

UPSC Daily Current Affairs| One Liners 20-01-2026

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History, Art and Culture

Zehanpora Stupas - Kashmir's Buddhist Past

Archaeological excavations at Zehanpora, Baramulla (North Kashmir) have revealed a man-made plateau with stupas, chaityas, and viharas dating to the Kushan era (1st-3rd century CE).

• **Historical Significance**

- Ancient Kashmir is confirmed to have been a major center of Buddhism in India.
- The discovery supports the historical records of Kalhana's Rajatarangini and Hiuen Tsang's writings.
- The site is connected to Emperor Kanishka's reign, when Mahayana Buddhism flourished.

• **Key Historical Facts**

- The 4th Buddhist Council at Kundalvana under Kanishka led to the split between Hinayana and Mahayana.
- Kashmir was a key route for Buddhism's spread to Central Asia and China.
- The site's architecture reflects Gandhara influence with Greco-Buddhist stone and stucco figures.

• **Regional Significance**

- Kashmir was a major center of learning that drew scholars from China and Central Asia.
- Its composite culture, or Kashmiriyat, was shaped by religious diversity.
- The region reflects strong pan-Indian and pan-Asian connections.

Polity & Governance

PRAGATI

A Decade of Cooperative, Outcome-Driven Governance.

- **PRAGATI** -Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation.
- It is a digital platform for fast-tracking projects, schemes, and grievance redressal through direct, real-time review by the Prime Minister, in partnership with States and Union Ministries.
- **Launched in** - 2015, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- It brings together 3 modern technologies such as digital data management, video conferencing, and geo-spatial technology.

• **Key takeaways**

- PRAGATI has significantly accelerated India's development by fast-tracking projects worth more than Rs.85 lakh crore.
- Under PRAGATI, 382 major national projects have been systematically reviewed and closely monitored.
- Out of 3,187 identified issues, 2,958 have already been resolved, significantly reducing delays and cost overruns.
- The platform ensures real-time coordination between the Centre and States under direct Prime Ministerial supervision, strengthening accountability.

Economy

KYC for Crypto Customers

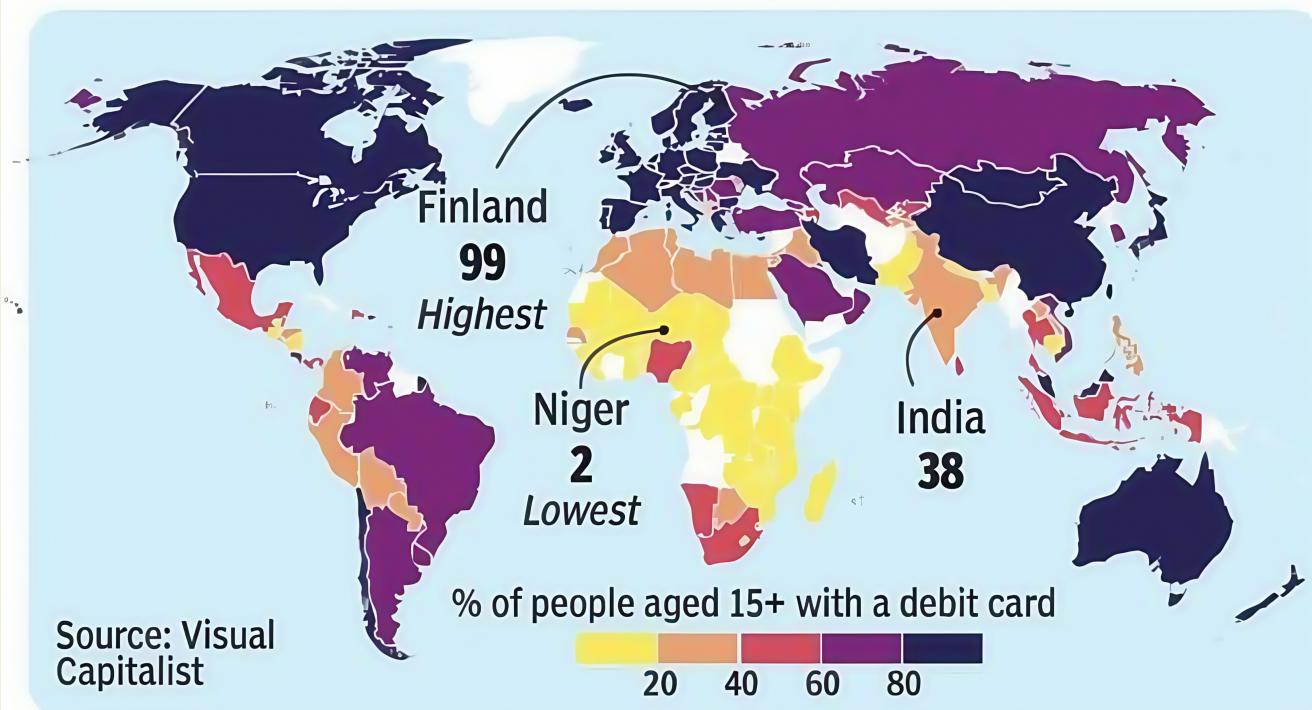
- **Guidelines issued by** - Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) under Union Finance Ministry.
- **Mandatory KYC measures**
 - Selfie with liveness detection.
 - Recording of geographical coordinates (latitude, longitude) of onboarding location with date/timestamp.
 - Verification of bank account by 'penny-drop' method.
 - Mandatory Permanent Account Number (PAN).
 - IP (Internet Protocol) address of the customer.
- **Objective** - To update Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Combating Financing of Terror (CFT) guidelines for Virtual Digital Assets (cryptocurrency).

Debit Card Ownership

What's behind India's low debit card ownership?

In many advanced economies, 9 out of 10 people (aged 15 and above) own a debit card. India's ownership (38%) is similar to those of low-income countries. This could be because of higher adoption of UPI, and a shift toward credit cards

Debit card ownership by country



Agriculture

Dairy Sector Development

- **MoU between** - Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and National Dairy Development Board (NDDB).
- **Key focus areas** - Dairy production, processing, and value addition, with a strong emphasis on empowering its primary stakeholders - millions of dairy farmers across the country.
- **Objectives** -
 - To enhance collaboration in multidisciplinary research, innovation, and capacity building across the entire dairy sector.
 - To facilitate the effective translation of research outcomes into practical, field-level solutions, thereby enhancing productivity, profitability, and sustainability across the dairy sector.

Environment

Major Groundwater Contamination in A.P

- **Source of report** - CGWB Annual Ground Water Quality Report, 2025.
- **Key contaminants** - Seawater intrusion (coastal aquifers), high electrical conductivity (EC), fluoride, uranium, residual sodium carbonate, nitrate, iron, chromium, cobalt, manganese, nickel, zinc, arsenic, selenium, cadmium, lead.
- **Key findings**
 - **Uranium** - Elevated concentrations (>30 ppb) in 16 villages of Sri SathyaSai district and 3 in Tirupati district.
 - **Arsenic** - 5 hotspots (>10 ppb).
 - **Fluoride** - Above 1.50 mg/l, especially in hard rock aquifers.
 - **Residual Sodium Carbonate** - Beyond permissible limits in 26.87% of samples.
- **Impact** - Extensive pollution detected in line with BIS norms.
- **Mitigating factor** - Monsoon showed some improvement in water quality, particularly for EC and fluoride.

Orobanche Aegyptiaca (Threat to Mustard Crop)

A parasitic weed that has inflicted damage in major mustard-growing areas of Rajasthan and Haryana.

- **Category** - Holoparasite, does not photosynthesize and is completely dependent on host-provided nutrition.
- **Mechanism** - Connects to the host's roots, drains essential resources, resulting in stunted development and plant wilting.
- **Seed Longevity** - One shoot produces 40-45 flowers; the resulting seeds persist in soil for as long as 20 years.

NIRANTAR

- **NIRANTAR** - National Institute for Research & Application of Natural Resources to Transform, Adapt and Build Resilience.
- A platform of institutions under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- **Objective** - To strengthen coordination and collaboration among MoEFCC Institutions.

Security

Bhairav Battalions

The Indian Army's newly raised Bhairav Battalions, designed for Special Forces tasks and modern warfare.

- **Nature** - High-speed, offensive units capable of Special Forces tasks at multiple levels.
- **Current Status** - 15 battalions raised, deployed along borders; plans for 25 in total.
- **Purpose**
 - To bridge gap between Para Special Forces and regular infantry.
 - To conduct special operations from tactical to operational depth.
 - To be a part of force restructuring in line with new technologies and evolving operational requirements.
- **Modern Warfare Focus** - To create a pool of over one lakh drone operatives across the force.

Science

ICEGATE-LPMS Integration

- **ICEGATE-LPMS** - Integration of the Indian Customs Electronic Gateway-Land Port Management System.
- **Inaugurated by** - Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC), at the Integrated Check Post (ICP), at Agartala, Tripura.
- **Focus on** - Critical customs data elements, including Bill of Entry, Shipping Bill, Out of Charge (OOC), and Let Export Order (LEO), along with event-based updates tracking cargo movement, from slot booking to gate-in and gate-out.
- **Objective** - To enable real-time, bidirectional exchange of data between ICEGATE and the Land Port Management System, creating a seamless digital ecosystem at land ports.
- **Significance** - It is a practical embodiment of Coordinated Border Management, promoting harmonised functioning among multiple border agencies through shared data, common risk assessment, and synchronized decision-making.

