



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEBRUARY 17, 2026

NATIONAL

➤ SAHI & BODH

- ✓ Union Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda will launch SAHI and BODH at the India AI Summit at Bharat Mandapam, marking a major push for responsible AI adoption in healthcare.
- ✓ SAHI (Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare for India) is a national framework guiding ethical, safe, and evidence-based AI deployment.
- ✓ It focuses on governance, data stewardship, validation, and alignment with public health priorities to ensure transparent and inclusive AI integration.
- ✓ BODH (Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health AI), developed by Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur with the National Health Authority, enables privacy-preserving evaluation of AI models using real-world health data under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission.
- ✓ Together, SAHI and BODH aim to strengthen trust, innovation, and global competitiveness in India's digital health ecosystem.

➤ Sugar Exports Cross 2 Lakh Tonnes in 2025-26

- ✓ India's sugar exports have crossed 2.01 lakh tonnes (2,01,547 tonnes) till February in the 2025-26 marketing year (October-September), according to the All India Sugar Trade Association (AISTA).
- ✓ White sugar accounted for 1,63,000 tonnes and refined sugar 37,638 tonnes. The United Arab Emirates emerged as the top destination (47,006 tonnes), followed by Afghanistan, Djibouti, and Bhutan.
- ✓ The government has approved 2 million tonnes of exports this year, including an additional 5 lakh tonnes under a pro-rata quota system.

- ✓ Meanwhile, sugar production is projected to rise 13% to 29.6 million tonnes, strengthening export capacity while maintaining domestic supply stability.
- **India's Unemployment Rises in January 2026**
- ✓ India's unemployment rate rose to 5% in January 2026, a three-month high, according to the latest Periodic Labour Force Survey released by the National Statistics Office.
- ✓ Urban unemployment increased to 7% from 6.7% in December, while rural unemployment reached 4.2%, reflecting seasonal labour market adjustments.
- ✓ The rise is mainly attributed to post-harvest slowdown in rural areas, reduced temporary farm jobs, and slightly weaker labour force participation, as fewer individuals actively sought work during the period.
- ✓ The data is measured under the Current Weekly Status (CWS) method, where a person is considered employed if they worked at least one hour in the previous seven days.
- **'VAYYU' Climate Research Centre**
- ✓ Indian Institute of Technology Madras has partnered with the Finnish Meteorological Institute to establish VAYYU - a Virtual Research Centre focusing on aerosol-meteorology interactions, Himalayan atmosphere-cryosphere dynamics, and urban air quality.
- ✓ The centre will conduct advanced simulations and state-of-the-art observations to study the impact of aerosols on regional hydro-climate, Himalayan snow and glacier melt, and air pollution in Indian megacities.

INTERNATIONAL

- **Bangladesh's New Prime Minister**
- ✓ Tarique Rahman was sworn in as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh on February 17, 2026, after his party's landslide win in the 13th Parliamentary Elections.
- ✓ The oath was administered by President Mohammed Shahabuddin at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad in Dhaka, marking a break from tradition as the ceremony was held outside Bangabhaban to accommodate around 1,200 guests.
- ✓ Rahman's party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), secured 209 of 297 seats, while Jamaat-e-Islami won 68.

STATE

➤ **India's First Comprehensive Graphene Policy**

- ✓ Chief Minister (CM) of Kerala Pinarayi Vijayan, approved India's first comprehensive graphene policy to position the state as a global hub for research, development, and production of graphene, a carbon-based "wonder material" with applications in advanced industries.
- ✓ Offers 50% land lease subsidy, flexible five-installment payments, up to 45% Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) support, and exemptions from stamp duty, registration fees, and electricity duty for graphene units in government parks.
- ✓ Includes the Rs.87 crore Graphene Innovation Centre (Kochi) and Graphene Aurora Project (Palakkad) by Digital University Kerala with MeitY and industry support.

➤ **'Sthree Suraksha' Scheme**

- ✓ Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan launched the Sthree Suraksha Scheme, providing a monthly pension of ₹1,000 to unemployed women and transwomen in Kerala, with the first payment disbursed to 10,18,042 beneficiaries.
- ✓ The scheme targets economically backward women aged 35-60 who are not receiving benefits from other social welfare pension schemes, along with transwomen, aiming to provide financial support and social security.

APPOINTMENTS

➤ **GAIL (India) Limited Appoints Deepak Gupta as New CMD**

- ✓ GAIL (India) Limited appointed Deepak Gupta as its new Chairman and Managing Director (CMD); he will assume charge on or after 1 March 2026 and serve till 28 February 2029.
- ✓ He will succeed Sandeep Kumar Gupta, who is set to retire on 28 February 2026.
- ✓ The appointment was approved by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

