

ONLY COMPETITION IAS

DAILY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS



Only Competition

30 March 2026



ONLY COMPETITION TEAM MEMBERS

Editor: Imtiyaz Khan

Managing Editor: Ritika Sharma

Academic Advisors: Raj Shekhar, Haroon, Banjit Hujuri, Manas Garg, Puneet Talukdar

Academic Research Team: Only Competition IAS Research Cell

Creative Media Team: Sunil Kansal, Shivam Sharma, Imaduddin Gaani, Anirban Saikia

Digital Publishing: Abhijeet Sahu & Media Unit

Marketing & Outreach: Akanshya Dutta & Team

Support Staff: Ankit Kumar, Manab Kalita

■ ABOUT ONLY COMPETITION IAS

Only Competition IAS is a premier academic platform dedicated to Civil Services and Competitive Examination preparation.

Our mission is to provide **high-quality, research-based, and exam-oriented content** to students across India through:

- Digital Platforms
- Classroom Programs
- Publications

📍 **Locations:** New Delhi | Guwahati | Online Edition Available

✉ **Email:** onlycompetitionofficial@gmail.com

☎ **Contact:** +91 9990-1260-23 / 24

⚖️ COPYRIGHT & LEGAL NOTICE

© 2026 Only Competition IAS. All Rights Reserved.

No part of this magazine may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without prior written permission from the publisher, except for brief quotations for academic and educational purposes.

The opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Only Competition IAS. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, the publisher does not take responsibility for any errors or omissions.

Jurisdiction Clause:

Any dispute arising out of or in connection with this publication shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi, India.

Head. Office: 201, Ansal Building No. A-12-13, Commercial Complex, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.
Assam Center: House No. 12, 3rd Floor, Bylane -6 Hriday Ranjan Path, Guwahati 781003.
Ph.: 011-460-448-9312, 999012-6023, 999012-60-24/ Web: www.onlycompetition.com



CONTENT

Bab el-Mandeb Strait: Geopolitical Flashpoint in the Escalating US-Israel-Iran Conflict.....	3
MCQs (Prelims Standard).....	6
Mains Questions.....	7
MCQs (Prelims Standard).....	10
MCQs (Prelims Standard).....	15
MCQs (Prelims Standard).....	20
MCQs (Prelims Standard).....	25
MCQs (Prelims Standard).....	30

Only Competition

Head. Office: 201, Ansal Building No. A-12-13, Commercial Complex, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.
Assam Center: House No. 12, 3rd Floor, Bylane -6 Hriday Ranjan Path, Guwahati 781003.
Ph.: 011-460-448-9312, 999012-6023, 999012-60-24/ Web: www.onlycompetition.com

2



Bab el-Mandeb Strait: Geopolitical Flashpoint in the Escalating US-Israel-Iran Conflict

Why in News?

- As the conflict between the **United States, Israel, and Iran** deepens in West Asia, global attention has shifted to the **Bab el-Mandeb Strait**, a narrow and strategically vital chokepoint.
- Any disruption in this strait could severely impact global energy security, international trade routes, and shipping costs, especially for Europe and Asia. The strait's vulnerability has been highlighted by recent Houthi attacks (backed by Iran) and the broader regional instability triggered by the ongoing war.
- Key Details of Bab el-Mandeb Strait
- **Location & Geography**
 - Lies at the **southern entrance of the Red Sea**, between **Yemen** (Arabian Peninsula) and the **Horn of Africa** (Djibouti and Eritrea).
 - Connects the **Red Sea** to the **Gulf of Aden** and further to the **Indian Ocean**.
 - Separates the Arabian Peninsula (northeast) from the African continent (southwest).
- **Physical Features**
 - Width: Approximately **30 km**.
 - Divided into two channels by the Yemeni island of **Perim**:
 - Eastern channel → **Alexander's Strait**
 - Western channel → **Dact-el-Mayun Channel**
- **Strategic Connectivity**



- Serves as a critical link between the **Indian Ocean** and the **Mediterranean Sea** via the **Red Sea** and the **Suez Canal**.
- Name meaning: “**Gate of Tears**” in Arabic, due to the large number of historical shipwrecks in the turbulent waters.

Significance of Bab el-Mandeb Strait

• Global Trade & Energy Security

- Handles a significant portion of world shipping, especially oil and gas from the Middle East to Europe and North America.
- Alternative route (around the Cape of Good Hope) is much longer and costlier.

• Chokepoint Vulnerability

- One of the world’s most important maritime chokepoints alongside the Strait of Hormuz and the Suez Canal.
- Disruptions can cause sharp spikes in shipping insurance premiums, freight costs, and global oil prices.

• Geopolitical Importance

- Control over the strait influences regional power dynamics involving Yemen (Houthis), Iran, Saudi Arabia, and global naval powers (US, UK, etc.).
- Recent Houthi attacks on shipping have already demonstrated its strategic sensitivity.

Implications of the Current Conflict

• For Global Economy

- Risk of rerouting shipping, higher energy prices, and supply chain disruptions.



- Impact on India's energy imports and export-oriented industries.
- **For India**
 - India depends heavily on the Red Sea route for oil imports from West Asia and trade with Europe.
 - Any prolonged disruption could affect energy security, inflation, and the cost of imported goods.
 - Highlights the need for diversified trade routes and stronger maritime security cooperation (e.g., through Quad, IONS).

UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

Prelims

- Key terms: Bab el-Mandeb Strait, Gate of Tears, Perim Island, Red Sea, Suez Canal, Chokepoint
- Location: Southern tip of Red Sea, between Yemen and Horn of Africa
- Related: Strait of Hormuz, Suez Canal, Houthi rebels, Maritime Silk Road

GS-2 (International Relations)

- Geopolitics of West Asia and maritime security
- Impact of regional conflicts on global trade routes

GS-3 (Economy & Security)

- Energy security and chokepoints in global trade
- Maritime domain awareness and India's naval strategy

Essay / Interview

Head. Office: 201, Ansal Building No. A-12-13, Commercial Complex, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.
Assam Center: House No. 12, 3rd Floor, Bylane -6 Hriday Ranjan Path, Guwahati 781003.
Ph.: 011-460-448-9312, 999012-6023, 999012-60-24/ Web: www.onlycompetition.com



- “Chokepoints and Conflict: The Strategic Vulnerability of Maritime Trade Routes in the 21st Century”
- “India’s Energy Security in an Era of West Asian Instability”

MCQs

1. With reference to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, consider the following statements:
2. It connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden.
3. It is located between Yemen and the Horn of Africa.
4. It is divided into two channels by the island of Perim.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

2. Bab el-Mandeb Strait is also known as:

- (a) Strait of Tears
- (b) Gate of Tears
- (c) Gate of Hormuz
- (d) Red Sea Passage

Answer: (b)

3. Which of the following is NOT correct about Bab el-Mandeb Strait?

Head. Office: 201, Ansal Building No. A-12-13, Commercial Complex, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.
Assam Center: House No. 12, 3rd Floor, Bylane -6 Hriday Ranjan Path, Guwahati 781003.
Ph.: 011-460-448-9312, 999012-6023, 999012-60-24/ Web: www.onlycompetition.com



- (a) It links the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean via Suez Canal
- (b) It is wider than the Strait of Hormuz
- (c) It lies at the southern entrance of the Red Sea
- (d) It separates Arabia from the Horn of Africa

Answer: (b)

4. Disruption in Bab el-Mandeb Strait would primarily affect:

- (a) Trade between Europe and Asia
- (b) Trade between North America and Australia
- (c) Only intra-African trade
- (d) Only oil exports from Russia

Answer: (a)

Mains Questions

1. "Maritime chokepoints like the Bab el-Mandeb Strait are becoming new theatres of geopolitical contestation." Discuss the strategic importance of the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and its implications for global trade and India's energy security. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Examine the impact of ongoing West Asia conflicts on key maritime trade routes and suggest measures for India to safeguard its interests. (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "Control over narrow sea lanes often determines broader regional influence." Analyse this statement with reference to Bab el-Mandeb and other critical chokepoints. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** "From Hormuz to Bab el-Mandeb: The Fragility of Global Energy and Trade Routes in an Age of Geopolitical Turbulence."



Solar Radio Burst Breakthrough by Indian Institute of Astrophysics

Why in News?

- Researchers from the **Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA)**, Bengaluru, have made a significant breakthrough in understanding **Solar Radio Bursts (SRBs)** – a long-standing mystery related to intense solar radio emissions associated with solar flares and coronal mass ejections (CMEs).
- The study enhances our knowledge of how accelerated electrons behave in the solar atmosphere and their impact on space weather, which is critical for protecting satellite-based technologies and Earth's communication systems.

Key Details of Solar Radio Burst (SRB)

- **Definition**
 - Intense solar radio emission linked with **solar flares** and other solar transients.
- **Origin & Mechanism**
 - Direct signatures of **accelerated electrons** in the solar corona and atmosphere.
 - Occur most frequently during **coronal mass ejections (CMEs)** and solar flares.
- **Observation Range**
 - Observed across a wide spectrum: from **millimetre to kilometre wavelengths** (frequencies from GHz to kHz).
 - Short wavelengths → emissions close to the solar surface.
 - Long wavelengths → emissions from large distances in the solar atmosphere.



- **Types of Solar Radio Bursts**

- Based on morphological characteristics, five main types:
 - **Type I, Type II, Type III, Type IV, and Type V.**

- **Impact on Earth**

- Affect the near-Earth space environment (space weather).
- Can interfere with **Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS)** signals by reducing signal-to-noise ratio and causing loss of lock.
- Potential disruption to satellite communication, GPS, aviation, and power grids during intense events.

Significance of the IIA Breakthrough

- **Scientific Advancement**

- Provides deeper insights into electron acceleration mechanisms during solar flares and CMEs.
- Improves modelling and prediction of solar radio emissions.

- **Space Weather Forecasting**

- Better understanding of SRBs helps in early warning systems for disruptive solar events.
- Critical for safeguarding modern technology-dependent infrastructure.

- **For India**

- Strengthens India's growing expertise in solar physics and space science.
- Supports missions like **Aditya-L1** (India's first solar observatory) in studying solar phenomena and their terrestrial impacts.



UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

Prelims

- Key terms: Solar Radio Burst (SRB), Coronal Mass Ejection (CME), Solar Flares, Type I-V Bursts, Space Weather
- Institutions: Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Aditya-L1 Mission
- Related: GNSS interference, Solar transients

GS-3 (Science & Technology)

- Solar physics, space weather, and their impact on satellite communication and navigation systems.

GS-3 (Disaster Management)

- Space weather as an emerging disaster risk for technology infrastructure.

Essay / Interview

- “Space Weather: The Invisible Threat to Modern Civilisation”
- “India’s Contribution to Solar Science: From Aditya-L1 to Breakthroughs in Solar Radio Bursts”

MCQs

1. With reference to Solar Radio Bursts (SRBs), consider the following statements:
2. They are intense solar radio emissions associated with solar flares and coronal mass ejections.
3. They are direct signatures of accelerated electrons in the solar atmosphere.
4. They are observed only in the visible light spectrum.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

Head. Office: 201, Ansal Building No. A-12-13, Commercial Complex, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.
Assam Center: House No. 12, 3rd Floor, Bylane -6 Hriday Ranjan Path, Guwahati 781003.
Ph.: 011-460-448-9312, 999012-6023, 999012-60-24/ Web: www.onlycompetition.com

10



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

Answer: (b)

2. Solar Radio Bursts are most frequently observed during:

- (a) Solar minimum periods
- (b) Solar transients such as flares and CMEs
- (c) Lunar eclipses
- (d) Planetary alignments

Answer: (b)

3. Which of the following missions of ISRO is primarily designed to study the Sun and solar phenomena?

- (a) Chandrayaan-3
- (b) Aditya-L1
- (c) Gaganyaan
- (d) NISAR

Answer: (b)

4. Interference caused by Solar Radio Bursts primarily affects:

- (a) Ground-based optical telescopes
- (b) Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) signals



(c) Radio broadcasting only

(d) Deep-sea communication

Answer: (b)

Mains Questions

1. “Solar Radio Bursts represent a critical aspect of space weather that can disrupt modern technological infrastructure.” Discuss the mechanism of SRBs and their implications for India. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Examine the significance of the recent breakthrough by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics in understanding Solar Radio Bursts and its relevance to India’s space programme. (10 marks / 150 words)
3. “Space weather events are emerging as a major challenge for satellite-dependent economies.” Analyse this statement with special reference to solar phenomena like flares, CMEs, and radio bursts. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** “The Sun as a Double-Edged Sword: Harnessing Solar Energy while Mitigating Space Weather Risks.”

Indonesia Implements Social Media Restrictions for Children Under 16

Why in News?

- Indonesia has recently begun implementing **social media restrictions for children under 16** as part of efforts to protect young users from online risks such as harmful content, addiction, cyberbullying, and exploitation.
- This move reflects growing global concerns over children’s digital safety and comes amid increasing regulatory actions by governments to balance technological access with child protection.



Key Details of the Policy

- **Restriction**

- Social media platforms are now restricted for children **below 16 years** of age in Indonesia.
- The policy aims to curb excessive screen time, exposure to inappropriate content, and potential mental health issues among minors.

- **Broader Context**

- Indonesia is one of the largest users of social media in the world, with a very young population.
- The regulation is part of wider efforts to enforce age-appropriate digital access and parental oversight.

About Indonesia

- **Location & Geography**

- An **archipelagic nation** (world's largest archipelago) located in Southeast Asia.
- Lies between the **Pacific Ocean** and the **Indian Ocean**.
- Bordered by Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste.
- Surrounded by the Indian Ocean to the south and the South China Sea (Pacific) to the north.

- **Capital**

- **Jakarta** (on the island of Java).

- **Terrain & Climate**

- Characterised by densely forested volcanic mountains and coastal plains with alluvial swamps.



- **Equatorial climate:** hot, humid, and rainy throughout the year.
- **Major Rivers**
 - Kapuas, Barito, Musi, and Digul.
- **Highest Peak**
 - **Puncak Jaya** - 5,030 metres (16,502 ft).
- **Natural Resources**
 - Rich in natural gas, crude petroleum, coal, nickel, bauxite, gold, tin, and copper.

Significance of the Move

- **Child Protection**
 - Addresses rising concerns over social media addiction, exposure to violent or explicit content, online grooming, and mental health impacts on children.
- **Global Trend**
 - Aligns with similar regulatory efforts in countries like Australia, the EU (Digital Services Act), and India's evolving guidelines under the IT Rules and Digital Personal Data Protection Act.
- **For Indonesia**
 - With a large youth population, the policy aims to promote responsible digital citizenship while supporting digital economy growth.
 - Challenges include enforcement, parental awareness, and potential impact on freedom of expression.



UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

Prelims

- Key terms: Archipelagic Nation, Indonesia, Social Media Regulation for Minors
- Geography: Location between Indian and Pacific Oceans, Capital - Jakarta, Highest Peak - Puncak Jaya
- Related: Digital Safety, Child Rights, IT Rules (comparative perspective)

GS-2 (Governance & IR)

- Government regulation of digital platforms and child protection policies
- Comparative analysis with India's approach to online safety

GS-3 (Science & Technology)

- Impact of social media on society and regulatory challenges in the digital age

Essay / Interview

- "Regulating Social Media for Minors: Balancing Child Protection and Digital Freedom"
- "Digital India vs Digital Indonesia: Approaches to Safeguarding Children in the Online World"

MCQs (Prelims Standard)

1. With reference to Indonesia, consider the following statements:
2. It is the world's largest archipelagic nation.
3. Its capital is Jakarta.
4. It is located between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

Head. Office: 201, Ansal Building No. A-12-13, Commercial Complex, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.
Assam Center: House No. 12, 3rd Floor, Bylane -6 Hriday Ranjan Path, Guwahati 781003.
Ph.: 011-460-448-9312, 999012-6023, 999012-60-24/ Web: www.onlycompetition.com

15



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

Answer: (d)

2. The highest peak of Indonesia is:

- (a) Mount Everest
- (b) Puncak Jaya
- (c) Mount Kinabalu
- (d) Mount Fuji

Answer: (b)

3. Indonesia recently implemented social media restrictions for children below the age of:

- (a) 13 years
- (b) 16 years
- (c) 18 years
- (d) 21 years

Answer: (b)

4. Which of the following is NOT a bordering country of Indonesia?

- (a) Malaysia
- (b) Papua New Guinea



(c) Thailand

(d) Timor-Leste

Answer: (c)

Mains Questions

1. “Regulating social media access for minors has become a global policy challenge.” Discuss Indonesia’s recent decision and its relevance for India’s digital governance framework. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Examine the geographical and strategic importance of Indonesia in the Indo-Pacific region. (10 marks / 150 words)
3. “The digital age presents both opportunities and risks for children.” Analyse the need for age-appropriate social media regulations in developing countries like India and Indonesia. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** “Protecting the Digital Generation: Balancing Innovation, Freedom and Child Safety in the Age of Social Media.”

ASI Begins Fresh Excavation at Balirajgarh Site in Bihar

Why in News?

- The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** has initiated fresh excavation at the historic **Balirajgarh site** in Madhubani district, Bihar.
- The site holds significant mythological and historical importance, being traditionally identified as the capital of the legendary King Bali and a major administrative centre of the ancient **Videha Kingdom** (part of the Mithila region).
- This excavation is expected to yield more insights into the cultural sequence of ancient Bihar and strengthen evidence of continuous habitation from early historic to medieval periods.

Head. Office: 201, Ansal Building No. A-12-13, Commercial Complex, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.
Assam Center: House No. 12, 3rd Floor, Bylane -6 Hriday Ranjan Path, Guwahati 781003.
Ph.: 011-460-448-9312, 999012-6023, 999012-60-24/ Web: www.onlycompetition.com

17



Key Details of Balirajgarh Site

- **Location**
 - Situated in **Madhubani district**, Bihar (Mithila region).
- **Historical & Mythological Significance**
 - Locally believed to be the capital of legendary King **Bali** (of Ramayana fame).
 - Served as an important administrative hub of the ancient **Videha Kingdom** (associated with King Janaka and Sita).
- **Protection Status**
 - Declared a site of **national importance** by the ASI in **1938** under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904.
- **Previous Excavations**
 - Excavated in **five phases** between **1962 and 2014**.
 - Antiquities discovered belonging to **five cultural periods**:
 - Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW)
 - Sunga
 - Kushan
 - Gupta
 - Later Pala period

About the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

- **Establishment**
 - Founded in **1861** by **Sir Alexander Cunningham**.
 - Headquarters: **New Delhi**.

Head. Office: 201, Ansal Building No. A-12-13, Commercial Complex, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.
Assam Center: House No. 12, 3rd Floor, Bylane -6 Hriday Ranjan Path, Guwahati 781003.
Ph.: 011-460-448-9312, 999012-6023, 999012-60-24/ Web: www.onlycompetition.com



- **Legal Status**

- After Independence, made a statutory body under the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958.**

- **Functions**

- Protection, maintenance, and conservation of ancient monuments, archaeological sites, and remains of national importance.
- Regulation of all archaeological activities in the country.
- Enforcement of the **Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972.**

- **Nodal Ministry**

- **Ministry of Culture**, Government of India.

Significance of the Balirajgarh Excavation

- **Historical**

- Will provide deeper understanding of the cultural continuity in the Mithila region from the NBPW period to the Pala era.
- Helps connect mythological narratives (King Bali, Videha Kingdom) with archaeological evidence.

- **For Bihar & India**

- Enhances knowledge of ancient Indian urbanisation, administration, and trade networks in eastern India.
- Boosts cultural tourism potential in the Mithila region.

- **Broader Context**

- Part of ASI's ongoing efforts to explore lesser-known but historically rich sites across India.



UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

Prelims

- Key terms: Balirajgarh, Videha Kingdom, King Bali, Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW), AMASR Act 1958
- Location: Madhubani district, Bihar
- Related: Archaeological Survey of India, Ancient Monuments, Mithila Region

GS-1 (History & Culture)

- Ancient Indian history, kingdoms of the Gangetic plains, and archaeological heritage of Bihar.

GS-1 (Indian Heritage)

- Role of ASI in preserving tangible cultural heritage.

Essay / Interview

- “Archaeology as a Bridge Between Mythology and History: The Case of Balirajgarh”
- “Preserving India’s Rich Cultural Heritage: Challenges and the Way Forward”

MCQs

1. Balirajgarh archaeological site is located in which district of Bihar?

- (a) Patna
- (b) Madhubani
- (c) Gaya
- (d) Bhagalpur

Answer: (b)



2. With reference to Balirajgarh, consider the following statements:

1. It is traditionally identified as the capital of King Bali.
2. It was an important administrative centre of the ancient Videha Kingdom.
3. It was declared a site of national importance in 1938.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

3. The Archaeological Survey of India was established in:

- (a) 1858
- (b) 1861
- (c) 1904
- (d) 1958

Answer: (b)

4. Which of the following cultural periods has NOT been reported from previous excavations at Balirajgarh?

- (a) NBPW
- (b) Mauryan
- (c) Gupta



(d) Pala

Answer: (b)

(Note: Excavations revealed NBPW, Sunga, Kushan, Gupta, and Pala; Mauryan is not explicitly listed in the finds mentioned).

Mains Questions

1. "Archaeological excavations like the one at Balirajgarh help bridge the gap between mythology and recorded history." Discuss the historical significance of the Balirajgarh site. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Examine the role of the Archaeological Survey of India in the preservation and exploration of India's cultural heritage. (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "The Mithila region of Bihar is a treasure trove of ancient Indian culture." Analyse the archaeological and cultural importance of sites like Balirajgarh. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** "Uncovering India's Past: The Enduring Relevance of Archaeology in Shaping National Identity."

Indian Navy Hosts IONS Maritime Exercise (IMEX) TTX 2026 in Kochi

Why in News?

- The **Indian Navy** successfully hosted the **IONS Maritime Exercise (IMEX) Table Top Exercise (TTX) 2026** at the Maritime Warfare Centre, Southern Naval Command, **Kochi**.
- The exercise focused on **non-traditional maritime security threats** and complex operational scenarios, aiming to enhance coordination, information sharing, and decision-making among participating navies in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).



Key Details of IONS Maritime Exercise (IMEX) TTX 2026

- **Focus Areas**

- Non-traditional maritime security threats (piracy, terrorism, smuggling, illegal fishing, climate-induced disasters, etc.).
- Complex operational scenarios requiring joint responses.
- Improvement in **information sharing, streamlined decision-making**, and validation of maritime security frameworks.

- **Participating Countries**

- Bangladesh, France, Indonesia, Kenya, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, Seychelles, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, and Timor-Leste.

- **Significance**

- Reaffirmed the **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)** as a key platform for regional maritime cooperation.
- Expected to strengthen collective security mechanisms and ensure stability across the Indian Ocean Region.

About the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)

- **What is IONS?**

- A **voluntary initiative** that brings together navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region.
- Aims to increase **maritime cooperation**, mutual understanding, and collaboration on common challenges.

- **Key Objectives**

- Promote maritime security.
- Enhance Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) cooperation.

Head. Office: 201, Ansal Building No. A-12-13, Commercial Complex, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.
Assam Center: House No. 12, 3rd Floor, Bylane -6 Hriday Ranjan Path, Guwahati 781003.
Ph.: 011-460-448-9312, 999012-6023, 999012-60-24/ Web: www.onlycompetition.com

23



- Build confidence and interoperability among regional navies.

- **History & Structure**

- Conceived by the **Indian Navy** in **2008**.
- Inaugural edition held in **February 2008** in **New Delhi**.
- Indian Navy served as the first Chair (2008-2010).
- Structured around **rotating chairmanship**, **biennial conclaves of Chiefs**, and specialised **working groups**.

Significance for India & the Region

- **For India**

- Reinforces India's role as a **net security provider** in the Indian Ocean Region.
- Strengthens maritime diplomacy and interoperability with friendly navies.
- Supports India's vision of a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific.

- **Broader Regional Impact**

- Enhances collective response to non-traditional threats.
- Promotes stability, trust, and cooperation among IOR littoral states.
- Complements other forums like the Quad, IORA, and BIMSTEC.

UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

Prelims

- Key terms: IONS, IMEX TTX, Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, Maritime Security, HADR
- Location: Kochi (Southern Naval Command)

Head. Office: 201, Ansal Building No. A-12-13, Commercial Complex, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.
Assam Center: House No. 12, 3rd Floor, Bylane -6 Hriday Ranjan Path, Guwahati 781003.
Ph.: 011-460-448-9312, 999012-6023, 999012-60-24/ Web: www.onlycompetition.com



- Related: Indian Navy, Indian Ocean Region (IOR), Non-traditional threats

GS-2 (International Relations)

- India's maritime diplomacy and multilateral naval cooperation in the IOR.

GS-3 (Security)

- Maritime security, non-traditional threats, and naval exercises.

Essay / Interview

- "Maritime Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region: Role of IONS and India's Leadership"
- "From Competition to Collaboration: Addressing Non-Traditional Maritime Threats in the 21st Century."

MCQs

1. With reference to the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), consider the following statements:
2. It was conceived by the Indian Navy in 2008.
3. It focuses exclusively on traditional naval warfare.
4. It promotes cooperation on maritime security and HADR.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Head. Office: 201, Ansal Building No. A-12-13, Commercial Complex, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.
Assam Center: House No. 12, 3rd Floor, Bylane -6 Hriday Ranjan Path, Guwahati 781003.
Ph.: 011-460-448-9312, 999012-6023, 999012-60-24/ Web: www.onlycompetition.com

25



2. The IONS Maritime Exercise (IMEX) TTX 2026 was hosted by the Indian Navy at:

- (a) Mumbai
- (b) Kochi
- (c) Visakhapatnam
- (d) Port Blair

Answer: (b)

3. Which of the following is NOT a participating country in IMEX TTX 2026?

- (a) France
- (b) Maldives
- (c) Australia
- (d) Singapore

Answer: (c)

4. The primary focus of IMEX TTX 2026 was on:

- (a) Nuclear submarine operations
- (b) Non-traditional maritime security threats
- (c) Deep-sea mining
- (d) Space-based naval surveillance

Answer: (b)

Mains Questions

1. "The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) has emerged as an important platform for maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region." Discuss its



objectives and evaluate India's role in strengthening regional maritime security. (15 marks / 250 words)

2. Examine the significance of non-traditional maritime security threats and the need for collaborative naval exercises like IMEX in the IOR. (10 marks / 150 words)
3. "India's leadership in IONS reflects its commitment to being a net security provider in the Indian Ocean." Analyse this statement. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** "Securing the Indian Ocean: From Traditional Rivalries to Cooperative Maritime Security Architecture."

Jungle Cat Populations Shrinking: Studies Call for Conservation Outside Protected Areas

Why in News?

- Recent studies have revealed that **Jungle Cat (*Felis chaus*)** populations are shrinking across their range.
- Researchers have emphasised the urgent need to conserve the species not only inside protected areas but also in **habitats outside** them, such as agro-pastoral lands, grasslands, and wetlands.
- This highlights the growing challenge of conserving wide-ranging, adaptable species in the face of habitat fragmentation and human-wildlife conflict.

Key Details of Jungle Cat

- **Scientific Name & Description**
 - Scientific Name: ***Felis chaus***
 - Medium-sized wild cat; long-legged and the largest among extant *Felis* species.
 - Other names: **Swamp Cat** or **Reed Cat**.



- **Physical Features**

- White muzzle, yellow irises, large ears with black tufts.
- Sometimes faint striping on long legs.
- Males are larger and heavier than females.

- **Habitat & Behaviour**

- Found in diverse habitats: grasslands, wetlands, deserts, and agro-pastoral areas.
- Avoids dense forests and heavily modified urban landscapes.
- Not strictly nocturnal; hunts actively in early mornings and late afternoons.

- **Diet**

- Carnivorous: primarily feeds on rodents, lizards, frogs, snakes, and occasionally small livestock.

- **Distribution**

- Wide range across **Asia** (especially India and Nepal), Egypt, Southwest Asia, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and southern China.
- Large populations reported in India and Nepal.

Conservation Status

- **IUCN Red List: Least Concern** (global level).
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule II.**
- **Concern:** Despite the “Least Concern” status, local populations are declining due to habitat loss, fragmentation, and conflict with humans outside protected areas.

Significance & Challenges

- **Ecological Role**

Head. Office: 201, Ansal Building No. A-12-13, Commercial Complex, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.
Assam Center: House No. 12, 3rd Floor, Bylane -6 Hriday Ranjan Path, Guwahati 781003.
Ph.: 011-460-448-9312, 999012-6023, 999012-60-24/ Web: www.onlycompetition.com



- Acts as an important mesopredator controlling rodent and small vertebrate populations.
- Indicator species for wetland and grassland health.

• Key Challenges

- Shrinking populations due to habitat conversion for agriculture and infrastructure.
- Increasing human-wildlife conflict in fringe areas.
- Need for conservation beyond protected areas (landscape-level approach).

• Way Forward

- Promote habitat conservation in agro-pastoral and community lands.
- Community awareness and conflict mitigation measures.
- Integration of Jungle Cat conservation into broader biodiversity and wetland management plans.

UPSC CSE & State PCS Relevance

Prelims

- Key terms: Jungle Cat (*Felis chaus*), Swamp Cat, Reed Cat, Schedule II (WLPA 1972)
- Distribution: India, Nepal, Egypt, Central & Southeast Asia
- Related: IUCN Red List, Habitat fragmentation, Mesopredator

GS-3 (Environment & Biodiversity)

- Conservation of small carnivores and the importance of habitats outside protected areas.



GS-1 (Geography)

- Distribution and habitat preferences of wildlife in Asia.

Essay / Interview

- “Protecting Wide-Ranging Species: The Need for Conservation Beyond Protected Areas”
- “Human-Wildlife Coexistence in the Anthropocene: Challenges for Mesopredators like the Jungle Cat.”

MCQs

1. With reference to the Jungle Cat (*Felis chaus*), consider the following statements:
2. It is also known as Swamp Cat or Reed Cat.
3. It is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
4. It is found across diverse habitats including grasslands, wetlands, and agro-pastoral areas.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

2. The Jungle Cat is the largest among which genus of cats?
 - (a) Panthera
 - (b) Felis



(c) Prionailurus

(d) Neofelis

Answer: (b)

3. Which of the following is NOT a primary prey of the Jungle Cat?

(a) Rodents

(b) Frogs and snakes

(c) Large ungulates

(d) Lizards

Answer: (c)

4. The IUCN Red List status of the Jungle Cat is:

(a) Endangered

(b) Vulnerable

(c) Least Concern

(d) Near Threatened

Answer: (c)

Mains Questions

1. "Conservation of species like the Jungle Cat requires going beyond protected areas." Discuss the ecological importance and conservation challenges of the Jungle Cat in India. (15 marks / 250 words)
2. Examine the significance of mesopredators in maintaining ecosystem balance and the threats they face due to habitat fragmentation. (10 marks / 150 words)



3. "Human-wildlife coexistence is essential for the survival of adaptable species outside protected areas." Analyse this statement in the context of the Jungle Cat. (15 marks / 250 words)
4. **Essay (250 marks)** "Beyond Protected Areas: Rethinking Wildlife Conservation in a Human-Dominated Landscape."

