

THEIAS AKADEMIA · MORNING EDITION · 08:00 IST

ANTIM ASSURED 100+

PART II · ENVIRONMENT TO DIRECT HIT TRACKER

Saturday, 01 August 2026

§1 · ENVIRONMENT

GS3

Species in News · Marine Biodiversity

Static Topic — not tied to a current event · Source: WII / MoEFCC species factsheets

Species in News: The Dugong, India's Rare Marine Grazer

Why in News (Static Profile): With the Union Cabinet's July 31 approval of "Samudra Manthan" placing renewed policy attention on India's offshore and coastal waters, this static profile of the Dugong — one of India's most threatened marine mammals inhabiting exactly those waters — rounds out today's ocean-economy theme.

Background: The Dugong (Dugong dugon), popularly called the "sea cow," is a herbivorous marine mammal found in India's Gulf of Mannar, Gulf of Kutch and Andaman & Nicobar waters, feeding almost exclusively on seagrass meadows.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- IUCN Red List status: Vulnerable; listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- India's key Dugong habitats: Gulf of Mannar (Tamil Nadu), Gulf of Kutch (Gujarat), and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- India notified its first Dugong Conservation Reserve in the Palk Bay, Tamil Nadu, in 2022.
- Primary threats: seagrass habitat loss, fishing-net entanglement, and boat-strike injuries.

🧠 AKADEMIA MEMORY TRIVIA

Dugongs are the only strictly herbivorous marine mammals — unlike dolphins or whales, they graze on seagrass meadows almost exclusively, giving rise to their "sea cow" nickname.

📄 PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2015: "Explain the purpose of the Convention on Biological Diversity... Discuss the CITES agreement in this context." (marine species conservation linkage)

🧠 PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. India's first Dugong Conservation Reserve was notified in: (a) Gulf of Kutch (b) Palk Bay (c) Chilika Lake (d) Sundarbans. **Answer: (b).**

GS3

Dugong

Schedule I

Marine Conservation

§2 · PLACES IN NEWS

📌 PLACES IN NEWS — 01 AUGUST 2026 | ANTIM ASSURED 100+



- ① New Delhi (Public Examinations Act assent, PMLA ruling, Cabinet's Samudra Manthan approval) ● ② Thimphu, Bhutan (₹4,000cr Line of Credit signed)
- ③ Avadi, Tamil Nadu (UTD-20 engine endurance test) ● ④ Pearl Harbor, USA (RIMPAC 2026 concluded)
- ⑤ Kakinada, AP (Krishna-Godavari offshore basin, Samudra Manthan focus area) ● ⑥ Gulf of Mannar (Dugong habitat, Conservation Reserve)

① New Delhi

Presidential assent to Examinations Act; SC's PMLA ruling; Union Cabinet's Samudra Manthan approval — three of today's biggest stories converge here.

② Thimphu, Bhutan

Site of the ₹4,000 crore concessional Line of Credit agreement signed July 31, 2026 under India's Neighbourhood First policy.

③ Avadi, Tamil Nadu

Home to Engine Factory Avadi, which completed the 500-hour endurance test of the indigenous UTD-20 diesel engine.

④ Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, USA

Hosted RIMPAC 2026, the world's largest maritime exercise, in which the Indian Navy concluded its participation on July 31.

⑤ Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh

Gateway to the Krishna-Godavari offshore basin, a key implementation zone for the newly approved Samudra Manthan exploration scheme.

⑥ Gulf of Mannar, Tamil Nadu

Key Dugong habitat and site of a Marine National Park and Biosphere Reserve, relevant to today's species profile.

§3 · ETHICS & INTEGRITY CASE STUDIES

Case 1 — Due Process vs Investigative Convenience

An investigating officer wants to freeze a suspect's bank account quickly to prevent asset flight, but the evidence is still thin. The Supreme Court's PMLA ruling today reminds us that "reasons to believe" — not mere suspicion — must ground coercive financial action. Discuss the ethical tension between investigative efficiency and an individual's due-process rights.

Case 2 — Integrity in Examination Systems

A civil servant overseeing recruitment examinations discovers evidence of a leak just before the exam. The new Examinations Amendment Act mandates fast-track prosecution, but political pressure suggests delaying disclosure until after the exam concludes. Evaluate the ethical duty to protect exam integrity versus institutional reputation management.

Case 3 — National Interest in Bilateral Development Aid

A diplomat negotiating the India-Bhutan Line of Credit is asked to attach informal conditions favouring specific Indian contractors. Discuss the ethics of tied aid versus genuine partner-country development priorities in India's neighbourhood diplomacy.

Case 4 — Environmental Stewardship in Resource Extraction

An engineer on the Samudra Manthan offshore exploration project identifies a marine ecosystem risk near a Dugong habitat that could delay the ₹84,084 crore scheme's timeline. Discuss the officer's ethical responsibility to report environmental risk versus pressure to meet energy-security targets.

Case 5 — Civil Registration and the Marginalised Citizen

A frontline registrar under the newly amended Registration of Births and Deaths Act encounters a homeless family unable to produce standard proof-of-residence documents. Discuss the ethical duty to ensure inclusive access to civil registration despite procedural gaps.

§4 · PRELIMS MCQS (18 QUESTIONS)

1. The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Act, 2026 received Presidential assent on:

(a) July 29 (b) July 30 (c) July 31 (d) August 1

Answer: (c) — Assent followed RS passage (Jul 30) and LS passage (Jul 29).

2. Section 17(1A) of the PMLA, 2002 empowers authorities to:

(a) Arrest an accused (b) Freeze bank accounts/property (c) Grant bail (d) Attach immovable property permanently

Answer: (b) — Freezing during investigation, subject to "reasons to believe."

3. The Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2026 amends an Act originally enacted in:

(a) 1955 (b) 1969 (c) 1972 (d) 1986

Answer: (b) — Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969.

4. The July 2026 India-Bhutan Line of Credit was valued at:

(a) ₹2,000 crore (b) ₹4,000 crore (c) ₹6,000 crore (d) ₹8,000 crore

Answer: (b).

5. The UTD-20 engine, tested at Engine Factory Avadi, powers which platform?

(a) BMP-1/BMP-2 IFVs (b) T-90 tanks (c) Arjun MBT (d) K9 Vajra

Answer: (a).

6. RIMPAC, the world's largest multinational maritime exercise, is hosted biennially at:

(a) Yokosuka, Japan (b) Pearl Harbor, USA (c) Darwin, Australia (d) Diego Garcia

Answer: (b).

7. "Samudra Manthan," the National Offshore Exploration Scheme, has an approved outlay of:

(a) ₹52,000 crore (b) ₹68,000 crore (c) ₹84,084 crore (d) ₹1,00,000 crore

Answer: (c).

8. A Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) reading above 50 indicates:

(a) Contraction (b) Expansion (c) Recession (d) Deflation

Answer: (b).

9. India's Manufacturing PMI for July 2026 stood at:

(a) 52.9 (b) 53.9 (c) 54.2 (d) 55.1

Answer: (b) — down from June's 54.2.

10. India's first Dugong Conservation Reserve is located in:

(a) Gulf of Kutch (b) Palk Bay (c) Chilika Lake (d) Sundarbans

Answer: (b).

11. The Dugong is listed under which Schedule of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972?

(a) Schedule I (b) Schedule II (c) Schedule III (d) Schedule V

Answer: (a).

12. Which of the following is India's largest trade and development partner among its immediate neighbours?

(a) Nepal (b) Bhutan (c) Bangladesh (d) Sri Lanka

Answer: (b) — long-standing largest trade/development partner relationship.

13. The Supreme Court bench that ruled on the PMLA account-freeze case comprised:

(a) Justices Dipankar Datta and Sheel Nagu (b) Justices Chandrachud and Kaul (c) Justices Gavai and Oka (d) Justices Nagarathna and Bhuyan

Answer: (a).

14. Krishna-Godavari and Mumbai High are examples of India's:

(a) Coal belts (b) Offshore hydrocarbon basins (c) Iron ore reserves (d) Wind energy corridors

Answer: (b).

15. The Public Examinations Amendment Act primarily addresses:

(a) University fee regulation (b) Examination malpractice/paper leaks (c) Reservation in admissions (d) Online-education standards

Answer: (b).

16. "Neighbourhood First" is a policy framework primarily associated with India's engagement in:

(a) ASEAN (b) South Asia (c) Gulf Cooperation Council (d) BRICS

Answer: (b).

17. Dugongs primarily feed on:

(a) Small fish (b) Plankton (c) Seagrass (d) Coral polyps

Answer: (c) — the only strictly herbivorous marine mammal.

18. RIMPAC 2026 involved participants from approximately how many nations?

(a) 15 (b) 22 (c) 29 (d) 35

Answer: (c).

§5 · MAINS QUESTIONS (8 QUESTIONS)

GS2 · 150 words — Discuss the significance of the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Act, 2026 in restoring public trust in India's recruitment examination systems.

GS2 · 150 words — "Reasons to believe" versus "suspicion" — examine the Supreme Court's evolving jurisprudence on procedural safeguards under the PMLA, 2002.

GS2 • 150 words — Evaluate India's "Neighbourhood First" policy through the lens of concessional Lines of Credit extended to Bhutan and other South Asian partners.

GS2 • 150 words — Discuss the role of civil registration systems in strengthening governance and welfare delivery, with reference to the Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2026.

GS3 • 150 words — Assess the strategic significance of indigenous propulsion technology, such as the UTD-20 engine, for India's defence self-reliance goals.

GS3 • 150 words — Examine the role of multinational maritime exercises like RIMPAC in shaping India's Indo-Pacific naval diplomacy.

GS3 • 200 words — Critically evaluate the "Samudra Manthan" National Offshore Exploration Scheme as a strategy for India's energy security, addressing both its economic potential and environmental risks.

GS3 • 150 words — Discuss the ecological significance of seagrass ecosystems in India's coastal waters, with reference to threatened species such as the Dugong.

§6 • ANSWER WRITING VALUE ADDITION

"Justice delayed at the level of due process is worse than delay in prosecution" — invoke this framing when writing on PMLA safeguards versus investigative urgency.

Quote: Samudra Manthan's ₹84,084 crore outlay targets 600+ MMTOE in reserve additions — a strong statistic anchor for GS3 energy-security answers.

Data point: RIMPAC 2026 involved 29 nations, 30+ warships and ~30,000 personnel — useful for illustrating scale in Indo-Pacific maritime diplomacy answers.

Framework: "Assent is not automatic" — Presidential assent remains a distinct constitutional stage even after both Houses pass a Bill, worth citing in polity answers on legislative process.

Comparative note: India's Manufacturing PMI (53.9) staying above the 50-threshold despite easing shows resilience amid inflationary pressure — a nuanced economy-answer data point.

Ecological point: Dugongs are the only strictly herbivorous marine mammals, making seagrass meadow health a direct proxy for their population viability — useful in GS3 marine-biodiversity answers.

§7 • AKADEMIA DIRECT HIT TRACKER

#	TOPIC	SECTION	GS PAPER	PROBABILITY
1	Public Examinations Amendment Act — Presidential Assent	Part I §2	GS2	Very High
2	SC's PMLA "Reasons to Believe" Ruling	Part I §2	GS2	High
3	Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill	Part I §2	GS2	Medium
4	India-Bhutan Line of Credit	Part I §3	GS2	High
5	UTD-20 Engine Endurance Test, Avadi	Part I §4	GS3	Medium
6	RIMPAC 2026 Conclusion	Part I §4	GS3	High

7	Samudra Manthan — Offshore Exploration Scheme	Part I §6	GS3	Very High
8	Manufacturing PMI July 2026	Part I §6	GS3	Medium
9	Dugong — Species Profile	Part II §1	GS3	Medium
10	Gulf of Mannar Biosphere/Marine Park	Part II §2	GS3	Medium
11	Krishna-Godavari/Mumbai High Offshore Basins	Part II §2	GS3	High
12	Neighbourhood First Policy Framework	Part I §3	GS2	High
13	PMLA Section 17(1A) — Statutory Provision	Part I §2	GS2	Medium
14	Civil Registration and Welfare Delivery	Part II §5	GS2	Medium
15	Indo-Pacific Naval Diplomacy	Part I §4	GS3	High
16	Seagrass Ecosystems and Marine Biodiversity	Part II §1	GS3	Medium

§8 · PROOF OF PRECISION

1. ANTIM ASSURED 100+ students had already studied the PMLA "reasons to believe" safeguard doctrine, the offshore-exploration policy landscape, and India's Neighbourhood First LoC mechanism weeks before today's developments — proof that our static-plus-current framework anticipates real exam trends.

2. The 30-day rotating species-profile system ensured Dugong coverage arrived precisely when Samudra Manthan made marine/offshore ecosystems newly relevant — not a coincidence, but a designed synergy.

3. Every Part I news card today carries a verified date and source lineage (PIB, LiveLaw, MEA, Defence Press, S&P Global) — the same rigour that delivered 48 direct hits in UPSC CSE Prelims 2026.

★ 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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