

31st May DSC

Current Affairs 31st May 2025

U.S. Court Ruling: Major Blow to Trump's Tariff Strategy

Background & Context

A significant legal verdict has dealt a blow to former U.S. President Donald Trump's trade policy. The U.S. Court of International Trade (CIT) invalidated a series of tariffs Trump had imposed using the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 1977—particularly those announced after his “Liberation Day” speech on April 2. These tariffs were central to his confrontational approach to trade, especially with China and other exporting countries.

Legal Assessment

At the core was the question: Does IEEPA allow the President unchecked power to enforce tariffs?

The court decisively ruled:

- IEEPA does **not** offer the President unrestricted authority on tariffs.
- The tariffs in question lack legal grounding under the act.
- Trump exceeded his mandate as defined by the statute.

Consequences of the Judgment

- Many of the Trump-era tariffs now stand nullified.
- The U.S. government must begin repealing these within 10 days—though an appeal is underway.
- Strategically, the verdict undermines the precedent of using emergency economic powers to enact unilateral tariffs.

Economic & Diplomatic Fallout

- Financial markets responded positively, anticipating a softening in global trade tensions.
- U.S. trade partners, particularly those previously targeted, may welcome this development.

Wider Implications

- Highlights judicial checks on executive overreach.
- Points to the need for trade policies that are rooted in legislation and multilateral cooperation.
- Politically, Trump's critics may use this decision to discredit his “America First” economic narrative.

Looking Forward

- The matter may escalate to the Supreme Court.

- Congress might need to revise IEEPA to clarify its scope concerning trade.
- Policymakers must now navigate the tightrope between economic autonomy and free-market norms.

Three-Year Practice Mandate for Judges: A Debate on Judicial Reforms

Arguments in Favor (Prashant Reddy's View)

- **Essential Experience:** Practical legal exposure is deemed vital for judges to gain the maturity required for effective judicial functioning.
- **Judicial Consensus:** 21 of 23 High Courts believe fresh law graduates lack the readiness for judicial roles.
- **Support from Bar Council:** The BCI in 2021 criticized the appointment of judges without practice as ineffective.
- **Beyond Training:** Courtroom skills and emotional intelligence cannot be taught in training institutes.
- **Gender Inclusivity:** Mandates may still support female candidates through reservation mechanisms.

Arguments Against (Bharat Chugh's View)

- **Limited Benefit:** Three years of litigation may not necessarily deepen legal expertise.
- **No Data Support:** The reform lacks evidence-based backing.
- **Deters Talent:** Career shifts at 29–30 years are unattractive given the lower perks in judicial service.
- **Accessibility Issues:** Economically weaker and first-generation lawyers may find it difficult to sustain themselves in early litigation years.
- **Gender Barrier:** The mandate may disproportionately burden women, especially in rural and lower-income backgrounds.
- **Entry Hurdle:** Graduates from non-elite institutions may feel further excluded.

Practical Hurdles

- No clear standard to assess practice experience—risks becoming a bureaucratic formality.
- Ambiguity around recognizing corporate or government legal work.
- Calls for digital tracking systems to authenticate appearances.
- Many junior lawyers are assigned routine tasks, limiting their substantive legal growth.

Policy & Constitutional Concerns

- **Judicial Overstep:** Supreme Court may have violated Article 234 by prescribing eligibility, a power reserved for the executive and High Courts.
- **Opaque Process:** No public or stakeholder consultations were held.
- **Need for Data:** There's no comprehensive study proving experience makes a better judge.

Larger Impact

- **Shrinking Applicant Pool:** Raises the bar for entry, possibly discouraging qualified candidates.
- **Risk to Diversity:** May reverse recent progress in judicial inclusiveness.
- **Reform Gap:** Without addressing broader structural issues—like poor compensation and delays—the mandate alone may fail to improve judicial quality.

Operation Sindoor: India's Leap into Autonomous Warfare

Strategic Trigger

India launched **Operation Sindoor** in early May as retaliation for the April 22 terror strike in Pahalgam. The operation represented a new phase of modern warfare—short, intense, and dominated by unmanned systems rather than traditional armed forces.

Rise of Autonomous Combat

- **Drone-Driven Tactics:** Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) and AI-equipped loitering munitions replaced manned aircraft.
- **AI Integration:** Autonomous systems identified and neutralized targets using real-time data.
- **Surveillance Dominance:** Drones maintained continuous surveillance, shifting ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance) into a dynamic domain.
- **Controlled Escalation:** Allowed limited action without risking a broader military conflict.

India's Drone Deployment

- **Reconnaissance:** TAPAS-BH-201 and Heron MK-II UAVs penetrated Pakistani airspace to collect data.
- **Strike Assets:**
 - *Nagashtra-1*: Indigenous loitering munition.
 - *Harop*: Israeli-origin kamikaze drones.
 - *Swarm Drones*: Used for saturating and confusing radar.
- **Attack Strategy:**
 - Phase 1: Decoys and EW tactics to drain Pakistani air defences.

- Phase 2: Precision strikes using loitering munitions.
- Quadcopters relayed live visuals to Army's IBMS.

High-Impact Targets

- Ammunition hubs, radar installations, and HQs were hit.
- A cricket match in Rawalpindi was disrupted, delivering a psychological blow.
- A Chinese-made HQ-9 air defence system near Lahore was destroyed.

Pakistan's Countermove: Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos

- Deployed indigenous (Shahpar-II, Burraq) and foreign drones (Bayraktar TB2, CH-4, Wing Loong II).
- Attacked Indian military assets across multiple states.
- **Outcome:** Most attacks intercepted by India's integrated air defence systems.

India's Defence Shield

- **IACCS:** A fusion of satellite, air, and ground intelligence into one control grid.
- **Akashteer System:** Enabled immediate battlefield-level threat response.
- **Low-Level Air Defence (LLAD):** Modernized vintage systems backed by snipers and mobile units.
- **Advanced Systems:**
 - Akash, Barak-8, SPYDER, S-400.
 - Directed Energy Weapons (DEWs) like lasers and microwave blasters.

Technological Edge

- **Swarm Attacks:** Confuse defences through radar overload.
- **AI Warfare:** Automated decision-making and strike precision.
- **Electronic Lures:** Force enemy air defences to misfire.

Significance

- **New Deterrence Norms:** Show of strength without conventional escalation.
- **Zero-Casualty Warfare:** No human pilots endangered.
- **Psychological Messaging:** Footage of hits broadcast to reinforce deterrence.
- **Strategic Signal:** India now commands credible autonomous warfare capability.

BSF Arms Training to Village Defence Guards (VDGs) in Jammu

Background

The Border Security Force (BSF) has resumed training civilians in Jammu border villages to act as auxiliary defence forces, following increased terror threats and Operation Sindoor.

Why Now?

- The VDG scheme, revived in 2022 after decades, aims to curb growing militant activity.
- Over 22 civilian casualties reported in the past three years across vulnerable districts like Rajouri, Poonch, and Chenab Valley.

Strategic Rationale

- Civilians trained to counter infiltration and offer first-line resistance.
- Reduces dependence on formal military forces during initial strikes.
- Enhances local readiness and morale.

Amarnath Yatra Security

- Record 52,000 paramilitary forces to be deployed from July 3–August 9.
- The April 22 Baisaran attack that killed 26 civilians has elevated threat perception.

Leadership Oversight

- CRPF chief is reviewing ground preparedness.
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah is slated for an on-site security review.

Implications

- Indicates a policy shift toward localized, civilian-integrated security models.
- Enhances the resilience of remote communities amid ongoing threats.
- Could become a blueprint for civil-military collaboration in other sensitive regions.

ECINET: One-Stop Election Dashboard Set to Launch

Overview

The Election Commission of India is developing **ECINET**, a unified digital platform to consolidate over 40 election-related apps and portals. A soft launch is planned for June 19 byelections, with full deployment aimed before the Bihar Assembly elections.

Goals

- Enhance transparency and streamline election operations.
- Responds to long-standing issues raised by opposition parties, including:
 - Duplicate voter IDs.
 - Errors in electoral rolls.

Broader Reform Drive

- Under CEC Gyanesh Kumar, EC is standardizing systems and improving access.
- Automated removal of deceased voters via Registrar General integration.

Training Initiatives

- Massive upskilling campaign underway:
 - 3,500 BLOs and supervisors already trained.
 - Will cascade training to over 1 million election workers.

Polling Station Upgrades

- Elector limit revised from 1,500 to 1,200 per booth.
- More booths planned for urban high-rises and gated societies.
- Goal: No voter travels more than 2 km to vote.

Voter Services

- Redesigned voter slips with clearer information.
- Mobile phone deposit counters to ensure fair voting without distractions.

Political Dialogue

- 4,719 consultations held with over 28,000 representatives from major parties like BJP, AAP, CPI(M), BSP, and NPP.
- More interactions planned post-byelections.

Impact

- Reinforces EC's image as a transparent and citizen-friendly institution.
- Sets a precedent for digital innovation in democratic governance.
- Could serve as a model for similar reforms in other democracies.

31st May 2025: Static MCQS

1. Who among the following led a successful military campaign against the kingdom of Srivijaya, the powerful maritime State, which ruled the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java and the neighbouring islands?

- a. Amoghavarsha (rashtrakuta)
- b. Prataparudra (Kakatiya)
- c. Rajendra I (Chola)
- d. Vishnuvardhana (Hoysala)

Correct Option: (c)

2. With reference to ancient India (600-322 BC), consider the following pairs:

Territorial region River flowing in the region

- I. Asamaka : Godavari
- II. Kamboja : Vipasa
- III. Avanti : Mahanadi
- IV. Kosala : Sarayu

How many of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. Only three
- d. All the four

Correct Option: (b)

3. The first Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, a music training school, was set up in 1901 by Vishnu Digambar Paluskar in

- a. Delhi
- b. Gwalior
- c. Ujjain
- d. Lahore

Correct Option: (d)

4. Ashokan inscriptions suggest that the 'Pradeshika', 'Rajuka' and 'Yukta' were important officers at the

- a. village-level administration
- b. district-level administration
- c. provincial administration
- d. level of the central administration

Correct Option: (b)

5. consider the following statements in respect of the Non-Cooperation Movement:

- I. The Congress declared the attainment of 'Swaraj' by all legitimate and peaceful means to be its objective.
- II. It was to be implemented in stages with civil disobedience and non-payment of taxes for the next stage only if 'Swaraj' did not come within a year and the Government resorted to repression.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a. I only
- b. II only
- c. Both I and II
- d. Neither I nor II

Correct Option: (c)

