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Current Affairs Today – February 13, 2026

13 February 2026

SUBJECTS COVERED

ENVIRONMENT

ECONOMY

SCIENCE & TECH

IR

SECURITY & DEFENCE

POLITY

REPORTS & SCHEMES

SOCIAL ISSUES

GEOGRAPHY

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WHY IN NEWS

Budget 2026-27 allocated Rs 20,000 crore for CCUS across five hard-to-abate sectors; Pakistan invoked the Indus Waters Treaty over Sawalkot Hydroelectric Project; and the government launched Bodhan AI for an open-source EduAI stack from IIT Madras.

ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE

CCUS Scheme — Rs 20,000 Crore for Hard-to-Abate Sectors

Union Budget 2026-27 allocated **Rs 20,000 crore** over five years as Viability Gap Funding (VGF) for a **Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (CCUS)** scheme targeting India's five hardest-to-decarbonise industrial sectors: **Power, Steel, Cement, Refineries, and Chemicals**.

Why these sectors specifically: CO₂ emissions in steel, cement, and chemicals are chemically unavoidable (process-linked) — electrification alone cannot eliminate them. CCUS captures CO₂ before it enters the atmosphere and either stores it geologically (in saline aquifers, depleted oil/gas fields, basalt formations) or converts it into useful products (urea, methanol, synthetic fuels).

India's steel position: India produced **152 million tonnes** of crude steel in FY 2024-25 — world's 2nd-largest steel producer. Steel accounts for **10–12%** of India's total GHG emissions. CCUS + Green Steel Taxonomy (below 2.2 tCO₂e per tonne) is India's route to meeting EU CBAM requirements from 2026.

Challenges: Capital-intensive (raises electricity costs 60–80%); energy penalty of 15–25%; no CO₂ pipeline network; regulatory vacuum on leakage liability; limited geological storage data.

Two **National Centres of Excellence in Carbon Capture** will be established; **IIT Bombay** and **JNCASR Bengaluru** are lead research institutions.

Arctic Warming — 2,554 Plant Species Could Invade

A new study found **2,554 vascular plant species** could find suitable Arctic habitat niches under continued warming. Currently, **341 alien taxa** are documented in the Arctic; **188 have naturalized**. Six invasion hotspots identified: Western Alaska, SW Greenland, SE Greenland, Northern Iceland, Fennoscandia, and Kanin-Pechora region (Russia).

India's invasive species burden: Spread across **2,66,954 sq km** of natural habitats. Key invasive species in India: *Lantana camara*, *Chromolaena odorata*, *Prosopis juliflora*. High-risk regions: Shivalik-Terai belt, Northeast Duar, Aravallis, Dandakaranya forests, Nilgiris.

SECURITY & DEFENCE

IAF Instructors at RAF Valley – First-Ever Deployment

Following the **19th UK-India Air Staff Talks**, three **IAF Qualified Flight Instructors** were posted at **RAF Valley** (UK) for a two-year tenure. Aircraft: **Hawk T2 and Texan T1** fast-jet trainers. Significance: First-ever deployment of an Indian officer as instructor at RAF Valley.

India now has officers serving as instructors at **all three UK military academies**: Dartmouth (Royal Navy), Sandhurst (British Army), and RAF establishments (Cranwell/Valley). Related defence exercises: Cobra Warrior, Ajeya Warrior, Tasman Saber. Framework: **UK-India Vision 2035**.

Assam Rifles – Indigenous Dog Breeds by 2050

Under a **MHA 2025 directive**, Assam Rifles will phase out foreign breeds and fully induct indigenous Indian canine breeds by **2027** (induction) with **complete replacement by 2050**.

Indigenous breeds selected:

Tangkhul Hui – native to Ukhrul district, Manipur; disease-resistant; used traditionally for hunting

Kombai – indigenous Tamil Nadu breed

Training centre: **Assam Rifles Dog Training Centre, Jorhat (Assam)**. Current breeds: Belgian Malinois, German Shepherd, Labrador. Assam Rifles background: India's oldest paramilitary force (est. **1835** as "Cachar Levy"); dual control – **MHA (administrative) + Ministry of Defence (operational)**.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Pakistan Invokes IWT – Sawalkot Hydroelectric Project

Pakistan officially invoked the **Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) 1960**, requesting consultations from India regarding the **Sawalkot Hydroelectric Project** (1,856 MW) – a run-of-the-river scheme on **River Chenab** (Western River under IWT) in **Ramban district, J&K**.

IWT background: Signed September 19, 1960; brokered by World Bank. Eastern Rivers (Sutlej/Beas/Ravi) allocated to India; Western Rivers (Indus/Jhelum/Chenab) allocated to Pakistan. India may only build run-of-river projects on Western Rivers; no large storage permitted.

India reportedly placed IWT in “abeyance” after the Pahalgam terror attack; Pakistan asserts no unilateral action can alter treaty obligations. Dispute resolution: **Permanent Indus Commission** (Tier 1) → **Neutral Expert** (Tier 2, technical) → **Court of Arbitration at The Hague** (Tier 3, legal).

India Chairs 1st BRICS Sherpas’ Meeting 2026

India chaired the **1st BRICS Sherpas’ Meeting** of 2026 on February 9–10 in New Delhi. India’s BRICS Sherpa: **Sudhakar Dalela** (Secretary, Economic Relations). Sous Sherpa: **Shambhu L. Hakki** (JS, Multilateral Economic Relations).

All 11 BRICS members participated including new members (Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE). **2026 BRICS Summit theme:** “Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation, and Sustainability.” **India is chairing BRICS for the 4th time** (previous: 2012, 2016, 2021). Priority areas: Health, agriculture, labour, employment, disaster risk reduction, environment, climate, energy, innovation.

India–UK Social Security Agreement

India and UK signed a **Bilateral Social Security Agreement** covering cross-border workers. Beneficiaries: approximately **75,000 Indian professionals** (IT, engineering, finance, consultancy). Mechanism: **Certificate of Coverage (CoC)** exempts employees on short-term assignments from dual social security contributions. CoC issued by **EPFO** (under Ministry of Labour & Employment).

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Bodhan AI — Bharat EduAI Stack (IIT Madras)

Government launched **Bodhan AI** — a non-profit organization under the **Ministry of Education** — to build the open-source **Bharat EduAI Stack** covering kindergarten to PhD level (K-to-PhD).

Developed by the **AI Centre of Excellence for Education at IIT Madras**. Components: personalized AI tutors, AI-assisted teacher training, institutional administration systems, data-driven policy-making. Vision: “AI for All” — inclusive, interoperable, sovereign, equitable, affordable, accessible education. Infrastructure type: **Open-source Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** for education.

IN-SPACE Selects 3 Startups for Satellite Bus as a Service

IN-SPACE (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre — commercial arm under ISRO) selected three startups for its **Satellite Bus as a Service (SBaaS)** initiative with **Rs 5 crore grant each**:

Astrome Technologies Pvt Ltd

Azista Industries Pvt Ltd

Dhruva Space Pvt Ltd

Purpose: Development and demonstration of robust, modular, scalable small satellite bus platforms with access to ISRO and Department of Space infrastructure, testing facilities, and technical guidance.

WIPO: India Ranks 7th in Global R&D Spending 2024

Per **WIPO** (World Intellectual Property Organization) data from GII 2025: India ranked **7th globally** with approximately **USD 75.73 billion** in R&D investment (2024).

Global R&D rankings:

China: USD 785.9B | 2. USA: USD 781.8B | 3. Japan: USD 186B | 4. Germany: USD 132.2B | 5. South Korea: USD 126.4B | 6. UK: USD 86.5B | 7. **India: USD 75.73B**

World total R&D expenditure 2024: **USD 2.87 trillion** (~3% growth from 2023). Global R&D as % of GDP: ~**2%** in 2024 (up from 1.48% in 2000).

ECONOMY & FINANCE

White Revolution 2.0 – Ministry of Cooperation

Amit Shah (Union Minister, Ministry of Cooperation) announced **White Revolution 2.0**. Target: Increase milk procurement to **1007 lakh kg/day by 2028-29** (50% increase over 5 years). Infrastructure: Establish/strengthen approximately **1.20 lakh** new and existing Dairy Cooperative Societies (DCS), Multipurpose-DCS, and M-PACS. Equipment: automatic milk collection units, bulk milk coolers, testing equipment.

EximPe – RBI Payment Aggregator Cross-Border Licence

EximPe (cross-border payments fintech; HQ Singapore; offices in Bengaluru, Mumbai) received RBI's **Payment Aggregator–Cross Border (PA-CB)** licence – approved without prior domestic PA licence (described as first of its kind). Founder: Arjun Zacharia. Scope: Import and export transactions; enables international merchants to accept UPI, cards, wallets, net banking from Indian customers. Previously facilitated over **USD 500 million** in bank-led cross-border trade payments across Asia.

ICICI Prudential AMC – RBI Approves Stakes in 8 Banks

RBI authorized **ICICI Prudential AMC** (with ICICI Bank group entities) to acquire up to **9.95%** of paid-up share capital or voting rights in eight banks: Bandhan Bank, City Union Bank, Equitas SFB, Federal Bank, IDFC FIRST Bank, HDFC Bank, Karur Vysya Bank, RBL Bank. Validity: One year. Regulatory frameworks:

Banking Regulation Act 1949; RBI (Commercial Banks – Acquisition and Holding of Shares) Directions 2025; FEMA 1999; SEBI LODR 2015.

Uttar Pradesh Budget FY 2026-27

Suresh Kumar Khanna (FM, UP) presented the UP Budget. Total outlay: **Rs 9,12,696.35 crore** (Rs 9.12 trillion) – **12.9% increase** from FY26 (Rs 8.08 trillion). New schemes allocation: over Rs 45,000 crore. Sectoral: Education 12.4%, Agriculture & allied 9%, Health 6%. Capital expenditure: **19.5%** of total outlay. Fiscal deficit limit: **3%** (per 16th Finance Commission recommendations). State GSDP FY25: Rs **30.25 lakh crore**; GSDP growth: 13.4%.

SOCIAL ISSUES

Kerala ‘Sthree Suraksha’ Scheme

CM Pinarayi Vijayan launched the ‘**Sthree Suraksha**’ Scheme (February 11, 2026) for unemployed women and transgender women (age 35–60) not covered under existing welfare pension programmes. Monthly pension: **Rs 1,000**. Eligibility: Permanent Kerala resident with Antyodaya Anna Yojana (yellow) or Priority Household (pink) ration card; not employed in government or receiving other pensions.

MOUS & AGREEMENTS

Agneevasthraa–Indian Army MoU (February 11): Domestic manufacturer Agneevasthraa signed an MoU with the **Indian Army** to supply carbon fabrics and advanced composite materials for armour systems, protective gear, and structural components. Aligned with Make in India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat.

INSA–CSIR-NIScPR MoU: Indian National Science Academy (INSA) signed MoU with **CSIR-NIScPR** (National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research) for collaborative science communication and evidence-based STI policy research. Key dignitaries: Dr. V. K. Saraswat (NITI Aayog), Prof. Shekhar C. Mande (INSA President), Dr. Geetha Vani Rayasam (CSIR-NIScPR Director).

DRDO–CSIR R&D Collaboration (February 11): Focus on technologies for human sustenance and performance in extreme environments – high-altitude survival, performance enhancement, off-grid energy systems, waste management in remote environments. Resource sharing of personnel, laboratories, and technology platforms.

MHA PROTOCOLS

MHA Guidelines on Vande Mataram

Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued guidelines standardizing official protocol for rendering the national song at government and public events. Specifications: **All six stanzas**; duration approximately **3 minutes 10 seconds**. When both are performed together, Vande Mataram is rendered **before** the National Anthem 'Jana Gana Mana'. Audience: Stand at attention (not mandatory for newsreels/documentaries).

IMPORTANT DAYS

International Day of Women and Girls in Science — February 11 (annual). UNGA Resolution **A/RES/70/212** (December 22, 2015); first observed February 11, 2016. Led by **UNESCO + UN-Women**. 2026 theme: "From Vision to Impact: Redefining STEM by Closing the Gender Gap."

International Day for Prevention of Violent Extremism — February 12 (annual). UNGA Resolution **A/RES/77/243** (December 20, 2022); first observed February 12, 2023. Coordinating body: **UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)**. 2026 theme: "Preventing Violent Extremism in the Age of New and Emerging Technologies."

AWARDS

Chang-Crandall Humanitarian Award 2026

Dr. Haripriya Aravind and **Dr. R. Venkatesh** (both from **Aravind Eye Care System, Puducherry**) received the **Chang-Crandall Humanitarian Award 2026** for exceptional contributions in cataract blindness prevention and visual disability care. Prize: **USD 100,000** (donated to charitable ophthalmic organization of their choice). Established: 2025 by **ASCRS Foundation** (American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery). Presentation: ASCRS conference, Washington DC, April 11, 2026.

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

CCUS (BUDGET 2026-27):

Allocation: **Rs 20,000 crore** over 5 years (VGF)

Target sectors: **Power, Steel, Cement, Refineries, Chemicals**

India crude steel: **152 MT** (FY25) — **world's 2nd largest**

Steel's GHG share: **10–12%** | Green Steel threshold: 2.2 tCO_{2e}/tonne

National Steel Policy 2017: **300 MT by FY 2030-31**

INDUS WATERS TREATY:

Signed: **September 19, 1960** | Brokered by **World Bank**

Eastern Rivers (India): Sutlej, Beas, Ravi | Western Rivers (Pakistan): Indus, Jhelum, **Chenab**

Sawalkot: **1,856 MW**, Chenab, Ramban district, J&K | Initiated 1984

Dispute tiers: PIC → Neutral Expert → Court of Arbitration (Hague)

BODHAN AI:

Ministry: **Ministry of Education**

Developed by: **IIT Madras** (AI Centre of Excellence for Education)

Scope: **K-to-PhD** (kindergarten to research level)

Type: Open-source **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)**

IAF AT RAF VALLEY:

3 IAF Qualified Flight Instructors at **RAF Valley, UK** (2-year tenure)

Aircraft: **Hawk T2** and **Texan T1**

India now at all **three UK military academies**: Dartmouth / Sandhurst / RAF

Framework: **UK-India Vision 2035**

ASSAM RIFLES DOGS:

Indigenous breeds: **Tangkul Hui** (Ukhrul, Manipur) + **Kombai** (Tamil Nadu)

Full replacement of foreign breeds by: **2050**

Training facility: **Jorhat, Assam**

Assam Rifles established: **1835** as “Cachar Levy”; oldest paramilitary

BRICS SHERPAS 2026:

India chairs 4th time (prev: 2012, 2016, 2021)

India's Sherpa: **Sudhakar Dalela**

2026 theme: “Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation, and Sustainability”

WHITE REVOLUTION 2.0:

Target: **1007 lakh kg/day** milk procurement by 2028-29

1.20 lakh new/existing Dairy Cooperative Societies

WIPO R&D RANKINGS 2024:

India: **7th globally**, USD 75.73 billion

World total: USD 2.87 trillion (2024); R&D/GDP ratio: ~2%

IN-SPACE SBAAS:

3 startups selected: **Astrome, Azista, Dhruva Space**; Rs 5 crore grant each

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

UP Budget FY27: **Rs 9.12 trillion**; 12.9% rise; CapEx 19.5%; Education 12.4%

Kerala Sthree Suraksha: **Rs 1,000/month** for unemployed women/transgender women aged 35-60

Chang-Crandall Award: **USD 100,000**; Aravind Eye Care System, Puducherry

IWT abeyance: India suspended consultations post-Pahalgam; Pakistan disputes legal validity

India-UK Social Security: Certificate of Coverage for **~75,000** Indian professionals

EximPe PA-CB: USD 500M+ in cross-border payments already facilitated; targets USD 1B UPI payments in 24 months

INSA = Indian National Science Academy | CSIR-NIScPR = National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research

International Day Women & Girls in Science: Feb 11 annually (UNGA Res. A/RES/70/212, 2015)

International Day for Prevention of Violent Extremism: Feb 12 annually (UNGA Res. A/RES/77/243, 2022)

Sources: Drishti IAS, AffairsCloud

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