



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

19th November 2025



19th November, 2025

CONTEXT: A three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court, in a majority judgment, recalled its May 16 verdict declaring the Centre's grant of ex post facto or retrospective environmental clearances (ECs) to building projects and constructions a "gross illegality"

Evolution

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

- **UNEP Definition:** A process to identify, predict, and evaluate the environmental consequences of proposed development actions.

Indian Context:

- A **statutory process** under the *Environment (Protection) Act, 1986*.
- Operationalised via the **EIA Notification 1994**,
- Updated significantly by **EIA Notification 2006**



Environment Impact Assessment Notification 2020

□ Post-facto Environmental Clearance allowed

- Legalises projects that have already started construction/operations without prior EC.
- Creates a procedure for granting EC *after* violations occur.

- **Reduced Public Consultation Period**
 - Notice period cut from **30 days to 20 days**.
 - Shortened overall time for public hearings.
- **Major Exemptions from Public Scrutiny**
 - Strategic projects
 - Inland waterways
 - Certain building/construction projects
- **Digitalisation of Process**
 - Online submission of applications, monitoring reports, and clearances.
 - Aimed at ease of doing business and process efficiency.
- **Restricted Violation Reporting**
 - Only **government authorities** and **project proponents** can report violations.
 - Citizens, CSOs, and local communities removed from reporting mechanism.

Challenges in Framework

1. Weak Public Participation
2. Poor Quality of EIA Reports
3. Conflict of Interest
4. Delayed Clearances & Bureaucratic Bottlenecks
5. Weak Post-Clearance Monitoring
6. Inadequate Cumulative Impact Assessment
7. Political & Economic Pressures



19th November, 2025

Environment Impact Assessment – Retrospective Clearance

CONTEXT: A three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court, in a majority judgment, re- called its May 16 verdict declaring the Centre’s grant of ex post facto or retrospective environmental clearances (ECs) to building projects and constructions a “gross illegality”

Environmental Impact Assessment



Case Study: Vizag LG Polymers Gas Leak (2020)

Background

- Styrene gas leak at LG Polymers plant, Visakhapatnam.
- 12 deaths, more than 1000 hospitalized.

EIA-Related Issues

- Plant **operated without a valid Environmental Clearance** for years.
- Retrospective clearance was sought (violating core principles of EIA).
- NGT held company accountable; imposed penalty of **₹50 crore**.

Way Forward

- **Independent EIA Regulator**
- **Universal & Sector-Wide Assessments**
- **Stronger Public Participation**
- **Reform Expert Committees**
- **Robust Monitoring & Penalties**
- **Citizen Access & Accountability**
- **Capacity Building & Transparency**

Mains Practice Question

Q. How does the draft Environment Impact Assessment [EIA] Notification, 2020 Differ from the existing EIA Notification, 2006? (150 Word, 10 Marks) – **CSE 2020**

Q. Discuss the significance of EIA in the Indian context, outline the major challenges in its implementation, and suggest a robust way forward to strengthen the EIA framework. **(15 marks / 250 words)**



19th November, 2025

A call against Terrorism at SCO

CONTEXT: In the SCO's heads of the state council meeting, External affairs minister stated that the world must display "zero tolerance" towards terrorism.

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

Evolution / History

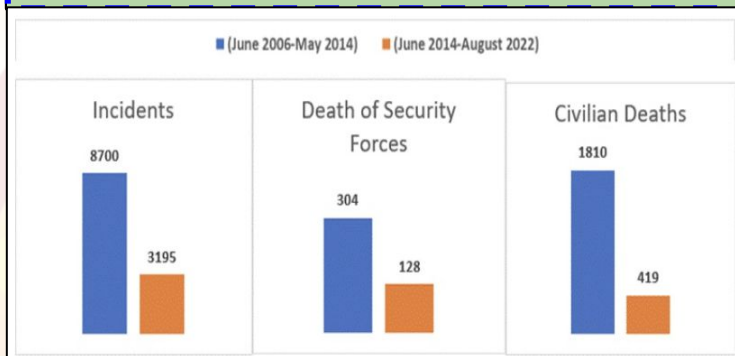
- **The Shanghai Five (1996)**
 - China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.
- **Formally established (2001)**
 - Uzbekistan
- **Newer members**
 - India and Pakistan (2017).
 - Iran (2023).
 - Belarus (2024).
- **Dialogue partners** – Afghanistan & Mongolia

Goals / Objectives of the SCO

- Strengthen **mutual trust, friendship** among member states.
- Promote effective cooperation (**Political, Trade and economic Scientific and technical, Cultural development, Education, energy, transport, tourism, environment, and other areas.**)
- Fight the "three evils": **terrorism, separatism, and extremism**, especially through security cooperation.
- Advocate a **fair global order**, multipolarity, and balanced international governance.



Terrorism – Definition and form



Types of Terrorism

- I. Ethno-nationalist terrorism
- II. Religious terrorism
- III. State-sponsored terrorism
- IV. Ideology-based terrorism
- V. Bioterrorism
- VI. Narcoterrorism
- VII. Cyberterrorism

Impact

1. Human cost
2. Economic Cost
3. Political & Social Cost
4. International Relations



A call against Terrorism at SCO



CONTEXT: In the SCO's heads of the state council meeting, External affairs minister stated that the world must display "zero tolerance" towards terrorism.

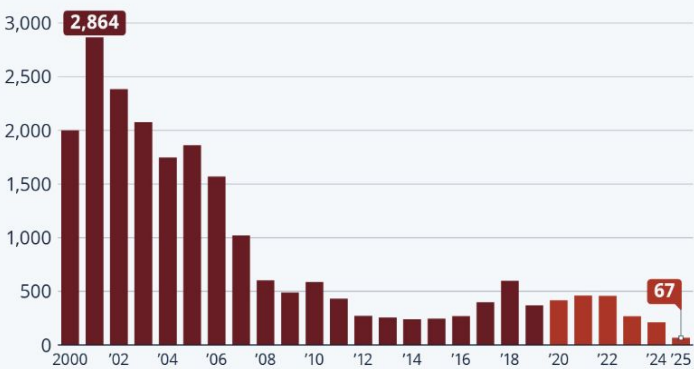
Section 113 of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023

Any act with the intent to threaten or likely to threaten the unity, integrity, sovereignty, security, or economic security of India or with the intent to strike terror or likely to strike terror in the people or any section of the people in India or any foreign country

Factors Behind Persistence

Jammu & Kashmir: A Region Long Caught Up in Conflict

Total number of terrorism-related incidents
in Jammu and Kashmir, by year*



1. Geopolitical & External factors
2. Proximity to conflict zones
3. Internal Socio-Political Factors
4. Radicalisation & Communal polarisation
5. Economic and Developmental Gaps
6. Technological and Operational Factors
7. Hybridisation – Terror crime nexus

Government Initiatives

Category	Measures Taken
1. Legal Measures	UAPA, 1967 (Amended 2019): Empowers designation of individuals as terrorists; property attachment; stronger prosecution.
2. Investigative Institutions	National Investigation Agency (NIA): Central agency for terror-related cases; improves coordination across states.
3. Intelligence Strengthening	NATGRID: Integrated intelligence database for real-time access to terror, crime, and economic data.
4. Specialised Policing Units	Anti-Terrorism Squads (ATS): Special units in state police forces for rapid response & investigation.
5. Internal Security Measures	Strengthened CAPF deployment, arrest of overground workers, seizure of properties, intensified search operations.



19th November, 2025

A call against Terrorism at SCO

CONTEXT: In the SCO's heads of the state council meeting, External affairs minister stated that the world must display "zero tolerance" towards terrorism.

Way Forward

Dimension	Key Measures
Strengthen Intelligence & Coordination	- Enhanced IB–NTRO–State ATS coordination. - Standardised inter-agency SOPs & predictive analytics.
Modernise Security Forces & Surveillance	- AI-enabled surveillance, facial recognition, biometrics. - Specialised intervention units with rapid mobility.
Disrupt Terror Financing Networks	Target drug trade, illegal mining, hawala routes.
Counter–Radicalisation & Build Community Resilience	- De-radicalisation & rehabilitation programmes. - Community policing and local partnership models. - Digital counter–narratives to curb online recruitment.
Development–Led Stabilisation in Vulnerable Areas	- Targeted development in LWE/Northeast/J&K regions. - Jobs, land rights, basic services, grievance redressal. - Strong state presence to reduce recruitment pools.
Strengthen International Cooperation & Diplomacy	- Enhanced intelligence sharing & joint operations. - Extradition, sanctions, pressure on sponsors.

Mains Practice Question

Q. Analyse the complexity and intensity of terrorism, its causes, linkages, and obnoxious nexus. Also suggest measures required to be taken to eradicate the menace of terrorism. **(15 Marks/ 250 words) – CSE 2021**

Q. Terrorism continues to pose a major internal security challenge for India. Analyse the persistent factors driving terrorism and suggest a strategy to counter it. **(15 marks / 250 words)**



What threatens Indian Sea Cow

19th November, 2025

SYLLABUS: GS - 3: Environment Conservation

Newspaper: The Indian Express; Page Number: 15

• CONSERVATION

Human activities and pollution: What threatens India's sea cows

Alind Chauhan

New Delhi, November 18

A NEW report launched at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Conservation Congress, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, last month, highlighted the growing threat to the dugong population in India.

In the South Asian region, dugongs, also known as sea cows, are primarily found in the Gulf of Kutch, the Gulf of Mannar-Palk Bay region (located between India and Sri Lanka), and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The report, 'A global assessment of dugong status and conservation needs', said that the marine mammal's long-term survival in the Gulf of Kutch and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands was "highly uncertain" and "challenging" respectively. Meanwhile, in the Gulf of Mannar-Palk Bay, its population appears to be "much lower" than in the recent past.

The IUCN, which compiles the official Red List of endangered species, lists sea cows as a species vulnerable to extinction. In India, they are listed under Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, which grants the species the highest legal protection against hunting and trade.

What are dugongs?

Dugongs (*Dugong dugon*) are a marine mammal believed to have inspired ancient seafaring tales of mermaids due to their gentle disposition. They have a plump appearance and a dolphin fluke-like tail. An adult dugong typically grows up to 10 feet and weighs around 420 kg. The mammals are exclusively herbivorous, and seagrass meadows are their main source of food.

Anant Pande, head of the Oceans and Coasts Conservation Division of WWF-India, told *The Indian Express* over email, "Dugongs inhabit shallow, warm coastal waters, often seen grazing in calm sheltered bays, lagoons, and estuaries less than 10 metres deep."

Why are they significant?

Dugongs play a crucial role in maintaining healthy seagrass ecosystems. For instance, when they graze on seagrass, the leaves are pruned and old shoots are uprooted. "This natural mowing process keeps meadows healthy, prevents overgrowth, and stimulates carbon storage in the sediment below... Dugongs not only maintain the productivity of

seagrass ecosystems but also contribute to climate regulation by sustaining one of the most efficient carbon sinks on the planet," Pande said.

Also, while feeding on seagrass, dugongs help release nutrients from the sediments, which are consumed by other marine species, especially commercially important fish, shellfish, and numerous invertebrates.

K Sivakumar, professor at Pondicherry University's Department of Ecology and Environmental Sciences, told *The*

Indian Express over email that seagrass habitats where dugongs were present provided "a minimum of Rs 2 crore per year worth of additional fish production".



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



What threatens Indian Sea Cow

19th November, 2025

SYLLABUS: GS - 3: Environment Conservation

Newspaper: The Indian Express; Page Number: 15

Why are dugongs in India at risk?

Once abundant in Indian waters, the dugong population has drastically reduced over the years. While Sivakumar says that currently, there are between 400 and 450 individuals in the region, others suggest that the number is less than 250.

It is difficult to ascertain the exact number of sea cows as they are elusive and live in cloudy and murky coastal waters, where traditional methods of survey often fail.

Human activities and degradation of coastal habitats are the primary drivers of decline in the dugong population currently. For instance, a majority of sea cows die due to accidental entanglement in fish nets.

Sivakumar said, "High turbidity, pollution and fishing are the threats to dugongs in the Gulf of Kutch. Fisheries bycatch and pollution are the major threats in Tamil Nadu. In the Andamans, fisheries-related mortality is higher."

A recent study, "Toxic traces: First insights into metals and metalloids in dugongs (*Dugong dugon*) from India", published in the journal *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, found five toxic elements — arsenic, cadmium, chromium, mercury, and lead — in tissues of various organs from 46 stranded dugongs in India. Pande and Sivakumar were among the authors of this study, along with Sweta Iyer, Chinmaya Ghanekar and Jeyaraj Antony Johnson, all three based at the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun.

Pande said, "This was the first global assessment of trace metal and metalloid concentrations in vital organs (like liver and kidneys, and muscles) of dugongs. These metals enter the sea through industrial discharge, agricultural runoff, and untreated wastewater, eventually settling into the sediments where seagrasses grow."

Moreover, the reproductive rate of sea cows is quite slow. A female dugong gives birth once in several years, which makes the species more vulnerable to extinction.

What has the government done to conserve dugongs?

Over the years, the Centre and states have taken several steps to help conserve the dugong population. For instance, the MoEFCC in 2010 constituted a 'Task Force for Conservation of Dugongs' to examine the issues related to the conservation of sea cows.

Subsequently, a national dugong recovery programme was launched in partnership with the governments of Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Under this, the Dugong Conservation Reserve was established in Palk Bay by the Tamil Nadu government in 2022. The reserve aims to protect seagrass meadows and the dugongs that depend on them.

However, researchers suggest that authorities need to do more. "While these actions have certainly tilted the needle in favour of dugongs, enforcement of regulations in protected dugong habitats, reduction of threats, especially bycatch in fisheries, and monitoring need to be strengthened," Pande said.

The views of Pande and Sivakumar are personal.

Species Overview

- Scientific name: ***Dugong dugon***
- Strictly **herbivorous marine mammal**
- Often called "**Sea Cow**" due to grazing behaviour.

IUCN Status & Legal Protection

- IUCN Red List: **Vulnerable**
- Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 (India): **Schedule I** (highest protection)

Reproduction of Dugong

- Individuals reach reproductive maturity after only nine or ten years and can give birth at intervals of around three to five years

Distribution in India

- Gulf of Mannar & Palk Bay (Tamil Nadu) – largest population in India
- Andaman & Nicobar Islands
- Gulf of Kachchh (Gujarat) – small, isolated population

Conservation Efforts in India

- Dugong Conservation Reserve (2022) – Tamil Nadu (Palk Bay).
- Seagrass restoration initiatives in Gulf of Mannar.
- "Dugong Recovery Programme" by MoEFCC & Wildlife Institute of India.



What can local bodies expect from the 16th FC?

19th November, 2025

SYLLABUS: GS - 2: Devolution of Powers and Finances up to Local Levels and Challenges Therein.;

Newspaper: The Hindu; Page Number: 08

The story so far:



On November 17, the 16th Finance Commission (FC) submitted its report to the President of India.

What are the expectations?

Main expectations include a percentage share for vertical transfer of resources from the Central revenue pool to the States for the next five years and the formula of its horizontal distribution among States. This is mandated under Article 280 of the Constitution.

What about panchayats, municipalities?

The other expectation is the recommendation to improve the finances of panchayats and municipalities as mandated under Article 280 (3) bb and c.

Like many other federations, local governments are the ones rendering essential public services, including drinking water, sanitation, public health, rural roads, maintenance of community assets etc. For this purpose, panchayats and municipalities are mandated to collect certain taxes like property tax, advertisement tax and non-taxes such as market fee, toll etc. However, a huge gap between revenues and expenditure responsibilities can be seen across States and Union Territories (UTs).

As per the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments, State governments have the power to assign revenue handles and expenditure responsibilities to various rungs of panchayats and levels of municipalities. Due to this reason, there is a wide variation in fiscal powers of panchayats, municipalities across States.

In an ideal scenario, functional responsibilities should be closely linked to the financial powers delegated to local governments. However, there is no separate list for either functional responsibilities or revenue handles that

should be assigned to panchayats and municipalities. While the 11th and 12th Schedules enumerate on 29 broad subjects for panchayats and 18 matters for municipalities respectively, they are merely illustrative and not binding.

Moreover, it is the Union and State governments that are expected to design vertical schemes on economic development and social justice, while local governments implement them.

State governments tend to assign responsibilities to local governments without concomitant revenue handles or officials. As a result, panchayats and municipalities bear the financial brunt which not only affects their development but operational efficiency as well.

What is the role of the SFC?

Every five years, States constitute a State Finance Commission (SFC) which can make recommendations to State legislature. The recommended

devolutions by SFC could be, *inter alia*, that panchayats and municipalities should have a share in the revenue pool of the State; be assigned revenue handles; receive both conditional and unconditional grants-in-aid; that local governments be assigned civic functions and functionaries; and various other administrative measures. More than a hundred SFC reports have been submitted across States, but hardly a few have been respected.

In such a situation, the local government must count entirely on fiscal transfers from the Union government. For this purpose, the Constitution mandates the Union Finance Commission (UFC) to suggest measures to augment State finances for local governments.

What did the previous UFCs do?

So far, recommendations of six UFCs have been implemented. However, they weren't able to quantify the resource

requirements of local governments, and made ad hoc arrangements and recommended lump sum grants. The 13th UFC, however, suggested calculating the grant as a percentage share in the union tax divisible pool. The 13th UFC did this consciously after a round of consultations with top legal experts and at the demand of the Union Ministry and several State governments. Neutrality to inflation was the first advantage of the proposal and share of local government in high buoyancy of union tax proceeds was the second major benefit. Sadly, the subsequent UFC took a complete U-turn and recommended lump sum grants. The 15th UFC followed its immediate predecessor in its route of fiscal transfers to local governments. This was not the only discontinuity in the recommendations made by the three successive bodies. The other major anomaly was in the form of conditional grants. In their zeal to reform panchayat and municipal administration, all these UFCs divided the grants into two components – basic and performance-based. While basic grants were unconditional, performance grants were tied to certain conditions identified by these UFCs as reform instruments. However, each UFC ensured to discontinue the line of reform initiated by the previous UFC. To illustrate, the 13th UFC stipulated six conditions for



What can local bodies expect from the 16th FC?



SYLLABUS: GS - 2: Devolution of Powers and Finances up to Local Levels and Challenges Therein.;

Newspaper: The Hindu; **Page Number:** 08

performance-based. While basic grants were unconditional, performance grants were tied to certain conditions identified by these UFCs as reform instruments. However, each UFC ensured to discontinue the line of reform initiated by the previous UFC. To illustrate, the 13th UFC stipulated six conditions for performance grants. **None of the conditions could be fulfilled by most States.** The 14th UFC refused to acknowledge any merit in the previous reform agenda and recommended fresh conditional performance grants. The conditions put forth by the 15th UFC were again of a different variety.

The 16th UFC, it is expected, must have gone beyond the oft-beaten approach and assessed the resource requirements of 2.7 lakh panchayats and about 5,000 municipalities, which would enable them to act as institutions for economic development and social justice.

V. N. Alok is professor at the Indian Institute of Public Administration.

Union Finance Commission (UFC) – Art 280

Objectives / Functions

- Recommend **vertical devolution** of taxes between Union & States.
- Recommend **horizontal distribution** among States.
- Suggest principles for **grants-in-aid** to States (Art. 275).
- Recommend measures to strengthen **local body finances** (Art. 280(3)(bb), (c)).

Composition

- **Chairperson + 4 Members** (as per Finance Commission Act, 1951).
- Qualifications prescribed in the Act (experience in public affairs, finance, administration, etc.).
- Dr Arvind Panagariya, and its members include Annie George Mathew, Manoj Panda, T rabi shankar and Soumya Kanti Ghosh (part-time).

Report Submission

- Submits report to the **President**, who lays it before Parliament

State Finance Commission (SFC)

Constitutional Article

Article 243-I – Panchayats.

Article 243-Y – Municipalities.

Objectives / Functions

- Recommend devolution of **tax revenues, fees, and grants** to Panchayats & Municipalities.
- Recommend measures for **improving financial position** of local bodies.
- Suggest principles for distributing **State's own revenues** among different tiers of local government.

Report Submission

Submitted to the **Governor**, who must lay it before the **State Legislature**



Centre rolls out initiatives to improve PDS operations

19th November, 2025

SYLLABUS: GS - 3: Public Distribution System

Newspaper: The Hindu; Page Number: 11

Centre rolls out initiatives to improve PDS operations; AI platform to get feedback

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Union Food and Public Distribution Ministry on Tuesday launched several digital initiatives aimed at modernising warehousing operations, improving supply chain efficiency, and enhancing transparency across the Public Distribution System (PDS).

A major initiative is the Anna Sahayata Holistic AI Solution (ASHA), an AI-based platform that allows beneficiaries to share their feedback on ration distribution through AI-enabled calls in their preferred language. According to the Ministry, the platform runs at a cost of ₹5 lakh, which is much less than maintaining a call centre to reach out to the PDS beneficiaries.

Union Food Minister Pralhad Joshi launched the schemes at an event in Bharat Mandapam. The government said through the

It allows beneficiaries to share their feedback on ration distribution through AI-enabled calls

platform, beneficiaries can report whether they received their full entitlement, the quality of foodgrains, and any difficulty faced at Fair Price Shops.

"The system uses multilingual translation, sentiment analysis, automated grievance categorisation and real-time dashboards for administrators. ASHA reaches 20 lakh beneficiaries monthly across India, developed in partnership with Wadhvani Foundation and backed by India AI mission via Bhashini's multilingual AI infrastructure," the government said.

'Reducing cost, time'
Mr. Joshi said that such initiatives support the government's mission of re-

ducing logistics costs and minimising turnover time. He said the PM Gati Shakti programme has synchronised different modes of transportation and laid the foundation for an integrated logistics ecosystem.

Another transformation is the Central Warehousing Corporation's new enterprise resource planning platform, 'Bhandaran 360'. "Implemented ahead of schedule, the system integrates 41 modules covering HR, finance, marketing, warehouse management, contract management, project monitoring and other core functions," the government said in a release.

The Minister also launched the 'Smart EXIM Warehouse System' for container freight stations and general warehouses. ANNA DARPAN, a new microservices-based platform that replaces the existing Depot Online System, was also launched.

- **Cost-effective:** Operates at **₹5 lakh**, far cheaper than maintaining call centres.
- Tech features: Multilingual translation, Sentiment analysis, Automated grievance categorisation, Real-time dashboards for administrators
- **Coverage:** Reaches **20 lakh beneficiaries monthly**.

Bhandaran 360

- New Enterprise Resource Planning system for Central Warehousing Corporation.
- Integrates **41 modules** covering: HR, finance, marketing, Warehouse management, Contract & project management, Other core administrative functions

Smart EXIM Warehouse System

- New digital system for container freight stations and general warehouses.
- Aims to streamline export-import warehousing processes.

ANNA DARPAN Platform

- New microservices-based platform replacing the older Depot Online System.
- Integrates full supply chain functions:
- Procurement
- Storage & movement
- Sales
- Quality checks
- Labour & contract management
- Acts as a single unified source of truth for both FCI and Department of Food & Public Distribution (DFPD).

ASHA (Anna Sahayata Holistic AI Solution)

- **AI-based multilingual feedback platform** for PDS beneficiaries.
- Uses **AI-enabled calls** to collect inputs on:
- Full entitlement received
- Quality of foodgrains
- Issues at Fair Price Shops



19th November, 2025

India to host Global Big Cat Summit next year

SYLLABUS: GS - 3: Environmental Conservation

Newspaper: The Indian Express; Page Number: 08

India to host Global Big Cats Summit next year: Yadav

Pratip Acharya
Belém (Brazil), November 18

CALLING FOR renewed global cooperation to protect big cat species and their habitats as part of integrated climate and biodiversity action, Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav on Monday announced India's decision to host a 'Global Big Cats Summit' next year.

Speaking at a high-level ministerial segment at COP30 conference focused on International Big Cats Alliance (IBCA), Yadav spoke about India's successes in their conservation.

"India has been able to double its tiger population ahead of the target timeline and our Asiatic Lion population continues to grow well. We have built one of the world's most comprehensive wildlife databases through nationwide population assessments of tigers, lions, leopards and snow leopards, while expanding protected areas, securing corridors, and partnering with local communities for conservation and eco-based livelihoods," he said.

Membership

- Open to **all 97 range countries** of the seven big cat species;
- Also open to **non-range countries**, international organisations, and institutions.

Funding Mechanism

- India pledged **USD 100 million for 5 years** to support the alliance;
- Will seek additional contributions from **member countries, NGOs, and conservation bodies**.

Founding Members

 Republic of Armenia	 Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh	 Kingdom of Bhutan	 Kingdom of Cambodia
 Arab Republic of Egypt	 Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	 Republic of Ecuador	 Republic of India
 Republic of Kenya	 Malaysia	 Republic of Mongolia	 Democratic Republic of Nepal
 Federal Republic of Nigeria	 Republic of Peru	 Republic of Suriname	 Republic of Uganda

Member Countries

Member Country, which has deposited an instrument of ratification, acceptance, or approval and for which this Agreement has entered into force, or a country acceded to this Agreement

 Armenia	 Bhutan	 Cambodia	 Ethiopia	 Eswatini	 Eritrea	 Guinea
 India	 Liberia	 Mongolia	 Nicaragua	 Nepal	 Rwanda	 Somalia
		 Suriname				

- A **global alliance** proposed and launched by **India (2023)** to protect and conserve **7 major big cat species**.
- **Objective**
- Promote **collaborative conservation**, capacity-building, research, habitat protection, and anti-poaching measures for big cats worldwide.
- **Headquarters - New Delhi, India.**



India to host Global Big Cat Summit next year

19th November, 2025

SYLLABUS: GS - 3: Environmental Conservation

Newspaper: The Indian Express; **Page Number:** 08

IBCA

International Big Cat Alliance



Tiger



Lion



Leopard



Snow Leopard



Cheetah



Jaguar



Puma

The International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) focuses on the conservation of seven major big cat species.



19th November, 2025

Indonesian defence minister to visit Delhi

SYLLABUS: GS - 3: Achievements of Indians in Science & Technology - Defence technology; Newspaper: The Hindu; Page Number: 12

Indonesian Defence Minister to visit Delhi for talks on BrahMos

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

Indonesian Defence Minister Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin is scheduled to visit India in the last week of November for a bilateral meeting with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi.

The meeting is being viewed as a significant follow-up to the major defence agreement involving the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, marking an important step forward in India's expanding defence export programme.

A senior defence official confirmed that the upcoming talks hold considerable importance, coming after a series of meetings and reciprocal visits by senior military officials from both nations. Indonesia has shown strong interest in procuring the BrahMos missile system.

The development came to light after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh recently revealed in Lucknow that Indonesia had formally placed a request for the purchase of the BrahMos system being manufactured at the new BrahMos Aerospace facility in the city.

On October 18, Mr. Singh and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath flagged off the first batch of



Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin

BrahMos missiles produced at the Lucknow unit. Officials noted that the Indonesia deal would be a major milestone for India's defence exports, showcasing the country's capability to supply combat-proven indigenous weapons.

Earlier, Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan met Minister Sjamsoeddin in Jakarta to discuss expanding bilateral defence cooperation.

'Global confidence'

Defence experts said BrahMos missiles used during Operation Sindoor to strike Pakistani airbases with full accuracy have enhanced global confidence in India's defence manufacturing.

The BrahMos missile has a range of over 290 km with a speed of Mach 2.8. It was jointly developed by India's Defence Research and Development Organisation, and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya.

- A **supersonic cruise missile** jointly developed by **India and Russia**.
- Name derived from **Brahmaputra (India) + Moskva (Russia)**.
- **Speed:** Mach 2.8–3.0
- **Range:** Initially 290 km; **extended to 450 km and 800 km** (variants now tested).
- Can be launched from land, sea (ships and submarines), and air (fighter jets).

Propulsion

- **Solid-fuel booster** (first stage)
- **Liquid-fuel ramjet** (second stage)
- **Developer Agencies - BrahMos Aerospace Pvt. Ltd.** (Joint venture: DRDO & NPOM, Russia).
- Future versions include BrahMos-NG (lighter, faster) and BrahMos-II (hypersonic under development).



Q1. Regarding Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in India, consider the following statements:

1. EIA in India is carried out under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
2. Public hearings are mandatory for all categories of projects under the EIA Notification, 2006.
3. The Expert Appraisal Committee does the appraisal of Category A projects at the central level.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: b

Q2. Regarding the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), consider the following statements:

1. It was originally formed as the "Shanghai Five" before expanding into the SCO.
2. All SCO decisions are made by a majority vote among member states.
3. India and Pakistan became full members of the SCO at the same time.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: c

Q3. Regarding dugongs, consider the following statements:

1. In India, its largest population is found in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
2. Dugongs reach reproductive maturity late, around nine to ten years, with long calving intervals.
3. The Dugong Conservation Reserve was established in the Gulf of Kachchh in 2022.

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

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: a

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. The Union Finance Commission recommends both vertical and horizontal distribution of the net proceeds of Union taxes.
2. The Union Finance Commission submits its report to the President, while the State Finance Commission submits its report to the Governor.
3. The State Finance Commission is constituted under Articles 243-I and 243-Y.

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

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: c

Q5. Regarding recent digital initiatives in India's food and warehousing ecosystem, consider the following statements:

1. ASHA uses AI-driven, multilingual call-based feedback to assess PDS service quality at scale.
2. Bhandaran 360 is a new ERP for the Central Warehousing Corporation.
3. ANNA DARPAN is designed exclusively for export-import warehousing operations.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: b





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