



# Daily Current Affairs UPPCS Prelims

23 Feb 2026

English



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Ma'am

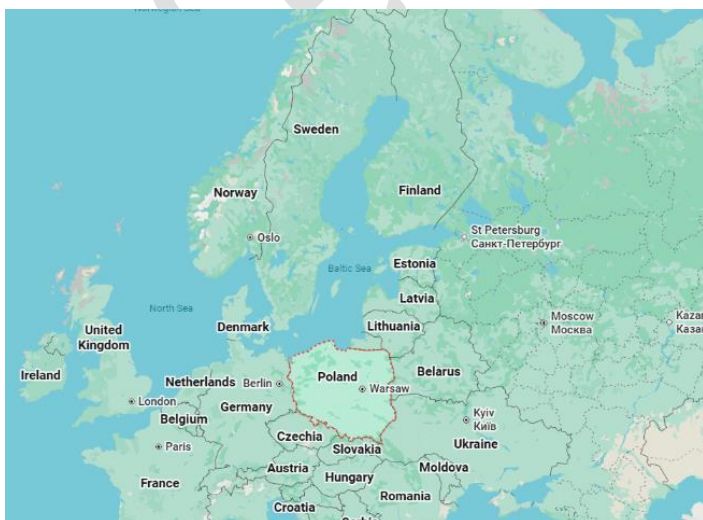
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## 1.1 Daily Current Affairs for UPPCS Prelims 2026 (23 February 2026)

### 1.1.1 Poland Withdraws from the Ottawa Convention (1997)

- Poland has officially withdrawn from the **1997 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty (Ottawa Convention)**, citing security concerns after the invasion of Ukraine. This move signals a broader regional shift in Europe's defence posture.
- It had ratified the treaty in 2012
- Completed destruction of stockpiles in 2016
- The withdrawal is linked to securing the **Eastern Shield**. The Eastern Shield is a **fortification system along borders with: Russia (Kaliningrad), Belarus**
- Ottawa Convention **bans use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines**.
- Anti-personnel mines: Prohibited under the Ottawa Convention.
- Anti-vehicle (anti-tank) mines: Not banned under Ottawa Convention.
- After Russia's invasion of Ukraine, neighbouring states reassessed treaty commitments Poland joined Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine in announcing withdrawal.
- Nearly three dozen nations never acceded to the Ottawa Treaty. Notable countries include: **India, Russia and United States**.



#### 1.1.1.1 Question

Which of the following countries has never acceded to the Ottawa Convention?

- (a) Canada
- (b) Germany
- (c) India
- (d) Japan

Answer: (c) India

#### 1.1.2 India Attends Board of Peace Meeting as Observer

India participated as an observer in the inaugural Board of Peace meeting in Washington D.C., reaffirming its support for a **Two-State solution** while balancing ties in West Asia.

##### What is the Board of Peace?

- Established by the United States.
- Seen as a potential rival to the United Nations.
- Includes 27 nations, such as: Saudi Arabia, UAE, Argentina
- Focus:
  - Redevelopment of the Gaza Strip.
  - Backed by a USD 10 billion U.S. commitment.
  - India clarified its role as: Observer, not a full member.
  - Reflects India's: "De-hyphenated" approach. Balanced engagement in India-Arab League relations and Continued ties with Israel.

#### 1.1.2.1 Question

The primary focus of the Board of Peace is the redevelopment of which region?

- (a) Afghanistan
- (b) Gaza Strip
- (c) Golan Heights
- (d) Sinai Peninsula

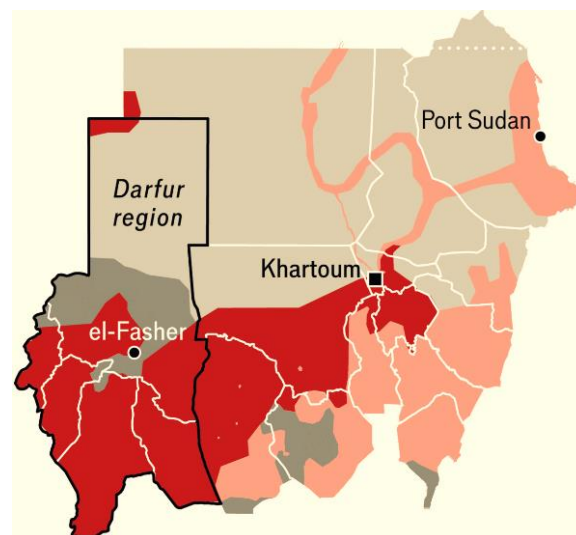
#### 1.1.3 Al-Fashir Crisis

- Mass killings during the capture of Al-Fashir by Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in October 2025 show patterns consistent with genocide, according to a UN fact-finding mission, intensifying global concern over Sudan's deepening humanitarian crisis.
- Al-Fashir is a city in the Darfur region of western Sudan.**

- It was the last stronghold of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) in Darfur before being seized by the RSF in October 2025.
- The **United Nations Independent International Fact-Finding Mission for Sudan** reported that during the October 2025 seizure of **Al-Fashir**, thousands were killed or raped over three days, with patterns consistent with genocide—including targeted killings of non-Arab communities, widespread rape, large-scale displacement and destruction of property—amid the broader **SAF–RSF conflict since 2023**.

### Sudan Civil War

- Sudan is facing a devastating civil war, derailing democratic transition and creating one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.
- Conflict **between Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) led by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) led by Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti)**.
- 2019 ouster of Omar al-Bashir raised hopes for civilian rule, but 2021 military coup dissolved transitional government.
- Full-scale clashes erupted in 2023.
- Ethnic Factor: RSF evolved from Janjaweed militias that targeted non-Arab groups (Massalit, Fur, Zaghawa), fueling mistrust and displacement.
- Resource Competition: Conflict intensified by struggle over land, water, gold and Red Sea trade routes.



#### 1.1.3.1 Question

Al-Fashir, recently in news due to mass killings, is located in:

- Blue Nile region of Sudan
- Darfur region of western Sudan
- Khartoum province of Sudan
- Eastern Sudan near the Red Sea

Answer: (b) Darfur region of western Sudan

#### 1.1.4 Bekaa Valley

- Israeli air strikes in **Bekaa Valley (eastern Lebanon)** killed at least 12 people, including a senior Hezbollah leader Hussein Yaghi, escalating tensions and straining the fragile 2024 US-brokered ceasefire.
- Israeli air strikes killed at least 12 people and injured more than 20, according to Lebanese authorities.
- Israel and Hezbollah agreed to a US-brokered truce in 2024.
- Ceasefire followed more than a year of cross-border hostilities linked to regional tensions and the Gaza conflict.
- Hezbollah is Shi'ite Islamist political and militant organisation, Backed by Iran
- Israeli strike targeted **Ain el-Hilweh**, the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon. Located near the port city of Sidon.

#### Bekaa Valley:

- Strategic region in eastern Lebanon
- Borders Syria





#### 1.1.4.1 Question

The Bekaa Valley, recently in news due to Israeli air strikes, is located in:

- (a) Northern Israel
- (b) Eastern Lebanon
- (c) Southern Syria
- (d) Western Jordan

Answer: (b) Eastern Lebanon

#### 1.1.5 Mount Kanlaon Eruption in the Philippines

- **Mount Kanlaon**, a highly active volcano in the Philippines, recently erupted, releasing ash and smoke over Negros Island and prompting safety warnings.
- Mount Kanlaon, also called **Kanlaon Volcano**, is a **stratovolcano** located on the island of Negros, Philippines.
- It is the **tallest mountain on Negros Island** and in the Visayas region, standing about 2,465 meters (8,087 feet) above sea level.
- It is one of the active volcanoes in the Philippines and part of the Pacific Ring of Fire.
- The volcano comprises a number of pyroclastic cones and craters.
- It has erupted more than 30 times since 1819.

#### 1.1.5.1 Question

Mount Kanlaon is best described as:

- (a) A dormant shield volcano in Indonesia
- (b) An extinct cinder cone in Malaysia
- (c) An active stratovolcano in the Philippines

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(d) A submarine volcano in the Pacific Ocean

Answer: (c) An active stratovolcano in the Philippines

#### 1.1.6 Vibrant Villages Programme-II (VVP-II) Launched

- The Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation Shri Amit Shah launched the Vibrant Villages Programme-II (VVP-II) worth **₹6,839 crore at Nathunpur village, Assam**, aiming to **develop border villages at par with other villages in India**.
- Earlier, border villages were referred to as the “last village” of the country. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi declared that every border village is the “first village” of India.
- Focus on: Development, Employment, Education, Roads, Telecommunications etc.
- Covers: 1,954 villages, 334 blocks, 17 states
- States Covered: Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Assam.

#### 1.1.6.1 Question

The Vibrant Villages Programme-II (VVP-II), recently launched, primarily aims to:

- (a) Promote urban infrastructure in rural areas
- (b) Develop coastal economic zones
- (c) Develop border villages at par with other villages in India
- (d) Establish smart cities in hilly states

Answer: (c) Develop border villages at par with other villages in India

#### 1.1.7 Base Year of Merchandise Trade Indices Revised to FY 2022–23

- The **Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCI&S)** has revised the base year of India’s Merchandise Trade Indices **from 2012–13 to 2022–23 (2022–23 = 100)** to reflect structural changes and evolving trade patterns.
- DGCI&S functions under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.

**Merchandise Trade Indices**

- Measure changes in unit values (prices) of **India's exports and imports** over time.
- Track **price movements in the external sector**.
- Help assess trade competitiveness.
- The revision accounts for:
  - Changes in commodity composition
  - Shifts in global and domestic trade patterns
  - Structural transformation of the Indian economy
  - Need for alignment with current macroeconomic indicators
  - Ensures more accurate economic analysis and policymaking.

- Emphasizes that AI benefits must be equitably shared across humanity.
- India leading the call for **"AI for All"** rooted in equity, access and global cooperation.

#### Focus areas:

- Strengthening international cooperation and multistakeholder engagement
- Respecting national sovereignty
- Advancing AI through accessible and trustworthy frameworks

#### Seven Pillars (Chakras) of Action

The Declaration is structured around 7 key pillars:

1. Democratizing AI Resources
2. Economic Growth & Social Good
3. Secure & Trusted AI
4. AI for Science
5. Access for Social Empowerment
6. Human Capital Development
7. Resilient, Efficient & Innovative AI Systems

#### Who Uses These Indices?

- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI): National Accounts Division uses Export–Import Unit Value Indices as deflators. It helps estimate real exports and imports in GDP calculations.
- Reserve Bank of India (RBI): Uses indices for Balance of Payments (BoP) analysis and External sector assessment

#### 1.1.7.1 Question

The revision of the base year of Merchandise Trade Indices has been undertaken by:

- (a) Reserve Bank of India
- (b) Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics
- (c) NITI Aayog
- (d) Ministry of Finance

Answer: (b) Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics

#### 1.1.8 AI Impact Summit 2026: New Delhi Declaration

- The AI Impact Summit 2026, held in **New Delhi**, concluded with the adoption of the New Delhi Declaration on AI Impact, **endorsed by 89 countries** and international organisations, marking a major step in global AI cooperation.
- Guided by the principle of **"Sarvajan Hitaya, Sarvajan Sukhaya"** (Welfare for all, Happiness for all).

#### 1.1.8.1 Question

The New Delhi Declaration on AI Impact, adopted at the AI Impact Summit 2026, was endorsed by how many countries and international organisations?

- (a) 54
- (b) 72
- (c) 89
- (d) 102

Answer: (c) 89

#### 1.1.9 475-Year-Old Our Lady of Grace Cathedral, Vasai Wins UNESCO Award of Merit (2025)

- A **community-funded restoration** of the 475-year-old Our Lady of Grace Cathedral in Vasai has won the Award of Merit at the **2025 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation**, highlighting India's excellence in heritage preservation.
- About the Cathedral
- Located in **Papdy village, Vasai (Mumbai region)**.
- Built in the **sixteenth century**.
- A stone structure built without cement, using mud as binding material.
- Represents **Portuguese colonial architecture** in India.

- A tangible testament to the establishment of **Catholicism in Maharashtra**.
- Total restoration cost: Approximately Rs 4.5 crore. Entirely community-funded, supported by parish donations.
- Executed by conservation architect Ainsley Lewis.

#### Highest Award of Distinction

- Iwami Ginzan Library Conservation Project, Oda, Japan.
- Sihang Warehouse Conservation Project, Shanghai, China.

#### 1.1.9.1 Question

The recently restored Our Lady of Grace Cathedral, which won the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Award of Merit (2025), is located in:

- (a) Panaji, Goa
- (b) Vasai, Maharashtra
- (c) Kochi, Kerala
- (d) Puducherry

Answer: (b) Vasai, Maharashtra

#### 1.1.10 NIELIT to Establish India's First Dedicated Quantum & AI University

- The **National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT)** has signed an MoU with the **Government of Andhra Pradesh** to establish India's first dedicated Quantum & Artificial Intelligence **University campus in Amaravati**.
- MoU signed on 20th February, 2026 at the India AI Impact Summit.
- Agreement between NIELIT, under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, and the Government of Andhra Pradesh.
- Establish India's first institutionally dedicated academic hub focused solely on Quantum and Artificial Intelligence.
- Aligns with Andhra Pradesh's vision under the proposed Andhra Quantum Mission. Amaravati to become the nucleus of the Quantum Valley initiative.

#### 1.1.10.1 Question

India's first dedicated Quantum & Artificial Intelligence University campus is proposed to be established in:

- (a) Bengaluru, Karnataka
- (b) Hyderabad, Telangana
- (c) Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh
- (d) Pune, Maharashtra

Answer: (c) Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh

#### 1.1.11 'Atal Bihari Vajpayee: The Eternal Statesman'

- The **Vice-President of India, Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan**, released a coffee table book on Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, recalling his legacy and urging the nation to carry forward his ideals of unity and democracy.
- Book Title: "**Atal Bihari Vajpayee: The Eternal Statesman**"
- Author: **Shri Vijay Goel**
- Contains: Rare photographs, Personal anecdotes, Archival material etc
- Vajpayee Served as a Member of the 12th and 13th Lok Sabha during Shri Vajpayee's tenure as Prime Minister.

#### 1.1.11.1 Question

The coffee table book titled "Atal Bihari Vajpayee: The Eternal Statesman" is authored by:

- (a) M. Venkaiah Naidu
- (b) Vijay Goel
- (c) Arun Jaitley
- (d) L. K. Advani

Answer: (b) Vijay Goel

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