Group 2 Mains – Daily Practice: Questions and Model Answers (17 November 2026)

1. Unit II – Tamil Society: Culture and Heritage · 15 marks · 250 words

Question: Examine the maritime trade between Sangam-age Tamilakam and the Roman world on the basis of literary, foreign and archaeological evidence (Alagankulam, Arikamedu), and bring out its impact on Tamil society.

How to write

- Directive verbs "examine" and "bring out" – two headings: evidence (three kinds) and impact
- draw the flowchart monsoon winds → ports → exports → imports, and an evidence-type table
- cite Akam 149, the Periplus, Pliny (77 CE), Arikamedu (Wheeler 1945) and the Valentinian coins of Alagankulam correctly
- end with the assessment "an active partner in a world trading network"

Model answer

Introduction

Sangam-age Tamilakam (c. 3rd century BCE – 3rd century CE) traded by sea with the Mediterranean world: the "Yavanas" (Greek and Roman traders) came with gold and left with pepper. **Literature, foreign accounts and archaeology** confirm this; a November 2026 field survey at **Alagankulam** (Ramanathapuram) recording coins of different periods has revived the theme.



A) Three kinds of evidence

Evidence	Details
Sangam literature	Akananuru 149 (Erukkattur Thayankannanar): Yavana ships "come with gold and return with pepper" at Muziris; Pattinappalai: horses by sea, pepper by land at Kaveripumpattinam; Mullaippattu: Yavana guards at the king's camp.

Foreign accounts	Periplus of the Erythraean Sea (1st century CE) – Muziris, Nelkynda, Kolchoi (Korkai), Poduke (Arikamedu); Pliny (77 CE) – India drained 50 million sesterces of Roman wealth a year.
Archaeology	**Alagankulam** (Vaigai bank, ~3 km from the sea): rouletted ware, amphora sherds, Tamil-Brahmi red ware of the 1st century BCE, three Roman coins of Valentinian II; **Arikamedu** – Wheeler's excavation (1945), amphorae, Arretine ware; Roman coin hoards in the Coimbatore–Karur region.

B) Socio-economic impact

Field	Impact
Economy	Pepper, pearl (Korkai) and gem production grew; port towns and merchant groups flourished.
Polity	Customs revenue for Chera, Chola and Pandya kings; rivalry over ports.
Culture	Yavana settlements, consumption of foreign goods; Tamil-Brahmi pottery shows the spread of literacy.
Decline	Trade fell after Rome's 3rd-century crisis; 4th-century Alagankulam coins show that contact continued.

Conclusion

Excavations confirm literature: Sangam Tamilakam was an **active partner** in a world trading network. Further work at Alagankulam, Keeladi and Korkai, and underwater archaeology, will showcase Tamil maritime heritage.

Scoring tips (faculty note): "Examine" – tabulate all three kinds of evidence (literature, foreign accounts, archaeology); writing only one costs marks. Quoting one Sangam line (Akam 149) makes the answer stand out. Names that earn marks: Hippalus, the Periplus, Pliny, Wheeler (1945), Valentinian II. Do not drift into Keeladi alone – the question is about maritime trade.

About 280 words (including tables, excluding the tip box) · 2 tables + 1 flowchart · time: 12 minutes.

Reference notes

Key facts

- Yavana = western traders, Greeks and Romans (the word comes via "Ionia"). Direct monsoon sailing across the Arabian Sea is linked with the name of Hippalus; trade peaked in the 1st century CE.
- Alagankulam: Ramanathapuram taluk and district; on the Vaigai, ~3 km from the sea; Mediterranean sherds (rouletted ware, amphorae); Tamil-Brahmi red ware of the 1st century BCE; three coins of Valentinian II (4th century CE) showing Victory holding a globe (Tamil Nadu Department of Archaeology).
- Arikamedu (Puducherry): excavated by Mortimer Wheeler in 1945; identified with "Poduke" of the Periplus.

- Literature: Akam 149 – Muziris; Pattinappalai – Kaveripumpattinam; Mullaippattu – Yavana guards.
- Foreign texts: the Periplus (1st century CE); Pliny's Natural History (77 CE) – 50 million sesterces a year.
- News: November 2026 – field survey at Alagankulam recorded coins of different periods (Daily Thanthi).
- Answer-boosting terms: Yavanas, maritime trade, port town, amphora, rouletted ware, monsoon winds, "black gold" (pepper).

2. Unit VI – Geography, Environment, Disaster Management · 15 marks · 250 words

Question: Explain the importance of the biodiversity of the Western Ghats for Tamil Nadu, and assess the threats to it and the adequacy of the present legal and administrative framework for its protection.

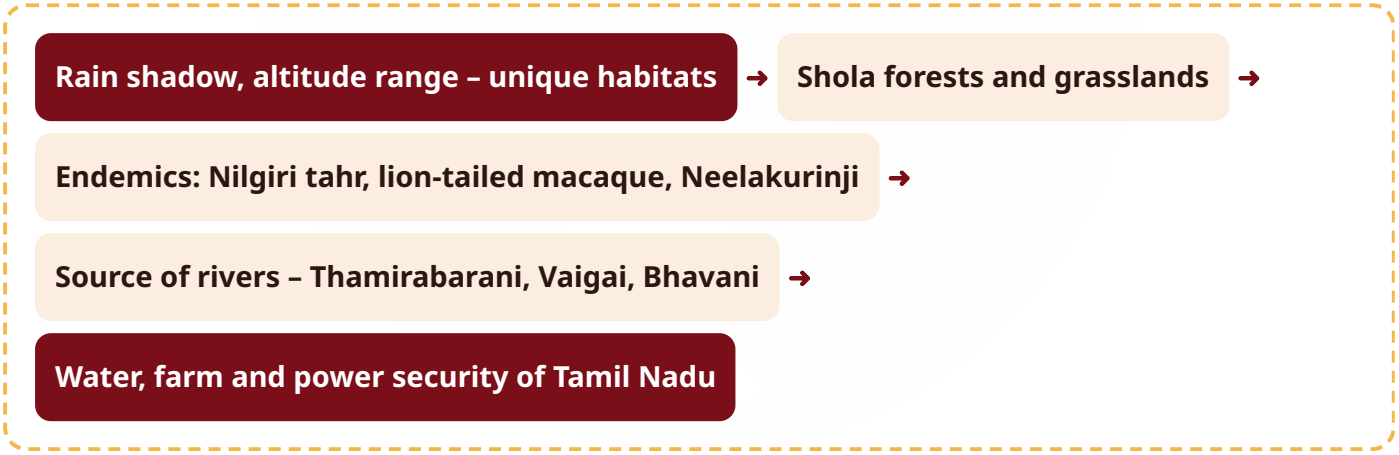
How to write

- Directive verbs "explain" and "assess" – three headings: importance, threat–response, way forward
- draw the flowchart habitats → endemic species → rivers → water security of Tamil Nadu, and a threat–framework table
- cite Gadgil 2011, Kasturirangan 2013 (37%), the draft of 31.07.2024 (Tamil Nadu 6,914 sq km) and the Nilgiri reserve 1986 exactly
- end with the assessment "protecting the water tower is the basis of development"

Model answer

Introduction

The **Western Ghats**, running about 1,600 km from Gujarat to Kanyakumari, form with Sri Lanka a global biodiversity hotspot and became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2012 (39 component sites). Three butterfly species recorded for the first time in Silent Valley National Park (Keralam) in November 2026 underline this richness.



A) Importance for Tamil Nadu

Element	Details
Protected areas	Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (1986 – India's first; UNESCO MAB 2000); Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO MAB 2016); Kalakad–Mundanthurai, Anamalai, Mudumalai and Srivilliputhur–Megamalai tiger reserves
Endemic species	State animal **Nilgiri tahr**; lion-tailed macaque; Neelakurinji, which flowers once in 12 years
Water security	Thamirabarani (Pothigai), Vaigai and Bhavani (Cauvery tributary) rise here; the range intercepts the southwest monsoon

B) Threats and the protection framework

Threat	Framework / response
Invasive alien plants (lantana, wattle) – loss of grasslands and sholas	Policy on Invasive Plants and Ecological Restoration 2022 (Tamil Nadu)
Broken elephant corridors, human–wildlife conflict	The Supreme Court upheld the Sigur elephant-corridor notification (October 2020)
Construction, tourism, roads – landslide risk	Gadgil panel (2011) – the whole range ecologically sensitive (three zones); Kasturirangan group (2013) – 37% (~59,940 sq km)
Legal protection pending	Draft notification (31.07.2024): 56,825.7 sq km in 6 States; 6,914 sq km in Tamil Nadu; final notification still awaited

Conclusion

The Ghats are Tamil Nadu's **"water tower"**: final notification of the eco-sensitive area, invasive removal with shola restoration, corridor protection and community eco-tourism can balance development and conservation.

Scoring tips (faculty note): "Explain and assess" – three parts: importance (table), threat–response (table) and way forward. A one-line contrast of Gadgil (2011) and Kasturirangan (2013) is a must. Tamil Nadu data: Nilgiri reserve 1986, Tamil Nadu's ESA 6,914 sq km, state animal Nilgiri tahr. Silent Valley is in Keralam – do not place it in Tamil Nadu.

About 280 words (including tables, excluding the tip box) · 2 tables + 1 flowchart · time: 12 minutes.

Reference notes

Key facts

- Western Ghats span 6 States: Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Keralam, Tamil Nadu. UNESCO World Heritage Site 2012 (39 component sites); at least 325 globally threatened species (UNESCO).
- Gadgil panel (WGEEP) 2011 – the entire range ecologically sensitive, zones ESZ 1, 2, 3. Kasturirangan group (HLWG) 2013 – 37% (~59,940 sq km).
- Draft notifications since 10.03.2014; draft of 31.07.2024 – 56,825.7 sq km: Karnataka 20,668, Maharashtra 17,340, Keralam 9,993.7, Tamil Nadu 6,914, Goa 1,461, Gujarat 449.
- Biosphere reserves: Nilgiri 1986 (MAB 2000); Agasthyamalai (MAB 2016).
- News: three butterfly species recorded for the first time in Silent Valley National Park, Keralam (The Times of India, Kochi, November 2026).
- Answer-boosting terms: biodiversity hotspot, endemic species, shola forest, eco-sensitive area (ESA), invasive species, elephant corridor.

3. Unit VII – Indian Economy (Tamil Nadu) · 15 marks · 250 words

Question: Examine to what extent the 21-day clearance limit and the Investment Promotion Commission introduced by the Tamil Nadu Business Facilitation (Amendment) Act, 2026 can help turn investment agreements into real industrial growth.

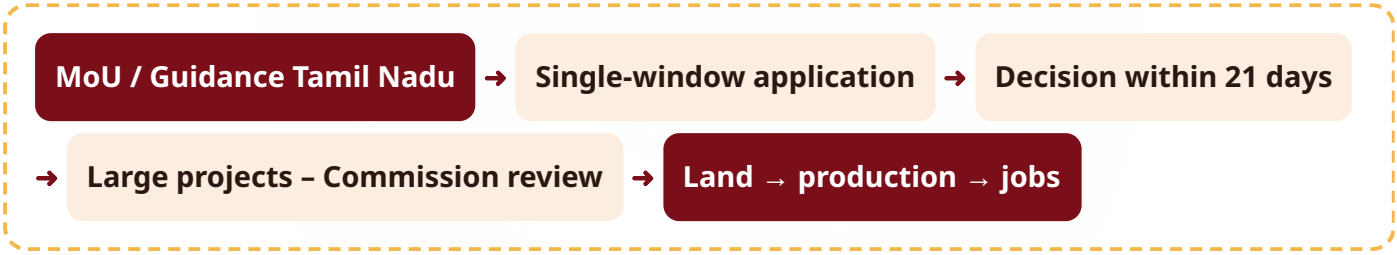
How to write

- Directive "examine to what extent" – structure: elements, data, strength–limit, way forward
- draw the flowchart MoU → single window → 21-day decision → Commission → production, and a strength–limit table
- cite Sections 11 and 16-A, ₹200 crore / 5,000 jobs, ASI 2024-25 (41,221; 14.99%; 10.90%) and 112 MoUs exactly
- end with the balanced verdict "speed of approval is necessary but not sufficient"

Model answer

Introduction

MoUs become factories only with **fast, predictable approvals**. The **Tamil Nadu Business Facilitation (Amendment) Act, 2026** sets a **21-day** ceiling for applicable clearances and creates the **Tamil Nadu Investment Promotion Commission** (Section 16-A) – key for India's leading factory State.



A) Elements of the reform

Element	Details
New Section 11	21 days, excluding public/local holidays, from a complete application; a longer Central-Act limit prevails.
Section 16-A – Commission	Chief Secretary chairs; reviews projects of ₹200 crore or more or 5,000 or more jobs, FTA-linked and Tamil-diaspora investments; binding directions; 22 State Acts in the Schedule.
Progress (November 2026)	Since May 2026: 112 MoUs (₹1.14 lakh crore; 1,42,271 jobs); 83 at land allotment or beyond; 19,323 of 21,753 single-window applications resolved; ₹2,000 crore subsidy in six months.

B) Assessment

Strength	Limit / challenge

First in factories (41,221; 15.44%) and employment share (14.99%) (ASI 2024-25); electronics exports $19.97 billion (2025-26, 41.63% of India).	Only third in GVA (10.90%) – needs higher-value industries.
Statutory time limit – less discretion and delay.	Central clearances (e.g., environmental) are outside it; "deemed approval" is not in the Bill's text – reported only as a Commission decision (November 2026); needs clear rules.
Top-level monitoring of large projects.	Land, power, skill gaps; no dilution of environmental safeguards; spread to southern districts.

Conclusion – way forward

Real-time tracking, accountability for delays, coordination with Central clearances, an industrial land bank, district-level spread and firm environmental rules will let the reform serve the **$1.5 trillion** economy goal for 2036. Speed is necessary, but not sufficient.

Scoring tips (faculty note): "Examine" – four parts: legal elements (table), data, a strength–limit assessment and the way forward. The Act's name, section numbers (11, 16-A), 21 days and ₹200 crore / 5,000 jobs impress the examiner. ASI 2024-25 data: 41,221 factories (15.44%), employment share 14.99%, GVA 10.90% (third). Do not write that "deemed approval" is in the Act – it is not in the Bill's text; it was reported as a Commission decision.

About 280 words (including tables, excluding the tip box) · 2 tables + 1 flowchart · time: 12 minutes.

Reference notes

Key facts

- Tamil Nadu Business Facilitation Act, 2018 (Act 7 of 2018) – single-window system; Guidance Tamil Nadu runs the single-window portal. 2026 amendment – L.A. Bill No. 16 of 2026 (introduced 02.09.2026); Commission – Chief Secretary as Chairperson, Industries Secretary as Member-Convener; Commission meeting, November 2026.
- ASI 2024-25 (MoSPI): 41,221 factories (15.44%, first); employment share 14.99% (first); GVA share 10.90% (third).
- Electronics exports: $19.97 billion (2025-26) = 41.63% of India.
- MoUs since May 2026: 112 – ₹1.14 lakh crore; 1,42,271 jobs; 83 at land allotment or beyond. Single window: 19,323 of 21,753 applications disposed.
- Goal: a $1.5 trillion economy by 2036 (Tamil Nadu government). Deemed approval: not in the text of L.A. Bill No. 16 of 2026; reported (PTI) as a decision of the November 2026 Commission meeting, with penalties for non-compliance.
- Answer-boosting terms: single window, time-bound clearance, deemed approval, MoU-to-ground, gross value added (GVA).