

THE PALA CIVIL TIMES



Civil Service Institute | Pala | Thiruvananthapuram | South India's Premier Civil Service Coaching Institute | www.civilservicepala.org



Talking peace: why mediation still matters in a world at war

THE HINDU
08-04-2026 : Page 11



IPO-bound companies get SEBI breather as West Asia conflict triggers market slowdown

THE INDIAN EXPRESS :
08-04-2026 : Page 13



War raises fear of worker exodus from West Asia

THE HINDU BL
08-04-2026 : Page 1

NATIONAL

Page 2



Bengal electorate shrinks 12% as 27 lakh out after judicial reviews

THE HINDU :
08-04-2026 : Page 1

Page 3



Villagers and police clash in Odisha amid protests against mining of bauxite

THE HINDU :
31-03-2026 : Page 7

PRELIMS CORNER

Page 8



Vijayanagara Empire

UPSC PYQ analysis -
Art and Culture

EDITORIALS DECODED

Page 5



Systemic reckoning

Sensitising the police against use of excessive force



EC failed Bengal voters, SC should look again



Nuclear milestone

India's first Prototype fast breeder reactor has gone critical



Artemis II flies farther than humans have ever gone

NASA's Artemis II marks the first crewed mission beyond the Moon since the Apollo program, setting a new human distance record and enabling direct observation of the Moon's far side. It serves as a critical rehearsal for future lunar landings and long-term human presence on the Moon, paving the way for missions to Mars.

Bengal electorate shrinks 12% as 27 lakh out after judicial reviews

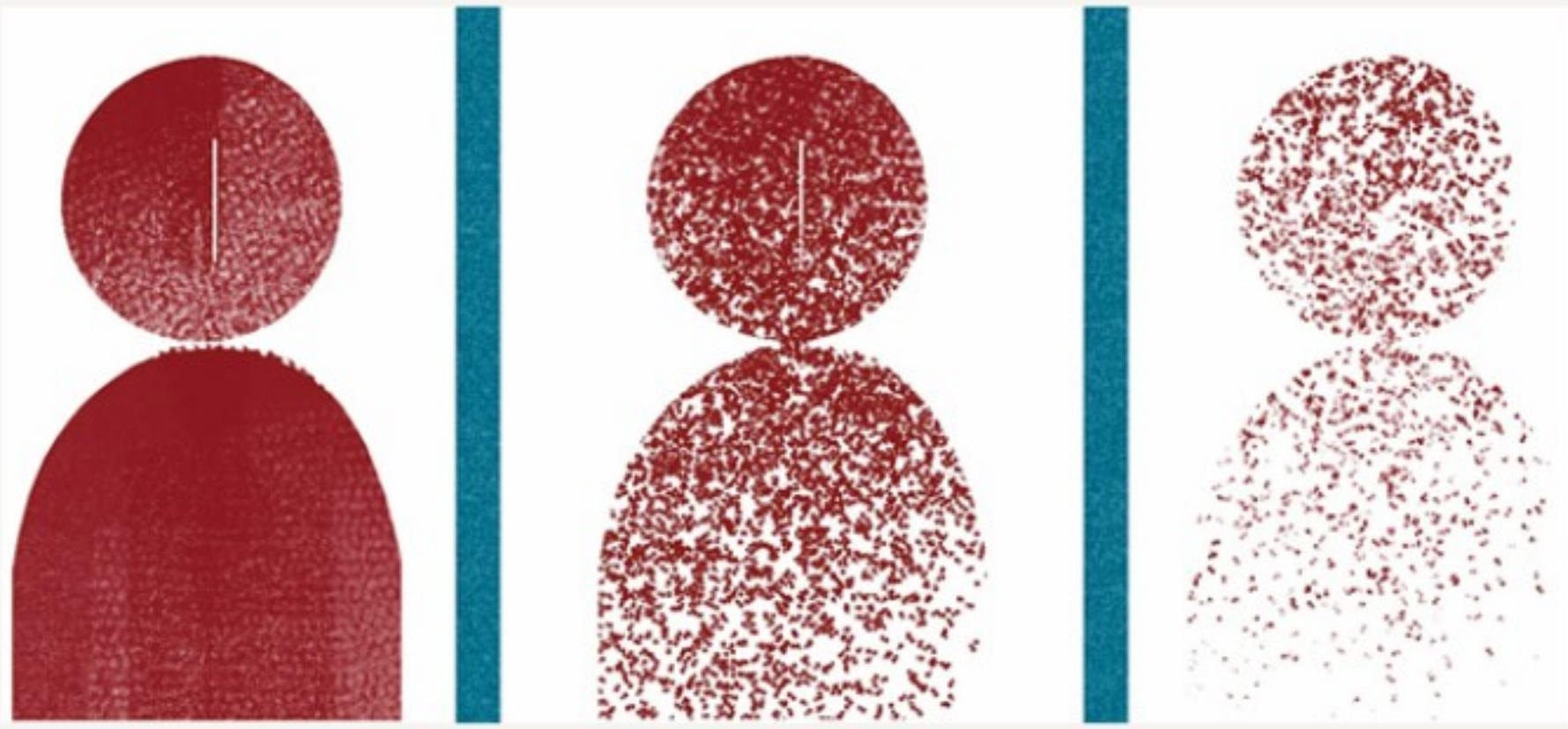
After judicial review, 27.16 lakh voters (around 45% of those under adjudication) were excluded from the final electoral rolls in West Bengal. Overall, about 91 lakh names have been deleted since the SIR began, reducing the electorate by nearly 12%—from 7.66 crore (October 2025) to 6.75 crore. For comparison, 7.34 crore voters were eligible in the 2021 Assembly elections.

SIR Statutory Framework

- **Section 21(1)**, Representation of the People Act, 1950 (RPA) mandates the preparation and maintenance of electoral rolls for each constituency.
- **Section 21(2)(a)**, RPA requires electoral rolls to be revised before every general and bye-election in the “prescribed manner”.
- The phrase “**prescribed manner**” refers to procedures under the **Registration of Electors Rules, 1960**.
- **Section 21(2)(b)**, RPA empowers the **Election Commission to revise rolls** annually in the prescribed manner.
- **Section 21(3)**, RPA allows the **Election Commission to conduct a “special revision”** at any time, but:
 - It is an exceptional power.
 - It applies to any constituency or part thereof (not necessarily all).
 - It requires recorded reasons in writing.

Special Intensive Revision in West Bengal

The Election Commission of India undertook a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal ahead of the Assembly elections scheduled for April 23 and 29, 2026. The process aimed to identify discrepancies such as data mismatches, placing several voters “under adjudication,” thereby temporarily suspending their voting rights.



Voters Under Adjudication

Approximately 60.06 lakh registered voters were flagged under adjudication due to “logical discrepancies” during the SIR process. Unlike other states where revised rolls were finalised earlier, uncertainty persisted in West Bengal. Following directions from the Supreme Court of India, around 500 judicial officers were नियुक्त to review these cases, with supplementary electoral lists to be released as decisions were made.

The SIR exercise in West Bengal underscores the need for balancing thorough verification with timely electoral participation. Strengthening data validation systems, ensuring transparency in adjudication, and allowing adequate timelines for appeals will be essential to enhance credibility and inclusiveness in future electoral processes.

Regional Distribution of Deletions

The exclusions were unevenly distributed:

- Murshidabad: ~4.55 lakh deletions
- North 24 Parganas: ~3.25 lakh deletions
- Malda: ~2.39 lakh deletions

These districts saw the highest number of exclusions among adjudicated cases.

Legal and Procedural Aspects

The excluded voters now have recourse to 19 appellate tribunals. However, due to the timeline of elections and roll finalisation (April 6 and April 9 for two phases), these individuals are effectively unable to vote in the current election cycle. The Supreme Court declined a plea to delay roll finalisation to allow further review.

Implications for Electoral Administration

- Highlights challenges in large-scale voter verification processes
- Raises issues of data accuracy, administrative capacity, and timelines
- Demonstrates the role of judicial oversight in electoral roll management
- Shows the impact of procedural delays on voter participation

The situation reflects the complexity of ensuring both accuracy and inclusiveness in electoral rolls.

Several villagers, police personnel injured in clash in Odisha amid protests against mining of bauxite

The Sijimali hills in Odisha (Rayagada–Kalahandi region) contain an estimated 311 million tonnes of bauxite. In February–March 2023, the Odisha government declared Vedanta Limited as the preferred bidder, with a proposal to extract 9 million tonnes annually. The project involves diversion of ~708 hectares of forest land, bringing it under the regulatory framework of the Forest Rights Act, 2006

Early Phase : Emergence of Local Resistance

Local tribal communities raised concerns regarding loss of forests, water sources, and livelihoods, leading to protests and obstruction of officials. Public hearings (Oct 2023) witnessed strong opposition, highlighting environmental, cultural, and livelihood risks. Police action, including arrests under serious charges, marked the initial escalation between communities and the state–corporate nexus.

Controversy over Gram Sabha Consent

Authorities claimed unanimous consent from multiple Gram Sabhas on December 8, 2023. However, subsequent investigations revealed:

- Allegations of forged signatures, including minors and deceased persons
- Claims of no actual meetings conducted
- Reports of coerced or uninformed consent

Later, fresh Gram Sabhas (2024) passed resolutions calling earlier approvals “fraudulent and invalid.”

Institutional and Legal Developments

- Petitions were filed in the Odisha High Court seeking cancellation of approvals
- The Court directed authorities to consider concerns but did not adjudicate factual disputes
- The Forest Advisory Committee granted Stage-I (in-principle) clearance in Dec 2025, despite noting allegations of irregularities
- Final approval (Stage-II) remains contingent on compliance with legal and environmental conditions

Intensification of Conflict (2024–2026)

- Continued protests, restrictions on gatherings, and arrests of activists
- Reports of administrative prohibitions on assembly and surveillance
- Recent clashes on 7th April, 2026 between villagers and police during road construction highlight persistent tensions

Competing claims:

- Administration: law and order, development
- Communities: rights violations and ecological threats



Governance and Legal Issues

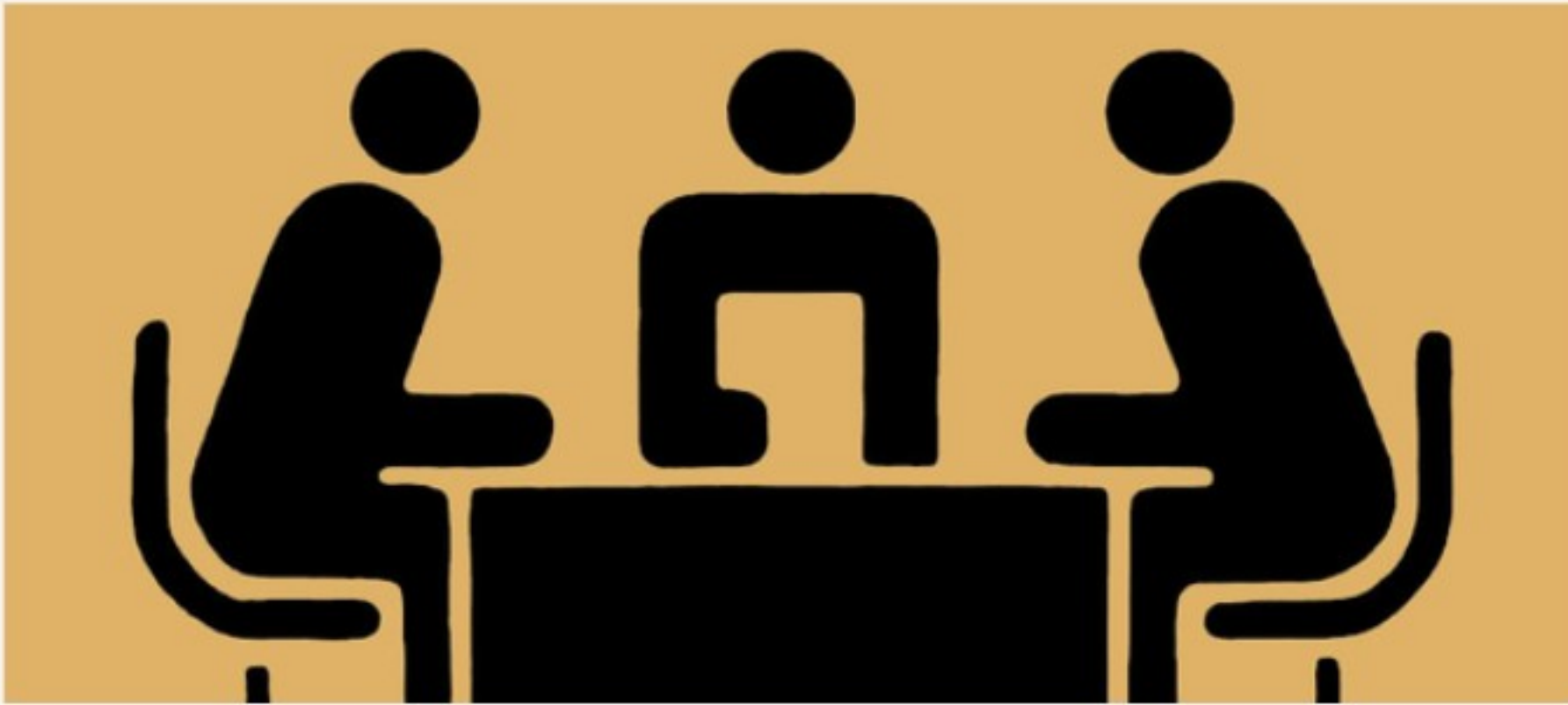
- Implementation gaps in FRA, 2006, particularly in ensuring free, prior, and informed consent
- Questions over procedural transparency and accountability
- Role of RTI and civil society in uncovering discrepancies
- Tension between developmental objectives and tribal rights protections

The Sijimali case reflects a gradual escalation from local resistance to a multi-layered conflict involving legal, administrative, and socio-environmental dimensions. It underscores the critical need for transparent consent processes, stronger institutional accountability, and balanced development approaches that align economic goals with constitutional protections for tribal communities.

Talking peace: why mediation still matters in a world at war

With the West Asia conflict entering its second month, mediation has emerged as a key diplomatic tool to de-escalate tensions. While reports suggest possible roles for countries like Pakistan, the broader issue is understanding how mediation works and when it succeeds.

The situation highlights the continued relevance of mediation in managing complex international conflicts.



Concept and Evolution of Mediation

Mediation refers to third-party facilitation of dialogue to resolve disputes peacefully. Its origins date back nearly 4000 years (e.g., Mesilim mediating between Lagash and Umma). Over time, it has evolved into a structured diplomatic practice, balancing neutrality, influence, and negotiation strategy. It remains central to international relations due to its flexibility and non-coercive nature.

Key Theoretical Frameworks

Bercovitch's Contingency Model:

Success depends on factors like nature of conflict, parties involved, and mediator capabilities. Effective mediators require credibility, communication skills, and patience.

Zartman's Ripeness Theory:

Conflicts become solvable when parties reach a "Mutually Hurting Stalemate", making negotiation preferable to continued conflict (e.g., Zimbabwe, 1979).

Biased Mediation Concept:

Contrary to neutrality, powerful mediators can leverage influence (incentives/pressure) to push agreements.

Mediation in contemporary international relations reflects a broader shift toward multipolar diplomacy, where non-Western actors are increasingly shaping conflict resolution processes. Its effectiveness underscores that strategic credibility and influence often matter more than formal neutrality, especially in complex geopolitical settings. At the same time, mediation offers a cost-effective and less disruptive alternative to military escalation, while also revealing the deep interlinkages between geopolitics, economic interests, and conflict dynamics.

Legal and Institutional Framework

- Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907: Institutionalised mediation and created the Permanent Court of Arbitration
- United Nations framework:
 - Chapter VI & Article 33 promote peaceful dispute resolution
 - Resolution 65/283 (2011) strengthens mediation efforts
 - 2012 UN Guidance outlines principles: consent, impartiality, inclusivity, coordination

UN peacekeeping (70+ missions since 1948) often complements mediation efforts.

Practical Utility of Mediation

Mediation contributes to conflict resolution by:

- Opening communication channels (Oslo negotiations)
- Providing face-saving mechanisms for parties
- Creating political space for negotiation (Camp David Accords)
- Enabling time and information management (Dayton Agreement)
- Shifting focus from military to political solutions (Colombia Peace Process)

Successful cases include mediation by Kofi Annan in Kenya.

Contemporary Relevance: West Asia Crisis

Current mediation efforts are multi-layered, involving multiple actors rather than a single mediator.

- Pakistan may act as a facilitator or venue, but neutrality concerns limit its role
- Other actors like Türkiye and Egypt are also involved

China's potential role:

- Economic leverage (energy imports, investments)
- Past success (Iran-Saudi rapprochement, 2023)
- Perception as a relatively independent and influential actor.

The Indian EXPRESS

EC failed Bengal voters, SC should look again

The recent electoral roll revision in West Bengal raises concerns over transparency, due process, and potential disenfranchisement, with a significant reduction in registered voters and a large number of exclusions despite documentation. The process appears to have shifted the burden of proof onto citizens, diverging from earlier practices that prioritised inclusion. While deletions are often attributed to legitimate factors, the scale and opacity of the exercise have led to apprehensions about fairness and the integrity. Although an appellate mechanism exists, its limited timeframe and capacity constraints reduce its effectiveness, particularly with elections approaching. Judicial oversight, while present, has been less stringent, raising questions about the adequacy of institutional safeguards. The situation underscores the importance of maintaining transparency, ensuring procedural fairness, and upholding the principle of universal franchise.

Editorial to Exam - Most probable question from this editorial

"Electoral roll revisions must balance administrative efficiency with the principle of universal franchise." Examine the challenges associated with electoral roll revisions in India and assess their implications for transparency, due process, and voter inclusion.



Systemic reckoning

The conviction of police personnel in the Sattankulam custodial death case highlights the role of judicial intervention, credible investigation, and witness testimony in ensuring accountability for abuse of power. Scientific evidence and judicial oversight were crucial in overcoming attempts to suppress facts. The case underscores procedural failures by medical and judicial authorities, which contributed to the escalation of abuse and eventual loss of life, while also reflecting the influence of public scrutiny in driving accountability. At the same time, the outcome raises broader questions about proportionality in punishment and the limits of deterrence within the justice system. While strict penalties may signal intolerance towards custodial violence, concerns remain about consistency in assigning culpability and adherence to principles of rehabilitative justice.

Editorial to Exam - Most probable question from this editorial

"Custodial violence reflects systemic failures in law enforcement and accountability mechanisms." Discuss the role of judiciary and investigative processes in addressing custodial brutality, and examine the challenges in ensuring accountability and police reforms in India.

thehindu **businessline.**

TUESDAY - MARCH 31, 2026

Nuclear milestone

The commissioning milestone of the Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam marks a significant advancement in India's nuclear energy programme. Despite substantial delays and cost overruns, the achievement reflects the technical complexity of developing fast breeder technology. The reactor's ability to generate more fissile material than it consumes strengthens India's long-term energy security strategy, particularly through the production of plutonium-239, which is essential for advancing the nuclear fuel cycle. At the same time, challenges remain in scaling and optimising this technology. Transitioning to metallic fuels to enhance efficiency, expanding breeder reactor capacity, and accelerating complementary projects are critical next steps. The broader objective includes progressing towards the thorium-based fuel cycle, leveraging India's resource advantage, while balancing current priorities in fissile material production. Persistent delays in associated infrastructure and research initiatives highlight the need for improved project execution.

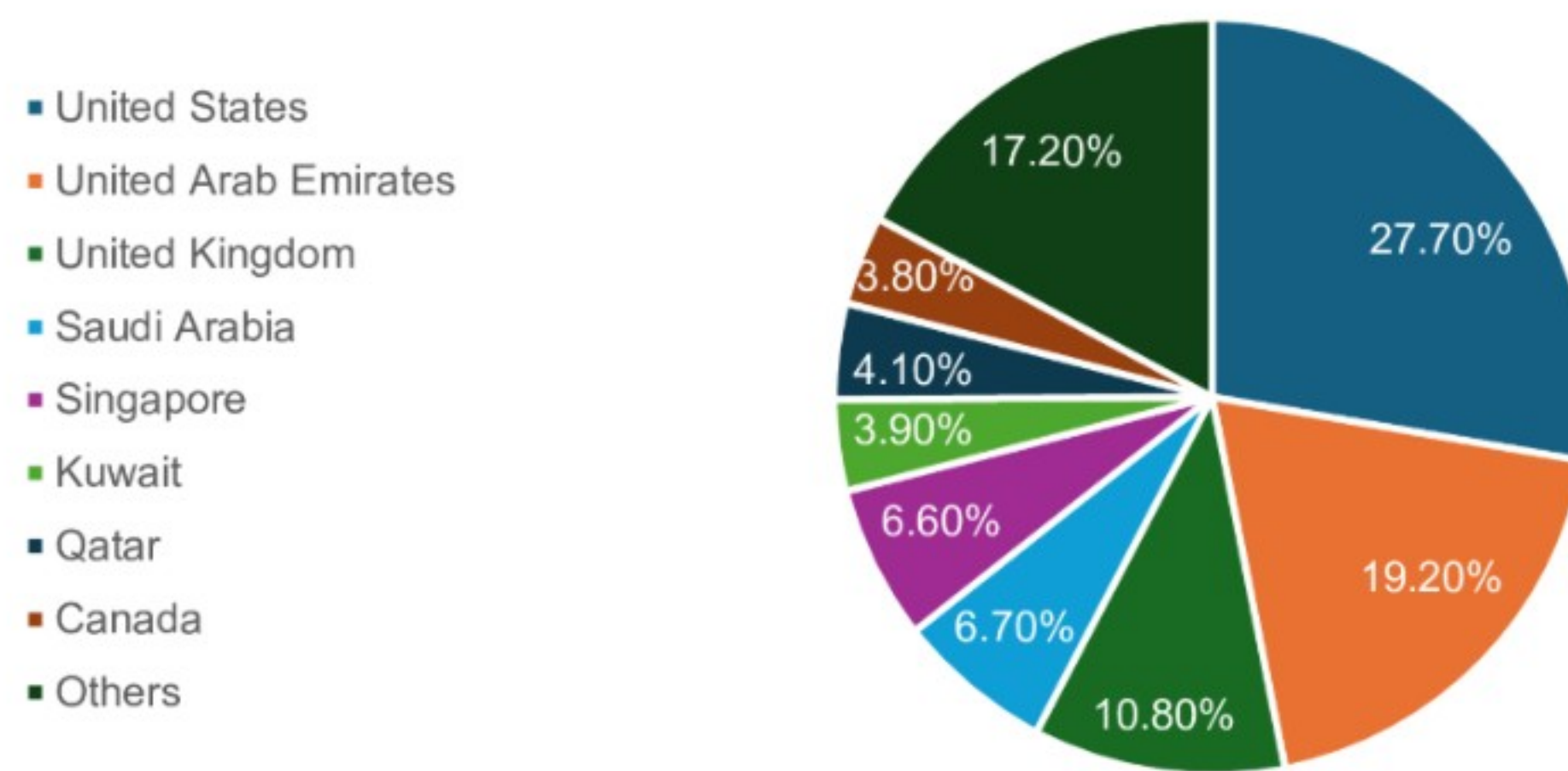
Editorial to Exam - Most probable question from this editorial

"India's fast breeder reactor programme is central to its long-term nuclear energy strategy." Discuss the significance of fast breeder reactors in India's energy security and examine the challenges in their development and implementation.

War raises fear of worker exodus from West Asia

Ongoing conflict in West Asia has raised concerns for India beyond immediate economic disruptions. The focus is on potential impacts on remittances and the risk of large-scale return migration of Indian workers from the Gulf region.

Country-wise share of India's inward remittance (FY24)



Source: RBI

Scale of Indian Workforce in the Gulf

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region—comprising Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain—hosts over 9.9 million Indians. These countries account for nearly half of India's migrant population and about 38% of total remittance inflows (2023–24), highlighting their critical importance.

What is the Diaspora Effect?

The Diaspora Effect refers to how over 35 million people of Indian origin living abroad advance India's home economy, culture and bilateral ties through remittances, investments and soft power.

How large is India's diaspora?

India's diaspora exceeds 35 million across 200 countries, comprising NRIs and PIOs, with major communities in the United States (5.41 million) and the United Arab Emirates (3.57 million).

Immediate Developments: Disruptions and Worker Behaviour

Industrial disruptions, particularly in refineries and related sectors, have affected employment conditions. While senior staff remain, many lower-level workers have temporarily moved away. Instead of sending money home, workers are holding back remittances due to uncertainty, indicating a behavioural shift rather than an immediate structural decline.

While current impacts remain limited, the situation underscores India's vulnerability to external labour and remittance shocks. Strengthening domestic employment opportunities, diversifying migration destinations, and enhancing social security mechanisms for migrant workers will be essential to mitigate long-term risks and ensure economic resilience.

Remittance Trends and Economic Stability

Remittance inflows have remained stable so far, rising to \$36.9 billion in Q3 FY26 from \$35.1 billion in the previous year. Authorities indicate no immediate macroeconomic stress, with inflation under control and credit availability stable. However, continued conflict could weaken remittance flows if Gulf economies face fiscal or industrial strain.

Potential Risks: Return Migration and Economic Impact

If the conflict persists, large-scale return migration becomes a key risk. This could strain domestic labour markets, reduce household incomes dependent on overseas earnings, and weaken consumption in remittance-dependent regions. In addition, a sudden influx of returning workers—many with skills tied to Gulf-specific sectors—may lead to underemployment and wage pressures in the short term. This could also increase the fiscal burden on governments through higher demand for welfare support and reintegration measures.

Remittances and External Stability

Remittances form a crucial component of India's external sector, supporting foreign exchange reserves and household consumption. Any sustained disruption in Gulf economies—driven by oil price volatility or conflict—can indirectly affect India's macroeconomic stability.

IPO-bound companies get SEBI breather as West Asia conflict triggers market slowdown

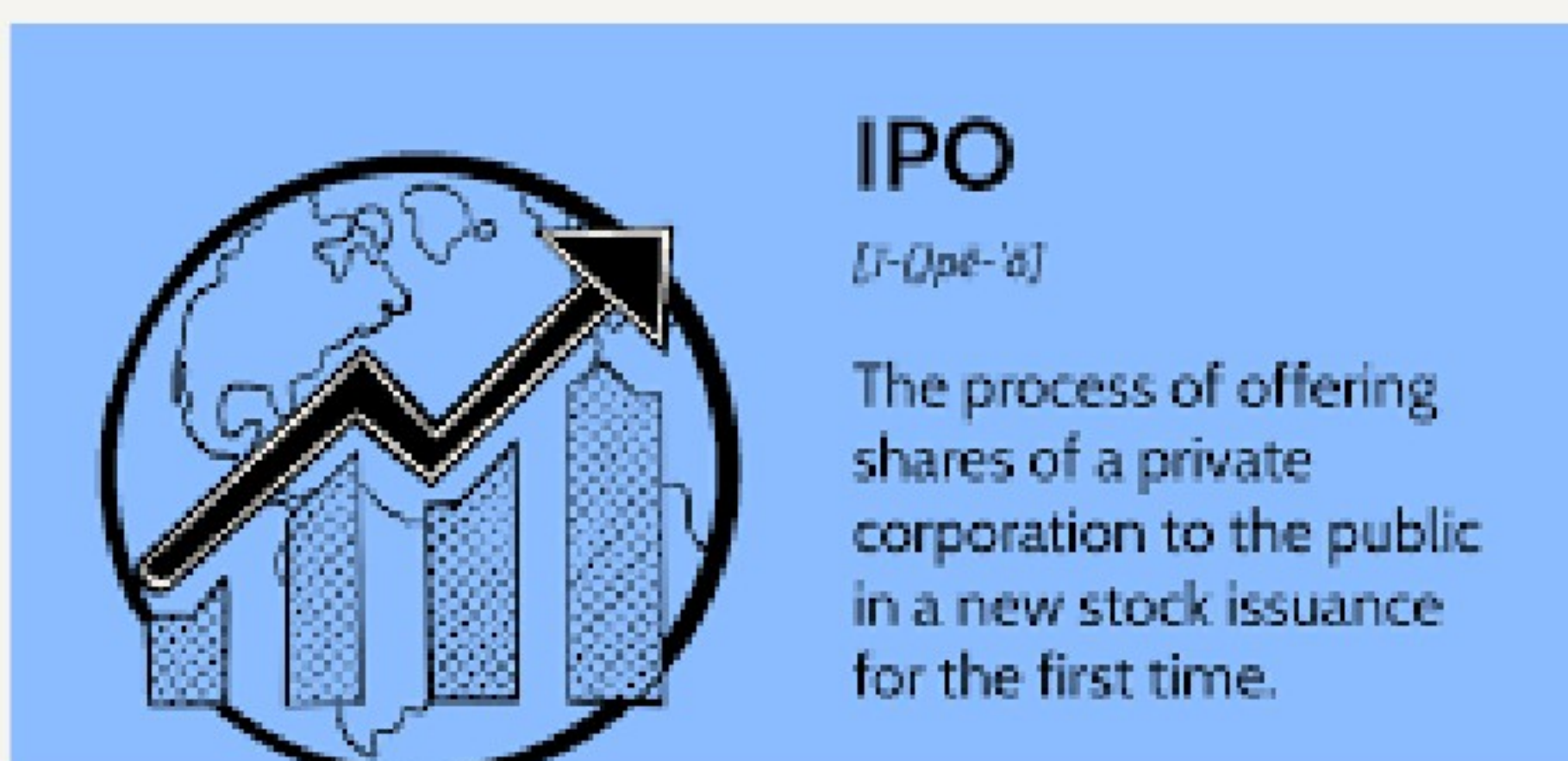
The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has introduced temporary regulatory relaxations amid a slowdown in the IPO market triggered by geopolitical tensions, particularly the West Asia conflict. Market volatility, weak investor sentiment, and falling valuations have led many companies to delay or withdraw IPO plans.

Key Regulatory Relaxations

SEBI has provided one-time relief measures to ease capital-raising constraints:

- Extension of IPO approval validity: Observation letters expiring between April–September 2026 are extended till September 30, 2026
- Companies must still comply with Issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements Regulations through updated disclosures

These measures aim to prevent duplication of regulatory processes and allow firms more flexibility in uncertain conditions.



Relaxation in Minimum Public Shareholding (MPS)

- SEBI continues to mandate 25% public shareholding
- However, it has allowed longer timelines (up to 10 years) for compliance
- Stock exchanges and depositories have been advised not to impose penalties for temporary non-compliance

This provides breathing space for companies struggling to meet listing norms during market instability.

SEBI's targeted relaxations reflect a regulatory balancing act—maintaining compliance standards while providing flexibility during market stress. The episode underlines how external geopolitical risks can disrupt domestic capital markets, making adaptive regulation essential for sustaining investor confidence and economic momentum.



Causes: Market Volatility and External Shocks

- Geopolitical tensions have triggered market sell-offs and valuation declines
- Several companies are unable to secure favourable IPO pricing
- Weak investor participation has reduced demand for new issues

Thus, firms are postponing IPOs rather than listing at undervalued prices.

Scale of Impact

- IPO pipeline of ₹2.65 lakh crore affected
- Around ₹1.40 lakh crore awaiting approval
- Nearly ₹1.25 lakh crore already approved but delayed

Major planned IPOs across sectors (finance, tech, infrastructure) are currently on hold.

Implications for Economy and Markets

- Slower corporate fundraising and expansion plans
- Potential impact on job creation and investment cycles
- Weakening of India's primary market performance compared to previous highs
- Highlights vulnerability of capital markets to global geopolitical shocks

PRELIMS CORNER :

1) Regarding the taxation systems of Krishna Deva, the ruler of Vijayanagar, consider the following statements: (2016)

1. The tax rate of land was fixed depending on the quality of the land.
2. Private owners of workshops paid an industry tax.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

2) In medieval India, the term “Fanam” referred to: (2022)

- (a) Clothing
- (b) Coins
- (c) Ornaments
- (d) Weapons

**PRELIMS 2026
 COUNTDOWN**

46 DAYS TO GO

HERITAGE Piprahwa Relics



The forthcoming arrival of the Piprahwa relics in Leh represents a significant moment of cultural recovery, reconnecting an important Buddhist heritage with one of India’s historic civilisational frontiers. These relics, associated with the Buddha and his Sakya lineage, highlight the deep historical roots of Buddhism in the region. Ladakh, often viewed through a strategic lens, historically functioned as a vital corridor linking India with Central Asia and the broader Buddhist world, facilitating the movement of ideas, traditions, and cultural exchanges across regions such as Kashmir, Gandhara, and Khotan.

The event underscores the need to recognise and preserve Ladakh’s role in India’s civilisational and cultural landscape. Existing archaeological and artistic evidence reflects its embeddedness in trans-regional Buddhist networks. While contemporary policy emphasises Buddhism in diplomatic outreach, there is a gap in effectively integrating heritage regions like Ladakh into this framework. A more balanced approach would involve preserving and showcasing such regions as cultural assets, thereby aligning civilisational narratives with tangible heritage conservation and regional development.

Prelims Corner: Explanations

1) The correct answer is (c)

Krishna Deva Raya, the ruler of Vijayanagara, implemented an efficient and well-organized taxation system, which played a key role in maintaining the prosperity of the empire. The two statements provided reflect aspects of this taxation system:

1. The tax rate of land was fixed depending on the quality of the land.: Correct.

Krishna Deva Raya's administration had a land revenue system that varied based on the quality of the land. This means that the tax rate was not uniform. It was determined based on the fertility and productivity of the land. Lands with better irrigation facilities and fertile soil were taxed more, while lands with lower productivity were taxed less. This was a common practice in many medieval Indian states and ensured that the taxation system was fair and based on the ability of the land to produce. This flexible system helped maximize revenue from agriculture, which was the backbone of the Vijayanagara economy.

2. Private owners of workshops paid an industry tax.: Correct.

Under Krishna Deva Raya, the Vijayanagara Empire had a structured system of taxation on artisans and industrial production. Workshops (like those involved in textiles, metal works, and other crafts) were taxed, and private owners of workshops had to pay an industry tax. This was part of a broader guild tax system where industries and trades were taxed based on their output. This system not only helped the state generate revenue but also regulated the economic activities of merchants and artisans within the empire. Such taxes were essential in maintaining the administrative infrastructure.

2) The correct answer is (b)



Fanam - Fanam was a type of coin used in medieval South India, particularly in the regions of the Chola, Pandya, and Vijayanagara empires.

The fanam was typically a small silver or gold coin, and it was used as currency in the southern part of the Indian subcontinent during the medieval period. These coins were often minted with inscriptions in Tamil or Kannada, and sometimes featured symbols or images representing the ruling dynasty. Thus, Fanam refers to coins, not clothing, ornaments, or weapons.

Civil Service Institute Pala
ESTABLISHED 1978 | 382 SUCCESS STORIES | PIONEERS IN IAS/IAS CREATING

Together We Can!
 Your Efforts,
 Coupled with Our Support,
 Make the Journey Successful.

25 YEARS OF LEGACY
382
 SUCCESS STORIES
TRUSTED | EXPERIENCED

ഒരു കോടി

രൂപയുടെ സ്കോളർഷിപ്പുകൾ!

മെമ്പ് 01 ന്
 പരീക്ഷ എഴുതൂ..
 മികവ് തെളിയിക്കൂ...

100%

വരെ സ്കോളർഷിപ്പ് നേടൂ!!

സാമ്പത്തിക പിന്മാറ്റത്തിനായി
 ഉള്ളവർക്ക് പ്രത്യേക പരിഗണന

IAS

കോളിംഗ്

ഡിഗ്രിയോടൊപ്പവും
 ഡിഗ്രിക്ക് ശേഷവും

Scholarship Examination

STAGE - 1 : Online Exam on
 01-05-2026 to Shortlist 100 Candidates

STAGE - 2 : Offline Exam & Interview
 at Pala & TVM on 09-05-2026

Register for the Scholarship Exam NOW!

9539381100 9744885516

Click Here

CIVIL SERVICE FULL-TIME PCM COURSE 2026-27



Features

- National-Level Renowned Faculty
- Highly Focused Academic Sessions
- Learn With Diverse Student Groups
- Well Equipped Library & Reading Room
- Special NCERT Classes
- Best Personalized Mentoring
- Daily Current Affairs Content
- 700+ hours of Coaching Sessions
- Test Series & Comprehensive Writing Practice
- Most Serene Campus & Peaceful Environment

Our Optional Subjects

MALAYALAM

(Dr. Baby Thomas & Dr. Davis Xavier)

SOCIOLOGY

(Adv. Jyothi Radhika Vijayakumar & Team)

POLITICAL SCIENCE

(Sri. Syamprasad P. B. & Dr. Nidhin Jose)

Special Academic Support for English Optional



Click
Here



Civil Service Institute Pala

GLORIOUS 27 YEARS

382 SUCCESS STORIES

Pioneers in IAS/KAS Coaching

Arunapuram, Pala, Kottayam District, Kerala - 686574, Mobile No: 9539381100, 8281447770



9539381100 9744885516

www.civilservicepala.org

admin@civilservicepala.com