land Forces.
2. The India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership was established in 2017.
3. The exercise discussed is being held in the United Arab Emirates.

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 — this edition is hosted in India, at Chaubatia, Uttarakhand.

Q9. RDI Scheme

Consider the following statements regarding the RDI Scheme:

1. Its ₹1-lakh-crore corpus is held and directly disbursed to private companies by ANRF.
2. It primarily uses long-tenure, low-interest loans rather than equity or grants.
3. Funded projects must keep their intellectual property within India.

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: (b). Statement 1 is incorrect — ANRF channels the corpus through Second-Level Fund Managers.

Q10. Genome editing

Consider the following statements regarding genome editing in India:

1. Genome editing using CRISPR-Cas9 always involves inserting a foreign gene into the target organism.
2. India's 2022 guidelines exempt certain categories of genome-edited plants from the full GMO biosafety regime.
3. ICAR has released genome-edited rice varieties for higher yield and drought tolerance.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 1 is incorrect — this is exactly what distinguishes genome editing from conventional GM.

Q11. GST architecture

Consider the following statements regarding India's GST architecture:

1. IGST is levied on inter-state supplies and on imports, apportioned between the Centre and the States.
2. The GST Council is a constitutional body established under Article 279-A.
3. September 2026 marked the first time gross monthly GST collections crossed ₹2 lakh crore.

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 — collections had crossed ₹2 lakh crore in earlier months too.

Q12. Balance of Payments Q1 FY27

Consider the following statements regarding India's BoP in Q1 FY27:

1. The Current Account Deficit widened primarily due to a narrower trade deficit.
2. Foreign Direct Investment inflows increased compared to the same quarter a year earlier.
3. Portfolio investment recorded a net outflow during the quarter.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 1 is incorrect — the CAD widened because the trade deficit widened, not narrowed.

Q13. Great Nicobar project

Consider the following statements:

1. The Galathea Bay Wildlife Sanctuary was denotified to enable the Great Nicobar transshipment port project.
2. The Shompen are classified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group.
3. The NGT has no jurisdiction over any aspect of the project's environmental clearance.

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 — NGT proceedings on the clearance are explicitly ongoing in parallel.

Q14. Himalayan Brown Bear

Consider the following statements regarding the Himalayan Brown Bear:

1. It is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
2. It is found mainly in the trans-Himalayan region, including Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh.
3. It is smaller in size than, and found at higher elevations than, the Himalayan Black Bear.

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 on both counts — it is the larger species and occupies higher elevations.

Q15. PVTG criteria

Consider the following statements regarding Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs):

1. A criterion for PVTG classification is a pre-agricultural level of technology.
2. All Scheduled Tribes in India are automatically classified as PVTGs.
3. The Shompen of Great Nicobar Island are classified as a PVTG.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 2 is incorrect — PVTG status applies only to a smaller subset of Scheduled Tribes meeting distinct criteria.

Q16. National Waterways

Consider the following statements:

1. National Waterways in India are declared under the National Waterways Act, 2016.
2. The Brahmaputra is designated as National Waterway-2.

3. Inland water transport generally has a lower carbon footprint per tonne-km than road transport.
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 statements are correct.

Q17. Strait of Malacca

Consider the following statements regarding the Strait of Malacca:

1. It connects the Indian Ocean with the South China Sea via the Pacific Ocean.
2. It lies between the Indonesian island of Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula.
3. It is one of the world's most important maritime chokepoints for global trade and energy shipments.

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 statements are correct — relevant to Great Nicobar's strategic location.

Q18. GST Council

Consider the following statements regarding the GST Council:

1. It is chaired by the Union Finance Minister.
2. Its decisions are taken only by unanimous consent of all members.
3. It was constituted under Article 279-A of the Constitution.

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). Statement 2 is incorrect — Council decisions are taken by weighted-majority vote, not unanimity.

Q19. Writ jurisdiction

Consider the following statements regarding Writs under the Constitution:

1. Article 226 empowers only the Supreme Court to issue writs for the enforcement of Fundamental Rights.
2. The power of a High Court under Article 226 is wider than the Supreme Court's power under Article 32.
3. A High Court may decline to entertain a writ petition where an adequate alternate statutory remedy exists.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 1 is incorrect — Article 226 empowers High Courts, for a wider range of purposes than Fundamental Rights alone.

Q20. Balance of Payments basics

Consider the following statements regarding India's Balance of Payments:

1. The Current Account includes trade in goods and services as well as transfers such as remittances.

2. A Current Account Deficit must always be financed by a drawdown of foreign exchange reserves.
3. Foreign Direct Investment is recorded under the Capital Account.

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 — a CAD can equally be financed by capital inflows without necessarily drawing down reserves.

NEEB 300+ LIVE PYQ WRITING

20 fresh statement-based MCQs, drawn straight from today's cards — exactly the raw material NEEB 300+ Live sessions convert into timed practice. theiasakademia.com

§5 Mains Questions (9)

GS1 The 2026 southwest monsoon closed at 87% of the Long Period Average, India's worst season since 2015. Discuss the physical mechanisms linking El Niño to Indian monsoon variability, and examine why its regional impact across India is rarely uniform. (150 words)

GS2 Critically examine the PM-SETU scheme's Special Purpose Vehicle model, under which private industry holds majority (51%) governance control over public Industrial Training Institutes. Does this represent a sound innovation in public-private partnership, or a risk to the public character of vocational education? (150 words)

GS2 Discuss the doctrine governing the maintainability of writ petitions under Article 226 against actions of statutory authorities where an alternate remedy exists, with reference to recent Karnataka High Court rulings on challenges to ED attachment orders under the PMLA. (150 words)

GS2 “An investment-linked Free Trade Agreement goes beyond conventional tariff liberalisation.” Discuss this statement with reference to the India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA), and evaluate its first year of implementation. (150 words)

GS3 Examine the significance of the Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) Scheme's two-tier financing architecture in addressing India's private-sector R&D financing gap. What risks does a debt-based, intermediary-routed model carry? (150 words)

GS3 Distinguish between genome editing and genetic modification, and critically evaluate India's regulatory approach to genome-edited crops in light of the 2022 guidelines and the 2024 release of genome-edited rice varieties. (150 words)

GS3 September 2026 GST collections show import-linked revenue growing substantially faster than domestic collections. Analyse what this divergence suggests about the sources of India's current economic growth, and its implications for GST buoyancy. (150 words)

GS3 India's Current Account Deficit for Q1 FY27 was financed by a net capital outflow rather than inflows. Explain why the financing composition of a Current Account Deficit matters as much as its absolute size. (150 words)

GS4 Case Study: You are a welfare officer preparing the Centre's submission to a High Court hearing a PIL on the Great Nicobar Island infrastructure project. You must balance the ecological value of a leatherback-turtle nesting beach, the project's claimed strategic importance, and the Shompen PVTG's claim that their culture is now judicially recognised as a fundamental right. (a) Identify the ethical issues involved in framing this submission. (b) What course of action would you recommend, and on what ethical reasoning? (250 words)

§6 Answer-Writing Value Addition

- Justice Joymalya Bagchi, Supreme Court, 5 Oct 2026: "Preservation of culture is a constitutionally protected fundamental right." — Great Nicobar/PVTG rights.
- 87% of the Long Period Average — IMD's final figure for the 2026 southwest monsoon, the lowest since 2015.

- \$100 billion in FDI and 1 million jobs over 15 years — EFTA's binding commitment under TEPA, now one year old.
- 51:24.5:24.5 — the Anchor Industry Partner-Centre-State equity split in every PM-SETU SPV.
- ₹2,03,521 crore — India's gross GST collection for September 2026, up 14.7% year-on-year.
- 22 projects, ₹2,192 crore — the first cohort financed under ANRF's ₹1-lakh-crore RDI deep-tech fund.
- 783 km, 80 years — the distance of the first international cargo voyage from Dibrugarh since Independence, and the gap since India last ran this trade route.
- Schedule I, data-deficient — the regulatory status of the Himalayan Brown Bear, most of whose range lies outside any Protected Area.

§7 AKADEMIA Direct Hit Tracker

TOPIC	GS PAPER	EXAM CAPSULE	PROBABILITY
PM-SETU SPV Model	GS2	Industry-majority (51%) ITI governance, 850/1000 ITIs identified	★★★★☆
Karnataka HC PMLA Writ Ruling	GS2	Article 226 “discretionary” against ED attachment orders	★★★★☆
DISHA 2.0	GS2	₹255-cr, 5-yr access-to-justice scheme with AI legal-aid chatbot	★★★★☆
2026 Monsoon Deficit	GS1	87% of LPA, worst since 2015, El Niño-driven	★★★★☆
India-EFTA TEPA Anniversary	GS2/GS3	\$100bn FDI/1mn jobs pledge, Swiss President's visit	★★★★☆
Bogibeel-Dhaka Waterway Cargo	GS1/GS2	First international cargo ex-Dibrugarh since Independence	★★★★☆
AIME-2026	GS2/GS3	ASEAN-India maritime exercise, Subic Bay, MAHASAGAR doctrine	★★★★☆
Mountain Guardian III	GS2/GS3	India-UAE Army exercise, Chaubatia, Uttarakhand	★★★★☆

TOPIC	GS PAPER	EXAM CAPSULE	PROBABILITY
TDI Scheme / ANRF Deep-Tech Fund	GS3	₹1-lakh-crore two-tier financing, first cohort of 22 projects	★★★★★
CRISPR / Genome Editing	GS3	SDN-1/SDN-2 regulatory exemption, 2024 gene-edited rice	★★★★★
September 2026 GST Collections	GS3	₹2.03 lakh crore, import-led growth	★★★★★
Current Account Deficit Q1 FY27	GS3	Widened to \$4.2bn, financed by capital outflow	★★★★★
Great Nicobar Project SC Order	GS2/GS3	PVTG culture as fundamental right, Calcutta HC to hear 25–26 Nov	★★★★★
Himalayan Brown Bear	GS3	Schedule I, buransh-dependent, data-deficient	★★★★★
PVTG Identification Criteria	GS1/GS2	Pre-agricultural technology, stagnant population	★★★★★
Strait of Malacca / Maritime Chokepoints	GS1/GS3	Strategic shipping lane near Great Nicobar	★★★★★
RBI MPC October 2026 (Watch)	GS3	Meeting underway 5–7 Oct 2026, outcome awaited	★★★★★
NVS-03 Launch Window (Watch)	GS3	ISRO's NavIC-restoration launch expected 15–20 Oct	★★★★★

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