



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 09-02-2026

Mapping Perspective

1. Chabahar Port

Prelims Perspective

2. RBI Policy Rate
3. Avian-flu

Mains Perspective

4. Right to be Forgotten
5. Anthropic sends a message to Bengaluru

Chabahar Port

Syllabus: GS-2: International Relations.

Context:

Iran has backed the Chabahar port and cooperation with India.

Introduction

- **Chabahar Port** is a deep-sea port located on the **Makran coast** of **southeastern Iran**.
- It is **Iran's only oceanic port**, providing direct access to the **Indian Ocean**.
- Developed primarily with **Indian assistance**, it is a key pillar of **India's regional connectivity and strategic outreach**.

Location & Geographical Significance

- Situated in **Sistan-Baluchestan Province**, near the **Gulf of Oman**.
- Located **outside the Strait of Hormuz**, unlike Pakistan's Gwadar Port.
- Strategic advantage:
 - Reduces dependence on congested and geopolitically sensitive chokepoints.
 - Facilitates maritime trade without passing through Pakistani territory.



Historical Background

- **2003:** India–Iran agreement on port development.
- **2016:** Trilateral agreement between **India–Iran–Afghanistan** for transit and trade.
- **2018 onwards:** India operationalised parts of the port despite US sanctions on Iran (with waivers for humanitarian trade).
- **2024:** India and Iran signed a **10-year long-term contract** for operation of Shahid Beheshti Terminal by India.

Infrastructure & Components

- Two main terminals:
 - **Shahid Beheshti Terminal** (India-developed)
 - Shahid Kalantari Terminal
- Capacity:
 - Phase-wise expansion planned up to **82 million tonnes per annum**.
- Connectivity:
 - Road and rail links to **Zahedan** and onward to **Central Asia**.
 - Linked to **International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**.

Strategic Importance for India

(a) Geopolitical Significance

- Provides **access to Afghanistan and Central Asia**, bypassing Pakistan.
- Counterbalances China's influence at **Gwadar Port** under CPEC.
- Enhances India's role in **West Asian geopolitics**.

(b) Economic & Trade Significance

- Facilitates export of:
 - Indian wheat, rice, medicines, construction materials.
- Reduces freight cost and transit time to Central Asia and Russia.
- Strengthens India's participation in **Eurasian supply chains**.

(c) Security & Strategic Depth

- Presence in the **western Indian Ocean region**.
- Enhances maritime domain awareness.

- Supports India's **Act West Policy** and **SAGAR doctrine** (Security and Growth for All in the Region).

Chabahar and INSTC

- Chabahar is a **key node** in the **International North–South Transport Corridor**.
- Connects:
 - India → Iran → Caspian Sea → Russia → Europe.
- Reduces transport time from **~40 days to ~20 days** (Mumbai–Moscow).

Comparison: Chabahar vs Gwadar

Aspect	Chabahar	Gwadar
Country	Iran	Pakistan
External Partner	India	China
Location	Outside Strait of Hormuz	Near Strait of Hormuz
Strategic Aim	Regional connectivity	Strategic & military leverage
Beneficiary	India–Iran–Afghanistan–Central Asia	China–Pakistan (CPEC)

Challenges

- **US sanctions on Iran** causing investment and banking hurdles.
- Regional instability in **Iran–Pakistan–Afghanistan** region.
- Infrastructure bottlenecks in rail connectivity.
- Security concerns in Sistan–Baluchestan.

Recent Developments

- Long-term India–Iran agreement (10 years) for port operations.
- India investing in port equipment and logistics.
- Increasing use of Chabahar for **humanitarian aid to Afghanistan**.
- Greater alignment with **INSTC revival amid Red Sea disruptions**.

Way Forward

- Fast-track rail connectivity (Chabahar–Zahedan).
- Integrate port with India's **logistics and shipping ecosystem**.
- Diplomatic balancing between **Iran–US–West Asia**.

- Promote private sector participation.

Conclusion

- Chabahar Port is not merely a commercial project but a **strategic asset** for India.
- It enhances **connectivity, geopolitical leverage, and economic outreach**.
- Its success is crucial for India's ambitions in **Central Asia, Eurasia, and the Indian Ocean Region**.

RBI Policy Rate

Syllabus: GS-3: Indian Economy – Monetary Policy.

Context:

- The **Reserve Bank of India's** Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) **paused the repo rate at 5.25%**.
- Decision follows a **25 bps cut in December** and **cumulative 125 bps easing in 2025**.
- Policy stance **retained as neutral**, signalling flexibility amid uncertainty.

Key Decisions & Projections

- **Repo Rate:** Unchanged at **5.25%**
- **Policy Stance:** Neutral
- **GDP Growth (FY26):** 7.4% (up from 7.3%)
- **Retail Inflation (FY26):** 2.1% (from 2%)
- Indicates confidence in growth with **benign inflation conditions**.

Why RBI Chose to Pause Rates

- **Benign Inflation Outlook**
 - Headline CPI below tolerance band in Nov–Dec.
 - Underlying inflation pressures remain low.
- **Strong Growth Momentum**
 - Consumption-led growth; domestic demand resilient.
- **Policy Optionality**
 - Pause allows RBI to respond to evolving global and domestic risks.

Role of Union Budget FY26

As highlighted by RBI Governor **Sanjay Malhotra**:

- **Income tax cuts** → Higher disposable income
- **GST rate rationalisation** → Lower cost pressures
- **Transmission of earlier rate cuts** → Credit & consumption support
 - Strengthens near-term growth, reducing urgency for further rate cuts.

External Sector & Trade Agreements

Since December policy:

- India signed trade agreements with:
 - United States
 - European Union
 - Oman
 - New Zealand
- **Expected Impact:**
 - Boost exports and FDI
 - Cushion against global slowdown
 - Support medium- to long-term growth
- **Caveat:** RBI flagged geopolitical risks and external headwinds.

Consumption as Growth Driver

- **Private Consumption Growth (FY26): ~7%**
- Supported by:
 - Low inflation
 - Fiscal measures
 - Earlier monetary easing
- **Statistical Support:** Low GDP deflator amplified real growth in H1.

Inflation Outlook (Forward Looking)

- **Q1 FY27 CPI: 4.0%**
- **Q2 FY27 CPI: 4.2%** (slight upward revision)
- Revision mainly due to **higher precious metal prices** (60–70 bps impact).

- Core/underlying inflation remains contained.

Impact on Borrowers & Depositors

(a) Repo-linked Loans

- **EMIs likely unchanged**
- Greater certainty for home & personal loan borrowers.

(b) MCLR-linked Loans

- Possible changes due to:
 - Banks' funding costs
 - Liquidity conditions
 - Deposit mobilisation

(c) Deposit Rates

- Broadly stable in near term
- Changes only if liquidity tightens persistently.

Road Ahead: RBI's Assessment

- **Approach:** Cautious, wait-and-watch
- **Positives:**
 - Strong domestic demand
 - Fiscal–monetary alignment
 - Supportive global financial conditions
- **Risks:**
 - Geopolitical tensions
 - Volatile crude oil prices
 - Diverging global monetary policies

Significance

- Illustrates **counter-cyclical monetary policy**
- Shows **coordination between fiscal and monetary policy**
- Highlights RBI's focus on **growth–inflation balance** and **policy credibility**

Avian-flu

Syllabus: GS-3: Science and Technology – Diseases.

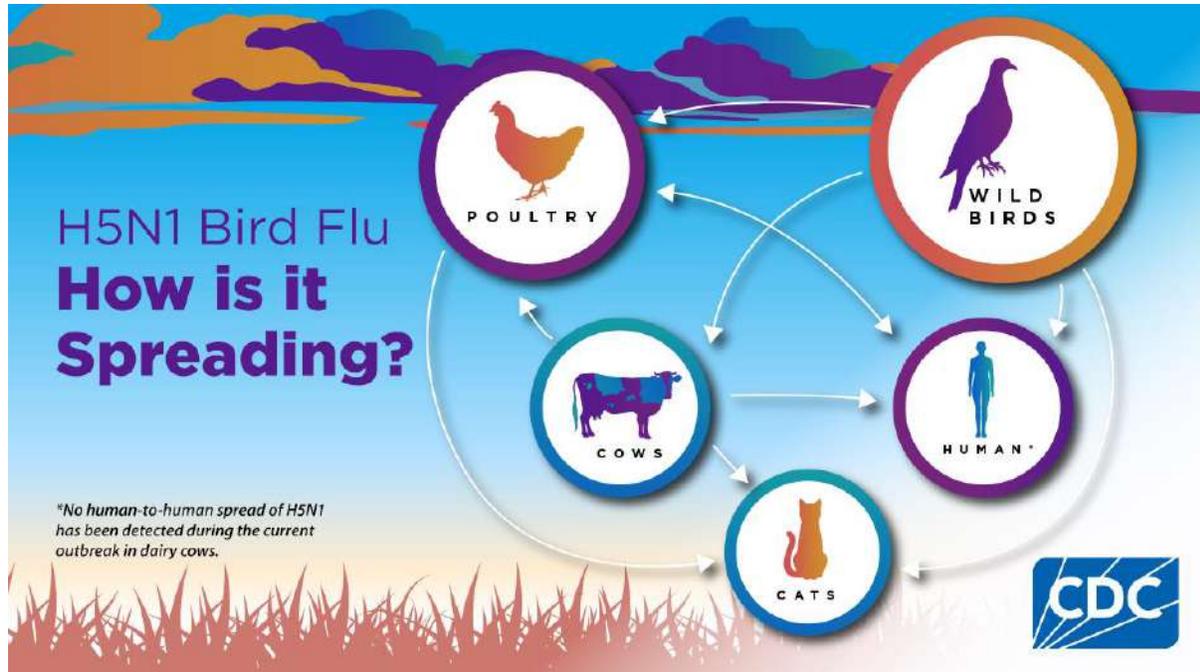
Context:

Bird flu resurfaces in Tamil Nadu after mass crow deaths in Chennai, triggering statewide surveillance.

- **Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) H5N1** detected among wild birds after mass crow deaths in **Chennai**.
- Between **29 Jan–4 Feb 2026**, about **1,000–1,500 crows** died in areas like Adyar, Velachery, Thiruvanmiyur and East Coast Road.
- Laboratory confirmation established **H5N1 circulation among wild birds**.
- Comes amid wider national concern:
 - **11 farm outbreaks (Dec 2025)** reported to WOA.
 - **Delhi Zoo closed (Sept 2025)** due to bird flu.

About Avian Influenza (H5N1)

- **Zoonotic viral disease** primarily affecting birds.
- **H5N1 strain:**
 - Highly pathogenic in poultry.
 - High mortality in infected birds.
- **Transmission**
 - Birds → birds: via droppings, secretions, contaminated water.
 - Birds → humans: **rare**, usually through **direct contact** with infected birds/carcasses.
- **Human-to-human transmission:** extremely limited.



Significance of Crow Deaths

- Crows are **sentinel species**:
 - Sudden mortality = **early warning signal** of viral circulation.
- Wild bird deaths often **precede poultry outbreaks**.
- Provides authorities a **critical intervention window** to prevent spillover.

Why Tamil Nadu Remains on High Alert

- Past pattern:
 - Fewer large poultry outbreaks compared to north/east India.
 - Alerts usually triggered by **wild birds or neighbouring states (Kerala)**.
- **High-risk zones**:
 - Border districts
 - Poultry transport corridors
 - **Namakkal poultry cluster** (major egg-producing hub).
- **Ecological-economic connectivity**:
 - Shared wetlands and flyways.
 - Cross-border poultry trade.
 - Wildlife movement ignores administrative boundaries.

Role of Migratory Birds

- Migratory waterfowl are **natural reservoirs** of avian influenza viruses.
- **Chennai–Pulicat–Cauvery delta belt** lies along international flyways.
- Possible pathway:
 - Migratory birds → local wild birds → domestic poultry.
- Urban wetlands and reservoirs increase **human–bird–poultry interface**.

Risks of Poultry Spillover

- Tamil Nadu has **dense commercial poultry production**.
- Poultry outbreak implications:
 - Mass culling
 - Supply chain disruption
 - Severe livelihood losses
 - Trade restrictions
- Current surveillance aims to **prevent this spillover stage**.

Institutional & One Health Approach

- **Integrated action** by:
 - Veterinary services
 - Public health departments
 - Municipal authorities
- Reflects **One Health framework**:
 - Human health
 - Animal health
 - Environmental health interconnected.

Right to be Forgotten

Syllabus: GS-2: Fundamental Rights and Judiciary.

Context:

In February 2026, the Supreme Court of India stayed a Delhi High Court judgment that had ordered the removal of online news reports. The SC will now examine the extent to which

the "Right to be Forgotten" applies to news archives, especially after an accused has been discharged.

Key Concept: Right to Be Forgotten (RTBF)

- **Definition:** The right to have publicly available personal information removed from internet searches and databases once it is no longer necessary or relevant.
- **Legal Basis in India: * Article 21:** Interpreted by courts as a facet of the **Right to Privacy** (confirmed in the *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India, 2017* judgment).
 - **Right to Dignity:** If past records (like criminal charges) continue to haunt a person after they are cleared, it is argued to infringe on their right to live with dignity.
- **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023:** While not explicitly named "Right to be Forgotten," the Act provides for the **Right to Erasure** of personal data that is no longer necessary for the purpose for which it was processed.



The Present Legal Dispute

- **The Case:** A banker sought the removal/de-indexing of news reports regarding a money laundering investigation after he was officially discharged by the court.
- **Delhi High Court Stance:** Ruled in favor of the banker, stating that "perpetual digital availability" of such records causes enduring reputational harm. It held that the media's right to expression is delimited by an individual's right to reputation under Article 21.
- **Supreme Court Intervention:** Stayed the HC order. The SC will now determine if RTBF can "erase" matters of public record and factual history.

Arguments: Individual Privacy vs. Public Interest

Arguments for RTBF (Individual Perspective)	Arguments Against/Press Freedom (Public Perspective)
Reputational Harm: Online records are permanent; "digital stigma" follows a person even after acquittal/discharge.	Freedom of Speech (Art 19): Forcing media to delete accurate reports is a form of censorship and creates a "chilling effect."
Right to Rehabilitation: A person should not be forever defined by their past legal troubles if cleared by the law.	Integrity of History: Erasure of public records distorts the "historical record" and creates a false narrative of the past.
Data Relevancy: Once a case is closed, the public "need to know" decreases compared to the individual's "right to privacy."	Public Interest: Information about financial investigations or public figures is often in the public interest, regardless of the legal outcome.

Major Concerns & Challenges

- **Chilling Effect:** If news outlets are forced to delete reports every time an accused is acquitted, they may hesitate to report on ongoing investigations.
- **Erasure of Truth:** Factual accuracy at the time of reporting vs. subsequent legal outcomes. (In this case, the reports were accurate when published and even included updates).
- **De-indexing vs. Deletion:** Courts often struggle between ordering a search engine to "de-index" (hide from search results) vs. ordering the news site to "delete" the article entirely.

Global Precedents

- **European Union (GDPR):** Article 17 of the GDPR explicitly provides the Right to Erasure (RTBF), subject to certain conditions like public interest and scientific/historical research.
- **Google Spain Case (2014):** The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) first recognized RTBF, ruling that search engines must remove links to "inadequate, irrelevant or excessive" personal data upon request.

Way Forward

- **Balancing Act:** There is a need for a "Proportionality Test"—balancing the individual's right to privacy against the collective right to information.
- **Legislative Clarity:** The judiciary often fills the vacuum left by the legislature. A clear statutory framework is needed to define "public interest" exceptions to RTBF.
- **Administrative Redress:** Instead of full deletion, "updating" records or "de-indexing" may be more balanced solutions than the complete erasure of history.

Practice Question

Q. "The Right to be Forgotten is a double-edged sword that balances personal dignity against the freedom of the press and the integrity of history. Discuss in the light of recent judicial interventions in India." (15 Marks, 250 Words)

Anthropic sends a message to Bengaluru

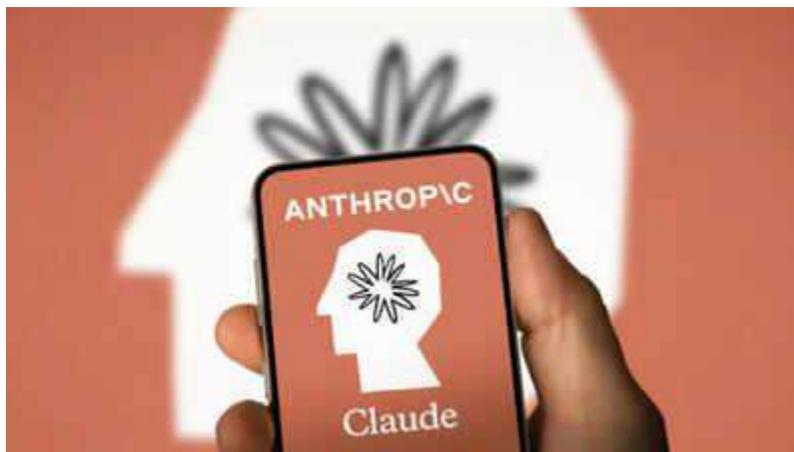
Syllabus: GS-3: Indian Economy – IT industry.

Context:

The release of **11 plugins** by the US-based AI startup **Anthropic** for its chatbot **Claude** has triggered a "SaaSocalypse," signaling a shift from AI as a "tool" to AI as an "autonomous agent."

The Paradigm Shift: From "Assistant" to "Agent"

- **Traditional View:** AI was seen as a *handmaiden*—an assistant to automate repetitive tasks while humans held the levers of control (e.g., code suggestions).
- **New Reality:** AI is becoming a *productive agent*. Anthropic's plugins can autonomously plan workflows, analyze datasets, interpret regulations, and generate business logic.
- **Significance:** It renders the "software-centered" approach obsolete. AI no longer just suggests; it **executes** end-to-end tasks.



Implications for the Indian IT Sector

India's IT model (Bengaluru-centric) has historically relied on **skilled human capital** and **cost efficiency**. This breakthrough challenges that model in several ways:

- **Threat to Entry-Level Jobs:** Tasks handled by large teams of junior analysts and developers (routine coding, maintenance, data cleaning) can now be performed by AI agents.
- **Consultancy & Legal Services:** Plugins capable of reviewing legal documents, flagging risks, and tracking compliance threaten the traditional billing models of law and consultancy firms.
- **Market Volatility:** The Nifty IT index saw its steepest fall since COVID-19 (Feb 2026), reflecting investor fear that Indian firms' massive investments in training staff for "traditional AI" might be undermined.

Economic & Policy Challenges

- **Job Security vs. Innovation:** The **Economic Survey (2025-26)** highlighted the risk of "hollowing out" India's core value proposition if adaptation lags.
- **The Skilling Challenge:** India needs to move from "basic AI literacy" to "AI-native" high-value roles. Policymakers and universities must redesign curricula to focus on high-trust advisory roles and complex transformation projects.
- **Dependency Risks:** Concentration of AI compute and data in the hands of a few global firms (like Anthropic, OpenAI) raises concerns about **technological sovereignty** and market power.

Anthropic's India Strategy (The "Bengaluru Message")

- **Office Expansion:** Anthropic plans to open its **second Asia-Pacific office in Bengaluru** (early 2026) to tap into the talent density.
- **Localization:** Focus on **Indic languages** (Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, etc.) and sectors like healthcare, education, and agriculture.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Potential collaborations with large Indian enterprises (e.g., Reliance/Jio) to democratize AI access.

Key Terminologies

- **SaaSocalypse:** The potential collapse of "Software as a Service" models due to autonomous AI.
- **Autonomous Economic Actor:** AI that makes decisions and executes tasks without constant human oversight.
- **Comparative Advantage:** India's shift from "low-cost labor" to needing a "high-value innovation" edge.
- **Responsible Governance:** The need for frameworks to ensure AI social impact and ethical use.

Way Forward for India

- **Move up the Value Chain:** Focus on domain-specific expertise that AI cannot replicate (e.g., complex architecture, ethical AI oversight).
- **Infrastructure Investment:** Bolstering domestic GPU capacity and data centers to reduce reliance on foreign platforms.
- **Proactive Policy:** Implementing the **National Program on AI** with a focus on job transition and social impact in rural sectors.

Practice Qs:

Q. "The transition of Artificial Intelligence from a 'digital assistant' to an 'autonomous economic agent' poses a fundamental challenge to India's traditional IT services model. Discuss. Suggest measures to ensure that India remains a global leader in the evolving AI landscape." (250 words, 15 Marks)