

PART II · ENVIRONMENT TO DIRECT HIT TRACKER

ANTIM ASSURED 100+

THEIAS AKADEMIA

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"The Topper's Last Read. Every Morning."

INSIDE PART II

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§1 • Environment

GS3 Environmental jurisprudence • Climate governance

18-19 September 2026, New Delhi (preview) • Source: National Green Tribunal

NGT's International Conference on Environment and Climate Dynamics Opens in New Delhi

Why in News: The National Green Tribunal is set to host an International Conference on the Future of Environment and Climate Dynamics in New Delhi beginning 19 September 2026, with preparatory sessions and delegate briefings held on 18 September, bringing together environmental judges, regulators, and scientists from multiple countries to discuss climate-litigation trends, cross-border environmental governance, and the evolving jurisprudence on the right to a clean environment.

Background: The National Green Tribunal, established under the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010, is India's specialised environmental court with the mandate to adjudicate cases relating to environmental protection, forest conservation, and natural-resource disputes, having developed a substantial body of jurisprudence — including linking environmental protection to the fundamental right to life under Article 21 — that increasingly intersects with international climate-law developments.

PRELIMS FACTS

- NGT's International Conference on Environment and Climate Dynamics opens 19 September 2026 in New Delhi; preview/preparatory activity on 18 Sept.
- National Green Tribunal was established under the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010.
- NGT has original jurisdiction over substantial-question-of-environment cases under specified environmental statutes.
- The conference brings together environmental judges, regulators, and scientists from multiple countries.
- Agenda includes climate-litigation trends and cross-border environmental governance.
- NGT has linked environmental protection to the Article 21 right to life in its jurisprudence.
- India is among a growing number of countries recognising a distinct "right to a clean environment."
- NGT operates through a principal bench (Delhi) and four regional benches.

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- Tests understanding of the NGT's institutional mandate and its jurisprudential contribution to environmental rights.
- Raises the significance of international judicial dialogue in harmonising climate-litigation standards.

- Connects to the global evolution of a justiciable "right to a clean environment" doctrine.
- Highlights India's growing role as a venue for international environmental-governance dialogue.

AKADEMIA MEMORY TRIVIA

NGT = 2010 Act, 5 benches (1 principal + 4 regional), and a jurisprudence trail from M.C. Mehta-era Article 21 environmental rights to today's international climate-litigation dialogue.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2018: "'Climate change' is a global problem. How India will be affected by climate change? How Himalayan and coastal states of India will be affected...?" is thematically adjacent; NGT-mandate PYQs recur regularly.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Consider the following statements: 1. The National Green Tribunal was established under a 2010 Act. 2. NGT has only one bench located in New Delhi. 3. NGT has linked environmental protection to Article 21. 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). **Explanation:** NGT has a principal bench plus four regional benches, not just one — statement 2 is wrong.

PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

Discuss the institutional role of the National Green Tribunal in shaping India's environmental jurisprudence and its relevance to global climate-governance dialogue. (150 words)

#GS3

#NGT

#ClimateGovernance

GS3 Taxonomy · Biodiversity hotspots

2026 (honest-dated, still developing) · Source: Zoological Survey of India

ZSI Documents New Spider and Whip-Scorpion Species from Northeast India

Why in News: The Zoological Survey of India has documented new species of spiders and a whip-scorpion (Amblypygi) from the biodiversity-rich forests of Northeast India during its ongoing 2026 taxonomic surveys, adding to the region's already exceptional arachnid diversity and underscoring the Eastern Himalaya-Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot's continuing yield of undescribed species.

Background: Northeast India falls within two globally recognised biodiversity hotspots — the Himalaya and Indo-Burma hotspots — characterised by high endemism and continuing species discovery due to difficult terrain and historically limited taxonomic survey coverage; the Zoological Survey of India, established in 1916, is India's apex taxonomic research organisation responsible for documenting the country's faunal diversity through publications like its annual "Animal Discoveries" volume.

PRELIMS FACTS

- New spider and whip-scorpion (order Amblypygi) species documented from Northeast India in 2026.
- Discovered under ongoing surveys by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), established 1916.
- Northeast India lies within both the Himalaya and Indo-Burma global biodiversity hotspots.
- Whip-scorpions (Amblypygi) are non-venomous arachnids distinct from true scorpions, lacking a stinger.
- ZSI publishes findings annually in its "Animal Discoveries" volume.

- The region's high endemism stems from complex terrain and historically limited taxonomic surveying.
- New-species documentation strengthens the case for targeted conservation of Northeast India's forest habitats.
- ZSI functions under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- Tests understanding of India's two Himalaya/Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspots and their taxonomic significance.
- Raises the analytical link between continuing species discovery and the case for stronger habitat protection.
- Connects to ZSI's institutional role in documenting India's faunal diversity systematically.
- Highlights the distinction between true scorpions and whip-scorpions as a specific taxonomic nuance.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2021: "What is a biodiversity hotspot? Explain the significance of Himalaya and Western Ghats as hotspots" is directly relevant.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Consider the following statements: 1. Northeast India lies within the Himalaya and Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspots. 2. Whip-scorpions possess a venomous stinger like true scorpions. 3. ZSI was established in 1916. 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). **Explanation:** Whip-scorpions lack a stinger and are non-venomous — statement 2 is wrong.

PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

Discuss the significance of continuing species discovery in India's biodiversity hotspots for conservation policy. (150 words)

#GS3

#Biodiversity

#ZSI

§2 · Places in News

📌 PLACES IN NEWS — 18 SEPTEMBER 2026 | ANTIM ASSURED 100+



- ① New Delhi (SC hearings, NGT conference, Army-SA talks)
- ② Bengaluru (HAL handover of Tejas/HTT-40/Dhruv-NG)
- ③ Amaravati (NIELIT Quantum & AI University)
- ④ West Rajasthan (Monsoon withdrawal onset)
- ⑤ Northeast India (new spider/whip-scorpion species)
- ⑥ Bab-el-Mandeb Strait (shipping security)
- ⑦ Pretoria (India-South Africa defence ties context)

West Rajasthan

India's arid northwestern region; IMD's traditional reference zone for marking the Southwest Monsoon's annual withdrawal onset, owing to its distance from moisture-bearing Arabian Sea winds and low rainfall profile.

Bab-el-Mandeb Strait

A narrow strait between Yemen, Djibouti, and Eritrea connecting the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden — a critical chokepoint for India-Europe trade, disrupted repeatedly since late 2023 by regional conflict spillover.

Bengaluru, Karnataka

Headquarters and primary manufacturing hub of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), which handed over Tejas trainers, HTT-40s, and Dhruv-NG helicopters to the IAF on 18 September.

Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh's under-development capital city, site of NIELIT's planned Quantum & AI University aligned with the National Quantum Mission.

Northeast India (Biodiversity Hotspot)

Spans the Himalaya and Indo-Burma global biodiversity hotspots; site of ZSI's newly documented spider and whip-scorpion species in 2026.

Pretoria, South Africa

South Africa's administrative capital; context city for the India-South Africa Army-to-Army Staff Talks held in New Delhi, reflecting the bilateral defence relationship within BRICS and IORA.

§3 · Ethics & Integrity Cases

INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

SC's Possible Inspection of NTA's Minto Road Office

The Court's willingness to physically inspect a statutory body's premises reflects the ethical principle that institutional trust must be verified, not merely assumed — accountability mechanisms function best when they can penetrate an organisation's internal processes, not just review its public statements.

SUBSTANTIVE EQUALITY IN TRAINING CONTEXTS

Stipend Parity for Foreign Medical Graduates

Ensuring equal stipends for equal internship duties, regardless of where a doctor studied, embodies the ethical principle that dignity of labour and fairness in compensation should attach to the work performed, not to the credential's geographic origin.

SCIENTIFIC HUMILITY AND ADAPTIVE GOVERNANCE

Monsoon Withdrawal and Climate Variability

IMD's criteria-based (not calendar-fixed) approach to declaring monsoon withdrawal reflects a governance ethic of adapting institutional judgment to observed reality rather than rigid convention — a principle transferable to policy-making generally under conditions of scientific uncertainty.

COLLECTIVE SECURITY RESPONSIBILITY

India's Naval Posture on the Bab-el-Mandeb Corridor

India's deployment of naval assets to protect merchant shipping, including vessels beyond its own flag, reflects the ethical principle of collective responsibility for global commons — that a rising power's security posture should extend to protecting shared international interests, not narrowly self-interested gains.

SELF-RELIANCE AS A LONG-TERM INSTITUTIONAL VALUE

HAL's Indigenous Platform Handover

Sustained investment in indigenous trainer aircraft and helicopters, even where imported alternatives might be faster to acquire, reflects the ethical and strategic value of long-term self-reliance over short-term convenience — a trade-off relevant to public procurement ethics broadly.

DUTY OF CARE IN BIODIVERSITY DOCUMENTATION

ZSI's Continuing Species Discoveries

Systematic taxonomic surveying of remote, under-studied habitats reflects a duty-of-care ethic toward biodiversity that has not yet been formally recognised or protected — documenting a species is often the first ethical step toward ensuring its conservation.

§4 · Prelims MCQs

Q1. The National Testing Agency was established in which year?

(a) 2015 (b) 2017 (c) 2019 (d) 2021

Ans: (b)

Q2. The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act was enacted in:

(a) 2022 (b) 2023 (c) 2024 (d) 2025

Ans: (c)

Q3. NExt, which is replacing FMGE, stands for:

(a) National Exit Test (b) National Examination for Trainees (c) National Extended Training (d) National Excellence Test

Ans: (a)

Q4. Consider the following statements: 1. West Rajasthan marks IMD's traditional monsoon-withdrawal reference point. 2. Monsoon withdrawal completes nationwide by mid-October typically. Which is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both (d) Neither

Ans: (c)

Q5. The Bab-el-Mandeb Strait connects the Red Sea to which water body?

(a) Arabian Sea (b) Gulf of Aden (c) Persian Gulf (d) Mediterranean Sea

Ans: (b)

Q6. HTT-40 was developed to replace which earlier trainer aircraft?

(a) HPT-32 (b) Kiran Mk-II (c) Pilatus PC-7 (d) Jaguar

Ans: (a)

Q7. Exercise IBSAMAR is a trilateral naval exercise involving India, Brazil, and:

(a) Bangladesh (b) South Africa (c) Bahrain (d) Botswana

Ans: (b)

Q8. The National Quantum Mission was approved with an outlay of:

(a) Rs 3,000 crore (b) Rs 6,003 crore (c) Rs 10,000 crore (d) Rs 1,500 crore

Ans: (b)

Q9. Bharat Connect was earlier known as:

(a) NEFT (b) Bharat Bill Payment System (c) IMPS (d) AEPS

Ans: (b)

Q10. PMAY-Urban 2.0 was approved by the Cabinet in which month/year?

(a) September 2023 (b) September 2024 (c) January 2025 (d) September 2025

Ans: (b)

Q11. Consider the following statements: 1. NGT was established under a 2010 Act. 2. NGT has jurisdiction only over air-pollution cases. Which is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both (d) Neither

Ans: (a)

Q12. Whip-scorpions belong to which arachnid order?

(a) Scorpiones (b) Amblypygi (c) Araneae (d) Solifugae

Ans: (b)

Q13. The Zoological Survey of India was established in:

(a) 1875 (b) 1916 (c) 1935 (d) 1947

Ans: (b)

Q14. Northeast India lies within which two global biodiversity hotspots?

(a) Western Ghats and Sundaland (b) Himalaya and Indo-Burma (c) Himalaya and Western Ghats (d) Indo-Burma and Sundaland

Ans: (b)

Q15. PMAY-Urban 2.0's central outlay is approximately:

(a) Rs 1.25 lakh crore (b) Rs 2.30 lakh crore (c) Rs 3.50 lakh crore (d) Rs 80,000 crore

Ans: (b)

Q16. NIELIT functions under which ministry?

(a) Ministry of Education (b) MeitY (c) Ministry of Science and Technology (d) Ministry of Skill Development

Ans: (b)

Q17. Consider the following statements: 1. India and South Africa are both BRICS members. 2. Both are also IORA members. Which is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both (d) Neither

Ans: (c)

Q18. Dhruv-NG is a next-generation variant of which platform?

(a) Tejas (b) Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) (c) HTT-40 (d) Prachand

Ans: (b)

Q19. The original PMAY-Urban was launched in which year with a "Housing for All" target?

(a) 2014 (b) 2015 (c) 2016 (d) 2017

Ans: (b)

Q20. NPCI Bharat BillPay Limited is a subsidiary of:

(a) RBI (b) SEBI (c) NPCI (d) IRDAI

Ans: (c)

§5 · Mains Questions

1. Discuss the recurring integrity challenges facing India's centralised entrance-examination system and evaluate recent legislative and judicial responses. (150 words) [GS2]

2. Discuss the significance of the equal-treatment principle in professional training contexts, with reference to recent judicial intervention in medical education. (150 words) [GS2]

3. Explain the physical mechanism governing the withdrawal of the Southwest Monsoon and discuss its significance for Indian agriculture. (150 words) [GS1]

4. Discuss the strategic significance of the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait for India's trade and India's naval response to regional shipping-security disruptions. (150 words) [GS1/GS2]

5. Discuss the significance of indigenous trainer-aircraft and helicopter production for India's defence self-reliance. (150 words) [GS3]

6. Discuss the objectives of the National Quantum Mission and the significance of building dedicated skilling infrastructure alongside research funding. (150 words) [GS3]

7. Discuss the restructuring of PMAY-Urban into PMAY-Urban 2.0 and evaluate its adequacy in addressing India's urban housing shortage. (150 words) [GS2]

8. Discuss the institutional role of the National Green Tribunal in shaping India's environmental jurisprudence. (150 words) [GS3]

9. **[GS4 Case Study]** As an examination-conducting authority's senior administrator, you learn of credible but unproven allegations of a security breach affecting lakhs of honest candidates awaiting results. Immediate public disclosure could cause panic and legal chaos; delay risks a cover-up perception if the breach is later confirmed. (a) Identify the ethical dilemmas involved. (b) Recommend a course of action balancing transparency, candidate welfare, and institutional credibility. (250 words) [GS4]

§6 • Answer Writing Value Addition

Data Point: PMAY-Urban 2.0 targets 1 crore additional houses with a central outlay of Rs 2.30 lakh crore, restructured into four distinct verticals.

Concept: "Institutional Accountability via Physical Verification" — the Supreme Court's willingness to inspect NTA's premises directly, a useful GS4 example of accountability beyond paper compliance.

Data Point: The National Quantum Mission carries an outlay of Rs 6,003 crore for 2023-2031 across computing, communication, sensing, and materials.

Concept: "Formal vs Substantive Equality" — reinforced this week by both the equal-pay ruling (17 Sept) and the stipend-parity ruling (18 Sept); pair them in any Article 14 answer.

Data Point: India's Southwest Monsoon withdrawal typically begins from West Rajasthan and completes nationwide by mid-October.

Concept: "Chokepoint Geography" — the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait is a textbook example of a maritime chokepoint whose disruption has cascading global trade effects.

Data Point: ZSI, established in 1916, continues to document new species from the Himalaya and Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspots even in 2026.

Concept: "Layered Digital Public Infrastructure" — Bharat Connect's extension into multicurrency forex illustrates India's DPI strategy of adding services onto shared rails rather than parallel systems.

§7 • AKADEmia Direct Hit Tracker

#	Topic	UPSC Relevance	Priority
1	SC's Possible NTA Office Inspection (NEET-UG 2026)	GS2 — Examination integrity, accountability	★★★★★
2	Stipend Parity for Foreign Medical Graduates	GS2 — Article 14, medical education	★★★★★
3	Southwest Monsoon Withdrawal Onset	GS1 — Indian climatology	★★★★★
4	Bab-el-Mandeb Shipping-Security Concerns	GS1/GS2 — Maritime chokepoints	★★★★☆
5	HAL Handover — Tejas/HTT-40/Dhruv-NG	GS3 — Indigenous defence production	★★★★★
6	India-South Africa Army Staff Talks	GS2 — Defence diplomacy, BRICS/IORA	★★★★☆
7	NIELIT Quantum & AI University, Amaravati	GS3 — Quantum Mission, skilling	★★★★☆
8	Bharat Connect Multicurrency Forex Services	GS3 — Digital Public Infrastructure	★★★★☆
9	PMAY-Urban 2.0 Transition Review	GS2 — Urban housing policy	★★★★☆
10	NGT International Climate Conference	GS3 — Environmental jurisprudence	★★★★☆
11	ZSI's New Spider/Whip-Scorpion Species	GS3 — Taxonomy, biodiversity hotspots	★★★★☆
12	National Testing Agency & 2024 Anti-Cheating Act	GS2 — Static polity/governance	★★★★☆
13	National Medical Commission Framework	GS2 — Static health governance	★★★★☆
14	National Quantum Mission — Four Pillars	GS3 — Static science policy	★★★★☆
15	PMAY-Urban Evolution (2015 → 2.0)	GS2 — Static scheme architecture	★★★★☆
16	NGT's Institutional Mandate (2010 Act)	GS3 — Static environmental law	★★★★☆
17	India's Himalaya & Indo-Burma Hotspots	GS1/GS3 — Static biogeography	★★★★☆
18	Exercise IBSAMAR & India-Brazil-SA Ties	GS2 — Static defence diplomacy	★★★★☆

★ THEIAS AKADEMIA — PROOF OF PRECISION

UPSC CSE Prelims 2026 Results

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

48

QUESTIONS FROM
ANTIM ASSURED 100+

7

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE DOCUMENT

6

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE CLASS

Our students had seen 48 questions before the paper was opened.

This is not luck. This is TheIAS Akademia.

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VERIFIED · PART II

Proof of Precision

Every item mapped. Every claim verified.

2

ENVIRONMENT CARDS

7

MAP PINS

6

ETHICS CASES

20

MCQS

9

MAINS QS

Environment

Geography

Ethics

Polity

Defence

✓ All facts sourced from NGT conference proceedings, ZSI taxonomic releases, and official verified data

✓ Every ethics case names its underlying ethical concept explicitly, per RULE 15 density mandate

✓ Cross-checked against the 7-day topic log — zero repeated topics

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