



UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

MAGAZINE NOTES

Down to Earth February 2026 — Water Crisis, SAF, Budget & 16th Finance Commission

15 February 2026 ·

ENVIRONMENT

ECONOMY

POLITY

SCIENCE & TECH

IR

GEOGRAPHY

SOCIAL ISSUES

GS1

GS2

GS3

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[in linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)**ALSO FROM THE CREATOR****BharatNotes**Free UPSC notes, MCQs, PYQ analysis. **100% Free.**bharatnotes.com →**ADVERTISE****Advertise with Ujiyari**

Reach thousands of UPSC aspirants daily.

[✉ epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

Down to Earth February 2026 — Water Crisis, SAF, Budget & 16th Finance Commission



Down to Earth

February 2026 (1-28)

GS1

GS2

GS3

**Down to Earth**

CSE · Fortnightly

EDITION

February 2026 (1-28)

MAINS:

GS Paper 1

GS Paper 2

GS Paper 3

EDITION OVERVIEW

Down to Earth's February 2026 issues carry the cover story “**PLEA**” in the first fortnight (1-15), focusing on the global water bankruptcy crisis. The two editions together cover megadroughts and water bankruptcy, SAF transition and UCO feedstock crisis, India's AI awakening, Forest Law amendment vs paper industry, African Swine Fever, Aravallis ecology, EU-Mercosur/India-EU/India-US trade geopolitics, the 16th Finance Commission's ecological federalism, Union Budget 2026-27, speed breeding, India's dairy model, caste-climate nexus, pharma innovation dilemma, deepfakes and AI governance, SC ruling on menstrual health, blackbuck conservation, sal heartwood borer, Rubaya coltan mine, and plastics-health linkage.

KEY TERMS

- **SAF** — Sustainable Aviation Fuel (IOC, Panipat; 1% mandate by 2027; IATA: 65% of aviation emission cuts)
- **RUCO** — Repurpose Used Cooking Oil (FSSAI initiative, 2018; max 3 reuses)
- **HEFA** — Hydroprocessed Esters and Fatty Acids (SAF pathway using UCO/fats)
- **Fischer-Tropsch** — SAF pathway using agricultural residues
- **ASF** — African Swine Fever (pigs/wild suids only; no vaccine; Serchhip, Mizoram outbreak)
- **BSL-4** — Biosafety Level 4 (required for Nipah virus isolation)
- **ETS** — Emissions Trading System (cap-and-trade; 1 allowance = 1 tonne CO₂)
- **BBNJ** — Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Treaty (in force 2026)
- **IndiaAI Mission** — \$1.25 billion AI infrastructure programme (MeitY, 2024)
- **16th FC** — 16th Finance Commission (2026-31; 41% devolution; ₹2,04,401 cr disaster allocation)

- **Van Adhiniyam, 1980** — Forest Conservation Act; recent amendment allows paper industry access to forestland
- **CBAM** — Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (EU; \$2-4 billion burden on Indian steel/cement)
- **Section 3(d)** — Indian Patents Act provision preventing evergreening (Venetoclax rejection)
- **Speed Breeding** — 22hr LED light, 4-5 generations/year; SKUAST rice cycle: 60 days
- **GANs** — Generative Adversarial Networks (deepfake architecture)
- **Agentic AI** — Autonomous AI with limited human intervention
- **Coltan** — Columbite-tantalite; refined to tantalum; DRC supplies 15% globally
- **DALYs** — Disability-Adjusted Life Years (plastics: 2.1M in 2016, 4.5M projected by 2040)

Sources: [NextIAS DTE Feb 1-15 Summary](#) , [NextIAS DTE Feb 16-28 Summary](#)

22 Chapters in this Edition

1

Megadroughts and the Global Water Bankruptcy

2

The Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) Transition & Feedstock Crisis

3

India's AI Awakening & Compute Deficit

4

Forest Law Amendment vs. The Paper Industry

5

African Swine Fever (ASF) & Nipah Virus

6

Aravallis Ecology & Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary
EU-Mercosur Trade Pact & Emissions Trading System (ETS)

8

Other Feb 1-15 Articles

9

The 16th Finance Commission & Ecological/Disaster Federalism

10

Union Budget 2026-27: Critical Evaluation

11

Speed Breeding — Fast-Tracking Climate-Resilient Agriculture

12

India's Dairy Model vs. Western Industrial Model

13

Caste, Climate Change, and Interlinked Vulnerabilities

14

India's Pharma — The Generics vs. Innovation Dilemma

15

Geopolitics of Global FTAs — India-EU, EU-Mercosur, India-US

16

Blackbuck Conservation & Sal Heartwood Borer

17

Plastics & Human Health — Lancet Study

18**Rubaya Coltan Mine Collapse & Rat-Hole Mining****19****Deepfakes, Agentic AI & Global AI Governance****20****Supreme Court on Menstrual Health (Article 21)****21****Grassroots Case Studies Feb 1-15****22****Grassroots Case Studies Feb 16-28**



CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[in linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujiyari →](#)<https://ujiyari.com/magazines/2026/down-to-earth-february-2026/>

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotes

Free UPSC study platform — subject-wise notes across all 4 GS papers, Prelims MCQs, Mains answer frameworks, PYQ analysis & progress tracking. **100% Free • No Login Required.**

[Start Preparing → bharatnotes.com](#)

📢 OPPORTUNITY

Advertise with Ujiyari

Reach **thousands of serious UPSC & State PCS aspirants** daily through our PDFs, website, and social channels.

Ideal for: Coaching institutes • EdTech platforms • Book publishers • Exam prep apps

[✉ epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

Write to us for rates & media kit

Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs · ujiyari.com · bharatnotes.com