UPSC Daily Current Affairs| One Liners 18-02-2026

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Geography

Thwaites Glacier – A Climate Tipping Point

- **Location & size –** A massive glacier in West Antarctica, roughly the size of a large country.
- **Nickname –** Often called the "Doomsday Glacier" due to its potential impact on global sea levels.
- **Geography –** Sits on land that slopes downward inland, dipping below sea level—making it vulnerable to warm ocean water flowing underneath.
- **Role of ice shelf –** Acts like a brace that slows the glacier's movement.
  - As it thins or breaks, the glacier accelerates and loses more ice.
- **Current changes –** Thwaites is thinning, retreating, and already contributing to sea-level rise.
- **Potential impact** – If it collapses entirely, it could raise global sea levels by about 0.5 meters.
- **Wider risk –** It holds back other glaciers in the West Antarctic Ice Sheet.
  - Its weakening could trigger faster ice loss elsewhere.
- **Global consequences –** Higher sea levels will worsen coastal flooding, erosion, and storm surges—threatening cities, ports, and low-lying islands worldwide.

Social Issues

New Aadhaar App

- It is a next-generation mobile application.
- **Objective –** To provide Aadhaar Number Holders (ANH) with a secure, convenient and privacy-first way to carry, share, show and verify their digital identity.
- **Available in –** Both android and Apple IOS platforms.
- **Advanced functionalities –**
  - Face verification for proof of presence.
  - Biometric lock/unlock in a single click.
  - Viewing of authentication history.
  - QR-based contact card for easy sharing of contact details.
  - Hotel check-ins through *Offline Verification Seeking Entity's (OVSE) QR code* scanning.
  - It facilitates, age gating, hospital admissions for visitors and attendants, event entries, verification of gig workers and service partners among many such use cases.
  - Developing offline verification ecosystem.
- **"One Family – One App" concept –** It allows management of up to 5 Aadhaar profiles on a single device.

International Relations and Issues

Hedging in International Relations

- **Position –** It falls between balancing (resisting a stronger power) and bandwagoning (aligning with it).
- **Nature –** Not clearly defined, but generally understood as a mix of
  - Selective engagement
  - Limited resistance
  - Partial deference
- **Objective –** Allows a state to cooperate economically with a potentially adversarial power while simultaneously preparing for possible diplomatic or military confrontation.
- **Effect –** Helps avoid direct conflict in the short term while keeping options open for the future.
- In short, hedging is a dual-track strategy—working with a rival where beneficial, but quietly building strength to counter them if needed.

Economy

Labour Force & Workforce Trends (Jan 2026)

- **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) -**
  - **Overall LFPR (15+ years) –** 55.9% in Jan 2026, nearly unchanged from 56.1% in Dec 2025.
  - **Female LFPR (15+ years) –** Steady at 35.1%, same as Nov 2025.
- **Workforce Participation Rate (WPR) –** After rising steadily from Jun–Dec 2025, WPR dipped slightly to 53.1% in Jan 2026.
- **Urban Workforce Participation –**
  - Male – Stable at 70.5%.
  - Female – Stable at 23.0%.
  - No significant month-to-month change.
- **Unemployment (UR) –**
  - Male unemployment in rural areas remained unchanged.
  - Minor declines attributed to winter slowdown and post-harvest slack.

Agriculture

Pesticides Management Bill, 2025

Ministry of Agriculture released the draft Pesticides Management Bill, 2025, seeking public comments on the legislation.

- **Objectives –**
  - To replace the Insecticides Act, 1968 and Rules, 1971 with updated, farmer-centric legislation.
  - To support both farmers' ease of living and industry's ease of doing business.
- **Reforms –**
  - Greater transparency & traceability in pesticide services.
  - Use of digital methods & technology to streamline processes.
  - Stricter controls on spurious pesticides via higher penalties.
- **Key Features –**
  - Mandatory accreditation of testing labs to ensure quality.
  - Compounding of offences with penalties defined by State authorities.

Environment

Chhari-Dhandh Wetland – Ramsar Site Recognition

- **Declared as –** A Ramsar site on January 31, 2026, Gujarat's 5th Ramsar Site and the 1st in Kachchh.
- **Location & Ecosystem –** Spread over 22,700 hectares, it lies at the confluence of *desert, grassland, and wetland landscapes*, supporting diverse flora and fauna.
- **Birdlife -**
  - Hosts ~283 bird species, including 11 globally threatened and 9 Near Threatened species.
  - Attracts thousands of migratory birds annually, notably the *Grey Hypocolius.*
  - Surveys recorded over 50,000 waterbirds, including 40,000 cranes at one site.
- **Tourism & Research –** Major destination for birdwatchers and ornithologists; 80% of visitors are foreign tourists from 52 countries.
- **Conservation history –**
  - Declared as Gujarat's 1st Conservation Reserve in 2008.
  - Sustained measures include habitat protection, ecological monitoring, and community participation.
- **Global Importance –**
  - Key stopover along the *Central Asian Flyway*, linking Central Asia with the Indian subcontinent.
  - Provides vital feeding and resting grounds for migratory birds from *Central Asia, Iran, and Siberia.*

NHAI 'Bee Corridors'

- **First-of-its-kind initiative –** Pollinator corridors along National Highways to support honeybees and wild pollinators.
- **Shift in approach –** From ornamental to ecological plantations with continuous stretches of bee-friendly vegetation.
- **Design –**
  - Mix of trees, shrubs, herbs, grasses.
  - Nectar- and pollen-rich species (Neem, Karanj, Mahua, Palash, Bottle Brush, Jamun, Siris).
  - Staggered flowering for year-round bloom.
  - Inclusion of wild elements (flowering weeds, dead wood, hollow trunks).
- **Implementation –**
  - Corridors developed based on agro-climatic suitability.
  - Clusters of flowering trees every 500 m–1 km (matching bee foraging distance).
  - At least 3 corridors planned in 2026–27.
  - 40 lakh trees to be planted, with 60% under Bee Corridor initiative.
- **Objective –** To enhances pollinator conservation, boosts agriculture & horticulture productivity, and strengthens ecological balance.

Security

Trilateral Naval Exercise in Andaman Sea

- **Conducted between –** Indian Navy, along with Japan and Indonesia.
- **Objective –** To enhance joint operational readiness, improve interoperability, and strengthen maritime cooperation for a safe and stable region.
- **Command –** Indian Navy formally took command of Combined Task Force (CTF) 154 under the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).

Combined Task Force (CTF) 154

- **Established in –** May 2023.
- **Objectives –** To enhancing maritime security through multinational training programs across the Middle East and the wider region.
  - To build partner nations' operational capabilities to address common threats, including illegal trafficking, piracy, and irregular migration.
- **Exercise –** It conducts Regular Maritime Security Enhancement Training (MSET) events, exercises such as *Compass Rose and Northern/Southern Readiness.*
- **Operates alongside CMF's other task forces -**
  - CTF 150 (Maritime Security),
  - CTF 151 (Counter-Piracy),
  - CTF 152 (Maritime Security in Arabian Gulf) and
  - CTF 153 (Maritime Security in Red Sea).

Exercise Vajra Ghaat – Key Highlights

- **Conducted at –** Pokhran Field Firing Range, Jaisalmer under the Southern Command, led by the White Tiger Division.
- **Focus on –** Validation of refined Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs) to boost battlefield survivability and operational effectiveness in desert warfare.
- **Key Highlights**
  - K9 Vajra self-propelled artillery gun system demonstrated speed, precision, and lethality in high-intensity fire missions.
  - Integration of advanced surveillance and technology-driven target acquisition enabled real-time engagement of simulated enemy positions.
- **Preparedness –** It reaffirmed the Army’s ability to conduct integrated combat operations in desert sectors by combining
  - Heavy artillery firepower
  - Modern sensors
  - Communication networks
  - Battlefield management systems
- **Outcome –** Strengthened combat posture in the western sector, highlighting synergy between traditional combat arms and emerging technologies.



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