

February 27, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have agreed to finalise a mutually beneficial Free Trade Agreement between India and Israel at the earliest.

(i) They also decided to elevate the bilateral relationship to the status of a Special Strategic Partnership.

(ii) Amid the ongoing tensions in the Middle East due to the US–Iran conflict, Prime Minister Modi, who is on a two-day state visit to Israel, addressed the country's Parliament.

(iii) He held bilateral talks with Prime Minister Netanyahu in Jerusalem. The two leaders discussed in detail the further enhancement of bilateral relations in various fields including defence, trade, investment, technology, agriculture, education, innovation, space and nuclear energy, as well as various regional and international issues, including the US–Iran conflict.

(iv) India–Middle East–Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) and cooperation under the India–Israel–UAE–US (I2U2) framework were also discussed.

(v) 17 agreements signed

- 17 agreements and preliminary agreements were signed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in various areas including mineral exploration, trade, investment, education, agriculture, energy, manufacturing, artificial intelligence (AI) technology, digital exchange, culture, maritime heritage, etc. through advanced technologies.
- An important announcement was also made to reserve 50,000 jobs for Indians in Israel in the next 5 years.

(vi) 2nd round of talks in May

- The second round of talks on the India–Israel Free Trade Agreement will be held in Israel in May, the Union Commerce Ministry said. The first round of talks was held in Delhi for 4 days from Feb. 23 to Feb. 26.
- As of 2024–25, the bilateral trade value was \$3.62 billion (Rs. 33,000 crore). Exports from India were \$2.14 billion and imports were \$1.48 billion. These have seen a decline of 52 percent and 26 percent respectively compared to the previous year.
- Israel's main exports include pearls, precious stones, petroleum products, textiles, agricultural products, etc., and its main imports include chemicals, minerals and fertilizers, machinery, electrical equipment, and defense equipment. India is Israel's second largest trading partner in Asia.

2. Last year, 7,667 people died and many went missing while trying to migrate to various countries around the world, according to the UN's International Organization for Migration (IOM).

(i) As legal migration opportunities have dwindled, people are falling prey to human smuggling gangs and making such dangerous journeys. In particular, there have been many deaths along dangerous sea routes, including the Mediterranean.

(ii) While the number of deaths in 2024 was 9,200, it has decreased to 7,667 in 2025.

(iii) However, it has been pointed out that this decrease is not due to progress, but is due to the fact that rescue operations and data collection have been hampered due to reduced funding from countries including the United States.

3. The Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal held talks in New Delhi with US Secretary of Commerce and Industry Howard Ludwig, who is in India, as the India-US interim trade agreement negotiations were postponed following the US Supreme Court ruling.

(i) The US Supreme Court ruled on February 20 that US President Trump's aggressive retaliatory tariffs on goods imported from 60 countries, including India, were invalid. This was a major setback for the Trump administration.

(ii) In violation of this verdict, Trump imposed a new uniform 10 percent reciprocal tax on goods imported from India and other countries. In this regard, the White House, the US President's Office, released a proclamation signed by Trump.

(iii) In this situation, as the country's economic decline continues due to the Supreme Court's ruling on taxation, the 10 percent reciprocal tax on countries around the world will be increased to 15 percent. Thus, the US administration will release details of the new taxes raised on countries around the world in the next few months, Trump announced on Saturday (Feb. 21).

(iv) Due to the US's instability on the tariff issue, India postponed talks to finalize the terms of an Interim Trade Agreement between the two countries, which were scheduled to be held in Washington, D.C., on Monday (February 23).

4. The Supreme Court has issued notice to the Central Government and the Election Commission of India to respond to a petition seeking to impose restrictions on the expenditure incurred by parties during elections.

(i) In this regard, the Centre for Public Interest Litigation and Common Cause, a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) filed a petition in the Supreme Court. It stated as follows:

- There is no ceiling on the expenditure incurred by a candidate during an election.
- Similarly, Section 77(1), Explanation 1(A) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, which exempts the travel expenses of celebrity speakers engaged in election campaigns from being included in the candidate's expenses, violates Articles 14 and 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. Therefore, this explanation should be repealed. It was stated that setting a ceiling on election expenses only for a candidate and exempting political parties from it would slowly undermine the electoral process.

(ii) The petition was heard by a bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Jayamalya Bagchi and Vipul M. Panch Choli. The bench issued notice to the Central Government and the Election Commission of India to respond to the petition by April 27.

5. The Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney will arrive in India on a 4-day official visit.

(i) During this visit, he will hold bilateral talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Officials said that the two leaders will formulate an action plan to improve bilateral relations.

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(ii) Prime Minister Modi, who participated in the G7 summit held in Canada last year, discussed in detail with Mark Carney the restructuring of bilateral relations.

(iii) In this context, Mark Carney will arrive in India on a 4-day official visit. He will first arrive in Mumbai, Maharashtra, and participate in various industry events. He will interact with industry leaders and experts from both countries.

(iv) The two Prime Ministers will review the progress made so far in the India-Canada Strategic Partnership. They will discuss strengthening cooperation in various sectors including trade, investment, energy, key minerals, agriculture, education, research, innovation, people-to-people contacts, and regional and international issues of mutual interest.

(v) The two will participate in the India-Canada Corporate CEO Meeting in Delhi, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs said.

6. Visit of French President Emmanuel Macron to India and the deepening ties between the two nations.

(i) Nature of the Strategic Partnership

- The relationship between India and France has transitioned from a standard strategic partnership to a "Special Global Strategic Partnership".
- While India maintains strategic partnerships with over 30 countries, the bond with France holds a primary position because it remains resilient against international pressures and diplomatic fluctuations.
- Both nations share a synchronized outlook on critical global issues, including defense, space research, climate change, and advanced technology.

(ii) Historical Reliability and Diplomatic Support

- Over the last 25 years, France has effectively replaced Russia as India's most reliable and trusted international partner.
- After India conducted nuclear tests in 1998, when the global community imposed economic sanctions, France was the only major power to maintain its friendship and refuse to join the sanctions.
- UN Security Council Support: France has consistently used its "Veto" power at the United Nations to block attempts by China to raise the Kashmir issue.
- Unlike the relationship with Russia, which is currently strained by the Ukraine war and Russia's proximity to China, or the relationship with the US, which is often affected by internal political interference, the India-France tie has remained immune to changes in Government or global alliances.

(iii) Defense and Economic Cooperation

- Defense cooperation is the fundamental pillar of the relationship; France is now India's second-largest supplier of military equipment.
- The Rafale Deal: The acquisition of Rafale fighter jets is a highlight of this tie, moving beyond a "buyer-seller" dynamic to a "co-production" model where many spare parts are manufactured within India.
- A total of 21 agreements have been signed to strengthen cooperation in high technology, defense,

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and the extraction of critical minerals.

- Currently, more than 700 French companies operate in India, while approximately 150 Indian companies have established industrial plants in France.

(iv) Leadership and Personal Diplomacy

- There is a deep personal understanding and friendship between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Emmanuel Macron.
- Since Macron took office in 2017, the two leaders have met more than 20 times through bilateral visits and international summits.

(v) Strategic Significance of the Visit

- Macron's visit is viewed as an extension of India's efforts to secure free trade agreements with the European Union and the United Kingdom.
- Macron's fourth state visit to India has successfully inaugurated a new chapter in global strategic cooperation.

7. Scientific contributions of two eminent Indian scientists, Dr. K.S. Krishnan and Dr. G.N. Ramachandran, both of whom were protégés of Nobel laureate Sir C.V. Raman.

(i) Dr. K.S. Krishnan (1898–1961)

- Born in 1898 in Watrap (near Srivilliputhur), he completed his early schooling there in Watrap before earning a Bachelor's degree in Physics in Chennai.
- Collaboration on the Raman Effect: Moving to Kolkata for higher studies, he joined Sir C.V. Raman's research team. Together, they published 16 research papers.
- Discovery of the Raman Effect: In February 1928, they proved the phenomenon of the "Scattering of Light," which became known as the Raman Effect. While Krishnan was a co-discoverer, only Raman's name appeared on the final paper sent to the journal Nature.
- Despite the Nobel Prize going solely to Raman, Krishnan selflessly continued his work, becoming a pioneer in Crystal Magnetism.
- He served as a professor at Dhaka University (1929) and Allahabad University (1942). In 1950, he became the founder-director of the National Physical Laboratory (NPL) in New Delhi.
- He was knighted by the British Government in 1946 and was a Fellow of the Royal Society. He was also a scholar of Tamil literature, delivering lectures on scientific elements in Kamba Ramayanam.
- He passed away on June 14, 1961, immediately after completing a physics research paper. To honor him, Madras University awards the "Dr. K.S. Krishnan Medal" to top students in M.A. Tamil Literature.

(ii) Dr. G.N. Ramachandran (1922–2001)

- Born on October 8, 1922, in Thiruvananthapuram, he completed his doctorate under Sir C.V. Raman in Bengaluru in 1944. He later earned another PhD from Cambridge University in 1949.
- Discovery of the "Triple Helix": Raman encouraged him to research the structure of collagen (a protein in skin). While global scientists proposed single or double helix structures, Ramachandran discovered the "Triple Helix" (a coil within a coil) structure.
- His work provided a permanent foundation for protein studies through the Ramachandran Plot (Phi/Psi angles), which is still fundamental in molecular biology.
- His research laid the groundwork for modern medical technologies like CT and MRI scans. While at

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the University of Chicago (1970), he and A.V. Lakshminarayanan developed the first algorithms for 3D medical imaging.

- He served as the Head of the Physics Department at Madras University from 1952 to 1970.
- He earned 9 Fellowships and 12 prestigious awards during his career. He suffered from Parkinson's disease later in life and passed away on April 7, 2001, in Chennai.

(iii) Comparative Legacy

- While Sir C.V. Raman received the Nobel Prize, both of his students made discoveries—Crystal Magnetism/Raman Effect (Krishnan) and the Triple Helix/Ramachandran Plot (Ramachandran)—that were equally worthy of the honor.
- In recognition of Ramachandran's work, a seminar hall at the Central Leather Research Institute (CLRI) in Chennai is named "Triple Helix".

