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**VIDHVATH IAS KAS ACADEMY**  
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**STUDY CENTRE**

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR UPSC CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION

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## 1. Trump's New Tariff Measures on Imports

### 1. Key Announcements

- U.S. President Donald Trump announced **100% tariffs on branded drugs** and **25% tariffs on heavy-duty trucks**, effective **October 1**.
- Additional tariffs: **50% on kitchen cabinets and bathroom vanities**, **30% on upholstered furniture**.
- Justification: Trump cited **"large-scale flooding"** of foreign goods into the U.S. market.



### 2. Scope and Uncertainty

- No clarity on whether these tariffs are **over and above existing national tariffs**.
- Ambiguity remains on **exemptions for countries with trade agreements** (EU, Japan, etc.).
- Seen as part of Trump administration's move to **rely on established legal authorities** amid a pending Supreme Court case challenging global tariff powers.

### 3. Definition: Tariff

- A **tariff** is a tax imposed by a government on imported or exported goods, primarily to:
  - Protect domestic industries (protective tariffs).
  - Raise government revenue.
  - Regulate foreign trade flows.

### 4. Legal and Constitutional Context (U.S. Focus)

- In the U.S., the power to impose tariffs stems from **Congress under the Commerce Clause of the Constitution**.
- However, in practice, presidents exercise tariff powers through legislations like:
  - Trade Expansion Act (1962)** – Section 232 allows tariffs for national security reasons.
  - Trade Act (1974)** – Section 301 permits action against unfair trade practices.
- The **Supreme Court case** on Trump's earlier global tariffs highlights the **judicial check** on executive trade powers.

### 5. Economic & Industry Implications

- The **pharmaceutical sector** is most affected, as tariffs apply unless companies set up U.S. plants.
- Industry body **PhRMA** warned tariffs could **undermine planned investments worth hundreds of billions**.
- Tariffs may **increase consumer prices** in the U.S., leading to inflationary pressures.
- Possible **trade tensions with allies** like EU, Japan, Canada if exemptions not clarified.

### 6. Global Trade Dimensions

- These measures fit into a broader trend of **protectionism** and **reshoring of manufacturing**.



- Likely to impact **WTO norms on free trade** and invite retaliatory tariffs.
- Could disrupt **global pharmaceutical supply chains**, heavily dependent on India and China.

## Conclusion

Trump's tariff escalation reflects a **policy shift toward economic nationalism and protectionism**, seeking to safeguard U.S. industries but risking **trade disputes and higher domestic prices**. With legal scrutiny pending in the Supreme Court, the move also tests the balance between **executive authority and judicial oversight** in trade policy.

## UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2 (International Relations):** Trade protectionism, WTO, impact on global trade governance.
- **GS Paper 3 (Economy):** Impact of tariffs on domestic industries, supply chains, inflation.
- **Essay Paper:** Themes of **protectionism vs globalization**, "National Interest vs Global Trade Norms."
- **Key Concept:** Understanding **tariffs, protectionism, and legal frameworks regulating trade policies**.

## 2. GST Council and States' Revenue Concerns

### 1. Background of GST Compensation Issue

- Goods and Services Tax (GST) was introduced in **2017** as a **destination-based indirect tax** subsuming multiple central and state taxes.
- The Union government assured States of **14% annual revenue growth** for five years, compared to the pre-GST growth rate of 14–18%.
- States like **Telangana and Kerala** argue that the **promised 14% revenue growth has not been achieved**; actual growth is around 7–8%.



### 2. Expenditure–Revenue Mismatch

- According to the **15th Finance Commission**:
  - Around **64% of total government expenditure** in India is borne by States.
  - But around **63–64% of total revenue accrues to the Union government**.
- This creates a structural imbalance where **States spend more but collect less**.

### 3. Use of Cess and Reduced Devolution

- The Finance Commission recommended **41% devolution of Union taxes to States**.
- However, about **20% of Union revenue comes from cesses and surcharges**, which are **not shareable** with States under **Article 270 of the Constitution**.
- Effectively, States get only **30–32% of Central taxes**, reducing their fiscal space.



#### 4. Lack of Transparency in GST Rate Cuts

- States alleged that the **GST rate rationalisation committee** did not receive any detailed study report before the latest rate cuts.
- Revenue loss projections: For Kerala alone, **₹8,000–₹10,000 crore** expected.
- Despite being on the **agenda of the GST Council**, the issue of **compensation to States was not discussed**.

#### 5. Key Definitions

- **GST Council (Article 279A)**: Constitutional body chaired by the Union Finance Minister, includes Union and State Finance Ministers. Recommends tax rates, exemptions, and revenue sharing.
- **Cess**: A tax levied for a specific purpose, not shareable with States (unlike divisible pool taxes).
- **GST Compensation Cess**: A temporary levy under the **GST (Compensation to States) Act, 2017**, meant to bridge States' revenue shortfall for five years (till June 2022).

#### 6. Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Article 270**: Distribution of taxes between Union and States; excludes cesses and surcharges.
- **Article 279A**: Establishment of GST Council and its decision-making framework.
- **Finance Commission (Article 280)**: Recommends distribution of central taxes to States.

#### Conclusion

The ongoing tussle reflects a **serious Centre–State fiscal imbalance**. While GST aimed at “**One Nation, One Tax**”, it has increased States' **dependence on the Centre** and eroded their fiscal autonomy. The **non-discussion of compensation** in the GST Council undermines cooperative federalism and calls for a **rethink on fiscal federalism** in India.

#### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2 (Polity & Governance)**: Issues in federal fiscal relations, functioning of GST Council, cooperative federalism.
- **GS Paper 3 (Economy)**: Impact of GST on States' revenues, fiscal deficit management, cess and surcharge implications.
- **Essay Paper**: Themes of **Centre–State relations, federalism, resource sharing**.
- **Key Concepts**: GST, cess, fiscal federalism, devolution, Finance Commission.

### 3. New Farming Technology to Combat Desertification

#### 1. Background and Problem

- **Desertification**: Land degradation in arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas due to climatic variations and human activities (UNCCD definition).
- Western Rajasthan's **Thar desert** is expanding towards the **National Capital Region (NCR)** due to:
  - Destruction of the Aravalli ranges.
  - Spread of sand dunes and erratic rainfall.





- Unsustainable plantation drives and land degradation.

## 2. The Innovation – Desert ‘Soilification’ Technology

- Developed by **Central University of Rajasthan (CUoR)** researchers.
- Converts **desert sand into soil-like structure** using polymers and an **indigenous bioformulation**.
- Benefits:
  - Enhances **water retention capacity**.
  - Promotes **cross-linking of sand particles** to improve soil structure.
  - Stimulates **beneficial microbial activity**, improving crop stress resistance.



## 3. Key Experiment Outcomes

- **Wheat (indigenous Wheat-4079 variety):**
  - Cultivated on 1,000 sq. metres at Banseli village near Pushkar (Ajmer district).
  - Yield: **26 kg per 100 sq. metres** (1:20 seed-to-harvest ratio, double the normal arid zone).
  - Required only **three irrigations** compared to 5–6 in normal wheat farming.
- **Other Crops:** Bajra, guar gum, and chickpea showed **54% higher yields** in polymer-amended sand.
- Supported by **Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK)** and Rajasthan’s Horticulture Department.

## 4. Broader Implications

- Potential to **halt desertification** and make barren desert land agriculturally productive.
- Reduced irrigation needs → **efficient water use** in drought-prone regions.
- Supports India’s commitments under:
  - **UNCCD (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification)**.
  - **Sustainable Development Goal 15 (Life on Land)**.
- Encourages **crop diversification** (millets, pulses, green gram) in drylands.

## 5. Constitutional & Legal Context

- **Article 48A (Directive Principles of State Policy):** State shall protect and improve environment and safeguard forests and wildlife.
- **Article 51A(g) (Fundamental Duties):** Duty of citizens to protect the environment.
- **National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)** and **National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA):** Promote sustainable farming practices in arid regions.
- **Desert Development Programme (DDP):** Government initiative to combat desertification in hot arid areas.

## 6. Definition: Soilification



- Process of **transforming loose sand into soil-like medium** with higher fertility, water-retention, and microbial activity, enabling sustainable farming in deserts.

## Conclusion

This experiment shows how **applied science and biotechnology** can transform barren desert into **productive farmland**, reduce water stress, and strengthen India's fight against desertification. It exemplifies **innovation in sustainable agriculture**, crucial for ensuring food security and combating climate change.

## UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 1 (Geography):** Desertification, land degradation, Aravalli ecosystem.
- **GS Paper 2 (Governance):** Centre–State cooperation in agricultural innovation, role of KVKs.
- **GS Paper 3 (Environment & Agriculture):** Sustainable agriculture, biotechnology, UNCCD commitments, water-use efficiency.
- **Essay Paper:** Themes of **technology for sustainable development**, “Combating Desertification for Future Generations.”
- **Key Concepts:** Desertification, soilification, bioformulation, sustainable agriculture.

## 4. Astronauts with Diabetes and Space Missions

### 1. Background of the Study

- Conducted during the **Axiom-4 (Ax-4) mission** at the **International Space Station (ISS)**.
- Indian astronaut **Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla** was part of the mission.
- Research partners: **Axiom Space** (U.S.-based private space company) and **Burjeel Holdings** (UAE healthcare provider).



### 2. Key Findings

- Astronauts with **diabetes are capable of undertaking space flights**.
- Everyday **diabetes monitoring tools** used on Earth can function effectively in space, enabling **end-to-end diabetes care** from Earth to space and back.
- The initiative opens the possibility for astronauts with previously **disqualifying medical conditions** to participate in missions.

### 3. Definition: Diabetes Monitoring

- Use of **continuous glucose monitors (CGM)** and related devices to track blood sugar levels in real time.
- Ensures effective management of diabetes, particularly in extreme or remote environments like outer space.

### 4. Significance of the Research

- Marks a **breakthrough in space medicine and remote healthcare**.



- Supports inclusion of astronauts with diabetes in future missions → **greater inclusivity in space exploration**.
- Potential applications in **telemedicine and healthcare delivery in remote/rural areas on Earth**.
- Burjeel Holdings announced its ambition to work towards sending the **first astronaut with diabetes** to space.

## 5. Constitutional, Legal & Policy Dimensions (India & Global)

- **Article 21 (Right to Life):** Includes right to health; research enhances medical innovations for all.
- **Article 51 & 51A (Promotion of international peace, cooperation, and scientific temper):** Encourages global collaboration in scientific advancements.
- **Outer Space Treaty (1967):** Ensures peaceful use of outer space for benefit of all humankind.
- India's **Space Policy 2023** emphasizes private participation and space-based applications, aligning with such collaborations.

## 6. Broader Implications

- Advances **space medicine**, crucial for long-duration missions (Moon, Mars).
- Integrates **AI, telemedicine, and biotechnology** into astronaut health monitoring.
- Strengthens **India's global space footprint** by participation in cutting-edge missions.

## Conclusion

The Ax-4 study represents a **paradigm shift in astronaut health eligibility**, proving that space travel can become inclusive even for individuals with chronic conditions like diabetes. It also underlines the growing role of **biotechnology and telemedicine** in future space exploration and healthcare on Earth.

## UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2 (Governance & IR):** Global collaboration in space research, health rights, and technology diplomacy.
- **GS Paper 3 (Science & Technology):** Biotechnology in space, health tech innovations, implications for India's space program.
- **Essay Paper:** "Science and Technology for Inclusive Human Progress" or "Space Research and Human Health."
- **Key Concepts:** Space medicine, telemedicine, diabetes monitoring, private sector role in space exploration.

## 5. The Turmoil in Kathmandu and Nepal's Political Road Ahead

### 1. Background of the 2025 Gen Z Protests

- On **September 8, 2025**, mass protests by **Generation Z (youth groups)** erupted in Kathmandu against corruption, unemployment, and political instability.
- Harsh police crackdown escalated public anger, forcing **Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli** to resign the next day.





- Following talks with the army chief, **former Chief Justice Sushila Karki** was sworn in as **interim Prime Minister** (September 12) to conduct elections on **March 5, 2026**.
- Parliament was dissolved and an **apolitical cabinet of experts** formed.

## 2. Broader Regional Context

- Political turbulence in South Asia has been frequent in the 2020s:
  - **Myanmar (2021):** Military coup.
  - **Afghanistan (2021):** Taliban return after U.S. withdrawal.
  - **Sri Lanka (2022):** Aragalaya movement ousted Gotabaya Rajapaksa.
  - **Pakistan (2023):** Protests after Imran Khan's arrest.
  - **Bangladesh (2024):** Sheikh Hasina resigned amidst protests.
- A common factor: **youth-led mobilisations** amid high unemployment (youth unemployment in Nepal exceeds **20%**).



## 3. Nepal's Political Journey

- **1990 Jan Aandolan:** Ended Panchayati Raj, introduced multi-party democracy.
- **1996–2006 Maoist Insurgency:** Claimed 17,000 lives; ended with peace process integrating Maoists into politics.
- **2006 Jan Aandolan II:** Forced King Gyanendra to restore parliament.
- **2008:** Monarchy abolished, Nepal declared a republic.
- **2015 Constitution:** Established a federal republic with bicameral parliament, but since then **7 governments** with recurring leaders (Oli, Prachanda, Deuba).
- Governance plagued by **cronyism, nepotism, corruption**, and weak economic growth.

## 4. Constitutional & Legal Dimensions

- **Article 61 (Nepal's Constitution):** Directs President to protect unity and the Constitution, but does not authorize political role of army → raises legitimacy concerns.
- **Electoral System:** 275-member House of Representatives with **First-Past-The-Post (165 seats) + Proportional Representation (110 seats)** → leads to fractured mandates.
- **Proposed Reforms:** Directly elected executive, curbing federalism, altering PR system → risks alienating **Madhesi, Janjati, and Tharu communities**.
- Interim PM's Priorities: Conduct elections, ensure accountability for police violence, and tackle high-level corruption.

## 5. India's Role

- India maintained **diplomatic restraint**, avoiding criticism in Nepal's media.
- PM Modi's **September 18 call** to Ms. Karki assured support and expressed condolences.



- India's focus: Ensure **free and fair elections** to safeguard Nepal's democratic transition.

## 6. Definition: Gen Z Protests

- Movements led by youth born between the **mid-1990s and early 2010s**, often demanding **accountability, transparency, and jobs**, leveraging social media as a mobilisation tool.

## Conclusion

Nepal stands at a critical juncture: while the resignation of Oli and installation of an interim government reflects a demand for change, **political uncertainty, constitutional dilemmas, and youth discontent** continue to challenge stability. The best path forward is to ensure **peaceful, inclusive, and credible elections** in 2026, without undermining constitutionalism or federal balance.

## UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2 (International Relations):** India–Nepal relations, political instability in South Asia.
- **GS Paper 2 (Polity):** Comparative constitutionalism, role of federalism and proportional representation.
- **GS Paper 3 (Internal Security & Governance):** Role of youth in protests, legitimacy of army in politics.
- **Essay Paper:** “Youth Movements and Democracy in South Asia” or “Balancing Stability and Inclusivity in Constitutional Democracies.”
- **Key Concepts:** Gen Z protests, federalism, proportional representation, cronyism, political instability in South Asia.

## 6. Ladakh's Demand for Sixth Schedule Status – Key Summary

### 1. Background of the Issue

- After the bifurcation of Jammu & Kashmir in August 2019, Ladakh became a Union Territory without a legislature.
- The **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)**, in September 2019, recommended Ladakh's inclusion under the **Sixth Schedule of the Constitution**.
- Three Union Ministries — **Home, Tribal Affairs, and Law & Justice** — conveyed “no objection” to the proposal.



### 2. Definition of Sixth Schedule

- The **Sixth Schedule (Articles 244(2) and 275(1))** provides for the creation of **Autonomous District Councils (ADCs)** in certain tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram.
- These councils safeguard **land rights, customary practices, and local governance** of tribal communities.

### 3. NCST's Reasoning and Recommendations



- Before UT status, Ladakhis enjoyed certain **agrarian and land rights** that restricted outsiders from buying land.
- Inclusion in the Sixth Schedule was seen as a safeguard to preserve **tribal identity, agrarian economy, and land rights**.
- NCST emphasized that without such protection, Ladakh's unique demographic and ecological balance may face risks.

#### 4. Government's Position and Political Context

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (2019) argued that the **Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council Act, 1997** already grants powers similar to the Sixth Schedule.
- In 2020, the **BJP's Leh Hill Council election manifesto** promised Sixth Schedule safeguards.
- However, by December 2022, the Centre stated that **developmental needs were being met by UT administration and special funding**, making separate constitutional safeguards unnecessary.

#### 5. Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Fifth Schedule:** Applies to Scheduled Areas in other states, focusing on tribal welfare and Governor's role.
- **Sixth Schedule:** Grants greater autonomy with legislative, judicial, and executive powers to ADCs.
- **NCST Role:** As per **Article 338A**, NCST can recommend measures for the welfare and protection of Scheduled Tribes.

#### 6. Key Concerns and Implications

- **Tribal identity & demographic protection:** Fear of land alienation and cultural dilution without Sixth Schedule safeguards.
- **Federalism debate:** Extending Sixth Schedule beyond North-East could set a precedent.
- **Political promise vs. legal action:** Discrepancy between BJP's assurances and the government's later stance.
- **Security & strategic significance:** Ladakh's location along sensitive borders (China, Pakistan) adds to the importance of stability and local trust.

#### Conclusion

The debate over Ladakh's Sixth Schedule inclusion reflects the tension between **developmental assurances by the Centre** and **constitutional safeguards sought by tribal communities**. While funds and administrative powers are provided, **identity, land rights, and local autonomy remain unaddressed concerns**.

#### UPSC Relevance

- **GS-II (Polity & Governance):** Constitutional provisions of Fifth & Sixth Schedule, role of NCST, federal issues.
- **GS-III (Security & Development):** Tribal rights in strategic regions.
- **Essay/Interview:** Themes of tribal identity, federalism, Centre-state relations, and developmental balance.



- **Prelims:** Articles 244, 275; NCST under Article 338A; Hill Council Act, 1997.

## 7. India's Response to NATO Chief's Remarks on Modi-Putin Talks

### Key Highlights

- **India rejects NATO Secretary General's remarks**
  - India dismissed as "*factually incorrect and entirely baseless*" the claims made by NATO Chief Mark Rutte suggesting PM Modi discussed U.S. tariff hikes with Russian President Vladimir Putin.
  - MEA Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal emphasized that such speculative remarks misrepresent India's diplomatic engagements.
- **Clarification on India's energy security policy**
  - India reiterated its commitment to ensuring **predictable and affordable energy costs** for its consumers.
  - Asserted its right to take "all necessary measures" to safeguard **national interests and economic security**.
  - Definition: *Energy Security* refers to the uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price.
- **Context of U.S. sanctions and tariff hikes**
  - U.S. President Donald Trump recently announced penalty tariffs on India due to continued crude imports from Russia.
  - India clarified that its decisions on energy purchases are guided by **strategic autonomy** and consumer affordability, not external pressure.
- **India-U.S. trade talks in New York**
  - EAM S. Jaishankar, along with Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, met U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer on September 22, 2025.
  - Focus areas included:
    - U.S. tariffs on Indian goods.
    - Sharp hike in H-1B visa fees (\$100,000 per application).
    - Broader bilateral trade relations.
- **India's diplomatic stand**
  - India expects *responsibility and accuracy* from international institutions like NATO in public remarks.
  - India continues to balance its relations with major powers while protecting its **strategic autonomy**.





- **Article 51 of the Indian Constitution** – directs the State to promote international peace, security, and maintain just and honorable relations among nations.
- **Doctrine of Strategic Autonomy** – though not explicitly constitutional, it is India's long-standing foreign policy principle ensuring independence in decision-making.
- **Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961)** – requires accuracy and responsibility in diplomatic communication between states.

### Additional Key Points

- India's foreign policy avoids aligning with military blocs like NATO but engages on issues of common concern.
- The issue reflects India's **energy pragmatism**, balancing affordable energy access with geopolitical considerations.
- The U.S.–India trade friction on **tariffs and visa fees** could influence bilateral ties, but India is pursuing dialogue.

### Conclusion

India's rejection of NATO Chief's remarks underscores its commitment to **strategic autonomy, energy security, and responsible diplomacy**. By engaging directly with the U.S. on trade and visa issues, India demonstrates a pragmatic approach in safeguarding its economic and national interests.

### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2 (International Relations):** India's foreign policy, strategic autonomy, and relations with major powers (U.S., Russia, NATO).
- **GS Paper 3 (Economic Security):** Issues of energy security, tariffs, and economic diplomacy.
- **Essay/IR Themes:** Balancing great power relations, challenges of multipolar world order, India's position on sanctions and trade wars.

## 8. AFSPA Extended in Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh

### Key Highlights

- **Extension of AFSPA (Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958):**
  - The Union Home Ministry extended AFSPA for **six months** in parts of Manipur, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh.
  - In **Manipur**: AFSPA continues across the state, except 13 police station areas in five valley districts (e.g., Imphal, Lamphel, Thoubal, Bishnupur, Kakching).
  - In **Nagaland**: Extended in **9 districts** and **21 police station areas** of five districts.
  - In **Arunachal Pradesh**: Extended in **Tirap, Changlang, Longding** districts and certain police station areas in **Namsai district** (bordering Assam).







- **Definition – AFSPA:**

- Enacted in **1958**, it grants special powers to the armed forces in “**disturbed areas**”.
- Powers include:
  - Use of force, including lethal force, against those violating law/order.
  - Arrest without warrant.
  - Search of premises without warrant.
  - Immunity from prosecution except with prior sanction of Union Government.

- **Legal & Constitutional Provisions:**

- **Article 355:** Union’s duty to protect states against internal disturbance.
- **AFSPA, 1958 (Section 3):** Central Government (or Governor) can declare any area as “disturbed.”
- **Judicial Scrutiny:**
  - *Naga People’s Movement for Human Rights v. Union of India (1997)* – Supreme Court upheld AFSPA’s constitutionality but mandated safeguards against misuse.
  - Protection under **Article 21 (Right to Life)** remains applicable.

- **Criticism and Human Rights Concerns:**

- Allegations of **human rights violations**, excessive use of force, and lack of accountability.
- **Justice Jeevan Reddy Committee (2005)** recommended repeal of AFSPA, suggesting its provisions be incorporated into the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).
- **Second Administrative Reforms Commission** also recommended its repeal.

- **Security Rationale:**

- Government cites the persistence of insurgency, arms smuggling, cross-border terrorism, and law-and-order challenges in the Northeast as reasons for AFSPA’s continuation.
- Partial withdrawal in some areas (e.g., Manipur valley districts) reflects gradual normalization efforts.

### Additional Key Points

- **“Disturbed Area” Definition:** An area declared under AFSPA where the use of armed forces is deemed necessary for maintaining public order.
- **Balance Between Security & Rights:** Debate continues on the need to ensure **operational freedom for security forces** while safeguarding **citizens’ fundamental rights**.

### Conclusion

The extension of AFSPA highlights the continuing **security challenges in the Northeast**, despite some progress in peace talks and reduction of insurgency. While the Act provides essential tools for counter-insurgency operations, it raises concerns about **democratic accountability, human rights, and federal balance**. A phased withdrawal, coupled with development and dialogue, remains the long-term solution.



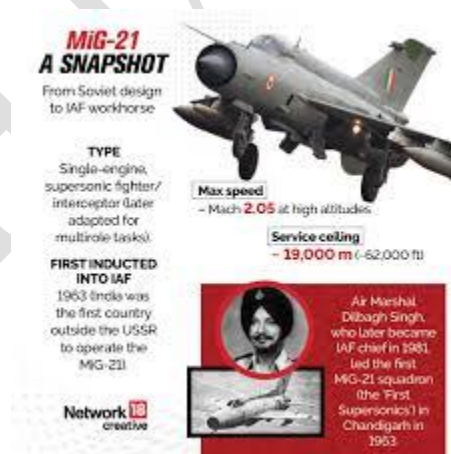
## UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2 (Polity & Governance):** Constitutional provisions, Centre-State relations, judicial scrutiny of security laws.
- **GS Paper 3 (Internal Security):** Counter-insurgency, terrorism, and law-and-order mechanisms.
- **Essay Topics:** Balancing national security with human rights, AFSPA debate in democratic governance.
- **Ethics (GS Paper 4):** Ethical dilemmas in use of force, civil liberties vs. national interest.

## 9. MiG-21 Fighter Jets Retired After Six Decades of Service

### Key Highlights

- **Historic Retirement**
  - The Indian Air Force (IAF) formally decommissioned the **MiG-21 jets** at Chandigarh Air Force Station after over **60 years of service**.
  - The last squadron (No. 23, “Panthers”) gave a ceremonial farewell, including the final sortie led by Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh.
- **Symbol of India–Russia Defence Ties**
  - Defence Minister Rajnath Singh described MiG-21 as not just a machine but a **symbol of India–Russia strategic partnership**.
  - MiG-21 was India’s first supersonic jet and backbone of the IAF for decades.
- **Operational Legacy**
  - Played a decisive role in:
    - **1971 War** (liberation of Bangladesh).
    - **Kargil conflict (1999)**.
    - **Balakot air strike (2019)**.
    - **Operation Sindoor** (air dominance demonstration).
  - Earned the nickname “**backbone of IAF**” for its long-standing service despite being a 3rd-generation aircraft.
- **Definition – Decommissioning:**
  - In military terms, it refers to formally retiring a system or equipment from **active operational service**, often marked with a ceremonial handover.
- **Concerns and Future Path**
  - Retirement reduced IAF’s fighter squadron strength to **29**, lowest since 1960s.
  - Highlights urgent need to expedite indigenous platforms:





- **LCA Tejas** (operational).
- **Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)** (under development).
- Defence Minister emphasized MiG-21's "legacy as DNA" for India's future indigenous fighter aircraft.

### Constitutional & Legal Provisions

- **Article 51A(d) – Fundamental Duty:** Citizens to defend the country and render national service when called upon.
- **Article 73 & 246 – Union List:** Defence of India and armed forces fall under Union's exclusive domain.
- **Defence Procurement Policy & Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan:** Legal-policy framework to promote indigenous defence manufacturing.

### Additional Key Points

- MiG-21 was inducted in the early 1960s and produced under license by **HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited)**.
- Though celebrated, it also drew criticism due to frequent accidents, earning the label "flying coffin."
- The farewell ceremony featured aerobatic displays by **Surya Kiran team, Tejas, and Jaguar fighters**, symbolizing continuity from legacy to future platforms.

### Conclusion

The retirement of the MiG-21 closes a golden chapter in India's military aviation. While it symbolizes India's deep defence ties with Russia and IAF's historic victories, it also underlines the **strategic urgency to build indigenous fighter capability**. The transition from MiG-21 to Tejas and AMCA represents India's push for **self-reliance in defence and modernisation of air power**.

### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2 (International Relations):** India–Russia defence ties, strategic autonomy in defence.
- **GS Paper 3 (Internal Security & Defence):** Modernisation of armed forces, indigenisation of defence production, Atmanirbhar Bharat in defence.
- **Essay/GS-1 History of Defence:** Evolution of IAF and impact of MiG-21 on India's military history.
- **Current Affairs:** Defence capability, Make in India, and role of indigenous platforms like Tejas and AMCA.

## 10. Weak Private Sector Response to India's National R&D Survey

### Key Highlights

- **Postponement of National Science and Technology Survey**
  - Science and Technology Ministry conducts a **biennial National Science and Technology Survey** to assess the state of R&D in India.



- Due to **low response from private firms**, the publication of the latest survey analysis is being postponed.
- **Scope of the Survey**
  - Covers around **8,000 R&D bodies**, both public and private.
  - Measures include:
    - Domestic expenditure on R&D.
    - Share of **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** devoted to R&D.
    - Number of scientists (including women participation).
    - Patents generated and international comparison of research spending.
  - Definition – *Research and Development (R&D)*: Systematic work undertaken to increase knowledge and apply it to develop new products or processes.
- **Response Statistics**
  - Government R&D institutions: **73%** responded.
  - Private industry bodies: **35%** responded.
  - Multinational companies: only **9%** responded.
  - Public sector contributes **~75%** of India's R&D funding, unlike advanced economies where private sector leads.
- **Challenges Identified by Industry**
  - Lack of clarity in defining **R&D spending parameters** in the questionnaire.
  - Comparison with developed nations may be misleading due to **low GDP per capita**, despite relatively impressive R&D spending.
  - Concerns over confidentiality and data sensitivity by private firms.
- **Government Measures**
  - Extension of survey submission deadline to **November 30, 2025**.
  - Engagement through workshops (e.g., FICCI) to encourage **private sector participation**.
  - Role of **National Science and Technology Management Information System (NSTMIS)** in data collation and analysis.



## Constitutional & Legal Context

- **Article 51A(h) – Fundamental Duty:** Encourage scientific temper, humanism, and spirit of inquiry and reform.
- **Section 8 of the Science and Technology Policy Framework:** Empowers government to promote R&D and collect related data.



- Supports **Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission** by highlighting gaps in private sector innovation and promoting **indigenous technological capability**.

#### Additional Key Points

- India's total R&D expenditure is a **percentage of GDP**, currently lower than OECD nations.
- Highlighted need for **public-private collaboration** to strengthen innovation ecosystem.
- Survey outcomes guide **policy decisions, incentives, and funding allocations** for science and technology development.

#### Conclusion

The weak response from the private sector underlines the **need for clearer definitions, incentives, and trust-building** measures in India's R&D ecosystem. Strengthening private sector participation is critical for **enhancing innovation, competitiveness, and self-reliance** in science and technology.

#### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2 (Governance & Science Policy):** Policies promoting research, public-private partnerships in science and technology.
- **GS Paper 3 (Economy & Science & Technology):** R&D expenditure, innovation ecosystem, technology-driven growth, Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- **Essay/GS-1 Themes:** Science and technology development, innovation for national progress, public-private collaboration.

## 11. Pakistan Seeks 'Comprehensive and Composite' Talks with India

#### Key Highlights

- **Pakistan's Proposal for Dialogue**
  - Pakistan PM **Shehbaz Sharif** expressed readiness for **composite, comprehensive, and result-oriented talks** with India on all outstanding issues.
  - Addressed the **UN General Assembly**, emphasizing the need for **proactive, not provocative, leadership** in South Asia.
- **Role of U.S. in De-escalation**
  - Sharif lauded former U.S. President **Donald Trump** for intervening during the **May 2025 conflict** between India and Pakistan.
  - Claimed timely U.S. action prevented a **full-scale war**.
  - U.S. Secretary of State **Marco Rubio** facilitated agreement for talks at a **neutral site**.
- **Background of May 2025 Conflict**
  - Triggered by terrorist attacks in **Pahalgam, Kashmir**, killing civilians.
  - India responded with targeted strikes on Pakistani military sites.
  - Pakistan denied involvement; Sharif claimed India was **repulsed with a "bloody nose"**.
- **Current Indo-Pak Relations**





- Relations remain **tense**, with India downplaying U.S. mediation role.
- U.S.–India relations have **cooled**, partly due to Trump-era **tariffs on Indian crude oil imports from Russia**.
- Highlights the interplay of **regional diplomacy and global power influence** in South Asia.
- **Definition – Composite Dialogue:**
  - A **multi-issue negotiation framework** addressing security, trade, water, terrorism, and other bilateral concerns between nations.
  - Objective: achieve **comprehensive and sustainable peace**.
- **Constitutional & Legal Context**
  - **Article 51 of the Indian Constitution:** Promotion of **international peace and security**, fostering friendly relations with other states.
  - **Simla Agreement, 1972** and **Lahore Declaration, 1999:** Provide legal-diplomatic framework for India-Pakistan dialogue.
  - **UN Charter (1945):** Obliges member states to settle disputes peacefully.

#### Additional Key Points

- Pakistan's initiative underscores continued **strategic rivalry** and **territorial disputes** over Kashmir.
- Emphasizes the role of **third-party mediation** in regional conflict management.
- Highlights how **external factors (U.S. policies, global trade, sanctions)** influence bilateral relations.

#### Conclusion

Pakistan's call for composite talks reflects an ongoing effort to manage tensions with India through diplomacy. While India remains cautious about third-party mediation, the episode underscores the **complexity of South Asian security dynamics** and the need for **pragmatic conflict-resolution mechanisms**.

#### UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper 2 (International Relations):** Indo-Pak relations, conflict resolution, role of external powers in South Asia.
- **GS Paper 3 (Security):** Cross-border terrorism, ceasefire agreements, regional stability.
- **Essay Topics:** Peace diplomacy, strategic rivalry, regional security architecture in South Asia.
- **Current Affairs:** Impact of global power interventions on bilateral disputes, evolving U.S.–India–Pakistan dynamics.