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# Current Affairs Today – February 12, 2026

12 February 2026

**SUBJECTS COVERED****POLITY****ECONOMY****SCIENCE & TECH****IR****ENVIRONMENT****HISTORY & CULTURE****REPORTS & SCHEMES****CURATED & WRITTEN BY****Bharat Choudhary**

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# Current Affairs Today — February 12, 2026

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## WHY IN NEWS

Key developments on February 12, 2026 include the MHA issuing new national anthem protocol guidelines, the IT Amendment Rules 2026 on deepfakes taking effect, renewed scrutiny of India's aviation duopoly, Stanford researchers mapping mantle earthquakes under the Himalayas, and Tamil Brahmi inscriptions confirmed in Egypt's Valley of the Kings.

## MHA ISSUES GUIDELINES ON VANDE MATARAM AND JANA GANA MANA PROTOCOL

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued a fresh advisory clarifying the protocol for singing/playing **Jana Gana Mana** (national anthem) and **Vande Mataram** (national song) at official and public functions.

### Key points:

**Jana Gana Mana** is India's national anthem — adopted by the Constituent Assembly on **January 24, 1950**; playing time: **52 seconds**

**Vande Mataram** is the national song — originally composed by **Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay** in *Anandamath* (1882); first sung at the **1896 Indian National Congress session**

Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, **1971** — governs misuse/disrespect of national anthem and flag

MHA reiterated that the full version of the national anthem (not truncated) must be played at all official government functions

The advisory follows incidents of incorrect renditions at public events

## UPSC RELEVANCE

Jana Gana Mana (adopted Jan 24, 1950), Vande Mataram (Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Anandamath 1882, first sung INC 1896), Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act 1971.

## MAINS GS-2:

Symbolic national identity; MHA administrative directives; role of national symbols in civic life.

## IT AMENDMENT RULES 2026 — MANDATORY AI LABELLING AND DEEPFAKE TAKEDOWNS

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) notified the **IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2026**, effective **February 20, 2026**, introducing mandatory AI content labelling and faster takedown timelines for harmful synthetic media.

### Key provisions:

**AI-generated content** must be prominently labelled by platforms; users must declare AI creation at upload

Non-consensual nudity and deepfakes: **2-hour takedown** window

Court/government-ordered illegal content: **3-hour takedown** window

Platforms that knowingly permit violative synthetic content lose **Section 79 safe harbour** protection (IT Act, 2000)

Decentralised enforcement: states can designate multiple officers for takedown orders

### UPSC RELEVANCE

IT (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules 2021, Section 79 IT Act (safe harbour), MeitY, synthetic media definition, 2-hour/3-hour windows, EU AI Act 2024.

### MAINS GS-2:

Digital governance; intermediary liability; Right to Privacy (Art. 21, K.S. Puttaswamy 2017).

### GS-3:

AI regulation; deepfakes and disinformation.

## INDIA'S AVIATION DUOPOLY — DGCA GAPS AND BVA 2024

India's civil aviation sector faces renewed scrutiny over its dangerous duopoly: **IndiGo** (63–65% domestic market share) and **Air India Group** (27–28%) together control approximately **90% of domestic routes**. IndiGo is the sole carrier on roughly 60% of domestic routes.

### Key developments:

**Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam (BVA), 2024** replaced the colonial-era **Aircraft Act, 1934** — aligning India with ICAO standards and Chicago Convention (1944)

DGCA has approximately **50% of technical posts vacant**, hampering safety oversight

**236 temporary approvals** issued for foreign pilots in 2025 due to crew shortage

India is the **3rd-largest domestic aviation market** globally; airports expanded from 74 (2014) to **163 (2025)**

ATF constitutes **40–45% of airline operating costs** in India (global avg: 25–30%)

Serial airline collapses: Kingfisher (2012), Jet Airways (2019), Go First (2023)

#### UPSC RELEVANCE

DGCA, Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam 2024 (replaced Aircraft Act 1934), ICAO, Chicago Convention 1944, UDAN scheme 2016, ATF taxation.

#### MAINS GS-3:

Aviation infrastructure; competition law; industrial policy.

#### GS-2:

Regulatory bodies; UDAN — regional connectivity.

## AI IN EDUCATION — NEP 2020 AND THE THREE A'S FRAMEWORK

The Ministry of Education released a discussion paper on integrating Artificial Intelligence into India's school and higher education system, drawing from the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's National Educational Technology Forum (NETF).

### Key points:

NEP 2020 proposed the **NETF (National Educational Technology Forum)** — a platform for exchange of ideas on technology in education

AI integration framework proposed under the **“Three A's”**: Awareness (what AI is), Application (using AI tools), and Advancement (building AI systems)

India's target: train **5 million** AI-skilled individuals under the National AI Mission (IndiaAI)

Key challenge: digital divide — urban-rural gap in device and internet access hinders equitable AI adoption

**National e-Governance Plan** and **PM eVIDYA** provide existing digital infrastructure for AI-powered learning tools

CBSE and NCERT are piloting AI literacy modules at the secondary level

### UPSC RELEVANCE

NEP 2020, NETF (National Educational Technology Forum), PM eVIDYA, IndiaAI Mission, CBSE, NCERT.

### MAINS GS-2:

Government policies on education; digital India; education technology.

### GS-3:

Artificial Intelligence; skill development.

## NATO ARCTIC SENTRY MISSION — INDIA'S OBSERVATION ROLE

NATO launched its enhanced **Arctic Sentry** surveillance mission in the High North, with Finland, Norway, and Iceland as primary members. India, as a NATO-Plus dialogue partner and Arctic Council observer state, was briefed on the mission.

### Key points:

**Arctic Council:** India has had **Observer State** status since **2013**

India's Arctic Policy was released in **March 2022** — first comprehensive Arctic strategy

Arctic holds approximately **30% of world's undiscovered natural gas** and **13% of undiscovered oil** (USGS estimates)

**Northern Sea Route (NSR):** Could cut India–Europe shipping distance by ~40% compared to Suez Canal route

India's Himadri station at **Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard (Norway)** — India's first Arctic research station (2008)

India–NATO ties: India is not a NATO member but participates in some NATO-led dialogues; strategic partnership with NATO members (US, France, UK) is deepening

### UPSC RELEVANCE

Arctic Council (India observer since 2013), India Arctic Policy 2022, Himadri Station (Ny-Ålesund, 2008), Northern Sea Route, IndARC (India's underwater observatory in Arctic), NATO.

### MAINS GS-2:

India's foreign policy; Arctic geopolitics.

### GS-3:

Climate change; energy security; polar research.

## TAMIL BRAHMI INSCRIPTIONS FOUND IN EGYPT'S VALLEY OF THE KINGS

Archaeologists confirmed the presence of **Tamil Brahmi inscriptions** at **Luxor (ancient Thebes), Egypt**, in the Valley of the Kings area, providing direct epigraphic evidence of ancient Tamil merchants and travellers visiting Egypt during the Roman period.

### Key points:

Inscriptions dated to approximately **1st–2nd century CE** — the height of Indo-Roman trade

Tamil Brahmi script — an adaptation of **Brahmi script** to write the Tamil language; used roughly from **3rd century BCE to 5th century CE**

Previous finds: Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions found in **Quseir al-Qadim** (ancient Myos Hormos), a Red Sea port in Egypt — confirming Tamil traders used Red Sea routes

**Periplus of the Erythraean Sea** (1st century CE Greek text) documents direct trade between Indian ports (Muziripattinam/Muchiri) and Egyptian Red Sea ports

Items traded: pepper, ivory, fine cotton textiles, precious stones from India; gold, wine, glass, and copper from Rome/Egypt

Archaeological evidence corroborates Tamil Sangam literature's references to *Yavana* (Greek/Roman) traders

### UPSC RELEVANCE

Tamil Brahmi script, Valley of the Kings (Luxor/Thebes), Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, Quseir al-Qadim, Indo-Roman trade, Muziripattinam/Muchiri, Sangam literature.

### MAINS GS-1:

Indian history — ancient trade connections; art and culture; Sangam Age.

## BOOKS BY ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL — PUBLICATION RULES EXAMINED

A debate emerged around **General M.M. Naravane's** memoir (former Chief of Army Staff, 2019–2022), raising questions about the regulatory framework governing publication of books by serving and retired defence personnel.

### Key points:

**Army Act, 1950 / Air Force Act, 1950 / Navy Act, 1957** — primary legislation governing service personnel

**Army Regulations** require prior clearance from the Ministry of Defence (MoD) for publication of books by serving officers; the framework for retired officers is less clearly defined

**Official Secrets Act, 1923** — prohibits disclosure of information relating to national security, defence installations, and sensitive matters

The government has sought to enforce clearance norms even for retired personnel in cases involving operational details

**Comparison:** US has prepublication review (PR) requirements via the respective military services; UK requires MoD clearance for sensitive content

### UPSC RELEVANCE

Army Act 1950, Official Secrets Act 1923, Ministry of Defence, Army Regulations on publications.

### MAINS GS-2:

Civil-military relations; freedom of expression vs. national security; governance and accountability.

## PANDIT DEENDAYAL UPADHYAYA — PUNYATITHI (DEATH ANNIVERSARY)

February 11 marked the **Punyatithi** (death anniversary) of **Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya**, one of the principal ideologues of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh and the founder of the philosophy of **Integral Humanism (Ekatma Manavdarshan)**.

### Key facts:

Born: **September 25, 1916**, in Mathura district, United Provinces

Died: **February 11, 1968** — found dead near Mughal Sarai (now Deendayal Upadhyaya Nagar) railway station under mysterious circumstances

Founded **Integral Humanism** (1965) — a political philosophy emphasising the holistic development of the individual (*Chiti, Virat, Samashti*); rejects both Western capitalism and Marxist socialism

Key role in founding the **Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS)** in 1951 — its general secretary for many years  
**Antyodaya** — concept of “rise of the last person”; deeply influenced BJP’s poverty alleviation programs

Mughal Sarai railway station was renamed **Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Junction** in 2018

### UPSC RELEVANCE

Integral Humanism (Ekatma Manavdarshan), Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS, founded 1951), Antyodaya concept, Deendayal Upadhyaya Nagar (Mughal Sarai renamed 2018).

### MAINS GS-1:

Modern Indian history — political ideologies; post-independence politics.

## INDIA’S SCIENCE BUDGET — PERSISTENT UNDER-UTILISATION CONCERN

Parliamentary Standing Committee data revealed that the **Department of Biotechnology (DBT)** and **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** have consistently under-spent their budgetary allocations — by **45–50%** in some years — raising concerns about India’s R&D capacity.

### Key points:

India’s **R&D expenditure as % of GDP**: **~0.64%** (2021–22) — compared to South Korea (4.9%), Israel (5.4%), China (2.5%), USA (3.5%); government target is 2% of GDP

**Total R&D spending (2021–22)**: **~₹1.27 lakh crore** — of which private sector contributes only **~36%** (vs. **~70%** in advanced economies)

Key institutions: IISc, IITs, CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research — 37 labs), DRDO, ICAR, ICMR

**Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)** — established under Anusandhan NRF Act, 2023 to provide high-level strategic direction to scientific research; corpus: ₹50,000 crore over 5 years; largely private-sector funded

**Aatmanirbhar Bharat** targets: semiconductors, quantum computing, AI, space tech, green hydrogen

#### UPSC RELEVANCE

DBT, DST, CSIR (37 labs), Anusandhan NRF Act 2023, ANRF, India R&D spend (0.64% of GDP), DRDO, ICAR, ICMR.

#### MAINS GS-3:

Science and technology policy; R&D ecosystem; government spending on research.

## KEN-BETWA RIVER INTERLINKING PROJECT — ENVIRONMENTAL PROTESTS

The **Ken-Betwa River Interlinking Project** — the **first project under the National River Linking Project (NRLP)** — faced renewed protests from environmental groups and Madhya Pradesh tribals over its impact on the **Panna Tiger Reserve** and the Ken river ecology.

### Key points:

**Ken-Betwa Link Project (KBLP):** Transfers surplus water from the Ken river (Madhya Pradesh) to the water-scarce Betwa river basin (MP and Uttar Pradesh)

Approved by Cabinet in **December 2021**; estimated cost: ~₹44,605 crore; to be completed by 2030

Will benefit: **10.62 lakh hectares** of agricultural land; drinking water to 62 lakh people; 103 MW hydropower

**Environmental concern:** The **Daudhan Dam** (key structure) will submerge ~9,000 hectares of the **Panna Tiger Reserve** — home to a successfully relocated tiger population; **10 lakh trees** to be felled

**National River Linking Project (NRLP):** Proposed by Dr. K.L. Rao (1970s); revived under NDA (2003–04); aims to link 30 major rivers through 30 links — Ken-Betwa is Link 1

**Supreme Court** monitoring the project; green clearances were contested

### UPSC RELEVANCE

Ken-Betwa Link Project (first NRLP project, Dec 2021 approval), NRLP, Panna Tiger Reserve, Daudhan Dam, Ken and Betwa rivers (MP/UP).

### MAINS GS-3:

River interlinking — benefits and concerns; biodiversity; water management.

### GS-1:

Indian rivers and drainage system.

## CENTRE-STATE FISCAL RELATIONS — 41% DEVOLUTION AND FINANCE COMMISSION

A PIB release and academic discussion highlighted tensions in **Centre-State fiscal relations**, particularly regarding the 41% tax devolution recommended by the **15th Finance Commission (2021–26)** and states' concerns about shrinking fiscal space.

### Key points:

**Finance Commission (FC):** Constitutional body under **Article 280**; constituted every 5 years; recommends sharing of central taxes between Centre and States

**15th Finance Commission** (Chairman: **N.K. Singh**): Recommended **41% of divisible pool** to states (down from 42% in 14th FC — 1% adjusted for J&K and Ladakh becoming UTs)

**Vertical devolution:** Centre-to-State share; **Horizontal devolution:** distribution among states (criteria: income distance, area, population, forest cover, tax effort, demographic performance)

States' concern: increasing Central share of **Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS)** with tied funding reduces states' fiscal autonomy

**GST Compensation:** Centre's obligation to compensate states for GST revenue loss (below 14% annual growth) ended in **June 2022** — many states lost significant revenue

**16th Finance Commission** (Chairman: **Arvind Panagariya**) — constituted in 2024; will cover **2026–31** period

### UPSC RELEVANCE

Article 280, Finance Commission, 15th FC (N.K. Singh, 41% devolution), 16th FC (Arvind Panagariya, 2026-31), GST compensation ended June 2022, divisible pool, vertical/horizontal devolution.

### MAINS GS-2:

Centre-State financial relations; fiscal federalism; Cooperative federalism.

## STANFORD RESEARCHERS MAP MANTLE EARTHQUAKES UNDER THE HIMALAYAS

Researchers at **Stanford University** published a study in *Nature Geoscience* identifying a cluster of seismic events occurring within the **mantle** — below the Mohorovičić discontinuity (Moho) — beneath the **Himalayan fold-and-thrust belt**.

### Key points:

**Mantle earthquakes** (occurring at depths >80 km, below the Moho) are unusual — most earthquakes occur in the cooler, brittle **crust** (above the Moho)

The study identified events at depths of **80–120 km** — within the mantle, in a zone expected to be ductile/plastic rather than brittle

Proposed mechanism: **dehydration embrittlement** — subducted Indian plate releases water into the mantle, temporarily making it brittle enough to rupture

**Himalayas** are the result of the **Indian Plate** colliding with the **Eurasian Plate** — collision began ~55 million years ago

**Mohorovičić discontinuity (Moho):** Boundary between Earth's crust and mantle; ~35–40 km deep under continents; named after Croatian seismologist **Andrija Mohorovičić** (1909)

The study has implications for earthquake hazard assessment in the Indo-Gangetic Plain and Himalayan states

### UPSC RELEVANCE

Mohorovičić discontinuity (Moho), dehydration embrittlement, Indian Plate-Eurasian Plate collision (Himalayas), mantle earthquakes, *Nature Geoscience*.

### MAINS GS-1:

Geophysics; Himalayan formation; earthquake distribution.

### GS-3:

Disaster management — earthquake preparedness.

## INDIAN RAILWAYS — OPERATING RATIO CRISIS AND REFORM IMPERATIVES

Indian Railways' **operating ratio** — the percentage of revenue spent on operations — worsened to over **98%** in recent years, leaving only 2 rupees out of every 100 rupees earned as operational surplus for capital investment.

### Key points:

**Operating Ratio (OR):** Lower is better; global standard for efficient railways: 60–75%; India's target: 95%; actual: >98% in FY 2022-23

**Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFC):** Eastern DFC (Ludhiana–Dankuni, 1,337 km) and Western DFC (Dadri–JNPT, 1,504 km) — now operational; expected to free passenger lines and reduce OR

**Kavach (TCAS):** Train Collision Avoidance System — SIL-4 certified automatic safety system; deployed on limited sections; government target: cover entire network

**Vande Bharat Express:** Semi-high-speed (160 kmph) indigenous train; 100+ sets operational; emblematic of Make in India in railways

**Capital expenditure:** Railways capex has risen from ₹45,980 crore (2014–15) to ₹2.62 lakh crore (2024–25 budget) — a 5× increase

**Privatisation vs. PPP:** IRCTC tourism trains privatised; station redevelopment under PPP; loco manufacturing in JV with GE and Alstom at Madhepura and Marhowra

### UPSC RELEVANCE

Operating ratio (Indian Railways), Dedicated Freight Corridors (Eastern/Western DFC), Kavach/TCAS, Vande Bharat Express, IRCTC, Madhepura loco factory (GE), Marhowra (Alstom).

### MAINS GS-3:

Infrastructure — Railways reform; PPP in infrastructure; logistics competitiveness.

### PERSONS IN NEWS

**Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay** — composer of *Vande Mataram* (1882, *Anandamath*); topic of discussion amid MHA anthem protocol advisory.

**Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya** — Integral Humanism philosopher, BJS co-founder; 57th Punyatithi on February 11.

**General M.M. Naravane** — Former Chief of Army Staff (2019–22); memoir publication raised debate on publication clearance norms for defence personnel.

## ★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

### NATIONAL SYMBOLS PROTOCOL:

Jana Gana Mana (national anthem): adopted **January 24, 1950**; duration **52 seconds**

Vande Mataram (national song): Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, **Anandamath (1882)**; first sung at **INC 1896 session**

Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act: **1971**

### IT AMENDMENT RULES 2026:

Effective: **February 20, 2026**; issued by **MeitY**

Deepfake/non-consensual nudity takedown: **2 hours**

Court/govt-ordered illegal content: **3 hours**

Previous timeline (2021 Rules): 24–36 hours

Safe harbour: Section 79, IT Act 2000

### INDIA AVIATION:

IndiGo: **63–65%** domestic share; Air India Group: **27–28%**; combined: **~90%**

IndiGo is sole carrier on **60%** of domestic routes

Airports: **74 (2014) → 163 (2025)**; target 350–400 by 2047

BVA 2024 replaced Aircraft Act **1934** (90 years old)

DGCA: **~50%** technical posts vacant; **236** foreign pilot approvals (2025)

ATF cost share: **40–45%** of airline costs in India (global: 25–30%)

### ARCTIC / NATO:

India: Arctic Council Observer since **2013**

India Arctic Policy: **March 2022**

Himadri Station: Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard, Norway — **2008**

Arctic holds **~30%** undiscovered natural gas, **~13%** undiscovered oil (USGS)

### TAMIL BRAHMI INSCRIPTIONS — EGYPT:

Location: Valley of the Kings, **Luxor (ancient Thebes)**

Period: **~1st–2nd century CE** (Indo-Roman trade peak)

Tamil Brahmi used: **~3rd century BCE to 5th century CE**

Earlier find: **Quseir al-Qadim** (ancient Myos Hormos), Red Sea port

Key text: **Periplus of the Erythraean Sea** (1st century CE Greek)

### DEENDAYAL UPADHYAYA:

Born: **September 25, 1916**; Died: **February 11, 1968**

Philosophy: **Integral Humanism (Ekatma Manavdarshan)**; concept: **Antyodaya**

Founded/led: **Bharatiya Jana Sangh (1951)**

Mughal Sarai renamed: **Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Junction** (2018)

### SCIENCE BUDGET:

India R&D spend: **~0.64% of GDP** (2021–22) vs. target 2%

ANRF (Anusandhan National Research Foundation): **₹50,000 crore** corpus over 5 years; **ANRF Act 2023**

CSIR: **37 laboratories**

#### KEN-BETWA LINK PROJECT:

First project under **NRLP (National River Linking Project)**

Approved: **December 2021**; cost: ~₹**44,605 crore**

Benefit: **10.62 lakh hectares** irrigated; **62 lakh** people drinking water; **103 MW** hydro

Environmental concern: Daudhan Dam submerges ~**9,000 ha** of **Panna Tiger Reserve**

#### FINANCE COMMISSION / FISCAL FEDERALISM:

Article **280**: Constitution; FC constituted every 5 years

15th FC Chairman: **N.K. Singh**; Devolution: **41%** of divisible pool (2021–26)

16th FC Chairman: **Arvind Panagariya**; Period: **2026–31**

GST compensation to states ended: **June 2022**

#### HIMALAYAN MANTLE EARTHQUAKES:

Study: **Stanford University**, published in *Nature Geoscience*

Depth: **80–120 km** (below Moho) – within the mantle

Mechanism: **dehydration embrittlement** (subducted Indian plate releases water)

Moho: ~**35–40 km** deep under continents; named after **Andrija Mohorovičić (1909)**

India-Eurasia collision began: ~**55 million years ago**

#### INDIAN RAILWAYS:

Operating ratio: >**98%** (FY 2022-23); target: 95%

Western DFC: Dadri–JNPT, **1,504 km**; Eastern DFC: Ludhiana–Dankuni, **1,337 km**

Kavach/TCAS: **SIL-4** certified collision avoidance system

Railway capex: ₹45,980 cr (2014–15) → ₹**2.62 lakh crore** (2024–25 budget)

Sources: Drishti IAS, AffairsCloud, PIB, Next IAS

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