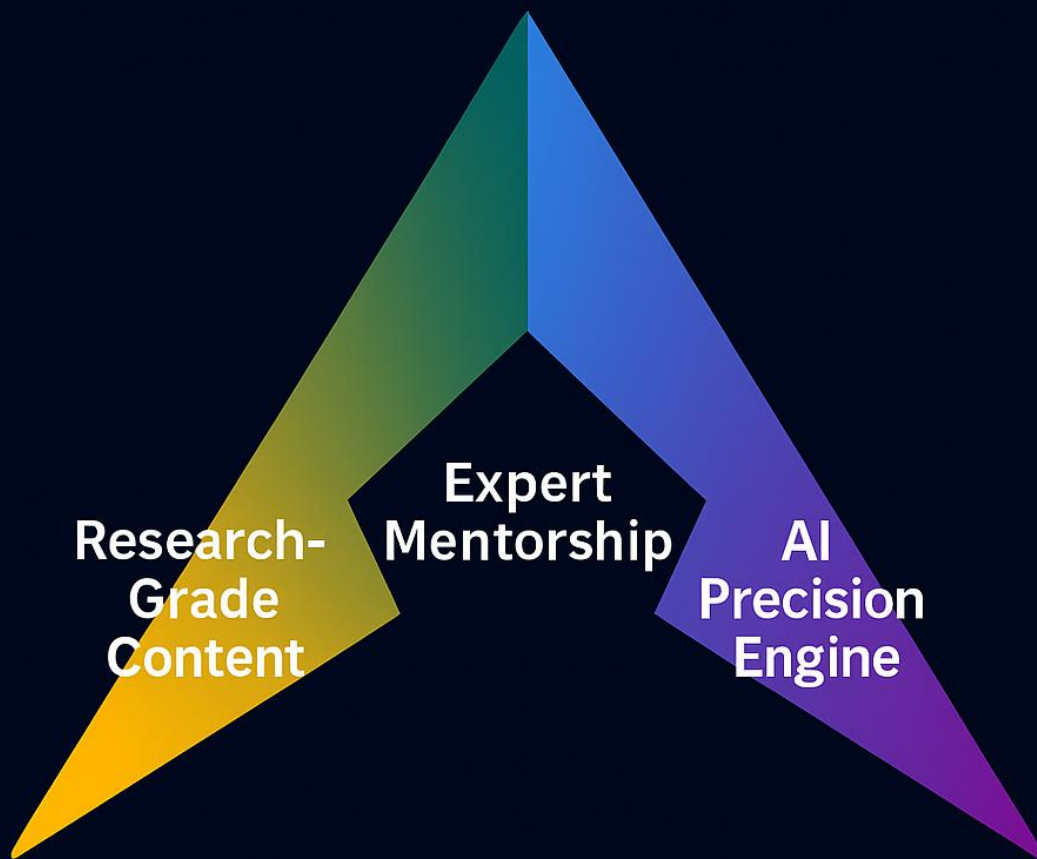


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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED 16.06.2026

GS Paper II: International Relations

1. India-Slovakia Comprehensive Partnership

a. Introduction

India-Slovakia relations entered a new phase when both countries elevated their ties to a Comprehensive Partnership during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bratislava. This was the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Slovakia since the country's independence in 1993.

The visit widened bilateral engagement beyond traditional diplomacy and placed emphasis on labour mobility, defence cooperation, digital technology, education, quantum communication, research, energy security and counter-terrorism.

The development is significant because it reflects India's effort to deepen engagement with Central Europe, not merely with major Western European powers. Slovakia, with its strengths in automotive manufacturing, electronics, defence production and advanced industrial systems, can become a useful partner in India's wider Europe strategy.



b. Key Outcomes

Several important agreements and understandings emerged during the visit.

Labour Migration

- India and Slovakia signed a memorandum of understanding on labour migration.
- It aims to promote safe, legal and orderly mobility of skilled professionals.
- This can protect Indian workers and create formal employment pathways in Europe.

Defence Cooperation

- A Letter of Intent on defence cooperation was signed.
- The focus is on joint development and production.
- This can support Make in India if it leads to technology transfer, manufacturing depth and genuine industrial collaboration.

Digital, Education and Research Cooperation

- Agreements were signed on digital technologies, higher education, research and audio-visual cooperation.

- The establishment of an Indian Council for Cultural Relations Chair in artificial intelligence at the Technical University of Košice reflects the growing role of technology and academic diplomacy.
- These initiatives can deepen knowledge partnerships between both countries.

Quantum Communication and Critical Infrastructure Protection

- Cooperation in quantum communication and critical infrastructure protection was discussed.
- These areas are important because digital networks, financial systems, energy grids and public infrastructure are increasingly vulnerable to cyber and technological risks.

Energy Cooperation

- Both countries agreed to deepen cooperation in energy.
- Nuclear and geothermal energy were identified as important areas.
- Slovakia's experience in nuclear energy and Europe's clean technology ecosystem can support India's energy diversification.

India-EU FTA and Social Security Agreement

- Both sides expressed support for the India-European Union Free Trade Agreement.
- They also supported the early conclusion of a Social Security Agreement.
- These are important for trade expansion and the welfare of Indian professionals working abroad.

These outcomes show that India-Slovakia relations are expanding from political goodwill to a more functional partnership covering mobility, technology, defence, energy and trade.

c. Significance

The elevation of ties strengthens India's outreach to Central Europe.

Central Europe Outreach

- India's European engagement has traditionally focused on larger partners such as France, Germany and the United Kingdom.
- Deeper ties with Slovakia can help India build a more diversified Europe policy.
- This supports India's objective of wider engagement across the European Union.

Economic Significance

- Slovakia is an important manufacturing economy in Europe.
- It has strengths in automobiles, electronics and precision industrial systems.
- These strengths complement India's scale, digital capabilities and manufacturing ambitions.

Defence-Industrial Value

- Defence cooperation can support India's indigenisation agenda.
- Joint development and production can contribute to India's domestic defence-industrial base.
- Areas such as artillery, armoured systems and defence components may offer scope for collaboration.

Labour Mobility

- Formal migration frameworks can create safer pathways for Indian professionals.
- They can reduce informal exploitation and improve mutual confidence.
- They can also address skill shortages in Slovakia while expanding opportunities for Indian workers.

Technology Cooperation

- Cooperation in artificial intelligence, digital systems, quantum communication and critical infrastructure protection aligns with India's strategic technology goals.
- It can strengthen research collaboration, academic exchange and innovation networks.
- It can also support India's wider technology diplomacy.

Energy Security

- Nuclear, geothermal and green technologies can help India diversify its clean energy options.
- In a period of energy uncertainty and climate pressure, such cooperation supports both energy security and sustainability.

Therefore, the partnership has value not only for bilateral relations, but also for India's wider goals of industrial capability, skilled mobility, strategic autonomy and technological advancement.

d. Counter-Terrorism and Strategic Dimension

The strategic value of the partnership also lies in security cooperation.

Counter-Terrorism Cooperation

- Both countries condemned terrorism, including the Pahalgam terror attack.
- They called for sustained international cooperation against terrorism.
- This helps India build wider diplomatic consensus on cross-border terrorism.

European Strategic Outreach

- Slovakia is a member of the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.
- Stronger engagement with Slovakia can help India communicate its position more effectively within European institutions.
- This is useful on issues such as terrorism, supply chains, technology standards and the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Strategic Autonomy

- India follows an independent foreign policy rooted in strategic autonomy.
- Engagement with Slovakia must therefore deepen cooperation without limiting India's diplomatic flexibility.
- This balanced approach can help India expand partnerships while preserving independent decision-making.

This strategic dimension shows that the partnership is not limited to economic cooperation; it also has diplomatic and security relevance.

e. Concerns and Challenges

Despite the elevation of ties, several challenges remain.

Limited Bilateral Trade

- Bilateral trade remains below potential.
- The Comprehensive Partnership will matter only if it leads to investment flows, sector-specific projects and business-to-business engagement.
- Economic cooperation must move beyond declarations.

Defence Implementation Issues

- Joint production should not remain limited to assembly or procurement.
- India must seek technology transfer, skill development and local manufacturing.
- Defence cooperation should be integrated with domestic supply chains.

Labour Welfare

- Labour mobility must be backed by welfare safeguards.
- Indian workers need fair contracts, skill recognition, grievance redressal and safe living conditions.
- Social security portability is essential for protecting migrant workers.

Geopolitical Balance

- Slovakia's position as an EU and NATO member may shape its approach towards Russia and Ukraine.
- India should deepen cooperation without compromising its independent foreign policy space.
- Strategic alignment should not become strategic dependence.

Technology Cooperation Risks

- Cooperation in artificial intelligence, quantum communication and critical infrastructure protection must not remain symbolic.
- It requires institutional funding, university linkages, joint laboratories and industry participation.
- Long-term research frameworks are necessary for meaningful outcomes.

These challenges underline the need to convert diplomatic momentum into practical, measurable and mutually beneficial cooperation.

f. Way Forward

India and Slovakia should operationalise the Comprehensive Partnership through a clear action plan, sector-wise targets and a regular review mechanism.

Action-Oriented Partnership

- Diplomatic commitments should be converted into specific projects.
- Sector-wise timelines and measurable outcomes should be developed.
- Regular review mechanisms should monitor implementation.

India-EU Free Trade Agreement

- India should continue to support the early conclusion of the India-EU Free Trade Agreement.
- It must also protect its trade, regulatory and development interests.
- A balanced agreement can expand market access, strengthen supply chains and support investment.

Social Security and Labour Mobility

- The Social Security Agreement should be concluded at the earliest.
- Skill recognition frameworks should be strengthened.
- Pre-departure orientation and worker-support mechanisms should be improved.

Industrial and Defence Collaboration

- Joint ventures should be promoted in defence, automotive manufacturing, green technology, electronics and advanced manufacturing.
- These sectors match Slovakia's industrial strengths and India's development priorities.
- Collaboration should focus on co-development and domestic capability-building.

Academic and Research Cooperation

- Cooperation should be deepened in artificial intelligence, quantum communication, digital technology and critical infrastructure protection.

- The AI chair at the Technical University of Košice should be used as a platform for wider research collaboration.
- Talent exchange, joint research and innovation networks should be expanded.

A well-implemented partnership can help India strengthen its Central Europe outreach while also supporting domestic industrial and technological capacity.

Conclusion

India-Slovakia ties are shifting from limited bilateral engagement to a broader partnership covering mobility, defence, technology, energy, trade and security cooperation. For India, Slovakia can become a useful Central European partner in its wider Europe strategy and supply-chain diversification.

The success of the Comprehensive Partnership will depend on implementation. If both countries can translate agreements into concrete projects, the relationship can strengthen India's European outreach, support domestic capability-building and contribute to a more diversified and resilient foreign policy.

GS Paper III: Security

2. Drone Revolution and Modern Warfare

a. Introduction

Recent conflicts in Ukraine, Lebanon and West Asia have shown that drones are no longer auxiliary tools in warfare. They have become central instruments of surveillance, targeting, precision strikes, logistics disruption and psychological pressure.

Cheap and mass-produced unmanned systems are changing the economics of war by allowing smaller forces and non-state actors to challenge technologically superior militaries. Modern warfare is therefore moving away from a purely platform-centric model dominated by expensive fighter aircraft, tanks and artillery. It is increasingly becoming drone-intensive, networked and industrial in character.

The side that can produce, repair, adapt and deploy unmanned systems at scale may gain a decisive advantage in future conflicts.

b. Changing Nature of Warfare

Earlier warfare was dominated by high-value military platforms such as fighter aircraft, tanks, artillery systems and precision missiles. Rear areas were often relatively safer, and advanced weapons were largely controlled by states.

The emerging model is different. Low-cost drones, first-person-view systems, loitering munitions and long-range unmanned platforms can now provide persistent surveillance and precision strike capability at much lower cost.

Continuous Battlespace

- Troop movement, vehicle concentration, logistics hubs and rear infrastructure can be detected and targeted quickly.

SIX STRATEGIC EFFECTS OF THE DRONE REVOLUTION



- The distinction between frontline and rear area is becoming less clear.
- Concealment, mobility and logistics are becoming more difficult.

Weakening of State Monopoly

- Commercial drones can be modified and weaponised by proxy groups, terrorists and organised criminal networks.
- Non-state actors can now access capabilities that were earlier available mainly to states.
- This widens the threat spectrum for both military and internal security agencies.

This transformation shows that drones are not merely new weapons; they are changing the basic structure of the battlefield.

c. Significance

The drone revolution has created major operational, strategic and industrial consequences.

Democratisation of the Battlefield

- Low-cost drones allow smaller forces to impose high costs on larger militaries.
- A relatively inexpensive first-person-view drone can damage or destroy an armoured vehicle worth millions.
- This changes the cost-benefit logic of warfare.

Persistent Surveillance

- Drones allow continuous monitoring of battlefield movement.
- They reduce concealment and increase vulnerability.
- Militaries must rethink camouflage, dispersion, mobility and logistics.

Rise of Industrial Warfare

- Military advantage now depends on rapid drone production and repair.
- Field-level modification of hardware and software has become important.
- Scale, adaptability and replacement capacity are becoming decisive.

Link with Electronic Warfare

- Drone warfare depends heavily on control of the electromagnetic spectrum.
- Detection, jamming, spoofing and counter-jamming are becoming as important as physical firepower.
- Fibre-optic drones, jamming-resistant systems and autonomous navigation show the rapid evolution of this domain.

Deep-Strike Capability

- Long-range drones and loitering munitions can target logistics hubs, airbases and ammunition depots.
- They can also threaten command centres and critical infrastructure far from the frontline.
- This allows weaker actors to project force beyond their immediate area of control.

Therefore, drones have become central to both battlefield effectiveness and strategic deterrence.

d. Concerns and Challenges

The spread of drone technology creates serious military, internal security, legal and ethical challenges.

Low Entry Barrier

- Commercial drones can be purchased, modified and weaponised with limited technical expertise.
- Terrorists, insurgents and organised criminal networks can use them for surveillance, smuggling and attacks.
- This makes drone misuse a major internal security threat.

Border Security Threats

- Drone-based smuggling of weapons, narcotics and explosives has emerged along sensitive borders.
- Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir are particularly vulnerable.
- Such drones can support terrorism, organised crime and proxy warfare.

Counter-Drone Gap

- Traditional air defence systems are designed for larger and costlier aerial threats.
- They may be unsuitable or economically inefficient against cheap micro-drones and swarms.
- Using expensive missiles against low-cost drones is often unsustainable.

Vulnerability of Civilian Infrastructure

- Airports, refineries, power grids, ports and prisons are exposed to low-cost aerial threats.
- Military bases and public events can also become targets.
- Protection requires technology, regulation and trained manpower.

Rapid Technological Evolution

- Sensors, batteries, navigation systems, artificial intelligence tools and communication links are improving quickly.
- This creates the risk of rapid obsolescence.
- Security forces must continuously update systems, doctrine and training.

Legal and Ethical Concerns

- Autonomous targeting raises questions of accountability and command responsibility.
- Cross-border drone strikes involve issues of sovereignty and proportionality.
- Mass surveillance through drones can affect privacy and civil liberties.

These concerns show that drone governance must combine military preparedness, internal security capacity and legal safeguards.

e. Lessons from Recent Conflicts

Recent conflicts provide important lessons on the operational and strategic use of drones.

Ukraine

- Commercial drones have been adapted into first-person-view strike drones, bomber drones and interceptors.
- Long-range attack drones have been used to target rear infrastructure.
- Tactical innovation has rapidly influenced battlefield outcomes.

Lebanon Theatre

- The role of Hezbollah shows how proxy actors can develop layered drone capabilities with external support.
- Drones and loitering munitions can be used for intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and precision attacks.
- Such capabilities can threaten both military and civilian targets.

Israel's Experience

- Israel highlights the importance of layered counter-drone systems.
- Radar, electronic warfare and AI-enabled detection are increasingly necessary.
- Both kinetic and non-kinetic interception methods are required.

Iran's Drone Strategy

- Iran has used unmanned systems for deterrence, coercion and regional power projection.
- Drones allow influence at relatively low cost.
- They can become strategic tools for states that do not rely only on conventional platforms.

These lessons underline that drone warfare is not a temporary phenomenon but a durable feature of modern conflict.

f. Relevance for India

India must treat drones both as an opportunity and as a threat.

Defence Applications

- Drones can support border surveillance and battlefield reconnaissance.
- They can assist precision strikes, logistics delivery and high-altitude operations.
- They can reduce risk to soldiers and improve real-time targeting.

Internal Security Applications

- Drones are relevant for cross-border smuggling, terrorism and prison security.
- They can support VIP security, crowd monitoring and critical infrastructure protection.
- Police forces and Central Armed Police Forces will increasingly need drone and counter-drone capabilities.

Industrial Relevance

- India must build a strong domestic drone ecosystem.
- This includes airframes, batteries, sensors, secure communication systems, navigation technologies and AI-enabled control.
- Dependence on insecure foreign components can create supply-chain and cyber vulnerabilities.

For India, drone preparedness must therefore involve the armed forces, border forces, police organisations, industry and research institutions.

g. Drone Warfare and Battlefield Economics

The drone revolution shows that military power is now shaped not only by expensive high-end platforms, but also by scale, speed and adaptability.

Changing Cost Logic

- Cheap drones can destroy or disable costly military platforms.
- The economic asymmetry favours actors who can innovate and mass-produce quickly.
- Future wars may reward rapid replacement capacity as much as technological sophistication.

Industrial Contest

- Drone warfare is an industrial contest as much as a battlefield contest.
- Countries that can mass-produce, modify and replace drones quickly will gain an advantage.
- The ability to innovate faster than the adversary may become decisive.

This makes drone capability a test of industrial depth, technological agility and military doctrine.

h. Way Forward

India should adopt a comprehensive drone and counter-drone strategy.

Combined Drone Doctrine

- India should develop a common drone and counter-drone doctrine for the armed forces, Central Armed Police Forces and state police.
- The doctrine should cover surveillance, strikes, logistics, border management and internal security.
- It should also define methods for countering hostile drones.

Indigenous Manufacturing

- Domestic capacity must be built across the drone value chain.
- Priority areas include sensors, batteries, chips, secure communication systems, navigation tools and AI-enabled software.
- Indigenous capability will reduce dependence and improve operational security.

Layered Counter-Drone Systems

- Counter-unmanned aerial systems should combine radar, radio-frequency detection, jamming and spoofing.
- Lasers, nets and kinetic interception should also be developed.
- No single system can address all drone threats, so layered defence is essential.

Border Drone Detection Grids

- Detection grids should be strengthened in Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan and coastal regions.
- These grids must integrate local police, border forces, intelligence agencies and forensic units.
- Data-sharing and real-time coordination should be improved.

Rapid Innovation Channels

- Start-ups, DRDO, armed forces, CAPFs and police organisations should be connected through fast innovation platforms.
- Procurement cycles must be shortened.
- Field feedback should guide rapid design improvements.

Training and Legal Reform

- Security forces should be trained in drone forensics, electronic warfare, swarm response and evidence collection.
- Legal frameworks should address drone misuse, airspace management and privacy concerns.
- Autonomous weapons accountability must also be clarified.

A successful strategy will require India to combine technology, doctrine, industry, regulation and field-level operational learning.

Conclusion

Drones have become part of the infrastructure of modern warfare. They are used for surveillance, targeting, strikes, logistics, deterrence and psychological operations. Their low cost, adaptability and wide availability have changed the balance between states, proxy actors and non-state groups.

For India, the priority is clear. It must build indigenous drone capability, strengthen layered counter-drone systems and adapt military and internal security doctrine.

A country that prepares early for the drone age will be better placed to protect its borders, infrastructure and strategic interests.

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However, the PrepAlpine team is simultaneously developing a dedicated Prelims-focused Current Affairs Series, designed for:

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- data recall
- Prelims-style MCQs
- objective pattern analysis

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- lists
- tables
- visual cues

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