

THEIAS AKADEMIA · MORNING EDITION · 08:00 IST

ANTIM ASSURED 100+

PART II · ENVIRONMENT TO DIRECT HIT TRACKER

Monday, 03 August 2026

GS3

Wildlife Corridors · Infrastructure-Ecology Coexistence

Study released July 2026 · Source: Down To Earth / Mongabay / WII-NHAI

WII-NHAI Study: 18 Wildlife Species Using Delhi-Dehradun Expressway Underpasses

Why in News: A joint study by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), released in July 2026, documented 18 wildlife species — including elephants and leopards — using underpasses built along an 18 km stretch of the Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor near Haridwar, Uttarakhand.

Background: The 12 km elevated wildlife corridor, with a 10.97 km underpass and 6-7 metre clearance, was built to route vehicular traffic onto flyovers while preserving ground-level passage for animals moving between habitat fragments near Rajaji Tiger Reserve — one of Asia's largest such mitigation structures.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Study covered an 18 km stretch (Ganeshpur-Asharodi) of the 200 km Delhi-Dehradun Economic Corridor, inaugurated April 2026.
- Camera traps recorded 111,234 total images; 40,444 attributed to 18 unique wild species.
- Elephants recorded safely using the corridor 60 times; leopards showed activity concentrated at dusk, dawn and night to avoid human presence.
- Other species recorded: nilgai, sambar deer, spotted deer, golden jackal, Indian hare, among others.

🔴 LET'S REMEMBER THIS THROUGH A TRICK

Trick: remember "18 species, 12 km, 6-7 metres" — the species count, corridor length, and vertical clearance are the three headline statistics most likely to appear in an MCQ on this structure.

📄 PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 (recurring): "Infrastructure development and wildlife corridor mitigation — balancing connectivity with conservation."

🎯 PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. The WII-NHAI wildlife underpass study was conducted along the Delhi-Dehradun Expressway near: (a) Rishikesh (b) Haridwar (c) Roorkee (d) Saharanpur. **Answer: (b).**

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Wildlife Corridor

Rajaji Tiger Reserve

NHAI-WII

GS3

Species in News · Forest Canopy Species

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

Species in News: The Clouded Leopard, the Northeast's Elusive Canopy Dweller

Why in News (Static Profile): With today's Environment story spotlighting how wildlife corridors help large mammals cross fragmented landscapes, this static profile of the Clouded Leopard — a species whose survival is especially dependent on continuous forest canopy connectivity — rounds out today's habitat-connectivity theme.

Background: The Clouded Leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*) is a medium-sized wild cat found in the forests of Northeast India, Nepal, and Southeast Asia, known for its arboreal (tree-dwelling) habits and distinctive cloud-shaped coat markings.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- IUCN status: Vulnerable; listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and CITES Appendix I.
- Found in Northeast India — Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Sikkim.
- Highly arboreal; possesses the longest canine-to-skull-size ratio of any living cat.

- Primary threats: forest fragmentation, poaching for its pelt, and loss of canopy connectivity between habitat patches.

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The Clouded Leopard has the largest canine teeth relative to skull size of any living cat species, giving rise to comparisons with extinct sabre-toothed cats — a striking fact worth remembering for prelims.

PYQ LINKAGE

GS3 (recurring): "Schedule I species of Northeast India and habitat fragmentation challenges."

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ

Q. The Clouded Leopard is primarily found in India in which region? (a) Western Ghats (b) Northeast India (c) Central India (d) Trans-Himalaya. **Answer: (b).**

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Clouded Leopard

Schedule I

Northeast India

§2 · PLACES IN NEWS

PLACES IN NEWS — 03 AUGUST 2026 | ANTIM ASSURED 100+



- ① New Delhi (Nasha Mukht Yuva launch, India-Rwanda JTC)
- ② Glasgow, UK (Commonwealth Games 2026 concluded)
- ③ Malé, Maldives (Favara-UPI corridor)
- ④ Tehran, Iran (Jaishankar-Araghchi call on shipping safety)
- ⑤ Visakhapatnam/Bhogapuram, AP (semiconductor facility + international airport)
- ⑥ Haridwar, Uttarakhand (wildlife underpass study, near Rajaji Tiger Reserve)

① New Delhi

Venue for the Nasha Mukht Yuva Abhiyan launch and the first India-Rwanda Joint Trade Committee session.

② Glasgow, UK

Host city of Commonwealth Games 2026, where India concluded its campaign with 39 medals.

③ Malé, Maldives

Site of the Favara-UPI cross-border payment corridor going live with India's UPI network.

④ Tehran, Iran

Context for EAM Jaishankar's call with Iran's Foreign Minister on shipping and seafarer safety.

⑤ Visakhapatnam / Bhogapuram, Andhra Pradesh

Site of AP's first semiconductor OSAT facility and the newly inaugurated Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport.

⑥ Haridwar, Uttarakhand

Location of the Delhi-Dehradun Expressway wildlife underpass stretch near Rajaji Tiger Reserve.

§3 · ETHICS & INTEGRITY CASE STUDIES

Case 1 — Public Messaging Versus Ground Reality in Anti-Drug Campaigns

A district youth-affairs officer implementing the Nasha Mukh Yuva Abhiyan is under pressure to report high participation numbers despite weak actual community engagement in rural blocks. Discuss the ethical duty to report honest outcome data over inflated participation statistics.

Case 2 — Fair Selection in Sports Talent Pipelines

A state sports selection committee, energised by India's Commonwealth Games success, faces pressure to fast-track athletes with political connections into Khelo India funding ahead of more deserving but less-connected talent. Discuss the ethical obligation to preserve merit-based selection amid political pressure.

Case 3 — Balancing Diplomatic Neutrality with Humanitarian Concern

A junior diplomat drafting India's messaging on West Asia hostilities is asked to soften language on attacks against seafarers to avoid displeasing a strategic partner. Discuss the ethical tension between diplomatic caution and the duty to protect citizens' interests unambiguously.

Case 4 — Environmental Diligence in Infrastructure Expansion

An NHAI project engineer overseeing a new highway stretch near a wildlife corridor is asked to reduce underpass specifications to cut costs, despite WII's recommendation for wider clearances. Discuss the ethical responsibility to prioritise long-term ecological mitigation over short-term cost savings.

Case 5 — Transparency in Semiconductor Investment Approvals

An official reviewing India Semiconductor Mission applications discovers a conflict of interest involving a relative's stake in a competing bid. Discuss the ethical duty of disclosure and recusal in high-value strategic-sector approvals.

§4 · PRELIMS MCQS (19 QUESTIONS)

1. The "Nasha Mukh Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan" was launched as a campaign spanning:

(a) 52 weeks (b) 100 weeks (c) 150 weeks (d) 200 weeks

Answer: (b).

2. India's first-ever Commonwealth Games judo gold medals (2026) were won by:

(a) Asmita Dey and Harsh Singh (b) Vinesh Phogat and Bajrang Punia (c) Sakshi Malik and Ravi Dahiya (d) Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh

Answer: (a).

3. India is currently the largest source of which category of Rwanda's imports?

(a) Textiles (b) Pharmaceuticals (c) Electronics (d) Automobiles

Answer: (b).

4. The Favara-UPI cross-border payment corridor connects India's UPI with which country's instant payment system?

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

Answer: (b).

5. India's diplomatic engagement with Iran on West Asia hostilities has primarily emphasised:

(a) Military support (b) Safety of commercial shipping and seafarers (c) Trade sanctions (d) UNSC referral

Answer: (b).

6. An OSAT (Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Test) facility primarily performs:

(a) Silicon wafer fabrication (b) Chip design (c) Packaging and testing of chips (d) Rare-earth mineral extraction

Answer: (c).

7. The Kurnool-IV Renewable Energy Zone transmission project (Phase-I) has a capacity of:

(a) 2 GW (b) 3.5 GW (c) 4.5 GW (d) 6 GW

Answer: (c).

8. India's flash Composite PMI for July 2026 marked the weakest private-sector growth since:

(a) January 2020 (b) March 2022 (c) June 2023 (d) August 2024

Answer: (b).

9. The WII-NHAI wildlife underpass study was conducted along the Delhi-Dehradun Expressway near:

(a) Rishikesh (b) Haridwar (c) Roorkee (d) Saharanpur

Answer: (b).

10. The Clouded Leopard is primarily found in India in which region?

(a) Western Ghats (b) Northeast India (c) Central India (d) Trans-Himalaya

Answer: (b).

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

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

Answer: (a).

12. Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport, inaugurated August 1, 2026, is located at:

(a) Kakinada (b) Bhogapuram (c) Rajahmundry (d) Nellore

Answer: (b).

13. As of May 2026, how many semiconductor facilities were approved under the India Semiconductor Mission?

(a) 8 (b) 10 (c) 12 (d) 15

Answer: (c).

14. India's Commonwealth Games 2026 medal tally, compared to 2022, showed a rise from:

(a) 26 to 31 (b) 31 to 39 (c) 35 to 42 (d) 40 to 45

Answer: (b).

15. Tejaswin Shankar became India's first Commonwealth Games medallist in which event?

(a) Decathlon (b) High Jump (c) Long Jump (d) Javelin Throw

Answer: (a).

16. The India-Rwanda first Joint Trade Committee session identified which of these as a NON-priority sector?

(a) Critical minerals (b) Pharmaceuticals (c) Automobiles (d) Digital technologies

Answer: (c).

17. The Rajaji Tiger Reserve, near which the Delhi-Dehradun wildlife corridor lies, is located in:

(a) Himachal Pradesh (b) Uttarakhand (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Punjab

Answer: (b).

18. UPI-based payment services are now available in how many countries outside India (as of the Maldives launch)?

(a) 5 (b) 7 (c) 9 (d) 12

Answer: (c).

19. The Arjun Mk-1A Main Battle Tank's indigenous content, compared to the base Mk1 variant, rose to:

(a) 41% (b) 48% (c) 54.3% (d) 62%

Answer: (c).

§5 · MAINS QUESTIONS (8 QUESTIONS)

GS2 · 150 words — Discuss the role of large-scale public campaigns like the Nasha Mukh Yuva Abhiyan in addressing substance abuse among Indian youth.

GS2 · 150 words — Examine the linkage between sporting achievements at multinational events and the effectiveness of government sports-development schemes.

GS2 · 150 words — Assess the significance of institutional mechanisms like the India-Rwanda Joint Trade Committee in deepening India's Africa outreach.

GS2 · 150 words — Discuss UPI's international expansion as an instrument of India's digital and economic diplomacy, citing recent examples.

GS2 · 150 words — Evaluate India's diplomatic approach to balancing neutrality and humanitarian concern amid the ongoing West Asia conflict.

GS3 · 150 words — Discuss the significance of OSAT facilities within India's broader semiconductor self-reliance strategy.

GS3 · 200 words — Critically examine the challenges of evacuating power from India's renewable energy zones, with reference to inter-state transmission projects.

GS3 · 150 words — Discuss the role of wildlife corridors and underpasses in reconciling infrastructure expansion with biodiversity conservation in India.

§6 · ANSWER WRITING VALUE ADDITION

Data point: India's Commonwealth Games medal tally rose from 31 (2022) to 39 (2026) across the same 10 sports — a clean statistic for GS2 sports-governance answers.

Quote: EAM Jaishankar's insistence that attacks on seafarers be condemned "regardless of who carries them out" — a strong citation for GS2 answers on India's principled West Asia diplomacy.

Framework: "JTC ≠ JDCC" — distinguishing trade-focused and defence-focused bilateral mechanisms strengthens precision in IR answers involving multiple "Joint Committee" structures.

Statistic: UPI is now live in 9 countries outside India — a strong number to cite when discussing India's digital-diplomacy and payments-infrastructure exports.

Ecological data point: 40,444 of 111,234 camera-trap images across an 18 km stretch were attributed to 18 wild species — a strong evidence base for GS3 answers on infrastructure-wildlife coexistence.

Framework: "OSAT packages, fab fabricates" — a clean two-stage distinction useful whenever a semiconductor-value-chain question appears in GS3.

§7 · AKADEMIA DIRECT HIT TRACKER

#	TOPIC	SECTION	GS PAPER	PROBABILITY
1	Nasha Mukht Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan	Part I §2	GS2	High
2	Commonwealth Games 2026 — India's Medal Tally	Part I §2	GS2	Very High
3	India-Rwanda First Joint Trade Committee	Part I §3	GS2	Medium
4	Favara-UPi India-Maldives Corridor	Part I §3	GS2	High
5	Jaishankar-Iran Call on Shipping Safety	Part I §3	GS2	Medium
6	Arjun Mk-1A Main Battle Tank — Indigenisation	Part I §4	GS3	Medium
8	AP's First Semiconductor OSAT Facility	Part I §5	GS3	Very High
9	Bhogapuram International Airport + AP Package	Part I §6	GS3	Medium
10	Composite PMI July 2026	Part I §6	GS3	Medium
11	Delhi-Dehradun Wildlife Underpass Study	Part II §1	GS3	High
12	Clouded Leopard — Species Profile	Part II §1	GS3	Medium
13	Rajaji Tiger Reserve	Part II §2	GS3	Medium
14	India Semiconductor Mission — National Progress	Part I §5	GS3	High
15	Kurnool-IV REZ Transmission — POWERGRID SPV Model	Part I §6	GS3	Medium
16	India's Africa Outreach — Trade Mechanisms	Part I §3	GS2	Medium
17	UPI Global Expansion — 9 Countries	Part I §3	GS3	High
18	West Asia Conflict — Impact on Indian Nationals	Part I §3	GS2	Medium

§8 · PROOF OF PRECISION

1. ANTIM ASSURED 100+ students had already studied UPI's global-expansion strategy, semiconductor value-chain stages, and wildlife-corridor mitigation concepts weeks before today's cluster of related developments — proof of our anticipatory static-plus-current design.
2. The 30-day rotating species-profile system ensured Clouded Leopard coverage arrived precisely when today's wildlife-corridor connectivity

story made canopy-dependent species newly relevant.

3. Every Part I news card today carries a verified date and source lineage (PIB, PM India, IANS, WION, 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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