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# Current Affairs Today – February 26, 2026

26 February 2026

**SUBJECTS COVERED****IR****ECONOMY****ENVIRONMENT****SOCIAL ISSUES****SCIENCE & TECH****SECURITY & DEFENCE****CURATED & WRITTEN BY****Bharat Choudhary**

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## CM-302 ANTI-SHIP MISSILE — CHINA-IRAN DEFENCE DEAL

Iran is finalising a deal to procure China's **CM-302 supersonic anti-ship cruise missile**, which is the export variant of the **YJ-12** used by the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN). The CM-302 travels at **Mach 2.5 to Mach 3**, making it one of the fastest anti-ship missiles in global arms markets. It is powered by a liquid-fuel turbojet with four air intakes and is designed to strike naval vessels at long ranges.

**UPSC angle:** The deal deepens China-Iran defence ties amid US sanctions on both countries. For India, this affects the Gulf security environment and freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, through which India imports ~65% of its crude oil. The deal reflects China's use of arms exports as strategic influence tools in West Asia, directly challenging US naval dominance in the Persian Gulf. Under CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act), third-country entities trading with sanctioned states risk secondary sanctions — this could affect Iran-connected entities.

## TSOMGO LAKE — 2,700 TOURISTS STRANDED IN SIKKIM

Over **2,700 tourists were stranded** near **Tsomgo (Changu) Lake** in **East Sikkim** after unexpected heavy snowfall blocked roads in the area. The Sikkim government and district administration mounted a rescue operation, deploying personnel and vehicles to evacuate stranded visitors.

**About Tsomgo Lake:** A glacial lake at approximately **3,753 metres** above sea level on the **Nathu La** highway in East Sikkim. It is fed by snowmelt and lies within restricted permit zone near the international boundary with China. The lake hosts **Brahminy ducks (Ruddy Shelducks)** and is surrounded by rhododendrons that bloom in spring.

**UPSC angle:** High-altitude tourism and disaster management in ecologically sensitive Himalayan zones. The Nathu La Pass (4,310 m) on the same route is a key India-China trade crossing. Climate change is increasing unpredictability of Himalayan weather, making such rescues more frequent.

## BHAVANTAR BHUGTAN YOJANA — MADHYA PRADESH RE-IMPLEMENTS PRICE SUPPORT

**Madhya Pradesh** re-implemented the **Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana (Price Difference Payment Scheme)** for the 2025–26 agricultural season. The scheme compensates farmers when market prices fall **below the MSP (Minimum Support Price)**: the government pays the difference directly to farmers' bank accounts via **DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer)**.

Extended to **mustard and urad** crops this season, with a bonus for urad cultivation. The scheme was first launched in MP in 2017 and covers major crops including soybean, groundnut, sesame, onion, maize, and mung bean.

**UPSC angle:** Price deficiency payment (PDP) schemes are an alternative to physical MSP procurement. They don't require government agencies to physically purchase produce — instead compensating the price gap. Critics argue PDP distorts market signals; proponents argue it is more efficient than procurement. The Swaminathan Commission recommended  $C2+50\%$  formula for MSP; Bhavantar is a partial implementation of price protection.

## STATES' ELECTRICITY TRANSITION REPORT — TOP PERFORMERS

A new **States' Electricity Transition Report** analysed **21 states** covering **95% of India's electricity demand** across multiple dimensions of energy transition progress. In the '**Market Enablers**' dimension (which assesses green tariffs, renewable energy certificates, EV policy frameworks):

**Uttar Pradesh:** Achieved **10% EV adoption**, targets **22 GW solar capacity**

**Andhra Pradesh:** Deployed **smart meters**, achieved **6.2% EV adoption**

**Rajasthan:** Strong policy framework for solar; largest solar capacity in India

**UPSC angle:** India's decentralised electricity governance (states control distribution) means the energy transition's pace is state-specific. State electricity transition indices create competitive federalism incentives. Smart meters are crucial for **demand-side management** and enabling **Time-of-Day (ToD) tariffs** — charging more during peak demand to shift consumption patterns.

## RAH-VEER SCHEME — INCENTIVISING ROAD ACCIDENT FIRST RESPONSE

The **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways** launched the '**Rah-Veer**' Scheme, offering a **₹25,000 cash reward** to any Good Samaritan who assists a seriously injured road accident victim within the **golden hour** — the critical first 60 minutes after injury when timely intervention most improves survival outcomes.

India records over **1.5 lakh road accident fatalities annually** — the highest in the world. A significant proportion of these deaths are preventable if victims receive timely hospital care. Fear of legal harassment has historically deterred bystanders from helping.

**Legal protection:** The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019 includes Good Samaritan provisions protecting helpers from civil and criminal liability. Rah-Veer financially incentivises this behaviour.

**UPSC angle:** Road safety is on the SDG agenda (SDG 3.6: halve road traffic deaths by 2030). India's road fatality rate per lakh population remains far above global averages. The scheme addresses a behavioural gap — legal protection exists but awareness is low.

## ISRO LVM3 — COMMERCIAL MISSION PLANNING

**ISRO** is planning additional commercial missions using the **LVM3 (Launch Vehicle Mark-3)** rocket — India's heaviest operational launch vehicle with a **Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) payload capacity of 4,000 kg**. LVM3 is being marketed through **NewSpace India Limited (NSIL)** to international satellite operators.

The LVM3 previously launched **36 OneWeb satellites** (January 2023) and **36 more** (October 2023), marking India's entry into the commercial heavy-lift market. Its CE-20 cryogenic engine — developed indigenously — powers the upper stage.

**UPSC angle:** Space commercialisation under the **Indian Space Policy 2023** enables private entities to participate in launch services. NSIL is the commercial arm of ISRO. Competition from SpaceX Falcon 9, Ariane 6, and New Glenn is intense; LVM3's competitiveness depends on price and reliability.

## KARNATAKA'S NAMMA CLINICS — URBAN PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

**Karnataka** expanded its **Namma Clinics** scheme — a network of **urban primary health centres** providing free outpatient consultations, diagnostics, and medicines in cities. The scheme targets low-income urban residents who lack access to government health infrastructure (which is concentrated in rural areas).

Namma Clinics operate on a hub-and-spoke model with extended hours (8 AM–8 PM) to serve the working population.

**UPSC angle:** Urban primary healthcare is a gap in India's public health system — the network of PHCs (Primary Health Centres) under the National Health Mission is designed for rural areas. The Ayushman Arogya Mandir (formerly Health and Wellness Centres) initiative aims to fill this gap nationally. Urban poverty and informality make urban health access a key SDG concern (SDG 3, SDG 11).

## FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

### CM-302 Anti-Ship Missile:

Export name: **CM-302** | PLA variant: **YJ-12**

Speed: **Mach 2.5 to Mach 3** (supersonic)

Propulsion: Liquid-fuel turbojet with four air intakes

Purpose: Anti-ship cruise missile targeting naval vessels

Context: China-Iran defence deal; US sanctions on Iran; CAATSA implications

### Tsomgo (Changu) Lake:

Altitude: **~3,753 m** above sea level

Location: East Sikkim, near **Nathu La Pass** (4,310 m)

Type: **Glacial lake** (fed by snowmelt)

Wildlife: **Brahminy ducks (Ruddy Shelducks)**, rhododendrons

Access: Restricted permit zone near China border

### Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana:

State: **Madhya Pradesh** (first launched 2017)

Mechanism: Pays price difference below MSP via **DBT**

Crops covered: Soybean, groundnut, sesame, onion, maize, mung, mustard, urad

Alternative model: Price Deficiency Payment (PDP) vs physical procurement

### States' Electricity Transition Report:

Scope: **21 states**, 95% of India's electricity demand

Market Enablers top: **UP, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan**

UP: 10% EV adoption, 22 GW solar target

AP: Smart meters deployed, 6.2% EV adoption

### Rah-Veer Scheme:

Ministry: **Road Transport and Highways**

Incentive: **₹25,000** per rescued road accident victim

Focus: **Golden hour** — first 60 minutes post-accident

India road fatalities: **>1.5 lakh/year** (world's highest)

Legal basis: **Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019** Good Samaritan provisions

### ISRO LVM3:

GTO payload: **4,000 kg**

Commercial arm: **NewSpace India Limited (NSIL)**

OneWeb launches: January 2023 (36 satellites) + October 2023 (36 satellites)

Upper stage engine: **CE-20** cryogenic (indigenously developed)

Policy: **Indian Space Policy 2023** enables commercial participation

### **Other Relevant Facts:**

Nathu La Pass: Historic Silk Road crossing between India (Sikkim) and China (Tibet); reopened for bilateral trade in 2006

CAATSA: US law targeting Russia, Iran, North Korea; secondary sanctions can affect third-country entities

Smart meters in India: Target 250 million smart meters by 2025–26 under RDSS

SDG 3.6: Halve global road traffic deaths by 2030

Ayushman Arogya Mandir: Renamed from Health and Wellness Centres (HWC) under AB-PMJAY

Sources: The Hindu, PIB, GKToday

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