

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

Date: 27-02-2026

### Table of Content

PM Visit to Israel

AI is Rapidly Transforming India's Legal Ecosystem

Supreme Court Bans NCERT Chapter on Judicial Corruption

India Secures Preferential Access to Two-Thirds of Global Trade Through FTAs

Attracting Talent Positioned Abroad

Industrial Corridors of India

#### NEWS IN SHORT

Chandrashekhar Azad

Hexagon Alliance

RailTech Portal and e-RCT System

China's "one country, two systems" Framework

Macaques

Global Mind Health 2025 Report

Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder

## PM VISIT TO ISRAEL

### Context

- The Prime Minister **paid an official visit to Israel**.
  - ♦ **In a historic first**, Prime Minister Modi addressed the Israeli Parliament, the Knesset, becoming the first Indian Prime Minister to do so.

### Major Outcomes

- Both nations **elevated their relationship to Special Strategic Partnership**.
- The Joint Commission on Science and Technology has been elevated to **Ministerial level**.
- **Initiative to collaborate in Critical and Emerging Technologies** led by National Security Advisors.
- 20 Joint **Fellowships in Agricultural Research**.
- Quota of up to **50,000 Indian workers over the next 5 years**.
- **Both nations also signed 17 pacts**, the focus of the visit has been on technology, including in the area of artificial intelligence, cyber security, innovation research and startups.
- The two sides also **vowed to expand their already close defence partnership by working towards joint development and joint production** under the framework of the **transfer of technologies**.
- India and Israel also discussed the implementation of the **India-Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** and cooperation under the framework of **I2U2 (India-Israel-UAE-USA)**.

### Significance of the Visit

- **Elevating Bilateral Ties to a “Special Strategic Partnership”**: The upgradation of relationship to a Special Strategic Partnership reflects deeper cooperation across defence, technology, trade, and people-to-people ties.
- **Expanded Cooperation in Strategic & Emerging Technologies**: Both countries agreed to launch major cooperation in critical and emerging technologies including AI, quantum computing, cybersecurity, and digital innovation.
  - ♦ These areas align with India’s goals like Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliance) and support Israel’s strengths as a global innovation hub.
- **Defence and Security Collaboration**: The two sides agreed to expand collaboration from merely procurement to joint development, joint production, and technology transfer of defence systems.

- ♦ These moves strengthen India’s defence capabilities and deepen security partnerships amid global uncertainties.
- **Economic Engagement & Trade Initiatives**: The visit accelerated economic cooperation:
  - ♦ Progress toward a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) was reaffirmed.
  - ♦ A financial dialogue was launched.
  - ♦ Discussions included linking India’s UPI payments system with Israel’s payment infrastructure to boost financial connectivity.
- **Context of Regional Tensions**: The timing of the visit amid ongoing tensions in the Middle East, threats of conflict involving Iran, and wider geopolitical instability gave it added significance.
  - ♦ It signalled India’s intent to be an engaged global actor that advances its strategic interests while promoting peace and stability.

### India and Israel Bilateral Relations & Evolving Ties

- **Bilateral Relations**: India announced its recognition of Israel in **1950**. Regular embassies opened in **1992** when full diplomatic relations were established between the **two countries**.
  - ♦ The bilateral relations were elevated to **strategic partnership in 2017** and were upgraded to **Special Strategic Partnership after this visit**.
  - ♦ **In 2022-23**, the two countries jointly celebrated **30 years of the elevation of bilateral ties to full diplomatic ties**.
- **Defense & Security**: Israel has been a **key supplier of advanced technology** from **AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System)** radars and drones to missile and surveillance systems making it one of **India’s largest defense suppliers**.
- **Bilateral Trade: India is Israel’s 2nd trading partner in Asia** and the **7th largest globally**.
  - ♦ In FY 2023-24 and FY 2024-25 the bilateral trade (excluding defense) was US\$ 6.53 billion and US\$3.75 billion respectively.
- **Investment**: During April 2000 – March 2024, Israel’s direct FDI into India was U.S. \$334.2 million.
  - ♦ There are over 300 investments from Israel in India mainly in the **high-tech domain, agriculture and water**.
- **Agriculture & Water Management**: In 1993, the first Agreement on Cooperation in Agriculture was signed.
  - ♦ **2006**: Comprehensive Work Plan on Agriculture launched (3-year cycles) – implemented through MASHAV (Israel’s Agency for International Development Cooperation).

- ♦ **2025:** Revised Agriculture Cooperation Agreement signed, expanding areas of partnership.
- ♦ The **Indo-Israeli Centers of Excellence (CoE)** demonstrate Israeli expertise, technologies and innovation in the horticultural field.
- **Science, Technology, Counter-Terrorism & Innovation:** India-Israel cooperation in Science & Technology (S&T) is overseen by the **Joint Committee on S&T**, established under the Agreement of Science & Technology cooperation signed in **1993**.
- ♦ **A US\$ 40 million India-Israel Industrial R&D and Technological Innovation Fund (I4F)** for joint projects was also set up.
- **Multilateral Cooperation:** Both are active members of the **I2U2 group** (India, Israel, USA, UAE), focusing on economic and space collaboration with projects like food parks and space-based environmental tools.

### Significance for India

- **Defence & security:** Israel is a **reliable partner** for **critical technologies** for India and can be instrumental in India's Self Reliance and Make in India.
- **Agriculture & water:** Israel is known for its **model of innovation, water conservation, and high-yield farming**, India can adopt these technologies with collaboration.
- **Geopolitics:** It is an important strategic partner for India in West Asia that complements **India's Act West policy**.

### Way Ahead

- The visit is being widely viewed as a milestone moment in India-Israel relations, underscoring growing strategic trust, deepening economic cooperation.
- It is seen as transforming long-standing ties into a forward-leaning, multidimensional strategic alliance with implications for security, economic growth, and global diplomacy.

Source: TH

## AI IS RAPIDLY TRANSFORMING INDIA'S LEGAL ECOSYSTEM

### Context

- The recently concluded India AI Impact Summit 2026 showcased **how AI is rapidly transforming India's legal ecosystem with AI-powered research tools**.

### Use of AI in India's Justice System

- In the Supreme Court, High Courts, National Informatics Centre (NIC) **AI tools are now assisting various functions such as:**
  - ♦ Transcription of oral arguments,
  - ♦ Translation of judgments,
  - ♦ Identification of defects in e-filing,
  - ♦ Legal research, and
  - ♦ Metadata extraction.



- Over the past decade, **courts have moved from basic computerisation to nationwide digital platforms**, real-time data systems, virtual courts and multilingual judgment access.
- **Latest technologies** like AI and its subsets Machine Learning (ML), Optical Character Recognition (OCR), Natural Language Processing (NLP) are being used in the e-Courts software applications developed under the eCourts Project.

### Use of AI in India's Criminal Justice System



- **e-Courts Project:** Initiated by the Supreme Court of India to modernize judicial functions through digital innovation.
  - ♦ **Phase III:** Integrates advanced AI solutions to improve case management and administrative efficiency in courts.



- **AI for Legal Translation and Language Accessibility:** India's judicial system operates primarily in English, creating barriers for non-English-speaking litigants.
  - ♦ AI-driven legal translation tools are being deployed to make legal documents and judgments accessible.
- **AI in Law Enforcement and Crime Prevention:** To enhance crime detection, surveillance, and criminal investigations.
  - ♦ Automated drones for crime scene monitoring and suspect tracking.
  - ♦ Facial recognition systems integrated with national criminal databases.
  - ♦ AI-powered forensic analysis to examine evidence and digital crime trails.
  - ♦ AI-driven speech-to-text tools assist in real-time FIR filing and case documentation.
  - ♦ AI is improving witness testimony analysis and courtroom evidence evaluation.

#### Significance of Use of AI in CJS in India

- **Backlog of Cases:** India's judicial system faces a backlog cases, undermining public trust in timely justice.
  - ♦ AI can streamline case management, reduce backlog, and speed up judicial processes.
- **Overcrowding in Prisons:** Indian prisons have been **housing more inmates than their capacity** for decades now, AI can streamline the complaint registration process, track investigations, flag necessary actions, and assess investigation quality.

- **Predictive Models for Operations:** AI can analyze crime location data, patrolling patterns, and offender routes to guide police operations effectively.
- **Resource Optimization:** AI can handle administrative tasks, freeing up police personnel for more public-facing work, such as investigations, law enforcement, and traffic management.
- **Enhanced Accuracy:** AI can prevent neglect of crucial evidence and ensure a more meticulous and reliable criminal justice process.

#### Concerns/Challenges

- **Privacy Concerns:** AI could lead to surveillance overreach and violations of individual privacy rights.
- **Bias and Discrimination:** AI systems may perpetuate biases in decision-making, affecting marginalized communities unfairly.
- **Lack of Transparency:** AI algorithms are often opaque, making it difficult to understand how decisions are made, potentially undermining accountability.
- **Dependence on Technology:** Over-reliance on AI could lead to the erosion of human judgment and discretion in the criminal justice system.
- **Data Security:** Storing and processing sensitive criminal justice data using AI raises risks of data breaches and misuse.
- **Ethical Concerns:** The use of AI in sensitive areas like sentencing and parole decisions raises moral and ethical questions about fairness and justice.
  - ♦ The opaqueness can go against the principles of open justice, due process and the rule of law.
- **Exclusion of Human Insight:** AI may overlook nuanced factors in cases that require human empathy and judgment.

#### Way Ahead

- A balanced approach must be taken to ensure AI tools respect privacy, civil liberties, and ethical standards, while preventing misuse.
- By leveraging AI, India's criminal justice system can become more efficient, accessible, and just, while ensuring safeguards are in place to address any challenges.

**Source: AIR**

## SUPREME COURT BANS NCERT CHAPTER ON JUDICIAL CORRUPTION

### Context

- Recently, the Supreme Court of India has **imposed a blanket ban** on a Class 8 NCERT textbook chapter **dealing with corruption in the judiciary**, and warned of **'serious action'** in case of non-compliance.

### Observations of the Supreme Court

- A Bench **headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant** made the following key observations:
  - The inclusion of the chapter appeared to be a **'calculated move to undermine the institution'**.
  - It may amount to **criminal contempt** due to its potential to lower the authority of the judiciary.
  - The matter requires a **deeper probe**.
  - If unchecked, such actions could **erode public faith in the judiciary**.
  - The Court emphasized **institutional responsibility**: 'Heds must roll'.
- The Solicitor General tendered an **unconditional and unqualified apology** on behalf of the Ministry of Education.

### Constitutional and Legal Dimensions

- Independence of Judiciary:** Part of the **Basic Structure Doctrine** (Kesavananda Bharati case).
  - Ensures autonomy from executive and legislative interference.
  - Essential for rule of law and constitutional supremacy.
  - The Court appears to view the chapter as an attempt to weaken this institutional independence.
- Contempt of Court:** It is governed by **Contempt of Courts Act, 1971**. Criminal contempt includes acts that:
  - Scandalize or lower the authority of the court;
  - Interfere with judicial proceedings;
  - Obstruct administration of justice;
  - The Bench indicated that the chapter **may fall within this definition**.
- Freedom of Expression vs Institutional Integrity:** **Article 19(1)(a)** guarantees freedom of speech and expression. Reasonable restrictions under **Article 19(2)** include **contempt of court; defamation; and public order**.
  - The issue highlights a tension between academic discourse and criticism of institutions, and protection of judicial dignity and authority.

- Role of NCERT and Curriculum Governance:** NCERT develops national curriculum frameworks.
  - Curriculum content often becomes politically and constitutionally sensitive.
  - Judicial scrutiny of textbooks has occurred in the past in matters involving ideology, history, and constitutional values.
  - This incident raises questions about **curriculum oversight mechanisms, academic accountability, and institutional consultation processes**.
- Governance and Institutional Trust:** The Supreme Court stressed that unchecked actions could erode **public confidence in the judiciary**.
  - In a democracy, courts derive legitimacy from public trust, and constructive criticism strengthens institutions.
  - However, unfounded or sensational allegations may weaken institutional credibility.
  - Maintaining balance is critical for democratic stability.

### Judicial Corruption in India

- Judicial corruption refers to **misuse of judicial authority** for private gain, including bribery, favoritism, influence in appointments, and case manipulation.

### Constitutional Position of Judiciary in India

- In India, while the higher judiciary enjoys constitutional independence, concerns have periodically emerged regarding transparency, accountability, and ethical standards.
  - Article 50:** Separation of judiciary from executive
  - Articles 124–147:** Structure and independence of Supreme Court
  - Articles 214–231:** High Courts
  - Article 129 & 215:** Power to punish for contempt
  - Basic Structure Doctrine:** Judicial independence is part of the basic structure
- Judicial independence is essential to rule of law, but **independence without accountability risks institutional insularity**.

### Key Institutional Concerns

- Appointment Process (Collegium System):** The collegium system, evolved through the **Three Judges Cases**, has been **criticized for lack of transparency**.
  - It promotes opacity and elite capture.

- **Contempt Jurisdiction:** The judiciary's power to punish for 'scandalizing the court' sometimes creates tension between accountability and institutional protection.
- **In-House Mechanism: Internal judicial inquiry processes** lack statutory backing and transparency.

Source: TH

## INDIA SECURES PREFERENTIAL ACCESS TO TWO-THIRDS OF GLOBAL TRADE THROUGH FTAS

### Context

- The Union Minister of Commerce and Industry said that India now enjoys preferential trade access to nearly two-thirds of global trade through a series of free trade agreements.

### Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

- FTAs are arrangements between two or more countries or trading blocs that primarily agree to **reduce or eliminate customs tariff and non tariff barriers** on substantial trade between them.
  - ♦ They can **cover both goods and services**. It also addresses issues such as investment, mobility of professionals, and regulatory cooperation.
- **India uses different terms** to denote the scope and depth of trade agreements.
  - ♦ **CECA/CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Cooperation/Partnership Agreement):** Covers goods, services, investment, intellectual property, and regulatory issues.
  - ♦ **ECTA (Economic Cooperation & Trade Agreement)**
  - ♦ **TEPA (Trade & Economic Partnership Agreement)**
  - ♦ **CETA (Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement)**
- India has secured preferential tariff access to markets covering **roughly 70% of global GDP** and trade flows. India now has **trade arrangements with 38 high-income economies**, many complementary to its export strengths.

### Major FTAs signed in recent years

- **India–UAE CEPA ( 2022):** The pact opened 99% of tariff lines (zero-duty on nearly all consumer and industrial exports) and expanded services and manpower mobility.
- **India–Australia ECTA ( 2022):** The deal eliminates tariffs on all Australian exports to India and on the entire range of Indian exports.

- **India–EFTA TEPA (2024):** The Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) with the four EFTA countries (Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein) was signed in 2024 and enters force in 2025.
- **India–UK CETA (2025):** It grants duty-free access to nearly 99% of India's exports to Britain.
- **India–Oman CEPA ( 2025):** Oman offered zero-duty on 98.08% of its tariff lines, covering 99.38% of India's exports to Oman.
- **India–EU FTA (2026):** Under the pact, 97% of EU tariff lines will be covered (about 99.5% of trade value), with India eliminating tariffs on 70.4% of tariff lines at entry.
  - ♦ **The EU agreement** alone covers markets responsible for about **one-third of global trade**.

### FTAs Under Negotiation

- **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC):** Negotiations formally launched in February 2026 with the Gulf Cooperation Council. The bloc includes Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain.
- **Israel:** India and Israel have initiated FTA negotiations, with the first round already held.
- **Chile:** Terms of Reference signed in 2025 to launch negotiations with Chile.
- **Canada:** Negotiations with Canada have been revived after earlier disruptions.

### Significance of India's Expanding FTA Network

- **Accelerated Export Growth:** FTAs reduce or eliminate import duties in partner countries, making Indian goods more price-competitive.
- **Integration into Global Value Chains (GVCs):** FTAs facilitate participation in cross-border production networks by lowering input costs and simplifying trade rules.
  - ♦ Indian firms can import intermediate goods at lower tariffs and export finished products competitively.
- **Gains Labour-Intensive Sectors:** Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) account for a large share of India's exports.
  - ♦ FTAs open new markets for products like handicrafts, textiles, leather goods, processed food, and light engineering items.
- **Attraction of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** FTAs improve investor confidence by ensuring stable market access and predictable trade rules.
  - ♦ Companies invest in India to use it as an export base to partner countries, facilitating technology transfer, skill development, and capital inflows.

### Concerns with FTAs

- **Risk of Trade Imbalances:** Past FTAs have, in some cases, led to imports rising faster than exports, widening the trade deficit.
  - ♦ For instance, India's trade deficit with ASEAN expanded significantly after tariff reductions under the 2010 Goods Agreement.
- **Competitive Pressure on Domestic Industries:** Domestic industries often fear being outcompeted by cheaper or technologically superior foreign goods.
  - ♦ Sectors such as dairy, agriculture, automobiles, steel, and electronics are particularly sensitive in FTA negotiations.

### Way Ahead

- India's expanding FTA network marks a decisive shift toward deeper global economic integration. By securing preferential access to markets, India is positioning itself as a **major export hub** and **supply-chain partner**.
- If complemented by **domestic reforms and industry preparedness**, these agreements can significantly advance India's goal of becoming a leading global trading power and achieving a **trillion-dollar export economy**.

Source: DD News

## ATTRACTING TALENT POSITIONED ABROAD

### Context

- Recent tightening of U.S. immigration policy has created uncertainty for highly skilled foreign workers, prompting the government to attract its global talent back through targeted initiatives and better opportunities.

### India's Dominance in High-Skill Migration to the U.S.

- Indian nationals accounted for nearly **71% of H-1B approvals in FY2024**, reflecting overwhelming dependence on this channel for high-skill mobility.
- A large proportion of beneficiaries possess advanced degrees, indicating that migration involves **highly trained human capital**.
- The **share of master's degree holders has steadily increased** over the decades, demonstrating the rising knowledge intensity of Indian migration.
- Concentration in sectors such as **information technology, finance, engineering, and research** makes Indian professionals central to U.S. innovation systems.

### Emerging Reverse Migration Trends

- **Rising visa costs** and uncertainty surrounding the **H-1B programme** have led many skilled Indians to reconsider long-term settlement abroad.
- **Reduced research funding**, scholarships, and hiring support at several foreign universities have weakened traditional pathways for overseas academic and professional careers.
- **Indian graduates from elite international institutions** are increasingly exploring employment opportunities within India due to improving domestic prospects.
- **Expanding opportunities in India's technology sector**, startup ecosystem, and Global Capability Centres are making return migration more attractive than before.

### India's Innovation Ecosystem

- **Strengths:**
  - ♦ India hosts over **1,600 Global Capability Centres** employing millions of professionals.
  - ♦ The startup ecosystem is among the **world's largest and continues to expand** across sectors.
  - ♦ **Digital public infrastructure** and a large domestic market create fertile ground for innovation.
- **Weakness:**
  - ♦ India's R&D expenditure remains around 0.64% of GDP, far below the **U.S. (3.47%), China (2.41%), and Israel (5.71%)**.
  - ♦ **Private sector participation** in research funding is **limited**.
  - ♦ **High-technology manufacturing** and deep-tech sectors remain underdeveloped.
  - ♦ **Weak industry-academia** collaboration constrains commercialization of research.

### Government Initiatives to Re-engage Overseas Talent

- **Global Access to Talent from India (GATI)** seeks to facilitate international mobility, collaboration, and skill exchange.
- **eMigrate V2.0** aims to create a digital ecosystem for monitoring overseas employment and protecting migrant workers.
- **The VAJRA (Visiting Advanced Joint Research) scheme** is a fellowship program that offers short-term positions for overseas scientists, including **Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs)**, to work in Indian research institutions.

- **Know India Programme** strengthens engagement with diaspora youth and encourages long-term connection with India's development trajectory.
- **SWADES (Skilled Workers Arrival Database for Employment Support):** The initiative aims to create a database of qualified citizens returning from abroad.
  - ♦ It maps the skills of returning talent to fill vacancies in Indian and foreign companies operating within India.

### Way Ahead

- Global visa uncertainty has created a rare strategic window for India to reclaim its highly skilled diaspora. However, attracting talent is only the first step. Long-term retention **requires improvements in urban livability, research opportunities, and economic dynamism.**
- If supported by comprehensive reforms, returning professionals can **accelerate India's transition to an innovation-driven economy.** Otherwise, the opportunity may dissipate as talent seeks alternative destinations, perpetuating the cycle of brain drain.

Source: TH

## INDUSTRIAL CORRIDORS OF INDIA

### In News

- The 2026–27 Union Budget announced an **integrated East Coast Industrial Corridor** with a key node at Durgapur, creating modern, globally competitive industrial hubs and greenfield investment regions.
  - ♦ 11 industrial corridors are planned across the country, spanning North–South and East–West belts.

### Industrial corridors

- They are linear development zones that **connect major economic centres** through an integrated network of roads, railways, ports, and airports.
- Industrial corridors play a fundamental role in **metamorphosing regional economies** by creating environments where industries can operate efficiently, sustainably, and competitively.

### Features

- Promotion of accelerated industrial growth by strengthening the link between industry and core infrastructure.
- Creation of globally comparable infrastructure along a defined pathway, offering a competitive and business-friendly environment.

- Facilitation of economic agglomeration and industrial clustering, helping regions maximise their growth potential.
- Optimal utilisation of regional strengths through focused investments and planned industrial development.
- Development along major transport arteries, particularly rail trunk routes, ensuring strong connectivity for efficient movement of freight and the public.



### Importance

- **Integrated infrastructure strengthens industrial efficiency:** Multimodal transport networks, reliable utilities, and ICT-enabled services create a unified ecosystem that supports efficient industrial operations and the movement of goods.
- **Plug-and-play ecosystems accelerate business readiness:** Ready-to-use facilities, assured utilities, and streamlined approvals reduce setup time, helping industries begin operations quickly and competitively.
- **Sustainability initiatives ensure responsible growth:** Renewable energy adoption, waste recycling systems, and green building norms help industries expand while limiting environmental impact.

- **Skill development initiatives encourage regional employment:** Training programmes and partnerships with educational institutions build a skilled workforce, generating jobs and strengthening local economies.
- **Special Economic Zones attract investment and promote exports:** SEZs offer tax incentives and regulatory advantages that draw foreign investment and enhance India's position in global value chains.
- **Public-Private Partnerships improve development outcomes:** Cooperative models between government and industry ensure better planning, efficient resource use, and effective management.
- **Walk-to-work planning elevates quality of life and productivity:** Reduced commuting, lower pollution, pedestrian-friendly layouts, and green spaces support healthier lifestyles and more productive urban environments, making industrial cities attractive to investors and workers alike.
- He actively participated in the **Non-Cooperation Movement (1920–22)** launched by Mahatma Gandhi.
- When produced before a magistrate, he **declared his name as “Azad,” father’s name as “Swatantra,”** and residence as “Jail.” After being publicly flogged, he adopted the title Azad, meaning “Free,” as his permanent identity.
- After the **Chauri Chaura incident (1922)** and the withdrawal of the Non-Cooperation Movement, he shifted towards revolutionary activities.
- On 27 February 1931, Azad was surrounded by police at **Alfred Park in Allahabad (now Chandrashekhar Azad Park)**. After a gunfight in which he enabled his associate Sukhdev Raj to escape, he shot himself with his last bullet to avoid capture

### Key Contributions

- **Kakori Train Robbery (1925):** As a leader in the Hindustan Republican Association (HRA) with Ram Prasad Bismil, Azad helped rob a train to fund arms for independence. He escaped capture while others were jailed.
- **Lahore Assassination (1928):** Aided Bhagat Singh and Rajguru in killing British officer John Saunders, avenging Lala Lajpat Rai's death during a protest.
- **HSRA Formation:** He reorganised the Hindustan Republican Association under the new name of Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA) after the death of its founder Pandit Ram Prasad Bismil. He was the chief strategist of the HSRA.

Source: PIB

## HEXAGON ALLIANCE

### Context

- A new geopolitical grouping, the Hexagon Alliance, has been proposed by Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, with India at its centre.

### About

- The “Hexagon of Alliances” would include **Israel, India, Mediterranean partners such as Greece and Cyprus**, along with other unnamed Arab, African and Asian states.
- The framework is designed to operate across **three tracks:** economic cooperation, diplomatic alignment and security collaboration.
- For India, participation would reflect its expanding strategic footprint in the Mediterranean and West Asia, complementing initiatives like **India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**.

### Governments steps

- The Government of India is developing multiple Industrial Corridor Projects under the National Industrial Corridor Programme (NICDP), guided by the PM GatiShakti framework to ensure coordinated, multimodal connectivity for major economic zones.
- The National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation Limited (NICDC), previously known as Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor Development Corporation Limited (DMICDC), was incorporated in January 2008 for the development, coordination, and implementation of the National Industrial Corridor Development Programme (NICDP) by the Government of India.

Source :PIB

## NEWS IN SHORT

### CHANDRASHEKHAR AZAD

#### In News

- The Prime Minister paid tribute to the revolutionary **Chandrashekhar Azad** marking his Martyrdom Day.

#### About Chandrashekhar Azad

- Chandrashekhar Azad was a **great Indian freedom fighter** and he was born on July 23, 1906 in Badarka village of Unnao district in Uttar Pradesh.

- However, deeper alignment in such a bloc could complicate India's ties with Iran, a key energy and connectivity partner.

Source: Mint

## RAILTECH PORTAL AND E-RCT SYSTEM

### Context

- The Union Minister for Railways announced the **RailTech Policy** and the complete digitisation of the **Railway Claims Tribunal (RCT)** under Indian Railways' flagship "52 Reforms in 52 Weeks" initiative.

### Rail Tech Policy Reform

- The Rail Tech Policy aims to engage innovators, startups, industry and institutions to **promote innovation in Indian Railways**.
- The new policy simplifies the selection of innovators and introduces a dedicated "**Rail Tech Portal**" for innovation.
- **Key innovation areas include:**
  - ♦ AI-based Elephant Intrusion Detection System (EIDS),
  - ♦ AI-based fire detection system in coaches,
  - ♦ drone-based broken rail detection system,
  - ♦ rail stress monitoring system,
  - ♦ sensor-based load calculation device on parcel vans (VPUs) etc.

### E-RCT: Reform in disposal of 'Railway Claims Tribunal' Cases

- The E-RCT system will enable **end-to-end computerisation and digitisation** of the Railway Claims Tribunal.
- Earlier, claimants had to physically visit tribunal benches for filing and case tracking, causing delays, travel burdens, and jurisdictional confusion.
- It will **transform the filing, processing and adjudication of claims** by making the process faster, more transparent and accessible from anywhere in the country.

Source: PIB

## CHINA'S "ONE COUNTRY, TWO SYSTEMS" FRAMEWORK

### Context

- **China** has systematically tightened control over Hong Kong, especially after the **2020 National Security Law (NSL)**, reshaping its political and media landscape.

### About

- Hong Kong was handed over from the **United Kingdom to China in 1997** under the framework of "**one country, two systems**", enshrined in the Basic Law of Hong Kong. It guaranteed:
  - ♦ High degree of autonomy;
  - ♦ Independent judiciary;
  - ♦ Civil liberties (free press, assembly, speech);
  - ♦ Capitalist economic system.
  - ♦ **These were to remain unchanged until 2047.**
- In recent years, there has been a growing outcry from Hong Kong's pro-democracy civil society against **China's alleged attempts to erode the city's autonomy**.
- In June 2020, China imposed the **Hong Kong National Security Law**.
  - ♦ **The law criminalises:** Secession (breaking away from China), Subversion (undermining central authority), terrorism, which is using violence or intimidation against people; and collusion with foreign or external forces.
  - ♦ This fundamentally altered political participation, judicial independence and civil society space.
  - The NSL has effectively subordinated Hong Kong's distinct political identity to a **centralized Chinese national identity defined by the CCP**.

Source: TH

## MACAQUES

### In News

- A viral story from a Japanese zoo about an abandoned baby **Japanese macaque ("Punch")** highlighted the complex **social hierarchy and emotional dependence in macaque societies**.

### About Macaques

- Macaques are a genus of Old World monkeys belonging to the family **Cercopithecidae**.
- They are among the most widespread and diverse primate groups, with more than 20 species distributed mainly across Asia and parts of North Africa. They are highly adaptable and can survive in diverse ecological conditions.
- The **Japanese macaque, also known as the "Snow Monkey,"** is native to Japan and is famous for living in cold climates and bathing in hot springs.
- The **Rhesus macaque** is widely distributed in North India and Southeast Asia and is extensively used in medical and biomedical research.

- The **Lion-tailed macaque** is an endangered species **endemic to the Western Ghats of India**, recognized by its distinctive silver-white mane.
- The **Crested black macaque** is native to the **Indonesian island of Sulawesi** and is known for its dark crest and critically endangered status.

### Social Behaviour and Hierarchy

- Macaques are **highly gregarious animals**, living in troops with a strict dominance hierarchy.
- Female dominance rank is **typically matrilineal, meaning daughters inherit rank close to that of their mothers**. In some species, such as the Japanese macaque, the “youngest sister rule” operates, where the youngest daughter ranks higher than older sisters.
- Male rank is usually determined by **alliances, physical strength, and fighting ability**. Males may migrate between troops.

Source :IE

## GLOBAL MIND HEALTH 2025 REPORT

### Context

- The Global Mind Health 2025 Report, released by Sapien Labs, highlights a significant mental health crisis among young adults in India and reveals a sharp generational divide in mind health outcomes.

### About the Report

- Formerly known as the **Mental State of the World Report**, it is published under the **Global Mind Project**.
- The study assesses emotional, social, cognitive and functional capacities required to manage life, work and relationships, using the **Mind Health Quotient (MHQ)** as a composite indicator.
- The study identifies **four key drivers** behind declining youth mental health:
  - ◆ Weakening family bonds
  - ◆ Decline in spirituality
  - ◆ Early exposure to smartphones
  - ◆ High consumption of ultra-processed foods

### Key Findings

- **Global Trends:**
  - ◆ Young adults in economically developed countries show poorer mind health outcomes compared to those in less developed regions.

Countries such as **Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the UK and China** ranked lower, while several sub-Saharan African nations like **Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Tanzania** performed relatively better.

- ◆ Notably, **Finland** ranks high in happiness but not proportionately in mind health, suggesting that life satisfaction and mental resilience are distinct measures.
- **India’s Position:**
  - ◆ Age 18–34: Ranked 60th globally with an MHQ score of 33.
  - ◆ Age 55+: Ranked 49th globally with an MHQ score of 96.

Source: IE

## AVOIDANT/RESTRICTIVE FOOD INTAKE DISORDER

### Context

- **ARFID (Avoidant/ Restrictive Food Intake Disorder)** is a mental health disorder which may look similar to picky eating.

### About

- **ARFID** is a type of **eating disorder** that is being increasingly recognised in the **global arena as a growing but treatable disorder**.
- Avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder (ARFID) is a condition that causes you to limit the **amount and type of food you eat**. It isn’t the result of a distorted self-image or an attempt to lose body weight, which is common among other eating disorders.
- ARFID can cause you to:
  - ◆ Lose interest in eating.
  - ◆ Feel anxious about the consequences of eating, like choking on food or vomiting.
  - ◆ Avoid foods that have an unwanted color, taste, texture or smell.
- It is treatable with appropriate professional support of mental health professionals, doctors and nutritionists/dietitians.

Source: TH

