



UPSC &amp; STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

**DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

# Current Affairs Today – February 23, 2026

23 February 2026

**SUBJECTS COVERED****CURATED & WRITTEN BY****Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator &amp; Content Creator •

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

Free UPSC &amp; State PCS Resources

[ujiyari.com](http://ujiyari.com)

# Current Affairs Today — February 23, 2026

23 February 2026

## PRAHAAR — INDIA'S FIRST COMPREHENSIVE COUNTER-TERRORISM POLICY

India launched “**Prahaar**”, its first-ever comprehensive counter-terrorism policy framework, released by the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**. The framework covers prevention and response across land, air, and maritime domains.

**Key threats identified:** Cross-border terrorism from western frontiers; **drone-based smuggling in Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir** for arms and narcotics; cyber attacks on critical infrastructure (power grids, railways, aviation, ports, defence, space assets, atomic energy); CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear) materials; dark web and cryptocurrency-based terrorist recruitment and financing.

**Key components:** Legal experts integrated throughout investigation and prosecution to improve conviction rates; enhanced international intelligence-sharing; youth prevention programmes; **prison-based de-radicalisation**; community engagement through religious leaders and NGOs; graded response mechanism.

**Key agencies:** Ministry of Home Affairs, National Investigation Agency (NIA), Intelligence Bureau (IB).

**UPSC angle:** National Investigation Agency (NIA Act 2008), UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act), MHA, counter-terrorism governance structure, CBRN threats, drone regulation (NDRF, DRDO anti-drone systems), dark web and cryptocurrency in terror financing, FATF (India's grey-listing history), de-radicalisation programmes.

## ROB JETTEN — NETHERLANDS' YOUNGEST AND FIRST LGBTQ+ PRIME MINISTER

**Rob Jetten**, age 38, was sworn in as Prime Minister of the **Netherlands**, becoming the country's **youngest-ever PM** and its **first openly LGBTQ+ Prime Minister**. He was formally installed by **King Willem-Alexander** at The Hague.

Jetten's centrist **Democrats 66 (D66)** party led the formation of a new Dutch government following a period of political instability in which Geert Wilders' far-right **Freedom Party (PVV)** had previously led an unsuccessful coalition. Jetten was formally installed by **King Willem-Alexander** as PM in early 2026.

**Policy priorities:** Counter populism, return Netherlands to “the heart of Europe,” maintain Ukraine support, NATO 2% defence spending commitment, stricter migration control, budget discipline.

**UPSC angle:** Netherlands (capital The Hague — home of ICC, ICJ, Europol), LGBTQ+ rights in European governance, NATO 2% GDP commitment, far-right political wave in Europe (context), EU immigration policy tensions, D66 (social-liberal party).

## BAFTA 2026 — ONE BATTLE AFTER ANOTHER DOMINATES

The **79th BAFTA Awards** (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) were held on **February 23, 2026** at the **Royal Festival Hall, London**. BAFTA President **Prince William** attended.

### Key winner:

**Best Picture + Best Director: *One Battle After Another*** (dir. **Paul Thomas Anderson**) — won **6 awards** from 14 nominations

**UPSC angle:** BAFTA (founded 1947, UK charity; based at 195 Piccadilly, London), India-UK cultural ties, film industry governance, CBFC (Central Board of Film Certification) in India.

## VAISHNAVI ADKAR — FIRST INDIAN WOMAN IN W100 FINAL SINCE SANIA MIRZA (2009)

**Vaishnavi Adkar** (21, born December 14, 2004, Pune) reached the singles final of the **ITF Women's Open in Bengaluru** (W100 category), entering as a wildcard ranked **World No. 690**. She became the **first Indian woman to reach a W100 or higher singles final since Sania Mirza in 2009** — a 17-year gap.

She lost 6-0, 6-1 to Belgium's **Hanne Vandewinkel** (ranked No. 124). Her world ranking improved by 200+ places to approximately No. 466. Coach: **Kedar Shah** (Bounce Tennis Academy); Mentor: **Rohan Bopanna**.

**Previous achievements:** Won Fenesta Women's Nationals 2025; won **bronze at the 2025 World University Games** — ending India's **46-year medal drought** in that event (India's first tennis medal at World University Games since 1979).

**UPSC angle:** Women's sports participation, Khelo India scheme, Sports Authority of India (SAI), Arjuna Award (Sania Mirza's tennis legacy), World University Games (FISU), wildcard entry system in professional tennis.

## VANJEEVI DIDI — PALAMU TIGER RESERVE'S WOMEN FOREST AMBASSADORS

The **south division of Palamu Tiger Reserve** (Jharkhand) launched the "**Vanjeevi Didi**" initiative in the **Garu range** on February 17, 2026. The programme selects **18 educated women** from each of 17 identified villages near the reserve as forest ambassadors.

Each “Vanjeevi Didi” receives **Rs 3,000/month stipend** during an initial 2-month pilot. The women — most of whom are graduates, postgraduates, or diploma holders — serve as bridges between communities and forest authorities: discouraging poaching and deforestation, promoting school enrollment, and disseminating government welfare schemes.

**Palamu Tiger Reserve** is one of the **original 9 reserves** under **Project Tiger** (launched 1973 by PM Indira Gandhi). Located in Jharkhand’s Latehar, Garhwa, and Palamu districts.

**UPSC angle:** Project Tiger 1973, Palamu Tiger Reserve (original 9), National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), community forest rights vs. conservation, eco-development committees, women’s empowerment in conservation, Joint Forest Management (JFM), forest rights under FRA 2006.

## AMARAVATI — INDIA’S FIRST QUANTUM VALLEY WITH IBM QUANTUM SYSTEM TWO

**Amaravati**, Andhra Pradesh’s upcoming greenfield capital, will host India’s **first Quantum Valley** — a dedicated tech park anchored by a **IBM Quantum System Two** facility (IBM’s most advanced superconducting quantum processor). **TCS (Tata Consultancy Services)** will develop quantum algorithms, applications, and workforce skills.

This aligns with India’s **National Quantum Mission (NQM)**, approved in **April 2023** with a budget of **Rs 6,003 crore** (2023-24 to 2030-31). NQM targets development of **50–1,000 qubit** intermediate-scale quantum computers and focuses on quantum computing, secure quantum communications, quantum sensing, and advanced materials.

Quantum computers operate at temperatures near **absolute zero** in dilution refrigerators. Strategic implications include **post-quantum cryptography** — the ability to break or withstand current encryption standards.

**UPSC angle:** National Quantum Mission (April 2023, Rs 6,003 crore), Amaravati capital project (AP Reorganisation Act 2014 context), IBM-India tech partnerships, post-quantum cryptography and national security, DST (nodal ministry for NQM), quantum supremacy, qubits.

## POLAND WITHDRAWS FROM OTTAWA CONVENTION (MINE BAN TREATY)

**Poland** announced its withdrawal from the **Ottawa Convention** (formally: the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines) in February 2026, citing the need to deploy **anti-personnel landmines along its eastern borders** (facing Russia and Belarus).

The **Ottawa Convention** entered into force on **March 1, 1999**. It requires signatories to: destroy stockpiled mines within 4 years; clear all planted mines from territories within 10 years; refrain from producing, transferring, or using anti-personnel mines. Poland joins the USA, Russia, China, India, and Pakistan among

major countries outside the treaty.

**UPSC angle:** Ottawa Convention (Mine Ban Treaty, 1999), anti-personnel mines vs. anti-tank mines distinction, Poland's NATO membership and eastern flank defence, Russia-Ukraine war's effects on European security architecture, humanitarian disarmament treaties (also: Chemical Weapons Convention, Biological Weapons Convention, TPNW).

## EXERCISE VAJRA PRAHAR — 16TH EDITION AT BAKLOH

The **16th edition of Exercise Vajra Prahar**, a joint **India–US Special Forces** exercise, was held at the **Special Forces Training School, Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh**. The exercise focuses on interoperability and advanced tactics between Indian and US Special Forces in counter-terrorism and unconventional warfare scenarios.

**UPSC angle:** India-US defence exercises (Vajra Prahar, Yudh Abhyas, Tiger Triumph, Tasman Saber), Special Forces Training School Bakloh, India-US Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI), LEMOA/COMCASA agreements enabling interoperability.

## ARISAEMA SIAHAENSE — NEW COBRA LILY SPECIES IN MIZORAM

A new species of **Cobra Lily** named *Arisaema siahaense* was discovered in **Siaha District, Mizoram** — the southernmost district of Mizoram, adjacent to Myanmar. The species is an **evergreen herb** growing up to **1.08 metres** with an exceptionally long spadix appendix with brownish-green bristles (21 cm). It is named after Siaha district.

**UPSC angle:** Biodiversity of northeast India (hotspot region under Eastern Himalayas biodiversity hotspot), Arisaema genus (jack-in-the-pulpit/cobra lilies, family Araceae), Mizoram geography, endemic species, Wildlife Protection Act, BSI (Botanical Survey of India), IUCN assessment of new species.

## INDIRA GANDHI SUKH SHIKSHA YOJANA — HIMACHAL PRADESH

**Himachal Pradesh** expanded the **Indira Gandhi Sukh Shiksha Yojana**, a state welfare scheme providing **Rs 3,000 per month for 10 months** to **daughters of widows** pursuing professional higher education at government institutions outside the state. Age limit: 18-27 years.

**UPSC angle:** State social welfare schemes, women's education support, HP's social sector expenditure, constitutional provisions on welfare (Directive Principles — Article 39, 41, 45), centrally sponsored vs. state schemes.

## FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

### Prahaar Anti-Terror Framework:

Released by: **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**

India's **first comprehensive counter-terrorism policy**

Key agencies: NIA (National Investigation Agency, Act 2008), IB (Intelligence Bureau)

NIA: Established under NIA Act 2008 after 26/11 Mumbai attacks; HQ: New Delhi

UAPA 1967 (as amended 2019): Designates individuals as terrorists; bans organisations

### Netherlands Political Facts:

Capital: **Amsterdam** (seat of government: **The Hague**)

Parliament: **States-General** (bicameral — Senate + House of Representatives, 150 seats)

International organisations based in The Hague: ICC, ICJ, OPCW, Europol, Eurojust

Rob Jetten: Age 38; D66 (Democrats 66) party; first LGBTQ+ Dutch PM; youngest PM

### BAFTA 2026:

Best Picture + Director: **One Battle After Another** (Paul Thomas Anderson) — **6 awards** total

Venue: **Royal Festival Hall, London** | BAFTA President: **Prince William**

BAFTA founded: **1947** | HQ: 195 Piccadilly, London

### Vaishnavi Adkar:

Hometown: **Pune** | Born: December 14, 2004 | Age: 21

Achievement: First Indian woman in W100+ singles final since **Sania Mirza (2009)** — 17-year gap

World University Games 2025: Bronze medal — ended **46-year medal drought** in tennis

Coach: Kedar Shah | Mentor: **Rohan Bopanna**

### Palamu Tiger Reserve + Vanjeevi Didi:

Location: Latehar, Garhwa, Palamu districts, Jharkhand

One of original **9 Project Tiger reserves** (1973)

Project Tiger launched: **1973** by PM Indira Gandhi | Now under NTCA (National Tiger Conservation Authority)

Vanjeevi Didi: 18 women/village × 17 villages | Rs 3,000/month | Garu range, south division

### National Quantum Mission:

Approved: **April 2023** (Cabinet) | Budget: **Rs 6,003 crore** | Period: 2023-24 to 2030-31

Nodal ministry: **DST (Department of Science and Technology)**

Target: 50–1,000 qubit quantum computers; quantum secure communications; quantum sensing

Amaravati Quantum Valley: IBM Quantum System Two + TCS

Qubits vs. classical bits: Quantum superposition allows simultaneous 0 and 1 states

### **Ottawa Convention (Mine Ban Treaty):**

Full name: Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines

In force: **March 1, 1999** | Parties: 164 countries

Non-signatories: USA, Russia, China, **India**, Pakistan, Israel (major military powers)

Poland's withdrawal: To use APMs on eastern border (Russia/Belarus)

**Anti-personnel mine:** Targets persons | **Anti-tank/anti-vehicle mine:** Ottawa Convention does NOT cover these

### **Exercise Vajra Prahar:**

Type: **India-US Special Forces** exercise

Location: **Special Forces Training School, Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh**

16th edition (2026)

India-US exercises also include: Yudh Abhyas (Army), Tiger Triumph (tri-service), Tasman Saber (with Australia too)

### **Other Relevant Facts:**

Arisaema sialhaense: Cobra Lily, discovered Sialha District (southernmost Mizoram, borders Myanmar); genus Arisaema, family Araceae; BSI (Botanical Survey of India) — surveys plant species in India

Bhavani River: Tributary of **Cauvery**; originates in Nilgiri Hills; Tamil Nadu's second-largest river; merges with Cauvery at Bhavani town, Erode district

Eastern Himalayas Biodiversity Hotspot: One of 36 global biodiversity hotspots (Conservation International); includes northeast India, Nepal, Bhutan, south Tibet, SW China

Sources: GKToday, The Hindu, PIB

---

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

# Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

 [linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

---

Published on [ujjari.com](http://ujjari.com) · Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs