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# Current Affairs Today — February 15, 2026

15 February 2026

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## WHY IN NEWS

India signed defence industrial cooperation agreements with Greece and unveiled the SESEL Joint Vision with Seychelles; Gujarat inked a Letter of Intent with Starlink (SpaceX) for satellite internet in tribal districts; and shooter Manu Bhaker won silver at the Asian Shooting Championships 2026 in New Delhi.

## DEFENCE & SECURITY

### India-Greece Defence Industrial Cooperation Agreement

India and Greece signed a **Joint Declaration of Intent for Defence Industrial Cooperation**, establishing a **5-year roadmap for co-development and co-production** of defence equipment. Key elements:

Aligns India's **Aatmanirbhar Bharat** defence initiative with Greece's **Defence Industry Agenda 2030**

A **Bilateral Military Cooperation Plan for 2026** was exchanged alongside the declaration

Greece will deploy a **liaison officer to the Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)**, Gurugram — India's maritime domain awareness hub covering the IOR

**Significance:** Greece is a NATO member and EU partner with advanced naval and aerospace defence industries. The cooperation opens avenues for India to access European-standard defence technology while offering Greece access to India's cost-competitive manufacturing base.

### DAC Approves 114 Rafale Jets — Rs 3.25 Lakh Crore Deal

The **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)**, chaired by Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh**, approved procurement of **114 Rafale fighter jets** from France's **Dassault Aviation** — India's largest ever defence deal at **Rs 3.25 lakh crore (~USD 40 billion)**. Breakdown: 18 fly-away (direct delivery) + 96 manufactured in India (HAL–Dassault partnership). India's total Rafale fleet will reach **176 jets** (36 IAF + 26 Navy Rafale-M + 114 new).

## MoD–HAL Dornier 228 for Coast Guard — Rs 2,312 Crore

The Ministry of Defence contracted with **HAL Kanpur Transport Division** for **8 Dornier 228 aircraft** with Operational Role Equipment for the **Indian Coast Guard**. The Dornier 228 is a 19-seater STOL (Short Take-Off and Landing) twin-turboprop powered by the Garrett TPE 331 engine, manufactured domestically at Kanpur. The Coast Guard aims to grow its air fleet from 80 to **100 aircraft by 2030**.

## Indian Navy Assumes Command of CTF-154

The **Indian Navy** assumed command of **Combined Task Force 154 (CTF-154)** for the first time. Commander: **Commodore Milind M. Mokashi, Shaurya Chakra** (taking over from the Italian Navy). CTF-154 operates under **Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)** — a 44-nation multinational partnership headquartered in **Manama, Bahrain** (established May 2023). Focus: Maritime training, counter-piracy, trafficking prevention, and Maritime Domain Awareness.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### India-Seychelles SESEL Joint Vision

India and Seychelles announced the **SESEL Joint Vision** — an acronym for **Sustainability, Economic Growth and Security through Enhanced Linkages** — during Seychelles President **Patrick Herminie's** State Visit to India (February 9, 2026), marking **50 years of diplomatic relations** between the two countries.

#### Key focus areas of SESEL:

**Maritime security** — coast guard cooperation, surveillance sharing

**Digital infrastructure** — submarine cable connectivity, digital governance

**Renewable energy** — solar and ocean-based energy cooperation

**Climate action** — shared vulnerability as island/coastal nations

**Trade and economic linkages** — facilitating bilateral commerce

**Strategic context:** Seychelles is critical to India's **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)** doctrine. India has established a **naval base at Assumption Island** (Seychelles) and regularly conducts joint patrols under bilateral agreements. India has extended multiple **Lines of Credit** to Seychelles for development.

## Henley Passport Index — India 75th

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India improved to **75th rank** in the Henley Passport Index (February 2026) with **56 visa-free or visa-on-arrival destinations** — up from 80th in January 2026 and 85th in 2025. Top rank: **Singapore (192 destinations)**; Japan and South Korea ranked second and third (187 destinations). Lowest: Afghanistan (24 destinations, rank 101).

### SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

#### Gujarat–Starlink LoI for Satellite Internet

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The **Gujarat government** signed a **Letter of Intent (LoI)** with **Starlink (SpaceX)** for satellite broadband deployment in underserved regions, particularly **tribal and Aspirational Districts** including **Narmada and Dahod**. Use cases: e-governance, healthcare, education, disaster management, and industrial connectivity. Aligns with the **Digital India** vision of last-mile broadband access.

**About Starlink:** Starlink is SpaceX’s **Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite internet constellation** — as of 2026, over 6,000 satellites in orbit, providing high-speed (50–200 Mbps), low-latency broadband. **TRAI** has been finalising the regulatory framework for satellite communications in India; spectrum allocation for satellite broadband is a contested area between LEO operators (Starlink, OneWeb/Eutelsat) and traditional terrestrial telecom operators (Reliance Jio, Airtel).

#### IIT Bombay–Columbia University AI Centre for Manufacturing

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The “**Columbia–IIT Bombay Centre of AI for Manufacturing**” was signed at **Bharat Mandapam**, New Delhi, in the presence of Union Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan** (Education). Focus sectors: semiconductors, robotics, pharmaceuticals, food processing, petrochemicals, and construction. Deliverables include applied research, talent development, and public AI datasets.

#### NITI Aayog — Technology Services Roadmap

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NITI Aayog Frontier Hub released “**Technology Services — Reimagination Ahead**”, targeting growth of India’s tech sector from **USD 265 billion to USD 750–850 billion by 2035**. Five levers: Agentic AI, Software & Products, Digital Infrastructure, Innovation-led Engineering, India-for-India solutions. Presented by Union Minister **Piyush Goyal**.

## ECONOMY & BANKING

### NIPL–PayNet Malaysia — UPI–DuitNow Interoperability

**NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL)** signed a cross-border QR payment agreement with **PayNet (Malaysia)**, enabling Indian visitors to use UPI apps at Malaysian merchants via **DuitNow QR** (Phase 1) and Malaysians to pay via UPI QR in India (Phase 2). UPI is now active in: UAE, Nepal, Mauritius, Singapore, France, Bhutan, and Malaysia.

### IOB–IIM Kozhikode MoU for Executive Education

**Indian Overseas Bank (IOB)** partnered with **IIM Kozhikode** for leadership and executive training, signed during IOB's **90th Foundation Day (February 10, 2026)**. A dedicated **Centre of Excellence** will be established at IIM-K's Kochi campus + IOB staff college for senior executive customised programs.

### Rajasthan Budget 2026–27 — Key Figures

Presented by Deputy CM and Finance Minister **Diya Kumari**. Total outlay: **Rs 6,10,956 crore**. Fiscal deficit: **Rs 79,492 crore (3.69% of GSDP)**. Key allocations: Rs 5,000 crore for **Jal Jeevan Mission–Urban** (6,245 villages); Rs 1,800 crore for roads; Rs 600 crore for **DMIC Jodhpur–Pali–Marwar** (3,600 hectares); Rs 500 crore for Atal Pragati Paths.

## APPOINTMENTS

### City Union Bank — R Vijay Anandh as MD & CEO

**RBI** approved the appointment of **R Vijay Anandh** as MD & CEO of **City Union Bank**, effective May 1, 2026 (3-year term). Annual remuneration: Rs 2.50 crore. Previously Executive Director of the bank with 28+ years in risk management, credit appraisal, and retail assets.

### Other Appointments (February 14–16 window)

**Deepak Gupta** — CMD of GAIL (effective March 1, 2026; term until February 28, 2029); succeeds Sandeep Kumar Gupta

**CA Prasanna Kumar D** — 74th President of ICAI (2026–27); Visakhapatnam-based; VP: CA Mangesh Pandurang Kinare

**Sanjay Agarwal** — MD & CEO of AU Small Finance Bank reappointed (from April 19, 2026, 3 years); AU SFB received in-principle universal bank approval in 2025

## GOVERNANCE

### Seva Teertha — New PMO Complex (February 13)

The **Seva Teertha** integrated complex was inaugurated by PM Modi on February 13 — housing the **PMO (Seva Teertha-1)**, **NSCS (Seva Teertha-2)**, and **Cabinet Secretariat (Seva Teertha-3)**. Designed by **Dr. Bimal Patel**; inscription: “**Nagrik Devo Bhava**”. First policy decision: **PM RAHAT Scheme** — cashless hospitalisation up to **Rs 1.5 lakh** for road accident victims within 7 days. **North and South Blocks** will be converted into the “**Yuge Yugeen Bharat**” **National Museum**.

### Ministry of Earth Sciences–Puducherry MoU

The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) signed a **5-year MoU with the Puducherry government** (February 12) covering six pillars: sustainable marine fisheries, offshore wind energy, desalination, ocean climate services, coastal erosion management, and maritime spatial planning. Signatories: **Dr. M. Ravichandran** (MoES Secretary) and **Dr. Sharat Chauhan** (Puducherry Chief Secretary).

## SPORTS

### Manu Bhaker — Silver at Asian Shooting Championships 2026

Olympic medallist **Manu Bhaker** won the **silver medal** in the **25m Pistol event** at the **Asian Shooting Championships 2026**, held in **New Delhi**. Qualification score: 584; Final score: 35 points (including two shoot-offs). She also competed in 10m Air Pistol (finished 7th). Manu Bhaker is the first Indian to win two medals at the same Olympic Games (Paris 2024 — bronze in 10m Air Pistol individual and 10m Air Pistol mixed team).

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

### Thanya Nathan — Visually Impaired Lawyer Tops Civil Judge Merit List (Kerala)

**Thanya Nathan**, a visually impaired lawyer from **Kannur district, Kerala**, topped the **Civil Judge (Junior Division) merit list among candidates with disabilities** in Kerala. She had previously topped her **LLB at Kannur University**. Study aids used: Braille materials, screen-reading software, and audio resources.

**Constitutional/legal significance:** The achievement aligns with a **Supreme Court ruling** affirming that visual impairment does not disqualify a candidate from judicial posts — upholding the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016** and the principle of **reasonable accommodation** in public employment.

Article 16 of the Constitution guarantees equality of opportunity in public employment; the RPwD Act 2016 mandates 4% reservation for persons with disabilities in government posts.

## IMPORTANT DAYS (FEBRUARY 12–14 WINDOW)

### National Productivity Week – February 12–18

The **68th Foundation Day of the National Productivity Council (NPC)** launched **National Productivity Week (February 12–18, 2026)**. Theme 2026: “**Clusters as Growth Engine: Maximising Productivity in MSMEs**”. Venue: India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. NPC was established in 1958 under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

### World Radio Day – February 13

**UNESCO** proclaimed **World Radio Day** in 2011; the UN General Assembly adopted it in 2012. First observed: February 13, 2012. Theme 2026: “**Radio and Artificial Intelligence: AI is a tool, not a voice**”. The 2026 event was hosted by **Akashvani Raipur** (All India Radio). Radio remains the single most accessible mass medium globally, reaching 95%+ of the world’s population.

### International Darwin Day – February 12

**Darwin Day** commemorates the birth anniversary of **Charles Darwin** (February 12, 1809) and celebrates **evolutionary science and scientific thinking**. Darwin’s **Theory of Evolution by Natural Selection** (1859, “On the Origin of Species”) is the foundational framework of modern biology.

## ★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

### INDIA-GREECE DEFENCE PACT:

Agreement: **Joint Declaration of Intent for Defence Industrial Cooperation**

Framework: 5-year co-development/co-production roadmap

India link: Aatmanirbhar Bharat | Greece link: Defence Industry Agenda 2030

Greece will post liaison officer to: **IFC-IOR, Gurugram** (maritime domain awareness hub)

### INDIA-SEYCHELLES SESEL:

SESEL = **Sustainability, Economic Growth and Security through Enhanced Linkages**

Occasion: 50 years of India-Seychelles diplomatic relations

Context: Seychelles President **Patrick Herminie** State Visit, February 9, 2026

India's SAGAR Doctrine: **Security and Growth for All in the Region** (PM Modi, 2015, Mauritius)

India's naval facility: **Assumption Island**, Seychelles

### GUJARAT-STARLINK LOI:

Satellite: LEO (Low Earth Orbit) constellation; 6,000+ satellites

Target districts: **Narmada and Dahod** (tribal/Aspirational Districts)

Regulator: **TRAI** — finalising satellite broadband spectrum allocation framework

Speed: 50–200 Mbps, low latency (unlike geostationary satellites at 600ms latency)

### MANU BHAKER — ASIAN SHOOTING CHAMPIONSHIPS 2026:

Event: 25m Pistol; **Silver medal**; Venue: New Delhi

Qualification: 584; Final: 35 points (two shoot-offs)

Paris 2024: Won **two bronze medals** (10m Air Pistol individual + 10m Air Pistol mixed team with Sarabjot Singh)

First Indian to win two medals at same Olympics since Norman Pritchard (1900)

### THANYA NATHAN — CIVIL JUDGE MERIT LIST:

From: **Kannur district, Kerala**

Achievement: Topped Civil Judge (Junior Division) exam among PwD candidates

Legal basis: **RPwD Act 2016** (4% reservation PwD in Govt jobs) + SC ruling on disability non-disqualification for judiciary

Article 16: Equality of opportunity in public employment

### OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

IFC-IOR: Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region; HQ Gurugram; India's maritime surveillance hub covering 21 countries

CTF-154: Established May 2023 under **CMF (Combined Maritime Forces)** — 44-nation body; HQ **Manama, Bahrain**

City Union Bank: Tamil Nadu-based; R Vijay Anandh as new MD (May 1, 2026; Rs 2.50 cr p.a.)

NPC (National Productivity Council): Founded **1958**; under Ministry of Commerce and Industry

World Radio Day: Proclaimed by UNESCO **2011**; adopted by UNGA **2012**; first observed February 13, **2012**

Darwin Day: February 12 = Charles Darwin's birth (1809); "On the Origin of Species" published **1859**

Sources: IndiaBix, AffairsCloud

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