

THE

PALA



CIVIL

TIMES

Civil Service Institute | Pala | Thiruvananthapuram | South India’ Premier Civil Service Coaching Institute | [www.civilservicepala.org](http://www.civilservicepala.org)

P2. NATIONAL



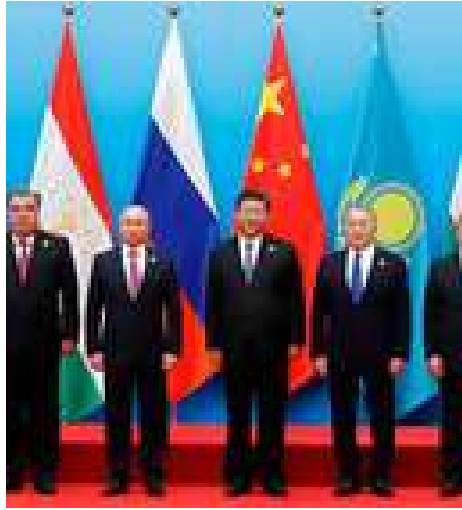
**With Tamil Nadu CM Vijay opening the Mettur dam, focus turns to longevity of water release-** Tamil Nadu’s delayed opening of Mettur Dam highlighted the impact of weak monsoons

P3 NATIONAL



**Over 7,200 CBI cases pending trial, says CVC report -** High pendency of corruption cases, procedural delays and staff vacancies highlight capacity challenges in India’s anti-corruption and vigilance framework.

P6. WORLD



**SCO must dismantle ecosystem of terror financing : PM Modi-** The 26th SCO Summit discussed terrorism, Afghanistan, West Asian and Ukraine conflicts, and strengthening cooperation among member states.

P7. ECONOMICS



**Majority of India’s gig workers remain out of the government’s reach :** India’s effort to extend social security to gig workers is constrained by the difficulty of accurately identifying and counting this rapidly growing workforce.

Editor’s Note

In this edition of the Pala Civil Times, we explore developments across the state, national, international and economic spheres, with a focus on understanding not just what has happened, but why it matters.

The State section begins with the opening of the Mettur Dam, examining how water availability, timely reservoir management and inter-State river dynamics directly influence agricultural outcomes. The National section turns to the persistent pendency of corruption cases under the Prevention of Corruption Act and India’s continuing push towards indigenisation and self-reliance in defence production. On the International page, we examine the latest Bishkek Declaration of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and India’s firm position on terrorism and regional security.

The Economics section explores the challenge of accurately identifying and counting India’s growing gig workforce, and how gaps in measurement can directly affect the delivery of social security. In our Decoded Editorials, we examine the growing urgency of finding a durable solution to the Russia–Ukraine conflict, alongside the significance of FSSAI’s proposed front-of-pack warning labels for India’s broader nutrition and public-health goals. Together, these articles are designed to go beyond current affairs and build a deeper, connected understanding of issues, institutions and policy choices—helping students see the larger ideas behind the day's news.

Happy Reading!

Editorials Decoded



Do not gamble



Intensifying long-range attacks and incidents near NATO territory have raised concerns about the conflict escalating into a wider European confrontation.



On packaged foods in India, now a red label, and a long overdue warning



FSSAI’s proposed red hexagonal labels aim to warn consumers about foods high in sugar, salt and saturated fat and promote more informed choices.

## With Tamil Nadu CM Vijay opening the Mettur dam, focus turns to longevity of water release

The Tamil Nadu government opened the Mettur Dam for irrigation on September 1, 2026, much later than the normal June 12 opening, amid a deficient monsoon and concerns over water availability for the Samba paddy cultivation season. The government initially plans to maintain the release for about 45 days.

**Storage:** On September 1, the reservoir stood at 91.56 ft, against its full level of 120 ft, with storage of around 54.45 TMC against a total capacity of 93.47 TMC.

**Sustainability:** At an assumed release of around 1 TMC per day, the available storage could sustain irrigation for roughly one and a half months, even under a worst-case scenario of no further inflow.

**Reserves:** After accounting for around 10 TMC for environmental flows, drinking-water needs and dead storage, the government expects the present storage to support the initial release period.

**Timing:** The release has been initiated now because Cauvery water takes around three weeks to reach the tail-end of the river system; further delay could severely affect the Samba crop.



### Role of Monsoon and Cauvery Inflows

**Deficiency:** Tamil Nadu is facing around 47% monsoon deficiency in the Cauvery catchment, constraining inflows into the reservoir.

**Karnataka Inflows:** The State is factoring in the possibility of additional Cauvery inflows from Karnataka during September.

**Historical Average:** Historical data indicate an average September realisation of around 36.8 TMC at Billigundulu over the past 30 years.

**Expected Flow:** T.N estimates that around 20 TMC could flow from Karnataka over the next 30 days, potentially extending irrigation releases by another two weeks.

**Northeast Monsoon:** irrigation expectations further rely on Northeast Monsoon, which normally contributes about half of Tamil Nadu's annual rainfall (expected around October 20).

### Why Mettur Dam Matters

**Multipurpose Role:** Constructed across the Cauvery, Mettur Dam is a critical reservoir for managing water for irrigation and hydroelectric power generation.

**Agricultural Reach:** Its water supports about 16.05 lakh acres of agricultural land across 12 districts, particularly in the Cauvery delta.

**Irrigation Cycle:** The normal irrigation cycle envisages opening the dam on June 12 and closing it on January 28, providing water for around 230 days.

**Water Dependence:** Timely release depends on adequate reservoir storage and inflows, linking the dam closely to monsoon performance and interstate Cauvery water realisation.

### Agricultural Implications

**Delayed Sowing:** created by poor rainfall and constrained reservoir storage.

**Crop Risk:** Insufficient or delayed release can adversely affect Samba paddy cultivation, particularly in downstream and tail-end areas.

**Groundwater Dependence:** Farmers resort to groundwater extraction through borewells, increasing dependence on alternative sources of irrigation.

The situation highlights the vulnerability of T.N agricultural economy to the combined effects of monsoon variability, reservoir storage and interstate river-water availability.

### PYQ Compass



Q. Consider the following pairs: (2019)

Famous place      River

1. Pandharpur      : Chandrabhaga

2. Tiruchirappalli : Cauvery

3. Hampi      : Malaprabha

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

a) 1 and 2 only

b) 2 and 3 only

c) 1 and 3 only

d) 1, 2 and 3

## Over 7,200 CBI cases under Prevention of Corruption Act pending trial, saysCVC report

The CVC Annual Report 2025 highlights persistent delays in corruption cases investigated by the CBI, with thousands of trials, appeals and investigations remaining pending for several years, even as the CBI's conviction rate improved to 71.71% in 2025.

### CBI: Case Pendency

**Pending Trials:** 7,229 PC Act cases investigated by the CBI were pending trial at the end of 2025, including over 400 pending for more than 20 years.

**Status of Appeals:** 14,083 appeals, revisions and writ petitions under the PC Act were pending in the High Courts and Supreme Court, including 739 over 20 years old.

**Investigation:** 755 corruption-related cases remained under CBI investigation, including 274 regular cases pending for over one year.

**Performance:** The CBI's conviction rate improved from 69.14% in 2024 to 71.71% in 2025, with 583 convictions among 1,022 cases receiving judgments.

### Capacity & Procedural Bottlenecks

**Vacancies:** Against a sanctioned CBI strength of 7,300, 1,088 posts were vacant, including 672 in executive ranks.

**Sanction:** 201 cases were awaiting prosecution sanction, while 72 references involving 172 officers awaited prior approval under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

**Investigative Load:** The CBI registered 797 regular cases, 177 preliminary enquiries and 31 Lokpal references, besides conducting 265 bribery traps and 81 disproportionate-assets cases.

**Vigilance Workload:** The CVC received 2,770 cases and 34,153 complaints during 2025, demonstrating the scale of the institutional vigilance burden.

## Defence PSUs told to reduce dependence on imports

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh reviewed the performance of 16 Defence PSUs, emphasising indigenisation, R&D, timely delivery, defence exports and globally competitive capabilities.

### Key Performance

**Production:** India's defence production reached approximately ₹1.8 lakh crore in 2025-26, with Defence PSUs contributing ₹1.29 lakh crore.

**Dividends:** Seven major Defence PSUs paid ₹3,951 crore in dividends to the government for 2025-26.

**Indigenisation:** PSUs are expected to strengthen domestic manufacturing, technologies and supply chains while reducing import dependence.

### Strategic Priorities

**Self-Reliance:** Reduce dependence on imported defence equipment and critical components.

**R&D:** Shift from merely increasing R&D expenditure to delivering technologies, IP, prototypes and operational products.

**Exports:** Improve product quality to international standards and expand India's presence in global defence markets.

**Innovation:** Increase collaboration with start-ups and MSMEs and identify niche technologies where India can achieve global leadership.

### National Security

**Resilience:** Recent conflicts highlight the need for assured supply chains, critical spares, surge production and rapid repair capabilities.  
**Make for World:** The broader objective is to transform Defence PSUs from primarily domestic suppliers into globally competitive defence companies, supporting the "Make in India, Make for the World" vision.

### PYQ Compass



Q. Consider the following statements about Mission Sudarshan Chakra of India:

1. It aims to enhance India's air defence, ballistic missile defence and aerial offensive capabilities.
2. This Mission is being designed to enhance rapid, precise, and powerful defence responses, reinforcing India's strategic autonomy.
3. One of the aims of this Mission is to cover all public places of India by an expanded nationwide security shield by 2035.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

## On packaged foods in India, now a red label, and a long overdue warning (I.E 02-09-2026)

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has proposed introducing **red hexagonal front-of-pack warning labels** on packaged foods high in specified nutrients such as sugar, salt and saturated fat. The proposal follows the Supreme Court's intervention, which urged the government to consider front-of-pack labelling as a public-health measure.



### The FSSAI Proposal

**Warning Label:** Packaged foods high in specified nutrients would carry a prominent red hexagonal warning on the front of the package.

**Nutritional Concerns:** The label would identify products containing high levels of added saturated fat, sugar or salt, based on thresholds linked to the Dietary Guidelines for Indians, 2024.

**Separate Warning:** Highly sweetened beverages would carry a specific warning to make excessive sweetness readily identifiable.

**Two-Phase Approach:** Initially, products high in at least two nutrients of concern would be covered; in the second phase, the requirement would extend to products high in even one nutrient.

**Visibility:** The warning is proposed to use a font size one point larger than that of the nutrition information table on the back of the package.

### Why It Matters

**Health Burden:** Concerns are constantly rising over growing consumption of foods high in sugar, refined carbohydrates, salt and unhealthy fats, alongside rising obesity.

**Impact on Children:** India holds the second-highest number of overweight or obese children globally, after China.

**Informed Choices:** A prominent front-of-pack warning could allow consumers to identify nutritionally harmful products more easily rather than relying on detailed nutritional information on the back of the package.

**Evidence:** Experiences such as Chile's 24% decline in sugary-drink consumption following the introduction of black octagonal warning labels indicate that clear warning labels can influence consumption behaviour.

### Concerns & Implications

**Coverage:** The initial focus on products high in two or more nutrients may exclude foods excessively high in only one unhealthy nutrient, while concerns also remain over the visibility of the proposed labels.

**Behaviour:** Labelling alone may not significantly change dietary choices, which are shaped by income, awareness, gender, cultural and faith-based practices; FSSAI's earlier health-star model was also criticised for appearing positive rather than cautionary.

**Judicial Basis:** The Supreme Court has pushed for stronger front-of-pack warnings and linked the issue to Article 21's right to health and Article 47's public-health obligation, rejecting the argument that implementation difficulties or industry concerns should override children's health.

**Broader Strategy:** Warning labels should therefore form part of a wider public-health approach combining nutrition awareness, consumer education, regulation of unhealthy foods and healthier lifestyle nudges, particularly as obesity can coexist with malnutrition.

### PYQ Compass



Q. With reference to perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) that are used in making many consumer product, consider the following statements: (2024)

1. PFAS are found to be widespread in drinking water, food and food packaging material.
2. PFAS are not easily degraded in the environment.
3. Persistent exposure to PFAS can lead to bioaccumulation in animal bodies.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

## Do not gamble (The Hindu : 02-09-2026)

The Russia-Ukraine conflict is witnessing an escalation in long-range attacks, with Ukraine increasingly targeting Russian energy and military infrastructure while Russia continues drone and missile strikes on Ukraine. The emergence of incidents involving Russian projectiles, explosive drones and suspected sabotage in NATO countries has raised concerns about the conflict spilling beyond Ukraine.

### Escalating Conflict

**Long-Range Attacks:** Russia and Ukraine have intensified attacks deep inside each other's territory, opening a new aerial and long-range front in the conflict.

**Russian Strikes:** Russia continues to use drones and ballistic missiles against Ukrainian targets, exploiting weaknesses in Ukraine's air-defence capabilities.

**Ukrainian Response:** Ukraine has increasingly targeted Russian energy infrastructure, supply networks and military systems, reportedly affecting a significant portion of Russia's refining capacity.

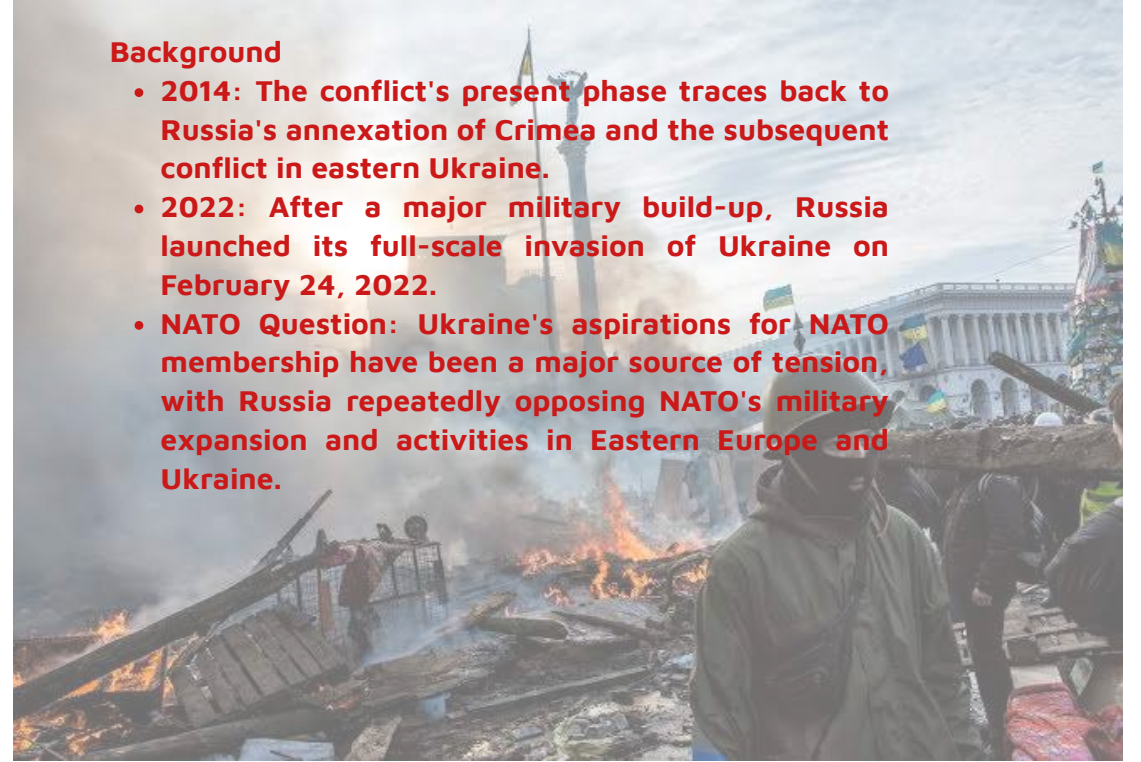
**Battlefield Stalemate:** Despite Russia controlling more than 20% of Ukraine's pre-2014 territory, its territorial advances have slowed, while continued European support has helped Ukraine withstand Russian attacks.

### Continuing Threats

**Spillover:** Incidents involving explosive drones near a German airport, a drone shot down over Romania and a Russian projectile landing in Poland indicate the possibility of the conflict extending into NATO territory.

**Gray-Zone Tactics:** European officials have also raised concerns over sabotage, recruitment of foreign agents and cyberattacks, suggesting the use of activities below the threshold of conventional warfare. It represent attempts to test NATO's response and political resolve without directly triggering a confrontation.

**NATO-Russia Risk:** Any deliberate or significant attack on NATO territory could activate a dangerous confrontation.



### Possibility of Further Escalation

**Domestic Pressure:** The slowing of Russian territorial gains and increasing Ukrainian attacks on Russian infrastructure could create pressure on Moscow to alter the course of the war.

**External Distraction:** There is the possibility that Russia could exploit U.S. strategic preoccupation in the Persian Gulf to intensify the conflict.

**Possible Escalation:** Concerns have been raised over potential cyberattacks or even a limited Russian incursion into NATO territory.

**Nuclear Dimension:** A direct Russia-NATO confrontation would carry exceptional risks because it could escalate into a conflict between nuclear-armed sides.

### Strategic Implications

**European Security:** Continued escalation increases the possibility of the Russia-Ukraine war becoming a broader European security crisis.

**Economic Pressure:** Ukraine's attacks on Russia's energy and refining infrastructure are increasingly imposing economic costs on Moscow.

**Military Balance:** Russia retains significant offensive capabilities, while Ukraine's ability to sustain resistance remains closely linked to continued European support.

**Escalation Trap:** Attempts to break the battlefield stalemate through attacks on NATO territory could transform a prolonged regional conflict into a much wider confrontation.

### PYQ COMPASS



Q. Consider the following countries: 1. Bulgaria 2. Czech Republic 3. Hungary 4. Latvia 5. Lithuania 6. Romania  
 How many of the above-mentioned countries share a land border with Ukraine?  
 a) Only two b) Only three c) Only four d) Only five

# WORLD

## SCO must dismantle ecosystem of terror financing, recruitment, radicalisation, safe havens: PM Modi



The 26th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit was held in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, bringing together member states to deliberate on key regional and international security issues. Pakistan assumed the SCO chairmanship for 2026–27 at the conclusion of the summit.

### Key developments at the Summit

**Afghanistan issue:** SCO members called for an inclusive government in Afghanistan.

**West Asia:** member states expressed deep concern over the West Asia/Persian Gulf conflict and called for a diplomatic solution.

**Conflicts:** SCO group also addressed the U.S.–Iran and Russia–Ukraine conflicts, including their implications for international security.

**Terrorism:** The group rejected the use of terrorist, separatist and extremist groups for personal gain.

**Finance:** members welcomed progress towards establishing an SCO Development Bank.

### India's stance

**Terrorism:** Called for dismantling the ecosystem of terrorist financing, recruitment, radicalisation and safe havens, with no double standards and no use of terrorism as an instrument of state policy.

**Approach:** Terrorism must not be addressed merely through an “action-reaction” approach.

**Afghanistan:** Emphasised peace and stability in Afghanistan, humanitarian assistance, and the threat posed by drug trafficking to regional security

## Palestine's stance in India's mediation role



A recent interview with the Palestinian Foreign Minister revealed the nation's stance on the following issues:

**West Bank:** Described the situation as deteriorating due to rising settler violence and stressed adherence to international law.

**Gaza Peace Plan:** Welcomed U.S. President Donald Trump's peace plan and called for implementation of its next phase, including Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

**Two-State Solution:** Reaffirmed the two-state solution as the only viable pathway to lasting peace.

**Palestinian Unity:** Called for greater unity among Palestinian factions under the framework of the PLO, with one government, law and administration.

**International Law:** Called for consistent application of international law without double standards and greater international accountability.

**India:** Welcomed India's longstanding ties with Palestine and Israel, but urged New Delhi to speak more forcefully against violations of international law and use its global influence to promote peace.

**Arms Transfers:** Urged India to seriously examine arms transfers to Israel, citing concerns regarding their potential implications under international law. **(A recent Amnesty International report claimed that more than 2,500 shipments of arms and ammunition were sent from India to Israel after October 7)**

**India as Peacemaker:** Called on India, given its global weight and relations with both sides, to play a more substantial role in promoting Israeli–Palestinian peace.



### PYQ Compass

Q. Consider the following:

1. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
  2. Missile Technology Control Regime
  3. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
- India is a member of which of the above?

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

## Majority of India's gig workers remain out of the government's reach

The Union Budget 2025–26 announced healthcare coverage for gig workers registered on the e-Shram portal, with an expected coverage of over one crore workers. However, only 8.58 lakh gig workers were registered on e-Shram as of January 2026, highlighting a major gap between the estimated size of the gig workforce and the workers actually identified through the government's database.

### Who is a Gig Worker?

**Legal Recognition:** The Code on Social Security, 2020 formally recognised gig workers and platform workers within India's social-security framework.

**Gig Worker:** A person earning from work arrangements outside the traditional employer–employee relationship.

**Platform Worker:** A person undertaking platform work, where an online platform connects service providers with organisations or individuals for payment.

**Aggregator:** A digital intermediary or marketplace connecting users with service providers.

**Asymmetric Sector distribution:** Gig work extends across food delivery, agriculture, healthcare, education, retail and domestic services, although registrations are concentrated in food, transportation and household work.

### The Counting Problem

**Lack of Dedicated Count:** India does not yet have a sufficiently developed, dedicated system for regularly measuring its gig workforce.

**NITI Estimate:** The principal benchmark remains the NITI Aayog's 2022 report, which estimated around 77 lakh gig workers in 2020–21, rising to 1.27 crore in 2024–25 and 1.43 crore in 2025–26.

**PLFS Gap:** Despite the gig workforce being estimated at around 2% of India's 61.6-crore workforce, the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) does not yet capture gig workers as a distinct category.

**Administrative Gap:** e-Shram registrations cannot automatically be treated as the total number of gig workers because registration depends on worker awareness, eligibility, access and actual enrolment.

**Coverage Gap:** The 8.58-lakh registrations in January 2026 represented only a small fraction of the workforce estimated by NITI Aayog.



### Counting & Social Security Challenges

**Policy Planning:** Reliable estimates are essential for planning healthcare, insurance, pensions and other welfare schemes, as well as estimating the financial resources required.

**Workforce Mapping:** Regular data is needed to identify the sectoral, geographical and occupational distribution of gig workers as the sector expands beyond traditional employment.

**Coverage Gap:** The wide gap between estimated and registered workers means many may remain outside the welfare-delivery system, while State-wise registration remains uneven.

**Benefits:** Although the Social Security Code provides for accident insurance, maternity benefits and a Social Security Fund, several provisions are yet to fully materialise; aggregators are required to contribute 1–2% of annual turnover, subject to a 5% ceiling

### PYQ Compass



Q. Discuss the merits and demerits of the four 'Labour Codes' in the context of labour market reforms in India. What has been the progress so far in this regard? (GS III - 2024)

Q. Most of the unemployment in India is structural in nature. Examine the methodology adopted to compute unemployment in the country and suggest improvements (GS III - 2023)

## India's Current Account Deficit Widens - what does it mean?

India's current account deficit (CAD) widened to \$4.2 billion, or 0.5% of GDP, in Q1 FY2026-27, from \$3.4 billion, or 0.4% of GDP, in the year-ago quarter, according to preliminary RBI data. **The widening was mainly driven by a larger merchandise trade deficit, although stronger services earnings, remittances and lower primary-income outgo provided a cushion.**

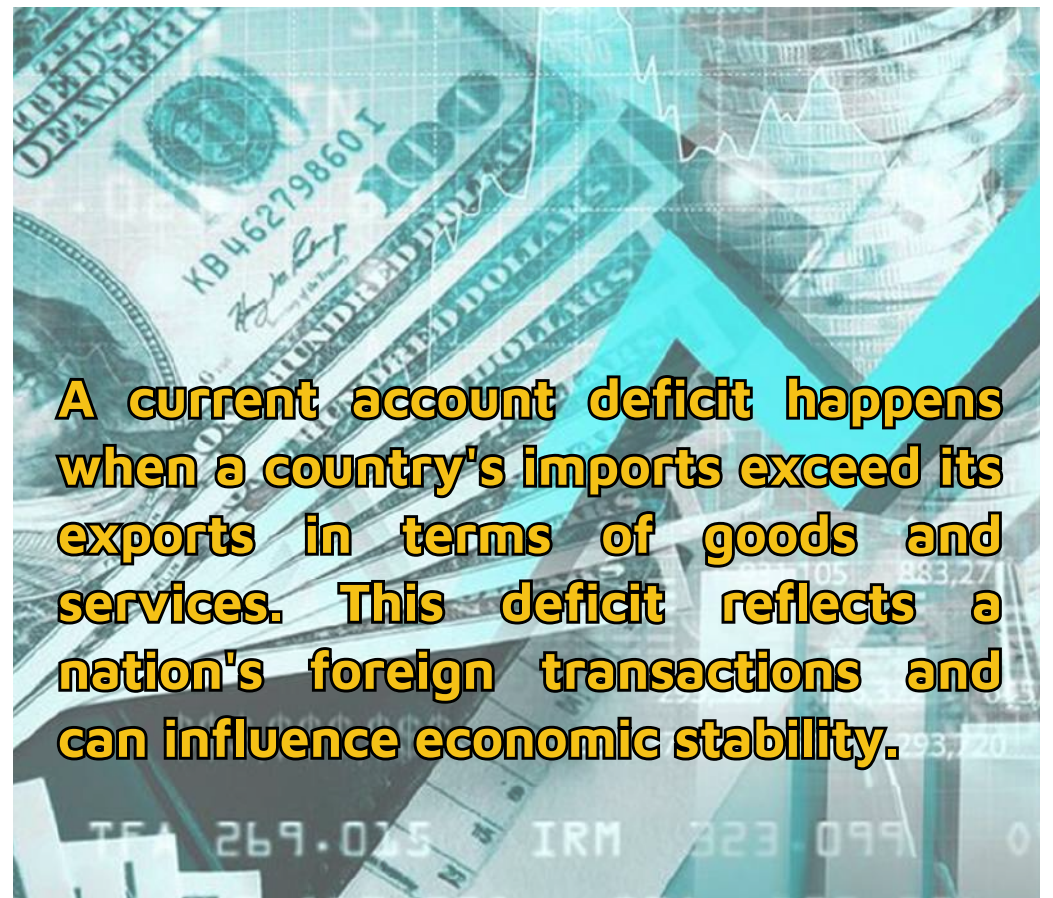
### How a UPI transaction works

**Merchandise:** The merchandise trade deficit widened sharply to \$86.1 billion from \$68.9 billion, making it the principal reason for the higher CAD.

**Services:** Net services receipts increased to \$51.6 billion from \$47.9 billion, supported by growth in computer services, business services and transportation.

**Remittances:** Personal transfer receipts, largely remittances from Indians working abroad, rose significantly to \$42.9 billion from \$33.2 billion.

**Primary Income:** Net outgo under primary income declined to \$10.5 billion from \$13.3 billion, mainly due to lower investment-income payments.



### Capital Flows & Reserves

**Foreign portfolio investment :** FPI recorded a \$9.6-billion net outflow, reversing a \$1.6-billion inflow in Q1 FY26.

**Deposits:** Non-resident deposit inflows moderated to \$2.8 billion from \$3.6 billion.

**ECBs:** Net external commercial borrowing inflows declined to \$3.3 billion from \$4.4 billion.

**Reserves:** Foreign-exchange reserves declined by \$8.1 billion on a balance-of-payments basis, compared with an accretion of \$4.5 billion a year earlier.

### Understanding CAD

**Meaning:** The current account records a country's transactions with the rest of the world involving goods, services, primary income and transfers.

**Deficit:** A CAD occurs when the country's current-account payments exceed its receipts, commonly because imports of goods and services exceed exports.

**BoP Link:** The current account is a major component of the Balance of Payments (BoP) and interacts with financial/capital flows and changes in foreign-exchange reserves.

**Not Always Negative:** A CAD is not inherently harmful; it can be sustainable when foreign capital finances productive, high-return investment and the economy can comfortably meet its external obligations.

### PYQ Compass



Q. What is/are the most likely advantages of implementing 'Goods and Services Tax (GST)'? (2017)

1. It will replace multiple taxes collected by multiple authorities and will thus create a single market in India.

2. **It will drastically reduce the 'Current Account Deficit' of India** and will enable it to increase its foreign exchange reserves.

3. It will enormously increase the growth and size of economy of India and will enable it to overtake China in the near future. Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

## PYQ Compass



Q. With reference to perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) that are used in making many consumer product, consider the following statements: (2024)

1. PFAS are found to be widespread in drinking water, food and food packaging material.
2. PFAS are not easily degraded in the environment.
3. Persistent exposure to PFAS can lead to bioaccumulation in animal bodies.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

**Ans : d**

PFAS, often called "forever chemicals," are used in various consumer products like non stick cookware, waterproof fabrics, and food packaging, and they leach into water and food sources. PFAS are highly resistant to environmental degradation due to their strong carbon-fluorine bonds, making them persist for decades. PFAS can accumulate in the tissues of animals and humans, potentially causing health issues such as hormonal disruption, cancer, and immune system effects.

Q. Consider the following countries:

1. Bulgaria
2. Czech Republic
3. Hungary
4. Latvia
5. Lithuania
6. Romania

How many of the above-mentioned countries share a land border with Ukraine?

- a) Only two
- b) Only three
- c) Only four
- d) Only five

**Ans : a**

Ukraine is the largest country in Europe. The country sits on the southwestern part of the Russian Plain. It is bordered by the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov to the south, Russia to the east and north, Belarus to the north, Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary to the west, and Romania and Moldova to the south.

## PYQ Compass



Q. Consider the following:

1. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
2. Missile Technology Control Regime
3. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

India is a member of which of the above?

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

**Ans : d**

India is the member of all the Organizations.

The SCO has nine member states—India, Iran, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Missile Technology Control Regime: On 27 June, India became a full member of the MTCR after a “deal” was struck with Italy. This marks the first entry into any multilateral export control regime for India.

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank: On 24 October 2014, twenty-one countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding the AIIB in Beijing, China: Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, India, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Mongolia, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Vietnam.

Q. What is/are the most likely advantages of implementing ‘Goods and Services Tax (GST)’? (2017)

1. It will replace multiple taxes collected by multiple authorities and will thus create a single market in India.
  2. **It will drastically reduce the ‘Current Account Deficit’ of India** and will enable it to increase its foreign exchange reserves.
  3. It will enormously increase the growth and size of economy of India and will enable it to overtake China in the near future. Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- a) 1 only
  - b) 2 and 3 only
  - c) 1 and 3 only
  - d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans : a**

It may reduce the fiscal deficit in the long-run and may place CAD favourably due to better foreign investment climate owing to an improved tax structure. But, the word ‘drastically’ is extreme and so the statement is incorrect.

## PYQ Compass



Q. Consider the following pairs: (2019)

**Famous place    River**

1. Pandharpur : Chandrabhaga
2. Tiruchirappalli : Cauvery
3. Hampi : Malaprabha

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

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

**Ans : a**

Pandharpur is a well known pilgrimage town on the banks of Chandrabhaga River in Solapur district, Maharashtra, India. Tiruchirappalli is located along the Kaveri River in Tamil Nadu, India. Hampi, also referred to as the Group of Monuments at Hampi, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site situated on the banks of the Tungabhadra River in the eastern part of central Karnataka near the state border with Andhra Pradesh. Thus only 1 and 2 are correct.

Q. Consider the following statements about Mission Sudarshan Chakra of India (2026):

1. It aims to enhance India's air defence, ballistic missile defence and aerial offensive capabilities.
2. This Mission is being designed to enhance rapid, precise, and powerful defence responses, reinforcing India's strategic autonomy.
3. One of the aims of this Mission is to cover all public places of India by an expanded nationwide security shield by 2035.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Ans : a**

Mission Sudarshan Chakra is an initiative of the Indian Air Force (IAF) aimed at strengthening India's integrated air defence network, ballistic missile defence systems, and aerial offensive capabilities. The mission seeks to improve rapid, precise, and effective defence responses while enhancing India's strategic preparedness and self reliance against evolving security challenges. It is a military initiative focused on national defence.

## PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q. FSSAI has proposed hexagonal warning labels on packaged foods high in sugar, salt and saturated fat. Which of the following provides the rationale for this approach?

- 1.Warning labels discourage consumption, whereas star ratings may create a positive impression of relatively healthier products.
- 2.Warning labels are preferred because they are less costly to implement than star ratings.

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- (A) 1 only  
 (B) 2 only  
 (C) Both 1 and 2  
 (D) Neither 1 nor 2

**Correct answer: (A) 1 only**

**Statement 1 is correct.** The proposed hexagonal warning-label system is designed to give a clear negative signal about specific nutritional risks such as high sugar, salt and saturated fat. In the earlier health-star rating approach, a product could receive a relatively favourable rating and thereby create the impression that it was a healthy or acceptable choice. The warning-label approach therefore seeks to discourage consumption of unhealthy products rather than rank them on a relative scale of "better" and "worse".

**Statement 2 is incorrect.** The rationale for moving towards warning labels is not their lower implementation cost.

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the e-Shram portal:

- 1.It was established as an Aadhaar-seeded National Database of Unorganised Workers, with registered workers receiving a Universal Account Number.
- 2.It facilitates the portability and integration of welfare, employment, skilling, apprenticeship and pension services for registered workers.
- 3.Its registration database can by itself be treated as a statistically representative estimate of India's entire unorganised and gig workforce.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (A) 1 and 2 only  
 (B) 2 and 3 only  
 (C) 1 and 3 only  
 (D) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (A) 1 and 2 only

**Statement 1 is correct:** Launched in 2021, e-Shram was created as an Aadhaar-seeded National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW). Registered workers receive a Universal Account Number, providing a common identification mechanism.

**Statement 2 is correct:** The portal has evolved beyond simple registration into a digital welfare-delivery platform, integrating services relating to welfare benefits, employment opportunities, skilling, apprenticeships and pensions. This can improve benefit portability and targeted delivery.

**Statement 3 is incorrect:** e-Shram is an administrative registration database, not a statistically representative survey of the entire workforce. Registration depends on workers actually enrolling, so the number registered cannot automatically be equated with the actual size of India's unorganised or gig workforce.