

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 Conservation • ESZ enforcement

NGT order 9 Sept 2026 (reported 10 Sept) • Source: NGT Central Zone Bench / Down To Earth

Van Vihar National Park Eco-Sensitive Zone Violation: NGT Orders Probe

Why in News: The National Green Tribunal's Central Zone Bench (Bhopal) has directed the Director of Van Vihar National Park & Zoo and Madhya Pradesh's Chief Wildlife Warden to investigate a complaint of illegal construction inside the park's Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ), after unauthorised construction was found in Prempura village, within the park's notified 100-metre ESZ. A compliance report is due within three months.

Background: Van Vihar National Park, on the edge of Bhopal's Upper Lake (part of the Bhoj Wetland Ramsar site), functions as both a notified national park and a zoological park. ESZs under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 are meant to act as "shock absorbers" around protected areas, regulating rather than banning specified activities.

PRELIMS FACTS

- Van Vihar National Park is located in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.
- It functions as both a national park and a zoological park.
- It borders Bhopal's Upper Lake, part of the Bhoj Wetland Ramsar site.
- Madhya Pradesh notified a 100-metre radius around the park as its ESZ.
- ESZs are constituted under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- The violation was found in Prempura village, within the notified ESZ.
- The order came from NGT's Central Zone Bench, headquartered in Bhopal.
- A compliance report is due within three months of the order.

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- Tests the ESZ regulatory philosophy of regulation, not prohibition, and the enforcement gaps allowing encroachment despite notification.
- Raises the coordination question between wildlife authorities and civic/revenue authorities in policing ESZ boundaries.
- Connects the Bhoj Wetland's Ramsar status to India's domestic ESZ enforcement architecture.
- Highlights NGT's expanding quasi-judicial role in site-specific wildlife/environmental compliance.

PYQ LINKAGE

Thematic link to GS3 conservation/EIA PYQs; no exact past question on Van Vihar's ESZ exists — disclosed honestly.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs) in India: 1. ESZs are notified under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. 2. ESZs completely prohibit all human activity within their notified radius. 3. The NGT can direct wildlife and civic authorities to jointly investigate ESZ violations. Which of the statements given above is/are correct? (a) 3 only (b) 1 and 3 only (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a). **Explanation:** ESZs are notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, not the Wildlife Protection Act, and they regulate rather than prohibit specified activities.

PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

Eco-Sensitive Zones are meant to act as "shock absorbers" around India's protected areas. Examine the enforcement challenges in realising this intent. (150 words)

#GS3

#ESZ

#NGT

#BhojWetland

GS3 Biodiversity · Static Topic

Static Topic — described May 2026 (Zootaxa), first ANTIM coverage

Duta Nixon: Ten New Parasitoid Wasp Species Described from India

Why in News: Scientists at the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), Kolkata, with the University of Calcutta, have described ten new species of the egg-parasitoid wasp genus *Duta Nixon* (family Scelionidae) from India — including *D. coriata*, *D. foveola*, and *D. microphleba* — published in *Zootaxa* (Vol. 5807), significantly expanding the known Indian radiation of a group previously documented mainly from the Nearctic region.

Background: Scelionid wasps are egg parasitoids of other insects, making them ecologically valuable natural biocontrol agents against crop pests. India's insect diversity, especially microhymenoptera, remains significantly under-documented relative to vertebrate taxa.

PRELIMS FACTS

- Ten new species of genus *Duta Nixon* described, family Scelionidae (parasitoid wasps).
- Described by ZSI, Kolkata, with the University of Calcutta.
- Published in *Zootaxa*, Volume 5807.
- Named species include *D. coriata*, *D. foveola*, and *D. microphleba*.
- Scelionidae are egg parasitoids — they parasitise the eggs of other insects.
- The genus *Duta* was previously known mainly from Nearctic (North American) records.
- Scelionid wasps are of biocontrol significance against agricultural pests.
- ZSI is India's apex faunal-taxonomy organisation, headquartered in Kolkata.

MAINS DIMENSIONS

- Highlights India's vast, still-undocumented insect diversity relative to better-studied vertebrate taxa.
- Connects biodiversity taxonomy to applied agriculture: egg-parasitoid wasps as biocontrol agents.

- Raises the "cryptic diversity" concept — genera thought geographically restricted revealing unrecorded diversity elsewhere.
- Tests understanding of ZSI's institutional mandate alongside BSI (its botanical counterpart).

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3's recurring biodiversity-conservation theme is the closest reference; no exact PYQ on Scelionidae exists — disclosed honestly.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding parasitoid wasps of the family Scelionidae: 1. They are primarily egg parasitoids of other insects. 2. Their ecological role makes them significant in biological pest control. 3. The genus *Duta* Nixon was, until recently, documented mainly from India. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (a). **Explanation:** *Duta* was previously known mainly from Nearctic, not Indian, records — the 2026 study newly established significant Indian diversity.

PROBABLE MAINS QUESTION

Discuss the significance of taxonomic research on India's insect biodiversity for agricultural biological control. (150 words)

#GS3

#ZSI

#Scelionidae

#StaticTopic

§2 · Places in News

PLACES IN NEWS — 13 SEPTEMBER 2026 | ANTIM ASSURED 100+



§3 · Ethics & Integrity Cases

CONCEPT: DISTRIBUTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY VS SCAPEGOATING

1. The MCD Commissioner's Dilemma

You are the newly-appointed MCD Commissioner tasked with implementing the Delhi HC's order after the Satya Niketan collapse. Investigation shows building-plan approvals were routinely signed off for years despite bypassed fire-NOC requirements, implicating multiple past officials, not just the current PG owner.

Framework: Utilitarian deterrence value of naming systemic failure vs each officer's individual deontological duty regardless of "everyone was doing it."

CONCEPT: INTERGENERATIONAL STEWARDSHIP OF HERITAGE

2. Whose Duty Is an Undocumented Ruin?

The Boramani stone labyrinth remains unprotected years after its discovery, at risk from encroachment and weathering, while ASI/state resources are stretched across thousands of undocumented sites.

Framework: The state's fiduciary duty to future generations to preserve heritage evidence, weighed against finite budgetary and administrative capacity.

CONCEPT: STRATEGIC AMBIGUITY IN STATECRAFT

3. The Ethics of Diplomatic Silence

India's own readout of the Modi-Xi meeting omits the Taiwan/Tibet references that China's readout includes, leaving the public unable to independently verify what was actually said.

Framework: Prudential ethics — calculated ambiguity as a legitimate statecraft tool vs a citizen's right to transparent foreign-policy communication.

CONCEPT: RECIPROCITY IN ALLIANCE-BUILDING

4. Trust as a Two-Way Obligation

The India-Australia Maritime Security Roadmap depends on both sides honouring reciprocal logistics access under the MLSA, even when domestic political pressures might tempt either side to defer commitments.

Framework: Reciprocity as the ethical foundation of durable alliances, distinct from transactional, interest-only cooperation.

CONCEPT: DUE PROCESS VS UTILITARIAN ENFORCEMENT

5. The Reverse Burden of Proof

PMLA's provisions allow attachment of "proceeds of crime" and shift the burden of proof onto the accused, raising the tension between swift, effective enforcement and the presumption of innocence.

Framework: Deontological due-process rights vs the utilitarian goal of deterring large-scale financial crime and terror financing.

CONCEPT: PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE VS ANTHROPOCENTRISM

6. Development at the Boundary of a Sanctuary

Premapura village's residents built homes within Van Vihar's Eco-Sensitive Zone, likely without full awareness of the ESZ's legal weight, while officials tasked with monitoring the boundary failed to act for years.

Framework: The precautionary principle and ecocentrism vs the immediate livelihood/housing needs of local, often economically vulnerable communities.

§4 · Prelims MCQs

Q1. Consider the following statements on the Model Tenancy Act, 2021: 1. It is directly applicable across India without state ratification. 2. It establishes Rent Authorities for tenancy registration. 3. It automatically covers unregistered paying-guest accommodation. Which is/are correct? (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 only (c) 1 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3 — **Ans: (b)**, a model law needs state adoption; it doesn't auto-cover unregistered PGs.

Q2. With reference to the Satavahana dynasty: 1. Pratishthana served as a capital. 2. They patronised rock-cut chaityas at Karla/Bhaja. 3. Their territory excluded the Konkan coast. Correct? (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3 (c) 1 only (d) all three — **Ans: (a)**, they controlled Konkan ports like Kalyan/Sopara.

Q3. Regarding India-China border de-escalation: 1. Galwan clash occurred June 2020. 2. Depsang-Demchok disengagement was October 2024. 3. The LAC is formally delimited and mutually agreed. Correct? (a) 1 and 2 (b) 1 and 3 (c) 2 and 3 (d) all three — **Ans: (a)**, the LAC remains undelimited.

Q4. Consider: 1. BRICS had five original members before 2024 expansion. 2. NDB is headquartered in New Delhi. 3. The 2026 Declaration launched a common BRICS currency. Correct? (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 (c) 1 and 3 (d) 2 and 3 — **Ans: (a)**, NDB is in Shanghai; no common currency launched.

Q5. The BRICS New Development Bank is headquartered in: (a) Beijing (b) Shanghai (c) New Delhi (d) Johannesburg — **Ans: (b)** Shanghai.

Q6. Consider: 1. India-Australia CSP was established in 2020. 2. MLSA allows reciprocal military-logistics access. 3. AUSINDEX is a trilateral exercise with Japan. Correct? (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3 (c) 1 and 3 (d) all three — **Ans: (a)**, AUSINDEX is bilateral.

Q7. Consider the PMLA, 2002: 1. ED can provisionally attach proceeds of crime pre-conviction. 2. FIU-IND functions under MHA. 3. India joined FATF in 2010. Correct? (a) 1 and 3 (b) 2 and 3 (c) 1 and 2 (d) all three — **Ans: (a)**, FIU-IND is under the Department of Revenue, not MHA.

Q8. FATF's peer-review mechanism assessing a country's AML/CFT compliance is commonly known as the: (a) Basel framework (b) Grey/black list (c) Article IV consultation (d) FSAP — **Ans: (b)** Grey/black list.

Q9. Consider India's critical-minerals policy: 1. The MMDR Amendment Act, 2023 delisted lithium from the atomic-mineral category. 2. NCMM has no role for GSI. 3. India's first major lithium reserve was reported from J&K. Correct? (a) 1 and 3 (b) 2 and 3 (c) 1 only (d) all three — **Ans: (a)**, GSI executes NCMM's exploration projects.

Q10. Which agency is India's apex organisation for critical-mineral exploration under the NCMM? (a) ONGC (b) Geological Survey of India (c) NMDC (d) Coal India — **Ans: (b)** GSI.

Q11. Consider FCNR(B) deposits: 1. They are foreign-currency term deposits from NRIs. 2. The depositor bears no exchange-rate risk on the principal. 3. RBI used a similar swap scheme in 2013. Correct? (a) 1 and 2 (b) 1 and 3 (c) 2 and 3 (d) all three — **Ans: (d)** all three correct.

Q12. Consider the Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 2026: 1. It replaces the 1891 Act. 2. It denies admissibility to digital-only banking records. 3. It complements the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023. Correct? (a) 1 and 3 (b) 1 and 2 (c) 2 and 3 (d) all three — **Ans: (a)**, digital form alone cannot bar admissibility.

Q13. The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 replaced which colonial-era law? (a) IPC, 1860 (b) CrPC, 1973 (c) Indian Evidence Act, 1872 (d) Police Act, 1861 — **Ans: (c)** Indian Evidence Act, 1872.

Q14. Consider ESZs in India: 1. Notified under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. 2. They completely prohibit human activity. 3. NGT can direct joint wildlife-civic investigations of violations. Correct? (a) 3 only (b) 1 and 3 (c) 2 and 3 (d) all three — **Ans: (a)**, ESZs are under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and regulate, not ban.

Q15. The Bhoj Wetland, adjoining Van Vihar National Park, is designated as a: (a) Biosphere Reserve (b) Ramsar Site (c) Tiger Reserve (d) UNESCO World Heritage Site — **Ans: (b)** Ramsar Site.

Q16. Consider Scelionidae wasps (e.g. genus *Duta*): 1. They are egg parasitoids. 2. They have biocontrol significance. 3. *Duta* was, until recently, documented mainly from India. Correct? (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3 (c) 1 and 3 (d) all three — **Ans: (a)**, *Duta* was mainly Nearctic before the 2026 study.

Q17. Which institution is India's apex organisation for faunal taxonomy, having described the new *Duta* species? (a) BSI (b) ZSI (c) WII (d) ICFRE — **Ans: (b)** Zoological Survey of India.

Q18. Consider India's recent legal-code replacements: 1. BNS, 2023 replaced the IPC, 1860. 2. BNSS, 2023 replaced the CrPC, 1973. 3. The Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 2026 replaced a 1972 law. Correct? (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3 (c) 1 and 3 (d) all three — **Ans: (a)**, the Bankers' Books Evidence Act replaced the 1891 Act, not a 1972 one.

Q19. The National Green Tribunal's Central Zone Bench, which ordered the Van Vihar ESZ probe, is headquartered at: (a) Bhopal (b) Pune (c) Kolkata (d) Chennai — **Ans: (a)** Bhopal.

Q20. China's current dominance in the global supply chain for critical minerals is most pronounced in: (a) Lithium mining (b) Rare-earth-element processing (c) Cobalt mining (d) Bauxite mining — **Ans: (b)** Rare-earth-element processing.

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§5 · Mains Questions

1. (GS1) Discuss the contribution of the Satavahana dynasty to art, architecture and Indo-Roman trade in peninsular India. (150 words)

2. (GS2) Recent building-collapse incidents in urban paying-guest accommodations expose a regulatory vacuum between municipal building law and rental-housing law in India. Discuss. (150 words)

3. (GS2) Divergent official readouts of the same bilateral meeting are often as diplomatically significant as the meeting itself. Discuss with reference to recent India-China engagement. (150 words)

4. (GS2/GS3) Examine the significance of India-Australia maritime security cooperation in the context of India's Indo-Pacific strategy. (150 words)

5. (GS3) Discuss the institutional architecture of India's anti-money-laundering framework and the constitutional concerns it raises. (150 words)

6. (GS3) Critical mineral security is emerging as a new frontier of India's resource geopolitics. Discuss the challenges and strategy. (150 words)

7. (GS2/GS3) Distinguish between "de-dollarisation" and a "common currency" in the context of BRICS, and examine India's stance on each. (150 words)

8. (GS3) Eco-Sensitive Zones are meant to act as "shock absorbers" around India's protected areas. Examine the enforcement challenges in realising this intent. (150 words)

9. (GS4 — Case Study) As the newly-appointed MCD Commissioner directed to implement the Delhi High Court's order after the Satya Niketan PG collapse, you find that building-plan approvals were routinely granted for years despite bypassed fire-safety requirements, implicating several past officials, not just the current owner. (a) What are the ethical issues involved? (b) What course of action would you adopt? (250 words)

THEIAS AKADEMIA The GS4 case study above mirrors the structured dilemma-resolution method taught in **EMP (Ethics & Moral Philosophy)**. theiasakademia.com.

§6 • Answer Writing Value Addition

\$136.38bn Cumulative RBI USD-INR swap-facility inflows as of 31 Aug 2026, FCNR(B) alone contributing \$127.23bn.

1,200 Exploration projects tasked to the GSI under the National Critical Mineral Mission, 2024-25 to 2030-31.

"Three Mutuals" PM Modi's articulated India-China framework: mutual respect, mutual sensitivity, mutual interest.

90 days Structural/fire-safety NOC deadline proposed under Delhi's draft PG Accommodation Regulation & Welfare Bill, 2026.

1891→2026 135 years separate the two Bankers' Books Evidence Acts, ending a colonial-era evidentiary regime.

10 species New parasitoid wasps of genus *Duta* described by ZSI from India in 2026, expanding a once-Nearctic genus.

100 metres The Eco-Sensitive Zone radius notified around Van Vihar National Park, breached at Prempura village.

24% BRICS's near-doubled share of global exports, cited by Piyush Goyal at the BRICS Business Forum (11 Sept 2026).

§7 • AKADEMIA Direct Hit Tracker

TOPIC	GS PAPER	CAPSULE	PROBABILITY
Satya Niketan PG Collapse & Draft Bill	GS2	Urban-governance accountability gap	★★★★☆
Boramani Stone Labyrinth (Satavahana)	GS1	Rare ritual-architecture find	★★★★☆
Modi-Xi Bilateral (readout divergence)	GS2	India-China calibrated engagement	★★★★★
BRICS New Delhi Declaration	GS2	UNSC reform, counter-terrorism	★★★★★
BRICS Local-Currency vs Common Currency	GS2/GS3	De-dollarisation debate	★★★★☆
India-Australia Navy Chief Visit	GS2/GS3	Indo-Pacific maritime roadmap	★★★★☆
PMLA/FIU-IND Architecture	GS3	AML framework, due-process tension	★★★★☆
National Critical Mineral Mission	GS3	Resource security, GSI target	★★★★☆
RBI USD-INR Swap Facility	GS3	External-sector monetary tool	★★★★☆
Bankers' Books Evidence Act, 2026	GS2/GS3	Colonial-law replacement	★★★★☆
Van Vihar NP ESZ Violation	GS3	ESZ enforcement gap	★★★★☆
<i>Duta Nixon</i> Wasp Species (ZSI)	GS3	Insect taxonomy/biocontrol	★★★★☆
Model Tenancy Act, 2021 (context)	GS2	Rental-housing law gaps	★★★★☆
FATF & India's AML Compliance	GS3	International peer review	★★★★☆
Comprehensive Strategic Partnerships	GS2	India's tiered diplomacy	★★★★☆
Colonial Law Replacement (BNS/BNSS/BSA/BBEA)	GS2	Legal-code modernisation	★★★★☆
Ramsar Convention & Bhoj Wetland	GS3	Wetland conservation obligations	★★★★☆
LAC & India-China Border Mechanisms	GS2/GS3	Boundary-management doctrine	★★★★☆

★ 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
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7

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE DOCUMENT

6

QUESTIONS FROM
A SINGLE CLASS

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

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Proof of Precision

Every item mapped. Every claim verified.

2

ENVIRONMENT CARDS

6

ETHICS CASES

20

MCQS GENERATED

9

MAINS QUESTIONS

7

PLACES MAPPED

0

REPEATED TOPICS

Environment

Ethics

Polity

IR

Defence

Economy

✓ All news sourced from NGT orders, ZSI/Zootaxa, PIB/MEA statements, and verified primary sources

✓ Every topic cross-checked against the 7-day topic log and 25-year UPSC question bank

✓ News Freshness Rule applied — no topic repeated without a Memory Technique box

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