

PART II · ENVIRONMENT TO DIRECT HIT TRACKER

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Daily Current Affairs for UPSC Prelims & Mains

Thursday, 11 June 2026

MORNING EDITION · THEIAS AKADEMIA

From News to Questions, From Questions to Selection

PART II CONTENTS

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

§1 Environment

International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) — India's Conservation Diplomacy at Global Scale

WHY IN NEWS

India's International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) held its Summit on June 1–2, 2026 with 14 countries participating. Saudi Arabia is set to join as the 26th member, extending IBCA's reach into West Asia. India extended invitations to 95 big-cat range countries across Asia, Africa and the Americas.

PRELIMS FACTS

- IBCA covers 7 big cats: Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, Puma
- Launched: April 9, 2023; HQ: New Delhi; current members: 25 countries + Saudi Arabia (26th)
- India's tiger count: 3,682 (2022 census); ~75% of world's wild tigers
- Project Tiger launched: 1973; now covers 55 tiger reserves across 18 states

BACKGROUND

IBCA was launched by PM Modi on April 9, 2023 (50th anniversary of Project Tiger) to protect the world's seven big cat species. Headquarters are in New Delhi. India hosts the world's largest population of wild tigers (3,682 as per 2022 Tiger Census, ~75% of global total).

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- Conservation diplomacy: IBCA positions India as a global leader in wildlife conservation, complementing its G20 presidency legacy on biodiversity finance and One Earth One Family values
- Institutional gaps: Big cats face habitat fragmentation, human-wildlife conflict, poaching and climate-induced range shifts — IBCA must address transboundary challenges
- Conservation vs development paradox: Project Tiger's success in India coexists with expanding infrastructure, raising questions of sustainable development corridors

GS3 — Environment

GS2 — IR

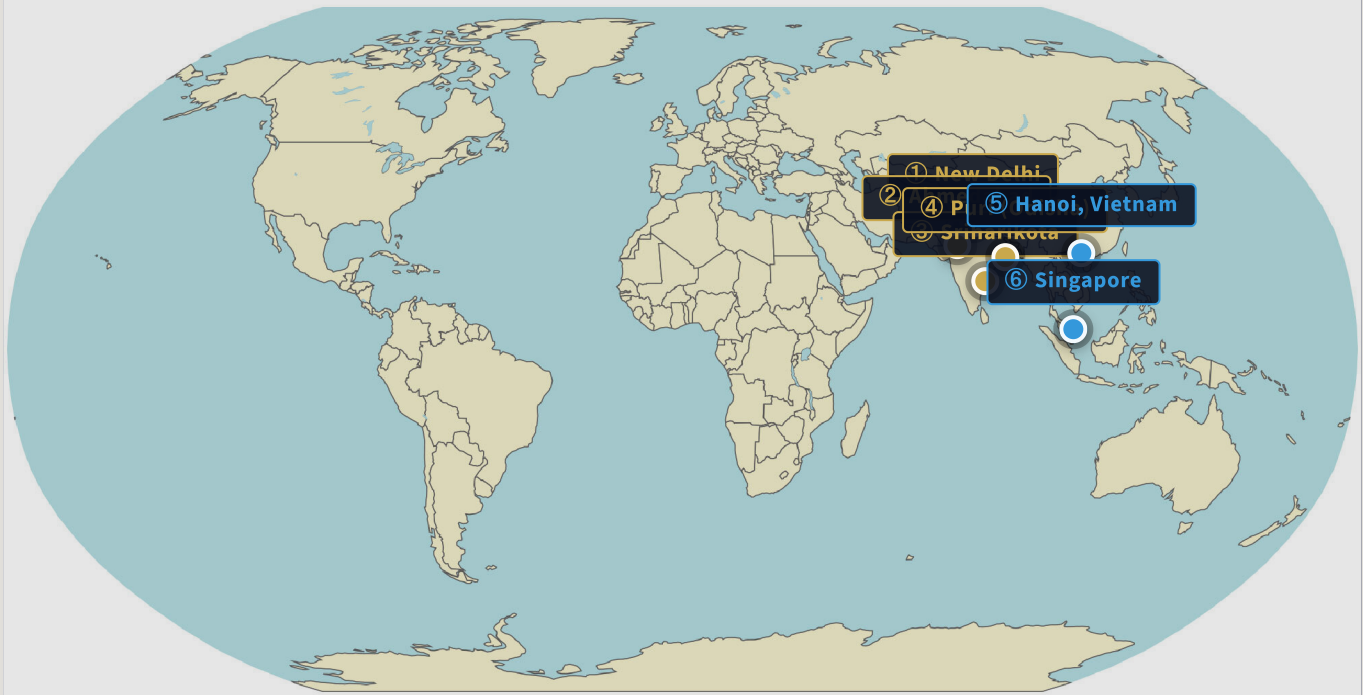
GS3 — Biodiversity

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2023: "Project Tiger — achievements and challenges." | GS3 2022: "India's wildlife conservation policies"

Akademia Teaching Hook: IBCA covers all 7 big cats — a Prelims favourite. Combine with Project Tiger's 50th year (2023 launch), India's tiger census data and the cheetah reintroduction story (Kuno NP) for a comprehensive environment MCQ set. Saudi Arabia joining IBCA = IR + Environment cross-linkage rare in other editions.

§2 Places in News — 11 June 2026



- ① New Delhi (NITI Aayog GCM, Gallantry Awards) ● ② Ahmedabad (Metro Phase 2A) ● ③ Sriharikota (Third Launch Pad)
- ④ Puri, Odisha (BRICS DRR Meet) ● ⑤ Hanoi, Vietnam (BrahMos Deal) ● ⑥ Singapore (Shangri-La Dialogue)

① New Delhi, India

Why in News: 11th NITI Aayog Governing Council + Defence Investiture Ceremony (Gallantry Awards 2026)

Location: Capital Territory; on banks of Yamuna River; 28.6°N, 77.2°E

Prelims Angle: Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre — venue of GCM. India Gate, Parliament House, Supreme Court all in Delhi.

PYQ Trend: Delhi frequently linked to governance, constitutional bodies, national events

② Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Why in News: Union Cabinet approves Metro Phase 2A (₹2,169 cr) — Koteswar Road to SVPI Airport

Location: Largest city of Gujarat; on banks of Sabarmati River; 23.0°N, 72.6°E

Prelims Angle: Gandhi Ashram, Sabarmati; CWG 2030 host city; World Police Games 2029

PYQ Trend: Sabarmati river, Gujarat geography, Smart Cities

③ Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh

Why in News: Third launch pad at SDSC Sriharikota on track for December 2026 commissioning

Location: Barrier island in Nellore district, AP; 13.7°N, 80.2°E; on Pulicat Lake

Prelims Angle: India's only operational spaceport; SDSC = Satish Dhawan Space Centre; bordered by Pulicat Lake (2nd largest brackish lagoon in India)

PYQ Trend: ISRO infrastructure, Pulicat Lake in environment questions

④ Puri, Odisha

Why in News: BRICS Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Technical Working Group meeting hosted in Puri

Location: Coastal city, Odisha; on Bay of Bengal; 19.8°N, 85.8°E

Prelims Angle: Famous for Jagannath Temple (Rath Yatra); Chilika Lake nearby (largest coastal lagoon in India); highly cyclone-prone coastline

PYQ Trend: Odisha cyclones, Chilika Lake biodiversity, Jagannath temple culture

⑤ Hanoi, Vietnam

Why in News: India's BrahMos Block 3 coastal defence missile deal with Vietnam finalised

Location: Capital of Vietnam; Red River delta; 21.0°N, 105.8°E; SE Asia

Prelims Angle: Vietnam = member of ASEAN, Mekong River basin; disputes with China in South China Sea (Paracel and Spratly Islands)

PYQ Trend: India-ASEAN, South China Sea, defence exports

⑥ Singapore

Why in News: Shangri-La Dialogue (Asia Security Summit by IISS) — venue for India-Vietnam BrahMos deal announcement

Location: City-state island nation; SE Asia; 1.3°N, 103.8°E; Malacca Strait

Prelims Angle: Member of ASEAN; located at Malacca Strait (critical chokepoint); ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM+) also held here

PYQ Trend: Malacca Strait, ASEAN, India's Act East Policy

§3 Ethics & Integrity Cases

Case 1 — The Welfare Scheme Diversion

Scenario: A District Collector finds that a senior IAS officer — his mentor — has been misappropriating PM Awas Yojana funds to settle political scores, routing beneficiary lists through a partisan NGO. Reporting could destroy his mentor's career and stall his own promotion.

Ethical Issue: Loyalty vs. integrity; personal obligation vs. public duty; institutional accountability. This is a classic moral dilemma where personal gratitude conflicts with constitutional oath to serve citizens impartially.

Values at stake: Probity Integrity Accountability Courage of Conviction

GS4 Mapping: Attitude & Integrity | Probity in Governance | Conflict of Interest | Whistleblower Protection Act 2014

Model Approach: Report to superior authority/vigilance commission immediately, document evidence, and act in accordance with Rules of Business — personal loyalty cannot override public trust.

Case 2 — The Scientist's Dilemma

Scenario: An ISRO scientist discovers a fatal flaw in the Gaganyaan mission's life support system just 6 weeks before launch. Reporting will delay the ₹10,000-crore mission and cause international embarrassment; staying silent risks astronaut lives.

Ethical Issue: Institutional pressure vs. human life; groupthink in high-stakes organisations; the ethics of silence as complicity.

Values at stake: Compassion Moral Courage Responsibility Non-maleficence

GS4 Mapping: Emotional Intelligence | Ethics in Science & Technology | Whistleblowing | Public Service Values

Model Approach: Report immediately through proper channels; invoke the precautionary principle; human life is non-negotiable — all other considerations secondary.

Case 3 — The Conservation vs. Tribal Rights Conflict

Scenario: A Forest Officer must relocate a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) from a newly declared tiger reserve. The community has lived there for centuries and considers the forest sacred. Relocation violates Forest Rights Act provisions; delay risks tiger corridor fragmentation.

Ethical Issue: Conservation imperatives vs. indigenous rights; developmental paternalism; the ethics of forced displacement for the "greater good."

Values at stake: Justice Empathy Rule of Law Sustainability

GS4 Mapping: Equity & Compassion | Environmental Ethics | Indigenous Rights | Forest Rights Act 2006

Model Approach: Seek free, prior and informed consent; explore community co-management models; involve district-level FRA committees before any relocation.

Case 4 — The Diplomat's Bind

Scenario: An Indian diplomat at a BRICS multilateral meeting discovers that a host nation is pressuring smaller member-nations to vote against an India-sponsored climate finance resolution. He can expose this through back-channels but risks diplomatic fallout and career consequences.

Ethical Issue: Individual courage vs. diplomatic protocol; nationalism vs. multilateral fairness; the tension between realpolitik and ethical foreign policy.

Values at stake: Fairness Diplomatic Integrity Leadership Honesty

GS4 Mapping: International Ethics | Courage of Conviction | Role of Conscience in Public Service | Ethical Leadership

Model Approach: Consult MEA through secure channels; build coalitions with like-minded BRICS members; document coercion patterns and report formally without escalating publicly.

§4 Prelims MCQs — 15 Questions

Q1 MODERATE

Consider the following statements about BrahMos missile:

1. It is a joint venture between India and France.
2. BrahMos Block 3 is a land-based coastal defence variant.
3. Vietnam is the first country to receive BrahMos.

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

✓ (a) 2 only

BrahMos is Indo-Russian JV; Philippines was first (2022), Vietnam is second. Statement 2 alone is correct.

Source: Defence Secretary statement, Shangri-La Dialogue 2026

Q2 EASY

The 11th Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog chaired on June 11, 2026 was themed on:

- (a) Digital India — A Trillion Dollar Economy
- (b) Inclusive Human Development for Viksit Bharat @2047
- (c) Climate Action and Green Growth
- (d) India@100: Infrastructure for Tomorrow

✓ (b)

Confirmed by ANI and PIB press releases for the June 11, 2026 Governing Council meeting.

Source: PIB/ANI, June 10–11, 2026

Q3 MODERATE

Sriharikota, where India is building its third launch pad, is located in:

- (a) Tamil Nadu, on the banks of Cauvery
- (b) Andhra Pradesh, bordered by Pulicat Lake
- (c) Odisha, near the Chilika Lake
- (d) Kerala, near Thumba

✓ (b)

SDSC Sriharikota is on Srihari Island in Nellore district, AP, bordered by Pulicat Lake — India's second-largest brackish lagoon.

Source: ISRO

Q4 EASY

India's peacetime gallantry awards in descending order of precedence are:

- (a) Param Vir Chakra → Kirti Chakra → Shaurya Chakra
- (b) Ashoka Chakra → Kirti Chakra → Shaurya Chakra
- (c) Ashoka Chakra → Shaurya Chakra → Kirti Chakra
- (d) Kirti Chakra → Ashoka Chakra → Vir Chakra

✓ (b)

Peacetime: Ashoka Chakra (highest) → Kirti Chakra → Shaurya Chakra. Param Vir Chakra and Vir Chakra are wartime awards.

Source: Ministry of Defence

Q5 MODERATE

With reference to the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA), consider:

1. It was launched on the 50th anniversary of Project Tiger (2023).
2. It covers seven big cat species including Snow Leopard and Jaguar.
3. Its headquarters are in Bengaluru.

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

✓ (a) 1 and 2

IBCA HQ is in New Delhi, not Bengaluru. Statements 1 and 2 are correct.

Source: MoEFCC, April 2023

Q6 MODERATE

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of RBI was constituted under which Act?

- (a) Banking Regulation Act, 1949
- (b) RBI Act, 1934 (amended 2016)
- (c) FRBM Act, 2003
- (d) Finance Act, 2015

✓ (b)

MPC was established by amending the RBI Act 1934 in 2016. It has 6 members; Governor has casting vote.

Source: RBI Act, 1934

Q7 HARD

Consider: 1. Shangri-La Dialogue is organised by IISS. 2. It is held annually in Singapore. 3. It is a formal intergovernmental summit under ASEAN. Which are correct?

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

✓ (a) 1 and 2

Shangri-La Dialogue is organised by the IISS (International Institute for Strategic Studies) — a private think tank, NOT an official intergovernmental body.

Source: IISS

Q8 MODERATE

Pulicat Lake, which appeared in news in context of Sriharikota, is located in:

- (a) Tamil Nadu only
- (b) Andhra Pradesh only
- (c) On the border of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu
- (d) Odisha

✓ (c)

Pulicat Lake straddles the AP-Tamil Nadu border; India's second-largest brackish water lagoon after Chilika. Srihari Island (home of SDSC) is within it.

Source: Wildlife Institute of India

Q9 HARD

Which of the following is true about the Ahmedabad Metro Phase 2A approved in June 2026?

1. It is 6.032 km long. 2. It costs ₹5,800 crore. 3. It takes the total network to 77.63 km.

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

✓ (b) 1 and 3

Cost is ₹2,169 crore (not ₹5,800 crore). Length 6.032 km and total network 77.63 km are both correct.

Source: Cabinet Secretariat, June 10, 2026

Q10 EASY

India's Project Tiger was launched in:

(a) 1970 (b) 1973 (c) 1975 (d) 1980

✓ (b) 1973

Project Tiger was launched on April 1, 1973 by PM Indira Gandhi. India now has 55 tiger reserves across 18 states.

Source: NTCA

Q11 MODERATE

NITI Aayog was created by:

- (a) A constitutional amendment under Article 263
- (b) An Act of Parliament
- (c) A Cabinet Resolution (executive order) in January 2015
- (d) A Presidential Ordinance

✓ (c)

NITI Aayog was created by Cabinet Resolution on January 1, 2015 — not by legislation or constitutional amendment.

Source: Cabinet Resolution, January 1, 2015

Q12 HARD

Which of the following statements about High Power Microwave (HPM) directed energy weapons is correct?

- (a) They use focused laser beams to destroy targets
- (b) They generate ultra-short microwave pulses to disable drone electronics
- (c) They are primarily used for nuclear deterrence
- (d) India has deployed them operationally since 2024

✓ (b)

HPM DEW systems generate ultra-short microwave pulses that disrupt/fry drone electronics. DRDO's system is still in testing phase (not yet operational).

Source: DRDO/EWCI 2026

Q13 MODERATE

India's Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) was established in:

(a) 1929 (b) 1935 (c) 1943 (d) 1950

✓ (c) 1943

ICWA was established in 1943 in New Delhi as India's premier think tank on international affairs.

Source: ICWA

Q14 MODERATE

Chilika Lake, India's largest coastal lagoon, is located in:

(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) West Bengal (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Odisha

✓ (d) Odisha

Chilika Lake in Odisha is India's largest brackish water lagoon. Pulicat Lake (AP-TN border) is the second-largest. Both appear frequently in UPSC environment questions.

Source: Ramsar Secretariat

Q15 **HARD**

With reference to Gaganyaan mission: 1. Crew will orbit at ~400 km altitude. 2. All four astronaut-designates are IAF officers. 3. The mission will use LVM3 rocket. Which are correct?

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

✓ (d) 1, 2 and 3

All three statements are correct. Gaganyaan will use LVM3 (formerly GSLV Mk III), orbit at ~400 km, and carry IAF test pilots as astronauts.

Source: ISRO

§5 Mains Questions — 11 June 2026

GS2 — Polity & Governance

"NITI Aayog's Governing Council has emerged as a platform for cooperative federalism, but its effectiveness depends on the political will of states. Critically analyse." (250 words)

Syllabus: Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies; Centre-State relations; devolution of power

- Structure and mandate of NITI Aayog vs. Planning Commission — shift from top-down to bottom-up planning
- Governing Council composition: CMs as co-creators of national policy — significance for federalism
- Criticisms: Opposition-ruled states boycotting meetings; GC decisions not binding; funding still centralised
- Compare with Planning Commission era: Finance Commission vs. NITI Aayog role in resource allocation
- Way forward: Legislative backing for NITI Aayog; inter-state councils for genuine cooperative federalism

Cooperative Federalism

Viksit Bharat

Planning Commission

Centre-State

GS2 — International Relations

"India's defence exports are emerging as a new instrument of strategic autonomy and diplomatic influence. Examine with reference to the BrahMos deal." (250 words)

Syllabus: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests; India's foreign policy

- BrahMos deal context: Vietnam, Philippines — India as a "net security provider" in Indo-Pacific
- Defence exports as soft power: Building strategic dependencies that outlast governments
- India's ₹50,000-crore defence export target by 2029 — current status and challenges
- Risks: Technology leakage concerns, third-country transfer clauses, Russia factor in BrahMos JV
- South China Sea angle: How India-Vietnam arms transfer affects regional balance of power

GS3 — Space Technology

"India's space programme is at an inflection point — from a state-driven model to a public-private partnership framework. Discuss the challenges and opportunities." (250 words)

Syllabus: Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology

- New Space India: Gaganyaan, third launch pad, 190+ startups — India's space ecosystem transformation
- IN-SPACe and NSIL: Policy frameworks enabling private sector participation
- Dual-use potential: DRDO-ISRO collaboration for military meteorology, communications, surveillance
- Funding gap: ISRO budget vs. NASA/ESA/CNSA; commercial revenue model needed
- Gaganyaan as enabler: Human spaceflight capability = R&D ecosystem, spin-off technologies, global prestige

ISRO

Gaganyaan

IN-SPACe

NewSpace

DRDO

GS3 — Environment & Ecology

"India's success in tiger conservation masks a deeper crisis of habitat fragmentation and human-wildlife conflict. Critically evaluate." (250 words)

Syllabus: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment

- Tiger success story: 3,682 tigers (2022), 75% of world's wild tigers — from 1,411 (2006) to today
- Habitat fragmentation: Linear infrastructure (highways, railways) cutting across wildlife corridors
- Human-wildlife conflict: 500+ tiger deaths since 2012; retaliatory killings; farmer compensation gaps
- IBCA's role: International cooperation on transboundary tiger/leopard corridors (India-Nepal-Bhutan)
- Way forward: Wildlife corridors legislation, community reserves, ecotourism revenue sharing

Project Tiger

IBCA

Wildlife Corridor

Human-Wildlife Conflict

GS3 — Economy

"The RBI's neutral monetary policy stance reflects the challenge of balancing domestic growth imperatives against global economic headwinds. Analyse." (150 words)

Syllabus: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilisation of resources, growth, development and employment

- MPC decision context: 5.25% repo rate, neutral stance, June 2026 meeting
- Global headwinds: US-Iran conflict, commodity price volatility, dollar strengthening
- India's macro-fundamentals: Strong GDP growth, controlled inflation, CAD within limits
- Trade-off: Rate cut would boost growth but risk inflation; rate hike would hurt MSMEs
- Forward guidance: RBI watching CPI, global oil prices and monsoon for Q3 FY27 trajectory

GS4 — Ethics

"Probity in public life requires not just the absence of corruption but the presence of moral courage. Illustrate with examples from governance and defence." (250 words)

Syllabus: Probity in Governance; concept of public service; philosophical basis of governance and probity

- Distinguish probity (active integrity) from mere rule-compliance (passive compliance)
- Moral courage: Whistleblowing against mentor (welfare scheme diversion case); scientist reporting Gaganyaan flaw
- Historical examples: Ashoka Chakra recipients, ICS officers who refused unjust orders
- Institutional design: RTI, Lokpal, Whistleblower Protection Act as structural safeguards for moral courage
- Conclusion: Probity is an attitude, not a procedure — must be cultivated in training and rewarded in performance

Probity

Moral Courage

Integrity

Whistleblower

GS4

§6 Answer Writing Value Addition

Quote Bank — 11 June 2026

"India is not just a geographical entity or economic power — it is a civilisational force that the world looks to for solutions, not just problems."

— PM Narendra Modi, G20 New Delhi Summit 2023 | Use in: IR, India's global role, GS2 Mains

"The best index to a person's character is how he treats people who can't do him any good."

— Abigail Van Buren | Use in: GS4 Ethics answers on probity, compassion, public service values

"Space is the province of all mankind, and its exploration must be for the benefit of all."

— Outer Space Treaty, 1967 | Use in: GS3 Space Technology, dual-use space, international governance of space

Key Data Points — Today's Edition

Topic	Data Point	Source
BrahMos-Vietnam Deal	₹6,000 crore (\$629 million); Block 3; range 290–300 km	Defence Secretary, Shangri-La 2026

Ahmedabad Metro	₹2,169 cr; 6.032 km; 5 stations; total 77.63 km network	Cabinet Secretariat, June 10, 2026
Tiger Census 2022	3,682 tigers; ~75% of world's wild tigers; 55 reserves	NTCA, 2022
RBI Repo Rate	5.25% (unchanged); neutral stance; MPC June 3–5, 2026	RBI, June 2026
Gallantry Awards 2026	51 awards conferred; Prasanth Nair — Kirti Chakra	Rashtrapati Bhavan

§7 AKADEMIA Direct Hit Tracker — 11 June 2026

6 NEWS STORIES TODAY	7 NEWS CARDS WITH FULL ANALYSIS	15 PRELIMS MCQS TODAY	6 MAINS QUESTIONS TODAY
4 ETHICS CASES TODAY	6 PLACES IN NEWS MAPPED	5 GS PAPERS COVERED	48 QUESTIONS FROM ANTIM IN PRELIMS 2026

Domain	Stories	Key Topics
Polity & Governance	2	NITI Aayog GCM, Ahmedabad Metro
International Relations	2	BrahMos-Vietnam, ICWA Peacekeeping Panel
Defence & Security	1	Gallantry Awards, Kirti Chakra, HPM Weapon
Science & Technology	1	DRDO-ISRO Collaboration, Third Launch Pad
Economy	1	RBI Repo Rate, MPC, PLI Textiles
Environment	1	IBCA, Project Tiger, Big Cat Conservation

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In what critics called the most unpredictable Prelims paper in a decade —

48

QUESTIONS FROM
ANTIM ASSURED 100+

7

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE DOCUMENT

6

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE CLASS

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