MISSION X FOR UPSC

XTERRA

WEEKLY

Weekly Current Affairs Compilation · 11 – 17 November 2026 · 14 Topics

Kashmir's chinars get Tree Aadhaar tags, a water rail and a willow warbler turn up on the coast, and Karnataka's Bhadra tiger rewilding plan draws debate. Navi Mumbai tops Swachh Survekshan 2025-26, three Maharashtra beaches earn Blue Flags, and India's first home-discovered insecticide molecule reaches farms.

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"innovation in learning"

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SPECIES, BIRDS & FLORA

Chinar Tree: Over 28,000 Chinars Geo-Tagged Under J&K's 'Tree Aadhaar' Mission

WHY IN NEWS

Jammu & Kashmir has geo-tagged about 28,560 chinar trees out of an estimated 32,000 to 33,000 in the Kashmir valley and Chenab region, as reported in early November 2026. Each tree gets a unique ID and a metallic QR code that records 25 parameters such as location, age, girth, health and threats. The chinar is the Oriental plane tree, not a maple.

28,560 **Chinars geo-tagged out of about 32,000 to 33,000**



Chinar avenue in autumn

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

1. **Technology in Conservation**
   Use geo-tagging and QR codes as an example of tech-based monitoring of heritage trees and urban greenery.
2. **Heritage Trees and Culture**
   Cite the chinar's link to Mughal gardens, autumn tourism and crafts to show nature-culture linkage.
3. **Urbanisation and Roads**
   Link tree-felling disputes to the need for tree-protection rules during road and urban expansion.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Scientific name	Platanus orientalis var. cashmeriana (Oriental plane)
Common name	Chinar; not a maple, though the leaves look alike
State symbol	State tree of Jammu & Kashmir
Height	Up to 30 m; takes 30 to 50 years to mature
Oldest tree	About 700 years old, Chattergam village, Budgam
Legal protection	Felling needs government approval, even on private land
Tree Aadhaar	Unique ID and QR code tracking 25 parameters per tree
Mughal link	Plantations expanded under the Mughals, notably Jahangir

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

The chinar is often mistaken for a maple, but it is a plane tree of the genus Platanus, and cutting one needs government approval even on private land.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Platanus orientalis | Tree Aadhaar | QR code, 25 parameters | J&K state tree | Chattergam, Budgam | 28,560 geo-tagged

EXAM TRAP

Do not call the chinar a maple or treat it as a conifer. It is a broad-leaved Oriental plane tree, and the 'Tree Aadhaar' tags are for tracking and protection, not for felling approval.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

Consider the following statements :

Statement I :
The chinar of Kashmir is the Oriental plane tree, Platanus orientalis.

Statement II :
The chinar is a species of maple.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

(a) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct and Statement II explains Statement I

(b) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct but Statement II does not explain Statement I

(c) Statement I is correct but Statement II is not correct

(d) Statement I is not correct but Statement II is correct

Answer: (c) Statement I is correct but Statement II is not correct

APPROACH

The chinar is a plane tree only resembling a maple in leaf shape, so Statement II is wrong.

SPECIES, BIRDS & FLORA

Water Rail: Rare Visitor Sighted at TS Chanakya Wetlands, Navi Mumbai

WHY IN NEWS

An uncommon water rail (Rallus aquaticus) was sighted at the TS Chanakya wetlands off Palm Beach Road, Navi Mumbai, as reported on 14 November 2026. In the Indian subcontinent it is a summer visitor to Kashmir and winters in eastern Pakistan and the north-western plains, so a record on the western coast is unusual.

23–28 cm **Length of an adult water rail**



Water rail

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

1. **Urban Wetlands**
   Use the sighting to argue for protecting urban wetlands as migratory stopovers.
2. **Elusive Species Monitoring**
   Cite how a secretive reed-bed bird is spotted mainly through citizen birdwatching records.
3. **Coastal Wetland Threats**
   Link the Navi Mumbai wetlands to pressure from reclamation and construction near the coast.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Scientific name	Rallus aquaticus (family Rallidae)
IUCN status	Least Concern
Appearance	Brown upperparts, blue-grey underparts, black-barred flanks, long reddish bill
Body	Flattened side to side, which helps it slip through reed beds
Habitat	Well-vegetated wetlands across Europe, Asia and North Africa
Migration	Northern and eastern populations migrate; warm-zone birds stay resident
India	Summer visitor to Kashmir; winters in the north-western plains
Behaviour	Elusive; freezes or runs for cover rather than flying

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Its narrow, laterally flattened body lets the water rail slip through dense reeds, and it often freezes or runs instead of flying when threatened.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Rallus aquaticus | Rallidae | Least Concern | TS Chanakya wetlands | Navi Mumbai | Reed-bed bird

EXAM TRAP

Do not treat it as endemic to north-east India or as an Endangered bird. It breeds across Europe, Asia and North Africa, and the IUCN lists it as Least Concern.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to the water rail, which one of the following is correct?

(a) It is endemic to north-east India

(b) It is categorised as Endangered by the IUCN

(c) It belongs to the rail family and is an elusive wetland bird

(d) It is a large soaring raptor

Answer: (c) It belongs to the rail family and is an elusive wetland bird

APPROACH

The water rail is a Least Concern reed-bed bird of the family Rallidae that breeds widely across Eurasia, so only option (c) fits.

SPECIES, BIRDS & FLORA

Willow Warbler: Karnataka's First Record Logged at Kenjar Grasslands, Mangaluru

WHY IN NEWS

A willow warbler (Phylloscopus trochilus) recorded at the Kenjar grasslands near Mangaluru is believed to be Karnataka's first sighting and only the fifth confirmed record in India, as reported on 14 November 2026. The tiny insectivorous songbird breeds across Europe and the Palearctic and winters almost entirely in sub-Saharan Africa.

5th **Confirmed record of the willow warbler in India**



Willow warbler

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

1. **Long-Distance Migration**
   Use the bird to show how small songbirds migrate thousands of kilometres between Eurasia and Africa.
2. **Grassland Habitats**
   Cite Kenjar's coastal grasslands to argue that grasslands need protection as bird habitats.
3. **Citizen Science**
   Link the record to eBird-style birdwatcher data that confirms vagrants.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Scientific name	Phylloscopus trochilus
IUCN status	Least Concern
Size	About 11 cm long; wingspan about 19 cm
Plumage	Greenish-brown above, off-white to yellowish below, no wingbars
ID clues	Pale pinkish-yellow legs, long pale bill, long primary projection
Breeding range	Europe and the Palearctic, east to the Anadyr basin in Siberia
Wintering	Almost entirely sub-Saharan Africa
Habitat	Open woodland with birch, alder and willow; gardens and hedges

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Almost the entire willow warbler population winters in sub-Saharan Africa, so a bird in India is a vagrant far off its usual route.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Phylloscopus trochilus | Least Concern | Kenjar grasslands | 5th record in India | Insectivorous songbird | Winters in Africa

EXAM TRAP

Do not treat it as a regular Indian winter visitor or as a threatened bird. It normally winters in Africa, and the IUCN lists it as Least Concern.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to the willow warbler, consider the following statements :

1. It is an insectivorous songbird.
2. It breeds in Europe and the Palearctic.
3. It is categorised as Endangered by the IUCN.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 1 and 2 only

APPROACH

The willow warbler is Least Concern, not Endangered, so Statement 3 is wrong. Statements 1 and 2 are correct.

SPECIES, BIRDS & FLORA

Bar-Headed Goose: First Satellite Tracking Study From Bihar's Nagi Dam Sanctuary

WHY IN NEWS

The bar-headed goose (Anser indicus) is back in Prelims notes through a first-of-its-kind tracking study in eastern India. A goose named Gagan, fitted with a solar GPS-GSM transmitter by the Bombay Natural History Society and Bihar's forest department, was released in February 2025 at Nagi Dam Bird Sanctuary, Jamui, flew over the Himalayas to Tibet at 5,220 m, and returned in December 2025.



Bar-headed geese in flight

5,220 m **Altitude recorded for the tagged goose**

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

1. **Central Asian Flyway**
   Use the study to show how Indian wetlands link to Tibetan breeding lakes along the flyway.
2. **Ramsar Wetlands**
   Cite Nagi and Nakti sanctuaries, both Ramsar sites, as winter homes for over 20,000 birds.
3. **Telemetry in Conservation**
   Link GPS tagging to evidence-based planning of wetland and flyway protection.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Scientific name	Anser indicus
IUCN status	Least Concern
Record	Often called the highest-flying migratory bird
Study	BNHS with Bihar's Environment, Forest and Climate Change Department
Tagged bird	'Gagan', released with 'Vayu' in February 2025
Release site	Nagi Dam Bird Sanctuary, Jamui, Bihar
Route	Bihar plains across the Himalayas to a lake in Tibet; about 780 km one way
Return	First week of December 2025, after over nine months

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Nagi and Nakti, which together host over 20,000 wintering birds, were notified as bird sanctuaries in 1984 and are now Ramsar sites.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Anser indicus | Least Concern | BNHS | Nagi Dam, Jamui | 5,220 m | Ramsar sites

EXAM TRAP

Do not treat the goose as a resident of the Himalayas or as an Arctic breeder. It winters on Indian wetlands such as Nagi and breeds on Central Asian and Tibetan lakes.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to the bar-headed goose, consider the following :

I. It is known for flying over the Himalayas during migration.

II. A tracking study tagged it at Nagi Dam Bird Sanctuary in Bihar.

III. It is categorised as Critically Endangered by the IUCN.

IV. The tracking study was carried out with the Bombay Natural History Society.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) Only three
(d) All the four

Answer: (c) Only three

APPROACH

Statements I, II and IV are correct. The bar-headed goose is Least Concern, so Statement III is wrong.

PROTECTED AREAS

Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve: Tiger Augmentation and a Gondia Tiger Death

WHY IN NEWS

Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve (NNTR) in Gondia and Bhandara, Maharashtra, is in the news for its tiger augmentation programme, with tigers reported to have risen to 23, and for a tiger death reported from Gondia district on 11 November 2026. It was notified in 2013 and links to Kanha, Pench and Tadoba by corridors.

23 **Tigers reported in NNTR after augmentation, per NTCA**



Tiger at a waterhole (illustrative image)

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

1. **Tiger Augmentation**
   Use NNTR to show how translocating tigers can restore a depleted source population.
2. **Corridors in Central India**
   Cite its links to Kanha, Pench and Tadoba to show landscape-scale tiger conservation.
3. **Buffer and Local Livelihoods**
   Link buffer-zone management to community support and human-wildlife conflict control.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Location	Gondia and Bhandara districts, Maharashtra
Tiger reserve	Notified 2013; Maharashtra's fifth tiger reserve
Components	Nawegaon NP, Nawegaon, Nagzira, New Nagzira and Koka sanctuaries
Corridors	Kanha, Pench and Tadoba tiger reserves
Terrain	Undulating; highest point Zenda Pahad, about 702 m
Vegetation	Southern tropical dry deciduous; 364 plant species
Fauna	Tiger, leopard, sloth bear, wild dog, gaur, four-horned antelope, pangolin

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

NNTR is part of the central Indian tiger landscape, which is reported to hold about one-sixth of India's tigers.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

NNTR | Gondia, Maharashtra | Notified 2013 | Zenda Pahad | Kanha-Pench-Tadoba link | Tiger augmentation

EXAM TRAP

Do not locate NNTR in Madhya Pradesh or the Western Ghats. It lies in eastern Maharashtra, on the central Indian landscape, and is joined to Kanha, Pench and Tadoba by corridors.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

Consider the following statements :

Statement I :
Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve is linked by corridors to Kanha, Pench and Tadoba.

Statement II :
Corridors let tigers disperse between reserves and keep their gene pool healthy.

Statement III :
Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve lies in the Western Ghats.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

(a) Both Statement II and Statement III are correct and both of them explain Statement I

(b) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct and Statement II explains Statement I

(c) Only one of the Statements II and III is correct and that explains Statement I

(d) Neither Statement II nor Statement III is correct

Answer: (c) Only one of the Statements II and III is correct and that explains Statement I

APPROACH

Statement III is wrong because NNTR lies in eastern Maharashtra, not the Western Ghats. Statement II is correct and explains why the corridor links matter.

PROTECTED AREAS

Bherjan-Borajan-Padumoni Wildlife Sanctuary: Draft 1 km Eco-Sensitive Zone Notified

WHY IN NEWS

The Environment Ministry has issued a draft notification for a uniform 1 km Eco-Sensitive Zone (ESZ) around Bherjan-Borajan-Padumoni Wildlife Sanctuary in Tinsukia district, Assam, as reported on 7 November 2026. The ESZ covers 32.01 sq km. The draft, issued under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, is open to public objections before it becomes final.



Forest safari track (illustrative image)

32.01 sq km **Total area of the proposed ESZ**

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

1. **Eco-Sensitive Zones**
   Use the draft to show how ESZs buffer protected areas from mining, industry and construction.
2. **Primate Conservation**
   Cite the sanctuary's hoolock gibbon and other primates as a case for forest-fragment protection.
3. **Public Consultation**
   Link the draft's objection period to participatory environmental decision-making.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Location	Tinsukia district, Assam
Sanctuary area	About 7.21 sq km across three forest patches
Notified	13 October 1999 by the Assam Government
Draft ESZ	Uniform 1 km; 32.01 sq km in total
ESZ split	Bherjan 8.48, Borajan 14.80, Padumoni 8.73 sq km
Legal basis	Environment (Protection) Act, 1986
Primates	Western hoolock gibbon, slow loris, Assamese and pig-tailed macaques
Other fauna	Leopard, golden jackal, wild boar, barking deer

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Though its three patches add up to only about 7.21 sq km, the sanctuary is home to seven or more primate species, including the western hoolock gibbon.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Bherjan-Borajan-Padumoni | Tinsukia, Assam | Draft ESZ 1 km | 32.01 sq km | Hoolock gibbon | EPA 1986

EXAM TRAP

Do not take the draft for a final notification. It is open to objections, and the sanctuary is a small three-patch forest in Tinsukia, not a large reserve.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to Bherjan-Borajan-Padumoni Wildlife Sanctuary, consider the following statements :

1. It is located in Tinsukia district of Assam.
2. A uniform 1 km eco-sensitive zone has been proposed around it.
3. The draft ESZ notification is issued under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 1 and 2 only

APPROACH

ESZs are notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, so Statement 3 is wrong.

PROTECTED AREAS

Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary: Safari Services Planned in Telangana's Mulugu

WHY IN NEWS

Forest officials in Mulugu district, Telangana, plan to start safari services inside Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary to promote eco-tourism and local livelihoods. The sanctuary, set up in 1952, covers about 812 sq km on the Godavari near the point where Telangana, Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh meet, and hosts the Medaram Jatara every two years.

812 sq km — **Area of Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary**



Waterfall landscape in Telangana (illustrative image)

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

1. **Eco-Tourism and Livelihoods**
   Use the safari plan to show how regulated tourism can support local communities near sanctuaries.
2. **Tribal Culture and Forests**
   Cite the Medaram Jatara as a tribal gathering inside a protected forest.
3. **Carrying Capacity**
   Link the plan to the need for limits on vehicles and visitors in sanctuaries.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Location	Mulugu district, Telangana, on the Godavari
Established	30 January 1952; notified 7 July 1999
Area	About 812 sq km
Rivers	Godavari; the Dayyam Vagu splits it into two parts
Vegetation	Southern tropical dry deciduous; teak dominant
Mammals	Tiger, leopard, wolf, wild dog, gaur, sambar, chital, nilgai, blackbuck
Birds	Peafowl, junglefowl, crested serpent eagle, hornbills, painted stork
Culture	Sammakka-Saralamma temple; Medaram Jatara every two years

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

The Medaram Jatara, held every two years at Tadvai inside the sanctuary, is described as Asia's largest tribal congregation.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Eturnagaram WLS | Mulugu, Telangana | Est. 1952 | 812 sq km | Godavari and Dayyam Vagu | Medaram Jatara

EXAM TRAP

Do not place Eturnagaram in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra or Chhattisgarh. It is in Telangana, near their borders, and it is a wildlife sanctuary, not a tiger reserve.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary, recently in the news, is located in

(a) Telangana
(b) Andhra Pradesh
(c) Odisha
(d) Karnataka

Answer: (a) Telangana

APPROACH

Eturnagaram is in Mulugu district of Telangana, on the Godavari near the Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh borders.

PROTECTED AREAS

Bhadra Tiger Reserve: Karnataka's Tiger Cub Rewilding Plan Draws Scientific Debate

WHY IN NEWS

Karnataka's forest department plans to raise orphaned or abandoned tiger cubs in an enclosure at Hipla grassland, Muthodi, inside Bhadra Tiger Reserve, train them to hunt and release them, as reported on 13 November 2026. Tenders over Rs 67 lakh have been issued. Some scientists question the science and need, while officials cite space limits at captive-care centres.

Rs 67 lakh — **Tenders issued for solar fencing and a trench**



Tigers watching a gaur (illustrative image)



Tiger drinking at a lake (illustrative image)

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

1. **Rewilding and Translocation**
   Use the plan to discuss IUCN translocation guidelines and the evidence needed for such projects.
2. **Orphaned Cub Management**
   Cite NTCA's rearing SOP to show the rules for hand-raised tigers and the debate around them.
3. **Science and Policy**
   Link the debate to evidence-based conservation decisions and expert consultation.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Reserve	Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary and Tiger Reserve, Chikkamagaluru, Karnataka
Area	Just over 500 sq km
Tiger reserve	Declared 1998
Project site	Hipla grassland, about 100 acres, in Muthodi
Method	Enclosure, hunting practice with Boma-moved prey, then release
NTCA SOP	50 ha enclosure, two years' rearing, 50 prey kills before release (as reported)
Concerns	Natural recovery already under way; cubs may not be abandoned
Support case	Similar programme in Madhya Pradesh; limited captive space

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Hipla is a grassland recovering after villagers voluntarily resettled from the core area in the early 2000s.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Bhadra TR | Chikkamagaluru | Hipla, Muthodi | Tiger rewilding | NTCA SOP | IUCN translocation guidelines

EXAM TRAP

Do not read the plan as approved science or as a relocation of adult tigers. It is a proposal for hand-reared cubs, and experts have asked for it to be reviewed.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

Consider the following statements :

Statement I :
Karnataka plans to raise orphaned tiger cubs in an enclosure inside Bhadra Tiger Reserve before release.

Statement II :
The plan has been universally endorsed by wildlife scientists.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

(a) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct and Statement II explains Statement I

(b) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct but Statement II does not explain Statement I

(c) Statement I is correct but Statement II is not correct

(d) Statement I is not correct but Statement II is correct

Answer: (c) Statement I is correct but Statement II is not correct

APPROACH

Several scientists have questioned the need and the method, so Statement II is wrong.

PROTECTED AREAS

Mudumalai Tiger Reserve: Tiger Close Approach Video Raises Safari Rule Questions

WHY IN NEWS

A viral video from the Achakarai area of Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, Nilgiris, showing a public figure following a resting tiger on foot has drawn criticism from conservationists, as reported on 16 November 2026. They want the Wildlife (Protection) Act examined for harassment of wildlife and entry rules. Officials say the visitors kept a safe distance.

3 states **Mudumalai meets Karnataka (Bandipur) and Kerala (Wayanad)**



Tiger resting by a lake (illustrative image)

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

1. **Responsible Wildlife Tourism**
   Use the episode to argue for strict distance and no-chase rules in tiger habitats.
2. **Legal Safeguards**
   Cite the Wildlife (Protection) Act's curbs on entry and harassment in protected areas.
3. **Tri-Junction Landscape**
   Link Mudumalai, Bandipur and Wayanad to the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve's connected habitat.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Location	Nilgiris district, Tamil Nadu
Landscape	Tri-junction of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala
Neighbours	Bandipur (Karnataka) and Wayanad (Kerala)
Sanctuary	Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, set up 1940
Biosphere	Part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve
River	Moyar river flows along the southern edge
Elephant camp	Theppakadu
Fauna	Tiger, Asian elephant, leopard, gaur, sloth bear

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Mudumalai is among India's oldest sanctuaries and sits at the tri-junction of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala within the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Mudumalai TR | Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu | Theppakadu camp | Moyar river | Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve | Wildlife (Protection) Act

EXAM TRAP

Do not treat Mudumalai as a Karnataka reserve. It lies in Tamil Nadu and borders Bandipur and Wayanad, and the incident concerns visitor conduct, not an official policy change.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, consider the following :

I. It lies in the Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu.

II. It borders Bandipur in Karnataka.

III. It is part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.

IV. It lies in the Eastern Himalayas.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) Only three
(d) All the four

Answer: (c) Only three

APPROACH

Statements I, II and III are correct. Mudumalai is in the Western Ghats, so Statement IV is wrong.

CLEAN CITIES, ENERGY & AGRI

Swachh Survekshan 2025-26: Navi Mumbai Tops the Cleanliness Rankings

WHY IN NEWS

President Droupadi Murmu conferred the Swachh Survekshan 2025-26 awards in New Delhi on 11 November 2026. Navi Mumbai was named the cleanest city, ending Indore's eight-year run at the top, with Surat and Vijayawada following in the rankings. The 10th edition assessed over 4,700 cities on 43 indicators across 10 areas, by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

10th **Edition of Swachh Survekshan**



Swachh Survekshan 2025-26 awards ceremony

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

1. **Swachh Bharat Mission Urban**
   Use the survey as the main accountability tool of SBM-Urban for solid waste and sanitation.
2. **Competitive Federalism**
   Cite city rankings as a way to push urban local bodies to improve through peer comparison.
3. **Citizen Feedback**
   Link the weight on citizen feedback and sanitation worker welfare to participatory governance.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Edition	10th; covers 2025-26; started in 2016 with 73 cities
Run by	Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, under SBM-Urban
Scale	Over 4,700 cities assessed on 43 indicators in 10 areas
Assessors	Over 3,000 trained assessors with GPS-enabled monitoring
Top city	Navi Mumbai; Indore's eight-year streak ended
Also ranked	Surat and Vijayawada followed
New emphasis	Citizen feedback, tourist sites, riverfronts, coastlines, sanitation workers
Awards	Conferred by the President, 11 November 2026

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Swachh Survekshan began in 2016 with 73 cities, and Indore had held the top spot for eight straight years before Navi Mumbai replaced it.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Swachh Survekshan 2025-26 | Navi Mumbai | 10th edition | 43 indicators | SBM-Urban | MoHUA

EXAM TRAP

Do not credit Indore with the top spot this year or the Jal Shakti ministry with the survey. Navi Mumbai ranked first, and the survey is run by MoHUA under SBM-Urban.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to Swachh Survekshan 2025-26, consider the following statements :

1. It is conducted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
2. Navi Mumbai was named the cleanest city.
3. It is an annual survey conducted by the NITI Aayog.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 1 and 2 only

APPROACH

The survey is run by MoHUA, not NITI Aayog, so Statement 3 is wrong.

CLEAN CITIES, ENERGY & AGRI

Swachh Shehar Jodi: Mentor-Mentee Pairing Lifts Weaker Cities' Waste Scores

WHY IN NEWS

Swachh Shehar Jodi (SSJ), a Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs mentorship initiative under Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0, pairs top-ranked cities with weaker ones. Around 72 mentor cities guided about 200 mentee cities in a 100-day programme. Reported gains between 2024 and 2025-26 include visible cleanliness rising from 48 to 70 percent and source segregation from 16 to 30 percent.

100 days
Length of the SSJ mentorship programme

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

1. **Peer Learning in Governance**
   Use SSJ to show how best practices spread through pairing rather than central orders.
2. **Solid Waste Management**
   Cite the gains in door-to-door collection and source segregation as measurable outcomes.
3. **Capacity Building under SBM-U 2.0**
   Link the use of state capacity-building funds to cooperative federalism.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Ministry	Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)
Mission	Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0
Pairing	About 72 mentor cities with about 200 mentee cities
Selection	Mentors from top Survekshan ranks; mentees nearby and lagging
Duration	100-day mentorship programme
Visible cleanliness	Mentee cities rose from 48 to 70 percent
Door-to-door collection	52 to 74 percent
Source segregation	16 to 30 percent

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS
Mentee cities more than doubled source segregation from 16 to 30 percent under the programme, according to the reported figures.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Swachh Shehar Jodi | Mentor-mentee cities | 100 days | SBM-Urban 2.0 | Source segregation | MoHUA

EXAM TRAP
Do not mix it with Swachh Survekshan. SSJ is a mentoring programme for weaker cities, while the Survekshan is the ranking survey that selects the mentors.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

Consider the following statements :

Statement I :
Under Swachh Shehar Jodi, top-ranked cities mentor lower-performing cities.

Statement II :
Swachh Shehar Jodi is a ranking survey that scores cities each year.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

(a) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct and Statement II explains Statement I
(b) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct but Statement II does not explain Statement I
(c) Statement I is correct but Statement II is not correct
(d) Statement I is not correct but Statement II is correct

Answer: (c) Statement I is correct but Statement II is not correct

APPROACH
SSJ is a mentorship programme, and the annual ranking is done by Swachh Survekshan, so Statement II is wrong.

CLEAN CITIES, ENERGY & AGRI

Blue Flag Certification: Three Maharashtra Beaches Win the 2026-27 Award

WHY IN NEWS

Three Maharashtra beaches, Ladghar and Guhagar in Ratnagiri and Shrivardhan in Raigad, received the international Blue Flag award for 2026-27, as reported on 11 November 2026. They are not in Mumbai. The Blue Flag is given by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), Denmark, on 33 criteria, and the 2026-27 season begins on 15 November.



Blue Flag on a beach in Mexico (illustrative image)


Blue Flag emblem

33 **Criteria a beach must meet for a Blue Flag**

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

1. **Coastal Tourism and Sustainability**
   Use the Blue Flag to show certified clean beaches as a model for sustainable tourism.
2. **ICZM and Coastal Management**
   Cite the programme's link to India's integrated coastal zone management work.
3. **Local Livelihoods**
   Link certification to jobs and local participation in beach management.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Beaches	Ladghar and Guhagar (Ratnagiri); Shrivardhan (Raigad)
Certifier	Foundation for Environmental Education, Denmark
Criteria	33, across four areas
Areas assessed	Environmental education, water quality, environmental management, safety and services
Season	2026-27 season starts 15 November 2026
India's first set	Eight beaches certified in 2020
Examples of first set	Kappad, Rushikonda, Shivrajpur, Radhanagar
Not Mumbai	None of the three is a Mumbai beach

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS
India's first Blue Flag beaches, eight in all, were certified in 2020, including Kappad in Kerala and Radhanagar in the Andamans.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Blue Flag | FEE, Denmark | 33 criteria | Ladghar, Guhagar | Shrivardhan | 8 beaches in 2020

EXAM TRAP
Do not credit the Blue Flag to an Indian agency or treat the beaches as Mumbai's. FEE in Denmark certifies it, and the three beaches are in Ratnagiri and Raigad.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to the Blue Flag certification, consider the following :

I. It is awarded by the Foundation for Environmental Education.

II. It assesses water quality and safety services.

III. Beaches must meet 33 criteria.

IV. It is awarded by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.

How many of the above statements are correct?

(a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) Only three
(d) All the four

Answer: (c) Only three

APPROACH
Statements I, II and III are correct. The certifier is FEE, not UNESCO, so Statement IV is wrong.

CLEAN CITIES, ENERGY & AGRI

Coal Gasification: Rs 37,500 Crore Scheme Targets 100 MT Capacity by 2030

WHY IN NEWS

Coal gasification is back in the news under the Rs 37,500 crore scheme the Union Cabinet approved on 13 May 2026. It targets about 100 million tonnes a year of gasification capacity by 2030. Coal or lignite is converted to syngas, which feeds methanol, ammonia, urea, synthetic natural gas and hydrogen instead of being burned for power.

100 MTPA
Gasification capacity targeted by 2030

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

1. **Energy Security and Imports**
   Use gasification to show how domestic coal can cut imports of methanol, ammonia and gas.
2. **Transition Debates**
   Cite it as a cleaner use of coal than direct burning, while noting that CO2 capture is still needed.
3. **Underground Gasification**
   Link eligibility of underground coal gasification to unlocked deep or unmineable coal.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Approval	Union Cabinet, 13 May 2026
Outlay	Rs 37,500 crore
Nodal ministry	Ministry of Coal, with Petroleum and Natural Gas on offtake
Target	About 100 MTPA by 2030
Output	Syngas to methanol, ammonia, urea, DME, SNG and hydrogen
Incentives	Up to Rs 1,350 crore for PSU projects; up to 50 percent revenue-share rebate
Technology	Surface and underground coal gasification both eligible
Timeline	Commercial operation within 60 months of award

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS
Syngas, the product of gasification, is a mix of carbon monoxide and hydrogen, and the scheme also gives extra incentive to plants using domestic gasifiers.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Coal gasification | Rs 37,500 crore | 100 MTPA by 2030 | Syngas | UCG | Ministry of Coal

EXAM TRAP
Do not equate gasification with coal-fired power. It converts coal into syngas for chemicals and fuels, and it still emits CO2 unless capture is added.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

With reference to coal gasification, consider the following statements :

1. It converts coal into syngas, a mixture of carbon monoxide and hydrogen.
2. Syngas can be used to make methanol and ammonia.
3. It produces no carbon dioxide at all.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Answer: (b) 1 and 2 only

APPROACH
Gasification still releases CO2 unless it is captured, so Statement 3 is wrong.

CLEAN CITIES, ENERGY & AGRI

Pioxaniliprole: India's First Home-Discovered Insecticide Molecule Reaches Farms

WHY IN NEWS

PI Industries announced on 29 October 2026 that Pioxaniliprole, registered by the Central Insecticides Board and Registration Committee (CIB&RC), is the first insecticide active ingredient discovered in India after over a decade of research. Sold as Pioxazon, it targets pests like fall armyworm and yellow stem borer in rice, maize, chilli, tomato and Bengal gram, with a nationwide rollout reported from 6 November 2026.



Paddy field (illustrative image)

1st **Insecticide active ingredient discovered in India**

CONNECT TO STATIC SYLLABUS

1. **Pesticide Regulation**
   Use the registration to explain the Insecticides Act, 1968 and the role of CIB&RC.
2. **Atmanirbhar Agri-Inputs**
   Cite home-discovered molecules as a step towards self-reliance in crop protection.
3. **Integrated Pest Management**
   Link new molecules to IPM and to the need to avoid resistance and ecological harm.

PRELIMS MATRIX

Molecule	Pioxaniliprole, by PI Industries
Brand	Pioxazon
Approval	Central Insecticides Board and Registration Committee
Significance	First insecticide active ingredient discovered in India
Class	Anthranilic diamide; acts on insect ryanodine receptors
Crops	Rice, chilli, tomato, Bengal gram and maize
Pests	Fall armyworm, yellow stem borer and others
Rollout	Nationwide from 6 November 2026, Rabi season

UNIQUE FACT FOR PRELIMS

Anthranilic diamides disrupt calcium regulation in insect muscle cells by acting on ryanodine receptors, which paralyses the pest.

PRELIMS MEMORY BANK

Pioxaniliprole | Pioxazon | CIB&RC | Anthranilic diamide | Ryanodine receptor | Insecticides Act 1968

EXAM TRAP

Do not call it a herbicide or a biopesticide. It is a synthetic insecticide, and CIB&RC under the agriculture ministry registers such molecules.

PRELIMS MODEL MCQ

Consider the following statements :

Statement I :

Pioxaniliprole is registered as an insecticide by the Central Insecticides Board and Registration Committee.

Statement II :

Pioxaniliprole is a herbicide used to remove weeds from paddy fields.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

(a) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct and Statement II explains Statement I

(b) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct but Statement II does not explain Statement I

(c) Statement I is correct but Statement II is not correct

(d) Statement I is not correct but Statement II is correct

Answer: (c) Statement I is correct but Statement II is not correct

APPROACH

Pioxaniliprole targets insect pests, not weeds, so Statement II is wrong.