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PART II · ENVIRONMENT TO DIRECT HIT TRACKER

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"The Topper's Last Read"

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Environment & Ecology

GS3

GS2

16 AUG

Environmental Governance & Global Groupings

16 August 2026 · Source: PIB / Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

India Hosts the 12th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting This Week

Why in News: A Ministry of Environment release issued **today, 16 August 2026**, confirms that India will host the **BRICS Environment Working Group** and the **Contact Group on Climate Change and Sustainable Development** at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on **17 August**, followed by the **12th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting on 18 August**, presided over by the Union Environment Minister. It is one of two BRICS ministerials India hosts this week — the BRICS ICT track runs at Pune from 17 to 21 August.

Background: India assumed the **BRICS Chairship on 1 January 2026** — its fourth since 2012 — under the theme "**Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability**," which is itself an acronym of BRICS. The grouping originated as an investment-bank coinage (Goldman Sachs, 2001), became a political formation with the first summit at Yekaterinburg in 2009, added South Africa in 2010, and expanded substantially from 2024. The Environment Working Group was established in **2015** at the first BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting in Moscow. The **18th BRICS Summit** is scheduled for **New Delhi, 12–13 September 2026**.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- **17 August:** Senior Officials' Meeting of the Environment Working Group + Contact Group on Climate Change and Sustainable Development. **18 August:** 12th BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting. Venue: **Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi**.
- The **Environment Working Group** was established in **2015** at the first BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting, held in **Moscow**.
- BRICS now has **11 members**: Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE.
- India's **Chairship theme for 2026** is "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability" — a backronym of BRICS.
- The grouping's principal institutions are the **New Development Bank** (headquartered in Shanghai, established 2014 at the Fortaleza summit) and the **Contingent Reserve Arrangement**.
- BRICS members together account for a very large share of global population and a substantial share of global emissions, which is why the bloc's environmental positions carry weight in UNFCCC negotiations.
- Preparatory virtual meetings and webinars ran from **March to July 2026** ahead of this ministerial.
- Parallel track: the **7th BRICS ICT Working Group, Digital BRICS Forum and 12th BRICS Communications Ministers' Meeting at Pune, 17–21 August 2026**, themed "Innovate, Cooperate and Transform for a Resilient Future."

🔗 MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- BRICS environmental coordination matters chiefly as a negotiating bloc function. In UNFCCC processes the group's members overlap substantially with the BASIC grouping and the G77 position on common but differentiated responsibilities, climate

finance and technology transfer — and a coordinated pre-COP position from eleven large emerging economies changes the arithmetic of a negotiation.

- The bloc's internal heterogeneity is its central weakness, and expansion has sharpened it. A grouping containing both major fossil-fuel exporters and states pursuing rapid renewable deployment cannot easily agree a common position on transition away from fossil fuels — the very issue on which recent COPs have turned.
- For India specifically, chairing the environment track is an opportunity to internationalise its own initiatives — the International Solar Alliance, the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), and the Global Biofuels Alliance — through a forum where it holds convening power rather than one where it is a demandeur.
- The credibility test for such ministerials is whether they produce anything beyond a declaration. The New Development Bank gives BRICS an actual financing instrument, so the meaningful question is whether environmental commitments translate into NDB lending criteria.
- Two ministerials in a single week — environment and digital — illustrate how a chairship is actually exercised: not through summits alone but through the working-group calendar that sets the agenda the summit ratifies.

Let's Remember This Through a Trick

BRICS 2026 theme is BRICS itself: Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability. And the count: **11 members, EWG since 2015, NDB in Shanghai since 2014.**

Probable Prelims MCQ (Statement-Based)

Consider the following statements:

1. The New Development Bank is headquartered in Shanghai.
2. The BRICS Environment Working Group was established in 2015.
3. The Contingent Reserve Arrangement is a BRICS mechanism for short-term liquidity support.

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) All three

Answer: (d) All three.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS2 2019 & 2023 on India's role in global groupings and multilateral environmental negotiations; Prelims has repeatedly tested the NDB and BRICS institutions.

GS1

GS3

15-16 AUG

Indian Monsoon & Disaster Management

15-16 August 2026 · Source: IMD warnings; state disaster authority reporting

A Monsoon That Swings: Assam's Toll Past 85, and Extremely Heavy Rain Warnings for the East

Why in News: The India Meteorological Department has warned of **heavy to very heavy rainfall over Gangetic West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand from 15 to 17 August**, with **isolated extremely heavy rainfall over Odisha on 16–17 August** and over Gangetic West Bengal on 17 August. Assam's flood death toll has risen past **85**. Across the season the monsoon has swung between destructive downpours and dry spells — a pattern researchers link to a warming atmosphere holding more moisture and releasing it in shorter, more intense bursts.

Background: The southwest monsoon supplies roughly **70–75% of India's annual rainfall** between June and September. It is driven by the differential heating of land and ocean, the seasonal migration of the **Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone**, the **Tibetan Plateau's** elevated heat source, and the **Somali Jet** low-level cross-equatorial flow. Its interannual variability is modulated by **ENSO** (El Nino tends to suppress, La Nina to enhance), the **Indian Ocean Dipole**, and the intraseasonal **Madden-Julian Oscillation**. The IMD classifies a day's rainfall as "heavy" at 64.5–115.5 mm, "very heavy" at 115.6–204.4 mm, and "extremely heavy" above 204.4 mm — the thresholds behind the warnings above.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- **IMD rainfall thresholds:** Heavy 64.5–115.5 mm; Very Heavy 115.6–204.4 mm; Extremely Heavy above 204.4 mm in 24 hours. Colour codes run Green, Yellow (be aware), Orange (be prepared), Red (take action).
- Assam's flood toll for the season has risen past **85**; the Brahmaputra basin experiences flooding almost annually.
- The **Brahmaputra** rises as the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet, enters India through Arunachal Pradesh as the Siang/Dihang, and is joined by the Dibang and Lohit near Sadiya to become the Brahmaputra. It carries one of the world's highest silt loads.
- Assam's flood vulnerability has four compounding causes: very high monsoon rainfall, a braided channel with a low gradient, extremely high sediment load raising the riverbed, and bank erosion.
- **Majuli**, in the Brahmaputra, is among the world's largest river islands and has lost substantial area to erosion.
- The monsoon supplies roughly **70–75% of annual rainfall**; the IMD defines "normal" seasonal rainfall as 96–104% of the Long Period Average.
- Governing framework: the **Disaster Management Act, 2005** (NDMA, SDMA, DDMA, NDRF, NDRF/SDRF funds), and the **Brahmaputra Board** established in 1980 under its own Act for the basin's flood management.
- Landslide risk in the Himalayan states is concentrated where intense short-duration rainfall meets steep slopes, fragile lithology and slope modification from road cutting and construction.

🎯 MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- The analytically important shift is not in total seasonal rainfall but in its distribution. A season can end at "normal" aggregate rainfall while consisting of fewer rainy days with higher intensity — which is simultaneously worse for flooding and worse for groundwater recharge and agriculture. Averages conceal the damage.
- Assam's floods are structurally different from urban flooding and should not be discussed interchangeably. The Brahmaputra's problem is aggradation — a riverbed rising through sediment deposition, which reduces channel capacity year on year and makes embankments a diminishing-return solution.
- Embankment-led flood control has a well-documented failure mode: it protects against moderate floods, encourages settlement in the protected floodplain, and converts an occasional inundation into an occasional catastrophe when the embankment breaches. The policy debate has moved towards accommodating floods rather than excluding them.
- Disaster management in India remains heavily weighted towards response rather than mitigation. The Fifteenth Finance Commission's creation of dedicated mitigation funds was an attempt to correct this, and its uptake is the measure worth tracking.
- The forecasting question is genuinely hard. Convective, short-duration extreme rainfall is precisely the phenomenon that models resolve worst, which is why cloudburst events remain difficult to warn for at useful lead times even as seasonal forecasting has improved.

💡 Let's Remember This Through a Trick

64.5, 115.6, 204.4 — heavy, very heavy, extremely heavy. And the Brahmaputra's three names in order: **Tsangpo in Tibet, Siang in Arunachal, Brahmaputra in Assam**, with the Dibang and Lohit joining near Sadiya.

Probable Prelims MCQ (Statement-Based)

Consider the following statements:

1. The Brahmaputra is known as the Siang or Dihang in Arunachal Pradesh.
2. The IMD classifies rainfall above 204.4 mm in 24 hours as "extremely heavy".
3. A positive Indian Ocean Dipole is generally associated with enhanced southwest monsoon rainfall over 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) All three

Answer: (d) All three.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS1 2017 & 2022 on the Indian monsoon and its variability; GS3 2020 on disaster management and flood mitigation; Prelims has repeatedly tested the Brahmaputra's course and the IOD.

THEIAS AKADEMIA Both Environment cards are fresh news, dated 15–16 August. No static species profile was needed — the fifth consecutive edition with zero environment filler. theiasakademia.com

SECTION 02

Places in News



- ① New Delhi (Red Fort address; BRICS ministerials) ● ② Assam (floods, toll past 85) ● ③ Kalpakkam (PFBR first criticality)
- ④ Dholera (semiconductor fab) ● ⑤ Northern Sea Route (Arctic shipping) ● ⑥ Chocó, Colombia (earthquake, Indian relief)
- ⑦ Flores, Indonesia (M7.7 earthquake)

① New Delhi

The Red Fort address of 15 August, and this week the venue for two BRICS ministerials — Environment at Bharat Mandapam on 17–18 August, ahead of the 18th BRICS Summit here on 12–13 September.

On the Indo-Gangetic plain on the west bank of the Yamuna, in the corridor between the Aravalli ridge — among the oldest fold mountain systems on Earth — and the river. That constriction is why every empire in northern India has fortified this spot.

② Assam and the Brahmaputra Valley

Flood toll past 85 this season, with the basin under continuing pressure as the IMD warns of very heavy rainfall across the east.

A structural valley between the Eastern Himalaya to the north and the Meghalaya plateau and Patkai-Naga hills to the south. The Brahmaputra here is braided, low-gradient and carries one of the world's highest silt loads, so the bed aggrades year on year. Majuli, one of the world's largest river islands, sits in this stretch and has lost substantial area to erosion.

③ Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu

Site of the 500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor, which attained first criticality in April 2026 — the milestone that unlocks Stage II of India's three-stage nuclear programme.

On the Coromandel Coast about 70 km south of Chennai, on the Bay of Bengal. Coastal siting supplies the large volumes of condenser cooling water that thermal and nuclear stations require; the same exposure is why the 2004 tsunami prompted a review of coastal reactor defences.

④ Dholera and Sanand, Gujarat

India's semiconductor cluster — three plants already in commercial production nationally, with exports begun, and five to eight further facilities announced.

On the flat, saline coastal plain at the head of the Gulf of Khambhat, on the Sabarmati's lower course. The site was chosen for exceptionally flat terrain, port proximity and the ability to guarantee the ultra-pure water and uninterrupted power that fabrication demands.

⑤ The Northern Sea Route, Russian Arctic

Now an explicit part of India-Russia connectivity discussions, per the MEA briefing of 14 August.

Runs along Russia's Arctic coast from the Kara Gate near Novaya Zemlya to the Bering Strait, across the Kara, Laptev, East Siberian and Chukchi seas. It shortens the Europe-to-East-Asia passage substantially against Suez, but the navigable season is set by sea ice, and UNCLOS Article 234 gives coastal states special regulatory powers in ice-covered waters.

⑥ Chocó department, Colombia

India dispatched 20 metric tonnes of relief material — medical supplies and equipment, temporary shelter material and hygiene kits — on 14 August, following the M7.4 earthquake near San José del Palmar on 10 August.

On Colombia's Pacific coast, in one of the wettest places on Earth, where the Andes meet the Chocó biogeographic region. Seismicity here arises from the subduction of the Nazca Plate beneath the South American Plate — the same convergent boundary that built the Andes.

⑦ Flores, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

An M7.7 earthquake struck off Flores early on 15 August, epicentre roughly 60 km north-north-west of Ende at about 10 km depth, with a tsunami warning issued and lifted after some three hours. Reported tolls varied widely through the day as figures were revised.

Part of the Lesser Sunda Islands along the Sunda volcanic arc, where the Indo-Australian Plate subducts beneath the Eurasian Plate. Indonesia lies on the Pacific Ring of Fire; shallow-focus offshore earthquakes of this magnitude are precisely the configuration that generates tsunamis.

SECTION 03

Ethics & Integrity Cases

Case 1 — The Target Without a Definition

Concept: Goal Displacement and Measurement Ethics

You head a training division asked to certify ten million people in a technology within a year. The target is public and politically visible; the definition of "trained" is yours to write. A three-day awareness module would let you meet the number comfortably; a six-month applied course would let you certify perhaps a twentieth of it. Nobody has asked you which you will choose. The ethical failure here is not lying about the number — it is the quieter substitution of a measurable proxy for the outcome the programme exists to achieve. Goal displacement is what happens when the indicator becomes the objective, and the officer who chooses the easier definition can defend every individual step while defeating the entire purpose.

Case 2 — Liability Removed, Investment Gained

Concept: Consequentialist Trade-off vs Deontological Constraint

A liability provision was written after an industrial disaster on the principle that a supplier of defective equipment should not be insulated from the consequences of its defect. Removing it will attract billions in foreign investment for clean energy that will displace coal and save lives through avoided air pollution. Keeping it preserves a safety incentive at the point where the risk is created. A consequentialist calculus may well favour repeal; a deontological reading says the protection was owed to the people who would bear the harm, and their claim does not diminish because the aggregate arithmetic improved. An officer advising on this should present both frames honestly rather than allowing the projected investment figure to do the moral work by itself.

Case 3 — Relief Before the Count Is Settled

Concept: Duty of Rescue Under Uncertainty

An earthquake strikes a distant country. In the first hours the death toll reported by different agencies varies by a factor of twenty and no one knows what is needed. Waiting for accurate assessment produces better-matched aid; acting immediately produces aid that arrives when it matters most but may be the wrong aid. India dispatched twenty tonnes within four days. The principle at stake is that in humanitarian response the duty of rescue is triggered by the reasonable belief that people are dying, not by certainty about how many — and that an agency which waits for the number to settle has usually waited too long. The corresponding obligation is honesty afterwards about what the aid actually achieved.

Case 4 — The Cooperative That Stopped Holding Elections

Concept: Institutional Capture and the Ethics of Custodianship

A district milk union has not held board elections for six years. Procurement continues, farmers are paid, the plant runs. The chairman argues, not unreasonably, that elections would introduce factional paralysis into an institution that is currently functioning. He may even be right about the short term. But a cooperative's entire moral claim rests on being owned by its members; an efficiently run cooperative without member control is simply a company that has misdescribed itself. The custodian's duty is not to produce the best outcome he can while holding power — it is to return the power. Efficiency is not a defence to the loss of the thing being made efficient.

Case 5 — The Embankment That Invited Settlement

Concept: Moral Hazard in Protective Policy

Your department builds an embankment that protects a floodplain from moderate floods. Within a decade thousands of families have settled behind it, precisely because it is now safe. When a flood exceeds the design standard and the embankment breaches, the loss of life is far greater than it would have been had nothing been built. No individual actor behaved wrongly. This is moral hazard operating at the level of policy: a protection that changes behaviour in a way that increases exposure to the residual risk. The ethical obligation it generates is one of disclosure — a protective structure must be communicated with its design limit attached, and communities have a right to know what the embankment does not protect them from.

Case 6 — Studying the Methodology

Concept: Epistemic Integrity in Public Response to Accusation

A foreign government publishes a report naming your country in an aggregate figure covering three very different economies, without disaggregating your share. Domestic opinion demands immediate and indignant rejection. The available response is to say that you are studying the findings and the methodology, that your legal framework is robust, and that violations will be dealt with under law. It is a less satisfying answer, and it will be read by some as weakness. It is also the only response consistent with epistemic integrity — you cannot rebut a claim you have not examined, and a state that reflexively denies accusations forfeits credibility when it later denies a false one. Institutional dignity is generally better served by asking for the evidence than by matching the volume.

SECTION 04

Prelims MCQs (20)

Q1.

Consider the following statements about the "Saptadhara" framework:

1. It names seven streams including manufacturing, Gati Shakti and soft power.
2. Its stated delivery horizon is the coming five to seven years.
3. A specific budgetary outlay was announced for each stream.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only. No outlay was attached to any stream.

Q2.

Civil Defence in India is governed principally by:

(a) The Disaster Management Act, 2005 (b) The Civil Defence Act, 1968 (c) The National Security Act, 1980 (d) The Home Guards Act

Answer: (b) The Civil Defence Act, 1968, amended in 2009 to include disaster management.

Q3.

Consider the following statements:

1. Integrated Tribal Development Agencies date from the Fifth Five Year Plan period.
2. PESA, 1996 extends the provisions of Part IX of the Constitution to Scheduled Areas.
3. Article 275(1) provides for grants-in-aid for promoting the welfare of Scheduled Tribes.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (d) All three.

Q4.

The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution applies to tribal areas in:

(a) Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram (b) Assam, Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura (c) Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh (d) Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya and Nagaland

Answer: (a).

Q5.

Consider the following statements about *Vande Mataram*:

1. It was composed by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay in 1875.
2. It was published in the novel *Anandamath* in 1882.
3. It was first sung at the 1896 session of the Indian National Congress.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (d) All three.

Q6.

Consider the following statements:

1. The Constitution of India expressly names *Jana Gana Mana* as the National Anthem.
2. The status of the National Anthem rests on a statement made by the President of the Constituent Assembly on 24 January 1950.
3. The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971 protects the National Anthem.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 2 and 3 only. Neither song is named in the Constitution's text.

Q7.

Consider the following statements on rules of origin:

1. They determine the economic nationality of a product for customs purposes.

2. "Substantial transformation" may be established by a change in tariff classification.
3. CAROTAR Rules, 2020 place the onus on the importer to hold origin information.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (d) All three.

Q8.

With reference to the Arctic Council, consider the following:

1. India is an Observer, not a member.
2. The Council has eight member states.
3. India's Arctic research station Himadri is at Ny-Alesund, Svalbard.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (d) All three. India became an Observer in 2013.

Q9.

UNCLOS Article 234 is significant because it:

- (a) Defines the Exclusive Economic Zone (b) Permits coastal states special laws for ice-covered areas within the EEZ (c) Establishes the International Seabed Authority (d) Governs transit passage through international straits

Answer: (b) — the legal basis invoked for regulating the Northern Sea Route.

Q10.

Consider the following statements:

1. A scramjet sustains combustion in supersonic airflow.
2. MIRV allows a single missile to deliver multiple independently targetable warheads.
3. Kusha is a long-range surface-to-air missile.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (d) All three.

Q11.

Consider the following statements about semiconductor manufacture:

1. RISC-V is an open, royalty-free instruction set architecture.
2. A "fabless" firm designs but does not fabricate chips.
3. ATMP refers to assembly, testing, marking and packaging.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (d) All three.

Q12.

Consider the following statements about India's nuclear programme:

1. Stage II of the three-stage programme uses fast breeder reactors.
2. The PFBR at Kalpakkam uses liquid sodium as coolant.
3. India is a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only. India is not an NPT signatory; it obtained an NSG waiver in 2008.

Q13.

India's largest reserves of thorium occur in the monazite sands of:

- (a) Gujarat and Rajasthan (b) Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh (c) Jharkhand and West Bengal (d) Karnataka and Maharashtra

Answer: (b). India holds roughly a quarter of world thorium reserves.

Q14.

Consider the following statements:

1. The International Seabed Authority is headquartered in Kingston, Jamaica.
2. The seabed beyond national jurisdiction is designated the common heritage of mankind.
3. Matsya-6000 is designed to carry three crew to a depth of 6,000 metres.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (d) All three.

Q15.

Consider the following statements on cooperatives:

1. The 97th Constitutional Amendment inserted Article 43B.
2. Cooperative societies is an entry in the State List.
3. In 2021 the Supreme Court struck down Part IXB in its entirety.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only. Part IXB survives for multi-State cooperative societies.

Q16.

Consider the following statements about BRICS:

1. The New Development Bank is headquartered in Shanghai.
2. The BRICS Environment Working Group was set up in 2015.
3. BRICS currently has eleven members.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (d) All three.

Q17.

Consider the following statements:

1. The Brahmaputra is called the Siang or Dihang in Arunachal Pradesh.
2. The Dibang and Lohit join it near Sadiya.
3. The Brahmaputra Board was established under an Act of 1980.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (d) All three.

Q18.

The IMD classifies 24-hour rainfall above 204.4 mm as:

(a) Heavy (b) Very heavy (c) Extremely heavy (d) Exceptionally heavy

Answer: (c). Heavy is 64.5–115.5 mm; very heavy 115.6–204.4 mm.

Q19.

Lepidocampa sikkimensis, published in *Zootaxa* in January 2026, is a newly described:

(a) Freshwater fish from the Teesta (b) Soil-dwelling dipluran from the Eastern Himalaya (c) Orchid from Sikkim (d) Bat from the Eastern Himalaya

Answer: (b) — a wingless, blind micro-arthropod described by the Zoological Survey of India, ending a near five-decade gap in Indian Diplura research.

Q20.

Consider the following statements:

1. India has enacted a dedicated statute regulating artificial intelligence.
2. The IndiaAI Mission includes pillars on compute capacity and safe and trusted AI.
3. The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 establishes a Data Protection Board.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 2 and 3 only.

SECTION 05

Mains Questions (9)

GS2 "A policy framework without a nodal agency, an outlay and a review mechanism is a vocabulary, not a programme." Critically examine with reference to recent national strategy announcements. (250 words)

GS3 Modern conflict targets refineries, financial systems and data centres rather than city blocks. Examine the adequacy of India's civil defence architecture for this threat model, and suggest reforms. (250 words)

GS2 India's tribal development problem has rarely been an absence of institutions, but institutions whose mandates exceed their authority. Discuss with reference to the ITDA structure, PESA and the Forest Rights Act. (250 words)

GS1 Discuss how *Vande Mataram* acquired political meaning it was not written to carry, and evaluate the 1937 decision to sing only its first two stanzas. (250 words)

GS2 "As tariff walls rise, the contested terrain shifts from the tariff rate to the origin determination." Discuss India's exposure and its rules-of-origin regime. (250 words)

GS2 Evaluate India's interests in the Arctic across the scientific, commercial and strategic dimensions, and the constraints on pursuing them. (250 words)

GS3 The repeal of the civil nuclear liability regime improves investment prospects and weakens a safety incentive. Discuss both propositions and state a reasoned position. (250 words)

GS1 "A monsoon season may end at normal aggregate rainfall while consisting of fewer, more intense rainy days." Explain the implications of this shift for flood management and agriculture. (250 words)

GS4 An officer is asked to certify ten million people as "trained" in a technology, and is free to define the standard. Identify the ethical issues, name the principles involved, and state what you would do. (150 words)

SECTION 06

Answer Writing Value Addition

The line the Chief Justice gave you (15 Aug): India's freedom struggle "was not primarily an armed insurrection; it was instead a sustained challenge to the legitimacy of colonial rule... *through the language of law*." Excellent for any GS1 or GS2 answer on constitutionalism.

The defence number that matters most: not ₹1.78 lakh crore of production, but the **76:24 public-private split**. Quote the split, not the total — it shows you read past the headline.

Three dates for civil defence: 1968 the Act, 2009 the disaster-management amendment, 2026 the proposed network. One statute, three threat models.

Five dates for one song: 1875 composed, 1882 published, 1896 first sung, 1937 two stanzas, 24 January 1950 equal status.

The cooperative judgment to cite: *Union of India v. Rajendra N. Shah* (2021) — Part IXB struck down for State cooperatives for want of state ratification, surviving only for multi-State societies. A precise citation beats a general claim about federalism.

Species to have in your pocket: *Lepidocampa sikkimensis*, a soil-dwelling dipluran from the Eastern Himalaya described by the Zoological Survey of India in *Zootaxa*, January 2026 — the first Indian Diplura description in nearly fifty years. Use it as your example of why soil biodiversity is under-documented.

The nuclear phrase: "SHANTI repealed 1962 and 2010" — one Act ending both the state monopoly and the supplier-liability deterrent. Compresses an entire policy shift into six words.

Honest framing for Arctic questions: the same ice loss that is an ecological catastrophe is a commercial opportunity, and India is on both sides of that ledger. Examiners reward candidates who name the contradiction rather than picking a side.

SECTION 07

AKADEMIA Direct Hit Tracker

Topic	GS	Capsule	Probability
Saptadhara — seven-stream framework	GS2/GS3	Manufacturing, agri, tech, Gati Shakti, Raksha, Green-Blue, Soft Power; 5-7 yr horizon; no outlay	★★★★★
Civil Defence Act 1968 & new network	GS3	1968 Act, 2009 disaster amendment, categorised towns, distinct from Home Guards	★★★★★
ITDA/ITDP framework & Tribal Sub-Plan	GS2	192 agencies, ST >50%, SCA 70:30, Fifth Schedule, PESA, FRA	★★★★★
Vande Mataram at 150	GS1	1875/1882/1896/1937/1950; anthem statutory, song not; first Red Fort rendition	★★★★★
Transshipment report & rules of origin	GS2/GS3	India Tier 1; \$67bn via 3 hubs; \$26-28bn revenue loss; CAROTAR 2020	★★★★★
Northern Sea Route & India's Arctic policy	GS2/GS1	Svalbard 1920, Himadri 2008, Observer 2013, Policy 2022; UNCLOS Art 234	★★★★★
Defence production & export ledger	GS3	₹1.78 lakh cr; exports ₹38,424 cr; 76:24 split; scramjet 1,200 s; Kusha 23 Jul	★★★★★
VIHAAN chip, DLI scheme & RISC-V	GS3	C-DAC VEGA, first-pass silicon, ISM ₹76,000 cr, 12 projects / 6 states	★★★★★
AI Skilling Mission & the statute gap	GS3/GS2	1 crore in 1 year; IndiaAI Mission pillars; no dedicated AI statute; DPDP 2023	★★★★★
100 GW nuclear, SHANTI Act, PFBR	GS3	SHANTI Dec 2025 repeals 1962 + 2010; PFBR criticality Apr 2026; three stages	★★★★★
Samudra Manthan & seabed law	GS3	₹85,000 cr; Matsya-6000; ISA Kingston; common heritage; CRZ reclassification	★★★★★
Cooperative architecture & 97th Amendment	GS3/GS2	Art 43B, Part IXB, <i>Rajendra N. Shah</i> 2021; Anand Pattern; Operation Flood	★★★★★
BRICS chairship & Environment Ministerial	GS2	11 members; EWG 2015 Moscow; NDB Shanghai; Summit Delhi 12-13 Sept	★★★★★
Monsoon variability & Assam floods	GS1/GS3	IMD thresholds 64.5/115.6/204.4; toll past 85; aggradation; embankment moral hazard	★★★★★
Gallantry awards architecture	GS2	78 awards incl. 13 posthumous; 9 Kirti Chakra, 19 Shaurya Chakra; peacetime hierarchy	★★★★★
Prior sanction for speech offences	GS2	SC quashed a hate-speech case on 14 Aug for absence of state sanction	★★★★★
Constitution Bench pendency	GS2	29 matters pending; dedicated afternoon slot proposed (12 Aug); Art 145(3)	★★★★★

VERIFIED • PART II

Proof of Precision

Every item dated. Every gap disclosed.

2

ENVIRONMENT CARDS

7

PLACES IN NEWS

6

ETHICS CASES

20

MCQS GENERATED

9

MAINS QUESTIONS

18

TRACKER ROWS

Environmental Governance

Physical Geography

Disaster Management

Ethics (GS4)

Cross-GS Integration

✓ Both Environment cards are fresh news dated 15–16 August — fifth consecutive edition with no static species filler

✓ Every place card carries physical-geography or tectonic context, not merely "an event happened here"

✓ Indonesia casualty figures reported as varying through the day rather than fixing on one contested number

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48

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7

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE DOCUMENT

6

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE CLASS

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