MISSION X FOR UPSC

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WEEKLY

Weekly Current Affairs Compilation · 8-14 September 2026 · 6 Topics

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

"innovation in learning"

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FOREST & WILDLIFE GOVERNANCE

CAG Audit Exposes Major Shortfalls in the Green India Mission

WHY IN NEWS

A Comptroller and Auditor General performance audit, tabled in Parliament on 12 August 2026, has found the Green India Mission fell drastically short of its forest and tree cover targets over a decade, with poor inter-departmental convergence identified as the core failure.

97.5% SHORTFALL AGAINST GREEN INDIA MISSION'S FOREST-COVER TARGET, PER CAG

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC, 2008)**
  The Green India Mission is one of its eight missions
- **Convergence-based scheme design**
  GIM depends on pooling funds from MGNREGA, CAMPA and state afforestation programmes
- **Carbon sequestration measurement**
  Why quantifying a forestry mission's climate impact is technically difficult

PRELIMS MATRIX

Launched	2014, under the National Action Plan on Climate Change
Core targets	Increase forest/tree cover on 5 mha; improve quality on another 5 mha
Audit	CAG Performance Audit Report No. 4 of 2026, tabled 12 August 2026
Audit scope	16 States/UTs, covering 2015-16 to 2024-25
Key finding	Convergence with MGNREGA/CAMPA/state schemes was absent at every institutional level
Carbon monitoring gap	Only MP and Chhattisgarh assessed carbon sequestration; flux towers left idle

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

The CAG audit found that of the 16 states covered, only two — Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh — had actually measured carbon sequestration between 2015 and 2025, even though carbon sequestration is the Green India Mission's core climate objective under the NAPCC.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Green India Mission = 1 of 8 NAPCC missions, launched 2014

Targets: 5 mha new forest/tree cover + 5 mha quality improvement

CAG Audit Report No. 4 of 2026, tabled 12 Aug 2026

Key failure: convergence with MGNREGA/CAMPA absent at every level

EXAM TRAP

Don't assume the Green India Mission's climate goal (carbon sequestration) is being systematically tracked nationwide — the CAG audit found only 2 of 16 covered states actually measured it over the entire decade studied.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to the Green India Mission, consider the following statements:
1. It is one of the eight missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change.
2. The CAG's 2026 audit found the mission had fully met its forest and tree cover targets.
3. The audit found poor convergence between GIM and schemes like MGNREGA and CAMPA.

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 CAG audit found major shortfalls against targets, not full achievement. Statements 1 and 3 are accurate.

FOREST & WILDLIFE GOVERNANCE

WCCB's Multi-Agency Operations Continue to Target Wildlife Trafficking

WHY IN NEWS

The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has continued a series of joint operations through 2026 — including sea cucumber seizures in Tamil Nadu and an inter-agency coordination meeting in Gujarat — reflecting its ongoing role as India's nodal body against organised wildlife crime.

2007 YEAR WCCB WAS CONSTITUTED, BY AMENDING THE WPA, 1972

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**
  Legal basis for WCCB's constitution and mandate
- **Multi-agency coordination in crime enforcement**
  WCCB's model of pooling Customs, CBI, CISF, BSF, Coast Guard and state forest departments
- **CITES & international wildlife trade regulation**
  WCCB's role in assisting foreign authorities on cross-border wildlife crime

PRELIMS MATRIX

Established	6 June 2007, by amending the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
Nature	Statutory multi-disciplinary body under MoEFCC
Core mandate	Collect/collate wildlife crime intelligence; maintain a centralised crime data bank
Tools	Wildlife Crime Database Management System; past ops SAVE KURMA, THUNDERBIRD, WILDNET
2026 activity	Sea cucumber seizures (Tamil Nadu, ~540 kg & 190 kg); Gandhinagar meeting, July 2026
Headquarters	New Delhi; parent ministry: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

WCCB's past operations have been named after distinctive codewords like "THUNDERBIRD," "WILDNET" and "SAVE KURMA" — the last one specifically targeting illegal trade in turtles and tortoises (kurma being Sanskrit/Hindi for tortoise).

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

WCCB = statutory body, constituted 6 June 2007 under WPA, 1972 | **Nodal ministry: MoEFCC** | **Maintains a centralised Wildlife Crime Database Management System** | **2026 activity: TN sea cucumber seizures; Gandhinagar coordination meeting**

EXAM TRAP

Don't assume WCCB is only a data/intelligence body with no enforcement role — it actively conducts and coordinates joint field operations with Customs, CBI, BSF, Coast Guard and state agencies, as seen in its 2026 seizures.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), consider the following statements:
1. It was constituted by amending the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
2. It functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
3. It maintains a centralised Wildlife Crime Database Management System.

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 — WCCB functions under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, not the Ministry of Home Affairs. Statements 1 and 3 are accurate.

FOREST & WILDLIFE GOVERNANCE

Bhoramdev Wildlife Sanctuary — A Tiger Corridor Still Awaiting Reserve Status

WHY IN NEWS

Bhoramdev Wildlife Sanctuary in Chhattisgarh remains a key link in the Kanha-Achanakmar tiger corridor and continues to await formal tiger reserve notification, even after NTCA support and years of recommendations, while recurring poaching incidents highlight the enforcement gap.

352 sq km — AREA OF BHORAMDEV WLS, PENDING TIGER RESERVE NOTIFICATION

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **NTCA's tiger reserve recommendation process**
  The distinction between NTCA's technical approval and a state's final statutory notification
- **Wildlife corridors & landscape connectivity**
  Bhoramdev's role linking Kanha NP (MP) and Achanakmar WLS (Chhattisgarh)
- **Cultural heritage & conservation overlap**
  The ancient Bhoramdeo Temple sits within this protected wildlife landscape

PRELIMS MATRIX

Location	Kabirdham (Kawardha) district, Chhattisgarh, in the Maikal range of the Satpura hills
Established	Notified as a sanctuary in 2001; area ~352 sq km
Corridor role	Links Kanha National Park (MP) with Achanakmar Wildlife Sanctuary (Chhattisgarh)
Status	NTCA backed tiger reserve status in Feb 2025; still pending statutory notification
Fauna	Tigers, leopards, sloth bears, and various deer species
Recent concern	Recurring poaching incidents (e.g. gaur/bison killed by electrocution)

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Bhoramdev's tiger reserve journey has now stretched over a decade — NTCA first recommended it in 2014 and again in 2018, both overlooked by the state government, showing how a technical recommendation from a central body doesn't automatically translate into legal protection.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

- Bhoramdev WLS: Kabirdham, Chhattisgarh; ~352 sq km, notified 2001
- Links Kanha NP (MP) with Achanakmar WLS (Chhattisgarh)
- NTCA recommended tiger reserve status in 2014, 2018, Feb 2025 — still pending
- Named after the 1,000-year-old Bhoramdeo Temple ("Khajuraho of Chhattisgarh")

EXAM TRAP

Don't assume NTCA's recommendation alone confers tiger reserve status — the Chhattisgarh High Court has explicitly held that NTCA's recommendation is not binding until the state completes the required statutory notification process.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to Bhoramdev Wildlife Sanctuary, consider the following statements:
1. It is located in Chhattisgarh.
2. It has already been formally notified as a tiger reserve.
3. It forms part of a corridor linking Kanha National Park with Achanakmar Wildlife Sanctuary.

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 — despite NTCA's repeated recommendations, Bhoramdev has not yet been formally notified as a tiger reserve. Statements 1 and 3 are accurate.

PROTECTED AREAS & SPECIES WATCH

Bhitarkanika Records Marginal Rise in Nesting Water Bird Population

WHY IN NEWS

Odisha's Bhitarkanika National Park recorded 1,32,279 nesting water birds across 10 species in its 2026 annual colonial bird census, a marginal rise from 1,30,796 in 2025, with the Asian Open-billed Stork remaining the dominant species.

1,32,279 NESTING WATER BIRDS COUNTED IN BHITARKANIKA'S 2026 CENSUS

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Ramsar Convention & Wetlands of International Importance**
  Bhitarkanika has held this status since 2002
- **Colonial nesting birds & heronries**
  Why species like storks and egrets nest together in large mixed colonies
- **India's major mangrove ecosystems**
  Comparative context with the Sundarbans, India's largest

PRELIMS MATRIX

Location	Kendrapara district, Odisha; estuary of the Brahmani, Baitarani and Dhamra rivers
Established	National Park notified 16 Sept 1998; core ~145 sq km within the 672 sq km sanctuary
Ramsar status	Designated 19 August 2002; Odisha's 2nd Ramsar site after Chilika
2026 bird census	1,32,279 nesting birds, including 76,151 chicks, across 10 species
Dominant species	Asian Open-billed Stork — 16,111 nests, 78,925 birds
Other significance	India's 2nd largest mangrove ecosystem after the Sundarbans

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Bhitarkanika's National Park core (145 sq km) sits nested entirely within the much larger Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary (672 sq km) — meaning the park is legally a protected zone within an already-protected zone, reflecting layered conservation status.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Bhitarkanika NP: Kendrapara, Odisha; core 145 sq km within 672 sq km sanctuary

Ramsar site since 2002; Odisha's 2nd Ramsar site after Chilika

2026 census: 1,32,279 nesting water birds, up from 1,30,796 in 2025

Dominant species: Asian Open-billed Stork

EXAM TRAP

Don't confuse Bhitarkanika National Park's area (145 sq km) with the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary's area (672 sq km) — the national park is a smaller core zone nested within the larger sanctuary, not the same figure.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to Bhitarkanika National Park, consider the following statements:
1. It is a Ramsar site.
2. It is India's largest mangrove ecosystem.
3. The Asian Open-billed Stork was the dominant species in its 2026 bird census.

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 — Bhitarkanika is India's second largest mangrove ecosystem, after the Sundarbans, not the largest. Statements 1 and 3 are accurate.

PROTECTED AREAS & SPECIES WATCH

Mindoro Bleeding-Heart Pigeon Photographed for the First Time in 20 Years

WHY IN NEWS

Camera traps set up by Filipino conservationists and Indigenous Iraya Mangyan patrollers have captured the first confirmed photograph in two decades of the Critically Endangered Mindoro bleeding-heart pigeon, a ground-dwelling bird endemic to the Philippine island of Mindoro.

20 yrs SINCE THE LAST CONFIRMED PHOTOGRAPH OF THIS CRITICALLY ENDANGERED PIGEON

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **IUCN Red List & "Lost Species"**
  Categories for species with no verified record in 10+ years
- **Camera-trap & species distribution modelling**
  Combining historical data with bioclimatic layers to target survey sites
- **Indigenous community-led conservation**
  The Iraya Mangyan community's role in the rediscovery

PRELIMS MATRIX

Species & IUCN status	Gallicolumba platenae; Critically Endangered
Distinguishing feature	Orange-red patch on white breast; iridescent green head/neck
Location	Puerto Galera rainforest, Oriental Mindoro, Philippines
Rediscovery	Photographed by camera trap in August 2026; first confirmed image since Dec 2005
Elevation found	Over 900 m — unusual, since it is typically a lowland-forest bird (400-800 m)
Conducted by	Center for Conservation Innovation Ph Inc. (CCIPH) with Iraya Mangyan patrollers

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

The species had been formally added to the global "Search for Lost Birds" list only in early 2026 — meaning it was rediscovered within the same year it was officially declared "lost," an unusually fast turnaround for a species with no record in 20 years.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

- Mindoro bleeding-heart = Gallicolumba platenae; Critically Endangered
- Endemic to Mindoro Island, Philippines
- First confirmed photo since 2005 — taken August 2026 by camera trap
- Found above 900 m, higher than its usual lowland-forest range

EXAM TRAP

Don't assume this rediscovery means the species is now safe — experts note its detection at unusually high elevation may reflect the species being pushed into refuge habitat as its original lowland forests disappear, not genuine recovery.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to the Mindoro bleeding-heart pigeon, consider the following statements:
1. It is endemic to the Philippine island of Mindoro.
2. It is classified as Critically Endangered by the IUCN.
3. The 2026 rediscovery confirms the species' population is now stable and recovering.

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 — a single camera-trap photograph confirms survival, not a stable or recovering population; the species remains Critically Endangered. Statements 1 and 2 are accurate.

PROTECTED AREAS & SPECIES WATCH

Udaipur Study Finds Multidrug-Resistant Bacteria in Red-Naped Ibis Faeces

WHY IN NEWS

A new study of red-naped ibises in Udaipur has found diverse bacteria in their faeces, including multidrug-resistant strains, raising concerns about how wildlife living close to human settlements can pick up and potentially spread antibiotic-resistant microbes.

MDR MULTIDRUG-RESISTANT BACTERIA FOUND IN RED-NAPED IBIS FAECES, UDAIPUR

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) & the One Health framework**
  How wildlife, livestock and human health are interconnected in AMR spread
- **Synanthropic species**
  Birds like the red-naped ibis that thrive in human-altered farmland/urban landscapes
- **Bioindicator species for environmental health**
  Using common resident birds to track pollution and pathogen spread

PRELIMS MATRIX

Species & alternate names	Pseudibis papillosa; also called Indian black ibis / black ibis
Appearance	Bare dark head with crimson warty skin patch on crown/nape; white shoulder patch
Behaviour & habits	Resident, non-migratory; forages in dry fields, not strictly aquatic
Distribution	Widespread across the Indian subcontinent's plains (Haryana, Punjab, Gangetic plain)
IUCN status	Least Concern; stable in India, declined in Pakistan due to hunting/habitat loss
2026 finding	Udaipur study found diverse gut bacteria, including multidrug-resistant strains

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Despite being a wading bird by family, the red-naped ibis rarely wades in water at all — it prefers dry, open farmland and stubble fields, making it one of the least "aquatic" ibis species, which is likely part of why it comes into such close, frequent contact with human-linked bacteria.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

- Red-naped Ibis = Pseudibis papillosa; also called Indian black/black ibis
- IUCN Least Concern; resident, non-migratory, widespread in Indian plains
- Prefers dry fields over water; rarely wades, unlike most ibises
- 2026 Udaipur study found multidrug-resistant bacteria in its faeces

EXAM TRAP

Don't assume the red-naped ibis is a water-dependent wader like most ibis species — it is one of the least aquatic ibises, favouring dry open fields and farmland far from water bodies.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to the Red-naped Ibis, consider the following statements:
1. It is also known as the Indian black ibis.
2. It is classified as Critically Endangered by the IUCN.
3. It is one of the least aquatic ibis species, preferring dry open fields.

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 Red-naped Ibis is classified as Least Concern by the IUCN, with a stable population in India, not Critically Endangered. Statements 1 and 3 are accurate.