



UPSC &amp; STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

**DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS**

# Current Affairs Today – February 16, 2026

16 February 2026

**SUBJECTS COVERED**

POLITY

ECONOMY

ENVIRONMENT

SCIENCE &amp; TECH

IR

SECURITY &amp; DEFENCE

REPORTS &amp; SCHEMES

SOCIAL ISSUES

PERSONS &amp; AWARDS

**CURATED & WRITTEN BY****Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator &amp; Content Creator •

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

Free UPSC &amp; State PCS Resources

[ujiyari.com](http://ujiyari.com)

# Current Affairs Today — February 16, 2026

16 February 2026

## WHY IN NEWS

February 16, 2026 saw a historic governance shift as India inaugurated the Seva Teertha — a new integrated complex housing the PMO, Cabinet Secretariat, and NSC Secretariat — ending over eight decades of governance from colonial South Block; the Defence Acquisition Council simultaneously cleared India’s largest-ever defence deal.

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

### Seva Teertha — India’s New PMO Complex Inaugurated

The **Seva Teertha** integrated administrative complex was inaugurated, marking the end of the Prime Minister’s Office’s eight-decade residence in **South Block**, a British-era colonial building constructed in the 1930s.

#### Three buildings:

Building	Occupant
Seva Teertha-1	Prime Minister’s Office (PMO)
Seva Teertha-2	National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS)
Seva Teertha-3	Cabinet Secretariat

#### Key design details:

Architect: **Dr. Bimal Patel** (same architect who designed the Central Vista redevelopment)

Green rating: **4-star** (Ministry of Environment standards)

Inscription: “**Nagrik Devo Bhava**” (Citizen is God) — reflecting citizen-centric governance philosophy

Features “**India House**” — a dedicated complex for hosting international bilateral and multilateral summits

Architectural motifs: **Chalukyan stone screen-work** (11th–13th century tradition); dome inspired by **Buddhist stupa** form

Inaugurated on the **95th anniversary of New Delhi’s formal inauguration** (February 13, 1931)

**First policy decision from Seva Teertha: The PM RAHAT Scheme** — assures cashless hospitalisation of up to **₹1.5 lakh** for road accident victims within the **first 7 days** of injury, regardless of the victim's ability to pay.

**UPSC Relevance:** GS-2 (Indian governance, PM's Office, Central Vista project); Prelims: Bimal Patel, Nagrik Devo Bhava, PM RAHAT.

---

## North and South Blocks — “Yuge Yugeen Bharat” National Museum

---

The Union Cabinet approved the conversion of **North Block and South Block** into the “**Yuge Yugeen Bharat**” **National Museum** (translation: India Across the Ages). The museum will chronicle India's civilisational journey — from ancient history through the freedom struggle to post-independence development. The move symbolically transitions these buildings from colonial administrative heritage to national cultural heritage.

---

## Urban Challenge Fund (UCF) — Cabinet Approval

---

The Union Cabinet approved the **Urban Challenge Fund** with **Rs 1,00,000 crore** central assistance (FY 2025–26 to 2030–31). The UCF aims to catalyse **Rs 4 lakh crore** total urban investment. Funding structure: 25% central + minimum 50% market sources + 25% state/ULB contribution. Three verticals: **Cities as Growth Hubs, Creative Redevelopment, and Water and Sanitation**. Eligible cities: population  $\geq 10$  lakh, all state/UT capitals, major industrial cities  $\geq 1$  lakh. A **Rs 5,000 crore Credit Repayment Guarantee corpus** supports smaller cities in accessing market financing.

---

## Rajasthan Budget 2026–27 Presented

---

Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister **Diya Kumari** presented the Rajasthan Budget for 2026–27. Key figures:

Total outlay: **Rs 6,10,956 crore**

Revenue receipts: Rs 3,25,740 crore

Fiscal deficit: **Rs 79,492.52 crore** (3.69% of GSDP)

Major allocations: Rs 5,000 crore for **Jal Jeevan Mission-Urban**; Rs 350 crore for industrial parks; Rs 1,800+ crore for roads and highways.

## DEFENCE & SECURITY

### 114 Rafale Jets — DAC Approves India's Largest Ever Defence Deal

The **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)**, chaired by Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh**, approved procurement of **114 Rafale fighter jets** from France at an estimated cost of **Rs 3.25 lakh crore (~USD 40 billion)** — the largest single defence procurement deal in India's history.

#### Deal structure:

**18 jets** in fly-away condition (direct delivery)

**96 jets** to be manufactured in India under **Make in India** framework (HAL–Dassault Aviation partnership)

**Cumulative Rafale fleet:** With 36 jets already inducted (IAF, 2020–21 batch) and 26 Rafale-Marine approved for the Navy, India's total Rafale force will reach **176 jets**.

**Route:** An **Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA)** with France — same route as the 2016 deal — bypasses conventional tendering and is used for Government-to-Government strategic procurements.

**Context:** India's Air Force requires **42 operational squadrons**; current strength is approximately 31 squadrons — below the mandated minimum. Ageing MiG-21 fleet retirements have accelerated the deficit.

### HAL Dornier 228 Aircraft for Coast Guard — Rs 2,312 Crore Deal

The Ministry of Defence signed a **Rs 2,312 crore** procurement deal with **HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited) Kanpur Transport Division** for **8 Dornier 228 aircraft** with Operational Role Equipment for the **Indian Coast Guard**. The Dornier 228 is a **19-seater German-origin STOL (Short Take-Off and Landing) twin-turboprop** aircraft powered by Garrett TPE 331 engines. India's Coast Guard aims to expand its air fleet from 80 to **100 aircraft by 2030**.

### Indian Navy Commands CTF-154 for First Time

The **Indian Navy** assumed command of **Combined Task Force 154 (CTF-154)** for the first time. Commander: **Commodore Milind M. Mokashi, Shaurya Chakra** (based in Manama, Bahrain). CTF-154 was established in **May 2023** under the **Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)** — a 44-nation naval partnership headquartered in Bahrain — and focuses on maritime training, anti-piracy operations, and counter-trafficking. India's leadership of CTF-154 marks a significant step in its role as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean.

## REPORTS & INDICES

### Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2025 — India Ranks 91st

**Transparency International** (founded 1993, HQ: Berlin) released the **Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2025**, evaluating 182 countries on a 0–100 scale (0 = most corrupt, 100 = least).

**India:** Ranked **91st** with a score of **39/100** — an improvement from 96th in CPI 2024. India outperforms all South Asian neighbours except **Bhutan** (score 71, rank 18).

#### Global highlights:

**Top performers:** Denmark (89, 8th consecutive year as global top), Finland, Singapore, New Zealand, Norway

**Bottom performers:** Somalia and South Sudan (9); Venezuela (10)

**Global average:** 42/100 — lowest in over a decade; 122 countries scored below 50

**829 journalists** killed globally since 2012 while investigating corruption

### NITI Aayog Technology Services Roadmap

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

## JUDICIARY & LAW

### Supreme Court — Telecom Spectrum is a Public Resource

The Supreme Court ruled that **telecom spectrum is a Union of India public resource** and cannot be treated as a corporate asset or monetised under the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016**. Spectrum is a limited, conditional, revocable privilege — not a proprietary right. Legal title vests exclusively with the Union of India. The ruling invokes the **Public Trust Doctrine** and is governed by the **Telecommunications Act 2023** and **TRAI Act 1997**. The ruling impacts financial creditors (such as SBI) seeking to monetise spectrum from defaulting operators (Aircel, RCom) and enables the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to reclaim airwaves.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### LHS 1903 — Four-Planet System Discovered

ESA's **Cheops Space Telescope** discovered a four-planet system around red dwarf star **LHS 1903**, located **117 light-years** from Earth. The system contains two **Super-Earths** (rocky planets) and two **mini-Neptunes** (gaseous). Notably, the outermost planet is rocky despite being beyond the gaseous planets — challenging standard planetary formation theory. The fourth planet has a surface temperature of  $\sim 60^{\circ}\text{C}$ , suggesting potential habitability. LHS 1903 is a red dwarf with 50% of the Sun's mass and 5% of its luminosity.

### IIT Delhi — Chirality-Based Electronics Device

A study published in **Nature** by IIT Delhi and a German research team describes a device that separates electrons by **chirality** (left/right-handed quantum state) without requiring powerful magnetic fields. The material used is **palladium gallium (PdGa)** crystal, which has a “twisted” band structure. The three-armed device functions as a **chiral valve**. Applications: low-power computing and novel magnetic memory devices — significant for quantum and neuromorphic computing.

### C-DOT — Quantum-Vulnerable Algorithm Detection Tool

The **Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT)** and **Synergy Quantum India Pvt Ltd** developed a tool to identify **quantum-safe vs. quantum-vulnerable cryptographic algorithms** in existing systems. Target sectors: defence, telecom, banking, and government IT systems. The tool enables preparedness for post-quantum cybersecurity migration.

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

The “**Columbia–IIT Bombay Centre of AI for Manufacturing**” was announced at **Bharat Mandapam**, New Delhi, by Union Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan**. Focus areas: semiconductors, industrial robotics, pharmaceuticals, food processing, petrochemicals, and construction.

## ECONOMY & FINANCE

### WPI Inflation Hits 10-Month High

India's **Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation** for January 2026 rose to **1.81%** — the highest in 10 months and the third consecutive monthly increase. Drivers: higher food article prices, non-food items, and manufactured products (basic metals, textiles). Fuel and power remained in deflation territory.

## NIPL–PayNet Malaysia — Cross-Border UPI-DuitNow QR Agreement

**NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL)** signed a cross-border QR payment agreement with **PayNet (Payments Network Malaysia)**. Phase 1: Indian visitors use UPI apps (Google Pay, PhonePe, Paytm) at Malaysian merchants via **DuitNow QR**. Phase 2: Malaysians scan UPI QR in India using DuitNow-linked apps. UPI is currently operational across UAE, Nepal, Mauritius, Singapore, France, Bhutan, and now Malaysia.

## GAIL — New CMD Appointed

**Deepak Gupta** was appointed **CMD of GAIL (Gas Authority of India Limited)**, effective March 1, 2026 (term: until February 28, 2029). He succeeds **Sandeep Kumar Gupta** (retiring February 28, 2026). Deepak Gupta currently serves as Director (Projects) at GAIL with expertise in natural gas pipelines and LNG.

## ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

### Kerala — India’s First Comprehensive Urban Policy

Kerala became the **first state in India** to adopt a comprehensive urban policy, approved by the State Cabinet under **CM Pinarayi Vijayan**. Prepared by the **Local Self-Government Department**, the policy projects **80% urbanisation by 2050** and focuses on climate-smart cities, coastal erosion management, and reducing spatial inequalities.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Henley Passport Index — India Ranks 75th

The Henley Passport Index placed India at **75th rank** with **56 visa-free or visa-on-arrival destinations**. Top-ranked passport: **Singapore** (192 destinations); Japan and South Korea rank second (187 destinations each). Lowest: Afghanistan (101st, 24 destinations).

## SPORTS

### Magnus Carlsen Wins 2026 FIDE Freestyle Chess World Championship

Norwegian grandmaster **Magnus Carlsen** defeated **Fabiano Caruana** 2.5–1.5 in the final at **Weissenhaus**, winning the inaugural **FIDE Freestyle Chess World Championship** — his **21st world title** across chess formats. This was the first official FIDE-recognised Freestyle (Chess960) World Championship.

## APPOINTMENTS

### CA Prasanna Kumar D Elected ICAI President

**CA Prasanna Kumar D** was elected the **74th President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)** for 2026–27. He has been a qualified CA since 1984 (40+ years experience) and is from Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. **CA Mangesh Pandurang Kinare** was elected Vice-President for 2026–27.

### AU Small Finance Bank MD Reappointed

**RBI** approved the reappointment of **Sanjay Agarwal** as MD & CEO of **AU Small Finance Bank** for a three-year term from April 19, 2026. Agarwal founded AU SFB and the bank received in-principle approval for Universal Bank status in 2025.

## CULTURE & HERITAGE

### National Cow Culture Museum — Mathura

India's **first dedicated cattle heritage museum** was established in **Mathura, Uttar Pradesh**, on the campus of **Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Veterinary Science University**. The museum focuses on indigenous cattle breeds, dairy production, sustainable agriculture, and conservation.

**★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA**
**SEVA TEERTHA — CORE DATA:**

Three buildings: PMO (Seva Teertha-1), NSCS (Seva Teertha-2), Cabinet Secretariat (Seva Teertha-3)

Architect: **Dr. Bimal Patel**

Inscription: “**Nagrik Devo Bhava**”

Green rating: 4-star building standards

Inauguration: 95th anniversary of New Delhi (Feb 13, 1931)

First decision: **PM RAHAT** — cashless hospitalisation ₹1.5 lakh, 7-day window

**RAFALE 114 JETS — CORE DATA:**

DAC approval: chaired by **Rajnath Singh**

Deal value: **Rs 3.25 lakh crore (~USD 40 billion)** — India’s largest defence deal

Composition: 18 fly-away + 96 Make in India

Total Rafale fleet: 36 (IAF existing) + 26 (Navy approved) + 114 (new) = **176 jets**

Framework: **Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA)** with France

IAF target: 42 squadrons; current ~31 squadrons

**CPI 2025 — INDIA DATA:**

India: Rank **91**, Score **39/100** (improved from 96th in 2024)

Best in South Asia after Bhutan (rank 18, score 71)

Publisher: **Transparency International** (founded 1993, Berlin)

Top: **Denmark (89)**; Bottom: Somalia/South Sudan (9)

Global average: 42/100; 122 countries below 50

**SUPREME COURT SPECTRUM RULING:**

Spectrum = Union of India’s public resource; not a corporate asset

Cannot be monetised under **IBC 2016**

Doctrine invoked: **Public Trust Doctrine**

Governing law: **Telecommunications Act 2023, TRAI Act 1997**

Impacts: Aircel, RCom spectrum recovery by DoT

**LHS 1903 SYSTEM:**

Telescope: ESA **Cheops**; Distance: 117 light-years

4 planets: 2 Super-Earths (rocky) + 2 mini-Neptunes (gaseous)

Unusual: outermost planet is rocky — challenges formation models

4th planet surface temp: ~60°C (potential habitability)

**OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:**

CTF-154: established May 2023 under **Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)** — 44-nation partnership, HQ Bahrain

Dornier 228: German-origin STOL aircraft; HAL manufactures at **Kanpur**; Coast Guard fleet target: 100 aircraft by 2030

Urban Challenge Fund: ₹1 lakh crore central; target ₹4 lakh crore total investment; 3 verticals (Cities as Growth Hubs, Creative Redevelopment, Water & Sanitation)

NITI Aayog tech target: USD 265B → **USD 750–850B** by 2035

NIPL: NPCI International Payments Limited; partners include UAE, Nepal, Mauritius, Singapore, France, Bhutan, Malaysia (new)

Kerala urban policy: **80% urbanization by 2050**; India's first comprehensive state urban policy

Rajasthan Budget: fiscal deficit 3.69% GSDP; Rs 5,000 cr for Jal Jeevan Mission-Urban

Magnus Carlsen: Norwegian; **21st world title** across chess formats; FIDE Freestyle = Chess960 format

ICAI: founded 1949; regulates CA profession in India; 74th President: CA Prasanna Kumar D (Visakhapatnam)

Sources: Drishti IAS, AffairsCloud, IndiaBix

---

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

# Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

 [linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

---

Published on [ujjari.com](http://ujjari.com) · Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs