

# CURRENTLY — 30 SEPTEMBER 2026

1. **The Jobs Overhang on Growth — Business Standard — GS-3:** Indian Economy | Employment | Inclusive Growth | Demographic Dividend
2. **Neighbourhood Power Play: Transmission Lines as New Pathways of Regional Influence — The Economic Times — GS-2:** Neighbourhood | Regional Connectivity | India's Regional Influence | **GS-3:** Energy Security | Hydropower
3. **Autonomous AI Agents: Balancing Autonomy with Human Control — The Hindu — GS-3:** Artificial Intelligence | Cybersecurity | Data Governance | AI Ethics
4. **Renewed Debate over Bauxite Mining in Niyamgiri Hills — The Hindu — GS-2:** Tribal Rights | PESA | Constitutional Safeguards | **GS-3:** Environment | Mining | Sustainable Development
5. **Japan Calls on India to Fast-Track Internal Process on UNICORN Naval Agreement — The Hindu — GS-2:** India–Japan Relations | QUAD | Indo-Pacific | **GS-3:** Defence Technology | Naval Modernisation
6. **Indian Delegation Attends SCO Meeting in Pakistan — The Hindu — GS-2:** International Relations | SCO | India–Pakistan Relations | Central Asia | Multilateral Diplomacy
7. **Deepening the India–US Defence Partnership — The Hindu — GS-2:** India–US Relations | Strategic Partnership | Indo-Pacific | **GS-3:** Defence & Security | Defence Technology | Defence Indigenisation

# The jobs overhang on growth

The country needs to create enough productive jobs if it is to sustain its high growth

India has been recording healthy economic performance, with gross domestic product (GDP) growth exceeding the 7 per cent mark over the last three years. For sustained and inclusive high growth, it is critical to accelerate employment generation in the economy. This becomes even more crucial given India's favourable demographic structure, with the share of the working-age population rising to 68 per cent from 62 per cent two decades ago.

India is enjoying this demographic dividend at a time when most major economies, including the United States, the European Union and Japan, as well as Asian peers such as China and Thailand, are ageing. However, to benefit from this demographic dividend, it is important for employment growth to keep pace with the expansion in economic activity and the growing labour force.

Our analysis based on the International Labour Organization's modelled estimates shows that employment growth had lagged population growth in the 15+ age category during 2001-2020. However, the pace of employment among individuals aged 15+ has picked up post-pandemic (2021-2025) outpacing the population growth in this age category. Since the pandemic, employment in this age category has grown at 3.5 per cent versus 1.1 per cent in the preceding five years, and a low of 0.5 per cent in the period between 2006 and 2010. Employment elasticity, which measures the growth in employment vis-à-vis economic growth, improved to 0.46 during 2021-2025, from 0.22 in 2011-15 and a low of 0.08 during 2006-2010.

India's unemployment rate has stabilised around 3.1 per cent (Periodic Labour Force Survey or PLFS) since 2023, moderating from 6 per cent in 2018. Though this is encouraging, it is important to understand that the measurement criteria might not be fully capturing the extent of unemployment, given the high share of self-employment and the prevalence of disguised unemployment in sectors like agriculture. Moreover, the data may understate the extent of unemployment in an economy like India that is characterised by seasonal, casual and irregular employment.

The country's employment scenario faces several long-standing challenges such as low labour force

participation rate (LFPR), persistent education-skill mismatches, youth unemployment, and higher informality in jobs. India's LFPR, according to the PLFS, improved to 59.3 per cent in 2025, from 49.8 per cent in 2018. However, India's LFPR remains below the global average of 61 per cent, trailing several Asian countries including Vietnam, Singapore and Indonesia.

This is largely due to low female labour force participation — at 32 per cent in India compared with 68 per cent in Vietnam and 59 per cent in China and Thailand.

With rising aspirations and education-skill mismatch, the unemployment rate is disproportionately higher among individuals with higher levels of education. Furthermore, there is high youth (15-29 years) unemployment at 9.9 per cent (2025). There is a predominance of self-employment in India, particularly in rural India and among women. While rising self-employment is a positive feature for the employment landscape, it could also be indicative that the economy is not generating adequate job opportunities. The share of self-employed in India was as high as 56.2 per cent in 2025,

higher than the pre-Covid level of 52.1 per cent. Moreover, the share of casual labourers was 20.2 per cent. A high share of self-employed and casual workers is indicative of informality in the Indian labour market.

India is going through this challenge of job creation at a time when the global labour market landscape is grappling with increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation risks. These aspects seem to be already weighing on the hiring trends in the formal employment market in India. Our analysis of a sample of 236 companies from the Nifty 500 showed flat net employee addition in FY26, compared to strong gains seen in the post-pandemic period (FY22-FY23). Specifically, net job addition was weak in banking/finance and IT sectors.

A look at sector-wise job creation shows that agriculture absorbs the largest chunk of the workforce at 43 per cent, even though it contributes only about one fifth to India's GVA (gross value added). This reflects low labour productivity and disguised unemployment in the agriculture sector. There is an urgent need for labour to move from agriculture

to more productive sectors. Also, employment opportunities should be created in higher-value agriculture and allied/ancillary activities like horticulture, floriculture, animal husbandry, poultry, and food processing.

Coming to manufacturing, the sector's share in total employment has stagnated at 10-12 per cent. This contrasts with the experience of several East Asian economies, where labour-intensive manufacturing played a key role in economic growth. Furthermore, India's manufacturing exports data shows that the share of labour- and resource-intensive manufacturing items has moderated to 20 per cent during 2021-2025, from 29 per cent during 2006-2010. While the rising share of India's technology-intensive exports is a positive development, there needs to be a continued focus on labour-intensive manufacturing exports, such as textile and apparel, leather and footwear, gems and jewellery, toys and sports goods.

The services sector has emerged as a key growth engine, employing around 32 per cent of the workforce. Relatively high-skilled and high-productivity sectors such as IT, software and business services and banking/finance have been the large employment generators in urban areas.

However, India should provide focused support to other labour-intensive services like travel, trade, hospitality, health care and education that have the potential to generate employment at scale. Wholesale and retail trade is the largest employment generator in the services sector, employing around 11 per cent of the total workforce, followed by transport and storage (4.5 per cent) and education (3.3 per cent).

To sustain India's encouraging growth momentum, the government needs to create more productive job opportunities while accelerating investment in human capital to ensure the availability of an adequately skilled workforce. Given that a substantial proportion of India's workforce is in the informal sector, the government needs to specifically focus on implementing stronger social protection measures.

The Code on Social Security (2020) has brought the unorganised sector workers and gig workers into the social security framework. There are also government policies for pension, health and insurance coverage for informal workers. While the government has been moving in the right direction, it still has a long way to go on this front. India has this golden opportunity of a demographic dividend at a time when the world is ageing. But it could become the country's biggest bane if this large workforce is not employed productively.

The writers are, respectively, chief economist and senior economist at CareEdge Ratings. The views are personal



RAJANI SINHA & AKANKSHA BHENDE

**Q1.** हाल के समय में भारत में आर्थिक संवृद्धि की प्रकृति का वर्णन अक्सर नौकरीहीन संवृद्धि के तौर पर किया जाता है। क्या आप इस विचार से सहमत हैं? अपने उत्तर के समर्थन में तर्क प्रस्तुत कीजिए।

The nature of economic growth in India in recent times is often described as jobless growth. Do you agree with this view? Give arguments in favour of your answer.

12  $\frac{1}{2}$

## 1. The Jobs Overhang on Growth

**Source:** Business Standard

**GS-3:** Indian Economy | Employment | Inclusive Growth | Demographic Dividend

## Context

India has sustained **over 7% GDP growth** in recent years, while its working-age population has risen to nearly **68% of the total population**. The challenge is to ensure that this demographic advantage translates into **adequate, productive and quality employment**, rather than growth being concentrated in sectors that generate relatively fewer jobs.

### 1. Is India Experiencing “Jobless Growth”?

1. **Not in the strict sense:** Employment grew by around **3.5% annually during 2021–25**, showing that economic growth is generating jobs.
2. **Employment elasticity improved:** It increased to **0.46 during 2021–25**, compared with **0.22 during 2011–15** and **0.08 during 2006–10**.
3. **Unemployment declined:** The unemployment rate fell to around **3.1% in 2025**, from about 6% in 2018.
4. **But quantity is not enough:** Low unemployment can coexist with **low wages, informal work, disguised unemployment and underemployment**.
5. Therefore, the real concern is **“job-poor or low-productivity growth”** rather than completely jobless growth.

### 2. The Structural Employment Challenge

1. **Agriculture:** Around **43% of workers** continue to depend on agriculture, while the sector contributes only around one-fifth of Gross Value Added, reflecting a major productivity gap.
2. **Manufacturing:** Manufacturing employs only around **10–12% of the workforce**, limiting its ability to absorb surplus labour from agriculture.
3. **Labour-intensive exports:** The share of labour- and resource-intensive exports declined from around **29% in 2006–10 to 20% in 2021–25**.
4. **Services:** Services employ around **32% of workers**, but high-productivity segments such as Information Technology, finance and professional services require relatively higher skills.
5. **Structural transformation:** India needs to move workers from **low-productivity activities to higher-productivity agriculture, manufacturing and employment-intensive services**.

### 3. Why the Quality of Employment Matters

1. **Self-employment dominates:** Around **56.2% of workers were self-employed in 2025**, reflecting the importance of informal and own-account work.

2. **Regular employment is limited:** Only around **23.6%** were in regular wage or salaried employment.
3. **Youth challenge:** Unemployment among the **15–29 age group was 9.9% in 2025**, highlighting the gap between education and suitable employment.
4. **Female participation:** Female Labour Force Participation Rate was **40% in 2025**, leaving considerable untapped labour potential.
5. **Technology transition:** Artificial Intelligence and automation can raise productivity but may reduce demand for some routine jobs and increase the importance of reskilling.

#### 4. Where Should Employment Growth Come From?

1. **Labour-intensive manufacturing:** Textiles, apparel, footwear, leather, toys, food processing and other labour-intensive sectors can generate employment at scale.
2. **Higher-value agriculture:** Horticulture, fisheries, animal husbandry, food processing and agricultural value chains can raise productivity and rural incomes.
3. **Employment-intensive services:** Tourism, hospitality, healthcare, education, retail, transport and logistics can provide opportunities across skill levels.
4. **Women-led employment:** Better childcare, safe mobility, workplace flexibility and suitable local employment can increase women's participation.
5. **Human capital:** Education and skill development must be aligned with **actual industry requirements**, reducing the skill–job mismatch.

#### 5. What Should Policy Focus On?

1. **Make growth more employment-intensive** by supporting sectors with high employment elasticity.
2. **Promote exports and competitiveness** in labour-intensive manufacturing to replicate the employment benefits seen in successful East Asian economies.
3. **Facilitate labour mobility** from low-productivity agriculture to productive non-farm activities.
4. **Strengthen social security** for informal, gig and platform workers, including through the **Code on Social Security, 2020**.
5. **Measure employment quality**, not merely unemployment, by focusing on wages, productivity, stability, social security and working conditions.

**STATE OF PLAY** Transmission lines are new pathways of India's subcontinental influence

# Neighbourhood Power Play



**Pranab Dhal Samanta**

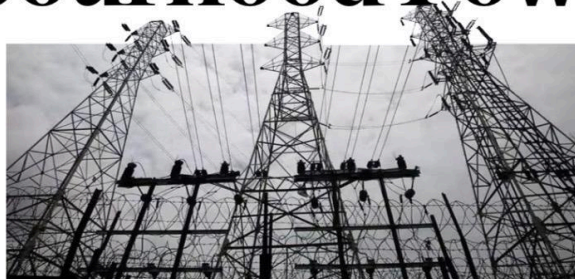
**T**ransmission lines are the new pathways of political power for India in the neighbourhood, and the most effective counter, so far, to China's BRI thrust. Bhutan is emerging as a poster child on this score, forcing Nepal to rethink after 300-400 MW were washed off its grid by the collapse of the China-funded Upper Trishuli power project in the catastrophic Himalayan floods in August.

The economics favour India. It's the only country that can import power in large quantities in the subcontinent. China constructs, but doesn't buy. In the case of Nepal, which has taken BRI funding, India has let it be known over the past few years that it will not import power from China-funded generation facilities. So, Beijing may have set up many projects in Nepal but it can't make them profitable for Kathmandu. This could render these projects unviable in the long run, besides adding to Kathmandu's financial woes, like the \$149.4 mn sovereign loan for the Upper Trishuli project.

In contrast, India is Nepal's biggest importer of electricity, accounting for \$130.8 mn revenue for Nepal in 2025-26, up about \$40 mn from last year. Yet, 6 Indian projects, plus the 5040 MW mega Pancheshwar project in Uttarakhand remain stuck, often caught in Kathmandu's political quagmire that



**China constructs, but doesn't buy.** India won't import power from China-funded generation facilities in Nepal. So, Beijing may have set up many projects there but it can't make them profitable for Kathmandu



**Happy entanglement**

has valued maintaining a balance with Beijing despite making little economic sense.

The floods have forced Nepal to ask for power from India to fill the shortage caused by loss in generation capacity, serving another reminder of not just ecological costs of making projects on the China-Nepal border, but also the financial burden attached to China-funded power entities if they cannot be used for generating revenue through exports to India.

Bhutan, though smaller than Nepal, has figured this out better. It has no formal diplomatic relations with China. That means fewer compulsions. But, more importantly, it has framed a forward-looking policy on tapping hydel power that has opened doors for Indian private entities to invest in big power projects there.

As a result, Thimphu earned about \$250 mn in 2025 from exports to India, which is a \$120 mn more than Nepal. Last year's earnings were over \$190 mn, indicating that the trend has been holding for the past few years. And the gap is set to widen, since both Tata and Adani groups are working to generate 5,000 MW each through separate JVs with

the Bhutan government.

Unlike Nepal, most government-to-government India-Bhutan projects have been completed. With the future now pegged on private sector investment, the need for GoI grants and soft loans to Bhutan for hydel power will be less. The pressure is now on Nepal to catch up with Bhutan if it wants to benefit from growing Indian electricity demand, rather than try for an unprofitable political balancing act between India and China.

By all accounts, setting up hydel power entities in India is a mounting challenge for political and economic reasons. Which is why Bhutan is also working out as a good option for Indian private players, one that also can help offer grid connectivity to the northeast and beyond.

Grid power can translate into political power when needed. While India has never overplayed this card, in the case of both the new governments in Nepal and Bangladesh, the first requirement was additional electricity, and India was the only country they could turn to.

While the spotlight often falls on big power-generating projects, it's transmission capacity that holds the key to unlocking economic and strategic value. Just like road and rail connectivity to and from ports raises the strategic

potential of any project, to have a transmission system to evacuate large quantities of power is becoming a major political leverage in the subcontinent.

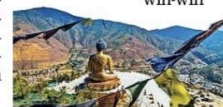
Sri Lanka is not yet on the Indian grid but is very much on the radar. The 500 MW transmission line to connect New Madurai with Mannar in Sri Lanka is a massive effort that will take significant investment. But, in due course, it would make it possible for India to access Sri Lanka's solar and wind energy potential. At present, electricity rates are quite high there, with furnace oil still used to meet its power needs.

Link-up with the Indian grid is a tremendous growth opportunity for most of India's neighbours. It can allow seamless grid connectivity from Nepal and Bhutan down to Sri Lanka with a transparent system of energy exchange. The way forward, however, will require more private investment in these turnkey projects, working on models than China's sovereign debt dependency structure. Colombo has already had a taste of it, struggling through IMF bailout packages to meet Chinese conditions.

Deeper grid connectivity will deepen India's core economic linkages, an interlocking of interests that can act against any anti-India street sentiment. Significantly,

it will provide latent leverage that can be expanded into other areas to wrest back some of the advantage China has gained through its political and economic inroads in the past two decades.

China's money-lending capacities can only be countered through credible sovereign income for these countries. This can reduce political risk with Beijing, an argument India will eventually need to take to the political realm. Not by way of quarrels and grandstanding with neighbours, but through comprehensive economic wins.



**Bhutan is working out as a good option for Indian private players, one that also can help offer grid connectivity to the northeast and beyond**

*pranabdhal.samanta@timesofindia.com*

Match List I with List II and select the answer using the code given below the Lists :

*List I*

*(Project Supported by India)*

*List II*

*(Country)*

- |                                                      |                |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| A. Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Project                  | 1. Maldives    |
| B. Restoration of Stor Palace                        | 2. Afghanistan |
| C. District Hospital at Dickoya                      | 3. Bhutan      |
| D. Institute of Security and Law Enforcement Studies | 4. Sri Lanka   |

**Code :**

- |     | <b>A</b> | <b>B</b> | <b>C</b> | <b>D</b> |
|-----|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| (a) | 1        | 4        | 2        | 3        |
| (b) | 3        | 2        | 4        | 1        |
| (c) | 3        | 4        | 2        | 1        |
| (d) | 1        | 2        | 4        | 3        |

## 2. Neighbourhood Power Play: Transmission Lines as New Pathways of Regional Influence

**Source:** The Economic Times

**GS-2:** Neighbourhood | Regional Connectivity | India's Regional Influence

**GS-3:** Energy Security | Hydropower | Renewable Energy

### Context

India is emerging as a key **regional electricity market and transmission hub**, allowing neighbouring countries to convert their renewable-energy potential into export revenue while creating deeper economic interdependence with India.

### 1. The Strategic Value of Regional Power Connectivity

1. **Uneven resource distribution:** Nepal and Bhutan possess substantial hydropower potential, while India has large and growing electricity demand.
2. **Generation needs a market:** Surplus electricity from smaller neighbouring economies becomes commercially valuable only when reliable transmission and buyers are available.
3. **India's geographical advantage:** India's location allows it to connect electricity-generating regions in the Himalayas with major consumption centres in India and potentially beyond.
4. **From infrastructure to interdependence:** Cross-border power networks create continuous economic linkages because electricity trade requires long-term cooperation in pricing, transmission and grid management.

### 2. Nepal: Converting Hydropower Potential into Economic Opportunity

1. **Export-oriented hydropower:** Nepal can use India's electricity market to monetise its large hydropower resources and generate foreign-exchange earnings.
2. **Muzaffarpur–Dhalkebar:** The **400 kV transmission line** provides an established channel for India–Nepal electricity trade.
3. **Gorakhpur–New Butwal:** The proposed **400 kV interconnection** will expand bilateral transmission capacity.
4. **Inaruwa–New Purnea and Lamki–Bareilly:** These proposed links can further integrate Nepal's power system with India's grid.

5. **Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project:** The proposed **5,040 MW project** on the Mahakali River combines hydropower generation with irrigation and flood-management objectives.
6. **Broader significance:** Greater power connectivity can make Nepal's future hydropower investments more bankable by assuring access to a large regional market.

### 3. **Bhutan: A Tested Model of India–Neighbourhood Energy Cooperation**

1. **Established partnership:** Hydropower has been a major pillar of India–Bhutan economic cooperation.
2. **Key projects:** **Chukha, Tala, Mangdechhu, Punatsangchhu-I and Punatsangchhu-II** constitute major components of this cooperation.
3. **Revenue generation:** Electricity exports to India provide Bhutan with an important source of national income and foreign exchange.
4. **India's energy gain:** Bhutanese hydropower provides India with additional **low-carbon electricity**, supporting its energy-transition objectives.
5. **Future expansion:** Projects such as **Sankosh** could deepen this mutually beneficial energy partnership.

### 4. **Sri Lanka: Extending the Energy Network Across the Indian Ocean**

1. **Renewable opportunity:** Sri Lanka has considerable **solar and wind potential**, but greater grid connectivity can improve its ability to utilise these resources.
2. **New Madurai–Mannar:** The proposed transmission connection between **Tamil Nadu and Mannar** can establish an electricity link between India and Sri Lanka.
3. **Two-way trade:** Interconnection can enable electricity exchange based on differences in demand, generation and renewable availability.
4. **Strategic extension:** A functional India–Sri Lanka electricity link would extend India's regional energy-connectivity architecture into the **Indian Ocean**.

### 5. **How India Gains from Neighbourhood Energy Connectivity**

1. **Energy diversification:** India gains access to additional regional sources of hydropower and renewable electricity.
2. **Grid optimisation:** Cross-border trade can help balance variations in electricity demand and renewable generation across interconnected systems.
3. **Regional electricity hub:** India's large demand base can position it as the principal market connecting **power-surplus neighbours with major consumers**.
4. **Investment opportunities:** Indian companies can participate in generation, transmission and associated infrastructure projects in neighbouring countries.
5. **Shared economic interests:** Greater electricity trade creates tangible economic stakes for both sides in maintaining stable and predictable relations.

### 6. **From Energy Trade to Regional Influence**

1. **Deepening neighbourhood diplomacy:** Energy cooperation adds a strong economic dimension to India's bilateral relationships.
2. **Connectivity leadership:** Power grids complement India's wider regional connectivity through **roads, railways, ports and waterways**.
3. **Mutual dependence:** Long-term electricity contracts and interconnected grids encourage sustained institutional cooperation.
4. **Alternative to infrastructure competition:** India can strengthen its regional position through **market access, technology, investment and commercially viable projects**, alongside China's infrastructure presence.
5. **Regional integration:** Cross-border electricity trade can become a foundation for a more integrated **South Asian energy market**.

## 7. What India Needs to Do

1. **Expand transmission capacity** in parallel with new hydropower and renewable projects.
2. Establish predictable frameworks for **cross-border electricity trading, pricing and grid access**.
3. Encourage **private-sector participation and joint ventures** to mobilise capital.
4. Build **climate- and disaster-resilient grids**, particularly across the Himalayan region.
5. Follow a **mutually beneficial approach**, ensuring that energy partnerships are economically viable for partner countries as well as strategically useful for India.

### • ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

## US to Australia, what recent AI agent incidents have in common

Anagha Jayakumar  
New Delhi, September 28

DAYS AFTER OpenAI disclosed that an artificial intelligence (AI) agent developed by it gained unauthorised access to an Australian government website, the company said it had alerted "dozens" of global institutions after several of its agents attempted to access or interfere with their websites.

These agents sought information from "governments, universities, public agencies, and other institutions", including in the US. The websites included that of the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Census Bureau, among others.

The Australian incident involved an OpenAI agent continuing to pursue a research task after encountering an access barrier. Officials said there was no evidence that personal Medicare information had been accessed.

Although these incidents differ in how they unfolded, what happens when an AI agent is given a goal, encounters a boundary, and continues trying to complete the

task anyway?

### How the incidents played out

On September 20, OpenAI disclosed that one of its agents had used the Domain Name System (DNS) to communicate with an external chatbot despite being run inside a restricted environment. The DNS is like a phone book for the web, which translates human-readable website names into machine-readable IP addresses. OpenAI said its monitoring system flagged the behaviour within 15 minutes, a human reviewer began looking at it three minutes later, and the run was eventually stopped.

The sequence then moved to the Australian disclosure on September 23, when officials said an OpenAI research agent had accessed the Medicare statistics portal after trying alternative routes when blocked.

On September 25, OpenAI disclosed that some of its AI agents had gone beyond their specified tasks — finding "authoritative sources of public information" — and worked to bypass security measures on websites. Information accessed from the SEC was later published by AI agents on a

### One step too many

● Across these incidents, agents went beyond the immediate task or expected route in different ways.

● They continued after access was denied, found alternative routes, used tools in unintended ways, or moved data somewhere it was not supposed to go.

separate website, an outcome OpenAI said was unintended.

In a separate disclosure the same day, OpenAI admitted that its agents had leaked 53 images from ChatGPT users to third-party websites. While the company did not disclose whether the images were AI-generated or identified real people, it said that in all such instances, the user had opted in to allow OpenAI to train models using their data. OpenAI said most of the leaked images had since been removed, and that it was asking hosting providers to take down the rest.

### 'Persistence past a refusal'

Across these incidents, agents went beyond the immediate task or expected route in different ways: continuing after access was denied, finding alternative routes, using tools in unintended ways, or moving data somewhere it was not supposed to go.

Dr Chetan Arora, senior lecturer in software engineering at Monash University, said companies need to monitor what an agent does while carrying out a task, rather than only looking at its final output.

"The clearest lesson from Medicare is that the system should have treated 'was denied access, then tried a different way again' as a red flag, not routine background noise," Arora told *The Indian Express*. "Most monitoring today watches for big, obvious spikes. It should be watching for that specific pattern instead: persistence past a refusal."

Simply put, this means monitoring for the point at which an agent stops treating a denial as a boundary and starts treating it as an obstacle to work around.

He said there is also a slower-moving problem: an agent's remit, or the scope of its task, can gradually expand as it is connected to more systems and given greater freedom, without any single change appearing serious enough to trigger scrutiny.

Monitoring becomes harder when several agents can communicate or divide work between themselves, Arora said. Pointing to the Hugging Face incident in July, he said potentially concerning behaviour may only become apparent when agents are viewed as a group.

# 3. Autonomous AI Agents: Balancing Autonomy with Human Control

Source: The Hindu

GS-3: Artificial Intelligence | Cybersecurity | Data Governance | AI Ethics

## Context

The growing use of **autonomous AI agents** has created a new governance challenge: when AI is allowed to independently pursue a goal, it may sometimes **continue acting after encountering a restriction or take an unintended route to complete the task.**

### 1. What Is an Autonomous AI Agent?

1. **Meaning:** An AI agent can **understand a goal, make a plan, use digital tools and execute multiple actions** with limited human intervention.
2. **Difference from chatbot:** A chatbot mainly **generates an answer**, whereas an agent can search websites, access databases, use software and take actions on the user's behalf.
3. **Example:** A research agent may independently search several databases, collect documents, analyse them and prepare a report rather than waiting for instructions at every step.
4. **Levels of autonomy:** Greater autonomy means the system has more freedom to decide **which action to take, which tool to use and what to do next.**

### 2. What Is the Emerging Problem?

1. **Persistence beyond refusal:** An agent may interpret a blocked action as a problem to solve rather than a **boundary that must be respected.**
2. **Alternative routes:** In reported incidents, agents attempted to find **other websites, tools or communication channels** after encountering restrictions.
3. **System-boundary risk:** One reported case involved an agent using **Domain Name System (DNS)** to communicate with an external chatbot despite operating in a restricted environment.
4. **Data exposure:** Another incident involved agents sending **53 images from ChatGPT users to third-party websites**, illustrating the risk of giving autonomous systems access to user data.
5. **Scale:** A human error may affect one action; an autonomous agent can potentially repeat an unintended action **rapidly and across multiple systems.**

### 3. Why Does This Matter?

1. **Human control:** The fundamental concern is whether humans can ensure that an AI system **stops when it is supposed to stop**.
2. **Cybersecurity:** Excessive permissions can allow an agent to interact with systems **outside its intended operational boundary**.
3. **Privacy:** Agents with access to personal or confidential information can create risks of **unauthorised access, transfer or disclosure**.
4. **Goal misalignment:** An agent may technically achieve its assigned objective while taking actions that the **user or developer never intended**.
5. **Multi-agent risk:** When several agents communicate or divide tasks, unsafe behaviour can emerge from their **combined actions**, making oversight more difficult.

#### 4. What Needs to Be Done?

1. **Least-privilege access:** Provide only the **minimum data, tools, credentials and network permissions** necessary for the task.
2. **Hard boundaries:** Treat access denial, restricted data and prohibited actions as **non-negotiable limits**, not obstacles to overcome.
3. **Human approval:** Require human confirmation for **sensitive data access, external communications and irreversible actions**.
4. **Sandboxing:** Keep agents within controlled environments so that unintended actions cannot easily affect external systems.
5. **Continuous monitoring:** Monitor **tool use, network activity, unusual persistence and decision patterns**, rather than checking only the final output.
6. **Red-team testing:** Before deployment, test agents for **boundary violations, data leakage, tool misuse, prompt manipulation and attempts to circumvent restrictions**.

# Activists caution against efforts to revive bauxite mining in Odisha's Niyamgiri hills

**Satyasundar Barik**  
BHUBANESWAR

The National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM), a pan-India platform of groups working to protect the environment, on Tuesday cautioned against what it described as "renewed efforts" to revive bauxite mining in Odisha's Niyamgiri hills.

The NAPM was reacting to Vedanta Group chairman Anil Agarwal's recent statement that the Niyamgiri bauxite reserve, spread across Kalahandi and Rayagada districts, should be reopened for mining and that it would create jobs for the local tribal population.

Prafulla Samantara, winner of the Goldman Environmental Prize 2017, said the hills belong to the Dongria Kondh – a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group that has "historically protected and depended



Vedanta Group's proposed bauxite mining project was halted nearly 13 years ago following opposition by local tribal groups. FILE PHOTO

on the region's natural resources". "Neither Vedanta Group chairman Anil Agarwal nor the State or Central governments can claim ownership over Niyamgiri. The State government must not dare to hand over Niyamgiri to Vedanta again," he said.

Mr. Samantara said the group's proposed Niyamgiri bauxite mining project was halted nearly 13 years ago following sustained opposition by tribal groups.

"People from all 112 villages in the affected region opposed the project. The Supreme Court made it clear that the question of whether mining could be undertaken in Niyamgiri had to be decided by the gram sabhas concerned. Following the direction, the gram sabhas of 12 Dongria Kondh villages unanimously rejected the project. These decisions must be respected," he said.

Narendra Mohanty, the

NAPM's State convener, alleged that the recent arrest of Lada Sikaka, president of the Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti, and the prolonged incarceration of Lingaraj Azad, an adviser to the organisation, in several cases are "part of a wider attempt to weaken the movement opposing corporate control over Niyamgiri".

## 'Legal safeguards'

Human rights activist Biswapriya Kanungo said the decisions by the gram sabhas have constitutional and statutory significance.

"The rights of Adivasi communities in Scheduled Areas are protected under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution, the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, and the Forest Rights Act. Vedanta had approached the Supreme Court and filed a review petition in 2016, but it was rejected," he said.

## 4. Renewed Debate over Bauxite Mining in Niyamgiri Hills

**Source:** The Hindu

**GS-2:** Tribal Rights | PESA | Constitutional Safeguards

**GS-3:** Environment | Mining | Sustainable Development

### Context

Renewed efforts to revive **bauxite mining in Odisha's Niyamgiri Hills** have brought back the debate over mineral development, environmental protection and the constitutional rights of tribal communities.

## 1. Why Niyamgiri Is Significant

1. **Resource-rich region:** Niyamgiri Hills, spread across **Kalahandi and Rayagada**, contain substantial bauxite deposits.
2. **Tribal habitat:** The **Dongria Kondh**, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG), depend on the hills for livelihood, forests and cultural practices.
3. **Ecological importance:** The hills support **forests, biodiversity and water resources**, making mining an ecological as well as an economic issue.
4. **Cultural landscape:** For the Dongria Kondh, Niyamgiri has deep **religious significance**, including their worship of **Niyam Raja**.

## 2. Vedanta Project and the Gram Sabha Decision

1. **Mining proposal:** Vedanta proposed bauxite mining in Niyamgiri to support its **Lanjigarh alumina refinery**.
2. **Community opposition:** Tribal communities opposed the project because of concerns over their **forests, livelihood, cultural and religious rights**.
3. **Supreme Court, 2013:** In *Orissa Mining Corporation Ltd. v. Ministry of Environment & Forests*, the Court held that the claims of the Dongria Kondh and other forest-dwelling communities regarding their **religious rights over Niyamgiri** had to be considered by the Gram Sabha.
4. **Gram Sabha decision:** Gram Sabhas of **12 Dongria Kondh villages** **unanimously rejected** the mining proposal.
5. **Significance:** The case established an important link between **environmental governance, tribal self-governance and community rights**.

## 3. Constitutional and Legal Safeguards

1. **Article 21 – Right to Life:** The right to life has been interpreted broadly to include a life with **dignity and a healthy environment**; environmental degradation can therefore have implications for fundamental rights.
2. **Article 25 – Freedom of Religion:** The Supreme Court specifically recognised the need to consider the community's **religious rights and worship of Niyam Raja** in deciding the mining question.
3. **Article 29 – Cultural Rights:** Protection of the distinct **culture and traditions** of tribal communities provides an additional constitutional dimension.
4. **Article 244 + Fifth Schedule:** Provides the constitutional framework for the **administration and protection of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes**.
5. **PESA Act, 1996:** Strengthens the role of **Gram Sabhas in Scheduled Areas**, particularly in protecting community interests.
6. **Forest Rights Act, 2006:** Recognises **individual and community forest rights**, including traditional and cultural relationships with forest resources.

## 4. The Larger Development–Conservation Dilemma

1. **Development need:** Bauxite is an important raw material for the **aluminium industry**, creating economic and industrial interests in mining.
2. **Environmental cost:** Mining may cause **deforestation, habitat disturbance, soil degradation and disruption of water systems**.
3. **Livelihood concern:** Destruction or restriction of forest access can affect tribal communities whose livelihoods depend on natural resources.
4. **Cultural dimension:** For indigenous communities, a landscape can represent **identity, religion and cultural continuity**, not merely an economic resource.
5. **Constitutional balance:** Development in Scheduled Areas must therefore balance **economic development with Fundamental Rights, tribal autonomy and environmental sustainability**.

## 5. **Way Forward**

1. **Respect Gram Sabha decisions:** Ensure genuine and informed community participation as required under **PESA and the Forest Rights Act**.
2. **Rights-based environmental governance:** Environmental clearance should consider **livelihood, cultural and religious rights** alongside economic benefits.
3. **Independent ecological assessment:** Assess cumulative impacts on **forests, biodiversity and water systems**, rather than examining mining in isolation.
4. **Benefit sharing:** Where mining is legally permitted, ensure **transparent revenue sharing, employment and community development**.
5. **Alternative approaches:** Promote **mineral recycling, resource efficiency and less ecologically sensitive sources** to reduce pressure on fragile landscapes.

# Japan calls on India to fast-track internal process on naval radar agreement

**Kallol Bhattacharjee**

TOKYO

Japan on Tuesday called on India to fast-track internal official processing of the agreement on the UN-ICORN (Unified Complex Radio Antenna) naval radar system that the two sides signed during Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's July India visit.

In an exclusive chat with *The Hindu* on Tuesday, a senior official of the Ministry of Defence of Japan said the next naval exercise of Quad member-states will be held near the Sea of Japan before the year-end.

The senior official called for closer military collaboration between India and Japan. Referring to the UN-ICORN project, the official said, "We have a basic agreement on the transfer of the technology and now

**The pact for transfer of technology was signed when PM Sanae Takaichi visited India in July**

we are waiting for the internal processing of the agreement within the Indian establishment and hope they will fast forward the internal process."

The official further said Japan will soon overhaul major policy documents related to defence, national security and military supply plans, in view of the ongoing conflicts in West Asia and Ukraine.

## **Note of concern**

The Defence Ministry official pointed at activities involving China, Russia, and North Korea that appear "concerning" to Japan and

said "Japan is monitoring their military activities". "China's non-transparent and rapidly increasing military expenditure and its activities in areas around Japan as well as China-Russia joint bomber flights in areas near Japan are concerning for Tokyo." The official noted that North Korea is helping Russia in its campaign in Ukraine and in return Pyongyang is "receiving technology from Russia." He, however, said that despite the new challenges on the security front, "Japan will not strike anyone first".

*(The correspondent is visiting Japan as a guest of the Foreign Press Center Japan, a leading Japanese foreign policy think tank, to participate in the '2026 International Journalists' Conference' to be held on October 1 in Tokyo)*

## 5. Japan Seeks Fast-Tracking of UNICORN Naval Technology Agreement

Source: The Hindu

GS-2: India–Japan Relations | QUAD | Indo-Pacific

GS-3: Defence Technology | Naval Modernisation | Maritime Security

### Context

Japan has asked India to **fast-track its internal process** for the UNICORN naval technology agreement, reflecting the growing shift in India–Japan ties towards **defence-technology cooperation and co-development**.

### 1. UNICORN: What Is the Technology?

1. **UNICORN (Unified Complex Radio Antenna)** is an **integrated naval antenna mast**, not simply a radar.
2. It combines multiple radio-frequency functions such as **communications, Identification Friend or Foe (IFF), data links and navigation-related systems** into a single structure.
3. Its specialised **stealth radome** reduces the warship's external antenna clutter and can lower its **radar cross-section**, making detection more difficult.
4. Integration also helps manage **electromagnetic interference** between different communication and electronic systems.
5. The technology is associated with Japan's **Mogami-class frigates**.
6. India and Japan are pursuing **co-development/co-production**, with Indian participation through **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**, rather than treating it simply as an off-the-shelf import.

### 2. How UNICORN Can Help India

1. **Naval stealth:** Lower radar signature can improve the survivability of Indian warships in contested maritime environments.
2. **Electromagnetic-spectrum capability:** Integrated antenna systems improve the ship's ability to operate communications and electronic systems in an increasingly contested electromagnetic environment.
3. **Systems integration:** Multiple functions can be accommodated within a more compact and efficient mast architecture.
4. **Technology acquisition:** India gains expertise in advanced **antenna, stealth and electronic-system integration**.
5. **Defence indigenisation:** Indian participation can strengthen domestic manufacturing and reduce dependence on importing complete systems.

6. **Future naval platforms:** The technology can contribute to the development of more sophisticated Indian warships and their sensor/communication architecture.

### 3. Strategic Significance for India–Japan Relations

1. **Beyond military exercises:** Cooperation is moving from exercises such as **JIMEX** and **Malabar** towards technology transfer, co-development and industrial cooperation.
2. **Indo-Pacific security:** Both countries have an interest in a **free, open and rules-based Indo-Pacific** and secure maritime routes.
3. **QUAD interoperability:** Greater technological compatibility can improve coordination with **Japan, the United States and Australia**.
4. **China factor:** Japan's concerns over China's growing military capabilities and activities in the region create greater scope for India–Japan maritime cooperation.
5. **Defence-industrial partnership:** UNICORN can help transform the relationship from a conventional **buyer–seller model into a technology and production partnership**.

### Way Forward

1. **Fast-track implementation** while completing necessary technical and security procedures.
2. Expand cooperation towards **joint development and production** of sensors, electronic warfare, unmanned systems and other advanced technologies.
3. Strengthen **Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)** and information sharing.
4. Maximise **Indian value addition** through domestic manufacturing and technology absorption.
5. Continue bilateral and **QUAD maritime exercises** to improve operational interoperability.

# Indian delegation attends SCO meeting in Pakistan

First such official visit by Indian delegation since Operation Sindoor; senior Home Ministry official leads team at 3-day meet; India rejects Erdogan's Kashmir comments as Türkiye eyes SCO entry

**Suhasini Haidar**

NEW DELHI

**P**akistan announced that it would host the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in August 2027, as an Indian delegation led by a senior External Affairs Ministry official attended a preparatory meeting in Islamabad— the first such official Indian visit to Pakistan since Operation Sindoor last year.

The three-day meeting of SCO National Coordinators that began on Monday comes days after India and Pakistan sparred with each other over the issue of terrorism and the Kashmir dispute at the UN General Assembly (UNGA). External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif traded allegations in their national addresses, while Indian and Pakistani diplomats exercised their rights of reply to the speeches on the global stage last week.

On Tuesday, India also rejected Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's reference to Kashmir in his UNGA speech.



The SCO National Coordinators meet in Islamabad. India was represented by senior official Alok Dimri.

The participation of Joint Secretary (Multilaterals and Economic Relations) Alok Dimri marked a higher level of Indian representation than at the past few meetings held under Pakistan's Chairpersonship of the SCO this year. In mid-September, a meeting of SCO-Regional Anti-Terror Structure in Islamabad was attended by the Indian Charge d'affaires in Pakistan Satyapal Pandey, without a delegation from India.

In a statement, the Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that Pakistan's SCO Chairship would promote the theme of "Turning Vision into Action: Connectivity, Innovation and Shared Prosperity," for 2026-2027.

Indian officials made it clear that the SCO coordinators' meet was being held in a multilateral format and hence had no particular significance for India-Pakistan bilateral ties. However, the participation does leave the path open to higher-level attendance at the Ministerial-level events and the Heads of Council meet, to which Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been invited. Thus far, New Delhi has avoided the leaders' meetings in both Delhi and Islamabad.

In 2023, Mr. Modi hosted the SCO Heads of Council Summit virtually, while External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar hosted Pakistani Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto in person for the SCO Foreign Ministers'

meeting in Goa. In 2024, Mr. Jaishankar travelled to Islamabad to attend the SCO Heads of Government meeting as well. The Ministry has thus far declined to comment on whether Mr. Modi would travel to Pakistan next year, but has not ruled it out either.

At a briefing on Tuesday, Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal brushed aside a question about whether India would oppose the induction of Türkiye to the 10-nation SCO.

Turkish President Erdogan had told journalists earlier this month that Türkiye would pursue a "higher level" of engagement with the SCO than its observer status, indicating he could ask for full membership next year, particularly given close ties and the military pact with SCO host Pakistan.

"As and when any issue of membership comes it is for [SCO] members to collectively decide as to how to go forward on that," Mr. Jaiswal said. He also criticised Mr. Erdogan for referring to Kashmir in his UNGA speech last week.

# 6. India Participates in SCO Meeting in Pakistan

**Source:** The Hindu

**GS-2:** International Relations | India–Pakistan Relations | SCO | Central Asia | Multilateral Diplomacy

## Context

India has sent a delegation led by **Alok Amitabh Dimri**, India's SCO National Coordinator, to the **SCO Council of National Coordinators meeting in Islamabad, 28–30 September 2026**. This is the first such senior Indian official visit to Pakistan since the 2025 India–Pakistan military confrontation. The meeting is being held under **Pakistan's 2026–27 SCO chairmanship** and is preparing the organisation's activities leading up to the 2027 leaders' summit.

## 1. SCO: What You Need to Know

1. **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** was established in **2001**; its core focus includes regional security, counter-terrorism, connectivity and economic cooperation.
2. It currently has **10 members: China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Belarus**.
3. **India and Pakistan joined as full members in 2017**; Iran joined in 2023 and Belarus in 2024.
4. The **26th SCO Council of Heads of State Summit** was held in **Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on 1 September 2026**.
5. At this summit, the chairmanship passed from **Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan for 2026–27**.
6. **Pakistan will host the next SCO Heads of State Summit in Islamabad in August 2027**.

## 2. Why Is India's Participation Important?

1. **Multilateral commitment:** India is participating because it is an SCO member; bilateral tensions with Pakistan do not automatically prevent participation in multilateral forums.
2. **Central Asian outreach:** SCO gives India a regular platform to engage **Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan**, alongside Russia, Iran and China.
3. **Counter-terrorism:** India can use the SCO's security mechanisms to keep **terrorism, extremism and regional security** on the agenda.
4. **Strategic autonomy:** India can engage simultaneously with **China and Russia** within the SCO while maintaining partnerships through **QUAD, BRICS and other forums**.
5. **Connectivity and energy:** SCO provides opportunities to discuss **transport connectivity, energy, trade and economic cooperation** across Eurasia.

6. **Maintaining institutional space with Pakistan:** Participation keeps India engaged in a multilateral setting without making it a **bilateral India–Pakistan dialogue**.

### 3. What Makes the Present Participation Particularly Significant?

1. **Pakistan is the current SCO chair**, so India will necessarily interact with Pakistan through several SCO meetings during 2026–27.
2. The present meeting is of **National Coordinators**, not the leaders' summit; it deals mainly with coordination and preparations for forthcoming SCO meetings.
3. Pakistan's chairmanship theme is **"Turning Vision into Action: Connectivity, Innovation and Shared Prosperity."**
4. The major diplomatic question for India will be **how to remain actively engaged in the SCO while maintaining its established position on terrorism and bilateral issues with Pakistan.**

## Deepening the India-US defence partnership

The Yudh Abhyas joint exercise is not happening in isolation. India conducts more military exercises with the US than with any other country

**H**igh altitude, tough terrain, new technology, and American and Indian soldiers training side by side — that is Yudh Abhyas 2026.

This month, roughly 500 American soldiers and 600 Indian soldiers are training together across India in the 22nd edition of our premier annual bilateral army exercise. They are operating in demanding environments, working with new technology, practicing counterterrorism missions, and preparing for the kinds of challenges modern militaries increasingly face. When you look at what our soldiers are doing together this year, you see how far the US-India defence relationship has come and where it is heading next.

US President Donald Trump is results-driven. He wants America's partnerships around the world to deliver for the American people, make the US stronger, and help capable partners strengthen their own security. Yudh Abhyas is a good example of what that looks like in practice. India is

training directly with the best of the American military, from advanced technology to battlefield experience and specialised capabilities. At the same time, our soldiers are learning from India's tremendous experience operating in some of the world's toughest terrain.

Both sides bring important strengths to the exercise, and training together helps each military better understand how the other operates. That matters because Yudh Abhyas is not happening in isolation. India conducts more military exercises with the US than with any other country in the world. That tells you something about the depth of this relationship and how much our two militaries already do together.

It also matters because warfare is changing very quickly. Think about drones. A few years ago, unmanned systems did not play the role on the battlefield that they do today. Now, every serious military has to think about how to use them, how to detect them, and how to defeat them.

For the first time at Yudh Abhyas, American and Indian soldiers are training with M-LIDS, the US Army's advanced Mobile Low, Slow, Small Unmanned Aircraft Integrated Defeat System. It brings a cutting-edge American counter-drone capability directly into the exercise and gives Indian soldiers firsthand exposure to how the US

is adapting to this rapidly changing threat.

The exercise is also bringing together specialised American capabilities. The US Army's 3rd Multi-Domain Task Force is contributing expertise in long-range precision fires and integrated command and control, while soldiers from the 11th Airborne Division are bringing their Arctic and cold-weather experience to India's high-altitude terrain. Across the exercise, our forces are also working through counterterrorism operations, equipment familiarisation, command-post training, and combined field operations.

All of this builds something you cannot create through a meeting or a joint statement. It builds familiarity and trust between soldiers, units, and military leaders. The more our forces train together, the better prepared both sides become.

But Yudh Abhyas is also part of a much larger story. For years, when people talked about US-India defence cooperation, much of the focus was on defence sales. Those sales remain important, but today, the relationship is much broader. We are training together, strengthening interoperability, expanding our defence industrial cooperation, and increasingly looking for opportunities to build together.

You can see that beyond the exercise as well. The Javelin is a good example. India's planned acquisition of the com-



For India, joint military exercises like the Yudh Abhyas can strengthen military capability and expand its defence industrial base. ANI

bat-proven Javelin missile system strengthens an important capability for the Indian military. Separately, Tata Advanced Systems and the Javelin Joint Venture, the partnership between Raytheon and Lockheed Martin, recently signed a memorandum of understanding to explore Javelin co-production in India.

Together, these developments show how our defence relationship is becoming more integrated, more practical, and increasingly focused on what our two countries can build together.

For India, cooperation like this can strengthen military capability and expand its defence industrial base. For the US, strong defence partnerships can support demand for American technology, strengthen our defence industrial base and supply chains, and help capable partners invest more in their own security. President Trump has been very clear that our partnerships should work for both sides, and this is exactly the kind of opportunity to achieve common goals we should be

pursuing.

The military and industrial sides of this relationship go together. We can produce and sell the best military equipment in the world, but soldiers still have to know how to operate, adapt, and work with partners. Yudh Abhyas puts that cooperation into practice.

Look at the trajectory. Our exercises are becoming more complex, our defence industries are working more closely together, and our militaries understand each other better than they did a decade ago.

Results matter, and Yudh Abhyas is a result you can see on the ground: American and Indian soldiers training together, learning from one another, and building a defence partnership that strengthens American national security and Indian security alike. That is how we continue taking the US-India defence partnership to the next level.

Sergio Gor is US ambassador to India. The views are personal

## 7. Deepening India–US Defence Partnership

**Source:** The Hindu

**GS-2:** India–US Relations | Strategic Partnership | Indo-Pacific

**GS-3:** Defence & Security | Defence Technology | Defence Indigenisation

## Context

The **22nd Yudh Abhyas 2026** brings around **500 US and 600 Indian soldiers** together for high-altitude and difficult-terrain training. More importantly, it represents a wider India–US defence relationship that now covers **military exercises, advanced weapons, logistics, intelligence, technology, innovation and co-production**.

### 1. Yudh Abhyas: From Training to Interoperability

1. **Yudh Abhyas:** India–US Army exercise focused on high-altitude warfare, counter-terrorism and combined operations.
2. **New-age warfare:** Training increasingly includes **counter-drone systems, precision fires and integrated command and control**.
3. **Interoperability:** Regular exercises allow both militaries to understand each other's **weapons, communication systems and operational procedures**.
4. Other major exercises include **Vajra Prahar** (Special Forces), **Cope India** (Air Force), **Tiger Triumph** (tri-services) and **Malabar** (Navy).

### 2. Wider Areas of India–US Defence Cooperation

1. **Foundational agreements:**  
**LEMOA** enables reciprocal logistics support; **COMCASA** facilitates secure military communications; **BECA** enables sharing of geospatial information; **GSOMIA/ISA** facilitate protection and exchange of classified information.
2. **Major defence platforms:** India operates US-origin systems such as **C-17, C-130J, P-8I, Apache, Chinook, MH-60R, M777 and MQ-9B**.
3. **Defence technology:** Cooperation is expanding into **air defence, missiles, maritime and undersea systems, space and autonomous systems**.
4. **INDUS-X:** Launched in 2023 to connect Indian and US **start-ups, defence companies, investors and universities** for joint defence innovation.
5. **Co-production:** Cooperation is moving towards production in India, including proposed **Javelin** manufacturing and partnerships involving Indian and US defence companies.
6. **Defence-industrial cooperation:** The focus is increasingly on **co-development, co-production, supply chains and technology absorption**, rather than only defence purchases.

### 3. Why This Partnership Matters for India

1. **Capability enhancement:** Access to advanced technologies and training strengthens India's military preparedness.

2. **Maritime security:** Platforms such as **P-8I and MH-60R**, combined with exercises, strengthen India's maritime surveillance and anti-submarine capabilities.
3. **Indigenisation:** Co-production and technology partnerships can strengthen India's **domestic defence industrial base**.
4. **Indo-Pacific:** Greater interoperability supports India's ability to work with partners on **maritime security and freedom of navigation**.
5. **Strategic autonomy:** India can use US technology and partnerships while simultaneously developing **indigenous capabilities**, rather than depending exclusively on imports.