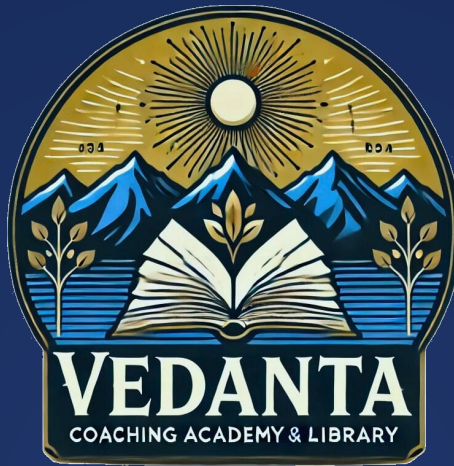




THE HINDU

Daily Current Affairs Analysis · UPSC CSE

WEDNESDAY · 02 SEPTEMBER 2026

Article 142 · Complete Justice

EVM Totalisers

Super Garuda Shield

Russia-Ukraine & NATO

Gig Workforce · e-Shram

E-Waste · Urban Mining

Q1 GDP 7.8% · New Base Year

Compiled by **Sapna Chauhan**

VEDANTA COACHING ACADEMY & LIBRARY

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GS PAPER DISTRIBUTION**GS II — Polity & Governance (2), International Relations (2)****GS III — Economy (2), Environment & Resources (1)**

Prelims-heavy value additions on EVM/VVPAT, e-Shram, India's military exercises, E-Waste Rules 2022 and the 2022-23 GDP base year.

EDITOR'S FOCUS

Article 142 is the day's highest-yield topic — pair it with Articles 141/143/144 and the "judicial over-reach vs complete justice" debate. In economy, connect the **gig-workforce measurement gap** with the **Code on Social Security 2020** and PLFS, and read the **7.8% Q1 print** alongside the new **2022-23 base year**.

Article 142 & the Supreme Court's power to do "complete justice"

The apex court invokes its plenary constitutional power to close protest FIRs nationwide — reviving the debate on where "complete justice" ends and judicial overreach begins.

WHY IN THE NEWS

On Tuesday, at the Centre's urging, the Supreme Court took the rare step of quashing criminal cases against Gen-Z protesters linked to the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP) stir over the **NEET-UG 2026 question-paper leaks**. A three-judge Bench headed by **CJI Surya Kant** used its powers under **Article 142** to do "complete justice", directing that the FIRs "will not be investigated, and will be closed for all intents and purposes" — across **all States and Union Territories**, not merely Delhi.

- ▶ **The plenary power.** Article 142(1) empowers the Supreme Court to pass any decree or order necessary for doing "complete justice" in any cause or matter pending before it — a mechanism to fill legislative gaps where existing law offers no specific remedy.
- ▶ **Inherent and residuary.** This power is not conferred by ordinary statute; it is inherent to the Court's role as custodian of the Constitution, letting it transcend procedural technicalities to prevent a "manifest travesty of justice".
- ▶ **Supremacy over ordinary laws.** In *Delhi Judicial Service Association v. State of Gujarat* (1991), the Court held Article 142 is of an "entirely different quality"; statutory restrictions in ordinary laws cannot limit this constitutional power.
- ▶ **Substantive justice.** As affirmed in *Canara Bank v. Debasis Das* (2003), the constitutional intent is to deliver substantive justice — the removal of injustice — over rigid procedure.
- ▶ **But the power is not unlimited.** In *Prem Chand Garg* (1963) and *A.R. Antulay* (1988) the Court held Article 142 cannot be used to pass orders inconsistent with express statutory provisions or fundamental rights; in *Supreme Court Bar Association v. Union of India* (1998) it clarified the power **supplements** substantive law, it does not **supplant** it.
- ▶ **Federalism friction.** "Police" and "public order" are State List subjects and investigation is an executive function; a blanket, nationwide closure of FIRs revives concerns about the separation of powers and Centre–State balance.
- ▶ **A wide footprint.** Article 142 has previously underpinned landmark orders — euthanasia guidelines (*Common Cause*, 2018), the Bhopal settlement, cleaning of the Taj, the Ayodhya land verdict, and cancellation of 2G/coal allocations — showing both its reach and its unpredictability.

FROM THE HINDU · PAGE 1

GS II · POLITY

SC quashes FIRs against Gen-Z protesters under Article 142

Bench led by CJI Surya Kant invokes "complete justice" power; order extends to every State and Union Territory where the NEET-UG protests took place.

The Supreme Court, at the urging of the Centre, took a rare and extraordinary step on Tuesday to quash criminal cases registered against Gen-Z pro-

testers involved in a nationwide stir linked to the Cockroach Janta Party following the NEET-UG 2026 paper leaks.

A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Surya Kant exercised its absolute powers under Article 142 to do "complete justice" and ensure the FIRs "will not be investigated, and will be closed for all intents

and purposes". The court clarified its order was not confined to Delhi, but extended to all States and Union Territories where protests took place.

VALUE ADDITION · ARTICLE 142 IN ONE PAGE

- **142(1)** — orders for "complete justice", enforceable throughout India. **142(2)** — powers as to attendance of persons, discovery of documents, and investigation/punishment for contempt.
- "Complete justice" is **not defined** — it is discretionary and case-specific, which is the source of both its flexibility and its criticism.
- Read with **Article 141** (law declared by SC binding on all courts), **Article 144** (all civil/judicial authorities to act in aid of the SC), and **Article 32** (writ jurisdiction).
- Judicial **self-restraint** is the only real check; critics flag overreach, unpredictability and the absence of codified guiding principles.

PRELIMS POINTERS

Art 142 — complete justice (plenary/residuary) · **Art 141** — law declared binding · **Art 143** — advisory jurisdiction (Presidential reference) · **Art 144** — authorities in aid of SC · **Art 137** — review · Key cases: **Delhi Judicial Service Assn (1991)**, **Prem Chand Garg (1963)**, **A.R. Antulay (1988)**, **SCBA v. UoI (1998)**.

SYLLABUS ▶ GS II — Indian Constitution: features & amendments; Structure, organisation and functioning of the Judiciary; Separation of powers.

GS PAPER II · POLITY · ELECTIONS

"Totalisers" in EVM vote counting

The Supreme Court asks the Centre to respond on a decades-old proposal to mask booth-wise trends — as the Election Commission warns of a legal vacuum and a fresh transparency risk.

WHY IN THE NEWS

The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought the Centre's response on the use of "**totalisers**" — machines that consolidate and count votes from multiple EVM control units simultaneously **without revealing booth-wise voting trends** — as a "fall-back option". The order came despite the Election Commission's warning that introducing totalisers now, when EVMs already face frequent public questioning, "may not be the right move".

- ▶ **What a totaliser does.** It connects a cluster of **14 control units** of EVMs used at 14 polling stations via a cable and returns a single consolidated result per candidate for that group — hiding how any individual booth voted.
- ▶ **The petitioner's case.** Advocate **Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay** argued totalisers would safeguard voter **privacy** and prevent post-poll **victimisation**, since parties profile booth-level patterns to reward or punish localities.

- ▶ **No legal framework.** The EC pointed out that neither the **Representation of the People Act** nor the **Conduct of Election Rules, 1961**, nor any allied enactment recognises or regulates a totaliser; substantive statutory amendments would be needed first.
- ▶ **Transparency concern.** Currently counting happens before candidates' agents, who use **Form 17C** to match booth-wise, machine-wise counts and at election tribunals. Clubbing EVMs would conceal individual machine malfunction and human error within an aggregate.
- ▶ **Political consensus is against it.** The EC submitted that **3 of 6 national parties and 18 of 29 State parties** opposed the idea; only the **Law Commission's 255th report** suggested selective use.
- ▶ **The EC's core worry.** That the totaliser would become "fodder for further misapprehension about EVMs" at a time when confidence in the machines is itself contested.

FROM THE HINDU · PAGE 12

GS II · POLITY

SC seeks Centre's response on use of 'totalisers' in EVM vote counting

The petition argues totalisers would protect voters' privacy by concealing booth-wise patterns; the EC says aggregation could mask glitches or human error in individual machines.

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL · NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court sought the Centre's response on totalisers — machines to consolidate votes from multiple EVM control units without revealing booth-wise trends — as a "fall-back option", despite an EC warning that introducing unregulated mechanisms could complicate public confidence.

"EVMs clubbed together would stand concealed within the aggregate figure... Totaliser, by its very design, aggregates the votes recorded across polling booths at a single point without preserving a distinct booth-wise, machine-wise trail," the poll body said, adding its main worry was fresh misapprehension about EVMs.

VALUE ADDITION · EVM & VVPAT — THE FULL RECALL

- **Timeline:** first used at Paravur (Kerala) in **1982**; regular use from 1998; all State polls on EVMs by 2003; **only-EVM Lok Sabha from 2004**.
- **Who makes them:** designed by the **Technical Experts Committee (TEC)** of the ECI with **Bharat Electronics Ltd, Bengaluru** (Min. of Defence) and **Electronics Corporation of India Ltd, Hyderabad** (Dept. of Atomic Energy).
- **Design facts:** stand-alone and **not networked**; runs on battery (**no external power**); one-time-programmable microcontroller that **cannot be reprogrammed** after manufacture.
- **VVPAT:** independent verification unit; first used at the **Noksen (Nagaland) bye-poll, 2013**; in all constituencies in the 2019 LS polls; slip shows serial/name/symbol, visible for **7 seconds**, then cut into a sealed drop-box.
- **Case law:** *Subramanian Swamy v. ECI* (2013) stressed the necessity of VVPAT in EVM elections.

PRELIMS POINTERS

Totaliser links **14 control units** · **Form 17C** = booth-wise account of votes recorded · only the **Law Commission 255th report** backed selective use · manufacturers **BEL + ECIL** · VVPAT debut **Noksen, Nagaland (2013)** · ECI's powers flow from **Article 324**.

SYLLABUS ▶ GS II — Salient features of the Representation of People's Act; Election Commission of India; Electoral reforms.

Exercise Super Garuda Shield 2026

Washington and Jakarta open their flagship multilateral drill – a barometer of minilateral security-building across a contested Indo-Pacific.

WHY IN THE NEWS

The United States and Indonesia kicked off their annual joint military drills, **Super Garuda Shield**, running until **11 September** across multiple Indonesian regions. Hosted by the **Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI)** and co-led by **US Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM)**, it is now among the region's largest combined exercises.

- **From bilateral to multilateral.** Originally established in **2006** as a bilateral army exchange ("Garuda Shield"), it expanded into a combined, joint-service, multilateral war-game covering **land, air, maritime and cyber** domains.
- **Who takes part.** Core nations are **Indonesia and the United States**, joined by roughly **13 additional partner/observer nations** – including Japan, South Korea, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, France and Singapore – spanning Indo-Pacific and NATO partner networks.
- **Stated aim.** To strengthen combined **interoperability**, tactical readiness and multilateral cooperation – enhancing collective capability in regional deterrence, crisis response, territorial defence and **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)**.
- **Operational value.** It improves command-and-control synchronisation, communications integration and logistics coordination between Western allied systems and Southeast Asian defence architectures.
- **Strategic backdrop.** The drill reflects Indo-Pacific balancing amid South China Sea tensions and the growing role of "minilaterals" in regional security – a space India engages through the Quad, ASEAN and its own bilateral exercises.

FROM THE HINDU · WORLD

GS II · IR

US, Indonesia open Super Garuda Shield 2026

Flagship annual exercise hosted by the TNI and co-led by USINDOPACOM draws 13 partner and observer nations across land, air, maritime and cyber domains.

The United States and Indonesia kicked off their annual joint military drills, Super Garuda Shield, spanning until September 11 across multiple Indonesian regions, in a combined multilateral war-game that has grown steadily from its 2006 origins as a bilateral army exchange.

Participating and observer nations include Japan, South Korea, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, France and Singapore. The exercise aims to strengthen interoperability, tactical readiness and multilateral cooperation, enhancing collective capabilities in deterrence, crisis response, territorial defence and HADR.

VALUE ADDITION · INDIA'S KEY MILITARY EXERCISES (PRELIMS SWEEP)

- **With the USA:** Yudh Abhyas (army), Vajra Prahar (special forces), Cope India (air force), Tiger Triumph (tri-service, bilateral).

- **Naval / Quad:** Malabar (India-US-Japan-Australia); Milan (multilateral, Visakhapatnam); RIMPAC (participant).
- **With Indonesia:** Garuda Shakti (army) & Samudra Shakti (navy) — *distinct from* the US-led Super Garuda Shield.
- **Others:** Indra (Russia), Dharma Guardian & JIMEX (Japan), AUSTRALIND & AUSINDEX (Australia), Varuna/Garuda/Shakti (France), Konkan/Ajeya Warrior (UK), Cobra Gold (observer).

PRELIMS POINTERS

Super Garuda Shield — host **Indonesia (TNI)**, co-lead **USINDOPACOM**, since **2006** · India is **not** a core participant · **HADR** = Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief · don't confuse with India's own **Garuda Shakti** (India-Indonesia army) or **Garuda** (India-France air).

SYLLABUS ► GS II — Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India or affecting India's interests; GS III — Security & defence.

GS PAPER II · INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Russia-Ukraine escalation & NATO's "gray zone"

Editorial view — with long-range strikes and sabotage testing Europe's resolve, the case for diplomacy grows stronger than the case for a nuclear-tinged gamble.

WHY IN THE NEWS

With Russia and Ukraine escalating long-range attacks on each other's territory, the risk of the conflict spilling into wider Europe is rising. A run of "gray-zone" incidents — explosive drones near a German airport, one downed over **Romania**, a Russian projectile in **Poland** — is testing NATO's resolve. The Hindu's editorial argues that Russia "must opt for diplomatic engagement with the West".

- **Gray-zone warfare.** Sabotage, cyberattacks, drone incursions and recruitment of foreign agents fall below the threshold of open war but probe allied resolve and complicate attribution.
- **Deterrence diplomacy.** CIA chief John Ratcliffe visited Moscow to warn the Kremlin against escalating the war into NATO member-states, even as nationalist rhetoric in Russia has hardened.
- **A stalled front.** Russia holds more than **20% of Ukraine's pre-2014 territory**, but incremental gains have slowed; Ukraine's long-range strikes on Russian energy and refining infrastructure have reportedly knocked out roughly **20% of refining capacity**, inflicting economic pain.
- **The gamble.** Under domestic pressure and stuck on the frontline, Russia could exploit US preoccupation in the Persian Gulf to escalate — but a wider war between two nuclear-armed sides would compound, not solve, its problems.
- **Why it matters for India.** Energy prices (India imports 85–90% of its oil), fertiliser and edible-oil supply, discounted Russian crude and defence platforms (e.g., S-400) all make the war a live economic-security variable for New Delhi.

Do not gamble

With Russia and Ukraine escalating their long-range attacks on each other's territory, the risk of the conflict spilling over into other parts of Europe is rising. There have been isolated but significant incidents suggesting Russia is carrying out 'gray zone' attacks, testing NATO's resolve.

Russia still has no clear path to victory. Its incremental territorial gains have slowed, while Ukraine's new aerial front inflicts economic pain. This stalemate is dangerous: escalation into NATO territory could trigger an all-out war between two nuclear-armed sides. Mr. Putin should instead opt for serious diplomatic engagement to end Europe's longest war since 1945.

VALUE ADDITION · NATO & THE STRATEGIC MAP

- **NATO** — founded 1949 (Washington Treaty); HQ Brussels; **Article 5** = collective defence ("an attack on one is an attack on all"); now **32 members** (Finland 2023, Sweden 2024).
- **Chokepoints**: the **Strait of Hormuz** (Persian Gulf oil) and the war's pressure on Russian energy exports both feed global oil-price risk.
- **India's stance**: strategic autonomy and repeated calls for dialogue — "this is not an era of war" — while sustaining energy and defence ties with Russia.
- **Concepts to cite**: gray-zone / hybrid warfare, deterrence, minilateralism, transboundary spillover.

PRELIMS POINTERS

NATO Art 5 — collective defence · latest members **Finland (2023)**, **Sweden (2024)** — total **32** · **pre-2014** = before Crimea's annexation · **Strait of Hormuz** connects the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman · gray-zone = below-threshold hybrid tactics.

SYLLABUS ► GS II — Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests; important international institutions.

GS PAPER III · INDIAN ECONOMY · EMPLOYMENT

India's gig workforce & the e-Shram gap

A promised healthcare benefit has driven a registration surge — yet five of every six gig workers still sit outside the State's measurement and its safety net.

WHY IN THE NEWS

The Union Budget 2025-26 (announced 1 February 2025) promised **healthcare coverage** for gig workers registered on the **e-Shram** portal, expected to benefit over one crore. But a Rajya Sabha reply (29 January 2026) shows only **8.58 lakh** gig workers registered — even doubling that accounts for barely **15%** of the estimated total. In effect, **five of every six gig workers remain outside the government's reach**.

- **A single-source estimate.** The oft-quoted "one crore" figure traces to NITI Aayog's 2022 report *India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy*, which put the number at **~77 lakh in 2020-21** and projected **1.27 crore (2024-25)** and **1.43 crore (2025-26)** — about **2%** of India's 61.6-crore workforce (2025 PLFS).

- **The measurement gap.** The Periodic Labour Force Survey still does not capture gig workers as a distinct category, leaving policy anchored to a single estimate.
- **The legal scaffolding.** The **Code on Social Security, 2020** first defined a "gig worker" and promised accident insurance, maternity benefits and a dedicated social-security fund — most of which is yet to materialise.
- **Where gig work concentrates.** Of the 21 sectors NITI listed, registrations cluster in the food industry, transportation, and domestic/household work; growth is also uneven across States.

TOP STATES BY e-SHRAM GIG REGISTRATIONS (Jan 2026)

Maharashtra	1,34,705
Uttar Pradesh	1,30,505
Bihar	1,09,207
West Bengal	54,734
Delhi	49,479
Andhra Pradesh	39,112
Rajasthan	38,205
Karnataka	37,871
Gujarat	34,756
Madhya Pradesh	34,351

Source: Ministry of Labour & Employment / e-Shram, as cited in The Hindu Data Point.

SECTOR SHARE OF GIG WORKERS (e-SHRAM)

Food industry	32.8%
Auto & transport	25.4%
Others	24.9%
Domestic/household	9.9%
Construction	3.6%
Agriculture	3.4%

Chart 4, The Hindu Data Team — five sectors employing the highest share of gig workers.

VALUE ADDITION · THE e-SHRAM PORTAL

- Launched **2021** by the Ministry of Labour & Employment, developed by the **National Informatics Centre (NIC)**; India's first Aadhaar-authenticated **National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW)**.
- Gives each worker a **12-digit Universal Account Number (UAN)** for identification and welfare access nationwide.
- **Eligibility:** any unorganised worker aged **16+**, who is **not** an income-tax payer and **not** an EPFO/ESIC member.
- **Scale & scope:** over **31.89 crore** registrations; a one-stop platform for welfare schemes, jobs, skilling, apprenticeship and pension, with **portability** of benefits for migrant and construction workers.

PRELIMS POINTERS

e-Shram — MoLE + **NIC**, 2021, **NDUW**, 12-digit **UAN** · **Code on Social Security, 2020** first defined "gig" & "platform" worker · **PLFS** by NSO/MoSPI · gig ≈ **2%** of the 61.6-crore workforce · eligibility age **16+**, non-taxpayer, non-EPFO/ESIC.

SYLLABUS ► GS III — Growth, development and employment. GS II — Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections; mechanisms and laws for the protection of the working population.

GS PAPER III · ENVIRONMENT · RESOURCE SECURITY

The two balance sheets behind every e-waste decision

Every discarded server is both a hazard and a mine — and the cheapest disposal today can quietly become tomorrow's strategic and environmental bill.

WHY IN THE NEWS

A Hindu opinion piece argues that every public or corporate decision on discarded electronics "creates two balance sheets" — one financial and immediate, the other strategic and long-lived. As economies digitise, mountains of e-waste have become among the largest untapped sources of strategic raw materials, framing the promise of **urban mining**.

- ▶ **Urban mining.** Discarded computers, servers and networking gear contain **copper, aluminium, gold, silver, palladium** and critical minerals; recovering them from end-of-life products — instead of digging deeper into the earth — turns "yesterday's electronics into tomorrow's resource base".
- ▶ **Why it isn't the default.** Safe recovery needs sophisticated technology, secure data destruction, compliant processing and traceable supply chains — all of which add cost. Procurement that rewards only the **lowest visible cost** (max resale, min processing) discourages advanced recycling.
- ▶ **The two balance sheets.** (1) Financial/immediate — purchase price, resale value, savings; (2) Strategic/long-lived — resource security, supply-chain resilience, public health, national competitiveness. Costs excluded from the first return later, and more expensive, in the second.
- ▶ **Procurement as industrial policy.** A shift to **life-cycle costing** and value-based procurement — and an **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** regime that rewards traceability and quality rather than the cheapest certificate — would channel investment into advanced recycling and strengthen domestic critical-mineral supply.
- ▶ **The unpaid bill.** Environmental costs never stay environmental: they resurface as remediation spending, higher compliance costs, and lost productivity — delayed or redistributed, but rarely avoided.

FROM THE HINDU · OP-ED · PAGE 8

GS III · ENVIRONMENT

The two balance sheets behind every e-waste decision

Suman Chandra & Abhinav Mathur — Whether India's discarded electronics become a strategic asset or a liability depends on the choices made today.

Every few years, governments and companies replace thousands of computers, servers and storage systems. What looks like a routine technology refresh is, in reality, the creation of a valuable mine — one holding copper, gold, palladium and critical minerals the world is scrambling to secure.

Every significant decision creates two balance sheets. The first is financial and immediate. The second is strategic, recording resource security, supply-chain resilience and national competitiveness long after the transaction closes. The question is: which decision leaves behind the smallest unpaid bill?

VALUE ADDITION · E-WASTE GOVERNANCE & CRITICAL MINERALS

- **E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022** (effective 1 April 2023) — an **EPR** regime with EPR certificates and recycling targets for producers, overseen by the **CPCB**; supersedes the 2011 and 2016 rules.
- India is among the world's **largest e-waste generators** (after China and the USA), with volumes rising sharply.

- **Basel Convention** governs the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes.
- **Critical minerals** link-ups: the **National Critical Mineral Mission (2025)**, **KABIL**, and India's list of **30 critical minerals** — plus circular-economy and **Mission LiFE** framing.

PRELIMS POINTERS

EPR = Extended Producer Responsibility · **E-Waste (Management) Rules 2022**, regulator **CPCB** · **Basel Convention** — hazardous-waste movement · **KABIL** = Khanij Bidesh India Ltd · **National Critical Mineral Mission (2025)** · urban mining ↔ circular economy / Mission LiFE.

SYLLABUS ▶ GS III — Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation; GS III — Mobilisation of resources; Science & Tech in recycling.

GS PAPER III · INDIAN ECONOMY · GROWTH

Q1 GDP at 7.8% & the new National Accounts series

"Endurance test": a robust first quarter beat forecasts — but oil, a deficient monsoon and fading front-loading make the stamina test the harder one.

WHY IN THE NEWS

Real GDP grew **7.8%** in the **April–June 2026** quarter, well above the 6–7% many economists expected despite the West Asia crisis. Separately, the Ministry of Statistics (MoSPI) released a **new National Accounts series with base year 2022–23**, replacing 2011–12.

- ▶ **Broad-based strength.** Growth was underpinned by both manufacturing and services; the **manufacturing sector grew 9.2%**, a three-quarter high, with capital formation picking up.
- ▶ **What drove it.** The **GST rate cut** (last September), the RBI's cumulative **125-basis-point** rate cuts through 2025, and **front-loading** of output ahead of expected uncertainty on inflation and future rate moves.
- ▶ **The stamina test.** Chief Economic Adviser V. Anantha Nageswaran cautioned that Hormuz uncertainty is likely to keep oil above **\$80/barrel** — costly for a country importing **85–90%** of its oil. A deficient monsoon threatens rural demand (July IIP already sluggish), and inflation, though within band, is expected to touch **5.9% in Oct–Dec 2026**.
- ▶ **Policy signals.** PM Modi reiterated the "buy local" appeal — avoid non-essential foreign travel and weddings abroad, curb gold purchases — as trade-deficit pressure rests heavily on services exports, themselves vulnerable to a global slowdown and AI substitution.
- ▶ **The new base year.** MoSPI chose **2022–23** as the most recent "normal" post-pandemic year (2019–20 and 2020–21 were distorted by lockdowns), incorporating wider **GST data**, state-level allocation and quarterly estimates, and reducing reliance on outdated proxies.

Endurance test

The quarters ahead will test the stamina of India's economic resilience.

India's economic growth in the first quarter surprised most people. Against a perception that growth would slow to about 6%-7% on account of the West Asia crisis, real growth in April-June 2026 came in at a robust 7.8% — with manufacturing at a three-quarter-high of 9.2%.

Yet the economy is not out of the woods. Hormuz uncertainty is likely to keep oil above \$80 a barrel; a deficient monsoon and sluggish rural demand loom; and the front-loading of manufacturing will, by definition, peter out. The Q1 resilience was tested and passed — but the tougher stamina test remains.

VALUE ADDITION · GDP & THE BASE-YEAR REVISION

- **Who measures it:** the **National Statistical Office (NSO)** under **MoSPI** compiles National Accounts.
- **Identity to remember:** **GVA + net (product) taxes = GDP** (at market prices); distinguish **real** vs **nominal** GDP via the GDP deflator.
- **Base-year revisions** periodically re-anchor prices/weights to reflect structural change: 2004-05 → 2011-12 → now **2022-23**.
- **Why 2022-23:** the most recent "normal" year after Covid-era distortions — giving a stable benchmark for growth comparisons, aided by richer GST-based data.

PRELIMS POINTERS

New GDP **base year 2022-23** (from 2011-12) · compiled by **NSO/MoSPI** · **GVA + net product taxes = GDP** · **Strait of Hormuz** = key oil chokepoint · RBI inflation target **4% ± 2%** · CEA = **V. Anantha Nageswaran**.

SYLLABUS ► GS III — Indian economy: growth, development and employment; Mobilisation of resources; Effects of liberalisation and monetary/fiscal policy.

VEDANTA · EXAM READINESS

Practice Zone

2 Mains questions (with Hindi rendering & approach) · 10 Prelims MCQs · full answer key · quick revision recap · trap-setters.

The Supreme Court's power under Article 142 to do "complete justice" is at once a shield against injustice and a source of institutional friction. In light of its recent use, critically examine the scope and limits of this power.

अनुच्छेद 142 के तहत "पूर्ण न्याय" करने की उच्चतम न्यायालय की शक्ति एक ओर अन्याय के विरुद्ध कवच है और दूसरी ओर संस्थागत टकराव का स्रोत भी। इसके हालिया प्रयोग के आलोक में इस शक्ति के दायरे एवं सीमाओं का समालोचनात्मक परीक्षण कीजिए।

APPROACH

Define Article 142(1) & (2) and "complete justice". Show the positive footprint (gap-filling — Vishaka, euthanasia, Ayodhya, cleansing of environs). Then the limits — *Prem Chand Garg* (1963), *A.R. Antulay* (1988), *SCBA v. UoI* (1998): cannot override statute or fundamental rights; and the federalism concern of quashing FIRs nationwide (police/public order are State subjects). Conclude with self-restraint and the need for guiding principles.

"India's gig economy is expanding faster than the State's capacity to measure and protect it." Discuss the challenges in formalising social security for gig and platform workers, and suggest a way forward.

"भारत की गिग अर्थव्यवस्था राज्य की उसे मापने और संरक्षित करने की क्षमता से अधिक तेज़ी से बढ़ रही है।" गिग एवं प्लेटफ़ॉर्म श्रमिकों हेतु सामाजिक सुरक्षा को औपचारिक बनाने की चुनौतियों की चर्चा कीजिए तथा आगे की राह सुझाइए।

APPROACH

Frame the measurement gap (PLFS doesn't count gig workers; the "1 crore" rests on a single 2022 NITI estimate; only 8.58 lakh on e-Shram). Cite the *Code on Social Security, 2020* — definition made, benefits largely unrealised. Discuss informality, portability and low registration uptake. Way forward: a PLFS gig module, universal auto-registration via aggregators, aggregator/platform contributions to a social-security fund, and interoperable data.

1. With reference to Article 142 of the Constitution, consider the following statements:

1. It empowers the Supreme Court to pass any order necessary for doing "complete justice" in a matter pending before it.
2. Orders passed under it are enforceable throughout the territory of India.
3. It can be used to pass orders inconsistent with express statutory provisions.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

2. With reference to Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) used in India, consider the following statements:

1. EVMs used by the ECI are stand-alone machines and are not connected to the Internet or any external network.
2. The microcontroller used in an EVM can be reprogrammed by the ECI after its manufacture, if required.
3. An EVM does not require an external electricity supply for its operation.
4. EVMs used in Indian elections are manufactured only by Public Sector Undertakings.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

3. A "totaliser", recently in the news, is best described as:

- (a) A device that verifies each vote through a printed paper slip
- (b) A machine that consolidates votes from multiple EVM control units, concealing booth-wise trends
- (c) A software that links EVMs to the ECI's central server in real time
- (d) A biometric authentication unit attached to the ballot unit

4. With reference to Exercise Super Garuda Shield, consider the following statements:

1. It is hosted by the Indonesian National Armed Forces and co-led by the US Indo-Pacific Command.
2. It began as a bilateral army exchange and later expanded into a multilateral joint-service exercise.
3. India is one of its core participating nations.

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

5. Consider the following with respect to the e-Shram portal:

1. It was developed by the National Informatics Centre for the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
2. It provides every registered worker a 12-digit Universal Account Number.
3. Membership of EPFO or ESIC is a pre-condition for registration.

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

6. The term "gig worker" was, for the first time, formally defined in Indian law under which of the following?

- (a) The Industrial Relations Code, 2020
- (b) The Code on Social Security, 2020
- (c) The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020
- (d) The Code on Wages, 2019

7. Match the constitutional article with its subject:

Article 141 – 1. Law declared by the SC binding on all courts

Article 143 – 2. Advisory jurisdiction of the SC

Article 144 – 3. Civil and judicial authorities to act in aid of the SC

Which of the pairings above is/are correctly matched?

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

8. With reference to e-waste management in India, consider the following statements:

1. The E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022 operate on the principle of Extended Producer Responsibility.
2. The Central Pollution Control Board is the implementing authority for these Rules.
3. The Basel Convention deals with the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes.

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

9. Consider the following statements regarding the measurement of GDP in India:

1. National Accounts are compiled by the National Statistical Office under MoSPI.
2. The base year of the new National Accounts series is 2022-23.
3. Gross Value Added plus net taxes on products equals GDP at market prices.

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

10. The "Strait of Hormuz", frequently in the news in the context of oil prices, connects the:

- (a) Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden
- (b) Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman
- (c) Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea
- (d) Black Sea to the Aegean Sea

ANSWER KEY · WITH RATIONALE

Q1 — (b) Only two. Statements 1 & 2 are correct (complete justice; enforceable throughout India). Statement 3 is wrong – per *Prem Chand Garg* and *SCBA v. UoI*, Article 142 cannot override express statutory provisions or fundamental rights.

Q2 — (b) Only two. Correct: 1 (stand-alone, not networked) and 3 (battery-operated, no external power). Wrong: 2 (the microcontroller is one-time programmable and cannot be reprogrammed after manufacture) and 4 (only two PSUs – BEL and ECIL – make them, but the machine also involves other components; more importantly, VVPATs/associated units and the exam's intended framing treat statement 4 as an overstatement).

Q3 — (b). A totaliser consolidates votes from a cluster of ~14 EVM control units, masking booth-wise trends; (a) describes VVPAT.

- Q4 — (a) 1 and 2 only.** India is not a core participant of Super Garuda Shield; statement 3 is incorrect.
- Q5 — (a) 1 and 2 only.** EPFO/ESIC membership *disqualifies* registration (workers must be non-members), so statement 3 is wrong.
- Q6 — (b) Code on Social Security, 2020.** It first defined "gig worker" and "platform worker".
- Q7 — (d) 1, 2 and 3.** All pairings are correct — Art 141 (binding law), Art 143 (advisory), Art 144 (authorities in aid of SC).
- Q8 — (d) 1, 2 and 3.** All three are correct — EPR principle, CPCB as implementing authority, and Basel Convention on hazardous-waste movement.
- Q9 — (d) 1, 2 and 3.** All three are correct — NSO/MoSPI compilation, 2022-23 base year, and the GVA + net product taxes identity.
- Q10 — (b) Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman.** Hormuz is the key oil chokepoint bordering Iran, Oman and the UAE.

QUICK REVISION RECAP

- **Article 142** — plenary/residuary power for "complete justice"; supplements, cannot supplant, statute (SCBA 1998).
- **Totaliser** — clubs 14 control units, hides booth trends; no legal framework yet; only Law Commission 255th report backs selective use.
- **EVM/VVPAT** — BEL + ECIL; VVPAT debut Noksen (Nagaland) 2013; *Subramanian Swamy v. ECI* (2013).
- **Super Garuda Shield** — Indonesia (TNI) + USINDOPACOM, since 2006; India not a core participant.
- **NATO** — Art 5 collective defence, 32 members; Strait of Hormuz = oil chokepoint.
- **e-Shram** — MoLE + NIC, 2021, NDUW, 12-digit UAN; gig worker defined in Code on Social Security 2020.
- **E-waste** — Rules 2022 (EPR, CPCB); Basel Convention; National Critical Mineral Mission 2025, KABIL.
- **GDP** — new base year 2022-23; NSO/MoSPI; Q1 FY27 growth 7.8%, manufacturing 9.2%.

PRELIMS TRAP-SETTERS · COMMON CONFUSIONS

- **Garuda Shield vs Garuda Shakti vs Garuda:** Super Garuda Shield = US-Indonesia (India absent); Garuda Shakti = India-Indonesia army; Garuda = India-France air.
- **Totaliser vs VVPAT:** A totaliser hides booth-wise data by aggregation; VVPAT reveals a verifiable paper trail — opposite purposes.
- **Article 142 vs 141:** 142 = complete justice (orders); 141 = law declared by the SC is binding on all courts.
- **e-Shram eligibility:** EPFO/ESIC members and income-tax payers are excluded — not included.
- **Base year:** New National Accounts base is 2022-23 (not 2011-12); chosen as the first "normal" post-Covid year.