

THEIAS AKADEMIA

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PART II · ENVIRONMENT TO DIRECT HIT TRACKER

Wednesday, 07 October 2026

“The Topper's Last Read. Every Morning.”

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GS3

Conservation of Species & Protected Areas

29–30 September 2026 (honestly dated — still the lead wildlife-translocation story into this edition) · Source: State Forest Department/NTCA-linked reporting via national outlets

A Tigress Returns to Buxa After Decades of No Resident Breeding Population

Why in News: On 29 September 2026, a 3-year-old tigress (T138, roughly 150 kg) was transported from Valmiki Tiger Reserve (Bihar) and released into Buxa Tiger Reserve (West Bengal) on 30 September, during Wildlife Week 2026. Buxa has had no confirmed resident breeding tiger population for decades despite being notified as a reserve in 1983. Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav and the West Bengal Chief Minister announced the release; two to three more tigers are planned for translocation within the next two months to build a viable founder population. This is honestly dated at 29–30 September rather than disguised as breaking news, because the follow-up translocation plan and habitat-monitoring coverage remain the dominant wildlife story into this edition's window, with no fresher pure-environment development clearing the freshness bar after an exhaustive sweep of Down To Earth, MoEFCC/PIB, NGT, NTCA/WII/ZSI/BSI/FSI, IUCN and UNEP/WMO/IPCC sources.

Background: Buxa Tiger Reserve (760 sq km, Alipurduar district, West Bengal) sits in the Dooars, spanning the Gangetic plains up to the Himalayan foothills, and is ecologically contiguous with Bhutan's forests, Assam's Manas landscape and the Jaldapara corridor — a key node for cross-border tiger and elephant dispersal. Although declared a reserve in 1983 under Project Tiger, poaching and habitat degradation left it tiger-less for years even as the prey base slowly recovered. Since 2018, the Forest Department has run an active restoration programme: over 800 chital released for prey supplementation, 380 hectares of grassland restored, and 64 Eco-Development Committees engaged with local communities. Valmiki Tiger Reserve, the source reserve, is itself a conservation success story, its tiger count rising from 8 in 2010 to 54 in the latest count, making it a surplus donor population for this active metapopulation-management strategy.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Tigress T138: age 3 years, weight ~150 kg, source Valmiki Tiger Reserve, West Champaran, Bihar.
- Captured 29 September 2026; released into Buxa 30 September 2026, during Wildlife Week 2026.
- Buxa Tiger Reserve: 760 sq km, notified 1983, Alipurduar district, West Bengal; part of the Dooars/Eastern Himalayan foothills landscape.

- Valmiki's tiger population grew from 8 (2010) to 54 (latest census) — the “source” reserve model for this translocation.
- 2–3 more tigers are planned for translocation to Buxa within roughly two months of this release.
- T138 is fitted with a satellite/VHF collar for continuous post-release monitoring.
- Habitat preparation since 2018: 800+ chital released, 380 hectares of grassland restored, 64 Eco-Development Committees engaged.
- Buxa links to Bhutan's forests, Assam's Manas and Jaldapara — relevant to Project Tiger's landscape-level (not reserve-only) approach.

MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- Marks a shift in India's conservation paradigm — from isolated reserve protection toward active, science-led metapopulation management using source-sink dynamics and genetic rescue.
- Human-wildlife interface: reintroducing an apex predator into a reserve bordering settled Dooars villages and tea gardens raises conflict-mitigation and compensation-regime questions under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 framework.
- Transboundary conservation angle: the Buxa-Bhutan-Assam corridor implicates India-Bhutan cooperation on habitat connectivity, a genuine Environment-IR overlap for Mains answers.
- Keystone-species economics: tiger reserves anchor ecotourism and ecosystem services, raising the opportunity-cost question of intensive single-species conservation versus landscape-level, multi-species conservation.
- Institutional capacity: the role of NTCA, State Forest Departments and Eco-Development Committees in translocation planning, post-release monitoring and community stakeholding.

LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

Two reserves, one number pair: Valmiki went **8** → **54** tigers (the donor); Buxa has gone from **0** resident tigers for decades → **1** with T138. Source-to-sink, in two numbers.

PYQ LINKAGE

Thematically linked to UPSC Prelims' recurring “match the tiger reserve to its State” format; exact wording/year not independently verified this run — present as a Mains-linkage theme rather than an exact citation.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. With reference to tiger conservation in India, consider the following statements:

1. Buxa Tiger Reserve is located in West Bengal and was notified as a tiger reserve in 1983.
2. Valmiki Tiger Reserve lies on the India-Nepal border and is part of the Terai Arc Landscape.
3. Tiger translocation between reserves is prohibited under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, which permits only in-situ protection.

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 false — active translocation between reserves, as seen with T138's move from Valmiki to Buxa, is a recognised and increasingly used conservation tool, not a prohibited one.

Buxa Tiger Reserve

Valmiki Tiger Reserve

Tiger Translocation

Project Tiger

GS3

GS3

Conservation of Species — Static Profile

Static Topic — not tied to a current event · Source: IUCN Red List / established species literature

Species in Focus: The Gharial, River Sentinel of the Ganga System

Why in News: This static profile rotates in because the Gharial has not featured in any of the last 30 editions, and because it pairs thematically with today's Environment Card 1: both are apex-species conservation stories built on the same India-pioneered tool — captive breeding and reintroduction into protected river/forest habitat.

Background: *Gavialis gangeticus* is the most distinct of all living crocodilians, instantly identifiable by its long, narrow, fish-catching snout and, in mature males, a bulbous nasal protuberance called the “ghara.” Once ranging across the Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra river systems, it is now functionally extinct across most of its historic range, surviving mainly in fragmented, actively managed populations. Conservation began under “Project Crocodile” (1975, with UNDP/FAO support), which pioneered a “grow and release” captive-breeding model at centres such as Kukrail (Lucknow) — the same institutional template now underpinning tiger and lion translocation programmes decades later.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Scientific name: *Gavialis gangeticus*; family Gavialidae.
- IUCN status: Critically Endangered; CITES Appendix I; Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I.
- Primary stronghold: the National Chambal Gharial Sanctuary, spanning the Uttar Pradesh–Madhya Pradesh–Rajasthan tri-junction.
- Other populations: Girwa river near Katarniaghat (UP), and fragments in the Brahmaputra and Mahanadi systems.
- Key threats: sand mining and riverbed alteration, dam/barrage construction fragmenting habitat, entanglement in fishing nets, and disturbance of sandbank nesting sites.
- Conservation framework began under Project Crocodile (1975, UNDP/FAO-supported); “grow and release” captive breeding pioneered at Kukrail, Lucknow.
- Ecological role: apex riverine predator/scavenger and indicator species for river health — gharial decline signals riverbed and flow degradation relevant to the Namami Gange mission.

- Classic exam distractor: often confused with the mugger crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*), a broader-snouted generalist found across lakes, rivers and wetlands, versus the gharial's narrow-snouted, purely fish-eating, riverine-specialist niche.

📍 MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- River-health indicator species, directly linking species conservation to the Namami Gange / river-rejuvenation mission.
- Inter-State river-sanctuary governance: the Chambal sanctuary spans three States, raising Centre-State coordination challenges for long, linear protected areas that don't respect administrative boundaries.
- Development-versus-conservation trade-off: sand-mining economy pressures versus riverine biodiversity protection, a recurring theme across India's river sanctuaries.
- Ex-situ breed-and-release as a conservation template — and its limits, since reintroduced gharials have shown variable post-release survival in some studies, a useful critical angle for Mains answers that over-praise captive breeding.

🧠 LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

Snout shape is destiny: **Gharial** = narrow snout, fish-only diet, river specialist. **Mugger** = broad snout, generalist diet, lakes-rivers-wetlands. "Narrow and picky vs. broad and flexible" separates the two in any MCQ.

📋 PYQ LINKAGE

Thematically linked to the recurring Chambal/gharial theme in UPSC test-series material; no authentic past UPSC-set question confidently recalled — flagged rather than fabricated.

📍 PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. With reference to the Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*), consider the following statements:

1. It is listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and Appendix I of CITES.
2. The National Chambal Sanctuary, its key stronghold, lies entirely within a single State.
3. Unlike the mugger crocodile, the gharial is a dietary specialist that feeds almost exclusively on fish.

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 false — the National Chambal Sanctuary spans three States (Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan), not a single State.

Gharial

National Chambal Sanctuary

Project Crocodile

IUCN Red List

GS3

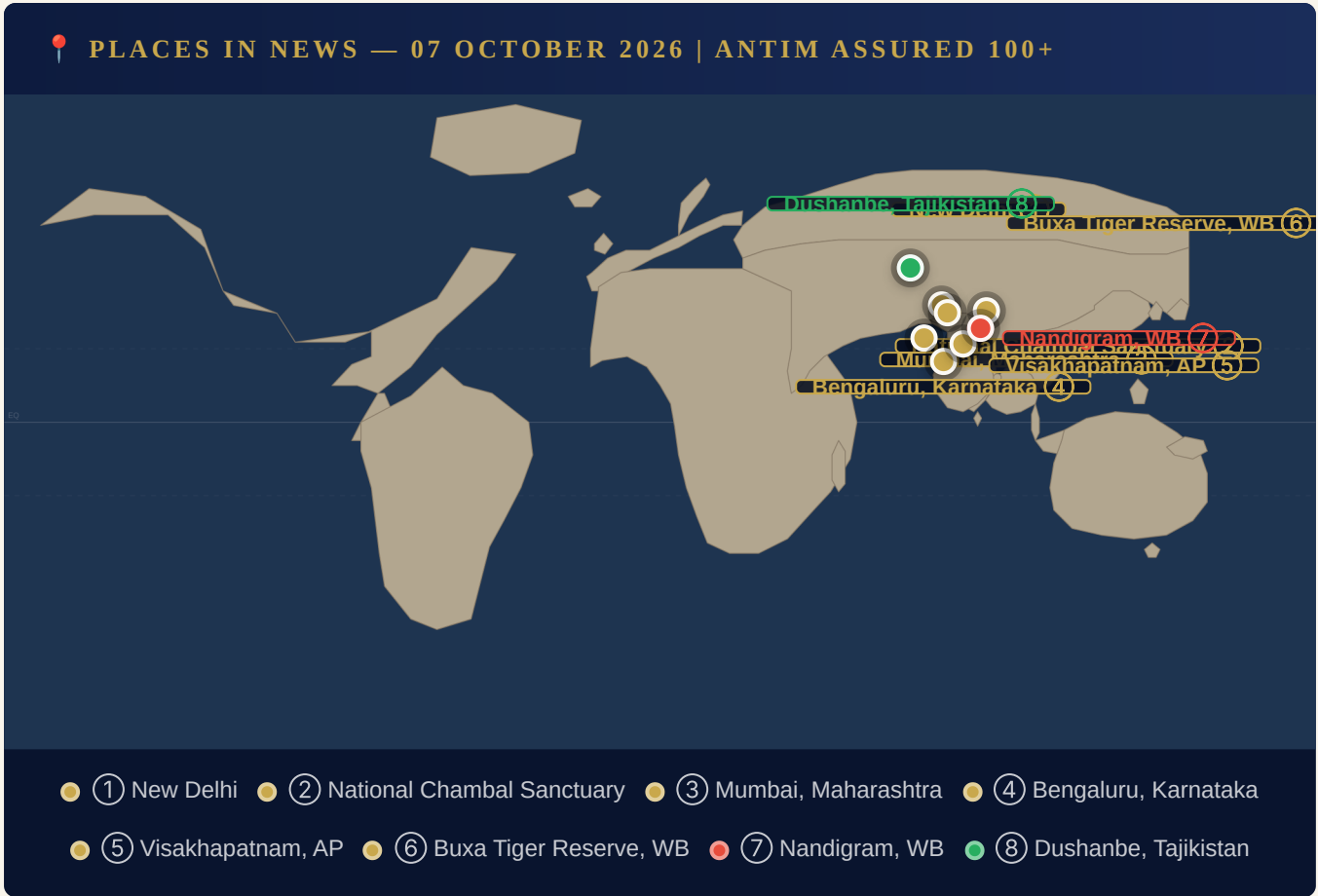
built for exactly this kind of ecocentric-versus-anthropocentric reasoning you'll need in both GS3 and GS4 answers. Explore it at theiasakademia.com.

PLACES IN NEWS

2

Places in News

8 pins · equirectangular projection, real coordinates



① New Delhi

Seat of the Supreme Court's hearings on the CEC's authority and the Election Commissioners Act reference (Part I, Polity Cards 1–2); also where USPACOM Commander Admiral Paparo met India's CDS and EAM Jaishankar (Part I, IR Card 2).

Sited on the Yamuna's western bank within the Lutyens' Delhi administrative zone, which houses the Supreme Court, Parliament and the principal Ministries referenced across this edition.

② National Chambal Sanctuary (UP–MP–Rajasthan)

Primary stronghold of the Gharial, this edition's static species profile (Part II, Environment Card 2).

A ravine-and-sandbank riverine tract along the Chambal, a major Yamuna tributary, spanning three States — a textbook case of a linear protected area that does not respect administrative boundaries.

③ Mumbai, Maharashtra

Headquarters of the Reserve Bank of India, source of both the credit-deposit ratio Bulletin and the broader monetary-policy backdrop to today's Economy section (Part I, Economy Card 1).

India's financial capital on the Arabian Sea coast, home to RBI, SEBI and the Bombay Stock Exchange, making it the natural anchor point for any banking-sector dateline.

④ Bengaluru, Karnataka

ISRO's headquarters, source of today's space-sector-reform clarification on the ISRO–IN-SPACE–NSIL division of roles (Part I, S&T Card 1).

Sits on the Deccan Plateau at over 900 m elevation; its cluster of public-sector R&D institutions (ISRO, DRDO labs, IISc) made it India's natural aerospace-research hub from the 1960s onward.

⑤ Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh

Hindustan Shipyard Limited's base, tied to the Navy's record 18-warship induction target for 2026 (Part I, Defence Card 2).

India's principal Eastern Naval Command base, sited where the Eastern Ghats meet the Bay of Bengal, giving the Navy a natural deep-water harbour and shipbuilding hub for its Eastern Fleet.

⑥ Buxa Tiger Reserve, West Bengal

Site of tigress T138's reintroduction after decades without a resident breeding population (Part II, Environment Card 1); its source reserve, Valmiki (Bihar), sits on the India-Nepal border along the Gandak river as part of the Terai Arc Landscape.

Lies in the Dooars at the Himalayan-foothill–Gangetic-plain transition, sharing a forest corridor with Bhutan and Assam's Manas landscape — strategically relevant to transboundary wildlife-corridor cooperation.

⑦ Nandigram, West Bengal

One of two constituencies (with Rejinagar) voting today in Assembly bypolls amid the unresolved SIR appeal backlog (Part I, Polity Card 3).

Located in Purba Medinipur district on the Bengal delta's fertile, densely populated coastal plain — historically significant terrain in the State's electoral geography.

⑧ Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Capital of one of the two new Central Asian customers (with Turkmenistan) for India's Akash air-defence missile export (Part I, Defence Card 1).

A landlocked Central Asian capital in the Hisar Valley, ringed by the Pamir and Alay mountain systems — part of the Connect Central Asia policy space where India's defence-export diplomacy is now extending.

ETHICS & INTEGRITY (GS4)

3

Ethics & Integrity

6 cases · each names its concept

Case 1 · When the Referee Disagrees With Itself

Primus Inter Pares & Collective Institutional Responsibility

Scenario: You are a senior ECI official asked to draft an internal note on how a disputed CEC-level decision (changing Form 6 without a Rules amendment) should be recorded when two of three Election Commissioners formally object.

Ethical issue: Does institutional unity require presenting a façade of consensus to the public, or does genuine accountability demand that dissent be documented and made available for judicial and public scrutiny?

Resolution anchor: An officer's note should preserve the dissent on record rather than suppress it — the Seshan doctrine of “primus inter pares” only has meaning if disagreement among equals is visible, not papered over for institutional optics.

Case 2 · A Vote Delayed Is a Vote Denied?

Proportionality & the Right to Vote as Integral to Article 21

Scenario: As a Returning Officer in West Bengal, you know thousands of SIR appeals remain undecided on the morning of a bypoll, and some of those voters will be turned away at the booth.

Ethical issue: Should procedural administrative delay (an under-resourced appellate system) be allowed to extinguish a substantive constitutional right, simply because the affected election is “only a bypoll” rather than a general election?

Resolution anchor: A conscientious officer would escalate the backlog as an urgent institutional failure regardless of the poll's scale — the right to vote does not come in different strengths depending on the importance assigned to an election by others.

Case 3 · Curing a Flaw With the Same Tool That Caused It

Separation of Powers & the Limits of Legislative Overruling

Scenario: As a law ministry officer, you are asked to defend the 2023 Act's selection-panel design (PM + LoP + one Cabinet Minister) against the charge that it defeats the Supreme Court's own interim safeguard in Anoop Baranwal.

Ethical issue: Is it ethical for the executive to use its ordinary law-making power to substantively reverse the effect of a judicial safeguard, even while remaining technically within its constitutional authority to legislate?

Resolution anchor: Legal power and ethical legitimacy are not the same thing: an officer should flag the optics and substance of a 2:1 executive-majority panel honestly in any briefing, rather than treating bare legislative competence as a complete ethical defence.

Case 4 • Whose Forest Is It, Really?

Ecocentrism versus Anthropocentrism

Scenario: As a Forest Range Officer in Buxa, you must brief tea-garden villages at the reserve's edge that a tigress has just been released nearby, years after they stopped expecting to share their landscape with a big cat.

Ethical issue: Does the ecological imperative of restoring a keystone predator species override the duty of care owed to forest-fringe communities who did not consent to the renewed risk of human-wildlife conflict?

Resolution anchor: An ethical officer treats the two obligations as complementary, not competing — genuine conservation success depends on transparent community engagement and a credible compensation mechanism, not on treating local residents as collateral to a wildlife target.

Case 5 • Protecting the Farmer or Protecting the Deal?

Rawls's Difference Principle & Distributive Trade-Offs

Scenario: As a trade-negotiation advisor, you are asked whether India should concede dairy-market access to unlock the stalled India-US Bilateral Trade Agreement, benefiting exporters and consumers broadly.

Ethical issue: How should a public official weigh a diffuse national economic gain against a concentrated harm to millions of small, often subsistence-level dairy farmers and cooperative members?

Resolution anchor: Rawls's difference principle suggests any trade concession should be judged by its effect on the least-advantaged group affected — here, smallholder dairy farmers — not merely by aggregate national benefit, which is precisely why India's negotiators have repeatedly held this line.

Case 6 • Selling What You Would Not Want Turned on You

Dual-Use Technology & Arms-Export Responsibility

Scenario: As a Department of Defence Production official, you are reviewing an export clearance for Akash air-defence systems to a new Central Asian customer with its own regional tensions.

Ethical issue: Does a state bear moral responsibility for how a legitimately exported defence system might later be used, beyond simply complying with end-user certificates and export-control law?

Resolution anchor: An official should apply due diligence beyond the paperwork minimum — assessing a recipient state's regional conduct and likely use-case — recognising that legal compliance under export-control rules is a floor for arms-trade ethics, not a ceiling.

PRELIMS MCQS

4

Prelims MCQs

20 questions · 12 statement-based

Q1. With reference to the Election Commission of India, consider the following statements:

1. The Election Commission has functioned as a three-member body continuously since 1950.
2. In T.N. Seshan v. Union of India (1995), the Supreme Court described the CEC as “primus inter pares.”

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (b) — The Commission was single-member until October 1989 and became consistently multi-member only from 1993; statement 2 correctly states the Seshan doctrine.

Q2. The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners Act, 2023 replaced which member of the Election Commissioner selection panel envisaged in Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India (2023)?

- (a) The Leader of the Opposition (b) The Prime Minister
(c) The Chief Justice of India (d) The Law Minister

Answer: (c) — The 2023 Act substituted a Union Cabinet Minister (nominated by the PM) for the Chief Justice of India in the selection panel.

Q3. With reference to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, consider the following statements:

1. SIR is distinct from the routine annual Summary Revision of electoral rolls.
2. SIR was first implemented in Bihar ahead of its 2025 Assembly elections.
3. Appeals against exclusion under SIR must be disposed of within 30 days by law.

- (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 false — no statutory deadline binds appellate disposal under SIR, which is precisely the gap at the heart of the West Bengal backlog story.

Q4. The Southwest Monsoon's withdrawal from India normally commences from which part of the country?

- (a) The Malabar coast (b) West Rajasthan
(c) The Gangetic delta (d) The Andaman Sea

Answer: (b) — Per IMD's revised normal dates (2020), withdrawal begins around 1 September from west Rajasthan, opposite to where onset begins (Kerala).

Q5. Consider the following statements regarding the India-US Bilateral Trade Agreement talks as of October 2026:

1. Dairy-sector market access remains a major sticking point.
2. The agreement has been signed and ratified by both countries.
3. US tariff threats linked to India's Russian oil imports have affected the negotiations.

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

Answer: (c) — Statement 2 is false — talks remain at a self-described "plateau" with no agreement signed.

Q6. United States Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) is headquartered in:

- (a) Guam (b) Honolulu, Hawaii
(c) San Diego, California (d) Yokosuka, Japan

Answer: (b) — INDOPACOM, the oldest and largest US geographic combatant command, is headquartered in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Q7. Which of the following foundational agreements between India and the United States governs the sharing of geospatial data?

- (a) LEMOA (b) COMCASA
(c) BECA (d) GSOMIA

Answer: (c) — BECA (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement), signed in 2020, governs geospatial-intelligence sharing; LEMOA covers logistics and COMCASA covers secure communications.

Q8. With reference to the Akash missile system, consider the following statements:

1. It is a short-to-medium-range surface-to-air missile developed by DRDO.
2. Armenia was its first export customer.
3. As of October 2026, it has been exported to a total of four countries.

- (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 false — as of this edition, Akash has three confirmed export customers: Armenia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

Q9. India's SAGAR doctrine, frequently invoked in the context of naval strategy, stands for:

- (a) Security and Growth for All in the Region (b)
Strategic Autonomy and Global Alliance Relations
(c) Ships, Aircraft, Guns and Readiness (d)
Southern Asian Geopolitical Alliance for
Regionalism

Answer: (a) — SAGAR stands for Security and Growth for All in the Region, India's maritime-strategy doctrine for the Indian Ocean Region.

Q10. Consider the following statements on India's space-sector reforms:

1. IN-SPACE promotes and authorises private-sector participation in space activities.
2. NSIL's primary role is frontier scientific research rather than commercialisation.
3. ISRO has stated it will not be privatised, retaining its role as India's principal space R&D institution.

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

Answer: (a) — Statement 2 is false — NSIL's role is to commercialise mature, proven ISRO technologies, not conduct frontier research, which remains ISRO's domain.

Q11. The National Quantum Mission's Quantum Communication vertical is anchored at which institution?

- (a) IISc Bengaluru (b) IIT Bombay
(c) IIT Madras (with C-DOT) (d) IIT Delhi

Answer: (c) — The Quantum Communication vertical's Thematic Hub is at IIT Madras in partnership with C-DOT; IISc Bengaluru anchors Quantum Computing, IIT Bombay anchors Sensing & Metrology, and IIT Delhi anchors Materials & Devices.

Q12. Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) is considered secure primarily because:

- (a) It relies on computational problems that are too complex for classical computers to solve
- (b) Any attempt to measure or intercept the quantum state disturbs it in a detectable way
- (c) It uses a longer encryption key than classical methods
- (d) It operates only over government-owned fibre-optic cables

Answer: (b) — QKD's security rests on a law of quantum mechanics — measurement disturbs the state — not on computational complexity, which underlies classical schemes like RSA.

Q13. With reference to the Credit-Deposit (CD) ratio, consider the following statements:

1. It measures the proportion of a bank's deposits deployed as credit.
2. A rising CD ratio has traditionally been read as a possible funding-vulnerability signal.
3. RBI's own analysis holds that a rising CD ratio can have no explanation other than genuine financial-stability risk.

- (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 false — RBI's own Bulletin article argues deposit creation can follow credit creation ("endogenous money") without necessarily signalling vulnerability.

Q14. India's fiscal deficit for April–August 2026 stood at what share of the full-year FY27 Budget Estimate?

- (a) 38.1% (b) 41.9%
- (c) 45.2% (d) 50.0%

Answer: (b) — CGA data placed the five-month fiscal deficit at 41.9% of the FY27 Budget Estimate, faster than the 38.1% recorded in the same period of FY26.

Q15. The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act primarily aims to:

- (a) Regulate foreign exchange reserves (b) Institutionalise fiscal discipline and reduce fiscal deficit over time
- (c) Fix the repo rate (d) Govern Centre-State tax devolution exclusively

Answer: (b) — The FRBM Act, 2003 institutionalises fiscal discipline and sets a glide path for reducing the fiscal deficit, against which monthly CGA data like today's is tracked.

Q16. Buxa Tiger Reserve, recently in the news for a tiger reintroduction, is located in which State?

- (a) Assam (b) West Bengal
(c) Bihar (d) Sikkim

Answer: (b) — Buxa Tiger Reserve lies in Alipurduar district, West Bengal, in the Dooars region bordering Bhutan.

Q17. With reference to the Gharial, consider the following statements:

1. It is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
2. It is primarily a generalist feeder found in lakes, rivers and wetlands alike.
3. The National Chambal Sanctuary is its key stronghold in India.

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

Answer: (a) — Statement 2 is false — that description fits the mugger crocodile; the gharial is a dietary specialist confined largely to flowing river systems.

Q18. Project Crocodile, the precursor to India's modern captive-breeding conservation model for species like the gharial, was launched with support from:

- (a) IUCN and WWF (b) UNDP and FAO
(c) World Bank and ADB (d) UNESCO and UNEP

Answer: (b) — Project Crocodile (1975) received UNDP and FAO support and pioneered the “grow and release” captive-breeding model later applied to other species.

Q19. Consider the following statements regarding India's defence-export policy:

1. India's defence exports in FY2025-26 reached a record figure, as reported, of over ₹38,000 crore.
2. BrahMos, Pinaka and Astra have been cited alongside Akash as flagship Indian defence-export products.

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (c) — Both statements are accurate per this edition's Defence Card 1 on Akash's export expansion.

Q20. The Mahe-class, referenced in the context of India's 2026 naval induction drive, refers to a class of:

- (a) Nuclear-powered submarines (b) Anti-submarine shallow-water craft
(c) Aircraft carriers (d) Fleet Support Ships

Answer: (b) — The Mahe-class comprises anti-submarine shallow-water craft built at Cochin Shipyard Limited, distinct from the Fleet Support Ship programme at Visakhapatnam.

THEIAS AKADEMIA Twenty MCQs recognised is one thing; writing a 150-word answer under exam pressure is another — **NEEB 300+ Live PYQ Writing** is where today's Mains questions below get the same drilling these Prelims questions just got. Explore it at theiasakademia.com.

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

5

Mains Practice Questions

9 questions · GS1×1, GS2×4, GS3×3, GS4×1

Q1. **GS1**

The withdrawal of the Southwest Monsoon is as consequential for Indian agriculture and water management as its onset. Discuss the factors governing monsoon withdrawal and its implications for rabi-season planning.

(150 words, 10 marks)

Q2. **GS2**

"The doctrine of 'primus inter pares' is only as strong as the transparency of dissent within the institution it describes." Examine this statement in the context of recent controversies surrounding the Election Commission of India's internal decision-making.

(150 words, 10 marks)

Q3. **GS2**

Critically examine whether the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners Act, 2023 adequately preserves the spirit of the Supreme Court's directions in *Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India* (2023).

(150 words, 10 marks)

Q4. **GS2**

The Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls has raised concerns about due process and the right to vote. Discuss the legal and administrative safeguards needed to balance roll accuracy with electoral inclusion.

(150 words, 10 marks)

Q5. **GS2**

Discuss the significance of INDOPACOM-level military engagement for India's Indo-Pacific strategy, and examine the balance India seeks between strategic autonomy and deepening defence cooperation with the United States.

(150 words, 10 marks)

Q6. **GS3**

India's credit-deposit ratio has crossed 80% in several quarters. Examine what this indicates about the banking sector's liquidity management and the debate around "endogenous money creation."

(150 words, 10 marks)

Q7. **GS3**

Assess the significance of India's growing defence export basket, with reference to platforms such as the Akash missile system, for India's strategic autonomy and its defence-industrial base.

(250 words, 15 marks)

Q8. **GS3**

India's National Quantum Mission aims to establish long-distance secure quantum communication capability. Discuss the strategic and economic significance of Quantum Key Distribution technology for critical infrastructure protection.

(150 words, 10 marks)

Q9. **GS4**

“Conservation ethics must reconcile the rights of wildlife with the livelihoods of forest-fringe communities.” Discuss with reference to recent large-carnivore reintroduction efforts in India.

(250 words, 15 marks)

VALUE ADDITION

6

Value Addition

8 quick-reference items

Seshan Doctrine

T.N. Seshan v. Union of India (1995): the CEC is “primus inter pares” (first among equals), not superior in power to the two Election Commissioners — all three enjoy equal decision-making authority in a multi-member Commission.

Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India (2023)

Constitution Bench held that, absent a law, Election Commissioners shall be appointed by the President on the advice of a committee of the PM, Leader of Opposition and CJI — an interim safeguard pending Parliamentary legislation.

INDOPACOM

United States Indo-Pacific Command, headquartered at Honolulu, Hawaii — the US military's oldest and largest unified combatant command, covering roughly half the Earth's surface.

BECA, COMCASA, LEMOA

India-US foundational defence agreements: LEMOA (logistics, 2016), COMCASA (secure communications, 2018), BECA (geospatial data, 2020) — collectively enabling interoperability without a formal alliance.

IN-SPACe vs NSIL vs ISRO

ISRO: R&D and frontier missions. IN-SPACe: single-window promoter-cum-regulator for private space activity. NSIL: commercial arm that transfers and monetises mature ISRO technology to industry.

National Quantum Mission (2023-2031)

Outlay of ₹6,003.65 crore across four verticals — Computing (IISc Bengaluru), Communication (IIT Madras + C-DOT), Sensing & Metrology (IIT Bombay), Materials & Devices (IIT Delhi) — targeting 2,000km secure quantum communication by 2031.

Endogenous Money Creation

A monetary-theory view that bank lending creates deposits (rather than deposits pre-existing and enabling lending) — used by RBI's own research to argue a rising credit-deposit ratio need not signal funding stress.

Gharial vs Mugger

Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*): Critically Endangered, slender snout, fish-specialist, flowing rivers only.
 Mugger (*Crocodylus palustris*): Vulnerable, broad snout, generalist feeder, lakes/rivers/wetlands — frequently confused in MCQs.

DIRECT HIT TRACKER

7

Direct Hit Tracker

18 rows · today's topics mapped to PYQ years

#	TOPIC	GS PAPER	SUBJECT	PYQ LINKAGE
1	ECI — Primus Inter Pares	GS2	Polity	2017, 2022
2	Election Commissioners Act, 2023	GS2	Polity	2023 (thematic)
3	SIR of Electoral Rolls	GS2	Polity	2015 (thematic)
4	Monsoon Withdrawal	GS1	Geography	2015, 2021
5	India-US Trade Plateau	GS2	IR	2019 (thematic)
6	INDOPACOM / Paparo Visit	GS2	IR	2016 (thematic)
7	Akash Missile Exports	GS3	Defence	2020, 2022
8	Navy 18-Warship Induction	GS3	Defence	2021 (thematic)
9	ISRO No-Privatisation Clarification	GS3	S&T	2019, 2023
10	National Quantum Mission / QKD	GS3	S&T	2022 (thematic)
11	Credit-Deposit Ratio	GS3	Economy	2018 (thematic)
12	Fiscal Deficit (CGA Data)	GS3	Economy	2016, 2020
13	Buxa Tigress Reintroduction	GS3	Environment	2018, 2020
14	Gharial — Species in Focus	GS3	Environment	2013, 2021
15	National Chambal Sanctuary	GS1/3	Geography/Env	2021 (thematic)
16	Seshan Doctrine (Value Addition)	GS2	Polity	2017
17	Anoop Baranwal Judgment	GS2	Polity	2023
18	BECA / COMCASA / LEMOA	GS2	IR	2020 (thematic)

You have reached the end of **ANTIM ASSURED 100+ — Part II**. Part I (Headlines to Economy) carries today's Polity, IR, Defence, S&T and Economy coverage.

VERIFIED · PART II

2ENVIRONMENT CARDS

8PLACES MAPPED

6ETHICS CASES

20PRELIMS MCQS

9MAINS QUESTIONS

0REPEATED BLOCKED TOPICS

- ✓ The Buxa tigress story is honestly dated 29–30 September 2026 — it is carried today because it remains substantively uncovered and relevant, not because it is breaking news.
- ✓ The Gharial card is explicitly labelled a Static Topic, rotated under the 30-day Environment fallback ladder, paired thematically with the Buxa card.
- ✓ Three PYQ linkages above are marked “(thematic)” where no single matching past question exists — flagged honestly rather than fabricated.
- ✓ Zero overlap with Part I: Environment and Places in News content appears only here, per the fixed structural rule.

Proof of Precision

48Questions Recognised

7From a Single Document

6From a Single Class

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