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WEEKLY

Weekly Current Affairs Compilation · 24-31 August 2026 · 8 Topics

Grouped by theme for faster revision — Protected Areas & Wildlife Watch and Species & Policy Watch. Every topic includes a Prelims Memory Bank for instant recall.

"innovation in learning"

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PROTECTED AREAS & WILDLIFE WATCH

Dihing Patkai National Park — Male Tiger Camera-Trapped for the First Time

WHY IN NEWS

A male tiger has been scientifically confirmed via camera-trap in Assam's Dihing Patkai National Park by the Zoological Survey of India, working with the Margherita West Forest Range — the first verified evidence of tiger presence in this lowland rainforest landscape.

1st SCIENTIFICALLY CONFIRMED TIGER RECORD IN DIHING PATKAI

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **National Park vs Wildlife Sanctuary status**
  Dihing Patkai was upgraded from sanctuary (2004) to national park (2020-21) under the WPA, 1972
- **Dehing Patkai Elephant Reserve**
  The park sits within this larger reserve spanning Assam's coal- and oil-rich Upper Assam districts
- **Camera-trap monitoring in tiger science**
  The primary scientific tool used to confirm big-cat presence in dense forest terrain

PRELIMS MATRIX

Location	Dibrugarh & Tinsukia districts, Assam
Status	Assam's 7th National Park; originally Dehing Patkai WLS (2004)
Area	231.65 sq km within the larger Dehing Patkai Landscape
Habitat	Dipterocarp-dominated lowland rainforest, largest such stretch in India
Recent confirmation	Male tiger camera-trapped, verified by ZSI, Aug 2026
Other fauna	Elephant, clouded leopard, white-winged wood duck, 310+ butterfly species

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Dihing Patkai is also called the "Jeypore Rainforest" and harbours India's largest stretch of lowland rainforest, yet until this camera-trap record, tiger presence there had only been inferred from pug marks, never scientifically confirmed.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

- Dihing Patkai = Assam's 7th National Park, Dibrugarh & Tinsukia
- Upgraded from WLS (2004) to NP in 2020-21
- India's largest lowland rainforest stretch; dominant tree = hollong
- 1st scientifically confirmed tiger record, via camera trap, Aug 2026

EXAM TRAP

Don't assume Dihing Patkai has long been a documented tiger habitat — earlier pug-mark sightings were only suggestive; this camera-trap record is the first scientific confirmation of the species' presence there.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to Dihing Patkai National Park, consider the following statements:
1. It is located in Assam.
2. It was Assam's first national park to be notified.
3. It holds India's largest stretch of lowland rainforest.

How many 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: 1 and 3 only

Approach
Statement 2 is the trap — Dihing Patkai is Assam's 7th national park, not its first (Kaziranga predates it by decades). Statements 1 and 3 are accurate.

PROTECTED AREAS & WILDLIFE WATCH

Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary — Monsoon Survey Records 124 Bird Species

WHY IN NEWS

A monsoon bird survey at Kerala's Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary recorded 124 bird species, including several Western Ghats endemics, reaffirming the sanctuary's ecological richness within the Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve.

124 BIRD SPECIES RECORDED IN THE 2026 MONSOON SURVEY

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve**
  UNESCO-designated reserve linking Peppara with Shendurney and Neyyar sanctuaries
- **Western Ghats endemism**
  Many species recorded in the survey are found nowhere outside this mountain range
- **Protected-area seasonal monitoring**
  Monsoon surveys track species diversity shifts across seasons

PRELIMS MATRIX

Location	Thiruvananthapuram district, Kerala, Western Ghats
Established	Declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1983
Area	53 sq km; catchment of the Peppara Dam on the Karamana River
Biosphere link	Part of the Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve (with Shendurney, Neyyar)
Borders	Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (Tamil Nadu) to the northeast
2026 survey	124 bird species recorded, including Western Ghats endemics

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Peppara is also home to 13 tribal settlements living within the sanctuary, and its evergreen forests shelter the vulnerable Vateria indica tree alongside rare birds like the Malabar trogon and white-bellied treepie.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Peppara WLS: Kerala, Western Ghats, 53 sq km, est. 1983

Part of Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve

Catchment of Peppara Dam, Karamana River

2026 monsoon survey: 124 bird species recorded

EXAM TRAP

Don't treat Peppara as an isolated protected area — it forms a contiguous conservation landscape with Shendurney and Neyyar sanctuaries in Kerala and Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to Peppara Wildlife Sanctuary, consider the following statements:
1. It was declared a sanctuary in 1983.
2. It is part of the Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve.
3. It shares a border with Kaziranga National Park.

How many 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: 1 and 2 only

Approach
Statement 3 is the trap — Peppara borders Kalakkad-Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu, not Kaziranga, which lies in distant Assam. Statements 1 and 2 are accurate.

PROTECTED AREAS & WILDLIFE WATCH

Corbett Tiger Reserve — Ramnagar Buffer Shows Sharp Rise in Tigers

WHY IN NEWS

A special annual survey by Uttarakhand's forest department has found a sharp rise in tiger numbers in the Ramnagar forest division adjoining Corbett Tiger Reserve, from 67 tigers in 2022 to 96 by July 2025, while the reserve's own population grew from 260 to 290.

67 → 96 TIGERS IN THE RAMNAGAR BUFFER DIVISION, 2022 TO 2025

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Project Tiger (1973)**
  Launched from Corbett's Dhikala zone — the first reserve under the scheme
- **Buffer zones & source-sink tiger dynamics**
  Adjoining divisions like Ramnagar absorb tigers dispersing from core reserves
- **Camera-trap population estimation**
  Extract-compare software analysis of camera images, as used in this survey

PRELIMS MATRIX

Established	1936 as Hailey National Park — India's first national park
Project Tiger status	First reserve under Project Tiger (launched 1 April 1973, Dhikala)
Location	Nainital & Pauri districts, Uttarakhand; Ramganga, Palain, Sonanadi rivers
Ramnagar buffer tiger count	67 (2022) to 96 (July 2025)
Corbett's own tiger count	260 to 290 over the same period
Survey method	1,059 camera-trap images across 181 locations, with WWF support

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Corbett was renamed twice before settling on its current name — first Hailey National Park (1936), then briefly Ramganga National Park, before being renamed after conservationist Jim Corbett, making it India's first national park under three different names.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Corbett = Hailey NP (1936), India's 1st national park

1st Project Tiger reserve, launched 1 April 1973

Ramnagar buffer tigers: 67 (2022) → 96 (July 2025)

Corbett's own tiger count: 260 → 290 over same period

EXAM TRAP

Don't confuse Corbett's founding year (1936, as Hailey National Park) with its Project Tiger designation (1973) — the reserve predates the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 itself by decades.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to Corbett Tiger Reserve, consider the following statements:
1. It was established in 1936 as Hailey National Park.
2. It was the first reserve to be included under Project Tiger.
3. The Ramnagar buffer division's tiger count declined between 2022 and 2025.

How many 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: 1 and 2 only

Approach
Statement 3 is the trap — the Ramnagar buffer's tiger count rose sharply (67 to 96), it did not decline. Statements 1 and 2 are accurate.

SPECIES & POLICY WATCH

Smew — First-Ever Sighting at Assam's Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary

WHY IN NEWS

Assam's Laokhowa Wildlife Sanctuary recorded its first-ever sighting of the rare migratory Smew during the 7th Kaziranga Waterbird Count 2026, alongside the endangered Bengal Florican, at the sanctuary's Rowmari-Dondowa beels.

1st-ever SMEW SIGHTING RECORDED AT LAOKHOWA WLS

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Migratory waterfowl & wintering grounds**
  The Smew is a scarce winter visitor from northern/central Europe
- **Asian Waterbird Census-style monitoring**
  The Kaziranga Waterbird Count follows a similar synchronised wetland-survey model
- **Laokhowa-Burhachapori landscape**
  A lesser-known wetland complex within the Kaziranga Tiger Reserve buffer

PRELIMS MATRIX

Species & IUCN status	Mergellus albellus (Smew); not globally threatened, but a rare Indian visitor
Appearance	Males show a crisp white body with a black mask; females mottled brown
Behaviour & habits	A diving duck; winters in northern/central Europe, straying rarely into India
Sighting location	Rowmari-Dondowa beels, Laokhowa WLS (Kaziranga Tiger Reserve buffer)
Survey context	7th Kaziranga Waterbird Count 2026 — 105,540 birds, 107 species, 166 wetlands
Prior Indian records	Haiderpur Wetland (UP), near Corbett NP — both rare, sporadic

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Ornithologists say the Smew's unexpected appearance in Assam may signal climate-driven shifts in migratory range, as warmer winters in its traditional European breeding grounds could be pushing vagrant birds further afield.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

- Smew = Mergellus albellus, rare European diving duck
- 1st-ever sighting at Laokhowa WLS, Rowmari-Dondowa beels
- Recorded during 7th Kaziranga Waterbird Count 2026
- Bengal Florican also recorded in the same survey

EXAM TRAP

Don't treat the Smew as a resident or regularly-wintering Indian duck — sightings remain extremely rare and localised, making this Laokhowa record a genuine conservation milestone, not a routine winter arrival.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to the Smew, consider the following statements:
1. It is a resident breeding duck species of Assam's wetlands.
2. It was recorded during the 7th Kaziranga Waterbird Count 2026.
3. The Bengal Florican was also recorded during the same survey.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

A 2 and 3 only
B 1 and 2 only
C 1 and 3 only
D 1, 2 and 3

Answer: 2 and 3 only

Approach
Statement 1 is the trap — the Smew is a rare winter migrant from Europe, not a resident breeding species of Assam. Statements 2 and 3 are accurate.

SPECIES & POLICY WATCH

Doronicum sanctum — Leopard's Bane Debuts in Northeast India

WHY IN NEWS

CSIR-IHBT researchers have discovered Doronicum sanctum, a new sunflower-family species from Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh — the first-ever record of the genus Doronicum ("Leopard's Bane") from Northeast India.

4,086m ELEVATION WHERE DORONICUM SANCTUM WAS FOUND, TAWANG

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Himalayan floristic biodiversity**
  High-altitude botanical surveys continue to reveal new Eastern Himalayan species
- **CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT)**
  Palampur-based institute specialising in Himalayan plant research
- **Comparative taxonomy**
  Distinguishing new species from close relatives via type-specimen comparison (Kew, NHM London)

PRELIMS MATRIX

Species & family	Doronicum sanctum; family Asteraceae (sunflower family)
Common name	"Leopard's Bane" — genus name from Arabic "doronigi"
Location found	~4,086 m elevation, Tawang district, Arunachal Pradesh, en route to Damteng
Distinguishing traits	Pubescent ray cypselae; caducous pappus; dilated peduncle apex
Significance	First-ever Doronicum record from Northeast India (earlier records: Western Himalaya)
Discovered by	CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (IHBT), Palampur

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Despite its dramatic common name, Doronicum sap is actually non-toxic — historians believe "Leopard's Bane" may have been a mistaken name, since arrows were once (wrongly) thought to be dipped in its juice for hunting leopards.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Doronicum sanctum = new species, Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh

1st-ever Doronicum record from Northeast India

Family Asteraceae; common name "Leopard's Bane"

Discovered by CSIR-IHBT, Palampur

EXAM TRAP

Don't assume "Leopard's Bane" means the plant is toxic to leopards or was proven to poison them — its sap is non-toxic, and the dramatic common name is now considered likely a historical misnomer.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to Doronicum sanctum, consider the following statements:
1. It belongs to the sunflower family (Asteraceae).
2. It was discovered in the Western Himalaya.
3. It is the first Doronicum species recorded from Northeast India.

How many 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: 1 and 3 only

Approach
Statement 2 is the trap — the species was found in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh (Northeast India), not the Western Himalaya, where all earlier Doronicum records were confined. Statements 1 and 3 are accurate.

SPECIES & POLICY WATCH

Neelakurinji's Rare Off-Cycle Bloom Near Munnar

WHY IN NEWS

A lesser-known population of Neelakurinji has begun flowering around Munnar's Chokramudi hills in 2026, catching many off guard since it is four years ahead of the famous Eravikulam bloom due only in 2030 — because different populations follow independent 12-year cycles.

12 yrs CHOKRAMUDI POPULATION BLOOMS 2026, NOT 2030

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Western Ghats shola-grassland ecosystem**
  Neelakurinji is a signature species of these high-altitude habitats
- **Mass/gregarious flowering (masting) in plants**
  A rare reproductive strategy also seen in bamboo
- **Kurinjimala Wildlife Sanctuary**
  Declared specifically to protect this species and its habitat

PRELIMS MATRIX

Species	Strobilanthes kunthiana (Neelakurinji); flowers once every 12 years, then dies
Habitat	High-altitude (1,500-2,500 m) grasslands, ~3,000 hectares across Kerala
Protected area	Kurinjimala Wildlife Sanctuary (~32 sq km), declared 2006
Chokramudi/Mattupetty cycle	Bloomed 1990, 2002, 2014, now 2026 (next due 2038)
Eravikulam NP cycle	Separate population, last bloomed 2018, next due 2030
Name origin	"Neela" (blue) + "kurinji"; gave the Nilgiri ("Blue Mountains") their name

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Neelakurinji's name literally gave the Nilgiri Hills their name — "Nilgiri" means "Blue Mountains," a reference to the blue-purple haze these flowers cast across the hillsides once every twelve years.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

- Neelakurinji = Strobilanthes kunthiana; blooms once every 12 years, then dies
- 2026 Chokramudi bloom is a separate cycle from Eravikulam's 2030 bloom
- Kurinjimala WLS (~32 sq km) declared 2006 to protect it
- Its blue-purple bloom gave the Nilgiri ("Blue Mountains") their name

EXAM TRAP

Don't assume all Neelakurinji populations across the Western Ghats bloom in the same year — different hillside populations (Chokramudi, Eravikulam, and others in Karnataka) run on independent 12-year cycles offset from each other.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to Neelakurinji, consider the following statements:
1. It flowers once every 12 years and then dies.
2. The 2026 Chokramudi bloom is an early arrival of the Eravikulam population's cycle.
3. The Nilgiri Hills are named after this flower's blue-purple bloom.

How many 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: 1 and 3 only

Approach
Statement 2 is the trap — the 2026 Chokramudi bloom belongs to a separate population with its own independent 12-year cycle, not an early Eravikulam bloom (due 2030). Statements 1 and 3 are accurate.

SPECIES & POLICY WATCH

Three New Rove Beetle Species Discovered in Arunachal Pradesh

WHY IN NEWS

Researchers from Rajiv Gandhi University and Germany's University of Tübingen have documented three new rove beetle species of the genus Megalopinus from Arunachal Pradesh, underlining Northeast India's underexplored insect diversity.

3 NEW MEGALOPINUS ROVE BEETLE SPECIES FOUND IN ARUNACHAL

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Staphylinidae (rove beetles)**
  One of the largest beetle families, identified by short elytra
- **Northeast India as an under-documented biodiversity hotspot**
  Part of the larger Indo-Burma hotspot
- **International research collaboration in taxonomy**
  Joint India-Germany fieldwork and species description

PRELIMS MATRIX

New species	Megalopinus arunachalensis, M. mithun, M. micros
Family & identification	Staphylinidae; short, leathery elytra exposing a flexible abdomen
Notable specimen	M. micros — one of the smallest in its genus, ~1.9 mm long
Collection sites	Eaglenest WS, Pakke Tiger Reserve, Mechukha valley, Aalo forest division
Habitat	Moist forest microhabitats — decaying wood, fungal leaf litter
Published in	Journal Soil Organisms; joint Rajiv Gandhi University-Tübingen study

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

The species epithet "mithun" honours Bos frontalis, the semi-domesticated cattle locally known as mithun in Arunachal Pradesh — a rare instance of an insect species being named after a culturally significant local animal.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

- 3 new Megalopinus rove beetles found in Arunachal Pradesh
- M. micros = one of the smallest in its genus, ~1.9 mm
- Family Staphylinidae; short elytra expose the abdomen
- Joint Rajiv Gandhi University-Tübingen (Germany) study

EXAM TRAP

Don't picture rove beetles with typical long wing-covering elytra like most beetles — their short, leathery elytra leaving the abdomen exposed is exactly what defines the family Staphylinidae.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to the newly discovered rove beetles in Arunachal Pradesh, consider the following statements:
1. They belong to the genus Megalopinus.
2. Rove beetles are identified by unusually long elytra that fully conceal the abdomen.
3. The discovery was a joint effort between an Indian university and a German university.

How many 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: 1 and 3 only

Approach
Statement 2 is the trap — rove beetles are defined by unusually short (not long) elytra, which leave most of the abdomen exposed. Statements 1 and 3 are accurate.

SPECIES & POLICY WATCH

Centre Proposes Complete Ban on Carbosulfan Insecticide

WHY IN NEWS

The Union Agriculture Ministry has proposed a complete ban on carbosulfan, a widely used insecticide on rice and cotton, after an expert committee found it highly hazardous with no specific antidote for poisoning.

0 KNOWN ANTIDOTE FOR CARBOSULFAN POISONING

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Insecticides Act, 1968 & the Registration Committee**
  Statutory basis for regulating pesticide use in India
- **Carbamate pesticides & cholinesterase inhibition**
  The toxicological mechanism behind carbosulfan's hazard
- **Precautionary principle in pesticide regulation**
  A recurring theme, also seen in the recent glyphosate restriction

PRELIMS MATRIX

Chemical	Carbosulfan, a carbamate insecticide used on rice, cotton and horticulture crops
Toxicity mechanism	Rapidly converts to toxic carbofuran in the body; no specific antidote exists
Expert Committee	Formed Jan 2026; submitted report 12 June 2026 recommending a ban
Regulatory recommendation	Registration Committee (Insecticides Act, 1968) backed a complete prohibition
Current stage	Draft order proposed; not yet a final, notified ban
Industry scale	~32 lakh acres of use; ~Rs 400 crore domestic market (per ACFI)

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

While Indian regulators cite carbosulfan's lack of antidote as the key hazard, the agrochemical industry counters that it is classified only under WHO Toxicity Category II and degrades within 7-10 days in soil and water without significant bio-accumulation — a live scientific and regulatory dispute.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

- Carbosulfan = carbamate insecticide; converts to toxic carbofuran
- No specific antidote exists for carbosulfan poisoning
- Expert Committee report (12 June 2026) recommended a complete ban
- Ban is proposed/draft stage, not yet finally notified

EXAM TRAP

Don't assume carbosulfan has already been officially banned — as of this news, only a draft order and Registration Committee recommendation exist; final notification is still pending.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to carbosulfan, consider the following statements:
1. It is a carbamate insecticide that converts to carbofuran in the body.
2. It has already been finally and officially banned in India.
3. No specific antidote exists for carbosulfan poisoning.

How many 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: 1 and 3 only

Approach
Statement 2 is the trap — only a ban proposal/recommendation exists so far; a final notification is still pending. Statements 1 and 3 are accurate.