

UPSC Daily Current Affairs| One Liners 08-01-2026

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History, Art and Culture

Ecologist Madhav Gadgil

- Madhav Dhananjaya Gadgil (1942-2026) was a distinguished Indian ecologist, academic, and environmental activist.
- He is widely recognized as the '*father of modern Indian ecology*.'
- **Contribution -**
 - He served as chairman of the *Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP)*, constituted by the Ministry of Environment and Forests in 2010, which is popularly known as Madhav Gadgil Committee.
 - The panel's 2011 report — widely known as the "*Gadgil Report*".
 - He pioneered the concept of *People's Biodiversity Registers*.
 - Key architect of India's *Biological Diversity Act, 2002*.
 - Founder of the *Centre for Ecological Sciences* at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, established in 1983.
 - **Philosophy** - A "*bottom-up*" model of environmental governance.
- **Awards & recognition -**
 - Padma Shri in 1981 and the Padma Bhushan in 2006.
 - *Tyler Prize* for Environmental Achievement in 2015 and the *Volvo Environment Prize*.
 - In 2024, the United Nations's *Annual Champions of the Earth award*, the UN's highest environmental honour, for his seminal work in the Western Ghats.
- **Literary works** - This Fissured Land (co-authored with Ramachandra Guha), Ecology and Equity, and his autobiography A Walk Up the Hill, etc.

Book and Audio Formats -Awazon ke Jugnu

- The publication traces the *journeys of 31 individuals* associated with *All India Radio, FM channels, the voice-over industry, broadcasting, and the tradition of stage poetry*.
- **Launched by** - *Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)*, an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Culture.
- **Objective** - To document and preserve some of India's most celebrated voices through recorded interviews and authentic publications.

Book Launch "Sing, Dance and Lead: Leadership Lessons from the Life of Srila Prabhupada"

- **Held at** - Vice-President's Enclave, New Delhi.
- **Authored by** - Hindol Sengupta.

Keonthal Royal Palace

A massive fire engulfed the historic Junga Palace.

- This 200-year-old palace served as the residence of the former Keonthal princely state.
- **Located in** - Junga, Himachal Pradesh, approximately 26 kilometers from Shimla.
- **Constructed in** - The 1800s by the rulers of Keonthal.
 - It forms an integral part of India's princely state heritage.
- **Historical Context**
 - The princely states were integrated into the Indian Union in 1950.
 - The palace's architecture exemplifies a blend of *Himalayan and colonial styles*.
 - It stands as a symbol of pre-independence feudal power structures.

Polity & Governance

India International Conference on Democracy and Election Management (IICDEM)-2026

- **Hosted by** - Election Commission of India (ECI).
- **Organised by** - India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM) under the aegis of ECI.
- **Participants** - It will be attended by nearly 100 international delegates representing Election Management Bodies (EMBs) from across the world.
- **Objectives** -
 - To serve as a global platform for international cooperation among Election Management Bodies.
 - To enable the development of a shared understanding of contemporary challenges, exchange of best practices and innovations, and co-creation of solutions.

Economy

Silver Prices Surge

Silver prices increased to ₹2,46,889 per kilogram in January 2026, compared to ₹85,913 per kilogram in January 2025.

- **Primary Factors Influencing Price Movement** -
 - **Monetary Policy** - Reductions in Federal Reserve interest rates contributed to increased demand for commodities.
 - **Manufacturing Demand** - Growth in sectors such as batteries, solar panels, semiconductors, and industrial metals increased silver consumption.
 - **ETF Flows** - The creation of new exchange-traded fund (ETF) units was followed by mutual funds purchasing physical silver.
 - **Geopolitical Factors** - The imposition of United States tariffs and ongoing supply chain disruptions affected silver markets.
- **India's Role in the Silver Market** -
 - India is a major importer of silver, with domestic prices trading at a 12 to 13 % premium over global prices.
 - Supply shortages in London have contributed to increases in local silver prices.

Agriculture

9th Edition of Indusfood 2026

- It is an India's flagship global food and beverage (F&B) sourcing exhibition.
- **Organised by** - Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI).
- **Aim** - To further consolidate India's position as a trusted and competitive partner in global food supply chains.
- **Key highlight** -
 - **Launch of India-UAE Food Corridor by Abu Dhabi Food Hub** - To enhance food security, streamlining supply chains and accelerating bilateral food trade flows.
 - **APEDA's 'Bharati Initiative'** - To showcase innovative Indian agri-food start-ups to global buyers through Shark Tank-style pitch sessions.

Environment

CSIR's Technology Transfer Ceremony titled "From Farm Residue to Road: Bio-Bitumen via Pyrolysis."

- India has become the *1st country globally to commercially produce Bio-Bitumen*, a development that is expected to significantly impact the nation's road infrastructure.
- **Significance** -
 - Bio-bitumen is a transformative step towards the vision of *Viksit Bharat 2047*.
 - By utilising agro-waste, it reduces pollution caused by crop burning and strengthens the *circular economy*.
 - With *15% blending*, India can save nearly *Rs.4,500 crore in foreign exchange* and substantially reduce its dependence on imported crude oil.

Security

Ships of the 1st Training Squadron (1TS)

- **INS Tir, Shardul, Sujata and ICGS Sarathi** — will be proceeding on a *Long-Range Training Deployment (LRTD)* to South East Asia.
- **LRTD Part of** - A training curriculum of the *110th Integrated Officers' Training Course (IOTC)*.
- **Scheduled to** - Undertake port calls at *Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand*.
- **Aim** - To provide comprehensive operational and cross-cultural exposure to officer trainees.
- **Significance** - It reinforces India's sustained maritime engagement with South East Asian nations.
- It aligns with India's Act East Policy and vision for a free, open and inclusive Indian Ocean Region.

Science

Public Healthcare

India crosses a historic milestone 50,000 NQAS Certifications.

- **National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS)** - A comprehensive quality framework established by the *Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW)*.
- **Coverage** - It includes 48,663 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (SHC, PHC, UPHC) and 1,710 secondary care facilities (CHC, SDH, DH), underscoring the institutionalisation of quality across all levels of public healthcare.
- **Methods of implementation** - It reflects the adoption of *multi-pronged acceleration strategies*, including continuous capacity building, digital innovations, substantial increase in pool of assessors, and continuous quality improvement mechanisms.
- **Significance** - This achievement embodies the spirit of *Aatmanirbhar Bharat* and the guiding principles of *"Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayaas"*, reaffirming that quality healthcare is central to India's development.

