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WEEKLY

Weekly Current Affairs Compilation · 29 September - 5 October 2026 · 9 Topics

A new eel off Odisha, an albino tahr in Chamba, a tigress returning to Udanti-Sitanadi, and India's voice at IWC-70. This week's compilation tracks nine stories spanning birds, marine taxonomy, and protected area management across the subcontinent.



"innovation in learning"

CONTENTS

9 topics, grouped by theme for faster revision

AVIAN & MARINE WATCH

01 Eurasian Whimbrel Sighted at Kadalundi-Vallikkunnu 3

02 Bathymyrus perplexus: New Eel Species from Bay of Bengal 4

03 India at IWC-70: Science-Based Whale Conservation 5

SPECIES & WILDLIFE WATCH

04 Galaxy Frog Resurfaces in the Western Ghats 6

05 Albino Himalayan Tahr Documented in Kugti Sanctuary 7

06 Coppersmith Barbet: The Tuk-Tuk Bird of Indian Gardens 8

PROTECTED AREAS & RESERVES

07 Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve Holds Elephant Rejuvenation Camp 9

08 Tigress Returns to Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve 10

09 Desert National Park: GIB Reintroduction at Sam 11

AVIAN & MARINE WATCH

Eurasian Whimbrel Sighted at Kadalundi-Vallikkunnu

WHY IN NEWS

A Eurasian Whimbrel (Numenius phaeopus) was recently sighted at the Kadalundi-Vallikkunnu Community Reserve in Kerala. A previously ringed individual was resighted at the site, confirming the use of tagging for tracking long-distance migration of wading birds along the Central Asian Flyway.

5 **Continents where found**

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Migratory Bird Flyways**
  Central Asian Flyway connects Siberian breeding grounds to South Asian wintering sites.
- **Ramsar Wetlands and Community Reserves**
  Kadalundi-Vallikkunnu is a notified Community Reserve under the Wildlife Protection Act.
- **Bird Ringing and Tracking**
  Ringing programmes help study migration routes, longevity and population trends.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Scientific name	Numenius phaeopus
Family	Scolopacidae (sandpipers and allies)
IUCN status	Least Concern
Identifying feature	Long, downward-curved bill; dark eye-stripes
Breeding grounds	Subarctic Siberia and Alaska
Wintering grounds	Coastal wetlands of Africa, South Asia, South America

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS
The Whimbrel's call is a distinctive series of seven rapid, whistling notes, which gives the bird one of its folk names, the seven whistler.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Numenius phaeopus · Least Concern · Central Asian Flyway · Kadalundi-Vallikkunnu, Kerala · Curved bill wader

EXAM TRAP
Do not confuse the Whimbrel with the larger Eurasian Curlew (Numenius arquata), which has an even longer bill and a different call pattern. Both belong to the same genus Numenius.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding the Eurasian Whimbrel:

1. It belongs to the same family as sandpipers.
2. It breeds in subarctic Siberia and Alaska.
3. It is classified as Endangered on the IUCN Red List.

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

Answer: 1 and 2 only

APPROACH
Statement 3 is factually wrong; the Whimbrel is Least Concern, not Endangered. Statements 1 and 2 describe its taxonomy and breeding range correctly, making the first option the answer.

AVIAN & MARINE WATCH

Bathymyrus perplexus: New Eel Species from Bay of Bengal

WHY IN NEWS

Scientists at the Zoological Survey of India's Gopalpur regional centre identified Bathymyrus perplexus as a new eel species from the Bay of Bengal. The finding, based on specimens collected off Paradip, Kakinada and the Godavari region between 2021 and 2025, was published in the Bulletin of Marine Science in September 2026.

32 Specimens studied (2021-25)

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Marine Biodiversity of India**
  Bay of Bengal supports deep-sea fish diversity studied through institutions like ZSI.
- **Taxonomic Research Institutions**
  Zoological Survey of India conducts species discovery and classification.
- **Deep-Sea Ecosystems**
  Species adapted to depths of 50-100 metres reflect unique continental shelf habitats.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Discovering institution	Zoological Survey of India, Gopalpur unit
Habitat depth	50 to 100 metres
Body colour	Pink to cloudy pink
Distinguishing marks	Black pigmentation on head; black mark from eye to snout
Collection sites	Paradip, Kakinada, Godavari region
Publication	Bulletin of Marine Science, September 2026

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS
The species name perplexus reflects the initial taxonomic confusion researchers faced in distinguishing it from closely related eel species before DNA analysis confirmed it as new.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Bathymyrus perplexus | ZSI Gopalpur | Bay of Bengal | 50-100 m depth | Bulletin of Marine Science

EXAM TRAP
This is a newly described species, not a newly sighted or rediscovered one. Questions may test whether candidates confuse species discovery with range extension or rediscovery.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

The newly identified fish species Bathymyrus perplexus was discovered in which water body?

1. Arabian Sea
2. Bay of Bengal
3. Andaman Sea

A Arabian Sea
B Bay of Bengal
C Andaman Sea
D Laccadive Sea

Answer: Bay of Bengal

APPROACH
The specimens were collected off Paradip, Kakinada and the Godavari region, all located along India's east coast facing the Bay of Bengal.

AVIAN & MARINE WATCH

India at IWC-70: Science-Based Whale Conservation

WHY IN NEWS

At the 70th meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC-70) held in Hobart, Australia from September 28 to October 2, 2026, India called for science-based approaches and stronger international cooperation to address threats to whales and other cetaceans, marking the convention's 80th anniversary.

80 Years since IWC founding

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **International Environmental Agreements**
  IWC regulates whaling globally under the 1946 International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling.
- **India's Marine Conservation Initiatives**
  Project Dolphin and Marine Protected Areas were cited as domestic commitments supporting India's IWC stance.
- **Global Commons Governance**
  The IWC exemplifies multilateral governance of shared marine resources beyond national jurisdiction.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Meeting	IWC-70, Hobart, Australia
Dates	28 September to 2 October 2026
IWC founded	1946, through the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling
Member governments	89
India's membership since	1981
India's domestic programmes cited	Project Dolphin, Marine Protected Areas

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS
IWC-70 coincided with the 80th anniversary of the founding convention, signed on December 2, 1946, making the Hobart meeting a milestone gathering for the organisation's history.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

IWC-70, Hobart | Founded 1946 | 89 member nations | India member since 1981 | Project Dolphin

EXAM TRAP
The IWC's commercial whaling moratorium, in force since 1986, is often tested; do not confuse the Commission's regulatory mandate with that of CITES, which separately regulates trade in endangered species including some cetacean products.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

Consider the following statements about the International Whaling Commission (IWC):

1. It was established through a convention signed in 1946.
2. India has been a member since 1981.
3. It has over 150 member governments.

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

Answer: 1 and 2 only

APPROACH
The IWC has 89 member governments, not over 150, making statement 3 incorrect. Statements 1 and 2 correctly state the founding year and India's membership year.

SPECIES & WILDLIFE WATCH

Galaxy Frog Resurfaces in the Western Ghats

WHY IN NEWS

Images of the rare Galaxy Frog (Melanobatrachus indicus) shared by a Tamil Nadu forest official renewed attention on one of India's most elusive amphibians, found only in isolated pockets of the southern Western Ghats.

1878 Year first described

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Western Ghats Biodiversity Hotspot**
  Endemic amphibians like the Galaxy Frog depend on undisturbed wet evergreen forests.
- **EDGE Species Concept**
  Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered species get conservation priority under ZSL's EDGE programme.
- **Amphibian Decline**
  Habitat fragmentation and climate sensitivity threaten narrow-range amphibians.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Scientific name	Melanobatrachus indicus
IUCN status	Vulnerable
Distribution	Southern Western Ghats, Kerala and Tamil Nadu
Elevation range	1,000 to 1,500 metres
Appearance	Dark body with bluish-white spots; scarlet-orange underside
Special recognition	Listed under ZSL EDGE programme

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS
The frog was first described in 1878 but went unrecorded for over a century before being rediscovered in 1997, making it one of India's great amphibian rediscovery stories.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Melanobatrachus indicus | Vulnerable | Western Ghats endemic | EDGE species | Rediscovered 1997

EXAM TRAP
Do not confuse the Galaxy Frog with other star-spotted or night frogs of the Western Ghats such as the genus Nyctibatrachus; Melanobatrachus is a distinct, single-species genus.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

Consider the following statements about the Galaxy Frog (Melanobatrachus indicus):

1. It is endemic to the Western Ghats.
2. It is classified as Critically Endangered by the IUCN.
3. It was rediscovered after a long gap in research records.

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
The Galaxy Frog is Vulnerable, not Critically Endangered, so statement 2 is wrong. Statements 1 and 3 correctly describe its endemism and rediscovery history.

SPECIES & WILDLIFE WATCH

Albino Himalayan Tahr Documented in Kugti Sanctuary

WHY IN NEWS

A rare white albino female Himalayan Tahr was documented for the first time in the Kugti Wildlife Sanctuary in Himachal Pradesh's Chamba district, drawing attention to the species and the heightened predation risk albinism creates.

2,500-5,000 m Elevation range

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Trans-Himalayan Wildlife**
  High-altitude ungulates like the Himalayan Tahr are adapted to steep, rocky terrain.
- **Genetic Anomalies in Wildlife**
  Albinism removes natural camouflage, increasing vulnerability to predators.
- **Protected Area Network of Himachal Pradesh**
  Kugti Wildlife Sanctuary falls within the Chamba landscape of the Western Himalaya.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Scientific name	Hemitragus jemlahicus
IUCN status	Near Threatened
Habitat	Steep rocky slopes, 2,500 to 5,000 metres
Range states	India, Nepal, Bhutan
Key threats	Habitat loss, livestock competition, poaching
Distinguishing feature	Thick reddish-brown coat with dense undercoat

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Albinism in wild ungulates is exceptionally rare because the loss of camouflage sharply reduces survival chances, making sightings like this one at Kugti scientifically valuable despite being individually unlucky for the animal.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Hemitragus jemlahicus · Near Threatened · Kugti Sanctuary · Chamba, Himachal Pradesh · Albino sighting

EXAM TRAP

Do not confuse the Himalayan Tahr with the Nilgiri Tahr (Nilgiritragus hylocrius) of the Western Ghats. The Himalayan Tahr inhabits the Western Himalaya, while the Nilgiri Tahr is a separate genus endemic to the Nilgiri hills and is Tamil Nadu's state animal.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

The Himalayan Tahr is found in which of the following states or regions?

1. Jammu and Kashmir
2. Himachal Pradesh
3. Uttarakhand

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

Answer: 1, 2 and 3

APPROACH

The Himalayan Tahr's range spans Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, all part of its Western Himalaya habitat, so all three statements are correct.

SPECIES & WILDLIFE WATCH

Coppersmith Barbet: The Tuk-Tuk Bird of Indian Gardens

WHY IN NEWS

The Coppersmith Barbet, known for its metronomic tuk-tuk call resembling a coppersmith's hammer, continues to be one of the most recognisable urban garden birds across India, making it a recurring reference point in wildlife and biodiversity coverage.

17 cm Average body length

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Urban Biodiversity**
  Species like the Coppersmith Barbet thrive in wooded gardens, showing adaptability to human-modified habitats.
- **Avian Taxonomy**
  Barbets belong to order Piciformes, which also includes woodpeckers, sharing cavity-nesting behaviour.
- **Bird Call Identification**
  Distinctive calls aid field identification, relevant to wildlife survey methodology questions.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Scientific name	Psilopogon haemacephalus
Family	Megalaimidae (Asian barbets)
IUCN status	Least Concern
Appearance	Chunky green body, crimson forehead and throat patch
Behaviour	Cavity nester; competes with mynas for nest holes
Habitat	Open wooded areas, groves, urban gardens

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Male and female Coppersmith Barbets are sexually monochromatic, meaning both sexes look virtually identical, a feature that distinguishes them from many brightly dimorphic bird species.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Psilopogon haemacephalus | Megalaimidae family | Order Piciformes | Tuk-tuk call | Cavity nester

EXAM TRAP

Barbets look superficially similar to woodpeckers in behaviour (tree-climbing, cavity nesting) but belong to a different family. Do not classify the Coppersmith Barbet as a woodpecker species.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

Which of the following statements about the Coppersmith Barbet is correct?

1. It belongs to the order Piciformes.
2. Males and females are sexually dimorphic in colour.
3. It is a ground-nesting bird.

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

Answer: 1 only

APPROACH

The Coppersmith Barbet is sexually monochromatic, not dimorphic, and it nests in tree cavities, not on the ground. Only the statement on its taxonomic order is correct.

PROTECTED AREAS & RESERVES

Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve Holds Elephant Rejuvenation Camp

WHY IN NEWS

Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh held a five-day elephant festival and rejuvenation camp in its Dhamokhar buffer zone, giving working camp elephants rest and health checks while boosting conservation awareness among local communities.

9 Camp elephants rejuvenated

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Tiger Reserve Management**
  Camp elephants assist with patrolling and tourism; their welfare is part of reserve management.
- **Buffer Zone Ecotourism**
  Events in buffer zones aim to generate local livelihoods while easing pressure on core areas.
- **Project Tiger Framework**
  Bandhavgarh is a key reserve under India's tiger conservation programme.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Location	Dhamokhar buffer zone, near Parasi Gate
District, State	Umaria district, Madhya Pradesh
Duration	Five days, late September 2026
Participants	9 of the reserve's 15 camp elephants
Key attraction	Krishna, calf born at the reserve in October 2025
Objective	Elephant welfare, health checks, tourism and awareness

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

The elephant calf Krishna, born at Bandhavgarh in October 2025, was formally named by the Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister during a December 2025 visit, reflecting the symbolic importance given to camp elephant welfare at the reserve.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve | Umaria district, MP | Dhamokhar buffer zone | Camp elephant welfare | Elephant calf Krishna

EXAM TRAP

This camp is distinct from the famous Kerala temple elephant festivals; Bandhavgarh's event is a forest department welfare and tourism initiative for its own working camp elephants, not a religious or cultural festival.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

The elephant rejuvenation camp mentioned was held in which tiger reserve?

1. Kanha Tiger Reserve
2. Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve
3. Pench Tiger Reserve

A Kanha Tiger Reserve

B Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve

C Pench Tiger Reserve

D Satpura Tiger Reserve

Answer: Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve

APPROACH

The camp was held in the Dhamokhar buffer zone of Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in Umaria district, Madhya Pradesh.

PROTECTED AREAS & RESERVES

Tigress Returns to Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve

WHY IN NEWS

A tigress, estimated to be around four years old and with no prior record in National Tiger Conservation Authority databases, was captured on camera traps on three occasions within 11 days at Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve in Chhattisgarh, raising hopes of tiger revival at the reserve.

4 yrs Estimated age of tigress

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Tiger Source-Sink Dynamics**
  Tigers often disperse from source populations like Chandrapur or Abujhmad into recovering reserves.
- **Camera Trap Monitoring**
  Camera traps are a key tool for identifying individual tigers and tracking population recovery.
- **Central Indian Tiger Landscape**
  Udanti-Sitanadi forms part of the broader central Indian tiger corridor linking Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and surrounding states.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Location	Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve, Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh
Detection method	Camera traps, 3 captures in 11 days
Estimated age	About 4 years
Possible origin	Chandrapur (Maharashtra) or Abujhmad area
NTCA record	No prior record; new individual
Significance	Indicator of ecological recovery of the reserve

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Officials described the sighting as more than the return of a single animal, calling it a sign of ecological recovery, since apex predators like tigers typically indicate a healthy and balanced forest habitat.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve | Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh | Camera trap evidence | Central Indian tiger corridor | Tiger dispersal

EXAM TRAP

Udanti-Sitanadi is also known as a stronghold for wild buffalo conservation; do not confuse its tiger revival news with its separate, longer-running wild buffalo conservation programme.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve is located in which state?

1. Madhya Pradesh
2. Chhattisgarh
3. Odisha

A Madhya Pradesh
B Chhattisgarh
C Odisha
D Maharashtra

Answer: Chhattisgarh

APPROACH

Udanti-Sitanadi Tiger Reserve is situated in Dhamtari district of Chhattisgarh.

PROTECTED AREAS & RESERVES

Desert National Park: GIB Reintroduction at Sam

WHY IN NEWS

The Union Environment Minister released two captive-bred male Great Indian Bustards into the wild at Sam within Desert National Park, Rajasthan, marking a milestone in efforts to revive the critically endangered bird's wild population.

3,160 sq km Area of the park

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

- **Species Recovery Programmes**
  Captive breeding and release programmes support critically endangered species like the Great Indian Bustard.
- **Thar Desert Ecosystem**
  Desert National Park preserves arid grassland and scrub habitat critical for bustard survival.
- **Project Great Indian Bustard**
  Coordinated national effort involving captive breeding centres and habitat protection in Rajasthan and Gujarat.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Location	Thar Desert, near Jaisalmer, Rajasthan
Area	Over 3,160 sq km
Key species	Great Indian Bustard, blackbuck, chinkara, desert fox
Geological feature	Fossils from the Jurassic Period
Water bodies	Rajbaugh, Malik Talao, Padam Talao lakes
2026 milestone	Release of two captive-bred male GIBs at Sam

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS
Desert National Park holds dinosaur-era fossils from the Jurassic Period, making it significant for palaeontology alongside its role as a stronghold for the Great Indian Bustard.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Desert National Park | Jaisalmer, Rajasthan | Great Indian Bustard release | Jurassic fossils | Sam release site

EXAM TRAP
Do not confuse Desert National Park with the Desert Wildlife Sanctuary of Kutch in Gujarat; both are arid-zone protected areas but in different states with different flagship species emphasis.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

The release of captive-bred Great Indian Bustards at Sam took place in which protected area?

1. Desert National Park
2. Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary
3. Kutch Desert Wildlife Sanctuary

A Desert National Park
B Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary
C Kutch Desert Wildlife Sanctuary
D Tal Chhapar Sanctuary

Answer: Desert National Park

APPROACH
The release site, Sam, lies within Desert National Park in Jaisalmer district, Rajasthan.