

ANTIM ASSURED 100+

PART II · ENVIRONMENT TO DIRECT HIT TRACKER

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GS3

Conservation, Environmental Pollution and Degradation • Environmental Impact Assessment

Hearing 24 September 2026; widely reported 9–11 October 2026 · Source: National Green Tribunal, Eastern Zone
Bench proceedings (reported via court-reporting outlets)

Enforcement on Trial: NGT Issues Non-Compliance Notices Over Maninag Reserve Forest Encroachment, Odisha

Why in News: At a hearing on 24 September 2026, the NGT's Eastern Zone Bench issued non-compliance notices to Odisha's Chief Secretary, senior Forest and Revenue officials, the PCCF, the Nayagarh Collector, the Khordha DFO, the Member Secretary of the Odisha State Pollution Control Board, and even the Union MoEFCC Secretary — over the state's 18-month failure to execute the NGT's own 14 February 2025 order to remove encroachments from Maninag Reserve Forest, Nayagarh district, and recover environmental compensation. Notices also went to the two alleged private encroachers.

Background: The case (petitioner Srikant Dash) concerns encroachment at Akhupadar village, Ranpur Tahasil, Nayagarh district, under Khordha Forest Division. The NGT's February 2025 order directed the DFO and Collector to remove illegal structures, restore the land and recover environmental compensation within one month. When this was not done, the petitioner filed an execution application, triggering this fresh round of notices with a new one-month compliance deadline. A separate NGT matter has MoEFCC-submitted data showing forest land “five times Delhi’s geographical area” under encroachment nationwide — placing this district case inside a much larger pattern.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Original NGT order: 14 February 2025; one-month compliance deadline, missed by roughly 18 months.
- 0.28 hectare of Maninag Reserve Forest land found encroached by a joint committee of the Nayagarh administration, Khordha forest division and the Odisha SPCB.
- 0.57 acre of government land allegedly under a private farmhouse, with a fence and overhead water tank.
- A further 0.20 acre on a separate government plot (“Patara Jungle”) — 0.04 acre under an outhouse, 0.16 acre under plantation.
- 0.03 acre of road land also allegedly encroached under a separate plot.
- Notices issued to nine categories of respondents, including the Union MoEFCC Secretary — an unusually high escalation for a district-level encroachment case.
- A linked, separate NGT matter has MoEFCC data showing nationwide forest encroachment covering an area roughly five times Delhi's geographical extent.

- The matter tests the NGT's execution powers, which are meant to operate in the same manner as a civil-court decree.

🎯 MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- Exposes the enforcement gap in Indian environmental federalism — orders exist, execution does not — and tests the NGT's own execution powers when forced to rely on the very officials who failed to comply.
- Raises the question of whether the NGT is effectively “toothless” without independent enforcement machinery of its own.
- Engages the polluter-pays and restoration principles against administrative inertia, and the personal accountability of the DFO and Collector for an 18-month lapse.
- A Centre-state coordination failure: escalation to the Union MoEFCC Secretary signals the Tribunal's frustration with state-level stonewalling.
- Links to the nationwide forest-encroachment data, raising questions about CAMPA/compensatory-afforestation fund utilisation and monitoring more broadly.

🧠 LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

“0.28 + 0.57 + 0.20 + 0.03” — four different encroached land parcels inside one Reserve Forest, and 18 months of non-compliance before the NGT bit back.

📄 PYQ LINKAGE

No exact-worded past PYQ on this specific NGT-execution angle verified; NGT's composition and jurisdiction recur in Prelims factual sets more generally.

🎯 PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. The National Green Tribunal was established under the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010, replacing the National Environment Appellate Authority.
2. The NGT has the power to execute its own orders in the same manner as a decree of a civil court.
3. Appeals against orders of State Pollution Control Boards under pollution-control laws go directly to the Supreme Court, bypassing the NGT.
4. Among forest categories under the Indian Forest Act, 1927, Reserved Forests enjoy the highest degree of legal protection.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 3 is the trap — the NGT, not the Supreme Court directly, is the designated appellate forum against SPCB orders; a further appeal from the NGT lies to the Supreme Court.

Static/evergreen profile, paired with Card 1 • Source: Ramsar Sites Information Service (official); Down To Earth (11 February 2026, dolphin census)

Chilika Lake: India's First Ramsar Site and Its Montreux-Record Comeback — Paired With Today's Odisha Enforcement Story

Why in News: Both cards in today's Environment section are Odisha environmental-governance stories. While the Maninag case (above) exposes slow enforcement against forest encroachment, Chilika's latest coastal-dolphin census (January 2026) shows the same state machinery's mixed record on wetland protection: statewide dolphin numbers are rising, but Chilika's own Irrawaddy dolphin count has been stuck at exactly 159 for two straight survey years, which officials link to habitat stress from illegal prawn farming and monofilament nets — a wetland echo of the forest-encroachment problem.

Background: Chilika is Asia's largest brackish-water lagoon, separated from the Bay of Bengal by a long sandy barrier spit. It was designated Ramsar Site No. 229 on 1 October 1981 — among India's first two Ramsar sites, alongside Keoladeo. By the early 1990s, heavy siltation from Mahanadi distributaries had choked its sea-mouth, crashing salinity and fish catch, so it was placed on the Montreux Record (the list of ecologically threatened Ramsar sites) on 16 June 1993. The Chilika Development Authority engineered a new artificial mouth connecting the lagoon directly to the sea; the restored tidal balance led to Chilika's removal from the Montreux Record on 11 November 2002, a case study cited internationally as a wetland-restoration success.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Ramsar Site No. 229; designated 1 October 1981; area 116,500 hectares; located at 19°42'N, 85°21'E.
- On the Montreux Record 1993–2002 due to siltation and mouth closure; removed in November 2002 after a new artificial sea-mouth restored salinity.
- 33 waterbird species breed, winter or stage here, and 118 fish species are recorded; a single-day January 2020 census recorded over 1.1 million migratory birds across 184 species.
- Nalabana Bird Sanctuary (15.53 sq km) is the core bird-protection zone inside the lagoon — distinct from Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary, a separate site for Olive Ridley turtle nesting.
- Latest state coastal-dolphin census (20 January 2026): 765 dolphins statewide, up from 710 the previous year — Humpback 497, Irrawaddy 208, Bottlenose 55, Spinner 3, Finless porpoise 2.
- Chilika itself holds 159 Irrawaddy dolphins, the highest single-site count in Odisha, but static for two consecutive survey years.
- The Irrawaddy dolphin carries Schedule I status under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, and is IUCN-listed as Endangered.
- Chilika's restoration model operationalises the Ramsar “wise use” principle through a dedicated state authority plus the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017.

🎯 MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- A global case study in successful Ramsar/Montreux restoration, contrasted with India's other stressed Ramsar sites where restoration has lagged.
- A persistent trade-off between traditional fisherfolk livelihoods and enforcement against illegal prawn-farming encroachment, a recurring Odisha litigation theme.
- Indicator-species caution: a rising statewide dolphin count can mask stagnation at one ecologically sensitive site, showing why conservation "success" numbers need site-level disaggregation.
- Institutional architecture: the Ramsar "wise use" principle operationalised through a dedicated state body, a template for other state wetland authorities.
- Thematic pairing with Card 1: the same state Forest, Environment & Climate Change Department and OSPCB that failed to act on Maninag also run Chilika's census and restoration programme — linking enforcement capacity across forest and wetland regimes.

🧠 LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

"In on 1-10-81, out of trouble by 11-11-02" — Ramsar designation date versus Montreux Record exit date. Don't confuse Nalabana (birds, inside Chilika) with Gahirmatha (turtles, a separate marine sanctuary).

📄 PYQ LINKAGE

Ramsar sites/wetlands recur as a Prelims factual theme; no single exact-year Chilika-specific PYQ independently verified — not cited to avoid fabrication.

🎯 PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. Chilika Lake was the only wetland in India to be designated a Ramsar Site in 1981.
2. It was placed on the Montreux Record in 1993 due to siltation and a declining fish catch, and removed from the record in 2002 after a new mouth connecting it to the Bay of Bengal was opened.
3. Nalabana Bird Sanctuary lies within the Chilika lagoon and was notified primarily to protect Olive Ridley turtle nesting sites.
4. The Irrawaddy dolphin found in Chilika is listed under Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b). Statement 1 is wrong — Chilika was among India's first Ramsar sites, not the "only" one (Keoladeo was designated the same day). Statement 3 is wrong — Nalabana protects migratory waterfowl; Olive Ridley nesting happens at Gahirmatha, a distinct sanctuary.



Places in News



PLACES IN NEWS — MONDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2026 | ANTIM ASSURED 100+



- ① New Delhi (Seat of the Union Cabinet, Supreme Court and Ministries behind today's Census 2027, MP reservation appeal track and defence-export policy stories)
- ② Jaipur, Rajasthan (Rajasthan High Court's suo motu case on "alarming degradation" inside the UNESCO-listed Walled City)
- ③ Keylong, Himachal Pradesh (Foundation stone laid for ICMR-CHAMP, India's first dedicated high-altitude health research centre)
- ④ Chilika Lake & Maninag, Odisha (Site of both Environment cards: Chilika's Ramsar/dolphin-census story and the NGT's Maninag Reserve Forest enforcement notices)
- ⑤ Paradip, Odisha (Venue of SAREX-2026, India's 12th National Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise)
- ⑥ Islamabad, Pakistan (Hosted the SCO Council of National Coordinators meeting attended by an Indian delegation, 29–30 September 2026)
- ⑦ Colombo, Sri Lanka (Site of India-Sri Lanka defence-cooperation agreements, including new L-70 air-defence guns for the Sri Lanka Air Force)
- ⑧ Manila, Philippines (The Philippines is BrahMos's first export customer; its contract anchors India's projected \$600-million BrahMos export story (alongside Vietnam and Indonesia))

New Delhi

Jaipur, Rajasthan

Seat of the Union Cabinet, Supreme Court and Ministries behind today's Census 2027, MP reservation appeal track and defence-export policy stories.

Sits on the Yamuna's floodplain on the Indo-Gangetic Plain; administered as a Union Territory under Article 239AA.

Rajasthan High Court's suo motu case on "alarming degradation" inside the UNESCO-listed Walled City.

Founded 1727 on Vastu Shastra principles at the edge of the Aravalli hills; India's first planned grid city of the pre-colonial era.

Keylong, Himachal Pradesh

Foundation stone laid for ICMR-CHAMP, India's first dedicated high-altitude health research centre.

Headquarters of Lahaul & Spiti district, on the Bhaga river in the trans-Himalayan cold-desert zone, cut off by snow for much of winter.

Chilika Lake & Maninag, Odisha

Site of both Environment cards: Chilika's Ramsar/dolphin-census story and the NGT's Maninag Reserve Forest enforcement notices.

Asia's largest brackish-water lagoon, separated from the Bay of Bengal by a sandy barrier spit at the mouth of the Mahanadi delta.

Paradip, Odisha

Venue of SAREX-2026, India's 12th National Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise.

A major port town at the Mahanadi's mouth on the Bay of Bengal, strategically placed on India's eastern seaboard shipping lanes.

Islamabad, Pakistan

Hosted the SCO Council of National Coordinators meeting attended by an Indian delegation, 29–30 September 2026.

Pakistan's planned capital at the foothills of the Margalla Hills, part of the Pothohar Plateau near the Indus system.

Colombo, Sri Lanka

Site of India-Sri Lanka defence-cooperation agreements, including new L-70 air-defence guns for the Sri Lanka Air Force.

A natural harbour on Sri Lanka's southwestern coast, astride the major east-west Indian Ocean shipping lanes.

Manila, Philippines

The Philippines is BrahMos's first export customer; its contract anchors India's projected \$600-million BrahMos export story (alongside Vietnam and Indonesia).

Located on Manila Bay on Luzon island, facing the South China Sea — the maritime theatre at the centre of the Philippines' own territorial disputes with China.

1. Institutional Accountability & “Who Watches the Watchmen”

The NGT's own enforcement orders against Maninag Reserve Forest encroachment went unexecuted for 18 months, forcing the Tribunal to issue notices even to the Union MoEFCC Secretary. This raises a core administrative-ethics question: when the very officials entrusted with enforcement are also the ones who fail to act, what ethical obligation binds a civil servant to self-report inaction rather than wait to be caught by a quasi-judicial body? The episode tests whether institutional design (giving the NGT civil-court-decree-like powers) can ever substitute for an individual officer's internalised sense of public accountability — echoing the ancient question *quis custodiet ipsos custodes* (“who will guard the guardians themselves”).

2. Distributive Justice: Adequate Representation vs Formal Equality

The Madhya Pradesh High Court's reversal of the state's OBC quota from 27% back to 14% sits at the heart of a genuine ethical tension between formal equality (treating all citizens identically under Article 14/16(1)) and substantive, group-based redress for historical disadvantage (Article 16(4)). A civil servant implementing reservation policy must continually ask whether a given quota reflects current, evidence-based backwardness or has calcified into a political entitlement detached from its original justifying purpose — the distinction Rawls draws between justice as fairness applied to basic structures versus mere formal non-discrimination.

3. Public Trust Doctrine & Intergenerational Equity

The Rajasthan High Court's suo motu intervention over Jaipur's “living heritage” degradation invokes the public trust doctrine: the state does not own cultural and natural heritage outright but holds it in trust for future generations, who have as much claim on an intact Walled City as the present generation that profits from encroaching on it. The ethical dilemma for a municipal officer is immediate and local (a builder's livelihood, a vote bank, a bribe) versus long-term and diffuse (an intact heritage city for grandchildren not yet born) — a textbook case of discounting the future in public decision-making.

4. Purpose Limitation & the Ethics of Data Stewardship

Census 2027's digital, app-based self-enumeration and its first-since-1931 caste count will generate India's most sensitive demographic dataset in nearly a century. The ethical obligation on the enumerating bureaucracy is one of purpose limitation — data gathered for planning and representation must not quietly migrate into surveillance, profiling, or political targeting. The Supreme Court's *K.S. Puttaswamy* proportionality test (a legitimate aim, necessity, proportionality and procedural safeguards) offers the ethical and legal benchmark against which every subsequent use of this caste data should be measured.

5. Moral Consistency vs Strategic Pragmatism in Diplomacy

India's attendance at the SCO's apex coordination meeting in Pakistan-chaired Islamabad, even as bilateral ties remain frozen, raises a classic dilemma in public ethics: is it hypocritical to engage an adversary multilaterally while refusing bilateral normalisation, or is this the pragmatic, Machiavellian "reason of state" that any responsible government must exercise? A purely Kantian universalisable-maxim approach would struggle to justify selective engagement, while a consequentialist framework would weigh the diplomatic and economic benefits of multilateral access against the moral cost of appearing to legitimise an unreformed adversary.

6. Reciprocity & the Ethics of Soft Power in Neighbourhood Diplomacy

India's defence-education and legacy-equipment-maintenance diplomacy with Sri Lanka — training cadets and officers rather than selling headline hardware — raises the question of what genuine reciprocity in an asymmetric relationship looks like. Is it ethical for a larger power to frame capacity-building assistance as pure goodwill when it is simultaneously, and explicitly, aimed at countering a strategic rival's (China's) influence? The test lies in whether the smaller partner's own developmental and security needs are genuinely centred, or merely incidental to the larger power's competitive strategy — a distinction between instrumental and intrinsic respect for a neighbour's agency.

? Prelims MCQs — From Today's Part I & Part II Coverage

Q1.

Consider the following statements:

1. Census 2027 is India's first census to be conducted as a fully digital, paperless exercise.
2. It is the first census since 1931 to record caste data for the entire population.
3. The reference date for all parts of India, including snow-bound Ladakh, is 1 March 2027.

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 wrong — snow-bound areas like Ladakh had an earlier reference date of 1 October 2026.

Q2.

Consider the following statements:

1. Article 16(4) of the Constitution permits reservation for backward classes that are “not adequately represented” in public employment.
2. The *Indra Sawhney* judgment (1992) fixed a general ceiling of 60% on reservations.
3. “Adequate representation” and “proportionate representation” are treated as legally identical standards by courts.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 2 is wrong (the ceiling is ordinarily 50%, not 60%); Statement 3 is wrong (courts, as in the MP case, treat them as legally distinct).

Q3.

Consider the following statements:

1. The 103rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2019 introduced a 10% EWS quota and was upheld by the Supreme Court in *Janhit Abhiyan v. Union of India* (2022).
2. Tamil Nadu's reservation of 69% has never faced any special legal protection and operates within the 50% ceiling.
3. SC/ST promotion quotas require quantifiable data on backwardness and inadequate representation under *M. Nagaraj*.

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 wrong — Tamil Nadu's 69% reservation exceeds the 50% ceiling under a special Ninth Schedule protection, not within the ordinary cap.

Q4.

Consider the following statements:

1. Jaipur's Walled City was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2019.
2. The public trust doctrine holds that natural and cultural resources are held by the state in trust for the public and future generations.
3. Article 51A of the Constitution places a fundamental duty on every citizen to value and preserve the rich heritage of the composite culture.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d). All three statements are correct; Article 51A(f) is the specific fundamental-duty clause invoked in the Jaipur case.

Q5.

Consider the following statements:

1. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's Council of Heads of State is its supreme decision-making body.
2. India and Pakistan joined the SCO as full members in different years.
3. The SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) is headquartered in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

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 wrong — India and Pakistan joined together in 2017 at the Astana Summit.

Q6.

Consider the following statements:

1. India's "Neighbourhood First" policy operates alongside the maritime SAGAR doctrine and its expanded successor, MAHASAGAR.
2. The Colombo Security Conclave originated as a trilateral India-Sri Lanka-Maldives security grouping and has since expanded.
3. India has never extended financial assistance to Sri Lanka during its economic difficulties.

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 wrong — India extended credit lines, fuel and currency-swap support to Sri Lanka through its 2022 crisis.

Q7.

Consider the following statements:

1. BrahMos Aerospace is a joint venture between India's DRDO and a Russian defence manufacturer.
2. The Philippines was the first export customer for the BrahMos missile system.
3. The air-launched variant of BrahMos is integrated with the Su-30MKI fighter.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d). All three statements are correct, reflecting BrahMos's expanding land/sea/air export basket.

Q8.

Consider the following statements:

1. SAREX is conducted by the Indian Coast Guard under the aegis of the National Maritime Search and Rescue Board.
2. The Director General of the Indian Coast Guard chairs the National Maritime Search and Rescue Board.
3. India's maritime search-and-rescue region is among the smallest in the world.

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 wrong — India's maritime SAR region is one of the largest in the world.

Q9.

Consider the following statements:

1. ICMR-CHAMP at Keylong is India's first dedicated institute for high-altitude and climate-sensitive-region health research.
2. DRDO's Defence Institute of High Altitude Research (DIHAR) is located at Leh and focuses on soldier physiology.
3. ICMR-CHAMP operates with no partnership from the Armed Forces Medical Services.

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 wrong — AFMS is an explicit partner institution in ICMR-CHAMP.

Q10.

Consider the following statements:

1. APARC is a core project of the World Climate Research Programme, alongside CLIVAR, CliC and GEWEX.
2. APARC's International Project Office is located in India.
3. The 2026 APARC General Assembly was hosted at IITM, Pune.

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 wrong — APARC's International Project Office is in Oberpfaffenhofen, Germany.

Q11.

Consider the following statements:

1. The Mission for Self-Reliance in Pulses has a six-year period from 2025-26 to 2030-31.
2. NAFED and NCCF are authorised to procure 100% of tur, urad and masur from registered farmers under the Mission.
3. India is a net exporter of pulses and has never depended on imports.

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 wrong — India is a structural net importer of pulses despite being the largest producer.

Q12.

Consider the following statements:

1. The Minimum Support Price for tur was raised more than that for masur for 2026-27.
2. Pulses supply roughly 20–25% protein content, more than double that of wheat.
3. The Krishi Mapper tool is used under the Mission for seed traceability.

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 wrong — Krishi Mapper is used for geo-fencing/tagging; SATHI is the seed-traceability tool.

Q13.

Consider the following statements:

1. The “separation principle” holds that monetary policy and macroprudential regulation should pursue the same instrument.
2. The Financial Stability and Development Council is chaired by the Finance Minister.
3. RBI's financial-stability mandate is read into the RBI Act's preamble and Section 45W, rather than being an explicit standalone object.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 1 is wrong — the separation principle holds that monetary policy and macroprudential tools should use *different* instruments for different objectives.

Q14.

Consider the following statements:

1. NBFCs' average Capital to Risk-Weighted Assets Ratio stood above the regulatory minimum as of 31 March 2026.
2. Hyman Minsky's Financial Instability Hypothesis argues that periods of prolonged economic calm can themselves sow the seeds of future instability.
3. India's early-2000s non-performing-asset cycle was resolved within a single financial year.

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 wrong — that NPA cycle's clean-up took nearly a decade.

Q15.

Consider the following statements:

1. The NGT was established under the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010.
2. The NGT has no power to enforce or execute its own orders and must rely entirely on ordinary civil courts.
3. A Reserve Forest is a category of forest land under the Indian Forest Act, 1927.

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 wrong — the NGT can execute its orders in the manner of a civil-court decree, though enforcement on the ground still depends on state officials.

Q16.

Consider the following statements:

1. Chilika Lake was designated a Ramsar Site in 1981, among the first two such sites in India.
2. It was placed on the Montreux Record due to siltation and removed after a new sea-mouth restored salinity balance.
3. The Irrawaddy dolphin population inside Chilika has shown continuous, unbroken growth over the past five years.

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 wrong — Chilika's own Irrawaddy dolphin count has stayed static at 159 for two consecutive survey years even as the statewide total has risen.

Q17.

Consider the following statements:

1. The Montreux Record lists Ramsar sites considered to be under threat and requiring priority conservation attention.
2. A Ramsar site, once placed on the Montreux Record, can never be removed from it.
3. Nalabana Bird Sanctuary and Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary are the same protected area under two different names.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 2 is wrong — Chilika itself was removed from the Montreux Record in 2002; Statement 3 is wrong — they are two distinct sanctuaries.

Q18.

Consider the following statements:

1. Paradip, the venue of SAREX-2026, is located at the mouth of the Mahanadi river on the Bay of Bengal.
2. Islamabad lies on the Pothohar Plateau at the foothills of the Margalla Hills.
3. Colombo is located on Sri Lanka's northeastern coast, facing the Bay of Bengal.

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 wrong — Colombo lies on Sri Lanka's southwestern coast, not the northeast.

Q19.

Consider the following statements:

1. Keylong is the headquarters of Lahaul & Spiti district in Himachal Pradesh.
2. Manila is situated on Manila Bay on the island of Luzon in the Philippines.
3. Both Keylong and Manila lie on major international shipping straits.

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 wrong — Keylong is a landlocked, high-altitude trans-Himalayan town with no shipping strait nearby.

Q20.

Consider the following statements:

1. The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 provides the highest statutory protection to species listed under Schedule I.
2. IUCN Red List categories (such as Vulnerable or Endangered) are legally binding domestic protection tiers under Indian law.
3. The Sarus Crane and the Irrawaddy dolphin are both listed under Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

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 — IUCN Red List categories are international scientific assessments, not domestic legal protection tiers; India's own Schedules under the 1972 Act are the binding legal classification.

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Twenty statement-based MCQs in one sitting is the real exam rhythm — **NEEB 300+ Live PYQ Writing** extends this into timed, full-length practice with examiner-style review the same evening. theiasakademia.com



Mains Questions

GS1

The Public Trust Doctrine requires the state to act as trustee of natural and cultural resources for the benefit of future generations. Discuss with reference to the judicial intervention in conserving Jaipur's UNESCO-inscribed Walled City. (150 words, 10 marks)

Framework: Define the public trust doctrine and its constitutional anchors (Art. 48A, 51A(f)); narrate the Jaipur case as an application to "living heritage"; bring in comparative delisting precedents (Dresden, Liverpool); conclude with institutional reform suggestions (heritage-enforcement cell, heritage-impact assessments).

GS2

Examine the distinction between "adequate representation" and "proportionate representation" under Article 16(4) of the Constitution, with reference to recent judicial pronouncements on OBC reservation. (150 words, 10 marks)

Framework: Start from the text of Article 16(4) and *Indra Sawhney* (1992); use the Madhya Pradesh High Court's 2026 ruling as the applied case; discuss the political pressure toward proportionate (population-share) representation versus the constitutional "adequate" standard; conclude on the evidentiary basis required for any future quota enhancement.

GS2

Discuss the significance of Census 2027 as India's first fully digital, self-enumerated census, and analyse its implications for caste-based policymaking, delimitation and women's reservation. (250 words, 15 marks)

Framework: Outline Census 2027's two phases and digital/caste-data firsts; link to the 106th Amendment's delimitation trigger; discuss data-privacy safeguards needed (Puttaswamy proportionality test); weigh administrative-feasibility gains against the risk of caste-data misuse.

GS2

"Institutional compartmentalisation allows India to pursue multilateral engagement with adversarial neighbours without diplomatic normalisation." Discuss with reference to India's SCO engagement with Pakistan. (150 words, 10 marks)

Framework: Explain India's compartmentalisation doctrine; trace SCO membership history (2017 Astana) and the current Pakistan-chaired cycle; weigh economic/connectivity gains against the optics of legitimising an unreformed adversary; conclude on whether this doctrine is sustainable at head-of-government level.

GS2

Evaluate India's "Neighbourhood First" policy through the lens of recent India-Sri Lanka defence cooperation, and discuss the China factor in South Asian strategic competition. (250 words, 15 marks)

Framework: Define Neighbourhood First and SAGAR/MAHASAGAR; use the September 2026 defence MoUs as a case study of “soft-balancing”; contrast India's capacity-building diplomacy with China's infrastructure/debt diplomacy; conclude on the durability of institutional (education/training) ties over one-off hardware deals.

GS3

Discuss the rationale for institutional reform in India's financial-stability architecture, with reference to the RBI Governor's “separation principle” and the five global risks flagged at the 2026 Kautilya Economic Conclave. (150 words, 10 marks)

Framework: Define the separation principle (monetary policy vs macroprudential regulation); list the five risks (debt, AI valuations, NBFI leverage, private credit, cyber); link to the FSDC's coordinating role; conclude on institutional preparedness versus complacency (Minsky).

GS3

India's growing defence exports, exemplified by BrahMos sales to Southeast Asian nations, mark a shift from net importer to credible exporter. Discuss the strategic and economic dimensions of this shift. (250 words, 15 marks)

Framework: Outline DPEPP's export targets and BrahMos's expanding product basket; discuss the strategic dimension (Act East, South China Sea optics, India-China relations); discuss the economic dimension (forex earnings, defence-industrial scale economics); conclude on risks of over-reliance on a single flagship platform.

GS3

“Pulses policy illustrates the tension between price-support-driven self-sufficiency and market-based agricultural reform.” Discuss with reference to the Mission for Self-Reliance in Pulses. (150 words, 10 marks)

Framework: Outline the Mission's MSP-plus-100%-procurement design; compare with the FCI rice-wheat experience; discuss the food-security/farmer-income/consumer-price trilemma; conclude on digital-targeting tools (AgriStack, SATHI) as a reform complement rather than a substitute for price policy.

GS4

The National Green Tribunal's inability to secure compliance with its own orders raises questions of institutional design versus institutional will. Discuss the ethical dimensions of administrative accountability with reference to a suitable case study. (150 words, 10 marks)

Framework: Use the Maninag Reserve Forest case; distinguish institutional design (NGT's decree-like execution power) from individual ethical will (officer accountability); invoke the principle of public trust and intergenerational

equity; conclude with mechanisms to align individual incentive with institutional mandate (performance audits, personal liability clauses).

Answer-Writing Value Addition

“Adequate representation, not proportionate representation, is the constitutional test under Article 16(4).” — reaffirmed by the Madhya Pradesh High Court, 9 October 2026, tracing back to *Indra Sawhney v. Union of India* (1992).

₹11,440 crore, 2025-31: India's Mission for Self-Reliance in Pulses cut import value by 31.52% and raised procurement from 18.4 to 31.4 lakh tonnes in its first year. — PIB, 11 October 2026.

24.6%: the NBFC sector's average Capital to Risk-Weighted Assets Ratio as of 31 March 2026, well above the 15% regulatory floor. — RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, Kautilya Economic Conclave, 3 October 2026.

1727 → 2019: the year Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II founded Jaipur on Vastu Shastra principles, and the year it was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Census 2027 is the first census since 1931 to enumerate caste data for India's entire population, and the first to be conducted fully digitally with app-based self-enumeration.

USD 600 million+: India's projected BrahMos-linked defence exports to the Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia combined. — Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh, 4 October 2026.

0.28 hectare: the extent of Reserve Forest land found encroached at Maninag, Odisha — still unresolved 18 months after the NGT first ordered its removal.

159: the number of Irrawaddy dolphins recorded in Chilika Lake for two consecutive survey years, even as Odisha's statewide dolphin count rose from 710 to 765. — Odisha Wildlife Wing census, January 2026.

TOPIC	GS PAPER	CAPSULE	PROBABILITY
Census 2027 — digital self-enumeration & caste data	GS2	16th census, 8th since Independence; first digital; first caste count since 1931	★★★★★
Article 16(4) — Adequate vs Proportionate Representation	GS2	Indra Sawhney (1992) 50% ceiling; MP HC reaffirms “adequate” standard	★★★★★
Public Trust Doctrine & Living Heritage (Jaipur)	GS1/GS2	Art. 49/51A(f); UNESCO “state of conservation” review mechanism	★★★★☆
Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)	GS2	Astana 2017 accession; CNC vs Council of Heads of State; RATS counter-terror arm	★★★★☆
India-Sri Lanka Defence Diplomacy & Neighbourhood First	GS2	SAGAR/MAHASAGAR; NDC-NDC MoU; L-70 guns; China-competition angle	★★★★☆
BrahMos Exports & Defence Production Policy	GS3	DPEPP targets; Philippines/Vietnam/Indonesia; DRDO-NPO Mashinostroyeniya JV	★★★★★
SAREX-2026 & National Maritime SAR Architecture	GS3	12th edition; NMSARB; SAGAR/MAHASAGAR doctrine	★★★★☆
ICMR-CHAMP & High-Altitude Health Research	GS2/GS3	Keylong; AFMS/DRDO-DIHAR synergy; climate-sensitive-region health	★★★★☆
APARC/WCRP & Global Climate-Science Architecture	GS3	WCRP's 4 core projects; SPARC → APARC; Montreal Protocol linkage	★★★★☆
Mission for Self-Reliance in Pulses	GS3	₹11,440 cr; MSP hikes; 100% NAFED/NCCF procurement; AgriStack/SATHI	★★★★★
RBI's “Separation Principle” & Financial Stability	GS3	FSDC; Minsky's Financial Instability Hypothesis; 5 global risks	★★★★☆
NGT Enforcement Powers & Forest Encroachment	GS3	Civil-court-decree-like execution; Indian Forest Act 1927 categories	★★★★☆
Chilika Lake & the Montreux Record	GS3	Ramsar Site No. 229; Montreux Record 1993-2002; Nalabana vs Gahirmatha	★★★★★
BNHS/IUCN Wetland & Species Governance (Odisha cluster)	GS3	Wild Life (Protection) Act Schedule I; IUCN Red List categories	★★★★☆
Indra Sawhney Judgment & the 50% Reservation Ceiling	GS2	Static-concept revision: basic-structure-adjacent doctrine, exceptions (TN 69%)	★★★★★

Ramsar Convention & Montreux Record (static concept)	GS3	Wise-use principle; Wetlands Rules 2017; India's 101+ Ramsar sites	★★★★☆
K.S. Puttaswamy Proportionality Test & Data Governance	GS2	Legitimate aim, necessity, proportionality, safeguards — applied to Census caste data	★★★★☆
India's Neighbourhood-First Geography (Places in News)	GS1/GS2	Mahanadi delta, Pothohar Plateau, Manila Bay — static geography anchors	★★★★☆

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