MISSION X — UPSC MENTORSHIP & GUIDANCE PROGRAM

Xtracts

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Mission X for UPSC

ISSUE 01 GS-I Climatology

El Niño Set to Rank Among Strongest Since 1950, NOAA Warns

NOAA's 12 November update put the Niño 3.4 index at 2.5°C above average — up from 2.1°C a month earlier — giving a strong-to-very-strong El Niño more than a 79% chance of persisting through January–March 2027 and roughly a 60% chance of ranking among the most powerful events since 1950, with forecasters expecting it to ease only by spring.

+2.5°C	79%	60%	12 Nov	1950
NIÑO 3.4 ANOMALY	CHANCE THRU MAR '27	CHANCE STRONGEST SINCE '50	NOAA ADVISORY DATE	BENCHMARK YEAR

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★★★	★★★☆☆	★★☆☆☆

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- The Niño 3.4 index tracks sea-surface temperature anomaly in the equatorial Pacific — the standard measure of ENSO (El Niño-Southern Oscillation) strength.
- Current anomaly: +2.5°C, up from +2.1°C a month earlier — NOAA's Climate Prediction Center update, 12 Nov 2026.
- >79% probability the event stays strong-to-very-strong through January–March 2027; ~60% chance it ranks among the most powerful since 1950.
- ENSO interacts with the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) to shape the Indian monsoon — a recurring Prelims theme.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-I | Geography GS-III | Disaster Management

El Niño is a textbook "important geophysical phenomenon" under GS-I Geography, but a strong 2026-27 event also tests India's disaster-preparedness machinery directly. **GS-III | Disaster Management:** probabilistic ENSO forecasts now feed into the IMD's seasonal monsoon outlook, drought-contingency planning, and buffer-stock decisions for food security — making climate forecasting a working input into governance, not just an academic topic. Key themes: ENSO-monsoon teleconnection; probabilistic forecasting in policy; drought and agricultural contingency planning.

ETHICS LENS

"Should scientific forecasts of uncertain climate events guide pre-emptive policy action, even at economic cost?" — NOAA's own numbers are probabilities, not certainties: a 79% chance of persistence and a 60% chance of being historic, not a guarantee. A government deciding whether to pre-position drought relief or import buffers must weigh the cost of acting on a forecast that may not materialise against the cost of being unprepared if it does. ***GS-IV Value: Prudence*** *— acting responsibly under uncertainty by weighing the cost of inaction against the cost of unnecessary pre-emption.*

Indian Climate → **IOD–ENSO Monsoon Link** PRELIMS 2017

With reference to 'Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)' sometimes mentioned in the news while forecasting Indian monsoon, which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. The IOD phenomenon is characterised by a difference in sea surface temperature between tropical Western Indian Ocean and tropical Eastern Pacific Ocean.
2. An IOD phenomenon can influence an El Nino's impact on the monsoon.

(a) 1 only	**(b) 2 only**
(c) Both 1 and 2	(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (b). Statement 1 is wrong — the IOD compares the western (Arabian Sea) and eastern (near Indonesia) Indian Ocean, not the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Statement 2 is correct: IOD phase can amplify or offset El Niño's effect on Indian rainfall.

ISSUE 02 GS-II Health & Human Resource

WHO's 2026 TB Report Credits India's 38% Mortality Fall — But Flags a Widening Funding Gap

The WHO Global Tuberculosis Report 2026, released on 12 November, found India's TB mortality fell 38% — from 28 to 18 deaths per lakh population between 2015 and 2025 — outpacing the 35% global decline, even as international donor funding for TB fell 14% (from $1.1 billion in 2024 to $940 million in 2025) against an estimated $22-billion annual requirement to meet the 2027 targets. India already funds 96% of its TB response domestically, well above the 86% global average.

38%	28→18	96%	$940 Mn	2030
INDIA TB MORTALITY FALL	DEATHS / LAKH (2015-25)	INDIA'S DOMESTIC TB FUNDING	GLOBAL DONOR FUNDING, 2025	SDG TB ELIMINATION TARGET

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- WHO Global Tuberculosis Report is released annually; the 2026 edition came out on 12 November 2026.
- India's TB mortality: 28 per lakh population (2015) → 18 per lakh (2025) — a 38% fall, versus a 35% global decline.
- 96% of India's TB-programme funding comes from domestic resources, above the 86% global average for 2025.
- SDG Target 3.3 commits the world to ending the TB epidemic by 2030; a UN High-Level Meeting in 2023 set interim 2027 targets.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-II | Health & Welfare GS-III | S&T (R&D Financing)

India's National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP), run in convergence with Ayushman Bharat, has pushed domestic financing to 96% of requirement — insulating the programme from the donor volatility that is now straining other high-burden countries. **GS-III | S&T (R&D Financing):** global TB research still drew only $1.2 billion against a $5-billion annual target, so even a well-funded national programme depends on an under-resourced global pipeline for better diagnostics, drugs and vaccines. Key themes: domestic health financing versus donor dependence; NTEP-Ayushman Bharat convergence; the funding gap in TB research and development.

ETHICS LENS

"Does a nation's fiscal self-reliance in health financing excuse the global community from its share of the burden of disease elimination?" — India now funds 96% of its own TB response while global donor funding for poorer, more donor-dependent countries fell 14% in a single year. That raises a fairness question: is the international community quietly offloading a shared SDG commitment (Target 3.3) onto the countries that already carry the highest disease burden, simply because some of them have proven capable of paying their own way? ***GS-IV Value: Distributive justice*** *— sharing the costs of a global public good across nations according to capacity, not merely according to where the burden currently falls.*

Public Health → **Immunisation Schemes** PRELIMS 2016

'Mission Indradhanush' launched by the Government of India pertains to:

(a) Immunisation of children and pregnant women	(b) Construction of smart cities across the country
(c) India's own search for the Earth-like planets in outer space	(d) New Educational Policy

Answer: (a). Mission Indradhanush (2014) drives full immunisation of children up to age two and pregnant women, originally targeting 201 high-focus districts across 28 states — the same public-health architecture that underwrites programmes like NTEP.

ISSUE 03 GS-III Indian Economy — External Sector

India's Goods Exports Hit a Record $49.47 Billion in October — But the Trade Gap Widens Too

Commerce Ministry data put October's merchandise exports at an all-time high of $49.47 billion, Trade Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said, lifting combined goods-and-services exports nearly 30% year-on-year to $89.99 billion. Yet the merchandise trade deficit still widened to $39.88 billion, from $30.21 billion in September, on costlier crude oil and freight. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said India is near $480 billion in exports for the first half of FY27 — 48% of the $1-trillion annual target.

$49.47 Bn	$89.99 Bn	~30%	$39.88 Bn	48%
OCT MERCHANDISE EXPORTS	OCT GOODS+SERVICES EXPORTS	YOY GROWTH, COMBINED	OCT MERCHANDISE DEFICIT	OF $1 TRN FY27 TARGET

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★☆☆	★★★★☆	★★☆☆☆

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- October 2026 merchandise exports: $49.47 billion — India's highest-ever monthly figure.
- Combined goods + services exports: $89.99 billion in October, up nearly 30% year-on-year.
- Merchandise trade deficit widened to $39.88 billion in October, from $30.21 billion in September 2026.
- Gems and jewellery exports rose 34% year-on-year to $2.92 billion, among the strongest sectoral gains.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-III | Indian Economy GS-II | International Relations

Record exports alongside a record-widening deficit illustrate a classic external-sector puzzle: a Production Linked Incentive (PLI)-driven manufacturing push and export diversification are genuinely lifting outbound trade, even as costlier crude and freight inflate the import bill faster than exports can offset it. **GS-II | International Relations:** the same week brought reports that the US had assured India a tariff edge over competing exporters under ongoing trade-deal talks — a reminder that market access negotiations now sit directly upstream of monthly trade data. Key themes: PLI-linked manufacturing exports; crude-oil import vulnerability; trade-deal diplomacy and tariff differentials.

ETHICS LENS

"Should a government headline a 'record' export figure while a worsening trade deficit sits in the same data release?" — Both numbers came from the same Commerce Ministry release, yet public messaging understandably leans on the favourable one. The tension is between legitimate, positive communication of a genuine achievement and the duty to present economic data in a way that lets citizens judge the complete picture, not a selectively flattering slice of it. ***GS-IV Value: Objectivity*** *— presenting the complete factual picture, including unfavourable data, rather than a selectively flattering one.*

External Sector → **Currency Convertibility** PRELIMS 2015

Convertibility of rupee implies:

(a) being able to convert rupee notes into gold

(b) allowing the value of rupee to be fixed by market forces

(c) freely permitting the conversion of rupee to other currencies and vice versa

(d) developing an international market for currencies in India

Answer: (c). India allows current-account convertibility (needed for trade flows like October's exports) but still does not permit full capital-account convertibility.

ISSUE 04 GS-III Science & Technology — Deep Ocean Mission

Matsya-6000 Nears Human Trials: India to Attempt a 500-Metre Dive Toward Its Deep-Sea Mission

Ministry of Earth Sciences Secretary Srinivasa Kumar Tummala said on 13 November that Matsya-6000, India's indigenously built manned submersible, is expected to undertake a 500-metre crewed trial dive off the Chennai coast in January–February 2027 — a milestone toward the Samudrayaan Project's ultimate 6,000-metre descent under the Deep Ocean Mission. The three-person steel-sphere craft, built at NIOT with inputs from DRDO, CSIR and ISRO, followed a domestic build after global tenders for a ready-made vessel ran into technology-denial hurdles.

500 M	6,000 M	3	₹4,077 Cr	NIOT
TRIAL DIVE, JAN–FEB '27	SAMUDRAYAAN TARGET DEPTH	CREW CAPACITY	DEEP OCEAN MISSION OUTLAY	LEAD BUILDING AGENCY

PRELIMS RELEVANCE	MAINS RELEVANCE	ETHICS RELEVANCE
★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★☆☆

PRELIMS TRIGGER

- Matsya-6000 is India's indigenously built manned deep-sea submersible, developed by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai, under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- 500-metre crewed trial dive planned for January–February 2027, ahead of the full 6,000-metre descent under the Samudrayaan Project.
- The 6,000 m mission's titanium-alloy personnel sphere (80 mm thick, rated to withstand 600 bar) is being fabricated with ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre.
- The Deep Ocean Mission was approved by the Union Cabinet in 2021 with a ₹4,077 crore outlay.

MAINS CONNECTION

GS-III | Science & Technology GS-III | Indian Economy (Blue Economy)

Matsya-6000 went indigenous only after global tenders for a ready-made manned submersible ran into technology-denial hurdles — a pattern familiar from India's space and defence programmes, and a reminder that strategic autonomy in critical technology is as much an economic necessity as a security one. **GS-III | Indian Economy (Blue Economy):** the mission's stated objectives — mapping ocean biodiversity and assessing seabed mineral resources, including the polymetallic-nodule fields India already holds exploration rights to in the Central Indian Ocean Basin — feed directly into India's Blue Economy policy. Key themes: indigenisation under technology-denial regimes; inter-agency convergence (NIOT-DRDO-CSIR-ISRO); Blue Economy and seabed mineral resources.

ETHICS LENS

"Is it justified to send human pilots into extreme-depth environments when uncrewed probes could gather similar data more safely?" — NIOT's Project Director has argued that "no camera can match the human eye," defending the case for crewed exploration. The real tension is between accepting a known, calculated physical risk to two trained pilots for richer, judgment-based scientific observation, versus the lower-risk but less perceptive alternative of sending machines alone. ***GS-IV Value: Informed consent and proportionate risk*** *— exposing trained professionals to a calculated, voluntarily accepted hazard only in pursuit of a larger, genuine public good.*

Oceanography → **Seabed Mineral Rights** PRELIMS 2021

Consider the following statements:
1. The Global Ocean Commission grants licences for seabed exploration and mining in international waters.
2. India has received licences for seabed mineral exploration in international waters.
3. 'Rare earth minerals' are present on the seafloor in international waters.
Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b). Seabed exploration is regulated by the International Seabed Authority under UNCLOS, not any "Global Ocean Commission." India holds a licence to explore 75,000 sq km in the Central Indian Ocean Basin for polymetallic nodules — the same mineral-rich seabed Matsya-6000's missions are designed to survey.

🧠 Memory Lab

Rapid revision · High-retention formats · Today's key concepts

SUNDAY · 15 NOV 2026

✕ XTRACTS IN 30 SECONDS

1. **El Niño intensifies —** NOAA's Niño 3.4 anomaly hit +2.5°C on 12 Nov; ~79% chance it stays strong through Mar 2027, ~60% chance it ranks among the strongest since 1950.

2. **India's TB mortality falls 38% —** WHO's 2026 report (28→18 deaths/lakh, 2015-25) also flags a 14% drop in global donor TB funding against a $22 Bn annual need.

3. **Exports hit a record, so does the deficit —** October's $49.47 Bn merchandise exports is an all-time high, but the trade deficit widened to $39.88 Bn on costlier crude.

4. **Matsya-6000 eyes a 500 m trial —** NIOT's indigenous submersible is set for a crewed dive in Jan–Feb 2027, a step toward Samudrayaan's 6,000 m target.

🔥 NUMBERS TO REMEMBER

+2.5°C NIÑO 3.4 ANOMALY	**38%** INDIA TB MORTALITY FALL	**$49.47 Bn** RECORD OCT EXPORTS
500 M MATSYA TRIAL DEPTH	**96%** INDIA'S TB FUNDING, DOMESTIC	**$39.88 Bn** OCT TRADE DEFICIT
6,000 M SAMUDRAYAAN TARGET DEPTH	**79%** EL NIÑO PERSISTENCE CHANCE	**₹4,077 Cr** DEEP OCEAN MISSION OUTLAY

🟣 ETHICS QUICK REFERENCE

ISSUE 01 — CLIMATOLOGY

Acting on a 79%/60% probability forecast, not a certainty. **Value: Prudence** — weighing the cost of inaction against unnecessary pre-emption.

ISSUE 02 — PUBLIC HEALTH

India funds 96% of its own TB fight as global donor funding falls 14%. **Value: Distributive justice** — sharing a global public good's cost by capacity, not just burden.

ISSUE 03 — ECONOMIC DATA

A "record exports" headline sits beside a record-widening deficit. **Value: Objectivity** — presenting the complete data, not a flattering slice of it.

ISSUE 04 — DEEP-SEA EXPLORATION

Sending human pilots where probes could gather similar data. **Value: Informed consent & proportionate risk** — a calculated, voluntary hazard for a genuine public good.

QUICK FACT

IOD–ENSO Monsoon Link

The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) can offset or amplify El Niño's impact on the Indian monsoon — a positive IOD paired with El Niño still often brings fair central-India rainfall, while a neutral-or-negative IOD with El Niño tends to produce poor monsoons.

◎ QUICK REVISION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Niño 3.4 anomaly: +2.5°C (12 Nov 2026 update), up from +2.1°C a month earlier — NOAA.
- ☐ ~79% chance El Niño stays strong-to-very-strong through Jan–Mar 2027; ~60% chance it's among the strongest since 1950.
- ☐ WHO Global TB Report 2026 (released 12 Nov): India's mortality 28→18/lakh population, 2015-25 (38% fall vs 35% global).
- ☐ India funds 96% of its TB response domestically vs an 86% global average; global donor funding fell 14% to $940 Mn in 2025.
- ☐ October 2026: record $49.47 Bn merchandise exports; merchandise trade deficit widened to $39.88 Bn.
- ☐ H1 FY27 exports near $480 Bn — 48% of the $1 trillion annual target (Piyush Goyal).
- ☐ Matsya-6000's 500 m crewed trial dive: Jan–Feb 2027, ahead of the 6,000 m Samudrayaan descent.
- ☐ Deep Ocean Mission: ₹4,077 crore outlay, approved by Cabinet in 2021; targets Blue Economy & polymetallic nodules.

📊 PYQ FREQUENCY — 10-YEAR VIEW

Climatology (ENSO/IOD)	6/10
Health & Welfare Schemes	7/10
External Sector (BoP/Trade)	5/10
Ocean & Blue Economy	4/10
Space-Ocean Tech Convergence	3/10
Ethics in Public Policy	8/10
Govt Schemes (Prelims Facts)	9/10

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