**Syllabus subtopic**: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests.

**Prelims and Mains focus**: about the helicopter deal and its significance; about other deals on the anvil; India-US trade dispute

**News**: The deal for **24 MH-60R Multi-Role Helicopters (MRH) for the Navy**, which is likely to be announced during the visit of U.S. President Donald Trump, is lined up for the final approval of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS).

**About the deal**

All procedural requirements for the deal have been completed. The 24 Lockheed Martin-built helicopters, worth $2.4 billion, are being procured through the **Foreign Military Sales route** of the U.S. government.

**Significance of the deal**

- The **Navy is facing an acute shortage of MRH, with several warships operating with empty helicopter decks**. These helicopters are being procured as replacement for 15 Sea King Anti-Submarine Warfare helicopters de-inducted in 1991 and one Sea King 42B MRH lost in accident. The MRHs in service, Sea King 42Bs, were inducted in the 1980s and are in need of replacement.

- Given the urgency, the U.S. is likely to take some MH-60R helicopters from its newest aircraft carrier, USS Gerald Ford, which is undergoing upgrades.

**Trade deal unlikely**

Mr. **Trump will visit India on February 24 and 25**. With no headway in the talks for a trade deal, there are expectations that a few big-ticket defence deals will be announced.
Other deals in the pipeline

- There are several big-ticket deals in the pipeline. These include **six Boeing P-8I long-range surveillance aircraft** and **13 BAE Systems-built 127-mm MK-45 naval gun systems** worth around $1 billion for the Navy, **six AH-64E Apache attack helicopters** for the Army, **30 armed drones** for the three services and a **tactical air defence system for Delhi**. However, these are at **various stages of procurement**.

- Apart from the deal for MH-60R helicopters, an announcement is possible on P-8I and Apache.