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Environmental Degradation

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Environmental Degradation

Nearly **30% of India's land** is degraded, and that share has risen for two decades. India has also restored a large area under its Bonn Challenge pledge. Both facts are true together. Exam questions test the gap between them.



The Chambal ravines, Rajasthan, a landscape shaped by severe soil erosion. Photo: Biswarup Ganguly, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons (File page).

At a glance

Four numbers that anchor this topic

01
29.77% degraded

97.85 million hectares of India’s land in 2018-19. The share was 28.76% in 2003-05.

02
26 million hectares

India’s Bonn Challenge pledge to restore land by 2030.

03
About 84% restored

21.76 million hectares restored during 2011-2020, reported on 17 June 2026.

04
28 of 31 states

Desertification rose in 28 of 31 states and Union Territories between 2011-13 and 2018-19.

Land degradation The loss of land’s biological or economic productivity, through erosion, vegetation loss or poorer soil.
DesertificationLand degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. It does not need moving sand.
Bonn ChallengeA voluntary global pledge to restore deforested and degraded land. Germany and IUCN launched it in 2011.
EutrophicationToo many nutrients in water cause heavy algae growth. The water then loses oxygen.
Part 1 · Understand the words

1 What does environmental degradation include, and why study its parts together?

Environmental degradation is damage to nature that lowers its ability to support life. It includes harm to ecosystems, loss of biodiversity, pollution and falling land productivity. An **ecosystem** is a community of living things and their surroundings. **Biodiversity** is the variety of life on Earth.

The United Nations describes climate change, nature loss, and pollution and waste as one interconnected planetary crisis. The three feed each other. Burning coal, for example, pollutes the air and also warms the climate. One action drives two problems at once.

The damage matters because it threatens food, drinking water, clean air and the materials people need for their livelihoods. Land that loses its soil grows less food. Water that is polluted cannot be drunk safely.

The links also shape policy. Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution interact. A fix for one problem can bring benefits for the others, or it can create a trade-off. Good planning must count these links.

Many students think degradation means pollution only. That is a common mistake. Pollution is one part. Land loss and species loss are equally part of it. (Source: UNEP)

Remember this: environmental degradation covers ecosystems, biodiversity, pollution and land productivity. It is wider than pollution.

2 What drives biodiversity loss and land damage?

A major 2019 assessment by IPBES ranked five **direct drivers** of biodiversity loss by their global impact. IPBES is the UN-backed science panel on biodiversity. The ranking runs in this order:

1. Land and sea use change.
2. Direct exploitation of organisms, such as fishing or logging.
3. Climate change.
4. Pollution.
5. Invasive alien species, which are non-native species that spread harmfully.

Land-use change had the largest relative negative effect on land and freshwater nature since 1970. Cutting a forest for a farm or a town is a simple example.

Behind these direct pressures sit **indirect drivers**. These include production, consumption, trade, population dynamics, technology and governance. Population growth alone is therefore an incomplete explanation. How people produce and consume matters just as much.

Land damage has its own causes. Over-cultivation, overgrazing, forest conversion and urbanisation can speed it up. **Overgrazing** means too many animals feeding on the same grass for too long. Droughts and coastal surges add more pressure. (Source: IPBES; WHO)

Remember this: the top two direct drivers are land and sea use change, then direct exploitation. Climate change is third.

3 Are land degradation and desertification the same thing?

No. Desertification is one kind of land degradation. The two terms come from the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), a global treaty on land.

Land degradation means declining biological or economic productivity of land. The convention counts erosion, deteriorating soil properties and long-term loss of vegetation as part of it. **Desertification** is land degradation in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. In plain words, it is land degradation in dry regions.

Two causes can work together. Climatic variations can cause desertification. Human activities can cause it too. Overgrazed grassland in a dry district is a good example.

A common misconception is that desertification means sand dunes marching over fields. The definition does not need dunes. A bare, eroded slope in a dry district with no sand at all can still count.

So every case of desertification is land degradation. But not every case of land degradation is desertification. Check the climate zone before using the word.

India ratified the UNCCD on 17 December 1996. The nodal ministry is the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. A nodal ministry is the one that leads on a subject. (Source: UNCCD)

Remember this: desertification needs a dry zone. It does not need sand.

Part 2 · India’s land and the Bonn Challenge

4 How much of India’s land is degraded?

About **29.77%** of India’s geographical area was degraded in 2018-19. That is **97.85 million hectares**. A hectare is 10,000 square metres, about the size of a football ground. The figure comes from ISRO’s Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas. (Source: MoEFCC)

The share has risen over two decades. It was 28.76% in 2003-05 and 29.32% in 2011-13. It reached 29.77% in 2018-19. Always quote the years with the figure. A degraded share without its period is an incomplete fact.

The atlas maps several processes. **Water erosion** is the largest, where running water carries away topsoil. **Vegetation degradation** comes next, where plant cover thins out. **Wind erosion** follows, where wind blows soil away.

The trend is also spreading. **Desertification increased in 28 of 31 states and Union Territories** between 2011-13 and 2018-19. Note that this 28-of-31 figure is about desertification, not all land degradation.

Do not read 29.77% as “India is 30% desert”. Degraded land includes eroded farms, thin forests and overgrazed pasture.

Remember this: 29.77% is the 2018-19 share. It has risen since 28.76% in 2003-05.

Quick check 1. The share of India's land classified as degraded has fallen steadily over the past two decades. *(True or False?)*

See answer ↓

Quick check 2. Desertification increased in 28 of 31 Indian states and Union Territories between 2011-13 and 2018-19. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

5 What is the Bonn Challenge, and what has India pledged?

The **Bonn Challenge** is a global drive to restore deforested and degraded land. Germany and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) launched it in Bonn on 2 September 2011. It runs on **voluntary pledges**. It is not a binding treaty.

The global targets are 150 million hectares by 2020 and 350 million hectares by 2030. The 2014 New York Declaration on Forests, adopted at a UN Climate Summit, endorsed and extended them.

India's pledge was raised once:

1. **2015:** India joined. It pledged 13 million hectares by 2020 and 8 million more by 2030.
2. **2019:** At UNCCD COP14 in Greater Noida, PM Modi raised the pledge to **26 million hectares by 2030**.
3. **2026:** India's Second Progress Report, released on 17 June 2026, said **21.76 million hectares** were restored during **2011-2020**. That is about 84% of the 26-million-hectare target.

Read that last line with care. The 21.76 million hectares were restored during 2011-2020. It is not a count of work up to 2026. The restoration also created about 1.22 billion person-days of employment. (Source: IUCN)

Remember this: the Bonn Challenge is voluntary. India's 2030 pledge is 26 million hectares.

> **Quick check 3.** The Bonn Challenge is a binding international treaty administered by the United Nations. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

6 How can degraded land recover?

Degraded land can recover when people act on the cause of the damage. The UNCCD points to several measures:

- **Erosion control** keeps topsoil in place.
- **Better water management** stops fields from drying or washing away.
- **Sustainable grazing** lets grass regrow between visits by animals.
- **Agroforestry** means growing trees together with crops or livestock.
- **Forest restoration** brings tree cover back where it was lost.

Local participation is part of the UNCCD approach. Imagine a village that fences a pasture, rests it for a season, and plants trees along field edges. Villagers know the land best, so they can keep the work going.

Restoration also supports livelihoods. India reported about 1.22 billion person-days of employment from its restoration work. In a General Studies answer, this ties land restoration to rural jobs. That is a useful environment-economy link.

For the treaty itself, read EnvEco0085. (Source: UNCCD)

7 Why can degradation rise while restoration reaches 84% of its target?

The two figures measure different things. They are not a contradiction.

Degradation tracks how much of the whole country's land is losing productivity in a survey period. The latest survey figure is 29.77% for 2018-19. **Restoration** tracks the hectares brought under restoration projects. India's reported figure is 21.76 million hectares during 2011-2020.

Think of a leaking water tank that is also being refilled. You can pour in a lot and still see the level fall, if the leak is bigger. Land works the same way. Restoration adds area back, while new degradation can still happen elsewhere.

The two numbers also cover different time spans. Always check the years before you compare them. An exam question may set one against the other to test this exact point.

Land degrades through several processes at once, so India's response uses several tools too. Afforestation, soil conservation and watershed management all play a role. For wider ecosystem terms, see EnvEco0001. For forest laws, see EnvEco0003.

Think it through: how can degradation rise while restoration reaches about 84% of target?

Degradation and restoration are measured in different ways. Degradation tracks the share of all land losing productivity. Restoration tracks hectares brought under restoration projects. New degradation elsewhere can outpace the area restored, so both numbers can rise together. The time periods also differ.

8 What do India's forest figures measure?

The India State of Forest Report 2023 (ISFR) was released on 21 December 2024. It gave a combined figure for forest and tree cover. That combined figure was **827,357 square kilometres**, or **25.17%** of India's geographical area.

The combined figure has two parts:

- **Forest cover:** 21.76% of the geographical area.
- **Tree cover:** 3.41% of the geographical area.

Add them and you get 25.17%. Never call the combined number "forest cover" alone. That is the most common mistake in this topic.

Here is a trap. The forest-cover share is 21.76%. The restoration figure is 21.76 million hectares. The digits match by coincidence. One is a percentage of India's area in a forest survey. The other is an area restored under the Bonn Challenge during 2011-2020. They measure different things.

Forest figures also differ from land-degradation figures. A forest survey counts trees. A degradation atlas counts land that has lost productivity. Use the right number for the right question. (Source: PIB)

Remember this: 25.17% is forest plus tree cover. Forest cover alone is 21.76%.

Part 3 · Air, water, climate and waste

9 Why is polluted air a health problem?

Polluted air harms the body because tiny particles travel deep into the lungs. WHO says **fine particulate pollution** contributes to heart disease, stroke, respiratory disease and lung cancer. Fine particulates are very small solid or liquid specks floating in the air.

The scale is large. Outdoor air pollution caused an estimated **4.2 million premature deaths** worldwide in 2019. A premature death is one that comes earlier than it otherwise would. Treat this as a historical estimate. It is not a count for 2026.

The good news is that the sources are known. Cleaner transport, cleaner energy, efficient buildings and better waste management can all cut major sources of outdoor air pollution. Think of smoke from a traffic jam, a coal plant or a burning rubbish heap. Each has a cleaner alternative.

A common mistake is to think air pollution is only an irritation. It is a health risk with serious long-term effects. That is why air quality sits inside environmental planning, not outside it.

For India’s recent air-quality programme results, see the latest-news section below. (Source: WHO)

10 What are ground-level ozone and acid deposition?

Ozone is a gas, and its effect depends on where it sits. **Stratospheric ozone** is high above the Earth. It reduces the harmful ultraviolet radiation that reaches the surface. **Ground-level ozone** is near the surface. It harms health.

Ground-level ozone is not released directly. It forms when nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds react in sunlight. Volatile organic compounds are chemicals that easily turn into vapour. Vehicles, power plants and industrial activities release these ingredients.

Acid deposition is a second case of a gas turning harmful. Sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides react in the atmosphere to form acids. The acids reach the ground in two ways. **Wet deposition** is acid in rain, snow or fog. **Dry deposition** is acid in gas and particles that settle without rain.

So acid deposition is wider than acid rain. Rain is only the wet part.

The same point works for ozone. Ozone is “good up high and bad nearby”. A question that says “ozone protects us” is only half right. (Source: US EPA, ozone; acid rain)

Remember this: ozone high in the sky protects. Ozone near the ground harms.

11 How can excess nutrients harm a lake?

Too many nutrients can make a lake sick. Excess nitrogen and phosphorus cause heavy algal growth. This process is called **eutrophication**. Algae are tiny plant-like organisms that grow in water.

The damage follows a chain:

1. Nutrients wash into the lake.
2. Algae grow thickly and block sunlight from plants below.
3. The algae die and sink.
4. Decomposition of the dead algae uses up dissolved oxygen.
5. Low oxygen can kill fish and other water animals.

The nutrients often come from fertiliser runoff and animal waste. Rain carries them from fields and farms into streams and lakes.

This matters for control. Nutrient pollution comes from the surrounding catchment, the whole area that drains into the lake. Control measures must therefore work across that catchment, not only at the lake edge.

The misconception is that more nutrients mean a richer, healthier lake. A little is natural. Too much starves the water of oxygen. (Source: NOAA)

> **Think it through: would cleaner lake water solve the whole problem?**
>
> A town removes floating rubbish but lets nutrient-rich runoff continue. The lake is not restored. Removing rubbish does not stop the nutrients. The nutrients still feed algae, the algae still use up dissolved oxygen, and animals still suffer. The runoff itself must be controlled.

12 How does climate change deepen environmental damage?

Climate change adds pressure to every other problem in this article. The IPCC, the UN's climate science panel, finds that human activities, mainly greenhouse-gas emissions, have **unequivocally** caused global warming. Unequivocally means beyond doubt.

Global surface temperature averaged about **1.1°C above** its 1850-1900 level during 2011-2020. Climate change has already caused widespread harm to nature and people. Further warming raises the risks to ecosystems, food and water.

Two kinds of response are needed. They are often confused:

- **Mitigation** reduces greenhouse-gas emissions or strengthens their removal from the air. Planting forests that absorb carbon is one example.
- **Adaptation** is adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects. The aim is to moderate harm or use beneficial chances. Building a sea wall is one example.

Mitigation tackles the cause. Adaptation tackles the impact. Both help limit losses and damages.

A common exam error is to swap the two terms. Ask one question. Is the action cutting the cause, or coping with the effect?

Remember this: mitigation cuts the cause. Adaptation copes with the effect.

13 Why does waste management begin before disposal, and what do India's 2026 rules say?

Good waste policy starts with how things are made and used. A **circular economy** promotes more efficient use of resources. It uses measures such as reduction, reuse, repair and recycling. The aim is less waste in the first place.

India's current municipal rules are the **Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026**. They were notified on 27 January 2026 and came into force on 1 April 2026. They replaced the 2016 rules. They were still the

framework in October 2026.

The rules require **four streams** of segregation:

- **Wet waste**, such as kitchen scraps.
- **Dry waste**, such as paper and plastic.
- **Sanitary waste**, such as used diapers.
- **Special care waste**.

Older notes say only wet and dry. That is outdated.

Some waste falls outside these rules. Industrial, hazardous, biomedical, e-waste, battery and radioactive waste have separate rules. Do not present them as ordinary municipal waste. (Source: PIB; CPCB)

> **Quick check 4.** As of October 2026, India's solid-waste rules require only wet and dry segregation. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Part 4 · Law and the latest news

14 Who has a constitutional duty to protect the environment?

Both the State and citizens carry a duty. The Constitution names them in two different places.

Article 48A addresses the State. It directs the State to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard forests and wildlife. It sits in the Directive Principles part of the Constitution.

Article 51A(g) addresses citizens. It makes environmental protection a Fundamental Duty. It covers forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife, and also compassion for living creatures.

The easy way to remember it: **48A is for the State; 51A(g) is for citizens**. Examiners often swap the two.

Courts have added to this. In **M. K. Ranjitsinh v. Union of India**, decided on 21 March 2024, the Supreme Court recognised protection against the adverse effects of climate change. It drew this from **Articles 14 and 21**. These are the rights to equality and to life and personal liberty. The same case had a later judgment on 19 December 2025, cited as 2025 INSC 1472. (Source: judgment text)

Remember this: Article 48A is a State direction. Article 51A(g) is a citizen's duty.

> **Quick check 5.** Article 48A states a citizen's Fundamental Duty. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

15 Which environmental laws should an aspirant know?

Four laws form the core. Learn each with its year and its one-line job.

Law	Core role
Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974	Prevents and controls water pollution. Provides for Central and State Pollution Control Boards.
Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981	Provides for preventing, controlling and abating air pollution.
Environment (Protection) Act, 1986	Gives the Central Government broad powers to protect and improve environmental quality.

Law	Core role
National Green Tribunal Act, 2010	Sets up a tribunal for specified environmental disputes, relief and compensation.

The order of years is easy to keep: 1974 for water, 1981 for air, 1986 for the umbrella Environment Act, and 2010 for the tribunal. The first two laws cover one medium each. The 1986 Act is broader and gives the Centre wide powers. The 2010 Act is about hearing disputes and giving relief.

A Pollution Control Board is the body that enforces rules on pollution. The Water Act provides for both Central and State boards.

A common trap is to credit the Air Act with water duties, or the reverse. Match the medium to the year. Water is 1974, and air is 1981.

For the wider legal picture, read EnvEco0003 (India's Conservation Framework).

16 What changed in India's climate promise, air quality and construction waste in 2026?

7 September 2026: clean-air progress. A government update reported lower annual PM_{10} in 108 of 130 NCAP cities in FY 2025-26, compared with FY 2017-18. PM_{10} means particles up to 10 micrometres wide. NCAP is the National Clean Air Programme. Twenty-six cities cut PM_{10} by more than 40%. Improvement does not mean every city met air-quality standards. (PIB)

24 April 2026: India's next climate promise. India submitted its NDC for 2031-2035 on 24 April 2026. An NDC is a country's national climate pledge under the Paris Agreement. It targets a **47% cut in GDP emissions intensity by 2035**, against 2005. It also targets about **60%**

non-fossil installed electricity capacity by 2035, with technology transfer and low-cost international finance. The electricity target is about installed capacity. It is not a target for electricity actually generated. (UNFCCC submission)

1 April 2026: construction waste. The Environment (Construction and Demolition) Waste Management Rules, 2025 came into force. They were notified in 2025 but began in 2026. Keep the two years apart. (PIB)

> **Think it through: does lower emissions intensity mean lower total emissions?**
>
> No, not always. Emissions intensity is emissions per unit of GDP. Suppose that figure falls, but GDP rises quickly. Total emissions can still increase. An intensity target is therefore different from an absolute target, which caps total emissions.

17 What changed in global talks and farm climate resilience?

October 2026: nature review. COP17 in Yerevan completed the first global review of progress towards reversing nature loss by 2030. The review warned that the 2030 goals and targets would not be achieved without rapidly accelerated action. This closing outcome replaces the earlier description of the review as only scheduled. (Carbon Brief)

As of October 2026: plastics talks. The February 2026 session, INC-5.3, handled organisational matters. It held no substantive treaty negotiations. INC is the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on

plastic pollution. Work continued through informal preparation, and UNEP listed preparations for INC-5.4. Do not describe INC-5.3 as adoption of a plastics treaty. (UNEP)

Farm resilience: NICRA. NICRA is the National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture project, run by ICAR (the Indian Council of Agricultural Research). It covers 651 districts. It has 448 Climate Resilient Villages in 151 vulnerable districts, spread across 28 States and Union Territories. Of 310 districts assessed for climate vulnerability, 201 rank “High” and 109 rank “Very High”.

These items show a pattern. Plans and reviews move faster than results. Always ask whether a headline reports a target, a process or an outcome.

18 How have exams tested these ideas?

Two earlier questions tested exact terms from this topic. Both are listed newest first. Each links to the full paper on this site.

Both questions reward exact labels. Know which goal number covers land, and which ministry leads on the UNCCD. Examiners build wrong options from near-misses such as the wrong ministry.

> **Quick check 6.** SDG 15 covers restoring terrestrial ecosystems, combating desertification and halting land degradation. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Check your understanding

These checks work only on this page. They do not save to My Progress.

Practice this month’s Current Affairs October 2026 questions with answers, set by set.
Practice October 2026 →

Related reading

All Environment and Ecology Articles

EnvEco0085 — United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

EnvEco0001 — Pollution, Ecosystems and Biodiversity

EnvEco0003 — India’s Conservation Framework

EnvEco0010 — Depletion of Natural Resources

EnvEco0012 — Conservation of Natural Resources

MCQ on Environmental Degradation

Try 12 practice questions on India’s land degradation, the Bonn Challenge and NICRA.

More Environment and Ecology Practice

Practice MCQs

1. According to ISRO's Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas, roughly what share of India's land was degraded in 2018-19?

A. 15%

B. 60%

C. 45%

D. 29.7%

See answer ↓

2. At UNCCD COP14 in Greater Noida, on 9 September 2019, what did PM Modi announce?

A. A raised pledge of 26 million hectares to be restored by 2030

B. A ban on further deforestation

C. India's first National Forest Policy

D. India's exit from the Bonn Challenge

See answer ↓

3. Per India's Second Progress Report released on 17 June 2026, how much land had been restored under the Bonn Challenge, and what share of the 26-million-hectare target did that represent?

A. 13 million hectares, about 50%

B. 21.76 million hectares, about 83.7%

C. 8 million hectares, about 30%

D. 26 million hectares, 100%

See answer ↓

4. Which of these is NOT one of the main processes driving land degradation in India per the ISRO Atlas?

A. Vegetation degradation

B. Water erosion

C. Volcanic activity

D. Wind erosion

See answer ↓

5. In 2015, when India first joined the Bonn Challenge, what was its initial restoration pledge?

A. 26 million hectares by 2030 only

B. 5 million hectares by 2025

C. 50 million hectares by 2050

D. 13 million hectares by 2020, plus 8 million more by 2030

See answer ↓

6. In a 7 August 2026 Parliament reply on agricultural yield losses, what data gap did the Agriculture Ministry admit to?

A. It has not formally assessed crop-yield losses caused specifically by land degradation

B. No state has reported its land-restoration progress

C. ICAR has not released any climate-resilient crop varieties

D. No data exists on India's total degraded land area

See answer ↓

7. NICRA (National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture) runs Climate Resilient Villages in how many vulnerable districts, across how many States/UTs?

A. 310 districts, across 20 States/UTs

B. 151 vulnerable districts, across 28 States/UTs

C. 651 districts, across 28 States/UTs

D. 448 districts, across 15 States/UTs

See answer ↓

8. Under the NICRA assessment of 651 predominantly agricultural districts, 310 were rated high or very high in climate vulnerability.

How many were rated very high?

A. 448

B. 651

C. 109

D. 201

See answer ↓

9. Between 2014 and 2024, ICAR released 2,900 new crop varieties. What share of these are tolerant to biotic or abiotic stress?

A. 2,661, the large majority

B. About a quarter

C. About half

D. None; stress-tolerance testing is pending

See answer ↓

10. Which of these is NOT one of the main processes driving land degradation in India, per the ISRO Atlas?

A. Water erosion

B. Urban road construction

C. Vegetation degradation

D. Wind erosion

See answer ↓

11. Roughly how much employment has India's Bonn Challenge restoration work generated, alongside its ecological goals?

A. About 8 billion person-days

B. About 500,000 person-days

C. About 1.22 billion person-days

D. About 12 million person-days

See answer ↓

12. Roughly what share of India's total degraded land is concentrated in just nine states, including Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Gujarat?

A. About 90%

B. About 5%

C. About 24%

D. About 60%

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **D.** The ISRO Atlas found 97.85 million hectares degraded in 2018-19, about 29.7% of India's total area. ↑ Q1
2. **A.** PM Modi raised India's Bonn Challenge pledge to 26 million hectares by 2030, the largest single-country pledge under that initiative. ↑ Q2
3. **B.** India had restored 21.76 million hectares by June 2026 — about 83.7% of its 26-million-hectare Bonn Challenge target. ↑ Q3
4. **C.** The ISRO Atlas identifies water erosion, soil-cover loss, vegetation degradation, wind erosion, and climate change as the main drivers — volcanic activity plays no role in India's land degradation. ↑ Q4
5. **D.** India's original 2015 pledge was 13 million hectares by 2020 plus 8 million more by 2030 — later raised to 26 million hectares in 2019. ↑ Q5
6. **A.** The Ministry admitted it has not formally assessed crop-yield losses attributable specifically to land degradation, a gap for LDN policy targeting. ↑ Q6
7. **B.** NICRA runs 448 Climate Resilient Villages across 151 vulnerable districts, spanning 28 States and UTs, out of 651 districts it covers overall. ↑ Q7
8. **C.** NICRA assessed 651 predominantly agricultural districts. Of these, 310 were rated high or very high in climate vulnerability. 109 were very high and 201 were high. 109 + 201 = 310. ↑ Q8
9. **A.** Of the 2,900 varieties released, 2,661 are tolerant to biotic or abiotic stress like drought or pests. ↑ Q9
10. **B.** The ISRO Desertification and Land Degradation Atlas names water erosion, soil-cover loss, vegetation degradation, and wind erosion as the main drivers, with climate change adding a fifth factor. Urban road construction is not one of the named processes. ↑ Q10
11. **C.** Restoration work under the Bonn Challenge has generated roughly 1.22 billion person-days of employment, tying land restoration directly to rural livelihoods. ↑ Q11
12. **C.** Nine states -- Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Ladakh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, and Telangana -- together account for roughly 24% of all degraded area in India. ↑ Q12

Quick-check answers

1. **False.** The share has risen: 28.76% in 2003-05, 29.32% in 2011-13 and 29.77% in 2018-19. ↑ 1
2. **True.** This is the atlas finding for desertification. It shows the problem is spreading, not shrinking. ↑ 2
3. **False.** It is a voluntary, pledge-based initiative launched by Germany and IUCN in 2011. It is not a binding UN treaty. ↑ 3
4. **False.** The 2026 rules specify four streams: wet, dry, sanitary and special care waste. ↑ 4
5. **False.** Article 48A addresses the State. The citizen's duty is in Article 51A(g). ↑ 5
6. **True.** The official SDG 15 text names all three. This was tested in CAPF (ACs) 2026. ↑ 6

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