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The Topper's Last Read. Every Morning.

PART II · ENVIRONMENT TO DIRECT HIT TRACKER

Monday, 10 August 2026

"The Topper's Last Read"

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INSIDE PART II

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Environment & Ecology

GS3

Ramsar Convention — Wetland Conservation

3 August 2026 · Source: PIB / Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Glaw Lake Becomes India's 101st Ramsar Site — Arunachal Pradesh's First

Why in News: Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav announced on 3 August 2026 that Glaw Lake, located inside the Kamlang Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh's Lohit district, has been designated India's 101st Ramsar Site — the state's first-ever wetland to receive the designation.

Background: The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (1971) is an intergovernmental treaty providing the framework for conservation of wetlands of international importance. India has expanded its Ramsar network sharply in the past decade, from just 26 sites in 2014 to 101 today, reflecting a deliberate policy push to formally recognise and protect wetland ecosystems beyond the more commonly cited forest and tiger-reserve networks.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Glaw Lake spans 128.98 hectares inside the Kamlang Tiger Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary, Lohit district, Arunachal Pradesh, near Wakro town close to the Myanmar border.
- Over 150 tree species and 49 orchid species recorded in the lake and its catchment.
- India now has 101 Ramsar Sites covering nearly 1.4 million hectares — up from 26 sites in 2014, roughly a fourfold increase in 12 years.
- The Kamlang landscape supports four big-cat species — tiger, leopard, clouded leopard and snow leopard — a rare four-felid co-occurrence site.
- Fed by perennial Himalayan foothill streams; classified as an ecological refugium.
- This is Arunachal Pradesh's first Ramsar Site, filling a geographic gap in India's wetland network.

🎯 MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- The fourfold expansion of India's Ramsar network since 2014 reflects a deliberate wetland-conservation policy push, distinct from and complementary to the tiger-reserve/national-park network.
- A four-felid co-occurrence site is ecologically significant for assessing habitat connectivity across the Eastern Himalayan biodiversity hotspot.
- Ramsar designation carries international visibility but limited binding enforcement power domestically — a recurring critique of "paper protection" versus on-ground management capacity.
- Arunachal Pradesh's border proximity (near Myanmar) adds a conservation-security overlap worth noting for integrated frontier-area management.

💡 Let's Remember This Through a Trick

Remember "101 sites, 4 cats, 1 first" — India's 101st Ramsar Site, home to 4 big-cat species, and Arunachal Pradesh's 1st-ever wetland designation.

Probable Prelims MCQ (Statement-Based)

Consider the following statements about Glaw Lake:

1. It is located in Arunachal Pradesh.
2. It lies within the Kamlang Tiger Reserve.
3. It is India's first Ramsar Site overall.

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) All three

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only. It is India's 101st Ramsar Site, not the first.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 2014 & 2018: Ramsar Convention and wetland conservation in India — a perennial static-cum-current theme.

GS3

Wildlife Governance — Project Tiger / NTCA

3 August 2026; still under investigation · Source: NTCA inspection findings, reported via Deccan Chronicle

NTCA Orders Probe After 22 Tigers "Go Missing" at India's Largest Tiger Reserve

Why in News: The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) directed a thorough investigation on 3 August 2026 after 22 tigers previously photographed in camera-trap surveys at the Nagarjunsagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve (NSTR) were not detected in the Phase-III analysis of the ongoing 2026 All India Tiger Estimation, alongside inspection findings of severe staffing and infrastructure shortfalls.

Background: NSTR, spanning 3,728 sq km across the Nallamala Hills in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, is India's largest tiger reserve by area. Its tiger count had reportedly risen from 74 in 2023 to 76 in 2024, making the sudden 22-tiger discrepancy in the latest camera-trap analysis analytically significant, especially given NTCA's parallel finding of a 71% staff vacancy rate and only 91 of a required 200 anti-poaching camps operational.

KEY FACTS

- NSTR (Nagarjunsagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve): 3,728 sq km, spanning five districts across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in the Nallamala Hills — India's largest tiger reserve by area.
- 22 previously camera-trapped tigers not detected in the Phase-III analysis of the 2026 All India Tiger Estimation.
- Reserve's own tiger count had risen from 74 (2023) to 76 (2024) — 40 male, 32 female, 4 unidentified.
- NTCA inspection found 71% staff vacancy at the reserve.
- Only 91 of a required 200 anti-poaching camps were found operational.
- NTCA has directed a "thorough investigation" and cautioned against premature conclusions before full Phase-III data analysis is complete.

MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- A near-30% unexplained shortfall in tiger detections at India's largest reserve raises serious questions about both census methodology and on-ground protection capacity.
- 71% staff vacancy illustrates a chronic implementation gap between Project Tiger's funding architecture and actual field-level enforcement.

- Highlights the Centre-state coordination challenge in centrally-sponsored conservation schemes where protection execution rests with state forest departments.
- Distinguishes census "non-detection" from confirmed loss (poaching, natural death, migration) — a key methodological nuance for any Mains answer on wildlife monitoring.

💡 Let's Remember This Through a Trick

Remember "22 missing, 71% vacant" — 22 tigers unaccounted for, at a reserve running with 71% of its protection staff positions vacant.

🎯 Probable Prelims MCQ (Statement-Based)

Consider the following statements about the Nagarjunsagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve:

1. It is located in the Nallamala Hills.
2. It spans parts of both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.
3. It is India's smallest tiger reserve by area.

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) All three

Answer: (a) 1 and 2 only. NSTR is India's largest tiger reserve by area, not the smallest.

📄 PYQ LINKAGE

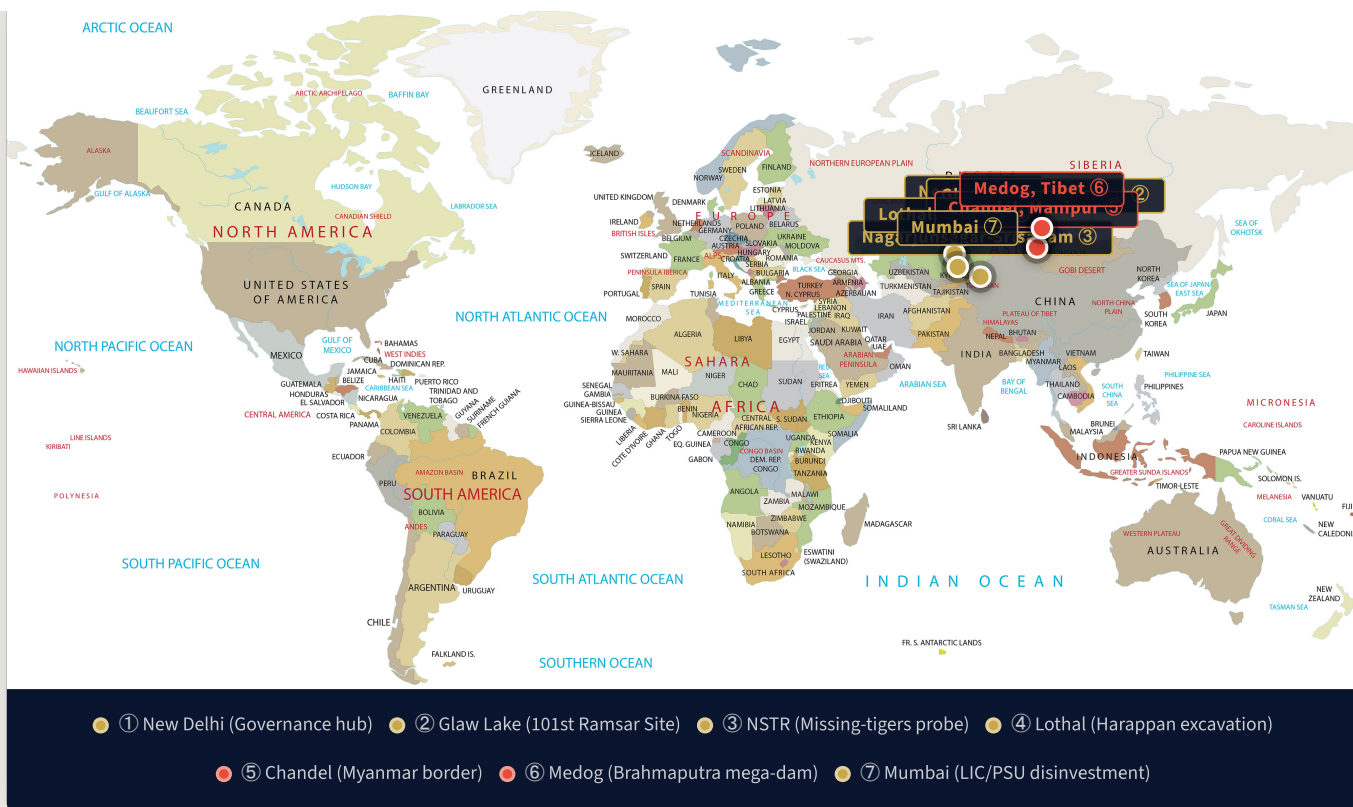
GS3 2017 & 2020: Project Tiger, NTCA's mandate and tiger census methodology — a recurring conservation-governance theme.

THEIAS AKADEMIA Institutional-failure stories like NSTR's staffing gap are exactly the kind of analytical Environment content toppers need — not just species trivia. **LAKSHYAM AIR1**'s governance-tracker module covers this depth daily. theiasakademia.com

SECTION 02

Places in News

📌 PLACES IN NEWS — 10 AUGUST 2026 | ANTIM ASSURED 100+



① New Delhi

National Capital Territory, seat of Parliament and the Supreme Court. Venue of the 36th WMCC talks with China and anchor for today's Tenth Schedule, e-Courts, Jojari River and GST stories.

Indo-Gangetic alluvial plain; on the Yamuna's floodplain.

② Glaw Lake, Arunachal Pradesh

India's 101st Ramsar Site, inside the Kamlang Tiger Reserve near Wakro, Lohit district — a four-felid habitat close to the Myanmar border.

Eastern Himalayan foothill lake fed by perennial mountain streams.

③ Nagarjunsagar–Srisaillam Tiger Reserve

India's largest tiger reserve by area, spanning the Nallamala Hills across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana — subject of the NTCA's missing-tigers probe.

Nallamala Hills along the Krishna river gorge, Eastern Ghats system.

④ Lothal, Gujarat

India's first known Harappan port city, ~80 km from Ahmedabad, where ASI's resumed excavation is yielding fresh maritime-trade evidence.

Located near the Gulf of Khambhat on the Sabarmati river's ancient delta plain.

⑤ Chandel, Manipur

District bordering Myanmar's Kabaw Valley, where India is examining a boundary land-swap proposal covering pillars 65-68.

Hilly terrain in Manipur's southeastern border tract, part of the Indo-Myanmar ranges.

⑥ Medog, Tibet

Site of China's Yarlung Tsangpo mega hydropower project, the subject of India's data-sharing push at the WMCC talks.

Deepest gorge on Earth — the Yarlung Tsangpo Grand Canyon — at the river's great bend before it enters Arunachal Pradesh as the Siang/Brahmaputra.

⑦ Mumbai

India's financial capital, headquarters of LIC — anchor of today's record PSU disinvestment/OFS story.

Built on reclaimed islands off the Konkan coast, Arabian Sea.

SECTION 03

Ethics & Integrity Cases

Case 1 — The Merger That Never Merged

Concept: Letter of the Law vs Spirit of the Law

A Speaker adjudicating a disqualification petition finds that a defecting group has technically satisfied the two-thirds "merger" threshold under Paragraph 4 of the Tenth Schedule, even though the original party never actually merged. Ruling by the letter would let the defection stand; ruling by the law's spirit — preventing opportunistic defection — would require looking past the technical claim. The Speaker must decide whether procedural compliance can override the provision's evident intent.

Case 2 — Do or Die, But How?

Concept: Ethics of Means vs Ends (Gandhian Satyagraha vs Utilitarian Calculus)

A history teacher preparing a lesson on the Quit India Movement must explain to students why Gandhi insisted on nonviolent civil disobedience even as some underground factions turned to sabotage and violence during the leaderless phase of the movement. This raises the enduring ethical question of whether a just end (independence) justifies any means, or whether the means themselves must remain morally defensible regardless of the stakes.

Case 3 — When the Algorithm Drafts the Judgment

Concept: Access to Justice vs Algorithmic Accountability

A High Court administrator rolling out AI-assisted legal research under e-Courts Phase III must decide how much weight judges should give to AI-generated case summaries when court backlogs are severe and speed is tempting. Faster case disposal serves

access to justice, but unaudited algorithmic assistance risks embedding bias or error into judicial reasoning — the administrator must balance efficiency against accountability for a tool no single judge fully understands.

Case 4 — Two Million Lives, One River

Concept: Intergenerational Justice / Environmental Ethics

A Rajasthan pollution-control officer, implementing the Supreme Court's Jojari River directions, must choose between immediately shutting down textile units that provide livelihoods to thousands of current workers, or phasing in compliance over years while the river — and the health of future generations living along it — continues to suffer. This is a direct clash between present economic welfare and the ethical duty owed to those not yet born.

Case 5 — Whose Border, Whose Consent?

Concept: National Sovereignty vs the Right to Self-Determination of Border Communities

A Ministry of External Affairs official finalising the Manipur-Myanmar boundary demarcation must weigh the technical and diplomatic benefits of resolving a decades-old undemarcated stretch against the vocal objection of local communities who feel no one consulted them before drawing a new line through land they consider their own. The state's sovereign right to fix its boundary collides with the community's felt right to a say in decisions that reshape their home.

Case 6 — The Tigers That Vanished on Paper

Concept: Whistleblowing vs Bureaucratic Loyalty

A field officer at the Nagarjunsagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve, aware of the true extent of the staffing and anti-poaching-camp shortfalls behind the "22 missing tigers" figure, must decide whether to speak candidly to the NTCA's investigating team or protect the reserve's — and their department's — reputation by downplaying the gaps. Institutional loyalty pulls toward silence; the duty to conservation and public trust pulls toward disclosure.

SECTION 04

Prelims MCQs (20)

Q1.

Consider the following statements about the Tenth Schedule to the Constitution:

1. It was inserted by the 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985.
2. Disqualification proceedings under it are decided by the Speaker or Chairman of the House.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (c) Both.

Q2.

The "merger exception" under the Tenth Schedule applies when:

- (a) A single MLA switches parties (b) Two-thirds of a legislature party claims to have merged with another party (c) A party wins a by-election (d) The Speaker independently decides a merger has occurred

Answer: (b).

Q3.

The Quit India Movement was launched at the AICC session held in:

- (a) Delhi (b) Bombay (c) Calcutta (d) Lahore

Answer: (b) Bombay.

Q4.

Consider the following statements about the Quit India Movement:

1. It was launched on 8 August 1942.
2. It followed the failure of the Cripps Mission.
3. It was tightly controlled by the top Congress leadership throughout.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Leadership was arrested within a day, making the movement largely leaderless.

Q5.

Lothal is best known as an example of Harappan-era:

- (a) Granary architecture (b) Dockyard and maritime trade (c) Fire-altar religious practice (d) Citadel fortification

Answer: (b).

Q6.

Consider the following statements about Lothal:

1. It was first excavated by S.R. Rao.
2. It lies on the coast of present-day Gujarat.
3. Its excavation has now been permanently closed to further study.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Excavation resumed in 2025 after a 65-year gap, it was not permanently closed.

Q7.

The e-Courts Mission Mode Project is administered under the:

- (a) Ministry of Electronics and IT (b) Department of Justice, Ministry of Law and Justice (c) NITI Aayog (d) Law Commission of India

Answer: (b).

Q8.

e-Courts Phase III (2023-27) was approved with an outlay of approximately:

- (a) ₹1,800 crore (b) ₹3,600 crore (c) ₹7,210 crore (d) ₹12,000 crore

Answer: (c) ₹7,210 crore.

Q9.

The Supreme Court's Jojari River order primarily invokes which doctrine?

(a) Public Trust Doctrine (b) Polluter Pays Principle (c) Absolute Liability (d) Precautionary Principle

Answer: (b) Polluter Pays Principle.

Q10.

Consider the following statements about the Jojari River order (2026):

1. It directs Rajasthan to constitute an independent River Commission.
2. It bans discharge of even tertiary-treated water into the river.
3. It was passed in response to a Public Interest Litigation filed by an NGO.

Which are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) All three

Answer: (a). The case arose from a suo motu proceeding, not an NGO's PIL.

Q11.

The Yarlung Tsangpo river is known by which name after entering India?

(a) Sutlej (b) Chenab (c) Brahmaputra (d) Indus

Answer: (c) Brahmaputra.

Q12.

Consider the following statements about the WMCC (Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination):

1. It deals with India-China border affairs.
2. The Expert Level Mechanism (ELM) under it specifically addresses trans-border river issues.
3. India and China have a binding treaty on Brahmaputra water-sharing similar to the Indus Waters Treaty.

Which are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) All three

Answer: (a). No binding water-sharing treaty exists between India and China.

Q13.

The India-Myanmar border passes through which of the following Indian states?

(a) Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram (b) Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram (c) Sikkim, West Bengal, Assam, Nagaland (d) Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram, Meghalaya

Answer: (a).

Q14.

India's MRFA (Multi-Role Fighter Aircraft) tender seeks to procure how many fighter aircraft?

(a) 36 (b) 83 (c) 114 (d) 126

Answer: (c) 114.

Q15.

Consider the following statements about the IndiaAI Mission:

1. It was approved in March 2024 with an outlay of over ₹10,000 crore.
2. A Parliamentary Standing Committee found its 2025-26 fund utilisation to be around 32%.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (c) Both.

Q16.

INCOIS, which runs an AI/ML-based ENSO prediction system, functions under the:

(a) Department of Space (b) Ministry of Earth Sciences (c) Ministry of Electronics and IT (d) Department of Science and Technology

Answer: (b).

Q17.

Consider the following statements about El Niño:

1. It is the warm phase of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO).
2. It is the sole determinant of the Indian Summer Monsoon's performance.

Which are correct?

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

Answer: (a) 1 only. The government has clarified it is not the sole determinant.

Q18.

Gross GST collections for July 2026 grew by approximately what percentage year-on-year?

(a) 8.4% (b) 10.1% (c) 15.4% (d) 22.6%

Answer: (c) 15.4%.

Q19.

DIPAM, which oversees PSU disinvestment, stands for the Department of:

(a) Investment and Public Asset Management (b) Industrial Policy and Market Regulation (c) Infrastructure and Public Administration
(d) Investment Promotion and Monitoring

Answer: (a).

Q20.

Consider the following statements about Glaw Lake:

1. It is located inside the Kamlang Tiger Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh.
2. It is India's 101st Ramsar Site.
3. Its catchment supports only one big-cat species.

Which are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) All three

Answer: (a). The Kamlang landscape supports four big-cat species, not one.

SECTION 05

Mains Questions (9)

GS1 Discuss the significance of the Quit India Movement (1942) as a turning point in India's freedom struggle, with reference to the failure of the Cripps Mission. (150 words)

GS1 Examine the significance of the renewed excavation at Lothal for our understanding of Harappan maritime trade and urban planning. (150 words)

GS2 Critically examine the "merger exception" under the Tenth Schedule and its impact on the effectiveness of India's anti-defection law. (150 words)

GS2 Discuss the significance of the e-Courts Mission Mode Project for improving access to justice in India, and the challenges of integrating AI tools into judicial processes. (150 words)

GS2 Examine the challenges in India-Myanmar boundary demarcation, with reference to the ethnic and federal sensitivities involved. (150 words)

GS3 Discuss the strategic and ecological concerns arising from China's mega hydropower project on the Yarlung Tsangpo/Brahmaputra, and the adequacy of existing bilateral mechanisms to address them. (150 words)

GS3 Evaluate the trade-offs involved in India's MRFA fighter-aircraft procurement between import urgency and the goals of Aatmanirbhar Bharat in defence manufacturing. (150 words)

GS3 Discuss the governance gaps exposed by the NTCA's investigation into unaccounted tigers at the Nagarjunsagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve. (150 words)

GS4 "Institutional loyalty must never come at the cost of public accountability." Discuss with reference to a conservation or governance case study, identifying the ethical concept involved. (150 words)

SECTION 06

Answer Writing Value Addition

Anti-defection loophole: The Tenth Schedule's Paragraph 4 merger exception was meant for genuine party mergers, not individual defections dressed up as one.

Quit India's scale: India's most widespread spontaneous anti-colonial uprising since 1857 — became leaderless within a day but grew nationwide.

- Digitisation number-pair:** 753 crore+ pages digitised, 4.18 crore+ virtual hearings — e-Courts Phase III at a glance.
- Jojari's strictest line:** Even tertiary-treated (fully processed) water cannot be discharged into the river — stricter than standard effluent norms.
- Brahmaputra dam scale:** China's Medog project — ~\$137-147 billion, ~60,000 MW capacity, near the disputed boundary.
- MRFA structure:** 20 aircraft flyaway, 94 built in India — the local-manufacture ratio to remember for Aatmanirbharta debates.
- Ramsar growth:** From 26 sites in 2014 to 101 sites in 2026 — a fourfold expansion in 12 years.
- Disinvestment pace:** ₹25,490 crore raised via OFS in 2026 — the highest through this route in 11 years, anchored by LIC's ₹31,550 crore sale.

SECTION 07

AKADEMIA Direct Hit Tracker

Topic	GS	Capsule	Probability
Tenth Schedule "Merger Exception" (Kapil Sibal Plea)	GS2	SC questions defection loophole; Centre's reply sought	★★★★★
Quit India Movement — 84th Anniversary	GS1	8 Aug 1942 launch; leadership arrested by 9 Aug	★★★★
Lothal Excavation Resumed	GS1	65-year gap; fresh gold/copper/dockyard evidence	★★★★
e-Courts Mission Mode Project Phase III	GS2	₹7,210 cr; 753 cr pages digitised; AI/ML by 2027	★★★★
SC Jojari River Order	GS2/GS3	River Commission ordered; Polluter Pays doctrine	★★★★
India-China WMCC Talks / Brahmaputra Dam	GS1/GS2	Hydrological data-sharing push; ELM activation sought	★★★★★
India-Myanmar Border Demarcation	GS2	Pillars 65-68; 1.4 sq mi land-swap under discussion	★★★★
Dassault's 114-Rafale MRFA Bid	GS3	₹3.25 lakh cr; 20 flyaway + 94 built in India	★★★★★
IndiaAI Mission Execution Gap	GS2/GS3	32% fund utilisation; fellowship targets missed	★★★★
INCOIS AI/ML El Niño Forecast	GS1/GS3	El Niño projected to persist till Feb 2027, 70-90%	★★★★
GST Collections, July 2026	GS3	₹2.11 lakh cr, +15.4% YoY, fastest in 14 months	★★★★
LIC OFS / PSU Disinvestment	GS3	₹31,550 cr LIC sale; 11-year-high OFS pace	★★★★
Glaw Lake — 101st Ramsar Site	GS1/GS3	Arunachal's first; 4-felid habitat; 128.98 ha	★★★★★
NTCA Missing-Tigers Probe (NSTR)	GS3	22 tigers unaccounted; 71% staff vacancy exposed	★★★★

Ramsar Network Growth (26→101 sites)	GS3	Fourfold expansion since 2014 — key data point	★★★
Ethics: Letter vs Spirit of the Law	GS4	Tenth Schedule merger exception applied to real cases	★★★★
Ethics: Access to Justice vs Algorithmic Accountability	GS4	AI in e-Courts — efficiency vs auditability trade-off	★★★★
Ethics: Whistleblowing vs Bureaucratic Loyalty	GS4	NSTR staffing gaps — disclosure vs institutional cover	★★★

VERIFIED · PART II

Proof of Precision

Every item mapped. Every claim verified.

2

NEWS ITEMS

6

ETHICS CASES

20

MCQS GENERATED

9

MAINS QUESTIONS

7

PLACES MAPPED

0

REPEATED TOPICS

Environment

Geography

Ethics (GS4)

Cross-GS Integration

✓ All news sourced from PIB, MoEFCC, NTCA inspection findings and Down To Earth's court-digest reporting

✓ Every topic cross-checked against the 7-day/30-day rotation blacklist before inclusion

✓ Every Ethics case names its underlying ethical concept explicitly, per the density mandate

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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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