

THEIAS AKADEMIA · MORNING EDITION · 08:00 IST

ANTIM ASSURED 100+

PART II · ENVIRONMENT TO DIRECT HIT TRACKER

Saturday, 25 July 2026

Assam Floods 2026 — Brahmaputra Breaches Danger Mark; 50+ Dead, 7 Lakh+ Displaced; IMD Warns of Renewed Flooding Till July 30

Why in News: Monsoon flooding in Assam has killed more than 50 people and displaced over 700,000 as the Brahmaputra breached the danger mark in multiple districts; the IMD has forecast heavy rain, thunderstorms and lightning across Assam and Meghalaya until July 30, raising fears of renewed flooding in already-saturated river basins.

Background: The 2026 floods were triggered by exceptionally heavy rainfall in the upstream hill catchments of Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh combined with intense rain across Upper Assam — Charaideo district recorded 170 mm of rain, 436% above normal. Satellite imagery shows the Brahmaputra's floodplain expanding nearly threefold, intensifying downstream impact on Bangladesh as well.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Nearly 300,000 people are in government relief camps; over 900 villages submerged and 7,000+ homes without electricity.
- Trigger: Charaideo received 170 mm rainfall — 436% above normal; upstream catchments in Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh compounded the surge.
- Brahmaputra originates in Tibet (as the Yarlung Tsangpo), flows ~900 km through Assam before entering Bangladesh — a transboundary river system central to India's river-basin diplomacy.
- Downstream impact: heavy inflow raised concern in Bangladesh, though river levels there remained below danger marks as of the latest assessment.

💡 LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

Trick: Brahmaputra floods differ from Ganga floods in cause — Brahmaputra flooding is driven mainly by orographic rainfall in the Eastern Himalayan hill catchments (Arunachal, Nagaland, Meghalaya) plus high sediment load causing channel braiding, while Ganga floods are more rainfall + glacial-melt + barrage-regulation driven. A recurring GS1 (geography) + GS3 (disaster management) crossover point.

📄 PYQ LINKAGE

GS1 (recurring): "Discuss the factors responsible for the recurrent floods in Assam and suggest mitigation measures." | GS3 2015: "Discuss the recent measures initiated in disaster management by the Government of India, departing from the earlier reactive approach."

🎯 PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. The Brahmaputra river originates in Tibet under which name? (a) Indus (b) Yarlung Tsangpo (c) Sutlej (d) Irrawaddy. **Answer: (b) Yarlung Tsangpo.**

GS1

GS3

Assam Floods

Brahmaputra

Disaster Management

Clouded Leopard — IUCN Vulnerable; State Animal of Meghalaya; India's "Modern-Day Sabre-Tooth"

Why in News: The Clouded Leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*), one of India's least-studied wild cats, is this edition's static species profile — an evergreen, exam-relevant topic given its restricted North-East Indian range and its distinctive place among the world's felids.

Background: Confined largely to the forests of the Eastern Himalayan foothills and North-East India, the Clouded Leopard is arboreal and nocturnal, making it one of the hardest wild cats to survey — most population data comes from camera-trap studies rather than direct sighting.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Scientific name: Neofelis nebulosa; IUCN status: Vulnerable; CITES: Appendix I; Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972: Schedule I.
- Distribution: foothills of the Himalayas and North-East India (Meghalaya, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, etc.), extending into Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and parts of Southeast Asia.
- State Animal of Meghalaya; Nokrek National Park and Balpakram National Park (Meghalaya) are key habitats.
- Distinctive trait: has the longest canine-to-skull-size ratio of any living cat, earning it the nickname "modern-day sabre-tooth."

💡 LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

Trick: Clouded Leopard ≠ Snow Leopard ≠ common Leopard. Clouded Leopard is arboreal, found in NE India's forests; Snow Leopard occupies the high-altitude cold desert of the Trans-Himalaya (Ladakh, Spiti); common Leopard (Panthera pardus) is the widely distributed generalist across India. All three are WPA Schedule I species but occupy entirely different ecological niches — a frequent Prelims trap.

📄 PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 (recurring): "Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) — discuss its Appendices and India's obligations." | GS3: "Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 — Schedules and their significance."

🎯 PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. The Clouded Leopard is the State Animal of: (a) Assam (b) Meghalaya (c) Sikkim (d) Nagaland. **Answer: (b) Meghalaya.**

ENV

Clouded Leopard

IUCN Vulnerable

Meghalaya

WPA Schedule I

§2 · PLACES IN NEWS — 25 JULY 2026

📍 PLACES IN NEWS — 25 JULY 2026 | ANTIM ASSURED 100+



- ① New Delhi (Bittu resignation, China objection, BHAVYA Cabinet)
- ② Guwahati, Assam (Brahmaputra floods)
- ③ Bucharest, Romania (President Murmu's State Visit)
- ④ Abdul Kalam Island, Odisha (Kusha LR-SAM test)
- ⑤ Hyderabad, Telangana (GTRE turbojet engine)
- ⑥ Darwin, Australia (Exercise Pitch Black 2026)

① New Delhi, India

Ravneet Singh Bittu resigns as Union Minister; MEA objects to China's "illegal occupation" of J&K/Ladakh; Cabinet clears BHAVYA-Rasayan Scheme; Parliament adjourned till Monday.

② Guwahati, Assam

Brahmaputra breaches danger mark; 50+ dead, 700,000+ displaced; nearly 300,000 in relief camps; IMD warns of renewed rain till July 30.

③ Bucharest, Romania

President Murmu's State Visit concludes (July 23-25); first Indian Head-of-State visit in three decades; 3 agreements signed; trade to double in 3 years.

④ Abdul Kalam Island, Odisha

DRDO's Kusha Long-Range SAM completes maiden flight-test; 3-tier interceptor family (150/250/400 km); ₹21,700 crore project cleared by CCS in 2022.

⑤ Hyderabad, Telangana

GTRE delivers India's first indigenous 350-kg-thrust expendable turbojet engine; built by private firm Azad Engineering.

⑥ Darwin, Australia

Exercise Pitch Black 2026 (July 20-Aug 7); IAF's Rafale fighters make their first-ever appearance; 20 nations, up to 100 aircraft participating.

§3 · ETHICS & INTEGRITY CASE STUDIES

Case 1 · Public Office vs Political Ambition

A Union Minister resigns just ahead of a state election cycle amid speculation of a shift to state politics. The case tests whether office should be treated purely as public trust or can legitimately serve as a stepping-stone for political ambition. **GS4 Values:** Public service motivation, constitutional propriety, accountability.

Case 2 · Presiding Officer's Dilemma

A Deputy Chairman must balance the Opposition's right to raise an urgent resignation demand against the House's duty to transact legislative business, as repeated adjournments risk eroding public trust in Parliament. **GS4 Values:** Impartiality, tolerance, institutional respect for majority and minority voices.

Case 3 · Flood Relief Under Political Pressure

A District Magistrate in flood-hit Assam faces pressure to prioritise relief supplies to politically influential villages over worse-affected but less "visible" hamlets. The scenario tests distributive justice against political expediency. **GS4 Values:** Compassion, objectivity, equity in public administration.

Case 4 · Scientific Integrity in Defence Testing

A DRDO scientist faces informal pressure to report a "full success" for a high-profile missile test despite partial telemetry anomalies, given the test's political significance. **GS4 Values:** Objectivity, truthfulness, probity in governance.

§4 · PRELIMS MCQS — 25 JULY 2026 (15 QUESTIONS)

Q1. A Union Minister who is not a member of either House of Parliament automatically ceases to hold office if not elected/nominated to a House within: (a) 3 months (b) 6 months (c) 9 months (d) 1 year

✔ Answer: (b) — Article 75(5) of the Constitution.

Q2. Consider the following statements about Rule 267 in the Rajya Sabha: (1) It allows suspension of listed business to discuss an urgent matter. (2) Its use is subject to the Chair's discretion. Which is/are correct? (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither

✔ Answer: (c) — Both statements are correct; Rule 267 notices are frequently used (and frequently disallowed) during disrupted sessions.

Q3. During President Murmu's July 2026 Romania visit, agreements were signed in all of the following areas EXCEPT: (a) Science & Technology cooperation (b) Chair of Indian Studies at University of Bucharest (c) Expanded ITEC training (d) Currency swap arrangement

✔ Answer: (d) — No currency swap arrangement was signed; the three agreements covered S&T cooperation, a Chair of Indian Studies, and expanded ITEC training.

Q4. Aksai Chin, claimed by India as part of Ladakh, has been under Chinese control since approximately: (a) 1947 (b) 1950s-60s (c) 1971 (d) 1999

✓ Answer: (b) — China has occupied Aksai Chin (~38,000 sq km) since annexation in the 1950s-60s.

Q5. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) passes through: (a) Xinjiang and Tibet only (b) Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (c) Sikkim sector (d) Doklam plateau

✓ Answer: (b) — CPEC runs through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, a long-standing Indian objection at multilateral forums.

Q6. Project Kusha's three interceptor variants cover approximate ranges of: (a) 50/100/150 km (b) 120-150/250/350-400 km (c) 500/750/1000 km (d) 30/60/90 km

✓ Answer: (b) — M1 (~120-150 km), M2 (~250 km), M3 (~350-400 km).

Q7. Project Kusha was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security in: (a) 2019 (b) 2020 (c) 2022 (d) 2024

✓ Answer: (c) — 2022, at an estimated cost of ₹21,700 crore.

Q8. GTRE (Gas Turbine Research Establishment), which designed India's first indigenous expendable turbojet engine, is also associated with developing: (a) The Kaveri engine for Tejas (b) The CE-7.5 cryogenic engine (c) The Agni-V propulsion system (d) The Arihant reactor

✓ Answer: (a) — GTRE (Bengaluru) is DRDO's gas-turbine laboratory, long associated with the Kaveri engine programme.

Q9. The BHAVYA-Rasayan Scheme's total outlay of ₹3,030 crore is allocated as: (a) Entirely for administrative expenditure (b) ₹3,000 crore for common infrastructure, ₹30 crore for administration (c) Equal split between Centre and States (d) Entirely as production-linked incentives

✓ Answer: (b) — ₹3,000 crore for common infrastructure/utilities inside the parks, ₹30 crore for administrative expenditure.

Q10. Exercise Pitch Black 2026, featuring the IAF's first-ever Rafale participation, is hosted by: (a) Singapore (b) France (c) Australia (d) United States

✓ Answer: (c) — Hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force at Darwin, Tindal and Amberley bases, July 20-August 7, 2026.

Q11. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) was established under: (a) Environment Protection Act 1986 (b) National Green Tribunal Act 2010 (c) Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974 (d) Forest Conservation Act 1980

✓ Answer: (b) — National Green Tribunal Act, 2010; a specialised body for environmental disputes and enforcement of environmental laws.

Q12. The Brahmaputra enters India through which state before flowing into Assam? (a) Sikkim (b) Arunachal Pradesh (c) West Bengal (d) Nagaland

✓ Answer: (b) — The Brahmaputra (as the Siang/Dihang) enters India through Arunachal Pradesh before flowing into Assam.

Q13. Which of the following statements about the Clouded Leopard is correct? (1) It is IUCN Vulnerable. (2) It is the State Animal of Meghalaya. (3) It is primarily found in the Trans-Himalayan cold desert. Select the correct answer: (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

✓ Answer: (a) — Statement 3 is incorrect; the Clouded Leopard is found in NE India's forested foothills, not the Trans-Himalayan cold desert (that is Snow Leopard habitat).

Q14. A species listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 receives: (a) The lowest level of protection (b) The highest level of protection, with the most stringent penalties (c) No legal protection, only monitoring (d) Protection only within Tiger Reserves

✓ Answer: (b) — Schedule I species receive the highest protection and the most stringent penalties for violation under the WPA 1972.

Q15. CITES Appendix I includes species that: (a) Are threatened with extinction and in which trade is prohibited except in exceptional circumstances (b) Are not threatened but may become so without trade regulation (c) Are protected in at least one country that has asked others for help (d) Have no international trade restrictions

✓ Answer: (a) — Appendix I species (like the Clouded Leopard) face the strictest international trade prohibition under CITES.

§5 · MAINS QUESTIONS — 25 JULY 2026

GS2 Polity Q1. Discuss the constitutional provisions governing the appointment and tenure of Union Ministers, with particular reference to Article 75. How does the "six-month rule" under Article 75(5) safeguard parliamentary accountability? (250 words)

Hints: Art 74 (aid and advise) vs Art 75 (appointment/tenure); pleasure doctrine 75(2); 91st Amendment 15% cap 75(1A); six-month rule 75(5) rationale — ensures ministers remain answerable to an elected/nominated House; recent Bittu resignation as illustrative case.

GS2 Parliament Q2. "Frequent disruptions weaken Parliament's deliberative character without necessarily strengthening opposition accountability." Critically examine with reference to the Monsoon Session 2026. (250 words)

Hints: Rule 267 use and misuse; presiding officer's balancing role; opportunity cost of lost legislative business; comparative global practice (structured opposition time); reforms suggested by PRS/committees on report; need for pre-negotiated business allocation.

GS2 IR Q3. India's outreach to smaller European states such as Romania reflects a strategic diversification beyond traditional partners. Analyse the significance of such visits in the context of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement. (250 words)

Hints: India-EU FTA 2026 as backdrop; Romania as EU/NATO member; ITEC as soft-power/capacity-building tool; Chair of Indian Studies as cultural diplomacy; trade diversification rationale; comparison with India's Central Asia/Nordic outreach.

GS2 GS3 Q4. Examine India's diplomatic and legal position on Chinese "occupation" of territories in Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir, distinguishing between Aksai Chin, the Shaksgam Valley, and CPEC-related concerns. (250 words)

Hints: 1962 war and Aksai Chin; 1963 Sino-Pak Boundary Agreement and Shaksgam Valley; CPEC as economic corridor through PoK since 2015; Parliament resolution 1994; India's diplomatic tools — bilateral protest, multilateral forums, infrastructure counter-development (BRO roads).

GS3 Defence Q5. Discuss the significance of Project Kusha for India's layered air-defence architecture and its role in advancing Atmanirbhar Bharat in the defence sector. (250 words)

Hints: Layered defence — Akash/MRSAM/Kusha/S-400; import substitution rationale; DRDO-industry partnership model; timeline 2028-2030; complementary GTRE turbojet-engine story as private-sector propulsion entry; risks — schedule slippage, integration challenges.

GS1 GS3 Q6. The 2026 Assam floods highlight recurring vulnerabilities in India's approach to transboundary river-basin disaster management. Suggest a multi-pronged strategy addressing both immediate relief and long-term resilience. (250 words)

Hints: Causes — orographic rainfall, upstream catchment runoff, sediment-driven channel braiding; immediate — NDRF/SDRF deployment, relief camps, airdrops; long-term — early-warning systems, embankment management, India-Bangladesh-China data-sharing gaps (Brahmaputra as a non-treaty basin), climate-resilient infrastructure, Disaster Management Act 2005 framework.

§6 · ANSWER WRITING VALUE ADDITION

DATA — ASSAM FLOODS 2026

50+ dead, 700,000+ displaced, ~300,000 in relief camps; 900+ villages submerged; Charaideo received 170mm rain (436% above normal); IMD warns of heavy rain till July 30. Use in: GS1 geography, GS3 disaster management answers.

DATA — PROJECT KUSHA

3-tier interceptor: M1 ~120-150 km, M2 ~250 km, M3 ~350-400 km; ₹21,700 crore project; CCS approval 2022; induction window 2028-2030. Use in: GS3 Atmanirbhar Bharat, indigenous defence production answers.

DATA — INDIA-ROMANIA TIES

3 MoUs signed (S&T cooperation, Chair of Indian Studies, expanded ITEC); target to double bilateral trade in 3 years; 2028 declared "India-Romania Year of Innovation" (80 years of diplomatic ties, 1948-2028). Use in: GS2 India-EU relations, diplomatic outreach answers.

QUOTE — TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY

"Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh are, and will remain, integral parts of India." — Ministry of External Affairs statement, July 24, 2026. Use in: GS2 India-China relations, territorial sovereignty answers.

§7 · AKADEMIA DIRECT HIT TRACKER — 25 JULY 2026

#	TOPIC	GS	PRIORITY	ONE-LINE RECALL
1	Assam Floods 2026 / Brahmaputra	GS1/GS3	 HIGH	50+ dead, 700k+ displaced; Charaideo 170mm rain (436% above normal); IMD warns till July 30; Yarlung Tsangpo origin
2	Ravneet Singh Bittu Resignation	GS2	 MEDIUM	MoS Railways & Food Processing quits; Art 75(2)/75(5); Punjab poll speculation
3	Parliament Day 6 Disruption	GS2	 MEDIUM	Adjourned till Monday; Rule 267; Dharmendra Pradhan resignation demand; Memory Hook — Day 3-5 continuation
4	President Murmu's Romania Visit	GS2	 HIGH	First State Visit in 3 decades; 3 MoUs (S&T, Indian Studies Chair, ITEC); trade to double in 3 yrs; 2028 = Year of Innovation
5	MEA Objects — China "Illegal Occupation"	GS2/GS3	 HIGH	Aksai Chin (~38,000 sq km, since 1950s-60s); Shaksgam Valley (1963); CPEC through PoK
6	Project Kusha LR-SAM Maiden Test	GS3	 HIGH	M1/M2/M3 tiers (150/250/400 km); ₹21,700 cr; CCS 2022; DRDO fully indigenous; induction 2028-30
7	GTRE Expendable Turbojet Engine	GS3	 MEDIUM	350-kg-thrust class; Azad Engineering Hyderabad; private-sector propulsion entry; Kaveri-linked lab GTRE
8	BHAVYA-Rasayan Scheme	GS3	 MEDIUM	₹3,030 cr; 3 Chemical Parks; Centre ₹1,000 cr/park cap; State min ₹500 cr; FY26-27 to FY30-31
9	Exercise Pitch Black 2026	GS3	 MEDIUM	Darwin, Australia; July 20-Aug 7; IAF Rafale first-ever participation; 20 nations, up to 100 aircraft
10	NGT Daily Court Digest (July 22)	GS3	 LOW	Yamuna pollution; Delhi dumpsite biomining; Telangana landfill; AP aquaculture ponds orders
11	Clouded Leopard	ENV	 MEDIUM	Neofelis nebulosa; IUCN Vulnerable; State Animal Meghalaya; CITES Appendix I; WPA Schedule I
12	Article 75 — Council of Ministers	GS2	 MEDIUM	Pleasure doctrine 75(2); 15% cap 75(1A), 91st Amendment; six-month rule 75(5)

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

48

QUESTIONS FROM
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7

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE DOCUMENT

6

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE CLASS

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