



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 14-02-2026

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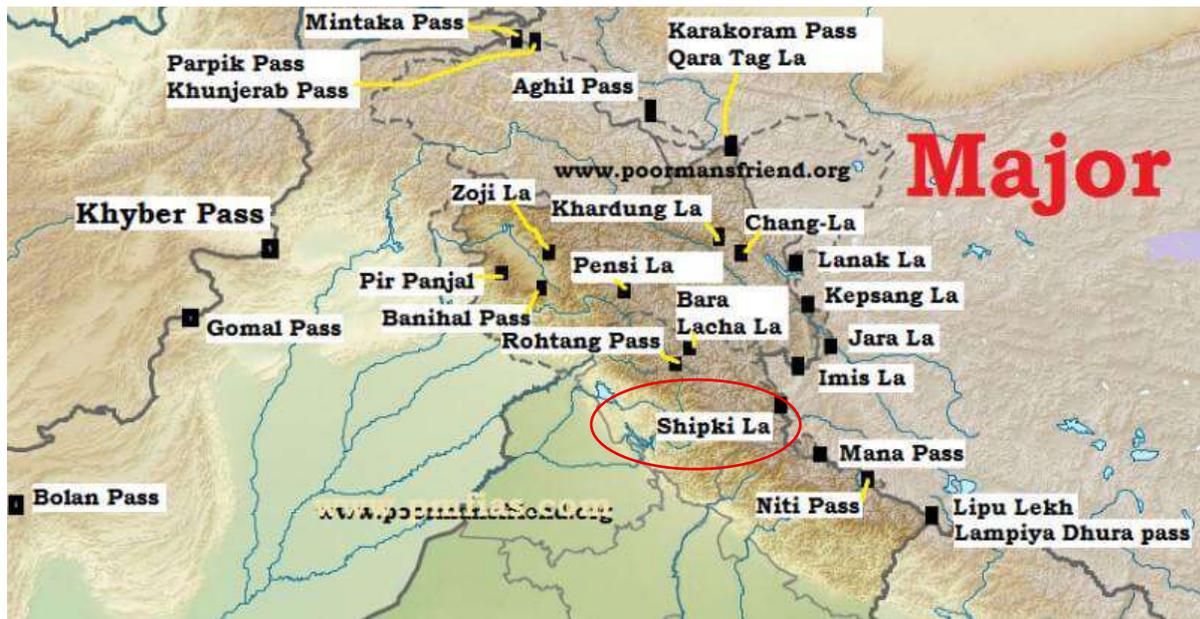
Shipki La Pass

Syllabus: Prelims Bits

Context:

- India is engaging with China to **explore opening an additional route for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra**, including the possibility of using **Shipki La Pass**.
- The information was **recently shared by the Government in Parliament**.

About Shipki La Pass



Location & Geography

- **Shipki La Pass** is a **high mountain pass** on the **India–China border**.
- Located in **Kinnaur** district of **Himachal Pradesh**.
- Lies very close to **Khab village** (confluence area of rivers).
- Altitude: **~3,930 metres**, making it **one of the highest motorable passes** in India.

Strategic & Historical Importance

- Functions as a **boundary post** on the **India–China frontier**.
- Declared a **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** post after 1962.
- Later formally named **Shipki La** by the **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)**.
- **Ancient offshoot of the Silk Route**, historically used for trans-Himalayan trade.
- Old name: **Pema La**

- Meaning: “*Shared Gate*” or “*Shared Pass*”.

Hydrology

- The **Sutlej River** enters India through this pass.
- In Tibet, the river is known as **Langqen Zangbo**.
- Originates in the **Tibet Autonomous Region**.

Trade & Connectivity

- Acts as **India’s third frontier post** for **trade and commerce with China**.
- Other frontier passes:
 - **Lipulekh Pass** – Uttarakhand
 - **Nathu La Pass** – Sikkim

Current Relevance

- Being examined as a **potential new route** for the **Kailash Mansarovar Yatra**.
- Opening the pass could:
 - Improve **religious tourism**
 - Enhance **border area development**
 - Strengthen **people-to-people contacts** under controlled conditions

Thangkui hui and Kombai Dog Breeds

Syllabus: Prelims Bits.

Context:

- **Assam Rifles** has intensified **indigenisation** of its canine unit in line with **Atmanirbhar Bharat**.
- Initiative follows a **directive of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** to induct **Indian dog breeds** into Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).

Key Indigenous Breeds Inducted

Tangkhul Hui

- **Region:** Ukhrul district, **Manipur**
- **Traditional use:** Hunting
- **Induction:** 6 dogs inducted in **2022** (pilot project)

- **Operational role:** Narcotics detection
- **Advantages:** High disease resistance, adaptability to local terrain



Kombai

- **Region:** Tamil Nadu
- **Status:** To be inducted from **April**
- **Induction plan:**
 - Initial phase: **2 males + 8 females**
 - First **3 years** focused on breeding
- **Target:** Full induction by **March 2027**



Current Canine Composition

- **Existing breeds:**
 - Labrador Retriever
 - German Shepherd
 - Belgian Malinois
 - Tangkhul Hui
- **Authorised strength:** 344 dogs
- **Present strength:**
 - Total dogs: **253 deployed**
 - At ARDTC: **104 dogs**
- **Deployment areas:** Northeast India & Jammu & Kashmir

Assam Rifles Dog Training Centre (ARDTC)

- **Location:** Jorhat district, Assam
- **Only dog training facility** of Assam Rifles
- **Handlers:**
 - Over **1,200 trained handlers**
 - **9-10 personnel per dog** for care & maintenance

Training Courses

For Personnel

- 23-week **Basic Dog Handler Course**
- 4-week **Dog First Aid Course**
- 2-week **Refresher Course**

For Dogs

- 12-week **Basic Obedience Course**
- 2-week **Refresher Course**
- 36-week **Specialised Courses:**
 - Tracking
 - Explosive Detection
 - Narcotics Detection

- Advanced training:
 - Selected handlers sent to **CRPF Dog Breeding & Training School**
 - Veterinary training at **Remount Veterinary Corps Centre**

Operational Significance

- Canine unit played a **crucial role in narcotics seizure (Sept 2025)** involving drugs trafficked from **Myanmar**.
- Enhances **border management, counter-narcotics, and internal security**.

Future Roadmap

- **Dual-purpose training:**
 - Assault + Tracking
 - Assault + Explosive Detection
- Possible induction of **Search & Rescue dogs** for disaster response.

Industrial Relations Code Bill

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

Context:

- **Lok Sabha passed the *Industrial Relations Code (Amendment) Bill, 2026* on 12 February 2026.**
- Objective: **Ensure legal clarity** and avoid interpretational disputes regarding repealed labour laws.
- Amendment linked to the **Industrial Relations Code (IRC), 2020**.

Need for the Amendment

- IRC, 2020 had already **repealed:**
 - Trade Unions Act, 1926
 - Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946
 - Industrial Disputes Act, 1947
- Repeal occurred via **Section 104 (Savings Clause)** of the IRC.
- However, concerns arose that:
 - Repeal power might be **misconstrued as delegated to the executive**.

- Amendment aims to:
 - Remove **ambiguity**
 - Prevent **future legal complications**
 - Reinforce that repeal occurred **by operation of law**, not executive discretion.

Key Legal Provision Involved

- **Section 104 of Industrial Relations Code, 2020**
 - Ensures:
 - Continuity of legal actions
 - Validity of past decisions
 - Legal certainty after repeal
- **February 2026 Notification**
 - Reaffirmed that repeal was statutory, not administrative.

Government's Stand (Labour Minister's Statement)

- Emphasised that **four Labour Codes** (implemented ~3 months ago) ensure:
 - Guarantee of minimum wages
 - Mandatory appointment letters
 - Equal wages for same work irrespective of gender
- Stated that labour reforms aim at **simplicity, transparency, and worker protection**.

Significance of the Amendment

- Strengthens **rule of law** in labour governance
- Prevents:
 - Judicial challenges on technical grounds
 - Confusion over legislative competence
- Enhances **ease of compliance** for industries
- Ensures **continuity and stability** in industrial relations framework

Substantive Motion

Syllabus: GS-2: Indian Polity – Parliament – Rules and Procedures.

Context:

- A BJP MP has moved a **notice for a substantive motion** in the **Lok Sabha** against **Rahul Gandhi**, who currently holds the **constitutional position** of **Leader of Opposition**.
- This motion seeks **serious consequences**, including:
 - Removal of Rahul Gandhi’s Lok Sabha membership.
 - Preventing him from contesting elections in the near future.
- This marks a clear escalation from earlier actions like:
 - **Privilege motion** (February 2025).
 - Demand to expunge certain remarks from parliamentary records.



What Exactly Is a Substantive Motion?

- A **substantive motion** is a **standalone proposal** placed before Parliament.
- It asks the House to take a **clear, final, and binding decision** on a specific issue.
- It is not linked to any other debate, bill, or discussion.

In essence, it forces Parliament to **directly confront an issue and decide on it**, rather than merely discuss it.

Key Features

- **Independent in nature** – complete in itself.

- Requires **prior approval of the Speaker**.
- If admitted:
 - It can be **debated**.
 - It can be **voted upon**.
 - It may even be sent to a **special committee** for examination.
- Once adopted, it reflects the **formal will of the House**.

Why Is the Speaker So Important Here?

- Under parliamentary rules, the **Speaker has wide discretionary powers**.
- The current Speaker, **Om Birla**, can:
 - Admit the motion.
 - Reject it outright.
 - Decide the manner in which it will be taken up.
- Courts traditionally **do not interfere** in such internal parliamentary procedures, making the Speaker's role crucial.

How Is This Different from a Privilege Motion?

Aspect	Substantive Motion	Privilege Motion
Nature	Policy / decision-oriented	Allegation-based
Scope	Very wide	Limited to breach of privilege
Outcome	Binding decision of House	Warning, reprimand, or punishment
Frequency	Rare	Relatively common
Political Impact	Very high	Moderate

This is why the current move is seen as **institutionally serious**, not merely political posturing.

What Are the Allegations?

- The BJP argues that Rahul Gandhi's:
 - Remarks on the **armed forces**,
 - **Banking and corporate sectors**,
 - And **constitutional authorities** have crossed the boundary of legitimate political criticism.

- According to them, such statements:
 - Damage the credibility of national institutions.
 - Undermine the dignity of Parliament.

Why Is Congress Calling It Political Targeting?

- Congress maintains that:
 - Parliamentary speech enjoys **special protection**.
 - Criticism of the government is a **core function of the Opposition**.
- They argue that:
 - Using a substantive motion against the Leader of Opposition risks **chilling dissent**.
 - It sets a precedent where procedure is used to **discipline political opponents**.

Why Does This Matter for Indian Democracy?

(a) Shift from Politics to Procedure

- The conflict has moved:
 - From speeches and protests → **rule-based parliamentary mechanisms**.
- This shows increasing use of **procedural tools as political weapons**.

(b) Constitutional Balance

- Raises questions about:
 - Limits of free speech inside Parliament.
 - Neutrality of the Speaker.
 - Protection available to Opposition leaders.

(c) Precedent Value

- Using a substantive motion against a sitting Leader of Opposition is **extremely uncommon**.
- Future governments and oppositions may rely on this precedent.

What Happens Next?

- Everything depends on the Speaker's decision:
 - **If rejected** → matter ends procedurally.
 - **If admitted** → debate, voting, or committee scrutiny becomes unavoidable.

- Until then, the motion remains a **notice**, not an action.

Conclusion

The episode illustrates how **parliamentary rules are not merely technical instruments but powerful political tools**, capable of redefining the boundaries between accountability, dissent, and institutional authority in a constitutional democracy.

Practice Qs:

Q. What is a substantive motion in the Indian Parliament? Examine its significance in the context of recent parliamentary confrontations between the government and the opposition. (15 marks, 250 words)

Erosion of Multilateralism

Syllabus: GS-2: International Relations – Multilateralism

Context:

- **Institutional Decay:** The United Nations (UN) and the UN Security Council (UNSC) are increasingly viewed as ineffective in maintaining international peace and resolving geopolitical conflicts (e.g., Gaza, Ukraine).
- **Weaponization of Law:** India has flagged that international rule of law is being "weaponized" to interfere in state sovereignty and internal affairs.
- **Rise of Parallel Frameworks:** Diplomacy is shifting from universal membership bodies (like the UN) to "parallel plurilateral frameworks" and ad-hoc coalitions involving private sector actors.
- **The "Two-Pole" Risk:** A growing trend toward a bipolar world centered on the U.S. and China, which threatens the stability of a truly multipolar order.



India's Strategic Response: "Economic Diplomacy First"

In response to the breakdown of traditional multilateral institutions, India is aggressively pursuing bilateral and plurilateral trade deals to secure its national interest.

➤ **India-EU Free Trade Agreement (2026):**

- **Scale:** Billed as the "Mother of all Deals," covering 25% of global GDP and 1/3rd of global trade.
- **Focus:** High-tech cooperation in semiconductors, biotech, and green energy (Euratom agreement).
- **Strategic Balancing:** Used to counter-balance the pressure from a "polarizing" global order and ensure India remains a central node in global supply chains.

➤ **India-U.S. Interim Trade Deal (2026):**

- **Outcome:** Reduction of U.S. tariffs on "Made in India" products to 18% (down from 25%-50% penalties).
- **Geopolitical Linkage:** The deal is closely tied to India's diversification away from Russian oil, though India officially maintains that energy sourcing is based on "objective market conditions."
- **Framework:** Moves toward a \$500 billion bilateral trade target by 2030.

Key Pillars of the "Reframed" Policy

- **Pragmatic Multipolarity:** Moving away from "arcane constructs" of the past toward "networked, inclusive multipolarity" through partnerships in trade and technology.
- **National Interest Supremacy:** A shift toward "issue-based alignments" rather than fixed ideological blocs. India has explicitly stated it will not do deals just to meet deadlines (e.g., the breakdown and eventual revival of U.S. talks).
- **Strategic Autonomy 2.0:** Balancing ties with the U.S. (technology and trade) while maintaining energy security and navigating relations with the EU and Global South (e.g., Chabahar Port commitments in Iran).

Major Challenges & Criticisms

- **Domestic Constraints:** Concerns regarding the impact of FTAs on the agricultural sector (farmers' interests) and MSMEs.
- **Energy Security vs. Diplomatic Pressure:** Navigating U.S. sanctions and executive orders regarding Russian oil imports while maintaining domestic price stability.
- **The "Trump Factor":** Dealing with unpredictable "transactional diplomacy," where trade concessions are often linked to specific geopolitical compliance (e.g., energy purchases).

- **Regional Instability:** Managing the fallout of political shifts in the neighborhood (e.g., the 2026 Bangladesh elections and subsequent trade concessions by the U.S. to Dhaka).

Way Forward / Conclusion for Mains

India must continue to champion "**Reformed Multilateralism**" while simultaneously building a "dense network of relations" through trade and technology. The goal is to ensure that global governance structures evolve to reflect **contemporary realities** (demographics and power dynamics) rather than remaining "cast in stone" institutions of the post-WWII era.