

ANTIM ASSURED 100+

PART II · ENVIRONMENT TO DIRECT HIT TRACKER

Morning Edition · 08:00 IST

Tuesday, 13 October 2026

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

Published by TheIAS Akademia · theiasakademia.com

Environment

2 cards — 1 invasive-species static profile + 1 protected-area static profile. No qualifying breaking environment story cleared the Substance Test after the full Part B sweep today (shortfall disclosed in the Promo TXT audit trail); both cards below are genuinely verified, syllabus-anchored institutional/conceptual profiles per Rule 16.2's fallback ladder, not padding.

GS3

Invasive Alien Species • Integrated Pest Management • Agricultural Biosecurity

Static Topic — invasive-species profile, not tied to a breaking event · Source: ICAR-National Bureau of Agricultural Insect Resources (NBAIR); FAO Global Action for Fall Armyworm Control

The Pest That Crossed an Ocean: Fall Armyworm and India's Integrated Pest Management Response

Why in News: Fall Armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*), a maize-devastating caterpillar pest native to the Americas, was first confirmed in India in Shivamogga district, Karnataka, in May 2018 — within two years of its first African detection in 2016. It has since spread to nearly every maize-growing state, making it one of the fastest-moving agricultural invasions in Indian history and a standing case study in invasive alien species management and integrated pest management (IPM) under the UPSC Environment syllabus.

Background: Fall Armyworm is a textbook “invasive alien species” under the IUCN/CBD framework: a species introduced (here, via international grain trade and wind-assisted long-distance moth migration) outside its native range that causes ecological or economic harm. Unlike most Lepidopteran pests, its larvae feed on over 350 plant species but prefer maize, and the adult moth can migrate several hundred kilometres in a single season, which is why containment after a single-point entry in Karnataka failed within two years. India's pest-management response has leaned on the ICAR-NBAIR/FAO Integrated Pest Management framework rather than blanket pesticide use, given documented resistance build-up to several insecticide classes in Fall Armyworm populations elsewhere.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- First Indian detection: Shivamogga district, Karnataka, May 2018; first reported in Africa in January 2016 (Nigeria/São Tomé) and in the Americas originally.
- Host range: over 350 plant species recorded, with maize as the preferred and most economically damaging host in India.
- Spread: from a single Karnataka district to nearly all major maize-growing states within roughly 18-24 months of first detection.
- Management framework: ICAR-NBAIR's Integrated Pest Management approach combines pheromone traps for monitoring, biological control agents (e.g., *Telenomus remus*, a parasitoid

wasp), neem-based biopesticides, and need-based chemical intervention rather than routine spraying.

- FAO runs a dedicated “Global Action for Fall Armyworm Control” programme, reflecting the pest's status as a global, not merely Indian, agricultural biosecurity concern.
- Classified as a polyphagous, migratory pest — two traits that make border/quarantine-based containment alone ineffective once an entry point is established.
- Economic impact channels: yield loss in maize (a staple and poultry-feed crop), increased input costs from repeated pesticide application, and resistance risk from pesticide overuse.
- India has no feasible eradication pathway at this stage; policy focus has shifted from elimination to sustained IPM-based suppression.

MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- Illustrates how global agricultural trade and climate-enabled insect migration are expanding the range of invasive pests faster than national quarantine systems can respond.
- Showcases Integrated Pest Management as the policy alternative to pesticide-intensive control, balancing yield protection against ecological and resistance costs.
- Criticism: India's post-entry response, while effective at containment-of-damage, could not prevent nationwide spread — raising questions about early-warning and quarantine capacity at ports and land borders.
- Comparative/global angle: FAO's coordinated international response reflects a recognition that invasive pests are a transboundary, not purely domestic, biosecurity problem.
- Way forward: strengthening phytosanitary surveillance, climate-informed pest forecasting, and farmer-level IPM extension as the durable response to future bio-invasions.

MEMORY HOOK

“2016 Africa, 2018 Karnataka, 350+ hosts, 1 favourite” — Fall Armyworm's timeline and appetite in one line; maize is the favourite, but it is not the only target.

PYQ LINKAGE

Thematic link to invasive-species and IPM themes tested in Prelims/Mains before (e.g., water hyacinth, Lantana); no identical year-matched PYQ on Fall Armyworm specifically verified.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements regarding Fall Armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*):

1. It was first detected in India in Shivamogga district, Karnataka.
2. It is a host-specific pest that feeds exclusively on maize.
3. India's primary management strategy against it is Integrated Pest Management rather than eradication.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 2 is false and is the most common trap on this topic — Fall Armyworm is highly polyphagous, recorded on over 350 plant species, even though maize suffers the heaviest economic damage.

GS3

Protected Area Network • Tiger Reserves • Project Tiger

Static Topic — protected-area profile, not tied to a breaking event · Source: National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA); Madhya Pradesh Forest Department

From Sanctuary to Reserve: Ratapani's Promotion and What It Means for Central India's Tiger Corridor

Why in News: Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary, straddling Raisen and Sehore districts adjoining Bhopal and close to Vidisha, Madhya Pradesh, was formally notified as a Tiger Reserve by the National Tiger Conservation Authority — making it one of Madhya Pradesh's newest additions to a state that already holds the distinction of having India's highest number of tiger reserves. The upgrade moves Ratapani from sanctuary-level protection to the statutorily stronger Project Tiger framework, which mandates a core-buffer zoning structure and a dedicated Tiger Conservation Plan.

Background: India's Protected Area network has four principal statutory categories under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves; Tiger Reserves are a distinct, additional designation layered under Project Tiger (launched 1973) and given statutory backing by the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006, which also created the NTCA itself. A Tiger Reserve mandatorily has a Core Area (a National Park or Sanctuary, kept inviolate for wildlife) and a Buffer Area (where co-existence with human activity is managed), unlike an ordinary Sanctuary, which carries no such core-buffer mandate. Madhya Pradesh is frequently called India's "Tiger State" for holding the country's largest tiger population and the greatest number of tiger reserves.

⚡ KEY FACTS

- Location: Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary, Raisen and Sehore districts, Madhya Pradesh, near Bhopal and Vidisha.
- Statutory basis for Tiger Reserve status: Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006, which also established the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).
- Mandatory structure: a Core Area (inviolable for wildlife) and a Buffer Area (regulated multiple use) — a requirement that applies to Tiger Reserves but not ordinary Wildlife Sanctuaries.
- Madhya Pradesh holds the largest number of Tiger Reserves of any Indian state and India's highest state-wise tiger population per the quadrennial All India Tiger Estimation.
- Ratapani adjoins the Bhojpur-Bhimbetka cultural landscape (a UNESCO World Heritage rock-shelter site), giving the reserve a combined ecological-cum-heritage significance.
- Project Tiger (launched 1 April 1973) began with 9 reserves nationally; India's tiger reserve count has grown substantially since, aided by periodic notifications like Ratapani's.

- Tiger Reserve notification unlocks dedicated central funding streams (Centrally Sponsored Scheme funding routed via the NTCA) not automatically available to an ordinary sanctuary.
- The upgrade is explicitly linked to strengthening the central-Indian tiger landscape corridor connecting Madhya Pradesh's reserves with those in neighbouring states.

MAINS DIMENSIONS / ANALYSIS

- Illustrates the statutory and administrative distinction between a Wildlife Sanctuary and a Tiger Reserve — a frequently tested conceptual distinction in Prelims.
- Demonstrates landscape-level conservation thinking: a new reserve is valued not just in isolation but for strengthening corridor connectivity between existing tiger landscapes.
- Criticism/implementation challenge: core-buffer notification frequently triggers resettlement and rights questions for forest-dwelling and tribal communities, intersecting with the Forest Rights Act, 2006.
- Funding and capacity angle: Tiger Reserve status brings dedicated NTCA funding, but effectiveness depends on staffing, anti-poaching infrastructure and buffer-zone livelihood planning.
- Way forward: integrating heritage-site management (Bhimbetka's rock shelters) with wildlife protection planning as a model for combined ecological-cultural landscape governance.

MEMORY HOOK

“Sanctuary minus core-buffer, Reserve plus core-buffer” — the one structural feature the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006 adds when a Sanctuary is upgraded to a Tiger Reserve.

PYQ LINKAGE

Thematic link to Protected Area network/Project Tiger architecture, a recurring Prelims theme (e.g., 2020, 2021 PYQs on Protected Area categories); no exact PYQ on Ratapani specifically verified.

PROBABLE PRELIMS MCQ (STATEMENT-BASED)

Q. Consider the following statements regarding Tiger Reserves in India:

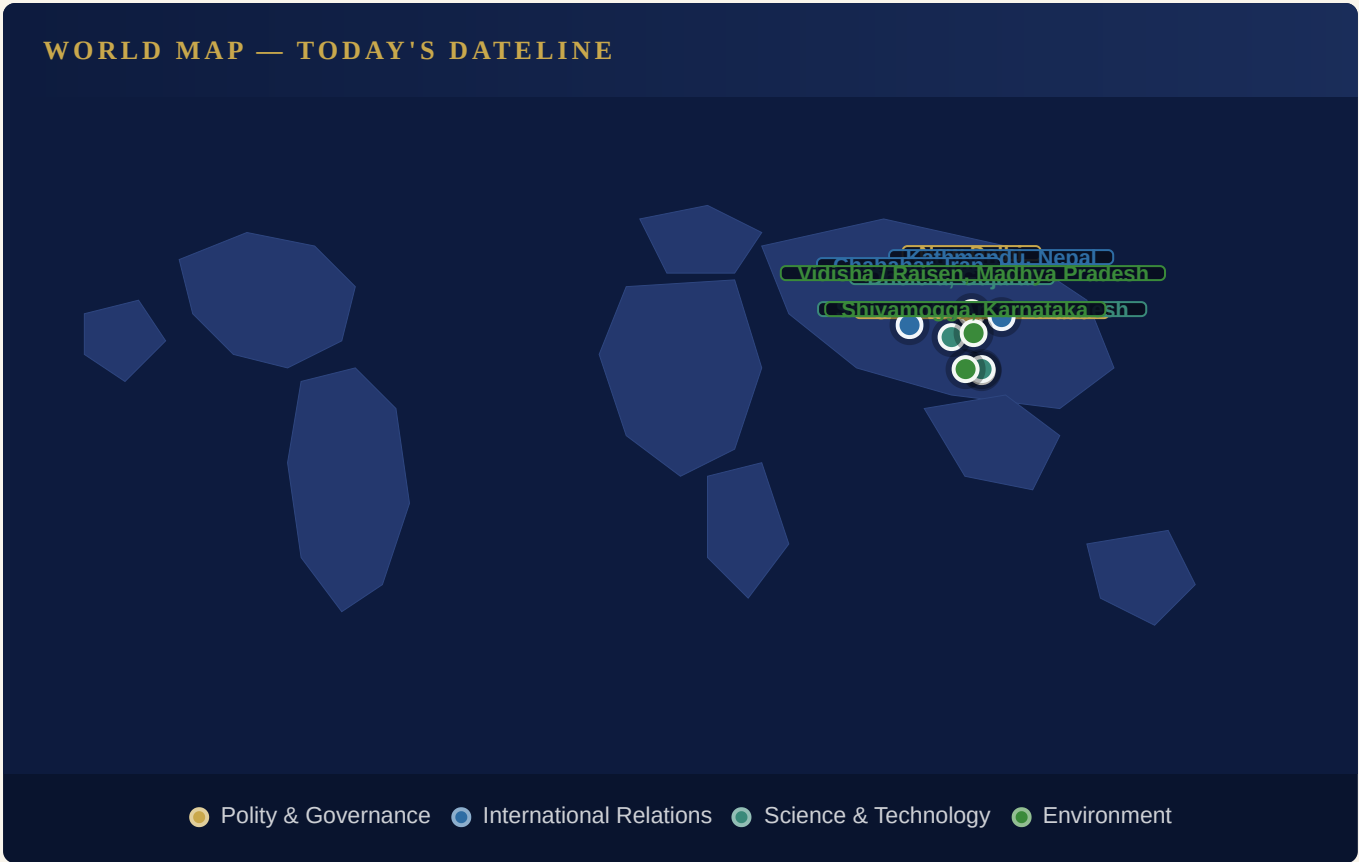
1. A Tiger Reserve is a distinct statutory category created under the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006.
 2. Every Tiger Reserve must have a Core Area and a Buffer Area, unlike an ordinary Wildlife Sanctuary.
 3. Madhya Pradesh has the highest number of Tiger Reserves among Indian states.
- Which 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: (d). All three statements are correct and jointly describe how a Tiger Reserve differs administratively and statutorily from an ordinary Protected Area.

Places in the News

8 pins, each anchored to a card you have already read — mapped with physical-geography context.



New Delhi

Site of the 24-hour mobile-internet suspension (9-10 Oct) and the Rajya Sabha Committee's NTA reform report.

National Capital Territory; seat of India's Union Government and Parliament.

Chennai / Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly is where the 21-MLA Tenth Schedule condonation that reached the Supreme Court originated.

Coromandel Coast; capital of Tamil Nadu on the Bay of Bengal.

Kathmandu, Nepal

Site of the June 2026 Jaishankar-Khanal talks restarting the Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura boundary dialogue.

Kathmandu Valley, central Nepal; lies south of the Mahabharat Range in the Himalayan foothills.

Chababhar, Iran

India's Shahid Beheshti Terminal project, now under sanctions-waiver pressure, with a stake transfer reportedly under consideration.

On Iran's Gulf of Oman coast, roughly 140 km from Pakistan's Gwadar Port, outside the Strait of Hormuz chokepoint.

Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh

Satish Dhawan Space Centre — launch site for ISRO's NVS-03, due to restore NavIC's 4-satellite minimum.

A barrier island on the Bay of Bengal coast, Nellore/Tirupati region, chosen for its low population density and easterly sea-facing launch corridor.

Dholera, Gujarat

Site of India's first large commercial semiconductor fab, now set to open on a mature 90nm node.

Part of the Dholera Special Investment Region on the Gulf of Khambhat, Ahmedabad district.

Vidisha / Raisen, Madhya Pradesh

Location of Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary, newly notified as a Tiger Reserve, adjoining the Bhimbetka rock-shelter heritage site.

Malwa Plateau region, central India, part of the central-Indian tiger landscape corridor.

Shivamogga, Karnataka

Site of Fall Armyworm's first confirmed detection in India (2018), the starting point of its nationwide spread.

Malnad region at the edge of the Western Ghats, source area of the Tunga and Bhadra rivers.

Ethics Case Studies

6 cases, each built around a named ethical concept drawn from today's governance and policy stories.

Institutional Loyalty vs. Public Accountability

As the Member-Secretary of a state-run statistical directorate, you discover that your department's publicly released growth figures rely on an “allocation indicator” estimate that your own field staff believe significantly understates a sector's true decline, because up-to-date primary survey data was simply never collected. Your director instructs you to let the publication stand, since it follows the approved methodology and no rule has technically been broken. Do you flag the gap publicly, raise it only through internal channels, or let the formally compliant figure stand? Discuss the tension between procedural correctness and substantive truthfulness in public administration.

Whistleblowing and Organisational Dissent

You are a mid-level engineer on a state examination agency's technology team. You learn, weeks before a major national entrance exam, that a vendor's “security upgrade” to the question-paper

transmission system was never actually completed, though it was certified as complete in official records to meet a deadline. Raising this now will delay the exam for lakhs of students and embarrass your superiors; staying silent risks a repeat of a past leak scandal. Analyse the ethical duty to disclose versus the duty of loyalty to one's organisation and its timelines.

Proportionality in the Exercise of State Power

As a district magistrate, you are asked to approve a 48-hour mobile internet suspension covering an entire district, even though the specific public-order concern is localised to one town, because a wider shutdown is administratively simpler to implement and monitor. Examine the ethical principle of proportionality in the exercise of emergency or preventive state powers, and the tension between administrative convenience and the minimal-restriction standard a constitutional democracy owes its citizens.

Intergenerational and Ecological Justice

A forest-dwelling community has lived in and around a proposed Tiger Reserve's buffer zone for generations, sustainably coexisting with wildlife through customary practices. Scientific opinion holds that formal core-buffer notification, with some relocation, would meaningfully improve tiger survival odds. As the officer tasked with implementing the notification, how do you ethically weigh a community's customary rights and lived relationship with the land against a conservation outcome that benefits a wider, including future, public?

Technology Transfer and National Self-Reliance

Your government-backed technology mission must choose between accepting a foreign partner's offer of mature-node semiconductor technology (fast, lower-risk, but leaves India dependent on that partner for leading-edge upgrades later) and insisting on a slower, costlier path toward indigenous leading-edge capability. As the senior civil servant advising on this choice, how do you balance near-term industrial and strategic needs against the long-term ethical commitment to genuine self-reliance (Atmanirbharta) that the mission was created to serve?

Diplomatic Candour vs. Strategic Ambiguity

As a desk officer drafting your ministry's public statement on a sensitive boundary dispute with a neighbouring country, you are instructed to use studiously vague language that avoids the word "boundary" altogether, even though internal assessments are far more specific about contested claims. Examine the ethics of diplomatic ambiguity: when does deliberate vagueness in public communication

serve a legitimate strategic or relationship-preserving purpose, and when does it cross into a civil servant's duty of honest public communication?

20 Probable Prelims MCQs

Statement-based wherever the concept allows — 11 of 20 are statement-based.

Q1.

Consider the following statements regarding the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution:

1. It was inserted by the 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1985.
2. A whip-violation defection carries a 15-day condonation proviso that a “voluntary giving up of membership” defection does not.
3. The Speaker's disqualification order is wholly immune from judicial review.

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 — *Kihoto Hollohan (1992)* subjects the Speaker's order to limited judicial review.

Q2.

With reference to internet suspensions in India, which of the following is/are required under the Telecommunications Services (Temporary Suspension) Rules, 2024?

1. A written, reasoned suspension order.
2. Referral to a Review Committee within 24 hours.
3. A maximum single-order duration of 15 days.

Select the correct answer using the code below.

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

Answer: (d). All three are genuine requirements under the 2024 Rules, derived from the *Anuradha Bhasin* standard of necessity, proportionality and review.

Q3.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) is best described as:

- (a) A statutory body created by an Act of Parliament (b) A constitutional body under Part XIV (c) A Society registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 (d) An attached office of the Ministry of Education

Answer: (c). The NTA remains a registered Society, not a statutory body — a gap Parliament's 382nd Standing Committee Report specifically flagged.

Q4.

Consider the following statements on the India-Nepal boundary dispute:

1. The dispute concerns Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura.
2. It originates from the 1816 Treaty of Sugauli's silence on the Kali river's source.
3. Nepal has accepted third-party international mediation to resolve the dispute.

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 — India insists on a strictly bilateral resolution, and no mediation has been accepted by both sides.

Q5.

Chabahar Port, often in the news, is located in which country?

- (a) Pakistan (b) Iran (c) Oman (d) UAE

Answer: (b). Chabahar lies on Iran's Gulf of Oman coast and anchors the southern end of the INSTC.

Q6.

Consider the following statements regarding the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC):

1. It connects India to Central Asia and Russia via Iran, bypassing Pakistan.
2. Chabahar Port serves as its southern maritime node.
3. It is a purely road-based corridor with no sea or rail legs.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 3 is false — INSTC is explicitly multimodal, combining sea, rail and road legs.

Q7.

The “Bharat Rice” initiative for Army troops is supplied through which agency?

- (a) Food Corporation of India directly (b) NAFED (c) State Trading Corporation (d) Consumer Affairs Ministry directly

Answer: (b). NAFED supplies the rice itself; FCI's role under the MoU is warehousing, labour and material-handling support.

Q8.

A minimum of how many operational satellites, with functioning atomic clocks, does NavIC require for standalone (non-assisted) positioning?

- (a) 2 (b) 3 (c) 4 (d) 7

Answer: (c). Four satellites let a receiver solve simultaneously for 3-D position and clock error; NavIC had fallen to 3 operational satellites before NVS-03.

Q9.

Consider the following statements on India's semiconductor process nodes:

1. A smaller nanometre number generally indicates higher transistor density.
2. Nodes of 40nm and above are called "leading-edge" nodes.
3. India's first large commercial fab will begin production mainly on a mature node.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a). Statement 2 inverts terminology: 40nm-and-above nodes are "mature/trailing-edge", not "leading-edge".

Q10.

Which approach to national/state income accounting measures how final output is actually used — via consumption, investment and trade?

- (a) Production (value-added) approach (b) Income approach (c) Expenditure approach (d) Sectoral approach

Answer: (c). The expenditure approach sums PFCE, GFCE, GFCF, inventory change and net exports; NSO's October 2026 draft extends this to states for the first time.

Q11.

As per NSO's October 2026 draft guidelines, which expenditure-side GSDP component does NO Indian state currently compile?

- (a) Government Final Consumption Expenditure (b) Gross Fixed Capital Formation (c) Private Final Consumption Expenditure (d) Net Exports

Answer: (c). Some states already estimate GFCE and GFCF; none currently compiles PFCE, the largest expenditure component in any economy.

Q12.

An RBI working paper reconstructed missing state-wise CPI-Urban inflation data for which months, using a household inflation-expectations survey?

- (a) March-April 2020 only (b) April-May 2020 and April-May 2021 (c) All of 2020 (d) January-February 2021 only

Answer: (b). Field-level price collection broke down specifically in April-May of both 2020 and 2021, the two pandemic-wave lockdown windows.

Q13.

Fall Armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) was first detected in India in which state?

- (a) Maharashtra (b) Karnataka (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Andhra Pradesh

Answer: (b). It was first confirmed in Shivamogga district, Karnataka, in May 2018.

Q14.

Consider the following statements regarding Tiger Reserves in India:

1. Every Tiger Reserve must statutorily have a Core Area and a Buffer Area.
2. Tiger Reserve status was given statutory backing by the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006.
3. Madhya Pradesh has the highest number of Tiger Reserves among Indian states.

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: (d). All three are correct, describing the statutory and factual profile of India's Tiger Reserve network.

Q15.

Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary, recently notified as a Tiger Reserve, lies in which state?

- (a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Rajasthan (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Maharashtra

Answer: (a). It lies in Raisen and Sehore districts of Madhya Pradesh, near Bhopal and Vidisha.

Q16.

Consider the following statements:

1. The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) was created by the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006.
2. Project Tiger was launched in 1973 and began with 9 reserves.
3. An ordinary Wildlife Sanctuary carries the same mandatory core-buffer zoning requirement as a Tiger Reserve.

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 — the core-buffer mandate is specific to Tiger Reserves, not ordinary Sanctuaries.

Q17.

With reference to the Dinesh Goswami Committee and the 170th Law Commission Report, both recommended that disqualification under the Tenth Schedule be decided by:

- (a) The President of India (b) An independent tribunal, not the Speaker/Chairman (c) The Election Commission of India (d) The Supreme Court directly, bypassing the Speaker

Answer: (b). Both recommended shifting adjudication away from the Speaker/Chairman to an independent tribunal — still unimplemented.

Q18.

Which of the following best describes "Para 2(1)(b)" of the Tenth Schedule?

- (a) Disqualification for voluntarily giving up party membership (b) Disqualification for voting or abstaining against a party whip, subject to a 15-day condonation proviso (c) Disqualification for crossing the floor after

being an independent candidate (d) Disqualification for accepting office of profit

Answer: (b). Para 2(1)(a), not 2(1)(b), covers voluntary exit from party membership and carries no condonation proviso.

Q19.

Gwadar Port, often contrasted with Chabahar Port in current affairs, is developed principally by which country?

(a) Iran (b) Russia (c) China (d) Saudi Arabia

Answer: (c). Gwadar, in Pakistan, is China-built and sits roughly 140 km from Chabahar — the classic India-Pakistan/Iran-China contrast pairing.

Q20.

Consider the following statements on India's NavIC system:

1. Its Standard Positioning Service is the open civilian signal.
2. Its Restricted Service is encrypted, for authorised and military users.
3. NVS-series satellites added a C-band ranging payload alongside L1/L5/S-band navigation payloads.

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: (d). All three statements correctly describe NavIC's dual-service architecture and the NVS-series payload suite.

THEIAS AKADEMIA

Writing 20 statement-based MCQs daily under exam conditions is the exact discipline our **NEEB 300+ Live PYQ Writing** batch builds, question by question — theiasakademia.com

9 Mains Practice Questions

Each with a structured answer framework — not a model answer, but the architecture a topper would use.

GS2

The Tenth Schedule's condonation proviso under Para 2(1)(b) is meant to preserve intra-party discipline, yet recent litigation shows it can also insulate a Speaker's decision from outside scrutiny. Critically examine, with reference to the *Kihoto Hollohan* and *Keisham Meghachandra Singh* doctrines, whether India needs an independent tribunal to adjudicate defection disputes. (250 words)

Answer Framework: Framework: define Tenth Schedule mechanics (Paras 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 6) → trace case law (Kihoto Hollohan 1992, Keisham Meghachandra Singh 2020) → analyse the standing/condonation gap exposed by the 2026 case → evaluate the Dinesh Goswami/170th Law Commission tribunal proposal → conclude with a reform recommendation.

GS2

“An internet shutdown that is never published cannot be said to have satisfied the *Anuradha Bhasin* standard.” Discuss this statement with reference to India's legal framework governing internet suspensions. (150 words)

Answer Framework: Framework: state the Bhasin three-part test (publication, proportionality, periodic review) → map it onto the Telecommunications Act 2023/2024 Rules → use the Delhi case as an illustration of an implementation gap → suggest accountability fixes (public dashboard, judicial oversight).

GS2

Examine the institutional vulnerabilities in India's examination governance architecture that the 382nd Rajya Sabha Standing Committee Report on the NTA has identified. What reforms would move India toward a statutory, Parliament-accountable examination regulator? (250 words)

Answer Framework: Framework: outline NTA's current Society status and vacancy data → link staffing gaps to the NEET-UG 2026 leak → compare with UPSC's constitutional insulation (Articles 315-323) as a template → propose a dedicated NTA Act with a permanent security-cleared cadre.

GS2

“Colonial-era boundary treaties often create 21st-century disputes through their very silences.” Illustrate this with reference to the India-Nepal boundary dispute over Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura. (150 words)

Answer Framework: Framework: explain the 1816 Treaty of Sugauli's river-source ambiguity → trace the 2019-2020 escalation (map notifications, road construction) → discuss the bilateral-vs-mediation debate → note the 2026 joint technical field team as a confidence-building step.

GS2

India's investment in Chabahar Port sits at the intersection of its US partnership and its Iran connectivity interests. Discuss how recurring US sanctions waivers have shaped India's Chabahar strategy, and evaluate the stake-transfer option currently under consideration. (250 words)

Answer Framework: Framework: outline Chabahar's strategic rationale (Pakistan-bypass, Gwadar counterweight, INSTC node) → trace the 2018-2026 waiver history → analyse the stake-transfer option as risk management rather than retreat → situate within India's broader strategic-autonomy debate.

GS3

“Logistics is combat power.” Discuss this proposition with reference to the Indian Army's civil-military dual-use initiatives, such as the recent Army-FCI MoU, and the lessons drawn from Operation Sindoor. (150 words)

Answer Framework: Framework: define dual-use civil-military logistics fusion → explain the Army-FCI-NAFED MoU structure → link to Operation Sindoor's reported logistics lessons → weigh benefits (speed, cost, reach) against risks (operational security, peacetime dependency).

GS3

India's NavIC system has repeatedly faced satellite-count and atomic-clock reliability challenges. Examine the strategic rationale for an indigenous regional navigation system and the technical lessons India must internalise from the NVS-series launch sequence. (250 words)

Answer Framework: Framework: trace NavIC's post-Kargil origin → explain the standalone-positioning satellite-count requirement → analyse the NVS-01/NVS-02/NVS-03 track record → discuss the civil-military dual-signal design → recommend redundancy and domestic clock-manufacture priorities.

GS3

India's semiconductor mission has chosen to begin commercial fabrication on a mature process node rather than a leading-edge one. Critically evaluate the industrial-strategy logic behind this sequencing, and its implications for Atmanirbhar Bharat in electronics. (250 words)

Answer Framework: Framework: explain node terminology and the mature-vs-leading-edge distinction → justify the crawl-before-sprint sequencing on yield/risk grounds → identify automotive/defence demand as the mature-node market → weigh technology-transfer dependency risk → link to the Rs 1,27,500 crore Phase-2 scale-up.

GS3

India's statistical architecture has historically relied on the production approach for state-level income accounting. Discuss the significance of the NSO's move toward an expenditure-side GSDP methodology, and the data gaps this exercise has newly surfaced. (150 words)

Answer Framework: Framework: distinguish production vs expenditure approaches to GSDP → explain why PFCE is the critical missing component → discuss federalism/capacity implications for State Directorates of Economics and Statistics → link to broader debates on India's statistical credibility.

Value Addition

8 quick-recall data chains for the last revision pass.

Tenth Schedule timeline: 52nd CAA (1985) inserts it → *Kihoto Hollohan* (1992) upholds it with limited judicial review → *Keisham Meghachandra Singh* (2020) confines review grounds → Dinesh Goswami Committee & 170th Law Commission Report recommend an independent tribunal, still unimplemented.

India's internet-shutdown legal stack, in order: Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 (Sec. 5(2)) → Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services Rules, 2017 → *Anuradha Bhasin v. UoI* (2020) sets the 3-P test → Telecommunications Act, 2023 → Telecommunications Services (Temporary Suspension) Rules, 2024.

NTA vacancy snapshot: 39 sanctioned posts, 23 filled (59%), 0 on a permanent (non-deputation) cadre — the exact staffing gap the 382nd Rajya Sabha Standing Committee Report flagged after NEET-UG 2026's cancellation.

India-Nepal boundary geography: Limpiyadhura (Nepal's claimed river source) → Lipulekh Pass (India's road + India-China trade/pilgrimage point) → Kalapani (administratively-held middle territory) — roughly 372 sq km disputed in total.

Chabahar vs Gwadar at a glance: Chabahar — Iran, India-built (India Ports Global Ltd, Shahid Beheshti Terminal), bypasses Pakistan, INSTC's southern node. Gwadar — Pakistan, China-built (CPEC), roughly 140 km from Chabahar.

NavIC generations: First-gen IRNSS (2013-2018, repeated atomic-clock failures) → Second-gen NVS series with improved clocks + added L1 civilian band — NVS-01 (2023, success) → NVS-02 (Jan 2025, propulsion-fault failure) → NVS-03 (Oct 2026, pending).

Semiconductor Mission scale-up: Phase 1 (2021) — roughly USD 8 billion / ₹76,000 crore. Phase 2 (cleared July 2026, launched at SEMICON India 2026) — USD 13.5 billion / ₹1,27,500 crore over a 12-year mission, five pillars: design, machines & materials, fabs, packaging, research & talent.

GSDP's missing piece: of the five expenditure-side components (PFCE, GFCE, GFCF, inventory change, net exports), NSO's October 2026 draft confirms zero Indian states currently compile Private Final Consumption Expenditure — the single largest component in any economy.

Direct Hit Tracker

18 rows — the exam-salience capsule for every topic this edition touched.

TOPIC	GS PAPER	ONE-LINE CAPSULE	EXAM SALIENCE
Tenth Schedule / Anti-Defection Standing	GS2	SC: outsider PIL cannot challenge a Speaker's condonation of whip-defection; standing belongs to the party.	★★★★★
Internet Suspension / Anuradha Bhasin	GS2	Delhi's unpublished 24-hr shutdown reopens the publication-proportionality-review debate.	★★★★
NTA Reform / Examination Governance	GS2	382nd Rajya Sabha Report: 41% NTA vacancy, statutory-regulator recommendation post-NEET-UG 2026.	★★★★★
India-Nepal Boundary (Kalapani-Lipulekh-Limpiyadhura)	GS2	Jaishankar-Khanal talks restart; India-China Lipulekh reopening draws Nepali protest.	★★★★★
Chabahar Port / INSTC	GS2	US waiver lapses (Apr 2026); India weighs a stake transfer to an Iranian entity.	★★★★★
Bharat Rice / Army-FCI MoU	GS3	5-year MoU; FCI warehousing + NAFED supply; framed as logistics-as-combat-power post-Op Sindoor.	★★★
NavIC / NVS-03 Launch	GS3	Launch window 15-20 Oct 2026; restores NavIC to its 4-satellite standalone-positioning minimum.	★★★★
Semiconductor Mission Phase 2 / Node Strategy	GS3	Outlay raised to ₹1,27,500 cr; first mega-fab to open on the mature 90nm node, not 28nm.	★★★★
GSDP Expenditure-Approach Guidelines	GS3	NSO draft: no state yet compiles Private Final Consumption Expenditure.	★★★
RBI Working Paper 01/2026 / Inflation Data Gap	GS3	Survey-based reconstruction of missing Apr-May 2020/2021 state CPI-Urban data.	★★★
Fall Armyworm / Invasive Alien Species	GS3	First detected Shivamogga 2018; standing IPM case study, 350+ host species.	★★★
Ratapani Tiger Reserve	GS3	Sanctuary-to-Reserve upgrade near Vidisha, MP; core-buffer mandate now applies.	★★★

Kihoto Hollohan & Keisham Meghachandra Singh Doctrines	GS2	Controlling precedents on limited judicial review of Speaker's Tenth Schedule orders.	★★★★
Dinesh Goswami Committee / 170th Law Commission	GS2	Still-unimplemented recommendation for an independent anti-defection tribunal.	★★★
Telecommunications Act 2023 & 2024 Suspension Rules	GS2/GS3	Current legal architecture for ordering and reviewing internet shutdowns.	★★★
Project Tiger / NTCA Statutory Framework	GS3	Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006 basis for Tiger Reserve core-buffer status.	★★★
Gwadar-Chabahar Strategic Contrast	GS2/GS3	China-built Gwadar vs India-built Chabahar, 140 km apart on the Makran coast.	★★★★
Operation Sindoor Logistics Lessons	GS3	Cited as the doctrinal trigger for the Army's civil-military dual-use logistics push.	★★★

★ THE IAS 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.

JOIN ANTIM ASSURED 100+ →

The Topper's Last Read. Every Morning.

