



## EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEBRUARY 18, 2026

### NATIONAL

#### ➤ NHA's 'BeeCorridors' Plan

- ✓ The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has launched the first-of-its-kind BeeCorridors initiative to develop pollinator-friendly stretches along National Highways.
- ✓ Announced on 17 February 2026, the plan shifts from ornamental to ecological plantations, focusing on nectar- and pollen-rich native species to support honeybees and biodiversity.
- ✓ Around 40 lakh trees will be planted in 2026-27, with nearly 60% under the BeeCorridors program, ensuring year-round flowering and ecological balance.
- ✓ The initiative strengthens sustainable highway development, boosts pollinator conservation, and promotes environmentally responsible infrastructure across India.

#### ➤ Gender Budget allocation in Union Budget 2026-27

- ✓ Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a ₹5.01 lakh crore Gender Budget allocation in the Union Budget 2026-27, an 11.55% rise from ₹4.49 lakh crore last year.
- ✓ The Gender Budget now accounts for 9.37% of the total Union Budget, up from 8.86%, reflecting stronger commitment to women's welfare and empowerment.
- ✓ A record 53 Ministries and Departments, along with five Union Territories, have reported allocations, marking the highest participation since gender budgeting began in 2005-06.

- ✓ The enhanced allocation supports gender-responsive schemes in health, education, skill development, safety, and economic empowerment for inclusive growth.

## **MEETINGS/ CONFERENCES/ SUMMITS**

### ➤ **International Conference on Dam Safety 2026**

- ✓ The International Conference on Dam Safety 2026 was held from February 13 to 14, 2026, at the J.N. Tata Auditorium, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru (Karnataka), under the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) Phase II and III.
- ✓ The conference was inaugurated by Chief Minister (CM) of Karnataka Siddaramaiah and presided over by Dr. K. Shivakumar, Deputy CM (Dy CM) of Karnataka.
- ✓ Launched DAMCHAT, an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based knowledge platform and Jal Shakti Data Management Platform.

## **DEFENCE**

### ➤ **Multilateral Naval Exercise 'MILAN'**

- ✓ MILAN, the ten-day mega multilateral naval exercise hosted by the Indian Navy, has commenced at Visakhapatnam with participation from 72 nations, over 60 warships, and three foreign aircraft.
- ✓ Major global powers, including the US, Russia, Japan, Germany, the Philippines, UAE, and South Africa are participating, while India has deployed key assets such as aircraft carriers INS Vikramaditya and INS Vikrant along with Visakhapatnam-class destroyers.
- ✓ The MILAN Village was inaugurated at the Eastern Naval Command by Vice Admiral Sanjay Bhalla, creating a dedicated platform for social, cultural, and professional interaction among naval delegates from over 70 countries, strengthening global maritime cooperation.
- ✓ The theme: is "Camaraderie, Cooperation, Collaboration"

