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WEEKLY

Weekly Current Affairs Compilation · 15-21 September 2026 · 13 Topics

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

"innovation in learning"

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PROTECTED AREAS & WILDLIFE GOVERNANCE

Asola Bhatti's Abandoned Mines Emerge as Delhi's Richest Bird Habitat

WHY IN NEWS

A new study has found that abandoned mining pits in the Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary have become the most bird rich habitat in the reserve, with former quarries now supporting a mix of scrub, grassland and water pools.

32.71 SQ KM AREA OF DELHI'S ONLY WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Aravalli hill range**
  India's oldest mountain system, represented in the protected area network here
- **Northern Aravalli leopard corridor**
  Links Sariska Tiger Reserve to the Delhi Ridge through this sanctuary
- **Ecological succession**
  How degraded, mined land can recover into a functioning wildlife habitat

PRELIMS MATRIX

Location	Southern Delhi, on the Southern Delhi Ridge, bordering Haryana
Area	32.71 sq km
Landform	Aravalli hill range, India's oldest mountain system
Key finding	Abandoned Bhatti mining pits are now the most bird rich habitat studied here
Corridor role	Part of the Northern Aravalli leopard corridor from Sariska to the Delhi Ridge
Management	10 year plan (2024-25 to 2034-35) by the Wildlife Institute of India

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Asola Bhatti's core area begins near the ancient Tughlaqabad Fort, meaning a 14th century fort and Delhi's only wildlife sanctuary now share the same protected landscape at the edge of the capital.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Asola Bhatti WLS: Delhi's only wildlife sanctuary, 32.71 sq km

Abandoned Bhatti mines are now its richest bird habitat

Part of the Northern Aravalli leopard corridor from Sariska

10 year plan (2024-25 to 2034-35) by WII guides its management

EXAM TRAP

Don't assume Asola Bhatti's mining pits are simply degraded land. The abandoned quarries have naturally regenerated into wetlands and rocky habitat that now support the sanctuary's richest bird diversity, the opposite of what their industrial origin would suggest.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary, consider the following statements:
1. It is located on the Aravalli hill range in southern Delhi.
2. Its abandoned mining pits have become its most bird rich habitat.
3. It has no connectivity with any tiger reserve in Rajasthan.

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 sanctuary is part of the Northern Aravalli leopard corridor connecting to Sariska Tiger Reserve, so it does have such connectivity. Statements 1 and 2 are accurate.

PROTECTED AREAS & WILDLIFE GOVERNANCE

Ladakh Orders Spatial Mapping of Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary

WHY IN NEWS

Authorities in Ladakh have ordered spatial mapping and field verification of military installations within the Changthang Cold Desert Wildlife Sanctuary, using GPS/GIS mapping and satellite imagery, alongside resumption of a statutory rights determination process.

10km to 1km NOT APPLICABLE; CHANGTHANG SPATIAL MAPPING ORDERED 16 SEPT

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Trans-Himalayan cold desert biogeographic zone**
  Changthang's high altitude plateau ecosystem
- **Rights determination under wildlife law**
  A statutory process for settling local rights within a sanctuary
- **Strategic infrastructure in border wildlife areas**
  Balancing defence needs with conservation in Ladakh

PRELIMS MATRIX

Location	Changthang Plateau, Leh district, Ladakh
Key lakes	Tso Moriri (highest lake on earth), Pangong Tso, Tso Kar
Key fauna	Snow leopard, kiang (wild ass), black-necked crane, Tibetan wolf
Recent order	16 September 2026, spatial mapping of military installations ordered
Method	GPS/GIS mapping, geo-referencing, satellite imagery
Nodal official	Sub-Divisional Magistrate of Nyoma, designated as collector

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Changthang is home to Korzok village, considered the world's highest permanently inhabited village, situated beside Tso Moriri at an altitude of about 4,500 metres.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Changthang WLS: Leh district, Ladakh, Trans-Himalayan cold desert | **Holds Tso Moriri, Pangong Tso, Tso Kar lakes** | **Spatial mapping of military installations ordered, 16 Sept 2026** | **Home to snow leopard, kiang, black-necked crane**

EXAM TRAP

Don't assume this mapping exercise legitimises new construction. Officials have clarified that resuming the rights determination process will not legitimise any fresh encroachment or unauthorised construction in the sanctuary.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to the Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary, consider the following statements:
1. It lies on the Changthang Plateau in Leh district, Ladakh.
2. Tso Moriri, located within it, is recognised as a Ramsar wetland.
3. The 2026 spatial mapping order legitimises new construction in the sanctuary.

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. Officials clarified the process does not legitimise fresh encroachment or unauthorised construction. Statements 1 and 2 are accurate.

PROTECTED AREAS & WILDLIFE GOVERNANCE

Indravati Tiger Reserve to Reopen to Tourists After Four Decades

WHY IN NEWS

The Indravati Tiger Reserve in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region is set to reopen to organised tourism on 1 November 2026, after nearly four decades of restricted access caused by Left Wing Extremism in the area.

2,799.07 SQ KM AREA OF INDRAVATI TIGER RESERVE, CHHATTISGARH

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Project Tiger (1973)**
  Indravati was declared a tiger reserve under this scheme in 1983
- **Left Wing Extremism and conservation access**
  How LWE affected forest protection and tourism for decades
- **Endangered wild Asian water buffalo**
  One of the reserve's most significant conservation species

PRELIMS MATRIX

Location	Bijapur district, Bastar region, Chhattisgarh
Declared	National Park in 1981, Tiger Reserve in 1983 under Project Tiger
Area	2,799.07 sq km; 1,258.37 sq km critical tiger habitat, 1,540.70 sq km buffer
Named after	The Indravati River, a major tributary of the Godavari
Key species	Tigers and one of the last populations of endangered wild Asian water buffalo
Reopening	Organised safaris to resume 1 November 2026, after ~4 decades of restricted access

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Around 70 percent of Indravati Tiger Reserve remained inaccessible to forest officials themselves, not just tourists, for nearly four decades because of Left Wing Extremism, making this reopening a milestone for conservation monitoring as much as for tourism.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Indravati TR: Bijapur district, Bastar, Chhattisgarh; 2,799.07 sq km

Declared National Park 1981, Tiger Reserve 1983

Reopens to tourists 1 November 2026, after ~4 decades

Holds one of the last wild Asian water buffalo populations

EXAM TRAP

Don't assume Indravati has been continuously open and monitored like most tiger reserves. Roughly 70 percent of its area was inaccessible even to the forest department for decades due to Left Wing Extremism, a distinct governance challenge.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to Indravati Tiger Reserve, consider the following statements:
1. It was declared a Tiger Reserve under Project Tiger in 1983.
2. It is named after the Indravati River, a tributary of the Godavari.
3. The reserve has remained continuously open to tourists for the past four decades.

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 reserve was largely inaccessible for nearly four decades due to Left Wing Extremism and is only now reopening to organised tourism. Statements 1 and 2 are accurate.

PROTECTED AREAS & WILDLIFE GOVERNANCE

NTCA Orders Action Against Illegal Resorts in BRT Tiger Reserve

WHY IN NEWS

The National Tiger Conservation Authority has directed Karnataka's Chief Wildlife Warden to act against illegal resorts and homestays operating within enclosures of the Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple (BRT) Tiger Reserve.

574.82 SQ KM AREA OF BRT TIGER RESERVE, KARNATAKA

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **NTCA enforcement powers**
  The statutory authority's role in directing state action against violations
- **Enclosures within tiger reserves**
  Private or revenue land pockets inside reserve boundaries
- **Soliga tribal community**
  Recognised for their role in BRT's tiger conservation success

PRELIMS MATRIX

Location	Chamarajanagar district, Karnataka, bridging the Western and Eastern Ghats
Established	Wildlife Sanctuary in 1974, Tiger Reserve status in 2011
Area	574.82 sq km
Name origin	"Biligiri" (white rocky cliff) and the Rangaswamy Vishnu temple atop it
Recent action	NTCA directed action against illegal resorts and homestays in reserve enclosures
Tribal link	Home to the Soliga tribe, praised for its role in tiger conservation

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

BRT sits at a rare biogeographic meeting point, forming the connecting bridge between the Western and Eastern Ghats, which allows gene flow of large carnivores and herbivores between two otherwise separated mountain systems.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

- BRT TR: Chamarajanagar, Karnataka; 574.82 sq km
- Sanctuary since 1974, Tiger Reserve since 2011
- NTCA ordered action against illegal resorts in its enclosures
- Home to the Soliga tribe, noted for tiger conservation role

EXAM TRAP

Don't assume BRT Tiger Reserve lies within a single Ghats system. It uniquely straddles the connecting bridge between the Western and Eastern Ghats, unlike most tiger reserves confined to one range.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to BRT Tiger Reserve, consider the following statements:
1. It is located in Karnataka's Chamarajanagar district.
2. It attained Tiger Reserve status in 2011.
3. It lies entirely within the Western Ghats.

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. BRT uniquely bridges both the Western and Eastern Ghats, not just the Western Ghats. Statements 1 and 2 are accurate.

PROTECTED AREAS & WILDLIFE GOVERNANCE

Painganga Wildlife Sanctuary: A Central India Protected Area Profile

WHY IN NEWS

Painganga Wildlife Sanctuary, spread along both banks of the Painganga River in Maharashtra's Yavatmal and Nanded districts, remains a key static geography reference point for Central India's protected area network.

325 SQ KM AREA OF PAINGANGA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, MAHARASHTRA

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Central Indian dry deciduous forests**
  Painganga represents this forest type alongside teak plantations
- **River bounded protected areas**
  How a river forming a sanctuary's boundary shapes its ecology
- **Maharashtra's protected area network**
  Context among reserves like Tadoba-Andhari and Tipeshwar

PRELIMS MATRIX

Location	Yavatmal and Nanded districts, Maharashtra
Established	1996
Area	325 sq km
Boundary feature	Surrounded on three sides by the Painganga River
Dominant flora	Teak, in the Pusad forest tract
Key fauna	Chinkara, chital, four horned antelope, nilgai, Indian pangolin

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Painganga Wildlife Sanctuary is bounded by its namesake river on three sides, an unusually complete natural boundary that few other Indian sanctuaries share.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Painganga WLS: Yavatmal and Nanded districts, Maharashtra | **Established 1996, area 325 sq km**

Bounded on three sides by the Painganga River | **Key fauna: chinkara, chital, four horned antelope, Indian pangolin**

EXAM TRAP

Don't confuse Painganga Wildlife Sanctuary with Painganga River itself as a separate protected area category. The river only forms the sanctuary's boundary; it is not a distinct notified protected area in its own right.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to Painganga Wildlife Sanctuary, consider the following statements:
1. It is located in Maharashtra.
2. It is bounded by the Painganga River on three sides.
3. Its dominant flora consists mainly of mangrove forest.

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. Painganga's dominant flora is teak within dry deciduous forest, not mangrove, which is a coastal ecosystem type. Statements 1 and 2 are accurate.

SPECIES & NATURAL HISTORY WATCH

Ingerana aizawl: New Frog Species Found on a University Campus

WHY IN NEWS

Researchers have formally described Ingerana aizawl, a new frog species discovered at Hratdawng Stream on the Mizoram University campus in Aizawl, after genetic analysis showed it was distinct from the previously assumed species, Ingerana borealis.

22-25.5mm LENGTH OF MALE INGERANA AIZAWL FROGS

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Integrative taxonomy**
  Combining morphology with mitochondrial DNA analysis to confirm new species
- **Family Dicroglossidae**
  The frog family this species belongs to, common across South Asia
- **Northeast India's amphibian diversity**
  An under-recorded hotspot revealed by campus level surveys

PRELIMS MATRIX

Species and family	Ingerana aizawl, family Dicroglossidae
Location found	Hratdawng Stream, Mizoram University campus, about 15 km west of Aizawl
Size	Males 22 to 25.5 mm, females 24.4 to 26 mm in snout-vent length
Appearance	Dark brown to reddish-brown, wrinkled dorsal surface, circular tympanum
Prior misidentification	Long recorded as Ingerana borealis since 2009
Published in	Zootaxa, September 2026

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Genetic analysis found the new species differs from its closest relative, Ingerana occidens, by only 4.8 to 6.6 percent, but differs by 15.3 to 17.6 percent from the Arunachal Pradesh populations it had long been mistaken for.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Ingerana aizawl: new frog, Hratdawng Stream, Mizoram University campus

Family Dicroglossidae, described in Zootaxa, Sept 2026

Previously misidentified as Ingerana borealis since 2009

Confirmed distinct via morphology and 16S rRNA DNA analysis

EXAM TRAP

Don't assume a species described from a university campus must be a common, well-documented animal. This discovery shows even frequently visited, human occupied sites in Northeast India can harbour entirely undescribed species.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to Ingerana aizawl, consider the following statements:
1. It was discovered on the Mizoram University campus in Aizawl.
2. It belongs to the frog family Dicroglossidae.
3. It was always recognised as a distinct species since its first record in 2009.

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 species was misidentified as Ingerana borealis since 2009 and only confirmed as distinct in 2026 through integrative taxonomy. Statements 1 and 2 are accurate.

SPECIES & NATURAL HISTORY WATCH

Himalayan Guchhi Mushroom Featured at the BRICS Gala Dinner

WHY IN NEWS

The rare Himalayan morel mushroom, known as Guchhi, appeared on the menu as "Gucchi Marmik" at the BRICS gala dinner hosted in New Delhi on 12 September 2026, drawing attention to this wild foraged Himalayan delicacy.

12 Sept 2026, GUCHHI MUSHROOM SERVED AT THE BRICS GALA DINNER

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Wild foraged versus cultivated crops**
  Guchhi's inability to be commercially cultivated, unlike most food crops
- **Geographical Indication (GI) tagging**
  Guchhi's pending GI application from Doda district, Jammu and Kashmir
- **Himalayan forest based livelihoods**
  Seasonal wild harvesting as an income source for hill communities

PRELIMS MATRIX

Species	Morchella esculenta, known as Guchhi, Gucchi or Gucci mushroom
Distribution	High altitude forests of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand
Growing season	A few weeks each spring, after snowmelt and rain
Cultivation status	Cannot be commercially cultivated; remains entirely wild foraged
Recent event	Served as "Gucchi Marmik" at the BRICS gala dinner, New Delhi, 12 Sept 2026
GI status	Application 737 filed in 2021 from Doda, still pending final grant

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Despite being one of the most expensive edible mushrooms in the world, Guchhi has no GI certification yet, since a 2021 application from Doda district remains in final examination at the GI Registry in Chennai, meaning no Guchhi sold today can be honestly called GI certified.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Guchhi = Morchella esculenta, Himalayan wild morel mushroom

Served as "Gucchi Marmik" at BRICS gala dinner, 12 Sept 2026

Cannot be commercially cultivated, only wild foraged

GI application (2021, Doda) still pending, not yet granted

EXAM TRAP

Don't assume Guchhi already carries a Geographical Indication tag just because it is widely marketed as a Himalayan or Kashmiri speciality. Its GI application remains pending final examination, with no grant issued yet.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to the Guchhi mushroom, consider the following statements:
1. It is the common name for the morel mushroom, Morchella esculenta.
2. It can now be commercially cultivated at scale in India.
3. It has already received formal Geographical Indication certification.

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

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

Answer: 1 only

Approach
Statements 2 and 3 are both traps. Guchhi cannot be commercially cultivated and remains wild foraged, and its GI application is still pending, not granted. Only statement 1 is accurate.

SPECIES & NATURAL HISTORY WATCH

Black-headed Ibis: A Wetland Indicator Species Profile

WHY IN NEWS

The Black-headed Ibis, a large white wader with a bare black head and neck, continues to be tracked as an indicator of wetland health across India, with recent large flock sightings at sites such as Tamil Nadu's Thoothukudi salt pans linked to wetland recovery.

65-76cm LENGTH OF THE ADULT BLACK-HEADED IBIS

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Threskiornithidae family**
  The ibis and spoonbill family this species belongs to
- **Wetland bioindicators**
  Large wading bird flocks as a sign of coastal and wetland ecosystem health
- **IUCN Near Threatened category**
  A status between Least Concern and Vulnerable, reflecting a declining trend

PRELIMS MATRIX

Species	Threskiornis melanocephalus, also called Oriental White or Indian White Ibis
Appearance	White plumage, bare black head and neck, down-curved black bill, 65 to 76 cm long
IUCN status	Near Threatened
Distribution	South and Southeast Asia, from India to Japan
Habitat	Wetlands, agricultural fields, and occasionally coastal areas
Indicator role	Large flock sightings, such as in Thoothukudi salt pans, signal wetland recovery

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

During the breeding season, some Black-headed Ibis develop a rare blood red patch of bare skin on the back of the neck, a striking colour change that has only a handful of published sighting records across India.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Black-headed Ibis = Threskiornis melanocephalus | **IUCN status: Near Threatened** | **White body, bare black head and neck, 65-76 cm long** | **Large flocks are treated as an indicator of wetland recovery**

EXAM TRAP

Don't confuse the Black-headed Ibis with the Red-naped Ibis. The Black-headed Ibis has a white body with only a black head and neck, while the Red-naped Ibis has an almost entirely dark body with a red patch on the head.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to the Black-headed Ibis, consider the following statements:
1. It is classified as Near Threatened by the IUCN.
2. It has a predominantly white body with a bare black head and neck.
3. It is found only in India and nowhere else in Asia.

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 species is found across South and Southeast Asia, from India to Japan, not only in India. Statements 1 and 2 are accurate.

SPECIES & NATURAL HISTORY WATCH

Himalayan Monal Crest Seized Under the Wildlife Protection Act

WHY IN NEWS

Forest officials in Himachal Pradesh's Chamba district have seized a cap adorned with the crest of the Himalayan Monal, a protected pheasant, highlighting continued enforcement against the illegal possession and display of its plumes.

2,100-4,500m ELEVATION RANGE OF THE HIMALAYAN MONAL

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**
  Prohibits possession of Monal parts without Chief Wildlife Warden authorisation
- **Traditional attire versus wildlife law**
  Tension between cultural headgear practices and species protection
- **State bird symbolism**
  Monal is Uttarakhand's state bird and Nepal's national bird

PRELIMS MATRIX

Species	Lophophorus impejanus, also called Impeyan Monal or Impeyan Pheasant
Elevation range	2,100 to 4,500 metres across the Himalaya
Range countries	Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, southern Tibet, Bhutan
Legal status	Hunting banned since 1982; possessing its crest without authorisation is an offence
Recent case	A Monal crest adorned cap seized in Chamba, Himachal Pradesh
State symbol	State bird of Uttarakhand; national bird of Nepal, called "danphe" there

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

The Himalayan Monal's vivid, shifting colours are not caused by pigment at all but by microscopic structures in its feathers that bend light, the same physical principle responsible for the shimmer on a soap bubble.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Himalayan Monal = Lophophorus impejanus

State bird of Uttarakhand; national bird of Nepal (danphe)

Hunting banned since 1982 under Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

Crest possession without authorisation remains an offence, as seen in Chamba

EXAM TRAP

Don't assume the Himalayan Monal's colours come from pigmentation like most birds. Its iridescent plumage results from structural coloration, where feather microstructure scatters light, not from any coloured pigment.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to the Himalayan Monal, consider the following statements:
1. It is the state bird of Uttarakhand.
2. Its iridescent colours are produced by structural coloration, not pigments.
3. Possessing its crest without authorisation is legally permitted in India.

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. Possessing the Monal's crest without Chief Wildlife Warden authorisation is a legal offence under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Statements 1 and 2 are accurate.

SPECIES & NATURAL HISTORY WATCH

Kerala Launches Fresh Drive Against the Invasive Giant African Snail

WHY IN NEWS

The Kerala Agricultural University has launched a special eradication project against the Giant African Snail after an unusually heavy monsoon triggered a fresh infestation surge across multiple districts, spreading from farms into homes and school campuses.

500+ PLANT SPECIES THE GIANT AFRICAN SNAIL CAN FEED ON

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Invasive alien species**
  One of the world's 100 worst invasive species, per the Global Invasive Species Database
- **One Health approach**
  The snail's role as a parasite vector linking animal, human and environmental health
- **Climate and pest outbreaks**
  Heavy monsoon rainfall creating conditions favourable to rapid pest spread

PRELIMS MATRIX

Species	Lissachatina fulica (also called Achatina fulica)
Native range	East Africa
Entry into India	First introduced in 1847, released in a Kolkata garden
2026 outbreak districts	Idukki, Thrissur, Kannur, Malappuram, Kottayam, Kerala
Health risk	Vector for parasitic nematodes causing eosinophilic meningoencephalitis in humans
Response	Kerala Agricultural University eradication project, with local self-government bodies

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

The Giant African Snail can aestivate, a form of dormancy, for up to three years during extreme drought, allowing it to survive conditions that would kill most other land snails and making eradication especially difficult.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Giant African Snail = Lissachatina fulica, native to East Africa

First introduced to India in 1847, Kolkata

2026 outbreak: Idukki, Thrissur, Kannur, Malappuram, Kottayam

Can carry parasites causing meningoencephalitis in humans

EXAM TRAP

Don't assume the Giant African Snail is a harmless garden pest. It is officially listed among the world's 100 worst invasive alien species and is a known vector for parasites that can cause serious human illness.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to the Giant African Snail, consider the following statements:
1. It is native to East Africa.
2. It was first introduced into India in 1847.
3. It poses no risk to human health.

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 snail is a known vector for parasitic nematodes that can cause meningoencephalitis in humans. Statements 1 and 2 are accurate.

SPECIES & NATURAL HISTORY WATCH

Lok Sabha Speaker Honours Khejri Tree Martyrs of Khejadli

WHY IN NEWS

The Lok Sabha Speaker paid tribute to Amrita Devi Bishnoi and other martyrs who died protecting Khejri trees in Khejadli village during the 18th century, days after Rajasthan moved to strengthen legal protection for the state tree following the 2026 Khejri Bachao Andolan.

1730 YEAR OF THE KHEJARLI MASSACRE THAT INSPIRED TREE PROTECTION

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Bishnoi community's conservation ethos**
  29 principles founded by Guru Jambheshwar Ji, including tree protection
- **Chipko Movement**
  The 1970s movement directly inspired by the 1730 Khejarli sacrifice
- **Land use versus conservation conflict**
  Solar energy expansion in the Thar Desert clashing with Khejri protection

PRELIMS MATRIX

Species	Khejri or Khejdi (Prosopis cineraria), Rajasthan's state tree since 1983
Historic event	Khejarli massacre, 1730, Jodhpur, 363 Bishnois killed protecting Khejri trees
Distribution	Arid and semi-arid Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Delhi, parts of south India
Ecological role	Nitrogen fixing tree that enhances soil fertility in desert conditions
2026 protest	Khejri Bachao Andolan, Bikaner, began 2 February 2026, over felling for solar projects
Recent tribute	Lok Sabha Speaker honoured Khejarli martyrs, reported 21 September 2026

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

The 1730 Khejarli sacrifice, where 363 Bishnois died protecting Khejri trees, directly inspired the 1970s Chipko Movement, meaning a single 18th century village protest in Rajasthan shaped one of independent India's most influential environmental movements.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Khejri = Prosopis cineraria, Rajasthan's state tree since 1983

Khejarli massacre, 1730: 363 Bishnois died protecting Khejri trees

Inspired the 1970s Chipko Movement

2026 Khejri Bachao Andolan protested felling for solar projects

EXAM TRAP

Don't confuse the Khejarli massacre (1730, the founding sacrifice) with the 2026 Khejri Bachao Andolan (a modern protest over solar project land acquisition). Both involve Khejri protection but are separate events roughly three centuries apart.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to the Khejri tree, consider the following statements:
1. It is a nitrogen fixing tree found in arid and semi-arid regions of India.
2. The 1730 Khejarli sacrifice inspired the 1970s Chipko Movement.
3. It has never faced any threat from land acquisition for energy projects.

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 2026 Khejri Bachao Andolan protested large scale felling of Khejri trees for solar power projects in Bikaner. Statements 1 and 2 are accurate.

SPECIES & NATURAL HISTORY WATCH

First Diplodocus Fossil Found Outside North America, in Spain

WHY IN NEWS

Palaeontologists have identified the first confirmed Diplodocus fossils outside North America, discovered at the La Tejeria site in Teruel, Spain, challenging the century old assumption that this iconic sauropod dinosaur lived only in the Morrison Formation of the United States.

150 MILLION YEARS OLD, THE AGE OF THE SPANISH DIPLODOCUS FOSSIL

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Late Jurassic palaeogeography**
  The changing Atlantic Ocean connected North America and Europe at this time
- **Sauropod dinosaurs**
  Long necked, plant eating giants; Diplodocus is one of the best known genera
- **Faunal exchange between continents**
  Evidence of episodic animal movement across the proto-North Atlantic

PRELIMS MATRIX

Genus	Diplodocus, a long necked sauropod dinosaur
Discovery site	La Tejeria, El Castellar, Teruel, Spain
Fossil material	14 tail vertebrae and several chevron bones
Age	About 150 million years old, Late Jurassic period
Significance	First confirmed Diplodocus fossil found outside North America
On display at	Museo Aragones de Paleontologia, Dinopolis, Teruel

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

For over a century, virtually every confirmed Diplodocus specimen came from the Morrison Formation in the western United States, making this single partial tail from Spain enough to rewrite the genus's known geographic range after more than 140 years.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

First Diplodocus fossil outside North America found in Teruel, Spain | **Site: La Tejeria, El Castellar; ~150 million years old** | **Fossil: 14 tail vertebrae plus chevron bones** | **On display at Museo Aragones de Paleontologia, Dinopolis**

EXAM TRAP

Don't assume Diplodocus was always known to be a globally distributed dinosaur. For over a century it was considered exclusively North American, and this 2026 Spanish discovery is the first confirmed evidence otherwise.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to the recent Diplodocus fossil discovery, consider the following statements:
1. It represents the first confirmed Diplodocus fossil found outside North America.
2. The fossil site is located in Teruel, Spain.
3. Diplodocus fossils have historically been most associated with the Morrison Formation in the USA.

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

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

Answer: 1, 2 and 3

Approach
All three statements are accurate and directly supported by the discovery report, making this a straightforward all correct question testing careful reading rather than a specific distractor.

POLICY & MOBILITY

NITI Aayog Releases Second Edition of India's Electric Mobility Index

WHY IN NEWS

NITI Aayog and WRI India released the second edition of the India Electric Mobility Index (IEMI) on 16 September 2026, with Delhi ranking first overall, as the country's EV transition continues to accelerate.

84/100 DELHI'S SCORE, THE TOP RANK IN INDIA'S ELECTRIC MOBILITY INDEX 2025

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Composite index design**
  How multiple weighted indicators combine into a single comparative score
- **Cooperative and competitive federalism**
  States benchmarked against each other to drive policy improvement
- **India's EV transition targets**
  Broader context of national non-fossil energy and net zero goals

PRELIMS MATRIX

Released by	NITI Aayog and WRI India
Release date	16 September 2026, at a workshop on State EV Policies
Indicators	16 indicators across 3 themes: Transport Electrification (50%), Charging Infra (30%), Innovation (20%)
Top state overall	Delhi, scoring 84 out of 100, up from 77
State EV policy coverage	29 of 36 States and UTs have notified standalone EV policies
National EV penetration	Risen to about 8.25 percent of vehicle sales by 2025-26

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Between the first and second editions of the index, the highest state score rose from 77 to 84 while the median state score climbed from 36 to 40, showing that improvement was not confined to already leading states but was broader across the country.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

- India Electric Mobility Index (IEMI), 2nd edition, released 16 Sept 2026
- By NITI Aayog and WRI India
- 16 indicators across 3 themes; Delhi ranked first (84/100)
- 29 of 36 States/UTs have notified standalone EV policies

EXAM TRAP

Don't assume the Index measures only EV sales numbers. It is a composite score covering transport electrification, charging infrastructure readiness, and EV research and innovation, not sales volume alone.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to the India Electric Mobility Index (IEMI), consider the following statements:
1. It is released by NITI Aayog in collaboration with WRI India.
2. It is based solely on the number of electric vehicles sold in each state.
3. Delhi ranked first overall in the index's second edition.

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 index is a composite score across transport electrification, charging infrastructure and innovation, not EV sales figures alone. Statements 1 and 3 are accurate.