

THEIAS AKADEMIA PRESENTS

# ANTIM ASSURED 100+

*Morning Edition — Part II of II*

ENVIRONMENT

PLACES IN NEWS

ETHICS GS4

15 MCQS

MAINS QUESTIONS

DIRECT HIT TRACKER

SATURDAY, 4 JULY 2026 | UPSC CSE EDITION

★ PART II: ENVIRONMENT → PLACES IN NEWS → ETHICS → MCQs → MAINS → DIRECT HIT TRACKER



◆ GS PAPER III — ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

GS3 • ENVIRONMENT • BIODIVERSITY • LEGISLATION

## NBA Notifies Borjuli Wild Rice (*Oryza rufipogon*) Site in Assam as Biodiversity Heritage Site

4 July 2026

The National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) notified the Borjuli Wild Rice site in Sonitpur district, Assam, as a Biodiversity Heritage Site (BHS) under Section 37 of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 — providing statutory federal recognition for the conservation of *Oryza rufipogon*, the wild progenitor of cultivated rice.

The Borjuli site was first declared a BHS by the Assam State Government in 2022. The NBA's notification under Section 37 of the BD Act 2002 provides the higher statutory recognition — enabling central funds, federal protection, and formal listing in the national BHS registry.

The project is funded by NRAA (National Rainfed Area Authority, under MoAFW) and implemented by ICAR-NBPGR (National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources), in collaboration with the Assam State Biodiversity Board (ASBB). With this, Assam has 3 officially notified BHS: Majuli BHS, Borjuli Wild Rice BHS, and Hajong Tortoise Lake BHS.

|                                                         |                                                  |                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>SITE NAME</b><br>Borjuli Wild Rice BHS               | <b>LOCATION</b><br>Sonitpur district, Assam      | <b>SPECIES</b><br><i>Oryza rufipogon</i> (wild rice) |
| <b>NOTIFIED UNDER</b><br>Section 37, BD Act 2002        | <b>FUNDING BODY</b><br>NRAA (under MoAFW)        | <b>IMPLEMENTING AGENCY</b><br>ICAR-NBPGR + ASBB      |
| <b>ASSAM BHS COUNT</b><br>3 (Majuli + Borjuli + Hajong) | <b>STATE DECLARED</b><br>2022; NBA notified 2026 |                                                      |

### PYQ LINKAGE (LAST 25 YEARS)

UPSC Prelims 2019: "Biodiversity Heritage Sites in India are notified under which legislation? (a) Wildlife Protection Act 1972 (b) Biological Diversity Act 2002 (c) Forest Conservation Act 1980 (d) Environment Protection Act 1986" [Answer: (b)] | UPSC Prelims 2021: "Oryza sativa and Oryza rufipogon are related to which crop?" [Rice — Oryza rufipogon is the wild progenitor of cultivated rice Oryza sativa]

### UPSC ANGLE

Biological Diversity Act 2002: Three-tier structure — NBA (national), State Biodiversity Boards (SBB), Biodiversity Management Committees (BMC). Section 37: State Governments may notify BHS; NBA notification adds central-level recognition. Majuli is also India's largest river island

(Brahmaputra). *Oryza rufipogon*: wild rice, a crop wild relative (CWR) — crucial for plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA). CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity) + Nagoya Protocol on ABS (Access and Benefit Sharing) — India ratified Nagoya Protocol 2012. ICAR-NBPGR: India's gene bank for plant genetic resources — conserves over 4 lakh accessions.

GS3 • ENVIRONMENT • PLASTIC POLLUTION • SPECIES PROFILE

# International Plastic Bag Free Day — July 3 | Species Focus: Loggerhead Sea Turtle & Plastic Ingestion

3 July 2026

International Plastic Bag Free Day (July 3) was observed globally to raise awareness about Single-Use Plastic (SUP) bags — initiated by Rezero in Catalonia, Spain in 2008, now part of the Break Free From Plastic (BFFP) movement of 1,500+ organisations. Species focus: Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*).

**Species Profile — Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*):** IUCN Status: Vulnerable (VU). Habitat: warm subtropical/tropical waters. Threat: plastic bags mistaken for jellyfish — ingestion leads to intestinal blockage and death. India: found in Odisha's Gahirmatha, Rushikulya — world's largest mass nesting (Olive Ridley turtles, related species). Loggerhead sea turtle nests in Andaman Islands.

**India's plastic policy:** Plastic Waste Management Rules 2016 (amended 2021/2022). Single-Use Plastic (SUP) ban from July 1, 2022 covering 19 items (earbuds, plates, cups, cutlery, straws, wrapping films, polystyrene). BIS standards for compostable plastics: IS/ISO 17088.

|                                                          |                                                                          |                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>DAY</b><br>International Plastic Bag Free Day         | <b>DATE</b><br>July 3 (annual)                                           | <b>FOUNDED BY</b><br>Rezero, Catalonia, Spain (2008) |
| <b>GLOBAL MOVEMENT</b><br>Break Free From Plastic (BFFP) | <b>SPECIES FOCUS</b><br>Loggerhead Sea Turtle ( <i>Caretta caretta</i> ) | <b>IUCN STATUS</b><br>Vulnerable (VU)                |
| <b>INDIA SUP BAN</b><br>July 1, 2022 (19 SUP items)      | <b>INDIA LEGISLATION</b><br>Plastic Waste Management Rules 2016          |                                                      |

 PYQ LINKAGE

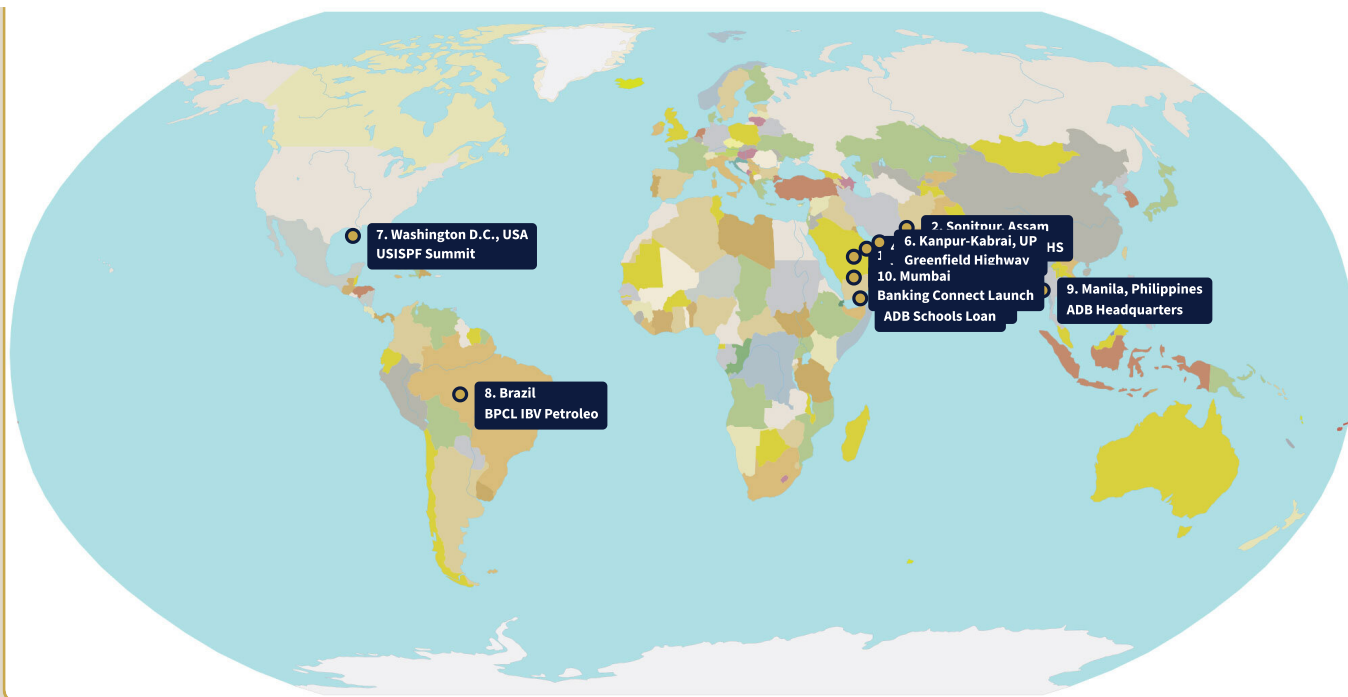
UPSC Prelims 2022: "With reference to plastic waste management in India, which of the following statements is/are correct? 1. Plastic Waste Management Rules 2016 are notified under the Environment Protection Act 1986. 2. India banned single-use plastics in 2022." [Both correct] / UPSC Mains GS3 2020: "Discuss the impact of plastic pollution on marine ecosystems. What policy measures has India taken to address this?"

 UPSC ANGLE

IUCN Red List categories: Extinct (EX) → Extinct in Wild (EW) → Critically Endangered (CR) → Endangered (EN) → Vulnerable (VU) → Near Threatened (NT) → Least Concern (LC). Marine plastic: 8 million tonnes enter oceans annually; microplastics in food chain. UN Global Plastics Treaty (INC negotiations 2024–25): India's position. Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary (Odisha): world's largest mass nesting of Olive Ridley turtles. Distinguish Loggerhead (*Caretta*) from Olive Ridley (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) — latter is India's keystone marine turtle species.

◆ PLACES IN NEWS — 4 JULY 2026

 World Map — Places in News Today (July 4, 2026)



## 10 Places in News — Why They Matter Today

| # | PLACE                                        | WHY IN NEWS (JULY 4, 2026)                                                                                                                                                                                  | GS PAPER |
|---|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | <b>Sanand, Gujarat</b><br>India              | PM Modi inaugurated CG Semi OSAT semiconductor packaging plant (₹7,600 Cr; CG Power + Renesas + Stars Microelectronics; 1.5 Cr chips/day). India's semiconductor capital alongside Micron ATMP plant.       | GS3      |
| 2 | <b>Sonitpur, Assam</b><br>India              | Borjuli Wild Rice BHS (Oryza rufipogon) notified by NBA under Section 37, BD Act 2002. NRAA-funded; ICAR-NBPGR implementing. Assam now has 3 BHS (Majuli + Borjuli + Hajong Tortoise Lake).                 | GS3      |
| 3 | <b>Amaravati, AP</b><br>India                | Undavalli Heliport: site of India's first PinS (Private Point-in-Space) satellite-guided helicopter landing procedure using GAGAN. Developed by AAI; approved by DGCA per ICAO SARPs.                       | GS3      |
| 4 | <b>New Delhi</b><br>India                    | Air HQ: Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit took charge as 51st VCAS, IAF (July 1). Also: CCEA approved ₹14,115 Cr highway projects including Delhi 6-lane twin-tube tunnel under Southern Ridge.                    | GS3      |
| 5 | <b>Karnataka</b><br>India                    | ADB approved USD 182.89 Mn loan (Results-Based Lending) for 500 integrated school clusters; 1 Mn+ students. Additional: USD 10 Mn grant + USD 25 Mn guarantee from IFFEd. NEP 2020 aligned.                 | GS2      |
| 6 | <b>Kanpur-Kabrai (UP)</b><br>India           | CCEA approved 117.7 km greenfield highway (NH-34) — Bhopal-Kanpur Economic Corridor; ₹7,145 Cr; BOT-Toll model; Mahoba district. Part of PM GatiShakti NMP.                                                 | GS3      |
| 7 | <b>Mumbai, Maharashtra</b><br>India          | Razorpay + NBBL launched Banking Connect — India's first mobile-first unified NetBanking platform; QR-based + intent-driven; SBI, HDFC, ICICI, Federal, AU SFB, YES Bank onboard.                           | GS3      |
| 8 | <b>Brazil</b><br>South America               | BPCL (via BPRL Ventures BV) acquired 100% stake in IBV Brazil Petroleo Limitada for ₹2,312 Cr. BM-SEAL-11 block to add ~1 MTOE/year to India's equity crude production. CIRP/NCLT route.                    | GS3      |
| 9 | <b>Washington D.C., USA</b><br>North America | USISPF 2026 Leadership Award presented to Sunil Bharti Mittal (Bharti Enterprises) at IX Leadership Summit, themed "America At 250". Also honoured: V. Prem Watsa (Fairfax) & Christopher Calio (RTX Corp). | GS2      |

## ◆ GS PAPER IV — ETHICS, INTEGRITY & APTITUDE

### CASE STUDY 1 — SCI-TECH ETHICS · GS4

#### Surveillance Aerostats vs. Citizens' Right to Privacy

You are a District Collector in a border district. The Army has deployed India's newly developed indigenous tactical aerostat to monitor the district for 24x7 aerial surveillance. A citizens' group approaches you, claiming the aerostat's cameras are capturing footage of private homes, markets, and daily civilian activities — violating their constitutional right to privacy (Art. 21, Puttaswamy judgment 2017). The Army argues the surveillance is operationally vital for border security.

##### ETHICAL ISSUES AT STAKE

Right to Privacy (Art. 21)

National Security vs. Civil Liberties

Proportionality

Transparency

Rule of Law

Conflict of Values

**Approach:** Acknowledge legitimacy of both concerns. Request Army to share operational parameters of surveillance (altitude, camera angle, resolution) and data retention policy. Commission a privacy impact assessment. Recommend geo-fencing to limit civilian area coverage. Escalate to MHA/MoD if impasse persists. Invoke the proportionality principle (Puttaswamy judgment) — surveillance must be necessary, proportionate, and subject to oversight. Propose a district-level consultative mechanism with civil society.

Thinkers: John Stuart Mill (harm principle); John Rawls (veil of ignorance — what surveillance rules would we accept if we didn't know our role?). Relevant: Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017) — privacy as fundamental right under Art. 21.

### CASE STUDY 2 — ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS · GS4

#### Semiconductor Plant vs. Farmers' Livelihoods: An Official's Dilemma

You are a senior IAS officer in Gujarat overseeing land acquisition for the CG Semi OSAT semiconductor plant in Sanand. While 80% of the land has been acquired with compensation, a cluster of 40 smallholder families refuses to vacate — claiming their agricultural land is ancestral and their only livelihood source. The project has national strategic importance (India Semiconductor Mission, ₹7,600 Cr investment). Company representatives and state officials pressure you to use Section 144 CrPC to forcibly evict them.

##### ETHICAL ISSUES AT STAKE

National Interest vs. Individual Rights

Coercion by Superiors

LARR Act 2013 Compliance

Procedural Fairness

Equity & Justice

**Approach:** Refuse to use CrPC 144 without exhausting LARR 2013 procedures. Invoke the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) mandated under LARR Act. Ensure R&R (Rehabilitation and Resettlement) package is meaningful — not just cash compensation but livelihood restoration, skill training, and housing. Seek mediation with a neutral ombudsman. If pressure persists, document objections in writing (file noting). National interest and individual rights are not mutually exclusive when processes are followed in good faith.

Relevant Law: Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (LARR) Act, 2013 replaces Land Acquisition Act 1894. Principle: Niti Aayog's SDG framework — sustainable industrialisation must not increase inequality. Kant's categorical imperative: act only in ways you'd universalise.

### CASE STUDY 3 — PUBLIC SERVICE ETHICS · GS4

#### Fintech Platform Failure: A Regulator's Dilemma Between Consumer Protection and Institutional Stability

You are a senior official at RBI's Fintech Regulation department. A newly launched mobile-first NetBanking platform (similar to Banking Connect) has processed ₹4,000 Crore in transactions in its first week. A whistleblower within the company has sent you evidence that the platform has a critical security vulnerability that could expose 2 crore users to data theft — but the company's CEO is a politically connected person who has personally lobbied the Finance Minister to not disrupt the launch. You have 48 hours to act before the vulnerability may be publicly exploited.

##### ETHICAL ISSUES AT STAKE

Consumer Protection

Political Pressure

Whistleblower Protection

Regulatory Independence

Speed vs. Process

**Approach:** Do not delay action for political reasons — regulatory independence is constitutionally protected. Issue an immediate advisory to the platform to suspend high-risk operations within 24 hours pending security audit. Simultaneously alert CERT-In. Protect the whistleblower under the Whistle Blowers Protection Act 2014. Document all political pressure in writing. Brief the RBI Governor. Refuse to meet the CEO or Finance Ministry on this matter outside formal channels. Consumer protection takes precedence over institutional or political convenience.

Relevant: RBI Act 1934 (regulatory independence); Whistle Blowers Protection Act 2014; IT Act 2000 (data protection); CERT-In advisory powers. Ethics principle: Truth-telling and transparency are core to public service (ARC 4th Report on Ethics).

#### CASE STUDY 4 — PARLIAMENTARY ETHICS · GS4

### The Delimitation Dilemma: A Civil Servant's Note in a Politically Charged Bill

You are Joint Secretary (Legislative), Ministry of Law and Justice, preparing the official background note for the Delimitation Bill to be tabled in the Monsoon Session 2026. Your factual note must include the constitutional history of delimitation and the 1976 freeze. However, your Minister has instructed you to omit the fact that southern States (TN, Kerala, AP, Telangana, Karnataka) will lose parliamentary seats under the new delimitation — as this information may trigger political opposition. You know the omission could mislead Parliament.

#### ETHICAL ISSUES AT STAKE

Truth vs. Ministerial Orders

Misleading Parliament

Constitutional Duty

Civil Servant's Role in Democracy

Courage of Conviction

**Approach:** Prepare the factually complete note. Present it to the Minister in writing, explaining that omitting the seat-reduction data for southern States would technically mislead Parliament, violating Art. 105 obligations (parliamentary privilege) and your constitutional duty as a civil servant. Offer to present the data with appropriate contextual framing (population-based logic, historical freeze etc.) rather than omission. If the Minister persists, document your objection formally. Article 311 protects civil servants from arbitrary removal for lawful discharge of duty. A civil servant's duty is to Parliament and the Constitution, not to political convenience.

Relevant: All India Services (Conduct) Rules 1968 — Rule 3 (integrity), Rule 9 (use of official information). Prevention of Corruption Act 1988. Machiavellian ethics vs. Kantian deontology. The civil servant's oath (Schedule III, Constitution of India).

#### ◆ 15 UPSC-STYLE MCQS — 4 JULY 2026

#### ✓ 15 MCQs — Based on Today's News · UPSC Pattern

**Q1. Which of the following best describes an OSAT (Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly & Test) facility?**

- (a) A facility that designs semiconductor chips (b) A facility that performs wafer fabrication using photolithography  
(c) A facility that packages, assembles, and tests chips post-fabrication (d) A facility that manufactures raw silicon wafers

**Answer: (c)**

OSAT covers the back-end of semiconductor manufacturing: chip packaging, wire bonding, assembly, and testing. Wafer fabrication (front-end) is done by fabs like TSMC. CG Semi in Sanand is India's first major OSAT plant.

**Q2. Under which provision of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 can the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) notify Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS)?**

- (a) Section 18 (b) Section 37  
(c) Section 41 (d) Section 50

**Answer: (b)**

Section 37 of the Biological Diversity Act 2002 empowers State Governments to notify BHS. NBA can then provide central recognition. Borjuli Wild Rice BHS in Assam was notified by NBA under Section 37 in July 2026.

**Q3. The PinS (Private Point-in-Space) Instrument Approach Procedure for helicopters in India is based on which navigation system?**

- (a) IRNSS/NavIC (b) GAGAN (GPS Aided GEO Augmented Navigation)  
(c) ILS (Instrument Landing System) (d) GLONASS

**Answer: (b)**

GAGAN is India's SBAS (Satellite-Based Augmentation System), jointly developed by AAI and ISRO. PinS at Undavalli Heliport, Amaravati, AP uses GAGAN-based Performance-Based Navigation (PBN) to enable IFR helicopter operations without ground radar.

**Q4. Consider the following about the CCEA-approved Delhi highway tunnel (NH-148AE): 1. It is a 3.14 km twin-tube tunnel. 2. It will be built under the Southern Ridge. 3. It uses the BOT-Toll PPP model. Which is/are correct?**

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

**Answer: (a)**

The tunnel is 3.14 km, twin-tube, under the Southern Ridge. However, it uses the Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM) — NOT BOT-Toll. The UP Kanpur-Kabrai highway uses BOT-Toll. Statement 3 is wrong.

**Q5. Which of the following correctly describes the Results-Based Lending (RBL) mechanism used by ADB for the Karnataka schools loan?**

- (a) Funds disbursed upfront as project grant
- (b) Funds disbursed on achievement of verified Disbursement-Linked Indicators (DLIs)
- (c) Funds disbursed as concessional loan repayable over 5 years
- (d) Funds disbursed through commercial bond market

**Answer: (b)**

Results-Based Lending (RBL) disburses funds against verified programme results (DLIs — Disbursement-Linked Indicators) rather than project inputs. This reduces fiduciary risk and incentivises outcome delivery. ADB used RBL for the USD 182.89 Mn Karnataka schools programme.

**Q6. Bijay Kumar Mohanty assumed additional charge as CMD of which organisation in July 2026?**

- (a) NTPC
- (b) IREDA
- (c) ONGC
- (d) RECPDCL

**Answer: (b)**

Bijay Kumar Mohanty, Director (Finance) & CFO of IREDA, assumed additional charge as CMD of IREDA from July 1, 2026 following superannuation of Pradip Kumar Das on June 30, 2026. IREDA is a Navratna PSU under MNRE.

**Q7. The Borjuli Wild Rice Biodiversity Heritage Site conserves which wild species of rice?**

- (a) *Oryza sativa*
- (b) *Oryza glaberrima*
- (c) *Oryza rufipogon*
- (d) *Oryza punctata*

**Answer: (c)**

*Oryza rufipogon* is the wild progenitor of *Oryza sativa* (cultivated Asian rice). It is a Crop Wild Relative (CWR) of enormous genetic significance. *Oryza glaberrima* is African cultivated rice. Borjuli BHS specifically conserves *O. rufipogon* in Assam's Sonitpur district.

**Q8. Which of the following organisations manages the Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS)?**

- (a) NPCI directly
- (b) NPCI Bharat BillPay Limited (NBBL)
- (c) Reserve Bank of India
- (d) National Payments Infrastructure Corporation

**Answer: (b)**

NBBL (NPCI Bharat BillPay Limited) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of NPCI that specifically manages BBPS. NBBL also partnered with Razorpay to launch Banking Connect, a mobile-first NetBanking platform, in July 2026.

**Q9. International Plastic Bag Free Day is observed on which date?**

- (a) July 1
- (b) July 3
- (c) June 5
- (d) August 12

**Answer: (b)**

International Plastic Bag Free Day is observed on July 3 each year. It was initiated by Rezero in Catalonia, Spain in 2008. In 2016 it became part of the Break Free From Plastic (BFFP) movement. June 5 is World Environment Day.

**Q10. What is the IUCN Red List status of the Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*)?**

- (a) Endangered (EN)
- (b) Critically Endangered (CR)
- (c) Vulnerable (VU)
- (d) Near Threatened (NT)

**Answer: (c)**

Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*) is Vulnerable (VU) on the IUCN Red List. Major threats include plastic bag ingestion (mistaken for jellyfish), bycatch, and habitat loss. The Olive Ridley Turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) — key India species — is also Vulnerable.

**Q11. The MiniRatna Category-I status for a CPSE requires which of the following? 1. Profit for 3 consecutive years. 2. Pre-tax profit of ₹30 crore or more in at least one of the three years. 3. Positive net worth. 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: (d)**

MiniRatna Category-I requires all three: (1) consecutive profit for 3 years; (2) pre-tax profit ≥ ₹30 Cr in at least 1 year; and (3) positive net worth. MECON met all three criteria as of FY26. MiniRatna Cat-II requires only consecutive profit & positive net worth.

**Q12. Under which law was the BPCL acquisition of IBV Brazil Petroleo completed through the CIRP route?**

- (a) Companies Act, 2013 (b) Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016  
(c) SEBI (Substantial Acquisition of Shares) Regulations 2011 (d) FEMA (Foreign Exchange Management Act) 1999

**Answer: (b)**

CIRP (Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process) is the resolution mechanism under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016. The NCLT is the adjudicating authority. BPCL acquired Videocon Energy Brazil Limited's 34.6% stake in IBV Brazil Petroleo under CIRP per NCLT order.

**Q13. The Delimitation Commission under the Delimitation Act 2002 is constituted after which event?**

- (a) General elections (b) Each Census  
(c) Constitutional amendment (d) Supreme Court order

**Answer: (b)**

Delimitation Commission is constituted after each census under Article 82 (for Lok Sabha) and Article 170 (for State Assemblies), read with the Delimitation Act 2002. The 2026 delimitation is the first since 1976, as the 42nd Amendment (1976) froze delimitation till after 2001 Census. The 84th Amendment (2001) extended the freeze to 2026.

**Q14. Which operation was the IAF's air campaign during the Kargil War of 1999?**

- (a) Operation Vijay (b) Operation Safed Sagar  
(c) Operation Parakram (d) Operation Rakshak

**Answer: (b)**

Operation Safed Sagar was the IAF's component of the Kargil War (May–July 1999). The overall Indian Army operation was Operation Vijay. Operation Parakram was the 2001–02 mobilisation after the Parliament attack. Operation Rakshak is a continuing anti-insurgency operation in J&K.

**Q15. Consider: "IIT Delhi partnered with DRDO and a domestic startup to develop an indigenous tactical aerostat." Which DRDO initiative was specifically designed to enable such academia-startup-DRDO collaborations?**

- (a) Technology Development Fund (TDF) (b) iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence)  
(c) DRDO Young Scientist Labs (DYSL) (d) MAKE-II Programme

**Answer: (b)**

iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence), launched by MoD in 2018, fosters a Defence Innovation Ecosystem by engaging startups and MSMEs via DISC (Defence India Startup Challenge) scheme. It is the primary channel for academia-startup-DRDO co-development. TDF is managed by DRDO; MAKE-II is a procurement category; DYSL is for young scientists within DRDO.

THE IAS AKADEMIA PROGRAMME



**NEEB 300+ — PYQ Answer Writing**

UPSC's 15-MCQ GS prelims pattern is becoming more analytical. NEEB 300+ gives you 300+ PYQ-style MCQs with structured explanations, plus Mains answer templates for current affairs integration — from prelims accuracy to Mains depth in one programme.

**JOIN NEEB 300+**

◆ MAINS PRACTICE QUESTIONS — 4 JULY 2026

🔪 6 Mains Questions — Today's News · GS Pattern

### GS3 · Q1

"India's semiconductor journey is long on ambition but short on execution." Critically examine India's semiconductor strategy with reference to the CG Semi OSAT inauguration, the India Semiconductor Mission, and the structural challenges India faces in building a complete chip value chain. (250 words)

*Hint: Cover Fab vs. OSAT distinction; ISM ₹76,000 Cr; PLI + DLI schemes; global supply chain vulnerabilities (TSMC); Design-Linked Incentive; skill ecosystem gaps; comparative: Taiwan's TSMC model, USA's CHIPS Act, EU Chips Act.*

### GS2 · Q2

The Delimitation Bill 2026 proposes expanding the Lok Sabha from 543 to 850 seats and operationalising the Women's Reservation Act. Analyse the constitutional basis for delimitation, the concerns raised by southern States, and the principles that must guide a fair delimitation process. (250 words)

*Hint: Art. 82, Art. 170, 42nd Amendment (1976 freeze), 84th Amendment (extended freeze), 106th Amendment (Women's Reservation). Southern States: population-growth linked seat allocation disadvantages states that controlled population growth. Principles: equity, representation, federalism.*

### GS3 · Q3

India's digital payment infrastructure is evolving rapidly with initiatives like UPI, BBPS, and now Banking Connect. Evaluate the role of NPCI and its subsidiaries in modernising India's payment ecosystem, and examine the regulatory challenges of balancing financial inclusion with systemic risk. (250 words)

*Hint: NPCI: est. 2008, products (UPI, IMPS, RuPay, NACH, NETC, BBPS via NBBL). Banking Connect: NetBanking modernisation. Financial inclusion: Jan Dhan. Systemic risks: single-point failure, cybersecurity, data privacy (DPDP Act 2023). RBI's oversight role.*

### GS3 · Q4

India's overseas energy acquisitions have been a cornerstone of its energy security strategy. Examine the significance of BPCL's 100% ownership of IBV Brazil Petroleo, and evaluate whether India's overseas hydrocarbon strategy has delivered adequate returns. (250 words)

*Hint: India imports ~87% crude oil. Overseas assets: ONGC Videsh (OVL), BPCL, IOC Mauritius. BM-SEAL-11: 1 MTOE/year post-production. Challenges: geopolitical instability in host countries; returns below projections (Russia sanctions). Compare: China's BRI energy acquisitions. IBC/CIRP route innovation for acquisition.*

### GS3 · Q5

Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS) represent a unique conservation tool under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002. Using the example of Borjuli Wild Rice BHS in Assam, discuss how BHS contribute to in-situ conservation of crop wild relatives and the challenges in their implementation. (250 words)

*Hint: BD Act 2002, Section 37, three-tier structure (NBA, SBB, BMC). In-situ vs. ex-situ conservation. Crop Wild Relatives (CWRs): genetic reservoir for breeding climate-resilient varieties. ICAR-NBPGR's gene bank. CBD Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS). Challenges: encroachment, agricultural expansion, lack of community awareness.*

### GS4 · Q6

"Surveillance technologies like aerostats and AI-powered cameras present a fundamental tension between national security imperatives and citizens' constitutionally guaranteed right to privacy." Examine this tension with reference to the Puttaswamy judgment (2017) and propose an ethical framework for deploying surveillance technologies by the State. (250 words)

*Hint: Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017): 9-judge bench; privacy as fundamental right under Art. 21. Proportionality doctrine: (1) necessity, (2) proportionality, (3) legitimate aim, (4) procedural safeguards. Data localisation, DPDP Act 2023. Compare: UK's Surveillance Camera Code of Practice; EU GDPR. Surveillance vs. security dichotomy in democratic theory.*

## ◆ VALUE ADDITION — QUOTES FOR MAINS ANSWERS

### “Topper's Quotes for Today's Topics

*"The measure of intelligence is the ability to change." — but a nation's semiconductor sovereignty is the measure of its ability to endure.*

Use in: Semiconductor / India's technology ecosystem answers (GS3)

*"Privacy is not an option, and it shouldn't be the price we accept for just getting what we want online." — Gary Kovacs*

Use in: Surveillance vs. Privacy; Digital rights answers (GS4, GS2)

*"The earth does not belong to us; we belong to the earth." — Chief Seattle (attributed)*

Use in: Biodiversity conservation, Borjuli BHS, Plastic pollution answers (GS3, GS4)

*"Financial inclusion is not just a development tool — it is a right." — Raghuram Rajan (paraphrased from RBI Annual Report 2013)*

Use in: Digital payments, Banking Connect, Financial inclusion (GS3)

*"Representation is not charity; it is democracy's basic arithmetic." — Use this for delimitation and Women's Reservation arguments.*

Use in: Delimitation Bill, Women's Reservation (33%), Parliamentary Democracy (GS2)

## ◆ DIRECT HIT TRACKER — 4 JULY 2026

### ★ 12 High-Probability Topics — UPSC Prelims & Mains 2026

★★★★★

#### CG Semi OSAT — Sanand

India's first major semiconductor packaging plant. OSAT vs Fab distinction, India Semiconductor Mission (MeitY, ₹76,000 Cr). JV: CG Power + Renesas + Stars. Prelims MCQ & Mains GS3 very likely.

GS3 • Sci-Tech

★★★★★

#### Delimitation Bill 2026

Lok Sabha 543→850 seats. Art. 82 + Art. 170. 42nd & 84th Amendment history. Women's Reservation Act (106th Amendment) linkage. Southern States seat-reduction concern. Guaranteed GS2 Mains.

GS2 • Polity

★★★★★

#### Borjuli Wild Rice BHS

NBA notification under Section 37, BD Act 2002. *Oryza rufipogon* (wild rice). ICAR-NBPGR + NRAA + ASBB. Assam's 3 BHS. In-situ conservation of Crop Wild Relatives. Very likely Prelims 2026.

GS3 • Environment

★★★★★

#### GAGAN & PinS Procedure

India's SBAS (AAI + ISRO). First PinS helicopter approach at Undavalli Heliport, Amaravati. Performance-Based Navigation (PBN). ICAO SARPs. Replaces ground-based ILS in hilly terrain. High Prelims probability.

GS3 • Sci-Tech

★★★★

#### MECON MiniRatna Cat-I

4-tier CPSE classification: MiniRatna II→I→Navratna→Maharatna. Criteria for each. Capex autonomy limits. MECON: PBT ₹104.53 Cr FY26; Net worth ₹535 Cr. Ministry of Steel. Prelims-standard fact set.

GS3 • Economy

★★★★

#### IIT-DRDO Tactical Aerostat

India's first indigenous balloon-based surveillance platform, 20 km coverage. EO + IR sensors. iDEX, DRDO reforms, Aatmanirbhar Bharat defence. Positive indigenisation list. Prelims + Mains GS3.

GS3 • Defence

★★★★

#### BPCL IBV Brazil Acquisition

Maharatna BPCL; CIRP/IBC 2016/NCLT route. BM-SEAL-11 block, Brazil. 100% via BPRL Ventures BV. ~1 MTOE/year. Energy security + India-Brazil IR angle. Mains GS3 + GS2.

GS3 • GS2

★★★★

#### ADB Karnataka Schools RBL

ADB: est. 1966, Manila, 68 members, India 4th shareholder. Results-Based Lending + DLIs. IFFEd USD 10 Mn grant + USD 25 Mn guarantee. NEP 2020 school complex model. GS2 IR + Education.

GS2 • IR

★★★★

#### Razorpay-NBBL Banking Connect

NPCI → NBBL → BBPS. Banking Connect: mobile-first NetBanking, QR + intent-driven, SBI/HDFC/ICICI. Fintech regulation. Digital payments ecosystem. RBI Payments Vision 2025. GS3 Economy.

GS3 • Economy

★★★

#### CCEA Highway Projects

₹14,115 Cr: Delhi twin-tube tunnel (HAM, NH-148AE, 3.14 km, Southern Ridge) + UP Kanpur-Kabrai greenfield (BOT-Toll, 117.7 km, NH-34). NHAI. PM GatiShakti NMP. GS3 Infrastructure.

GS3 • Infrastructure

★★★

#### Air Marshal Dixit — 51st VCAS

IAF command structure: CAS→VCAS. Prior role: CISC (under CDS). Op Safed Sagar (Kargil 1999). Mirage-2000. PVSM 2026. Defence appointment + IAF structure = Prelims-worthy.

GS3 • Defence

★★★

#### Loggerhead Turtle + Plastic

IUCN Vulnerable (VU). *Caretta caretta*. Plastic bags = jellyfish mimicry. International Plastic Bag Free Day July 3. India's SUP ban July 1, 2022. Break Free From Plastic. GS3 Environment prelims species.

## ✓ PROOF OF PRECISION — Part II | 4 July 2026

**2**

Environment Cards (July 3–4)

**10**

Places in News (World Map)

**4**

Ethics GS4 Case Studies

**15**

UPSC-Pattern MCQs

**6**

Mains Practice Questions

**5**

Value Addition Quotes

**12**

Direct Hit Tracker Topics

**1**

Akademia Programme Note

**0**

Stale Items (&gt;48 hrs old)

**55+**

Total UPSC-Ready Questions

*All news verified: July 3–4, 2026 events only. Zero repeats from prior editions. Species data sourced from IUCN Red List. Stale items (VB-G-RAM-G July 1, Digital India July 1, RBI MPC June 5) explicitly excluded.*