

ANTIM ASSURED 100+

PART II · ENVIRONMENT TO DIRECT HIT TRACKER

Morning Edition · 08:00 IST

Sunday, 11 October 2026

“The Topper's Last Read. Every Morning.”

Published by TheIAS Akademia · theiasakademia.com



GS3

Conservation of Biodiversity — Species Monitoring, Wetland Ecosystems, Wild Life (Protection) Act 1972 Schedules

9–11 October 2026 · Source: Down To Earth / BNHS (Bombay Natural History Society)

BNHS Launches India's First Synchronised Sarus Crane Census, Tied to World Migratory Bird Day

Why in News: BNHS called for a nationwide, synchronised count of the Sarus Crane (*Antigone antigone*) on 10–11 October 2026, timed with World Migratory Bird Day (10 October). It has appealed to State Forest Departments, research bodies, farmers and citizen-scientists to submit counts to a central repository — billed as India's first standardised, same-window national count of the species, replacing disconnected, non-comparable state surveys. BNHS says the exercise will map breeding/roosting strongholds, flag powerline-collision hotspots, and feed into wetland and agricultural policy.

Background: The Sarus Crane is the world's tallest flying bird (about 1.5 m) and India's only resident breeding crane — unlike migratory cranes, it never leaves the subcontinent, making it a year-round indicator of wetland-farmland health. It once ranged across the Gangetic plains and central/eastern India but has retreated mainly to Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana, with southern populations nearly extirpated. It survives largely outside formal protected areas, in farmland wetlands, exposing it directly to agricultural land-use change. It holds Schedule I status under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 — “on par with the tiger” — and is on CITES Appendix II internationally.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Scientific name: *Antigone antigone* (formerly *Grus antigone*)
- IUCN Red List status: Vulnerable
- Legal protection: Schedule I, Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972; CITES Appendix II
- India's only resident (non-migratory) breeding crane species
- Population estimates conflict: international assessment ~8,000–10,000 in India (declining); Uttar Pradesh's own 2024 state count found ~20,000 — a gap that reflects the absence of a standardised method until now
- State of India's Birds: a long-term decline of 76.84%, with a current annual decline of about 4.33% per year
- Current strongholds: Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana; isolated Maharashtra pockets; steep decline in southern India

- Key threats: wetland degradation, changing agricultural land use, pesticides, powerline collision/electrocution, egg/chick poaching, free-ranging dog predation

🎯 MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- A species surviving mainly outside the protected-area network exposes the limits of a PA-centric conservation model and the need for “working landscape” conservation
- Citizen science and a synchronised census methodology as a credibility tool, comparable to the All-India Tiger Estimation protocol
- Agriculture-wildlife interface: pesticide use and powerline infrastructure as unintended biodiversity threats, cross-linking to GS3 agriculture and infrastructure planning
- Schedule I status as India's highest statutory protection tier, contrasted with the IUCN's scientific threat category (legal vs scientific classification)
- Data integrity in conservation policy: conflicting population estimates (8,000 vs 20,000) undermine evidence-based wetland policymaking

🧠 LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

“Tallest but grounded” — the Sarus Crane is the world's tallest flying bird, yet the only crane that never migrates out of India; Schedule I “on par with the tiger,” yet living mostly outside tiger-style protected areas, in farmland wetlands.

📄 PYQ LINKAGE

No direct PYQ on the Sarus Crane specifically; conceptually linked to the recurring Wild Life (Protection) Act Schedules question type and to Prelims 2014's Montreux Record/Ramsar question on wetland-species protection.

🎯 PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. It is the only resident (non-migratory) crane species breeding in India.
2. It is listed under Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
3. Its IUCN Red List status is “Endangered.”

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 3 is wrong — the Sarus Crane is “Vulnerable,” not “Endangered”; candidates often conflate a higher statutory protection tier (Schedule I) with a more severe IUCN category.

Glaw Lake Becomes Arunachal Pradesh's First Ramsar Site as India's Wetland Network Crosses 101

Why in News: Glaw Lake, a 129-hectare high-altitude freshwater wetland inside the Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary & Tiger Reserve (Lohit district), was designated India's 101st Ramsar Site on 3 August 2026 — giving Arunachal Pradesh its first internationally recognised wetland. This followed India's Ramsar count crossing 98 sites in February 2026 (up from just 26 in 2014), and it extends Ramsar recognition — until now concentrated in the Gangetic plains and south India — into the Eastern Himalayan biodiversity hotspot, a representation gap worth flagging even though the designation itself is now a few months old.

Background: The Ramsar Convention (1971) is an intergovernmental treaty for the conservation of “Wetlands of International Importance,” primarily as waterfowl habitat; India implements it domestically through the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017, framed under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. A site must meet specified ecological, hydrological or biodiversity criteria to qualify. India's tally rose sharply after 2019 under an active notification push, from 26 (2014) to 101 (August 2026), with Tamil Nadu now the state with the most sites (20). A sub-category, the Montreux Record, flags Ramsar sites undergoing adverse ecological change; India currently has two such sites.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Glaw Lake: 129 hectares, Lohit district, Arunachal Pradesh, inside Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary & Tiger Reserve, at roughly 1,500 m altitude
- India's 101st Ramsar Site overall; Arunachal Pradesh's first
- Feeds and regulates the River Kamlang; habitat for waterbirds and 20-plus reptile/amphibian species
- Conservation stewardship shared with the Mishmi tribe, who consider the lake sacred
- India's Ramsar count: 26 (2014) → 98 (February 2026) → 101 (August 2026)
- Tamil Nadu leads with 20 Ramsar sites; Uttar Pradesh has 13
- Montreux Record sites in India (ecological stress): Keoladeo Ghana National Park, Rajasthan (listed 1990) and Loktak Lake, Manipur (listed 1993)
- Governing domestic framework: Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017, under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986

🎯 MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- Ramsar designation as “soft law” — no binding enforcement mechanism; outcomes depend on domestic implementation and state capacity
- Eastern Himalayan wetlands have historically been under-represented on India's Ramsar list — ecological and strategic rationale for correcting this gap
- Indigenous, community-led conservation (the Mishmi tribe) as a model distinct from state-enforcement conservation, linking to Forest Rights and PVTG-rights debates

- A numbers-vs-quality debate: rapid growth in the Ramsar count (26 → 101) against the persistence of Montreux-listed sites showing designation alone doesn't guarantee ecological health
- Wetlands as carbon sinks and flood-buffer infrastructure, relevant to climate adaptation and disaster-risk reduction

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

“26 to 101 in a decade” — India's Ramsar count has nearly quadrupled since 2014; remember the two black marks on that white count: Keoladeo (1990) and Loktak (1993) remain on the Montreux Record despite the headline growth.

PYQ LINKAGE

UPSC Prelims 2014: “If a wetland of international importance is brought under the ‘Montreux Record’, what does it imply?” — tests exactly this concept.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. It is maintained under the Ramsar Convention.
2. It lists Ramsar sites where ecological character has changed, is changing, or is likely to change due to human interference.
3. A site's inclusion in the Montreux Record automatically removes it from the Ramsar List.

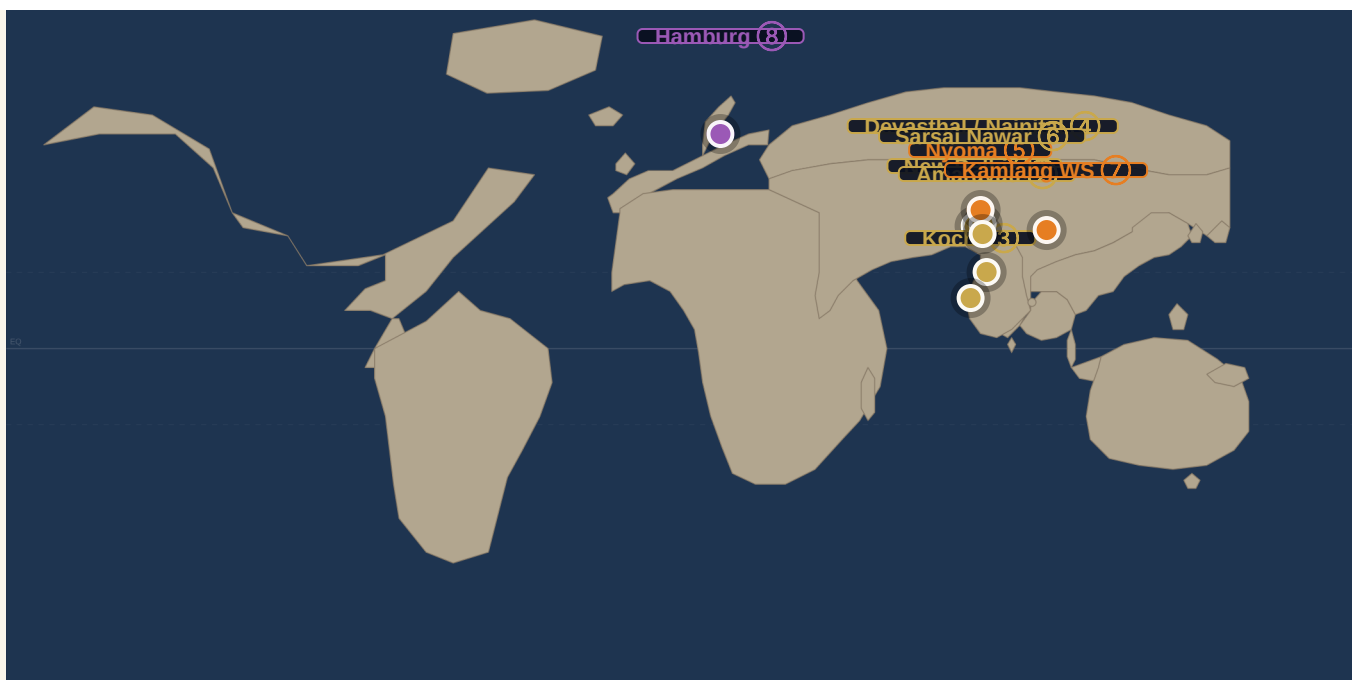
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 3 is false — Montreux Record listing flags a site for priority conservation attention; it is not a delisting, and a site can also be removed from the Record once conditions improve.

Places in News

 PLACES IN NEWS — SUNDAY, 11 OCTOBER 2026 | ANTIM ASSURED 100+



- ① New Delhi (Supreme Court's Sunday sitting on Article...)
- ② Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh (Supreme Court dismissed AP's appeal on 3...)
- ③ Kochi, Kerala (EyeROV, the Kochi startup, delivered Ind...)
- ④ Devasthal / Nainital, Uttarakhand (ARIES's decade-long optical monitoring o...)
- ⑤ Nyoma, Ladakh (DRDO's Advanced High-Altitude Parachute ...)
- ⑥ Sarsai Nawar, Etawah, Uttar Pradesh (A Ramsar-listed farmland wetland and Sar...)
- ⑦ Kamlang WS, Lohit, Arunachal Pradesh (Glaw Lake's Ramsar designation gives Aru...)
- ⑧ Hamburg, Germany (Dr Bimal Patel sworn in as India's judge...)

New Delhi

Supreme Court's Sunday sitting on Article 19/Metro-shutdown contempt plea; also the site of the 57th GST Council meeting and the Cabinet's ITLA approval

Seat of the Union Government and the Supreme Court; sits in the Yamuna's floodplain on the Indo-Gangetic Plain, administered as a Union Territory under Article 239AA.

Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh

Supreme Court dismissed AP's appeal on 34% local-body Backward Class reservation (Thandava Yogesh case)

AP's capital region lies in the Krishna river delta on the Coromandel Coast, a fertile deltaic tract that has long shaped the state's agrarian and political geography.

Kochi, Kerala

EyeROV, the Kochi startup, delivered India's first indigenous military-grade underwater ROV (TROUT) to the Navy

A natural harbour city on the Malabar Coast backwaters, historically a spice-trade hub and now

Devasthal / Nainital, Uttarakhand

ARIES's decade-long optical monitoring of blazar OJ 287 strengthens the case for a binary supermassive black hole

Sits in the Kumaon Himalaya at over 2,400 m, chosen for ARIES's Devasthal telescopes for its low light

home to a growing coastal deep-tech and maritime-startup ecosystem.

pollution and stable atmospheric seeing.

Nyoma, Ladakh

DRDO's Advanced High-Altitude Parachute maiden live jump, alongside this week's stratospheric High-Altitude Platform test

A high-altitude plateau in eastern Ladakh near the Indus river's upper course, at over 4,000 m, on the Line of Actual Control's logistics and surveillance frontier.

Sarsai Nawar, Etawah, Uttar Pradesh

A Ramsar-listed farmland wetland and Sarus Crane breeding stronghold, central to BNHS's first synchronised national crane census

Lies in the Yamuna-Chambal doab of the Gangetic Plain, an agriculturally intensive tract where the Sarus Crane survives almost entirely outside formal protected areas.

Kamlang WS, Lohit, Arunachal Pradesh

Glaw Lake's Ramsar designation gives Arunachal Pradesh its first internationally recognised wetland

Part of the Eastern Himalaya global biodiversity hotspot near the India–Myanmar frontier, drained by the River Kamlang and bordered by Namdapha National Park.

Hamburg, Germany

Dr Bimal Patel sworn in as India's judge on the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea

A North Sea/Elbe-estuary port city, seat of ITLOS under UNCLOS Part XV — distinct from the ICJ and Permanent Court of Arbitration, both at The Hague.

Ethics & Integrity Case Studies

1. Proportionality & Public Order vs Civil Liberty

A rare Sunday Supreme Court sitting this week tested whether a blanket Metro shutdown and the preventive detention of 6,000–7,000 protesters, imposed ahead of a political demonstration, were proportionate to a genuine public-order threat or amounted to a de facto suspension of Article 19 freedoms. The episode raises a core administrative-ethics dilemma: a civil servant invoking Section 163 BNSS must weigh a citizen's right to peaceful assembly against collective security, using the narrowest restriction that achieves the legitimate aim, not the most convenient one. The doctrine of proportionality — is the restriction suitable, necessary and the least restrictive option, with a fair balance between individual rights and public interest — is the civil servant's practical test here, not a blanket invocation of “law and order.”

2. Trust-Based Governance & Goodhart's Law

The GST Council's decision to withdraw arrest powers and replace coercive enforcement with automated, data-driven compliance embodies a shift toward trust-based governance — but it also risks Goodhart's Law: once a measure (say, a risk-score threshold) becomes the target, taxpayers and even field officers may game it rather than pursue its underlying purpose of honest compliance. An ethical tax administrator must therefore treat automation as a tool that still requires human judgment and periodic recalibration, not a substitute for integrity in enforcement, and resist the temptation to declare “mission accomplished” simply because a dashboard metric improves.

3. Evidence-Based Policymaking & Substantive Equality

Andhra Pradesh's attempt to grant 34% local-body Backward Class reservation on the strength of an unverified “family survey” — struck down by the Supreme Court — illustrates the ethical duty of a policymaker to ground redistributive decisions in rigorous, defensible evidence rather than political expedience. Substantive equality (correcting real, demonstrated disadvantage) demands more intellectual honesty than formal equality (treating a stated target as self-justifying); a civil servant asked to certify or defend such data bears a personal responsibility not to let electoral urgency override empirical rigour, even under political pressure.

4. Strategic Autonomy vs Interdependence

The Tejas Mk1A's stalled GE F404 engine deliveries pose an ethical question of institutional honesty: when is a programme genuinely “indigenous,” and when does publicly claiming self-reliance while remaining import-dependent on a critical sub-system amount to misleading the public and the legislature about actual strategic vulnerability? Civil servants and defence planners have a duty of truthful disclosure about capability gaps, even when that candour is politically uncomfortable, because downstream decisions (squadron planning, operational readiness) depend on an honest, not an aspirational, picture of self-reliance.

5. The Land Ethic & Stewardship Beyond Protected Boundaries

The Sarus Crane survives almost entirely outside India's formal protected-area network, in farmland wetlands shaped by ordinary farmers' daily choices about pesticide use and land conversion. Aldo Leopold's “land ethic” — that the human community should be enlarged to include soils, waters, plants and animals, with humans as citizens rather than conquerors of that community — is directly tested here: conservation ethics cannot stop at a sanctuary's boundary fence but must extend into working agricultural landscapes, calling for extension officers and farmers themselves to internalise a duty of stewardship that formal law alone cannot compel.

6. Multilateral Legal Diplomacy as Soft Power

India's continuous seat on the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea since 1996, most recently renewed through Dr Bimal Patel's election, rests on a less visible ethical commitment: sustained

investment in rule-of-law institutions and multilateral trust-building rather than transactional, short-term diplomacy. A nation's credibility on legal and judicial fora is cumulative and reputational — built case by case, term by term — underscoring that ethical statecraft sometimes lies in patient institution-building whose payoff is not immediate but accrues to future generations of negotiators and litigants.

Prelims MCQs

20 statement-based practice questions drawn from today's Part I & Part II coverage.

Q1.

Consider the following statements:

1. The right to freedom of assembly under Article 19(1)(b) can be restricted only after a formal Proclamation of Emergency under Article 352.
2. Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 empowers an Executive Magistrate to issue urgent orders in cases of apprehended danger or nuisance.
3. A writ of habeas corpus can be issued by both the Supreme Court and the High Courts.

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 the trap — Article 19(2)–(3) “reasonable restrictions” (e.g. public order) operate in ordinary times too; a formal Emergency proclamation is not a precondition.

Q2.

Consider the following statements:

1. The 50% ceiling on reservations laid down in *Indra Sawhney v. Union of India* (1992) applies without exception to all forms of reservation in India.
2. The “triple test” for Backward Class reservation in local bodies was laid down by the Supreme Court in *K. Krishnamurthy v. Union of India* (2010).
3. Article 243D of the Constitution provides for reservation of seats in Panchayats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 1 is the trap — *Indra Sawhney* itself permits breaching 50% only in “extraordinary circumstances,” so the ceiling is not absolute.

Q3.

Consider the following statements:

1. It is a principal organ of the United Nations headquartered at The Hague.
2. Judges of ITLOS are elected by States Parties to UNCLOS for a term of nine years.
3. India has never had a judge on the ITLOS bench before 2026.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b). Statement 1 is wrong twice over — ITLOS is an independent UNCLOS body (not a UN organ) and sits at Hamburg, not The Hague. Statement 3 is wrong — India has held a seat since 1996.

Q4.

Consider the following statements:

1. Its members are India, Israel, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Emirates.
2. It focuses on six areas of cooperation including water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security.
3. It has an established permanent secretariat based in Abu Dhabi.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b). Statement 1 wrongly swaps the “United Kingdom” for the “United States” — a classic membership-swap trap. Statement 3 is wrong: I2U2 deliberately has no standing secretariat.

Q5.

Consider the following statements:

1. The Tejas Mk1A is currently powered by the indigenously developed Kaveri engine.
2. The 2021 engine contract between HAL and GE Aerospace covers 99 F404-IN20 engines.
3. The Ministry of Defence has invoked a penalty clause against GE Aerospace over delivery delays.

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 false — the Tejas Mk1A flies on the imported GE F404-IN20; the indigenous Kaveri remains underpowered and uncertified for frontline service — a commonly tested indigenisation-myth trap.

Q6.

Consider the following statements:

1. iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence) is implemented through the Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO), a not-for-profit company.
2. SPRINT is an Indian Navy initiative under the iDEX umbrella to fast-track induction of indigenous technology.
3. The EyeROV TROUT underwater vehicle was developed by a DRDO laboratory.

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 false — TROUT was developed by a private Kochi startup, not a DRDO lab; the entire point of iDEX is to source innovation outside the traditional DRDO/PSU system.

Q7.

Consider the following statements:

1. It is classified as a blazar because its relativistic jet points almost directly towards Earth.
2. The periodic brightness variation studied is attributed to a secondary supermassive black hole orbiting the primary one.
3. The study primarily used gravitational-wave detectors to confirm the binary black hole system.

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 the distractor — the ARIES-led study used optical telescopes across the electromagnetic spectrum, not gravitational-wave detectors.

Q8.

Consider the following statements:

1. They typically operate in the stratosphere, above commercial air traffic.
2. They are considered a cost-effective alternative to Low Earth Orbit satellites for persistent surveillance and communication relay.
3. India's recently tested indigenous HAPS was developed by DRDO's ADRDE, Agra.

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 — the common trap is doubting statement 1 by confusing the stratosphere with the higher mesosphere/thermosphere where satellites actually orbit; HAPS deliberately sit below that, above weather and air traffic.

Q9.

Consider the following statements:

1. The Council recommended omitting the power of arrest from the GST law altogether.
2. The prosecution threshold under the CGST Act was raised from ₹1 crore to ₹5 crore.
3. The meeting also approved a reduction in GST rates on a wide range of consumer goods.

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 the classic distractor — this meeting made no broad rate changes at all; the reforms were procedural and legal, not rate-related.

Q10.

Consider the following statements:

1. It has been set up as a Special Purpose Vehicle by the Union Cabinet.
2. It is mandated to conduct both technical and financial appraisal of all infrastructure projects irrespective of cost.
3. It will maintain a National Transport Data Repository using sources such as FASTag and Vahan.

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 the distractor on two counts — ITLA does technical appraisal only, and only for projects of ₹500 crore or more, not “all” projects.

Q11.

Consider the following:

1. Foreign Currency Assets
2. Gold held by the RBI
3. Special Drawing Rights
4. India's Reserve Tranche Position in the IMF

Select the correct answer using the code below:

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 1, 2 and 3 only (c) 1, 3 and 4 only (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (d). Students often drop the “Reserve Tranche Position in the IMF” as an obscure fourth component — it is the smallest but still an officially reported component in every RBI Weekly Statistical Supplement.

Q12.

Consider the following statements:

1. It is the only resident (non-migratory) crane species breeding in India.
2. It is listed under Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
3. Its IUCN Red List status is “Endangered.”

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 3 is wrong — the Sarus Crane is “Vulnerable,” not “Endangered”; candidates often conflate a higher statutory protection tier (Schedule I) with a more severe IUCN category.

Q13.

Consider the following statements:

1. It is maintained under the Ramsar Convention.

2. It lists Ramsar sites where ecological character has changed, is changing, or is likely to change due to human interference.
3. A site's inclusion in the Montreux Record automatically removes it from the Ramsar List.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 3 is false — Montreux Record listing flags a site for priority conservation attention; it is not a delisting, and a site can also be removed from the Record once conditions improve.

Q14.

Consider the following statements:

1. Preventive detention under Article 22 requires that the detained person be informed of the grounds of detention "as soon as may be."
2. The National Security Act, 1980 allows detention without trial for a maximum period that can be extended by Parliament alone.
3. A person preventively detained has a constitutional right to consult a legal practitioner of their choice before any judicial authority.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 3 is the trap — Article 22(1)'s right to consult a legal practitioner expressly does NOT extend to persons preventively detained (Article 22(3)(b) excludes this safeguard).

Q15.

Consider the following statements:

1. The Goods and Services Tax (Compensation to States) Act, 2017 was enacted to compensate states for revenue loss arising from GST implementation.
2. The GST Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT) has only a Principal Bench with no State Benches permitted.
3. E-invoicing under GST is mandatory only for taxpayers with turnover above a threshold prescribed by notification.

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 the trap — GSTAT has a Principal Bench (New Delhi) plus State Benches across India, not a single centralised bench.

Q16.

Consider the following statements:

1. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act inserted Part IX relating to Panchayats into the Constitution.
2. Reservation for women in Panchayats under Article 243D is capped at one-third of total seats, including seats reserved for SC/ST women.

3. The tenure of a dissolved Panchayat must be reconstituted through fresh elections within six months in every case.

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 the trap — Article 243E requires fresh elections within six months only when a Panchayat is dissolved before expiry of its term; normal-term expiry requires elections to be completed before expiry, not within six months after.

Q17.

Consider the following statements:

1. The International Court of Justice is seated at The Hague.
2. The International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea is seated at Hamburg.
3. The Permanent Court of Arbitration is seated at Geneva.

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). The Permanent Court of Arbitration is also seated at The Hague, not Geneva.

Q18.

Consider the following statements:

1. Its members are India, Israel, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Emirates.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) This statement is correct (b) This statement is incorrect because the second 'U' is the United States, not the UK (c) This statement is incorrect because Israel is not a member (d) This statement is incorrect because it is a five-member grouping

Answer: (b). I2U2's second 'U' is the United States, not the United Kingdom — a classic membership-swap trap.

Q19.

Consider the following statements:

1. The 'Transfer of Technology' component of a defence deal refers to the supplier sharing design, manufacturing and critical-process know-how enabling the buyer to produce the item domestically.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) Correct definition (b) Refers only to physical transport of finished engines (c) Refers only to a brand-licensing fee (d) Refers only to joint testing of the engine

Answer: (a). ToT is about enabling domestic production capability, not logistics, branding, or testing alone.

Q20.

Consider the following statements:

1. With reference to the Sarus Crane: it is listed in Appendix I of CITES.
2. India has the largest surviving wild population of the Sarus Crane in the world.

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: (b). Statement 1 is wrong — the Sarus Crane is in CITES Appendix II, not Appendix I; India genuinely holds the world's largest wild population of the species.

THEIAS AKADEMIA

Writing out full statement-based reasoning, not just picking an option, is what separates a 100-plus scorer from the rest — **NEEB 300+ Live PYQ Writing** gets you doing exactly that every single day. theiasakademia.com



Mains Questions

GS2

The invocation of prohibitory orders and preventive detention during public protests often creates tension between Article 19 freedoms and the State's duty to maintain public order. Critically examine this tension in light of recent judicial scrutiny of mass detentions and transport shutdowns during protests in India. (15 marks)

Framework: State the constitutional scheme — Art. 19(1)(a)/(b)/(d) subject to “reasonable restrictions” under Art. 19(2)-(3), with Section 163 BNSS as the statutory tool courts require to be proportionate and time-bound; cite judicial correctives — habeas corpus under Art. 32, contempt jurisdiction against non-compliant executive action; conclude with the proportionality doctrine as the balancing test.

GS2

“Political competition to expand Backward Class reservation in local body elections frequently outpaces the empirical rigour the Constitution demands.” Discuss with reference to the Supreme Court's ‘triple test’ doctrine for local-body OBC reservation. (15 marks)

Framework: Explain the triple test (empirical inquiry, quantum justification, 50% ceiling) from K. Krishnamurthy (2010) built on Indra Sawhney (1992); illustrate with the Andhra Pradesh 34%-quota strikedown; recommend a standing State Backward Classes Commission for continuous data collection as the way forward.

GS2

The GST Council's 57th meeting marks a shift from rate rationalisation to structural decriminalisation of indirect-tax enforcement. Examine how this reflects, and tests the limits of, India's model of cooperative fiscal federalism under Article 279A. (15 marks)

Framework: Describe Art. 279A's weighted-voting design and the Mohit Minerals (2022) ruling on the non-binding-yet-persuasive nature of Council recommendations; analyse the ease-of-business vs revenue-protection trade-off in removing Section 69 arrest powers; conclude on cooperative federalism's capacity to absorb structural, not just rate, reform.

GS2

India's continuous representation on the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea since 1996 illustrates the value of sustained multilateral legal diplomacy. Discuss the significance of such institutional presence for a country's foreign-policy and maritime interests. (10 marks)

Framework: Explain ITLOS's mandate under UNCLOS Part XV/Annex VI and its distinction from the ICJ/PCA; link continuous judicial representation to India's EEZ and Indo-Pacific positioning; note the broader debate on equitable representation of rising powers in international judicial bodies.

GS3

The recurring delays in the Tejas Mk1A's GE F404 engine supply illustrate a structural indigenisation gap even in India's flagship indigenous fighter programme. Examine the causes of India's continued import-dependence on critical defence sub-systems, and suggest a roadmap to achieve genuine self-reliance. (15 marks)

Framework: Define the airframe-vs-engine indigenisation gap (58% ToT on F404 vs promised 80% on F414); analyse causes — global oligopoly in fighter engines, Kaveri programme's underperformance; suggest parallel public-private R&D investment, audited ToT milestones and diversified suppliers as the way forward.

GS3

How do innovation ecosystems such as iDEX, DISC and SPRINT change the traditional DRDO-PSU model of defence research and procurement in India? Assess their potential and limitations using a recent example. (10 marks)

Framework: Explain the iDEX → DISC → SPRINT funnel and how it differs from the lab-to-PSU pipeline; use EyeROV's TROUT ROV as an example of startup-to-Navy delivery; discuss scalability and reliability limitations as the key constraint on wider adoption.

GS3

“The 57th GST Council's decision to decriminalise GST enforcement — removing arrest powers and sharply raising prosecution thresholds — marks a shift from an adversarial to a trust-based

compliance architecture.” Critically examine the trade-offs this entails between ease of doing business and revenue protection. (15 marks)

Framework: State the specific changes (Sec. 69 removed; prosecution threshold ₹1cr → ₹5cr; penalty cut) and the Council's buoyancy rationale; weigh MSME-friendly gains against moral-hazard/evasion risk; propose calibrated, data-driven risk-based audits as the way forward.

GS3

“Species that survive largely outside India's formal protected-area network pose a distinct conservation challenge.” Discuss with reference to the Sarus Crane, and suggest a policy framework for conserving wetland-dependent biodiversity embedded in agricultural landscapes. (15 marks)

Framework: Establish the PA-centric conservation gap exposed by the Sarus Crane's farmland habitat; diagnose threats — pesticides, land-use change, powerlines, inconsistent census data; prescribe farmer-incentive schemes, wetland notification outside PAs, and stronger citizen-science pipelines; link to India's shift toward landscape-level conservation.

GS4

A district magistrate must decide whether to impose a broad Section 163 BNSS prohibitory order covering an entire city ahead of a large political demonstration, based on an intelligence input warning of “possible disruption.” Discuss the ethical considerations the magistrate should weigh, and the course of action you would recommend. (Case study, 20 marks)

Framework: Identify the stakeholders and competing values (public safety, Art. 19 liberties, administrative accountability); apply the proportionality test (suitability, necessity, least-restrictive means, fair balance); recommend a narrowly tailored, time-bound, geographically limited order with a transparent review mechanism, over a blanket city-wide shutdown.

+ Answer-Writing Value Addition

Per Down To Earth (9 October 2026), the Sarus Crane's State of India's Birds assessment shows a long-term population decline of 76.84% with a current annual decline rate of 4.33% — yet Uttar Pradesh's own 2024 state census counted nearly 20,000 birds against an international estimate of just 8,000–10,000 for all of India, showing that methodological inconsistency, not ecological decline alone, is itself a live conservation-data problem.

Per the GST Council's 8 October 2026 outcomes note, monthly taxable supply under GST has risen 25.8% — from ₹40.19 lakh crore to ₹50.58 lakh crore — even as the effective tax rate on domestic supply fell from 14.55% to 13.13%, official evidence cited for “rate rationalisation paying for itself” through buoyancy rather than higher rates.

“Only a three-fourths weighted majority of the GST Council — with the Centre holding exactly one-third of the vote — can carry a recommendation, making it one of the few constitutional bodies where no single government, Centre or State, can unilaterally dictate outcomes.” (Article 279A(9), Constitution of India)

The ARIES-coordinated OJ 287 study is the most extensive optical time-series of any blazar in roughly 150 years — built from over a decade of dedicated monitoring by 106 scientists across 48 institutions in 18 countries, estimating the central black hole's mass at a minimum of 3.89 billion solar masses.

India has held an uninterrupted (near-continuous) seat on ITLOS since Justice P. Chandrasekhara Rao's election among the Tribunal's original judges in 1996 — a 30-year institutional presence that predates India's more recent push for greater representation in UN-linked bodies.

India's defence exports hit a record ₹38,424 crore in FY26, up 62.66% year-on-year (Department of Defence Production data) — against a ₹50,000-crore target for 2029, illustrating rapid growth in exportable indigenous platforms even as a critical sub-system like the Tejas's fighter engine remains import-dependent.

The Indra Sawhney 50% ceiling is not absolute: it was itself framed to permit breach only in “extraordinary circumstances” for far-flung and remote areas — a nuance repeatedly tested in Prelims statement-based questions on reservation jurisprudence.

India's foreign exchange reserves (\$734.61 billion as of 2 October 2026) remain \$43.5 billion above end-March 2026 levels despite four straight weekly declines — a reminder that a short-term fall and a medium-term accumulation trend can both be true at once, a distinction examiners frequently test.

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TOPIC	GS PAPER	CAPSULE	PROBABILITY
Article 19 / Section 163 BNSS — protest rights vs public order	GS2	Reasonable restrictions under Art. 19(2)-(3); BNSS Sec. 163 succeeds CrPC Sec. 144	★★★★

Triple Test & 50% reservation ceiling (local bodies)	GS2	K. Krishnamurthy (2010) triple test; Indra Sawhney (1992) 50% cap	★★★★★
GST Council 57th meeting — decriminalisation reforms	GS2/GS3	Art. 279A; Mohit Minerals (2022); Sec. 69/125/132 CGST changes	★★★★★
ITLOS — India's seat, Bimal Patel	GS2	UNCLOS Part XV/Annex VI; ITLOS vs ICJ vs PCA seat distinction	★★★★
I2U2 grouping	GS2	Minilateralism; six cooperation pillars; distinct from the Quad	★★★
Tejas Mk1A GE F404 engine delays	GS3	Indigenisation gap; ToT 58% vs 80%; penalty clause invoked	★★★★★
iDEX-DISC-SPRINT innovation pipeline (EyeROV TROUT)	GS3	Startup-driven defence innovation vs DRDO/PSU model	★★★
ARIES & blazar OJ 287 binary black hole study	GS3	Blazar vs quasar; multimessenger astronomy; AGN unified model	★★★
DRDO stratospheric High-Altitude Platform (HAPS)	GS3	Pseudo-satellite surveillance; stratosphere vs satellite orbit	★★★
Integrated Transport & Logistics Authority (ITLA)	GS3	SPV; National Transport Master Plan; logistics-cost-to-GDP ratio	★★★★
Forex reserves — fourth straight weekly fall	GS3	FCA/Gold/SDR/RTP composition; reserve-adequacy debate	★★★★
Sarus Crane synchronised national census	GS3	Schedule I vs IUCN Vulnerable; species outside protected areas	★★★★★
Glaw Lake — Arunachal Pradesh's first Ramsar Site	GS3	Ramsar Convention; Montreux Record; Wetlands Rules 2017	★★★★
Montreux Record & Ramsar framework	GS3	Keoladeo & Loktak as India's two Montreux-listed sites	★★★
UNCLOS dispute-settlement architecture (ITLOS/ICJ/PCA)	GS2	Seat, jurisdiction and binding-force distinctions	★★★★
Preventive detention & Article 22 safeguards	GS2	Art. 22(1) legal-practitioner right excluded for preventive detention	★★★★
GST Appellate Tribunal & Tribunals Reforms Act 2026	GS2	Principal + State Benches; National Tribunals Commission	★★★
Defence engine indigenisation & ToT accountability	GS3	F404 (58%) vs F414 (80%) Transfer-of-Technology benchmark	★★★★

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