

## UPSC Daily Current Affairs| One Liners 21-02-2026

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#### Geography

##### Nigerian Mine Tragedy

37 miners were killed and 26 others hospitalized after the toxic gas leak.

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**Occurred at** - A lead and zinc mine in North-Central Nigeria.

##### **Cause (Preliminary Findings):**

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Sudden discharge of lead oxide.

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Associated gases - Sulphur and carbon monoxide.

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Poor ventilation likely worsened the buildup underground.

#### Social Issues

##### Mobile Bidi Pustaka Hidi Campaign - Karnataka

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**Led by** - School Education Department.

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**Collaboration with** - Women & Child Welfare, Library, Health, and Police Departments.

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**Campaign slogan** - "Put down your mobile and pick up a book."

##### **Objective**

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To encourage schoolchildren to reduce screen time and develop a habit of reading books.

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To shape them into responsible citizens with rational and high-level thinking skills.

#### Environment

### **Bela Gram - India's First Net-Zero Panchayat**

- **Recognition of** - Bela Gram in Bhandara district, Vidarbha (Maharashtra), at Mumbai Climate Week 2026.

- **Awards** - Rashtriya Panchayat Puraskar 2024 for its pioneering climate action.

- **Key Initiatives -**

- Planted 90,000+ trees during weddings and festivals.

- Transitioned households from smoky chulhas to LPG.

- Installed solar panels in homes, anganwadis, and Panchayat offices.

- Promoted waste segregation at doorsteps and eliminated single-use plastics.

- Advocated "waste to wealth" practices.

### **Murshidabad Wetlands - "Kidneys of South Bengal"**

- **Shrinking rate at** - 2.1% per year, triple the global average and 1.5 times India's national average.

- **Area reduced from** - 5,524.7 ha (1990) to 1,700.2 ha (2025).

- **Proof** - Based on satellite imagery (1990-2025) and field surveys (2019-2025).

- **Causes -**

- Over half severely degraded due to *invasive weeds, siltation, and pollution*.

- Collapse of river-wetland connectivity - *Only 4 of 14 wetlands* retain functional links.

- **Current status -**

- Many wetlands (e.g., Chaltia Beel, Bishnupur Beel, Bil Belun, Bilpatan) rated "poor" to "very poor."

### Red Sandres (Pterocarpus santalinus)

- **Endemic to** - India, with a restricted range in the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh.

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*Seshachalam Biosphere Reserve*, the world's largest natural reserve of Red Sanders.

- **Thrives in** - Rocky, degraded, red-soil lands under hot and dry climates.

- **Value & demand** -

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Highly prized for its deep red wood, used in *luxury furniture, musical instruments, and traditional medicine*.

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Strong international demand, especially in East Asia, drives illegal trade.

- **Protection Status** -

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**IUCN Red List** - Endangered.

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**CITES** - Appendix II (regulated trade).

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**Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** - Schedule II (legal protection in India).

### Europe Push Circular Economy in Textiles

- The European Commission banned the destruction of unsold textiles under the *Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR)*.

- **Objective** - To cut textile waste, reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and promote resale, reuse, and remanufacturing.

### India - Revision of Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026

- **Mandate** - Four-stream waste segregation and embedding circular economy principles into national policy.

- **Objective** - To reshape textile waste management, aligning India with global sustainability efforts.

## India's January 2026 Air Quality Snapshot (CREA Report)

- **Overall findings -**

- Nearly half (123 of 248) Indian cities exceeded India's PM2.5 NAAQS limit of 60  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .
- No city met the WHO safe guideline of 15  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

- **Worst Performers -**

- **Ghaziabad (U.P.)** - Most polluted, monthly average PM2.5 = 184  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ; breached NAAQS daily.

- **Delhi** - Second most polluted, monthly average = 169  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

- **Other top 10** - Noida, Gurgaon, Greater Noida, Dharuhera, Gangtok, Singrauli, Bhiwadi, Narnaul.

- **States with widespread exceedances** - Rajasthan (23/34 cities), Haryana (19/25), Bihar (15/24), Odisha (13/15), Uttar Pradesh (13/20).

- **Cleanest Cities -**

- **Damoh (M.P.)** - Cleanest, monthly average = 17  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

- Other clean cities included five from Karnataka, and one each from J&K, Bihar, Nagaland, Punjab.

## Science

## WAVES Creators' Corner

- **Held as a part of** - India AI Impact Summit 2026.
- **Objective** - To showcase AI's role in the AVGC-XR (*Animation, VFX, Gaming, Comics, Extended Reality*) ecosystem.
- **Startup Showcase** -
  - 51 AVGC-XR and Media Tech startups presented AI-driven solutions.
  - Included winners of Bhasha Setu and Kalaa Setu challenges.
- **Technological highlights** -
  - Real-time game development and prompt-to-cinema studios.
  - Agentic AI newsroom by AWS & BharatGen.
  - Sarvam's real-time voice cloning.
  - Indus Chat App for multilingual interaction.
  - 270° AI film screenings (NFDC).
  - Sony Research India's face/voice re-aging.
  - Whistling Woods' marker-less motion capture using DSLR/iPhone.

## "Invisible Shield" AI Security Framework

- A next-generation AI-enabled biometric deduplication and document verification platform.
- **Launched by** - UIDAI.
- **Objective** - To ensure one unique identity per resident by performing population-scale biometric deduplication across fingerprints, face, and iris data.
- **Features** -
  - AI-based metadata extraction and verification against source documents.
  - Integrated with Digilocker APIs for authenticity checks.
  - Uses NVIDIA AI inferencing for semantic analysis.
  - Reduces fraud, speeds up enrolment/update processes, and improves service quality.