

MAINS iMPACT 202525-08-2025

TRANSFORMATION OF INDIA'S DEFENCE AND INTERNAL SECURITY POSTURE

SYLLABUS:

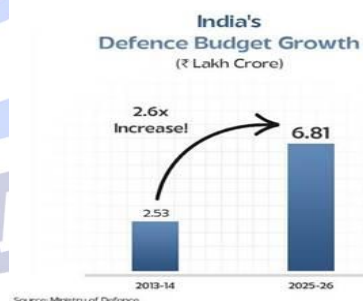
GS 3 > Internal Security

REFERENCE NEWS:

India's defence and internal security posture has undergone a profound transformation, marked by greater clarity of purpose, stronger deterrence, and a sustained drive for self-reliance. National security is treated as non-negotiable, with a focus on building indigenous capacity and preparedness. This has resulted in a more confident, modern, and proactive approach to external and internal challenges.

INDIA'S DEFENCE & SECURITY TRANSFORMATION:**Rising Defence Expenditure & Self-Reliance**

- **Defence production** touched record cr (2024–25), **3x** 2014–15 level.
- **Exports grew 34x** in a decade → ₹23,622 25), to **100+ nations** (incl. USA, France,



₹1.50 lakh cr (2024–Armenia).

Key Reforms for Atmanirbharta

- **Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020:** Prioritises **Buy (Indian – Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured)** to promote indigenous systems.
- **Make Procedures:** 146 projects approved; MSME focus with govt co-funding.
- **FDI liberalisation:** 74% automatic, up to 100% govt route for advanced tech.
- **Innovation Push:** iDEX & TDF to support start-ups/MSMEs. **Technology Development Fund (TDF)** provides grants up to ₹10 crore for MSMEs and start-ups to build advanced defence and aerospace technologies.
- **Indigenisation Portals:** SRIJAN lists 46,798 items; 5 Positive Lists cover 5,012 banned import items.
- **Offsets & Strategic Partnership Model:** Encourage tech transfer via global OEM tie-ups.
- **Ease of Doing Business:** Licence simplification, R&D budget share (25%) for start-ups/industry.

- **Technology & AI: Defence AI Council (DAIC) & Defence AI Project Agency (DAIPA)** driving AI integration; DRDO focus on 9 thrust areas.
- **DRDO has identified nine thrust areas for research:** Platforms, Weapon Systems, Strategic Systems, Sensors & Communication, Space, Cyber Security, AI & Robotics, Materials & Devices, and Soldier Support.

Stronger Response to Terrorism

- Uri 2016: Surgical strikes.
- Pulwama 2019: Balakot air strikes.
- Operation Sindoor 2025: Drones & precision strikes destroyed 9 terror camps in PoK; 100+ terrorists eliminated.

Five 'New Normals' on Pakistan

- **Firm response to terror attacks** – Any attack on India will be met with a decisive reply.
- **No tolerance for nuclear blackmail** – Nuclear threats will not prevent India from striking terrorist bases.
- **No distinction between terrorists and their sponsors** – Both will be held equally accountable.
- **Terrorism first in any talks** – Engagement with Pakistan, if it happens, will focus only on terrorism or Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.
- **Zero compromise on sovereignty** – “Terror and talks cannot go together, terror and trade cannot go together, and blood and water cannot flow together.”

Futuristic Defence: Sudarshan Chakra Mission (2035): Indigenous R&D, predictive technologies, AI-based warfare systems, comprehensive security shield.

Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) Decline:

- LWE-affected districts reduced to <20.
- Violence incidents fell from 1,936 (2010) → 374 (2024).
- Civilian/security casualties ↓ 85%.
- 8,000+ Naxalites surrendered.
- Roads, schools, welfare → reduced extremist mobilisation.

INDIA'S DEFENCE CAPACITY:

- India stands **4th** in the **Global Firepower Index 2025**, highlighting its position as a major military power.
- Defence budget for **2025–26** is pegged at **₹6.81 lakh crore (~\$79 billion)**, a **9.5% increase** over the previous year.
- Of this, approximately **₹4.7 lakh crore (~\$54 billion)** covers manpower costs, while **₹1.8 lakh crore** is allocated for **modernisation and procurement**.
- A significant shift sees **75% of the modernisation budget** earmarked for domestic procurement, reinforcing the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative; R&D funding also sees a healthy boost.

- **Indian Army:** around **1.45 million soldiers**, with **1.15 million in reserve**. Paramilitary forces add another **~2.5 million personnel**. Induction of advanced capabilities as part of the **'Decade of Transformation' (2023–2032)** includes:
 - New missile regiments (e.g., air defence),
 - **Rudra Brigades** integrating multi-domain operations,
 - Artillery units like **Divyastra** and **Shaktibaan**, and drone-enhanced infantry tactics.
 - Ground strength: **~4,200–4,600 tanks**, **~150,000 armoured vehicles**. Nearly **9,700 artillery units** including rocket systems (Pinaka, Dhanush, etc.).
- **Indian Air Force (IAF):** **~170,000 active personnel**, with **31 active fighter squadrons** against an authorized 42. Total **~2,229 aircraft**, includes **513 fighter jets**, **899 helicopters**, and **831 support aircraft**.
 - Procurement approved for **97 Tejas Mk1A fighters** (₹62,000 crore deal), boosting indigenous manufacturing.
 - Additional inclusion of **AEW&C (Airborne early warning and control) aircraft** for enhanced surveillance.
- **Indian Navy:** **~293 vessels**, including **2 aircraft carriers** (INS Vikramaditya, INS Vikrant), **13 destroyers**, **18 corvettes**, and **16 submarines**. Naval personnel **~142,000** active.
- **Strategic reach:** India is increasingly projecting **blue-water capabilities**, conducting **anti-piracy and maritime security missions** (e.g., Red Sea deployments).
- **Paramilitary & Specialized Forces**
 - **Border Security Force (BSF):** India's largest border guard. Recently raised drone squads to bolster surveillance
 - **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF):** Over **300,000 personnel** in 247 battalions, including specialized units like **CoBRA** (anti-Naxal) and **RAF** (riot control).
 - **CISF (Central Industrial Security Force):** securing critical infrastructure including airports and industrial hubs, with plans to expand to 220,000.
 - **ITBP (Indo-Tibetan Border Police):** responsible for security on the China border.
 - **SSB (Sashastra Seema Bal):** deployed along Nepal and Bhutan borders.
 - **NSG (National Security Guard):** Elite counter-terror unit with **~10,000 personnel**, including VVIP protection detachments.
- **Modernisation & Strategic Outlook**
 - Emergency procurement worth **\$4.6 billion** and additional investments in stealth jets and drones reflect renewed urgency.
 - Also, a **\$7 billion Rafale naval jets** deal underscores growing domestic production.
 - The IAF, Army, and Navy are moving toward **joint, tech-heavy, self-reliant capabilities** by 2035, as discussed in the **"Ran Samwad"** tri-service seminar emphasizing AI, cyber, quantum tech, theatre commands, and indigenous supply chains.

- **Nuclear Triad: Tri-Vector Nuclear Capability:** India possesses a fully operational nuclear triad, ensuring **second-strike capability** and **strategic deterrence** across land, air, and sea:
 - **Sea-Based Leg (SSBNs):**
 - **INS Arihant:** India's first indigenous nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, commissioned in 2016, enabling undersea nuclear launch capabilities
 - **INS Arighat:** Second SSBN, part of the Arihant class, now on patrol
 - **K-4 SLBM:** Tested from INS Arighat in Nov 2024, with a ~3,500 km range—enhancing deterrence reach to cover China and Pakistan
 - **Future Submarines:** Development of bigger S5-class SSBNs is underway, to carry longer-range missiles like K-5 (~5,000 km) and K-6 (~8,000 km) with MIRV capability
 - **Land-Based Missiles:**
 - **Agni Series:** Ranging from Agni-I to Agni-V; Agni-V boasts a range above 5,000 km and tested with MIRV tech for multi-target strikes.
 - Other systems include **Prithvi** and **Shaurya**, enabling flexible nuclear delivery
 - **Air-Based Delivery:**
 - **Modified fighter jets** like Mirage-2000, Jaguar, and Su-30MKI are nuclear-capable; Su-30MKI can carry BrahMos cruise missiles
- **Decoy Systems: X Guard Decoy System** for Rafale jets—to confuse incoming missiles, enhancing survivability.
- **Missile Arsenal (Conventional & Nuclear)**
 - **Ballistic Missiles:** Agni series (I–V), Prithvi series, and Shaurya hold both conventional and nuclear roles
 - **Hypersonic Project** and next-gen BrahMos under development to bolster future readiness
- **Air Defence Systems:**
 - **SAMAR System:** Indigenous short-range mobile air defense using outdated Russian missiles—tested successfully; SAMAR-2 (range ~30 km) soon ready for testing
 - **VSHORADS (MANPADS):** A DRDO-developed fourth-generation man-portable system to counter low-altitude threats, with dual-waveband infrared guidance
 - **Akashteer:** An AI-enabled, networked Air Defence Control & Reporting System—fully automated, integrated across Army, IAF (IACCS), and Navy (Trigun), already in induction
 - **IADWS - Sudarshan Chakra:** A newly test-fired Integrated Air Defence Weapon System combining surface-to-air missiles and laser anti-drone weaponry—multi-layered aerial threat interception

CHALLENGES OF INDIAN DEFENCE SYSTEM:

- **Modernisation and Obsolete Equipment:** A large portion of India's defence inventory is outdated. Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence (2023) noted

that ~68% of Army equipment is vintage, ~24% current, and only ~8% state-of-the-art.

- Indian Army still relies heavily on ageing T-72 tanks (inducted in 1979), despite induction of T-90S and Arjun MBT.
- **Defence Budgetary Constraints:** Though India's defence budget is the 3rd largest globally, revenue expenditure (salaries, pensions) dominates, leaving less for capital modernisation. In Union Budget 2025–26, out of ₹6.21 lakh crore allocation, ~₹1.4 lakh crore went to pensions and ~₹1.8 lakh crore to salaries. Only ~27% left for modernisation.
- **Border Security Challenges:** The **2020 Galwan clash** highlighted poor infrastructure along the LAC. China has rapidly developed roads, airfields, and villages near the border. Ceasefire violations and infiltration attempts continue in J&K. In 2023, over **70 infiltration attempts** were reported.
- **Defence Manufacturing Dependence:** Despite "Atmanirbhar Bharat," India remains the **world's largest arms importer** (SIPRI 2023). Critical systems like jet engines, transport aircraft, submarines, and certain missile defence components are still imported (from Russia, USA, France, Israel). India's Tejas jet depends on GE engines from the US.
- **Delays in Procurement & Bureaucratic Bottlenecks:** Long procurement cycles reduce combat readiness. The procurement of Rafale jets took nearly **15 years** before the first batch arrived in 2016.
- **Cybersecurity and Emerging Warfare:** India faces growing cyber threats and lack of indigenous cyber defence tech. The **2020 Mumbai power grid cyberattack**, allegedly linked to China, exposed vulnerabilities. CERT-In reported over **1.3 million cybersecurity incidents in 2022**.
- **Jointness and Integration Deficit:** Lack of synergy between Army, Navy, Air Force despite creation of **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)**. India still does not have fully functional **integrated theatre commands**, unlike the US or China.
- **Shortage of Officers & Soldier Welfare:** The Army faces a **shortage of over 11,000 officers** (MoD 2023). Stress, suicides, and lack of career progression in paramilitary forces are rising concerns. CAPFs reported **400+ suicides between 2019–2022**.
- **Maritime Security Gaps:** Despite long coastlines, India has limited blue-water naval capacity compared to China. India operates **2 aircraft carriers (INS Vikramaditya & INS Vikrant)**, while China already has 3 and is building more advanced ones. 26/11 Mumbai attacks exposed gaps in coastal surveillance.
- **Internal Security & Insurgencies: Left-Wing Extremism (LWE)** though declining, **90 districts across 11 states** still face Maoist influence (MHA 2023). Ethnic violence in **Manipur (2023)** highlighted gaps in intelligence and inter-agency coordination. In 2022 alone, **125 terrorists were neutralised**, but infiltration networks remain active.

WAY FORWARD:

Modernisation of Armed Forces

- **Naresh Chandra Committee** (2012) and **Shekatkar Committee** (2016): Prioritise modernisation over manpower-heavy expenditure. Increase share of capital outlay in defence budget.

- US “Revolution in Military Affairs” (RMA) – constant upgradation in AI, robotics, drones.

Defence Indigenisation & Atmanirbhar Bharat

- **Kargil Review Committee (2000):** Reduce import dependency and develop a strong domestic MIC (Military Industrial Complex). Israel’s self-reliant defence ecosystem with strong academia–industry–forces linkage.
- **Positive indigenisation lists** banning imports of over **500 defence items**. Defence corridors in **Tamil Nadu and UP** to boost MSME involvement.

Border Infrastructure and Security

- **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence (2022):** Fast-track road, tunnel, and airfield construction along LAC and LoC. China’s rapid dual-use infrastructure near Tibet and Xinjiang.
- Border Roads Organisation (BRO) completed record **295 infrastructure projects in 2023**, including **Sela Tunnel (Arunachal)** and **Atal Tunnel (HP)**.

Budgetary Reforms

- **15th Finance Commission (2020)** suggested a **non-lapsable Modernisation Fund** for defence.
- NATO guideline – member countries spend **2% of GDP** on defence. India’s defence budget is **~1.9% of GDP (2025–26)**, but **~55%** goes to pensions and salaries.

Cyber & Space Security

- **National Cyber Security Policy (2013):** Create Cyber Command and enhance indigenous encryption. US Cyber Command & Space Command; China’s Strategic Support Force.

Strengthening Paramilitary & Internal Security

- **2nd Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC):** Better training, stress management, and welfare measures for CAPFs. UK’s centralised police reforms for coordination and welfare.
- Modernisation of Police Forces Scheme, Smart fencing project along Pakistan border.

Defence R&D and Private Sector Participation

- **Kelkar Committee (2005):** Level playing field for private players in defence production. US DARPA model of innovation; Israel’s close academia–industry–military integration.

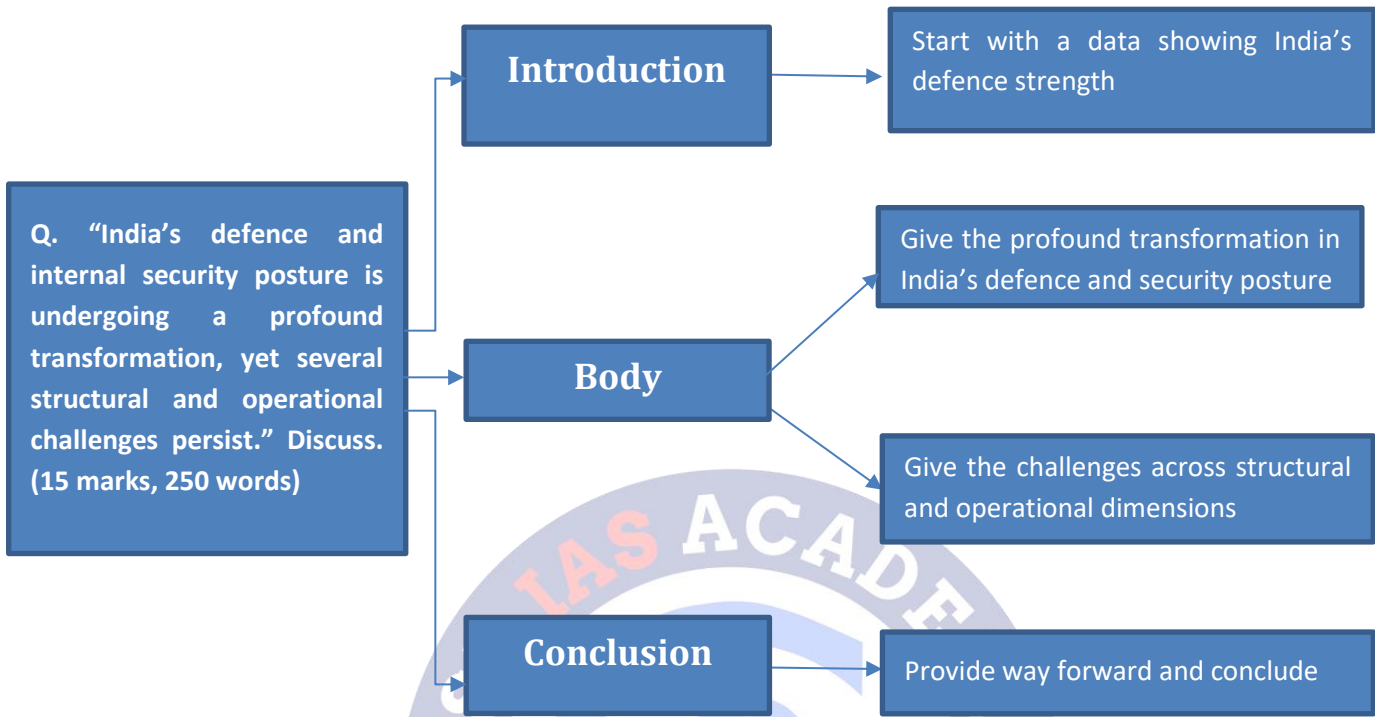
Human Resource & Officer Shortage

- **Kargil Review Committee:** Reform in officer recruitment, lateral entry from CAPFs. US “All-Volunteer Force” model with strong veteran reintegration policies. Agnipath Scheme (2022) to create youthful force while reducing pension burden.

PRACTICE QUESTION:

Q. “India’s defence and internal security posture is undergoing a profound transformation, yet several structural and operational challenges persist.” Discuss. (15 marks, 250 words)

APPROACH:



MODEL ANSWER:

India stands **4th in the Global Firepower Index 2025**, with a defence budget of **₹6.81 lakh crore (~\$79 billion)**, and largest arms importer as per SIPRI, reflecting its growing military might.

Transformation in Defence and Security Posture

- Defence production touched record **₹1.5 lakh crore in 2024–25**, tripling since 2014–15.
- Exports grew **34 times in a decade** (₹23,622 crore in 2024–25, to 100+ nations).
- Bold responses to terrorism: Uri (2016), Balakot (2019), *Operation Sindoor* (2025).
- Decline in Left-Wing Extremism: incidents reduced from **1,936 (2010) → 374 (2024)**; 8,000+ surrenders.
- Growing blue-water naval capability: **293 vessels**, including **INS Vikrant** (India’s first indigenous aircraft carrier).
- **Nuclear Triad** operational with SSBNs (INS Arihant, INS Arighat), Agni-V with MIRV, and nuclear-capable aircraft (Su-30MKI, Mirage-2000).

Persistent Challenges

- **Obsolete equipment:** ~68% of Army equipment still vintage (Parliamentary Standing Committee, 2023).
- **Budget constraints:** Of ₹6.81 lakh crore (2025–26), ~55% spent on salaries and pensions; only ~27% on modernisation.

- **Border vulnerabilities:** 2020 Galwan clash exposed infrastructure gaps vs China.
- **Import dependence:** India remains the **world's largest arms importer (SIPRI 2023)**.
- **Procurement delays:** Rafale deal took 15 years; submarine fleet stuck at 16 vs requirement of 24.
- **Cyber & emerging warfare:** Mumbai power grid cyberattack (2020) exposed vulnerabilities; over **1.3 million cyber incidents in 2022**.
- **Integration deficit:** Theatre commands yet to be fully operational despite creation of CDS.
- **Officer shortages & welfare:** Army short of **11,000 officers**; CAPFs saw **400+ suicides (2019–22)**.
- **Maritime gaps:** India has 2 carriers vs China's 3 (with more under construction).
- **Internal conflicts:** Ethnic violence in Manipur (2023); J&K terrorism infiltration attempts (70+ in 2023).

Way Forward

- **Modernisation & Capital Outlay:** *Naresh Chandra Committee (2012), Shekatkar Committee (2016)* – shift focus from manpower to technology. Adopt best practices from US's *Revolution in Military Affairs* (AI, drones, robotics).
- **Indigenisation & Defence Manufacturing:** *Kargil Review Committee (2000)* – reduce imports, build MIC (Military Industrial Complex). Strengthen defence corridors (UP, TN); replicate Israel's academia–industry–forces model.
- **Border Infrastructure:** *Parliamentary Standing Committee (2022)* – fast-track tunnels, airfields; BRO completed **295 projects in 2023**.
- **Budgetary Reforms:** *15th Finance Commission (2020)* – non-lapsable modernisation fund. Move closer to NATO's 2% of GDP defence spending benchmark.
- **Cyber & Space Preparedness:** *National Cyber Security Policy (2013)* – set up Cyber Command; replicate US Cyber Command/China's Strategic Support Force.
- **Strengthening Paramilitary & Police:** *2nd ARC* – training, welfare, stress management; implement Smart Fencing.
- **Human Resource Reforms:** *Kargil Review Committee* – lateral entry, officer recruitment reforms. Agnipath Scheme (2022) to cut pension burden, infuse youth.

A holistic approach balancing modernisation, manpower, and multi-domain preparedness is essential for India to emerge as a **self-reliant, technology-driven global military power by 2035**.