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## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION**

**DATE: 5/08/2025 (TUESDAY)**



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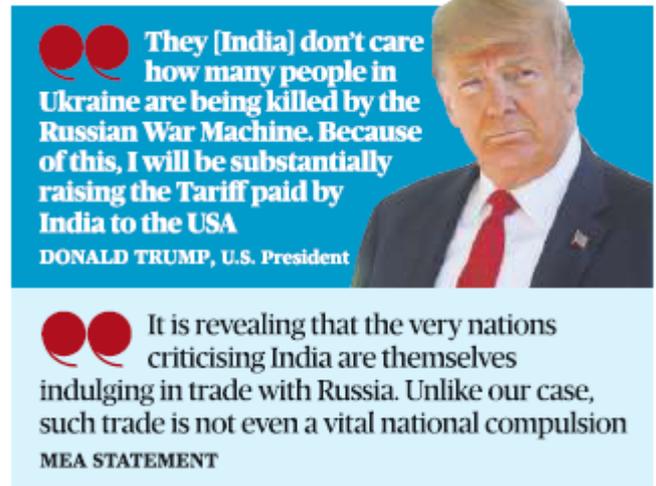
## I. Centre Hits Back After Trump Threatens More Tariffs on India

### • Background of the Issue

- U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to substantially raise tariffs on India, alleging that India is profiting from large-scale imports of Russian oil during the Ukraine conflict.
- Trump accused India of reselling Russian oil in global markets for profit, ignoring the humanitarian impact of the war.

### • India's Response

- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) rejected the allegations, calling the targeting of India “unjustified and unreasonable.”
- MEA highlighted that the U.S. itself had actively encouraged India to import Russian oil after the Ukraine conflict to stabilize global energy markets.
- India clarified that its Russian oil imports are to ensure predictable and affordable energy costs for domestic consumers.



### • Global Context & Double Standards

- MEA pointed out that both the European Union (EU) and the U.S. continue to trade with Russia at levels far higher than India.
- In 2024, EU–Russia bilateral goods trade stood at €67.5 billion, while services trade reached €17.2 billion in 2023.
- India emphasized that unlike EU and U.S., its imports from Russia are a matter of necessity, not luxury.

### • Key Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Article 51 of the Indian Constitution:** Directs the State to promote international peace and security, while safeguarding national interests.
- **Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992:** Empowers the Government to regulate foreign trade in the interest of economic stability and national security.
- **WTO Norms:** Under the WTO framework, unilateral tariff hikes like those threatened by Trump could face challenges for violating Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) principles.

### • Definition of Key Term

- **Tariff:** A tax imposed by a government on imported goods, generally aimed at protecting domestic industries or penalizing trade practices of other nations.

### • Conclusion & UPSC Relevance

- The controversy highlights the geopolitics of energy security, India's balancing act in the Russia–Ukraine war context, and the impact of unilateral U.S. trade measures.
- For UPSC, the topic links with **GS Paper 2 (International Relations), GS Paper 3 (Energy Security & Economy), and GS Paper 1 (World Affairs).**
- It also reflects how India uses diplomacy to counter pressure while ensuring national energy security.

## 2. Despite HC Order, MGNREGS Remains Stalled in West Bengal

- **Background of the Issue**

- The Calcutta High Court, on June 18, 2025, directed the resumption of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in West Bengal from August 1.
- Despite the order, the scheme remains stalled, with neither the Centre nor the State showing willingness to resume implementation.
- Funds have been frozen since March 2022 under Section 27 of the MGNREGA, 2005, over alleged corruption in the State's implementation.

- **Centre–State Conflict**

- The Centre cites misuse of funds and rule violations under MGNREGA to justify withholding allocations.
- The State government claims the Centre owes ₹3,000 crore in pending payments and has introduced an alternative scheme—**Karmashree Prakalpa**—promising 50 days of employment.
- Both Centre and State appear reluctant to restart the scheme due to upcoming Assembly elections in 2026, reflecting political considerations.

- **Impact on Workers**

- Thousands of rural workers seeking employment have been left in limbo, deepening the ongoing migrant crisis as people leave the State in search of work.
- The Paschim Banga Khet Majoor Samity (PBKMS), a workers' union, petitioned the High Court and continues to demand immediate implementation of the scheme, calling the inaction “illegal and unjust.”

- **Key Constitutional & Legal Provisions**

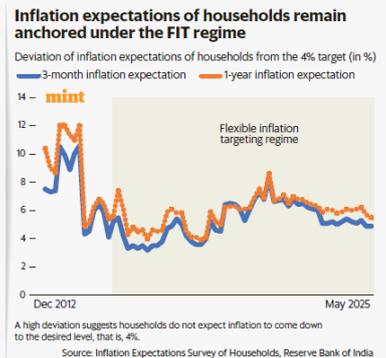
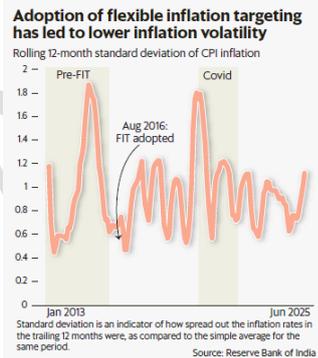
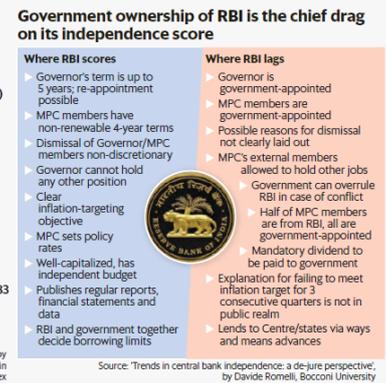
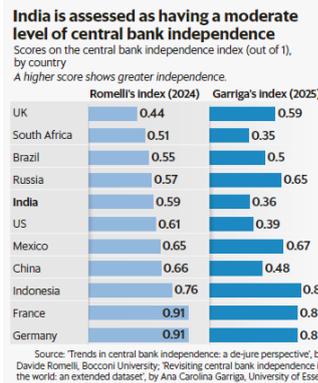
- **Article 21:** Guarantees the right to life, which includes the right to livelihood; schemes like MGNREGS operationalize this right.
- **Article 39(a) & 41 (Directive Principles of State Policy):** Mandates the State to ensure right to work and adequate means of livelihood.
- **MGNREGA, 2005:** Provides 100 days of guaranteed wage employment per year to rural households; Section 27 allows Centre to stop funds in case of irregularities.
- **Judicial Oversight:** High Courts under Article 226 have powers to enforce compliance with statutory rights like MGNREGS.

- **Definition of Key Term**

- **MGNREGA:** A rights-based scheme enacted in 2005 to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by guaranteeing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**

- The deadlock in West Bengal underscores the politicization of welfare schemes and highlights



tensions in Centre–State relations regarding fund allocations and accountability.

- For UPSC, the issue connects with **GS Paper 2 (Governance, Centre–State Relations, Welfare Schemes)**, **GS Paper 3 (Inclusive Growth & Employment)**, and **Ethics (Justice & Accountability)**.
- It also exemplifies the role of judiciary in safeguarding statutory rights and the challenges of implementing large-scale social security programs in politically charged environments.

### 3. India–US Push for Landmark Defence Procurement Deal

- **Background of the Issue**
  - India and the US are negotiating a **Reciprocal Defence Procurement Agreement (RDPA)** to open each other’s defence procurement markets.
  - If finalized, India would become the 29th signatory and the only Asian nation after Japan to join this US framework.
  - The deal is expected to be announced within a year, depending on parallel trade talks and geopolitical considerations.
- **Key Features of RDPA**
  - RDPA would provide Indian defence companies direct access to the US defence market worth \$850 billion.
  - It would allow US firms to tap into India’s defence manufacturing and technology sectors.
  - The agreement reduces the need for multiple government approvals under export-import controls and ITAR (International Traffic in Arms Regulations).
  - It would facilitate Indian companies in supplying advanced technologies, including spy satellites, directly to US entities.
- **Strategic and Economic Significance**
  - For India: A major boost to defence exports, which already touched a record ₹23,622 crore in FY25.
  - For the US: Access to India’s rapidly expanding defence market, historically dominated by Russian equipment.
  - The agreement strengthens Indo-US defence ties, especially in the wake of heightened geopolitical tensions after Operation Sindoor.
  - Experts view RDPA as the “logical next step” to enhance India’s role as a strategic ally in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Existing Frameworks and Challenges**
  - Current Indo-US defence trade relies on interim agreements like the **Security of Supply Arrangement (2024)**, which still involves bureaucratic hurdles.
  - ITAR rules under the US Department of State and Strategic Trade Authorization under the Department of Commerce regulate access to US defence technology.
  - RDPA would shift procurement procedures under the US Department of Defence, simplifying Indian access to US defence tenders.
- **Key Constitutional & Legal Provisions**
  - **Article 51 of the Constitution:** Promotes international peace and security, relevant for strategic defence cooperation.



- **Article 73 & 246:** Provide the Union Government powers over defence, treaties, and foreign affairs.
- **Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) and Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP), 2020:** Legal frameworks guiding India's defence acquisitions.
- **Offset Policy in Defence Procurement:** Encourages foreign companies to invest in Indian defence manufacturing.
- **Definition of Key Term**
  - **Reciprocal Defence Procurement Agreement (RDPA):** A bilateral pact that grants signatory nations mutual access to each other's defence procurement markets, streamlining approval processes and enhancing industry collaboration.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
  - The proposed RDPA signifies a transformative step in Indo-US defence and strategic relations, expanding India's defence manufacturing footprint globally.
  - It could reduce India's dependence on Russia, diversify supply chains, and strengthen India's position in the Indo-Pacific security architecture.
  - For UPSC, the topic is highly relevant for **GS Paper 2 (International Relations, Bilateral Agreements)**, **GS Paper 3 (Defence, Security, Economy)**, and **Essay Paper (India-US Strategic Partnership)**.

#### 4. Hydrogen and Tech Firms Among New PSUs

- **Background of the Development**
  - In July, seven new public sector units (PSUs) were set up by the Union and State governments as part of India's efforts to boost technological innovation and green energy transition.
  - These include the **Hydrogen Valley Innovation Cluster (HVIC) Foundation in Kerala** and the **Amaravati Quantum Computing Centre Ltd in Andhra Pradesh**.
  - The Ministry of Corporate Affairs reported the establishment of 17,750 companies and over 7,300 LLPs during the same month.
- **Hydrogen Valley Innovation Cluster (HVIC), Kerala**
  - A government of Kerala initiative aimed at **energy transition and decarbonization**.
  - Focuses on the **production and use of green hydrogen and green ammonia**, particularly for water and road transport.
  - Aligned with India's **National Green Hydrogen Mission** and the broader goal of achieving **net zero emissions by 2070**.
- **Amaravati Quantum Computing Centre Ltd, Andhra Pradesh**
  - A state government-led initiative supported by global technology leaders like **IBM** and **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)**.
  - Linked to the **Quantum Valley Tech Park** being developed in Amaravati.
  - Aims to place India at the forefront of **quantum computing and advanced digital technologies**, crucial for cybersecurity, data analysis, and AI.
- **Strategic and Economic Significance**
  - The HVIC will help reduce dependency on fossil fuels, support renewable energy growth, and



contribute to green mobility solutions.

- The Amaravati Quantum Centre enhances India's **digital sovereignty and technological competitiveness** in high-end computing.
- Together, these PSUs mark a synergy between **green energy transition and frontier technology adoption**, supporting India's long-term development goals.

- **Key Constitutional & Legal Provisions**

- **Article 39(b) & 39(c)**: Directive Principles emphasizing equitable distribution of resources and prevention of wealth concentration.
- **Article 48A**: Mandates the State to protect and improve the environment, directly linked to decarbonization initiatives.
- **Companies Act, 2013**: Provides the framework for incorporation and functioning of PSUs and LLPs.
- **National Green Hydrogen Mission (2023)** and **National Quantum Mission (2023)**: Policy backbones for these new ventures.

- **Definition of Key Terms**

- **Green Hydrogen**: Hydrogen produced using renewable energy sources, with minimal carbon emissions.
- **Quantum Computing**: A next-generation computing technology leveraging principles of quantum mechanics to solve problems far beyond the capacity of classical computers.

- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**

- The establishment of PSUs in **green hydrogen and quantum computing** underscores India's dual push towards **sustainable energy** and **cutting-edge technology leadership**.
- It highlights the role of cooperative federalism, where state-led initiatives align with national missions.
- For UPSC, the topic is relevant for **GS Paper 3 (Science & Technology, Environment, Energy Security, Industrial Development)**, **GS Paper 2 (Governance, Centre-State Relations)**, and **Essay Paper (Green Economy and Digital India)**.

## 5. RBI's MPC Starts Deliberations on Bi-Monthly Monetary Policy

- **Background of the Issue**

- The Reserve Bank of India's **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)**, chaired by Governor Sanjay Malhotra, has begun a three-day meeting to decide the upcoming bi-monthly monetary policy.
- The deliberations come amid expectations that the RBI may pause its ongoing **rate easing cycle**, which started in February 2025.
- Since then, the repo rate has been reduced by **100 basis points** in three tranches to boost economic growth.

- **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)**

- Constituted under the **RBI Act, 1934 (amended in 2016)** for deciding monetary policy, particularly the repo rate.
- Six members: three nominated by the Government of India and three from RBI, including the Governor as Chairperson.
- Decisions are taken by majority vote, with the Governor holding the casting vote in case of a tie.



- **Repo Rate and its Importance**
  - **Repo Rate** is the rate at which RBI lends to commercial banks; a cut makes borrowing cheaper, encouraging investment and consumption.
  - Since February 2025, repo cuts have aimed to **stimulate demand and support growth** amid global uncertainties.
  - However, frequent cuts raise concerns about **inflationary pressures** if demand rises too quickly.
- **Constitutional & Legal Provisions**
  - **Article 38 & 39 (Directive Principles of State Policy)**: Mandate the State to ensure adequate livelihood and equitable distribution of resources, supported through monetary stability.
  - **RBI Act, 1934**: Provides statutory backing for RBI's role in maintaining monetary stability.
  - **Monetary Policy Framework Agreement (2016)**: Legally binds RBI to maintain inflation within the 4% (+/-2%) target band.
- **Definition of Key Term**
  - **Bi-Monthly Monetary Policy**: A monetary policy review conducted every two months by RBI's MPC to decide policy rates (such as repo, reverse repo) and assess the macroeconomic outlook.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
  - The MPC's decision will be crucial in balancing **growth and inflation control**, especially after aggressive repo cuts.
  - It reflects the importance of institutional mechanisms in maintaining **macroeconomic stability and financial discipline**.
  - For UPSC, this topic is relevant for **GS Paper 3 (Indian Economy – Monetary Policy, Growth, Inflation)**, **GS Paper 2 (Statutory Bodies & Governance)**, and **Essay Paper (Economic Stability in India)**.

## 6. Curtailed Access to US Market to Diminish India's Manufacturing Prospects

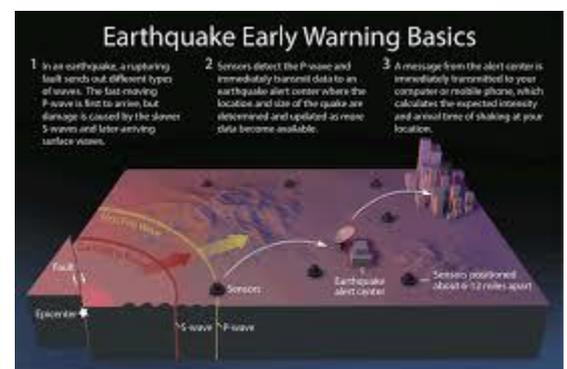
- **Background of the Issue**
  - Moody's Ratings has cautioned that India's manufacturing growth prospects could weaken due to curtailed access to the US market.
  - The warning comes after US President Donald Trump announced a **25% import duty on Indian goods**, effective from 7 August.
  - Meanwhile, India and the US are in talks for a **bilateral trade pact** to ease trade frictions.
- **Impact on India's Manufacturing Sector**
  - The US is one of India's largest export destinations; higher tariffs will make Indian goods less competitive.
  - Sectors like **textiles, pharmaceuticals, IT hardware, and engineering goods** are expected to face significant challenges.
  - The move may slow India's plans to expand its **manufacturing base under the 'Make in India' and Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes**.
- **Domestic Demand and Economic Resilience**
  - Despite external trade pressures, Moody's notes that India's strong **domestic demand** will support economic resilience.



- Rising middle-class consumption, infrastructure investments, and government-led schemes are expected to buffer the slowdown.
- **Key Constitutional & Legal Provisions**
  - **Article 19(1)(g):** Ensures the right to practice any profession or carry on any occupation, trade, or business.
  - **Article 301:** Guarantees freedom of trade, commerce, and intercourse throughout the territory of India.
  - **Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992:** Empowers the government to regulate imports and exports in the interest of trade balance.
  - **WTO Norms:** India may challenge unilateral tariffs as a violation of the **Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN)** principle.
- **Definition of Key Term**
  - **Tariff:** A tax imposed on imported goods by a government to protect domestic industries, raise revenue, or retaliate against unfair trade practices.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
  - While the US tariff hike poses a serious challenge to India's export-led manufacturing ambitions, domestic demand and structural reforms may partly offset the impact.
  - The situation highlights the importance of **trade diplomacy, economic diversification, and self-reliance strategies** in India's growth model.
  - For UPSC, the topic is relevant to **GS Paper 3 (Indian Economy – Growth, Industrial Policy, External Trade), GS Paper 2 (International Relations & WTO), and Essay Paper (Global Trade Wars and India's Economic Resilience).**

## 7. India's Development of an S-Wave Earthquake Early-Warning System

- **Background of the Initiative**
  - India is working on its first **early-warning system for destructive secondary waves (S-waves)** during earthquakes, planned for deployment within the next decade.
  - Led by the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**, this system aims to provide a critical time window after primary waves (P-waves) are detected, allowing protective measures to save lives and safeguard infrastructure.
  - The move addresses India's high seismic vulnerability, with 59% of the country prone to earthquakes.
- **Technical Framework and Functioning**
  - Earthquakes release **P-waves** (faster but less damaging) followed by **S-waves** (slower but more destructive).
  - The system will monitor P-waves using **accelerometers** and **GPS devices** installed across the country to give advance warnings before the arrival of S-waves.
  - Though exact prediction of earthquake time and magnitude remains scientifically impossible, **real-time monitoring** can reduce fatalities and damage.
- **Seismic Vulnerability in India**
  - The **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** has classified India into four seismic zones.





- **Zone V** (Himalayan region) is the most earthquake-prone, while **Zone II** is the least vulnerable.
- Historical earthquakes such as the **1905 Kangra earthquake (8.0 magnitude, ~19,800 deaths)** and the **2001 Bhuj earthquake (7.9 magnitude, ~12,932 deaths)** highlight the devastating impact of major tremors.
- **Integration with Resilience Frameworks**
  - The system complements **disaster-resilient building codes, adaptive engineering, and artificial intelligence**-based disaster management strategies.
  - According to the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)**, early-warning systems enhance recovery speed, reduce infrastructure losses, and improve livelihood protection.
  - Such measures are essential under the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030)**, to which India is a signatory.
- **Key Constitutional & Legal Provisions**
  - **Article 21**: Right to life, interpreted to include protection from natural disasters through proactive state measures.
  - **Article 47 (Directive Principles)**: Duty of the State to improve public health, indirectly covering disaster risk management.
  - **Disaster Management Act, 2005**: Provides for disaster preparedness, mitigation, and response at national and state levels.
  - **BIS Building Codes (IS 1893 & IS 13920)**: Specify structural safety standards for earthquake-prone areas.
- **Definition of Key Term**
  - **S-Wave (Secondary Wave)**: A seismic wave that arrives after the primary wave (P-wave) during an earthquake; travels slower but causes far greater destruction due to intense ground shaking.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
  - India's planned S-wave early-warning system represents a major leap in disaster preparedness, combining science, technology, and governance.
  - Given India's seismic vulnerability, especially in the Himalayan belt, this initiative could drastically reduce casualties and economic losses.
  - For UPSC, this topic is highly relevant to **GS Paper 1 (Geography – Earthquakes)**, **GS Paper 3 (Disaster Management, Science & Technology)**, **GS Paper 2 (Governance & Public Safety)**, and **Essay Paper (Science and Society in Disaster Risk Reduction)**.

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## 8. Private Push Spurs a Wave of Space Innovation

- **Background of the Development**
  - Former ISRO Chairman Dr. S. Somanath highlighted India's transition from a **state-funded space model** to a **stakeholder-based ecosystem**.
  - This shift has unleashed a wave of innovation, enabling private players in areas such as **satellite manufacturing, small launch vehicles, and space-based data services**.
  - The move aligns with India's growing ambition to emerge as a **global hub for affordable and reliable space solutions**.
- **Role of the Private Sector**
  - Private companies are increasingly contributing to **design, development, and commercialization of satellites and launch services**.
  - Startups supported by schemes like **IN-SPACe (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre)** are at the forefront of technological innovation.
  - Public-private partnerships are enhancing India's competitiveness in the **global \$500+ billion space economy**.
- **Policy and Institutional Reforms**
  - The establishment of **IN-SPACe** in 2020 has provided a regulatory framework for private sector participation in space.
  - Reforms under the **SpaceCom Policy 2020** and proposed **Space Activities Bill** aim to ensure transparency, security, and innovation.
  - Collaboration with private entities supports India's strategic goals, including **Atmanirbhar Bharat** and national security preparedness.
- **Key Constitutional & Legal Provisions**
  - **Article 51A(h)**: Fundamental duty to develop scientific temper and spirit of inquiry.
  - **Article 73 & 246**: Empower the Union government to legislate on matters of space and defense.
  - **Space Activities Bill (draft)**: Aims to regulate commercial space activities, ensure compliance with **Outer Space Treaty, 1967**, and encourage private investment.
  - **Outer Space Treaty obligations**: India must ensure that activities by private actors remain peaceful and internationally accountable.
- **Definition of Key Term**
  - **Stakeholder-Based Space Ecosystem**: A collaborative framework where government agencies, private companies, startups, and research institutions share roles and responsibilities in the development and commercialization of space technologies.
- **Conclusion & UPSC Relevance**
  - India's private-driven space innovation marks a strategic shift towards **self-reliance, global competitiveness, and technological leadership**.
  - It ensures that the country is well-positioned to meet both **commercial opportunities and strategic challenges** in outer space.
  - For UPSC, the topic is relevant for **GS Paper 3 (Science & Technology, Indigenization, Security)**, **GS Paper 2 (International Treaties, Regulatory Frameworks)**, and **Essay Paper (India's Space Mission and Global Leadership)**.



## 9. China's Restriction on Critical Minerals to Western Defense Companies

- **Background and Context**
  - China, which supplies nearly **90% of global rare earths**, has tightened export controls on critical minerals essential for defense industries, amid escalating US-China trade tensions.
  - These minerals are vital for producing microelectronics, missile-targeting systems, night-vision goggles, drone motors, and advanced defense satellites.
  - Restrictions have led to price surges—some materials costing **5–60 times their earlier rates**—causing delays in defense production.
- **Impact on Western Defense Production**
  - US defense firms such as Lockheed Martin and drone manufacturers are facing delays of up to two months due to shortages of rare-earth magnets.
  - Some companies, like Leonardo DRS, are down to “safety stock” levels, especially for germanium, critical for infrared sensors in missiles.
  - The US Department of Defense has warned that without stable material flow, **timely product deliveries will be at risk**.
- **Strategic Dependence and Vulnerabilities**
  - Around **80,000 defense components** in US weapons systems rely on minerals subject to Chinese controls (Govini data).
  - Even alternative suppliers in Japan, Taiwan, or North America depend on Chinese-processed rare earths.
  - Drone startups and small defense suppliers are most vulnerable due to their limited stockpiles and supply-chain capacity.
- **US Response and Countermeasures**
  - The Pentagon created the **Critical Minerals Forum** to diversify supply chains and support allied production.
  - Investments include a **\$400 million stake in MP Materials** (largest rare-earth mine in the Americas) and **\$14 million to a Canadian firm** to produce germanium substrates.
  - Defense contractors are required to stop buying China-sourced rare-earth magnets by **2027**, pushing firms toward alternate global suppliers.
- **Key Legal and Geopolitical Frameworks**
  - Under the **US Defense Production Act**, the government can fund domestic rare-earth production for national security.
  - China's export control measures are an assertion of **economic statecraft**, leveraging supply-chain dominance as a strategic tool.
  - Internationally, the issue ties into **WTO rules on trade restrictions**, though national security exemptions often complicate enforcement.
- **Definition of Key Term**
  - **Critical Minerals**: Minerals essential for the economy, security, and defense, with high supply-chain risks due to limited global availability and concentrated production sources.
- **Conclusion and UPSC Relevance**
  - China's mineral export controls highlight the **geopolitical weaponization of critical resources**, creating supply vulnerabilities for advanced defense technologies in the West.
  - For India, which is also dependent on imports for many rare earths, the situation underscores the



urgent need to build a **domestic critical mineral strategy**, as reflected in India's 2023 Critical Minerals List.

• Relevant for **UPSC GS Paper 2 (International Relations, Geopolitics), GS Paper 3 (Science & Tech, Economy, Security), and Essay Paper (Strategic Autonomy and Resource Security)**.

## 10. Bangladesh a Year After Sheikh Hasina's Ouster

- **Political Legitimacy and Role of Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI)**
  - The ouster of Sheikh Hasina in August 2024, initially portrayed as a spontaneous students' uprising, is now seen as a **planned regime change** orchestrated by Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI), with support from Pakistan, the US, and China.
  - The Yunus-led Interim Government lacks **constitutional validity**, as Bangladesh's Constitution has no provision for such an interim setup. The High Court restored a caretaker government system (Dec 2024), but the Yunus regime fails to meet neutrality and non-party requirements.
- **Suppression, Violence, and Human Rights Concerns**
  - The regime has unleashed widespread violence against minorities (Hindus, Christians, Buddhists, Sufis, Ahmadiyyas) and Awami League supporters.
  - Symbols of the **1971 Liberation War** have been systematically destroyed.
  - Media freedom has been curtailed, with journalists jailed and media houses taken over, leading to propaganda-driven narratives.
- **Election Delays and Rise of the National Citizen Party (NCP)**
  - Instead of holding elections within the mandated 90 days, the regime initiated reforms (constitutional, electoral, police) seen as a tactic to delay polls.
  - The **NCP**, formed in 2025 with JeI-linked student leaders, lacks genuine student support and has been accused of violent acts, including an attempted desecration of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's mausoleum in July 2025.
- **Economic Collapse and Governance Crisis**
  - Growth rates have halved from 6%+, with factories shutting down, rising unemployment, and hyperinflation.
  - The Bangladesh Bank flagged persistent inflation, election uncertainty, and stagnant private investment in July 2025.
  - Critical institutions such as the **judiciary and central bank** have been undermined, eroding checks and balances.
- **Foreign Policy Realignment and Anti-India Tilt**
  - The Yunus regime has been accused of turning Bangladesh into a **"client state of Pakistan"** while strengthening ties with China.
  - Anti-India propaganda has increased, painting India as complicit in past authoritarianism.
  - India, despite patience and continued support for democratic processes, faces rebuff, though public opinion in Bangladesh increasingly yearns for the stability and prosperity seen under India-friendly policies.
- **Key Constitutional and Legal Provisions**
  - Bangladesh's **Constitution (Article 123)** mandates elections within 90 days of Parliament's dissolution, highlighting the illegality of prolonged interim rule.





- International human rights frameworks, including the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** and **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**, are being violated through suppression of minorities and denial of free elections.
- **Definition of Key Term**
  - **Caretaker Government:** A temporary, neutral government formed to conduct free and fair elections within a stipulated period, without bias toward any political party.
- **Conclusion and UPSC Relevance**
  - The situation in Bangladesh represents a **serious democratic backsliding**, with implications for regional stability, minority rights, and India's security.
  - For India, the crisis highlights the importance of **neighborhood-first diplomacy**, vigilance against anti-India alliances (China-Pakistan-Bangladesh), and support for democratic institutions.
  - Relevant for **UPSC GS Paper 2 (International Relations, India and Neighbourhood, Human Rights)**, **GS Paper 3 (Security and Strategic Issues)**, and **Essay Paper (Democracy in South Asia)**.

## 11. The Missing Link in India's Battery Waste Management

- **Rising Demand for Lithium Batteries and Environmental Risks**
  - India's lithium battery demand is projected to rise from 4 GWh (2023) to 139 GWh by 2035, driven by EV adoption and battery energy storage systems (BESS) for achieving **Net Zero by 2070**.
  - Improper disposal of lithium batteries can release hazardous materials into soil and water; in 2022, 7,00,000 tonnes of lithium batteries contributed to India's 1.6 million tonnes of e-waste.
- **Battery Waste Management Rules (BWMR) 2022 and Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)**
  - The BWMR introduced **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)**, mandating producers to fund the collection and recycling of batteries.
  - **Definition – Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR):** A policy approach in which producers are responsible for the entire lifecycle of their products, especially for take-back, recycling, and final disposal.
  - The rules require recyclers to be compensated via an **EPR floor price**, ensuring coverage of costs for collection, processing, and recovery of critical minerals like lithium, cobalt, and nickel.
- **Challenges in Implementation**
  - The current **EPR floor price is too low**, making proper recycling economically unviable and encouraging fraudulent or informal recyclers who may issue fake certificates or dump hazardous waste.
  - Inadequate recycling could lead to **over \$1 billion in foreign exchange losses by 2030** due to increased import dependence on critical minerals.
  - Large electronics producers often evade compliance in developing countries, undermining sustainability efforts.
- **Global Comparison and Pricing Gap**
  - In the UK, producers pay about **£600/kg for EV battery recycling**, while India's proposed rate is less than one-fourth of that, even after accounting for purchasing power differences.
  - A globally comparable and fair EPR pricing structure is needed to protect recyclers and promote a circular economy.



- **Need for Stronger Enforcement and Integration of Informal Sector**
  - Strengthening enforcement through **digital tracking of EPR certificates**, robust audits, and strict penalties for fraud is crucial.
  - Integrating informal recyclers into the formal sector through training and regulation can expand recycling capacity and reduce unsafe practices.
  - Ensuring compliance is both an **environmental and strategic imperative**, as it affects energy security, green growth, and India's decarbonisation agenda.
- **Key Constitutional & Legal Provisions**
  - Article 48A of the Indian Constitution directs the State to **protect and improve the environment**.
  - Article 51A(g) imposes a **fundamental duty on citizens** to safeguard the environment.
  - The **Environment Protection Act, 1986** and the **E-Waste Management Rules, 2016** provide the overarching legal framework for managing hazardous waste.
- **Conclusion and UPSC Relevance**
  - India must adopt a **fair EPR floor pricing mechanism**, strengthen enforcement, and formalise informal recycling networks to prevent environmental degradation and reduce foreign exchange losses.
  - Effective battery waste management is essential for achieving **energy security, environmental protection, and circular economy goals**.
  - Highly relevant for **UPSC GS Paper 3 (Environment, Energy Security, Economy), GS Paper 2 (Governance, Policy), and Essay Paper (Sustainable Development & Climate Change)**.

## 12. IAF's Unending Fighter Conundrum

- **Legacy and Retirement of MiG-21s**
  - The **MiG-21**, inducted in 1963 from the Soviet Union after the 1962 China war, was the first supersonic and non-western fighter in the Indian Air Force (IAF).
  - Despite being a backbone of the IAF for decades and playing key roles in the 1965, 1971, Kargil (1999), and Balakot (2019) operations, it earned the label '**flying coffins**' due to over 450 accidents across six decades.
  - The MiG-21 will be retired in September 2025, reducing IAF's fighter strength from 31 to 29 squadrons against a sanctioned strength of 42.
- **Current Strength and Delays in LCA Mk-1A Induction**
  - The IAF currently operates two squadrons of LCA-Mk1 but urgently awaits the delivery of the more advanced **LCA Mk-1A**, delayed due to supply chain disruptions in engines from **GE Aerospace**.
  - A ₹48,000 crore contract was signed for 83 Mk-1A jets, with expected delivery of 16 jets annually from March 2024, but none have been delivered yet.
  - HAL plans to scale up to 24 jets per year once engine supply stabilises.
- **Future Induction Plans**
  - IAF aims to induct **over 600 jets in the next two decades**, including 180 LCA-Mk1A, 120+ LCA-Mk2, 114 MRFA (Medium Role Fighter Aircraft), and at least 120 AMCA (Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft).





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- A twin-engine deck-based fighter is also planned for the Navy.
- The LCA Mk-2 (first flight expected in 2026) will replace Mirage-2000, MiG-29, and Jaguars.
- **Development of Fifth-Generation Aircraft (AMCA)**
  - The AMCA project is India's indigenous **Fifth Generation Fighter Aircraft (FGFA)**, to be developed in two phases: Mk-1 with GE-414 engines and Mk-2 with a co-developed 110KN engine.
  - AMCA prototype is expected within a decade; private sector participation has been invited, marking a shift from HAL monopoly.
  - Meanwhile, discussions are ongoing for possible limited import of Russian **SU-57** or American **F-35** as interim fifth-generation fighters.
- **Strategic Challenges and Global Context**
  - China currently fields nearly **1,900 fighters including 1,300 fourth-generation jets**, and has deployed fifth-generation aircraft, with plans to supply **40 J-35 stealth jets to Pakistan**, intensifying India's security concerns.
  - India operates around 260 Su-30MKIs, with upgrades planned for 84 jets initially. Early batches of Sukhoi will phase out by early 2040s.
- **Key Constitutional and Legal Provisions**
  - Article 51A(d) of the Constitution directs citizens to defend the country and render national service when called upon.
  - Article 246 & Seventh Schedule empower the Union Government to legislate on defence matters.
  - The **Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP)** and **Defence Acquisition Policy (DAP 2020)** provide frameworks for indigenous defence production under *Atmanirbhar Bharat*.
- **Conclusion and UPSC Relevance**
  - The retirement of MiG-21s marks the end of a historic era but exposes the urgent need to fill squadron gaps amid rising Chinese and Pakistani capabilities.
  - Timely production and induction of LCA Mk-1A, Mk-2, MRFA, and AMCA is critical for India's air dominance and national security.
  - This issue is highly relevant for **UPSC GS Paper 3 (Security & Defence Technology)**, **GS Paper 2 (Governance & Policy)**, and **Essay Paper (National Security and Self-Reliance in Defence)**.



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