



Sun, Planets and Transitions

The Sun will be in Capricornus (*Mesha*) on 1 February. Its angular diameter will be 32'27.9". It will move to Aquarius, the Water Bearer (*Kumbha*), on 16 February. On 28 February, the angular size of the Sun will decrease to 32'17.8".

Mercury, Venus and Mars are also in Capricornus on 1 February. The planets move into Aquarius on 5, 8 and 27 February respectively. Mercury further moves to Pisces, the Fishes (*Meena*) on 19 February.

Mercury is well placed for observations in February 2026 for observers close to the northern side of the equator. The planet is moving northwards, that is, its azimuth is increasing in the northern direction. Further, the ecliptic will be nearly perpendicular to the horizon this month. These two factors will make Mercury an easy target to locate.

Mercury reaches its maximum eastern elongation on 19 February. Its elongation will increase from 15° on 11 February to 18° on 19 February; thereafter it will again decrease to 15° by 26 February.

Ephemeris of Mercury:

Date	Alt*	Diam''	Mag	EI°
01 Feb	+00°55'	5.05	-1.2	8.0 E
10 Feb	+08°18'	5.71	-1.1	14.4 E
20 Feb	+12°44'	7.35	-0.3	18.1 E
28 Feb	+07°25'	9.40	1.9	12.6 E

Venus is now back in the evening sky. It is making a slow rise over the western horizon, but is here to stay for the next few months. It should be possible to see Venus by mid-February. Like Mercury, it too is moving northwards. Until May 2026, its declination will keep increasing

List of Events in February 2026 (Time in IST)

Dt	Dy	Time	Event
01	Su	17:11	Moon-Beehive: 1.3° S
02	Mo	03:39	Full Moon
03	Tu	08:18	Moon-Regulus: 0.4° S
04	We	00:48	Moon descending node
04	We	09:30	Uranus stationary in RA
07	Sa	13:56	Moon-Spica: 2° N
09	Mo	18:13	Last quarter
10	Tu	22:22	Moon apogee: 404600 km
11	We	08:49	Moon-Antares: 0.8° N
12	Th	18:26	Moon south declination: 28.4° S
17	Tu	17:31	New Moon
17	Tu	17:43	Annular solar eclipse
18	We	11:49	Moon ascending node
18	We	12:30	Venus 1.6° S of Moon
18	W	03:30	Mercury 0.1° N of Moon
19	Th	23:29	Mercury elongation: 18.1° E
20	Fr	01:55	Neptune 3.3° S of Moon
20	Fr	05:24	Moon-Saturn: 4.8° S
20	Fr	21:30	Saturn 0.8° S of Neptune
23	Mo	03:30	Uranus 5.4° S of Moon
24	Tu	08:13	Moon-Pleiades: 1.2° S
24	Tu	17:58	First quarter
25	We	04:48	Moon perigee: 370100 km
25	We	22:18	Mercury stationary in RA
26	Th	04:53	Moon north declination: 28.4° N
27	Fr	11:56	Moon-Jupiter: 4° S

and then it will start decreasing, while its elongation will increase until mid-August. In short, the evening appearance of Venus in 2026 is favourable to observers in the northern hemisphere.

Ephemeris of Venus:

Date	Alt*	Diam''	Mag	EI°
01 Feb	-01°04'	9.8	-3.9	6.4 E
10 Feb	+02°24'	9.9	-3.9	8.5 E
20 Feb	+05°41'	10.0	-3.9	10.9 E
28 Feb	+08°14'	10.1	-3.9	12.8 E



Mars reappears above the eastern horizon at dawn, but it will be too difficult to find. It too is moving northwards.

Ephemeris of Mars:

Date	Alt*	Diam''	Mag	EI°
01 Feb	-03°11'	3.9	1.2	5.5 W
10 Feb	-01°01'	3.9	1.2	7.5 W
20 Feb	+01°55'	4.0	1.2	9.8 W
28 Feb	+04°08'	4.0	1.2	11.5 W

Jupiter will be in Gemini, the Twins (*Mithuna*), in February. Gemini being the northernmost zodiacal constellation, a planet in this constellation is always well-placed for observers in northern latitudes.

Ephemeris of Jupiter:

Date	Alt*	Diam''	Mag	EI°
01 Feb	+32°39'	45.6	-2.6	154.6 E
10 Feb	+41°40'	44.8	-2.6	144.6 E
20 Feb	+51°28'	43.8	-2.5	133.7 E
28 Feb	+59°06'	42.8	-2.4	125.3 E

Saturn will be in Pisces, the Fishes (*Meena*). It passes less than 50 arc-minutes from Neptune on 20 February. You can star-hop from Saturn to Neptune. Try taking a series of pictures of the star field around Saturn this month. You should be able to make a nice movie of the movements of Saturn and Neptune.

We gave a finding chart for Saturn and Neptune in the last issue of SkyNews. We give it again below, and it can also be accessed at <https://skytonight.wordpress.com/>.

Ephemeris of Saturn:

Date	Alt*	Diam''	Ring#	Mag	EI°
01 Feb	+38°41'	16.3	36.9	1.1	46.0 E
10 Feb	+31°36'	16.1	36.6	1.1	37.9 E
20 Feb	+23°38'	16.0	36.2	1.1	28.9 E
28 Feb	+17°13'	15.9	36.0	1.0	21.8 E

Angular diameter of the major axis of ring.

* Altitudes of a planet are given for the beginning of civil twilight if the planet is to the west of the Sun, or for the end of civil twilight if the planet is to the east of the Sun.

(Disclaimer: We categorically mention here that we do not believe in astrology and believe that the only influence a planet has on us is to give us the viewing pleasure of its beauty. The sole purpose of giving the transition of planets and the Sun is to acquaint the reader with the Indian nomenclature of planets and constellations and also to show that the actual positions of the Sun and planets, which are based on modern computing, are very different from those given in astrology tables.)

March of the Moon

The month begins with the Full Moon on 1 February. On this day, it passes north of the Beehive cluster (*Pushya nakshtra*), but of course, the cluster would be lost in the glory of the lunar light.

The Moon passes less than half a degree south of Regulus (*Magha*) between 3 and 4 February. It then passes south of Spica (*Chitra*) between 7 and 8 February. In the pre-dawn hours of 11 February, we can see the Moon north-west of Antares (*Jyeshtha*). It will be less than a degree north of Antares at about 9 am. The lunar crescent will be at the spout of the teapot asterism of Sagittarius on 13 February. The next day, it will be holding the handle of the teapot.

The Moon then reappears above the western horizon on 18 February. It will be a challenging evening for experienced observers, as a thin lunar crescent will be visible. Less than 2% of the lunar surface facing us will be seen illuminated by sunlight. Right below and to the left will be Venus, shining at a magnitude of -4. You can see Mercury above the crescent moon, and further up are Saturn and Neptune.

You can test your ability to sight Venus and the thin lunar crescent close to the horizon soon after sunset.

On 19 February, the about 5% illuminated

crescent Moon will be between Mercury and Saturn. On 22 February, the Moon is in Aries. The next day on 23 February, we can see the nearly 40% illuminated lunar disk right below the Pleiades (*Krutika*) cluster. The Moon passes north of the Hyades cluster on 24 February. On 25 February, the Moon will occult the star Elnath (*Agni*), or Beta Tauri. This event can be observed only late at night from the southern tip of India.

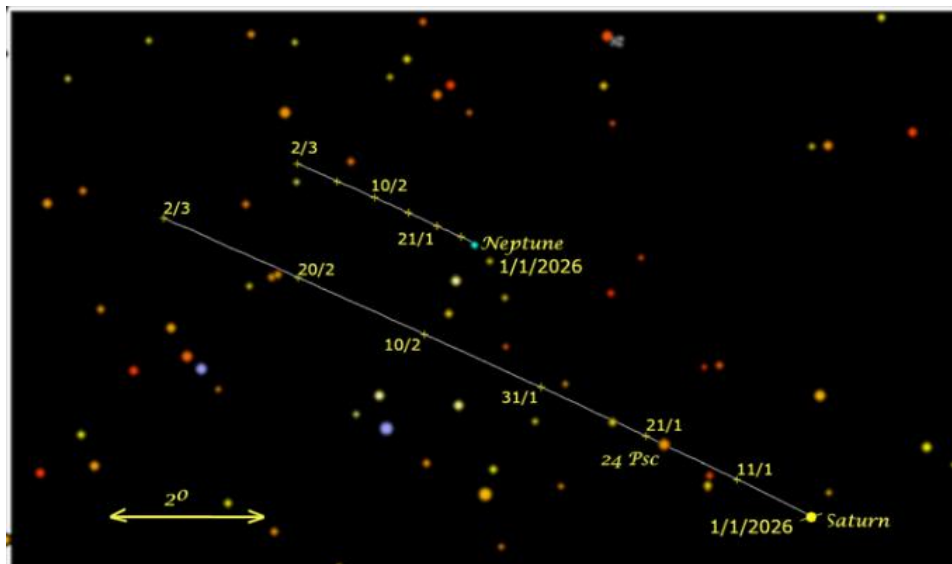
On 27 February, the nearly 82% illuminated lunar disk can be seen entering the Gateway of Heaven. It will be half-way between Pollux and Jupiter.

Finding Neptune

Minimum angular distance between Saturn and Neptune:

Date	Time (UT)	Separation	Dec	El°
20 Feb	19:56	0°49'52"	-1°39'	28.7°

Neptune can be spotted with the help of Saturn. The map below shows the tracks of Saturn and Neptune. The positions of the planets are marked with '+' at an interval of 10 days, starting on 1 January until 2 March. You can use this map to star-hop to Neptune from Saturn. The faintest star on the map is of magnitude 8.5.



Tracks of Saturn and Neptune from 1/1/26 to 2/3/26

Events Involving the Moons of Jupiter

In the table below, we list the events visible from India. The table gives the timings of eclipses, occultations, transits and shadow transits of the moons of Jupiter, suitable for Indian observers. The timings are given in Indian Standard Time (IST).

The output is given as per the following abbreviations and notations:

Columns: 1 = date; 2 = time; and 3 = satellite number.event type.phase.

Satellite numbers: 1 = Io; 2 = Europa; 3 = Ganymede; and 4 = Callisto.

Event type: Ec = eclipse; Oc = occultation; Tr = transit; and Sh = shadow transit.

Phase: D = disappear; R = reappear; I = ingress; and E = egress.

Example:

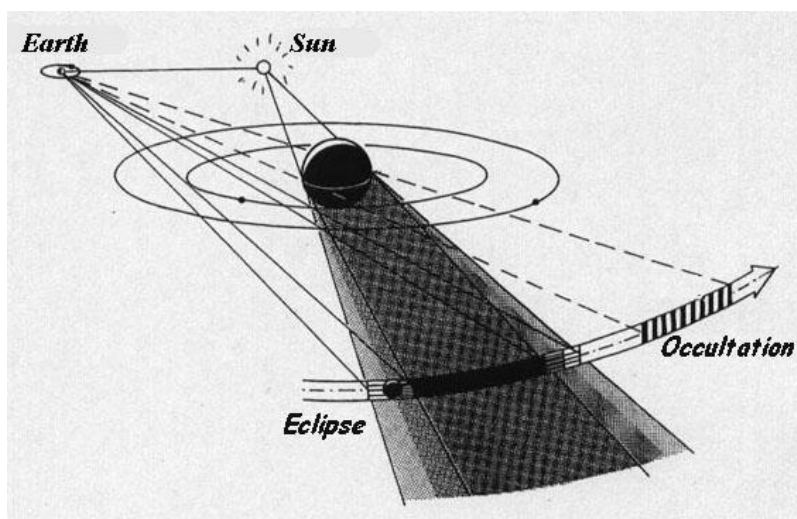
01	19:57:12	1.Tr.I
	20:29:48	1.Sh.I

Means that

On 1 February, at 19:57:12 hours, Io will begin its transit across Jupiter's disk. Later at 20:29:48 hours its shadow will start transiting across the planet's disk.

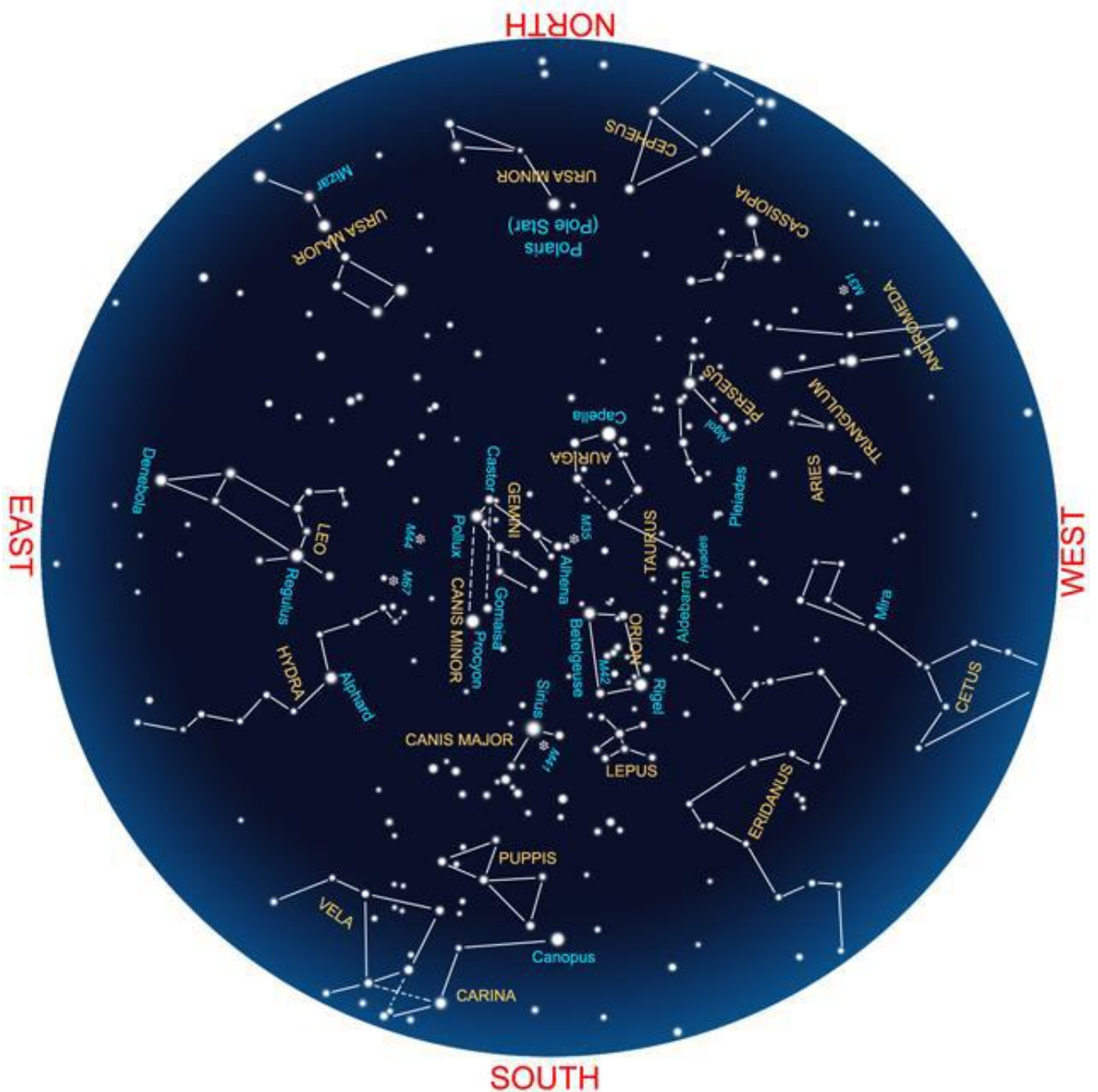
Satellites of Jupiter in February 2026

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>		<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
01	19:57:12	1.Tr.I		08	21:42:54	1.Tr.I		15	02:22:18	1.Oc.D		22	21:23:00	3.Ec.D
	20:29:48	1.Sh.I			22:24:36	1.Sh.I			20:45:48	3.Ec.R		23	00:46:00	3.Ec.R
	22:13:36	1.Tr.E			23:59:12	1.Tr.E			23:29:42	1.Tr.I			01:17:36	1.Tr.I
	22:46:30	1.Sh.E		09	00:41:12	1.Sh.E		16	00:19:30	1.Sh.I			02:14:36	1.Sh.I
02	20:07:42	1.Ec.R			19:02:18	1.Oc.D			01:45:48	1.Tr.E			03:33:36	1.Tr.E
04	00:10:24	2.Oc.D			22:02:36	1.Ec.R			02:36:06	1.Sh.E			22:36:54	1.Oc.D
	04:13:30	2.Ec.R		10	18:25:42	1.Tr.E			20:49:06	1.Oc.D		24	01:52:24	1.Ec.R
	21:02:18	3.Tr.I			19:09:54	1.Sh.E		17	23:57:30	1.Ec.R			19:44:42	1.Tr.I
	23:30:06	3.Sh.I		11	02:28:30	2.Oc.D			18:48:18	1.Sh.I			20:43:24	1.Sh.I
05	00:18:42	3.Tr.E		12	00:25:48	3.Tr.I			20:12:36	1.Tr.E			22:00:42	1.Tr.E
	02:49:36	3.Sh.E			03:29:06	3.Sh.I			21:04:48	1.Sh.E			22:59:54	1.Sh.E
	19:15:48	2.Tr.I			03:41:54	3.Tr.E		18	18:26:12	1.Ec.R		25	20:21:06	1.Ec.R
	20:31:48	2.Sh.I			21:12:42	4.Tr.E		19	23:55:42	2.Tr.I		27	02:18:42	2.Tr.I
	22:05:42	2.Tr.E			21:34:42	2.Tr.I		20	01:44:06	2.Sh.I		28	20:23:42	2.Oc.D
	23:22:30	2.Sh.E			23:08:00	2.Sh.I			02:45:00	2.Tr.E		01*	01:22:48	2.Ec.R
07	03:16:24	1.Tr.I		13	00:24:24	2.Tr.E			23:05:06	4.Oc.D				
	03:55:48	1.Sh.I			00:35:42	4.Sh.I		21	03:01:30	4.Oc.R				
08	00:35:48	1.Oc.D			01:58:30	2.Sh.E			22:45:36	2.Ec.R				
	03:33:48	1.Ec.R		14	20:08:42	2.Ec.R		22	20:49:42	3.Oc.R		* Night of 28 Feb / 1 Mar		



Eclipses occur when the satellites pass in the shadow of Jupiter. Occultations occur when the satellites pass behind Jupiter for a terrestrial observer. (Picture courtesy: <https://promenade.imcce.fr/en/pages3/365.html>)

This sky map for February is drawn for mid-northern latitudes, to be used around 9:30 p.m. local time



For the latest updates, please visit <https://skytonight.wordpress.com/monthly-sky-notes-and-links/>

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