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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

1. India's Evolving Role in the Russia-Ukraine War

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Shift to Active Engagement:** External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar stated that India has moved "beyond advocacy" to become "a little more involved" in resolving the Russia-Ukraine war, holding dual dialogue with both Moscow and Kyiv.
- **Areas of Operational Focus:** India's diplomatic intervention emphasizes practical security issues, including grain exports, energy transport safety, Black Sea shipping navigation, and exploring non-attack options.
- **Proposal to End Conflict:** Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha acknowledged that India presented a "comprehensive" and "broad" proposal aiming to end the ongoing war.
- **Strategic Autonomy Maintained:** Despite Western scrutiny and economic pressure regarding Indian imports of Russian energy, New Delhi reaffirms its age-old ties with Russia and independent foreign policy choices.
- **Security & Humanitarian Concerns:** Recent attacks in Sumy, Ukraine, resulted in drone strikes damaging an Indian-owned pharmaceutical medical warehouse, underscoring the risks to global supply chains and foreign property during the war.
- **Multilateral Engagement Context:** Remarks were made at the Munich Leaders' Meeting in New Delhi alongside high-level interactions with US Indo-Pacific Command officials, showcasing India's balanced multi-alignment strategy.

Essential Definitions

- **Strategic Autonomy:** A doctrine in foreign policy enabling a state to make foreign policy decisions independently based on national interest without being constrained by traditional global power blocs.
- **Multi-Alignment:** The diplomatic practice of maintaining functional, constructive relations simultaneously with competing major global powers rather than joining formal alliances.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 51 of the Indian Constitution:** Directs the State under the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) to promote international peace and security, maintain just and honorable relations between nations, and foster respect for international law and treaty obligations.
- **UN Charter Principles:** Article 2(4) prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, aligning with India's advocacy for negotiations and diplomatic conflict resolution.



Conclusion

India's foreign policy approach to the Russia-Ukraine war reflects a transition from passive neutral advocacy to constructive active diplomacy. By leveraging its unique relationship with both Western nations and Russia, India reinforces its position as a credible mediator while strictly upholding its national strategic autonomy.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (International Relations):** Indian foreign policy, Bilateral, regional, and global groupings involving India, and the impact of policies of developed and developing countries on India's interests.
- **GS Paper II (Polity):** Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 51 - Promotion of international peace and security).

2. Next-Gen GST & India's Next Phase of Growth

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Dual Core Objectives:** Next-Gen GST aims to rationalise tax rates for household relief while simplifying compliance to ensure ease of doing business across enterprises of all sizes.
- **Robust Revenue & Compliance Growth:** Gross GST collections reached ₹12.46 lakh crore during April–September 2026 (up 11.6% year-on-year), while total registrations grew to 1.71 crore by August 2026.
- **Broad-Based Economic Expansion:** Reported taxable supplies grew by 25.8% between October 2025 and July 2026, demonstrating widespread growth across all 11 sector groups and major Indian states.
- **Enhanced Liquidity via Refunds:** Approximately ₹1.80 lakh crore was refunded to businesses between April and September, improving working capital availability for small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).
- **Cooperative Federalism in Action:** States achieved a 16% growth in aggregate SGST receipts (including IGST settlement share), reflecting shared fiscal gains and collaborative policymaking in the GST Council.

- **Upcoming Reform Agenda:** The next phase focuses on process reforms concerning registration, return filing, input tax credit flow, and dispute resolution to minimize compliance time and costs.

Essential Definitions

- **Input Tax Credit (ITC):** A mechanism allowing businesses to reduce the tax they pay on outputs by the amount of tax already paid on input purchases, preventing tax cascading.
- **Integrated GST (IGST):** The tax levied under the GST framework on all inter-state supplies of goods and services, collected by the Centre and settled between the Centre and destination States.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 246A:** Grants Parliament and State Legislatures concurrent powers to make laws with respect to Goods and Services Tax.
- **Article 279A:** Mandates the constitution of the GST Council as a joint forum of the Centre and States to make recommendations on tax rates, exemptions, and administrative procedures.

Conclusion

Next-Gen GST strengthens India's fiscal architecture by balancing consumer relief with sustained revenue generation. By streamlining administrative processes and reinforcing cooperative federalism, these reforms create a predictable economic environment essential for achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Economy):** Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development, and government budgeting.
- **GS Paper II (Governance & Polity):** Issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers, and the functioning of the GST Council.

3. First Captive-Bred Great Indian Bustards Rewilded in Desert National Park

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Landmark Rewilding Event:** Two male Great Indian Bustards (GIB) raised in captivity were released into Rajasthan's Desert National Park (DNP), marking the first successful rewilding step under Project GIB.
- **Ex-Situ Breeding Infrastructure:** Conservation breeding centres established at Ramdevra and Sam in Jaisalmer maintain 98 captive-bred birds, developed by artificially incubating wild-collected eggs since 2019.



- **Critically Endangered Status:** The intervention aims to recover a severely threatened wild population, which currently stands at approximately 150 individuals in the wild.
- **Ecological Significance:** GIB serves as a key flagship species for grassland ecosystems, land degradation neutrality, and acts as an indicator for the Central Asian Flyway migratory corridor.
- **Habitat Management Interventions:** Complementary conservation includes habitat restoration across 200 square kilometres of fenced grassland enclosures within DNP, alongside telemetry tracking studies by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII).
- **Progressive Release Protocol:** Out of 11 captive birds earmarked for rewilding, the initial release provides vital scientific insights to refine reintroduction protocols for future batches.

Essential Definitions

- **Rewilding:** The environmental practice of reintroducing captive-bred or displaced animal species back into their natural, unmanaged habitats to restore ecological balance.
- **Ex-Situ Conservation:** The preservation of components of biological diversity outside their natural habitats, such as in captive breeding facilities or gene banks.



Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972:** The Great Indian Bustard is listed under Schedule I, granting it the highest level of legal protection against hunting and commercial trade.
- **Article 48A of the Indian Constitution:** Mandates that the State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country.
- **Article 51A(g) of the Indian Constitution:** Casts a fundamental duty upon every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment, including forests, lakes, rivers, and wildlife.

Conclusion

The successful rewilding of captive-bred Great Indian Bustards marks a significant breakthrough in species recovery efforts. Combining ex-situ breeding with in-situ habitat restoration offers a viable model for preventing the extinction of critically endangered avifauna in India.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Environment & Ecology):** Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment, and biodiversity recovery initiatives.
- **GS Paper II (Polity & Governance):** Constitutional provisions related to environmental protection (Directive Principles of State Policy and Fundamental Duties).

4. India-US Trade Negotiations: Prioritising Institutional Predictability over Tariff Margins

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Uncertainty as a Trade Barrier:** Rapidly shifting US trade policies and emergency statutory frameworks have created policy unpredictability, hindering long-term planning for Indian exporters.
- **Erosion of Relative Tariff Advantages:** Tariff advantages gained through bilateral deals risk rapid dilution as Washington extends similar or lower rates to competing export economies like Vietnam.
- **Vulnerability of Sectoral Exemptions:** Key Indian exports, particularly generic pharmaceuticals, face uncertainty due to upcoming reviews of zero-duty exemptions and proposed import duties.
- **Asymmetry in Deal Commitments:** India risks offering long-term tariff cuts and procurement commitments in exchange for US tariff concessions that remain vulnerable to administrative revisions.
- **Focusing on Irreversible Terms:** India's negotiation strategy should prioritize binding commitments against arbitrary tariff hikes, mandatory prior consultation mechanisms, and structural dispute safeguards over narrow tariff gaps.
- **Conditional Reciprocity Mechanism:** Indian tariff adjustments and purchase commitments should be explicitly linked to sustained US compliance, ensuring reciprocal adjustments if US concessions are revoked.

Essential Definitions

- **Reciprocal Tariffs:** A trade policy mechanism where one nation imposes import duties on another country matching the exact rates or conditions levied on its own exports.
- **Structural Excess Capacity:** An economic condition where a nation's production capability significantly exceeds domestic demand, leading to international market distortion and anti-dumping investigations.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 253 of the Indian Constitution:** Empowers Parliament to make laws for implementing international treaties, agreements, or conventions with foreign nations.
- **Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992:** Authorizes the Central Government to formulate, regulate, and implement India's foreign trade policy and modify duty structures.
- **WTO General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Article II:** Mandates binding tariff schedules to ensure predictability in international trade by preventing unilateral duty increases above agreed ceiling levels.

Conclusion

Navigating trade negotiations with the US requires India to shift its diplomatic focus from temporary tariff margins toward binding structural guarantees. Securing transparent consultation processes, conditional reciprocity, and permanent sectoral protections will safeguard India's foreign trade against legislative and administrative shifts in Washington.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (International Relations):** Bilateral, regional, and global groupings involving India, and the impact of policies of developed countries on India's economic interests.
- **GS Paper III (Economy):** India's foreign trade policy, export dynamics, tariff structures, and global trade governance frameworks.

5. Drought in Maharashtra: Comparative Dynamics and Structural Vulnerabilities

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Evolving Climate Vulnerability:** Unlike 1972, when three consecutive failed monsoons triggered a crisis, Maharashtra now faces acute water distress after just a single bad rainfall season, underscoring heightened ecological fragility.
- **Severe Irrigation Deficit:** Despite harboring the highest number of dams in India, Maharashtra's gross irrigated area remains low at 17% to 18%, leaving a vast majority of agriculture dependent on unpredictable monsoons.
- **Fiscal Strain & Borrowing:** Facing a heavy debt burden, the state government secured an additional ₹45,000 crore borrowing for drought relief, alongside allocating ₹70,000 crore solely for interest servicing in the current fiscal year.
- **Historical vs. Contemporary Policy Response:** The 1972 drought led to bipartisan cooperation and the inception of the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS)—now VB-G RAM G—whereas modern drought management is marked by competitive political demands for drought-affected declarations.
- **Widespread Regional Impact:** Drought conditions have been officially declared across 265 out of 358 talukas, creating significant administrative challenges for relief distribution and social security coverage.
- **Agricultural Growth Fluctuations:** Demonstrating structural volatility, state agricultural growth dipped into negative territory in recent years and projects a modest 3.4% recovery, contrasting sharply with historical peaks.

Essential Definitions

- **Drought Declaration:** An administrative process by state governments based on parameters like rainfall deficit, soil moisture, crop damage, and remote sensing indices to trigger emergency relief funds.
- **Fiscal Deficit:** The excess of a government's total expenditure over its total revenue (excluding borrowings), indicating the total financial assistance required from public debt.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Disaster Management Act, 2005:** Provides the statutory framework for disaster response, authorizing State and District Disaster Management Authorities to deploy National and State Disaster Response Funds (NDRF/SDRF) for drought mitigation.
- **Article 293(3) of the Indian Constitution:** Mandates that a State Government cannot raise loans without the consent of the Government of India if there is still outstanding any part of a central loan.

- **Schedule VII (State List - Entry 14 & Entry 17):** Assigns primary responsibility over Agriculture and Water resources (irrigation, canals, drainage, and water storage) to State Legislatures.

Conclusion

The recurring drought crises in Maharashtra highlight the urgent need to move from reactive relief measures to long-term structural reforms in irrigation, cropping patterns, and climate-resilient agriculture. Sustainable groundwater management and prudent fiscal governance remain essential for ensuring rural economic stability and ecological security.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper III (Environment, Disaster Management & Agriculture):** Major crops and irrigation systems, land reforms, climate change impacts, drought management frameworks, and disaster relief.
- **GS Paper II (Governance & Polity):** Center-State financial relations, borrowing limits under Article 293, and disaster management governance under federal structures.

6. Cadre Allocation Tussle: CAPF Officers vs. IPS Deputation

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Core Institutional Dispute:** A long-standing conflict persists between cadre officers of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Indian Police Service (IPS) officers regarding reservation and deputation quotas in senior command positions.
- **Judicial Directives and Non-Compliance:** Contempt petitions were filed in the Supreme Court alleging non-compliance with its May 2023 judgment, which called for a progressive reduction in IPS deputation within CAPFs.
- **Impact on Career Progression:** CAPF cadre officers argue that extensive IPS deputations at senior levels (such as DIG, IG, and DG ranks) severely limit promotion opportunities and exacerbate career stagnation.
- **Ministry of Home Affairs Stance:** The MHA emphasizes the necessity of IPS deputation, citing operational synergy, civil-military coordination, and maintaining an institutional link between Central and State police establishments.
- **Legislative Intervention via CAPF Act:** Parliament enacted the Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Act, creating an umbrella framework that empowers the Centre to frame recruitment, promotion, and service conditions overriding inconsistent court orders.
- **Deputation Quotas Mandated:** The new statutory framework reserves 50% of IG posts and at least 67% of Additional DG posts—along with all Special DG and DG posts—for deputation, sparking fresh legal challenges in the Supreme Court.

Essential Definitions

- **Deputation:** The temporary transfer of a civil servant or public official from their parent cadre or department to serve in another organization or Ministry under defined terms and conditions.

- **Non-Functional Financial Upgradation (NFFU):** A scheme granting financial scale elevation to officers who cannot be promoted due to a lack of promotional vacancies, ensuring parity with higher-grade pay without changing physical rank.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 309 of the Indian Constitution:** Empowers Parliament and State Legislatures to enact laws regulating the recruitment and conditions of service of persons appointed to public services and posts in connection with the Union or States.
- **Article 312 of the Indian Constitution:** Authorizes the creation of All India Services (including the IPS), common to both the Union and States, to maintain administrative uniformity and national integration.
- **Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Act, 2026:** Codifies service conditions, rank structures, and deputation ratios for Group A officers across the five core CAPFs (CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP, and SSB).

The tussle for top posts in India's CAPFs: IPS officers or force veterans?



Conclusion

The institutional conflict between CAPF cadre officers and IPS deputations reflects a delicate balance between cadre morale and inter-departmental integration. Settling this dispute requires structured career progression pathways alongside clear, statutory deputation norms to preserve both operational synergy and professional incentives.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Governance & Polity):** Role of civil services in a democracy, functioning of All India Services versus Central Group A services, and judicial review of legislative enactments.
- **GS Paper III (Internal Security):** Management of internal security forces, structural challenges in Central Armed Police Forces, and inter-agency coordination mechanisms.

7. Structural Challenges in Lung Cancer Screening in India

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Rising Mortality and Incidence Burden:** Lung cancer has emerged as the leading cause of cancer deaths in India, accounting for 10.9% of all cancer deaths (98,687 deaths in 2024), rising from fourth to third place in overall incidence.
- **Late-Stage Diagnosis Deficit:** Approximately 93% of lung cancer cases in India are diagnosed at advanced stages, reducing five-year survival rates to between 7% and 18%, compared to up to 80% if detected in stage one.
- **Exclusion from Primary Screening:** National health screening guidelines at primary health centres focus exclusively on oral, breast, and cervical cancers using inexpensive visual exams, omitting lung cancer due to cost and infrastructure barriers.

- **Efficacy of Low-Dose CT (LDCT):** Studies by ICMR and AIIMS show that LDCT-based screening provides the highest net monetary benefit and effectively identifies malignant nodules even in high-tuberculosis endemic settings.
- **Non-Smoker Risk Dynamics:** A significant proportion of Indian lung cancer patients are non-smokers exposed to biomass fuel, second-hand smoke, beedi use, and high ambient air pollution, making Western smoking-centric criteria inadequate.
- **Resource and Diagnostic Bottlenecks:** Implementing LDCT screening nationwide is constrained by high equipment costs, lack of CT scanners at primary levels, and the requirement for asymptomatic individuals to travel to tertiary centres.

Essential Definitions

- **Low-Dose Computed Tomography (LDCT):** A specialized radiological imaging technique that uses a lower dose of radiation than a standard CT scan to obtain detailed cross-sectional images of the lungs for early-stage cancer detection.
- **Incidence:** The rate or number of new cases of a specific disease arising within a defined population over a specified time period.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 21 of the Indian Constitution:** Guarantees the fundamental Right to Life, which the Supreme Court has expanded to include the right to health, timely medical care, and access to essential diagnostic infrastructure.
- **Article 47 of the Indian Constitution:** Mandates a Directive Principle of State Policy requiring the State to regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties.
- **National Health Policy, 2017:** Outlines strategic interventions for non-communicable diseases (NCDs), prioritizing early screening, equitable healthcare access, and the expansion of comprehensive primary care through Health and Wellness Centres.

Conclusion

Addressing India's high lung cancer mortality requires a transition from symptom-driven tertiary care to targeted risk-based screening protocols. Integrating low-dose CT technology for high-risk populations, alongside addressing environmental risk factors like air pollution and biomass emissions, remains vital for strengthening national cancer control outcomes.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Governance, Social Justice & Health):** Issues relating to the development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, public health infrastructure, and National Health Policies.
- **GS Paper III (Environment & Science/Technology):** Impact of ambient air pollution on public health outcomes and application of advanced diagnostic technology in disease eradication.

8. Millennia-Long History and Contemporary Significance of Animal Diplomacy

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Historical Evolution:** Animal diplomacy—the strategic exchange, loan, or gifting of fauna between nations—has been practiced across millennia, from Egyptian pharaohs and the Roman Empire to medieval European and Asian courts.
- **Shift from Gifts to Conservation:** Following the enforcement of CITES in 1975, global practices shifted away from treating rare species as permanent state gifts, moving toward regulated scientific loans and international conservation programs.
- **Soft Power & Public Engagement:** Modern animal diplomacy, exemplified by China's "Panda Diplomacy," enables nations to project soft power, bypass formal diplomatic friction, and build goodwill directly with the global public.
- **India's Diplomatic Tradition:** India has a rich history of fauna exchanges, ranging from Sultan Muzaffar II's gift of a rhinoceros to Portugal in the 1500s to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru gifting elephants internationally post-independence.
- **Transnational Species Recovery:** Modern initiatives, such as the India-Namibia cheetah reintroduction under "Project Cheetah" and India gifting peacocks to the UN in Geneva, merge diplomatic relations with biodiversity conservation.
- **Symbolism of Ecological Stewardship:** Gifting or loaning endangered fauna places a formal obligation of wildlife stewardship on the recipient state, making animal welfare a barometer of broader diplomatic trust.

From giraffes to pandas:
The millennia-long history
of animal diplomacy



Essential Definitions

- **Soft Power:** The ability of a nation to influence international outcomes and shape preferences through cultural appeal, political values, and diplomatic goodwill rather than military or economic coercion.
- **Ex-Situ Conservation:** The preservation of biodiversity components outside their natural habitats through zoological gardens, captive breeding facilities, or international sanctuary networks.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora):** An international agreement regulating and monitoring transnational movements of wild animals to ensure trade does not threaten species survival.
- **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972:** Regulates the export, import, transfer, and captivity of scheduled wild animals in India, ensuring strict adherence to international legal norms.
- **Article 51A(g) of the Indian Constitution:** Enjoins a fundamental duty upon every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment and show compassion for living creatures.

Conclusion

Animal diplomacy has evolved from historic displays of imperial power into a sophisticated mechanism combining cultural goodwill with international conservation obligations. Balancing soft power projection with wildlife welfare under legal frameworks like CITES ensures that ecological stewardship remains central to modern diplomatic engagements.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (International Relations):** Foreign policy tools, soft power projection, bilateral and multilateral engagements, and international conventions (CITES).
- **GS Paper III (Environment & Ecology):** Transnational wildlife conservation, biodiversity protection frameworks, and human-animal stewardship.

9. Institutional Fragility and Statutory Ambiguities in Election Commission Governance

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Constituent Assembly Vision:** Frame-makers like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar centralized the election machinery to prevent provincial abuse and voter deletions, anticipating executive overreach and partisan control.
- **Statutory Lack of SIR Mandate:** The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) lacks explicit backing in the Representation of the People Act, 1950, as Section 21 distinguishes between intensive and special revisions without mentioning "special intensive revision".
- **Mass Voter Disenfranchisement:** Media reports indicate that the SIR exercise resulted in the removal of 13 crore Indian voters from electoral rolls, conflicting with universal adult suffrage.
- **Internal Governance Crises:** Unilateral decision-making by the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) without consulting other Election Commissioners undermines collective decision-making protocols required for valid constitutional functioning.
- **Constitutional Removal Procedures:** Opposition parties are contemplating impeachment against the CEC, which requires proved misbehaviour under rules applicable to Supreme Court judges.
- **Statutory Immunity Protections:** Section 16 of the 2023 Act provides the CEC and ECs lifelong immunity from civil and criminal liability for official actions, surpassing protections granted to other constitutional authorities.

Essential Definitions

- **Special Intensive Revision (SIR):** A hybrid voter list revision exercise conducted by the ECI that combines door-to-door verification with targeted constituency updates without explicit statutory terminology under the RP Act, 1950.
- **Universal Adult Suffrage:** The constitutional principle granting every adult citizen, regardless of wealth, income, gender, social status, or race, the fundamental right to register and vote.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 324 of the Indian Constitution:** Vests the superintendence, direction, and control of elections in the Election Commission of India, exercising residual powers only where explicit statutory laws are silent.

- **Article 326 of the Indian Constitution:** Guarantees elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies on the basis of adult suffrage, requiring inclusion rather than exclusion of eligible citizens.
- **Section 21 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950:** Governs the preparation and revision of electoral rolls through summary, intensive, or special revisions recorded for specific constituencies.
- **Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners Act, 2023:** Regulates the appointment, service conditions, term of office, and legal immunities of members of the Election Commission.

Conclusion

Preserving the institutional credibility of the Election Commission of India requires strict adherence to statutory procedures and transparent decision-making. Reconciling internal governance structures with constitutional mandates under Article 324 remains vital for upholding voter trust and democratic integrity.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (Governance & Polity):** Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions, and responsibilities of key Constitutional Bodies, and electoral reforms.
- **GS Paper II (Electoral Processes):** Representation of the People Act, election management, safeguards against disenfranchisement, and federal democratic structures.

10. Reorientation of U.S. National Defense Strategy: Implications for India

Key Highlights & Summary

- **Mid-Term Strategy Realignment:** Elbridge A. Colby, U.S. Under Secretary of War for Policy, delivered an updated assessment of the 2026 National Defense Strategy, converting Administration priorities into concrete foreign policy.
- **Core Defense Pillars:** The revised framework prioritizes defending the U.S. homeland, deterring China in the Indo-Pacific, expanding burden-sharing with global allies, and overhauling the U.S. defense industrial base.
- **Shift toward Burden-Sharing:** Washington is transitioning from providing primary regional security to demanding that allies and partners assume greater financial, military, and logistical responsibilities.
- **Simultaneous Competition and Negotiation:** The U.S. maintains military deterrence against China along the First Island Chain while actively engaging Beijing in trade and economic negotiations, creating dynamic strategic shifts.
- **Impact on Strategic Autonomy:** U.S. expectations for European self-reliance and winding down costs in Ukraine directly intersect with India's defense dependencies on Russia, energy choices, and multi-alignment posture.
- **Bargaining Power and Leverage:** Future India-U.S. engagements will depend less on symbolic partnership labels and more on concrete leverage, including industrial scale, technology, and economic capabilities.

Essential Definitions

- **Burden-Sharing:** A security concept wherein primary military allies and regional partners assume a larger share of financial, material, and operational responsibilities for collective defense.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** The ability of a sovereign nation to make independent foreign policy decisions based on national interest without being constrained by major power blocs or treaty obligations.

Legal and Constitutional Framework

- **Article 51 of the Indian Constitution:** Directs the State under the Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) to promote international peace and security, maintain just relations, and honor treaty obligations.
- **Article 253 of the Indian Constitution:** Empowers Parliament to enact legislation for implementing international treaties, bilateral defense agreements, and security arrangements with foreign nations.
- **Bilateral Defense Frameworks:** Operationalized through foundational defense agreements including GSOMIA, LEMOA, COMCASA, and BECA, alongside strategic initiatives like iCET and INDUS-X.

Conclusion

The evolving U.S. National Defense Strategy presents India with both strategic expectations and significant opportunities. Building domestic defense manufacturing capacity, economic scale, and diversified global partnerships will enable New Delhi to generate necessary leverage while preserving its core strategic autonomy.

UPSC Relevance

- **GS Paper II (International Relations):** Effect of policies and politics of developed countries on India's interests, bilateral and regional groupings, and strategic partnerships.
- **GS Paper III (Internal Security & Defense):** Indigenization of defense capability, defense industrial base, supply chain resilience, and security challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.

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