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.

- **Occurred at –** A lead and zinc mine in *North-Central Nigeria.*
- **Cause (Preliminary Findings):**
  - Sudden discharge of *lead oxide.*
  - Associated gases – *Sulphur and carbon monoxide.*
  - Poor ventilation likely worsened the buildup underground.

Social Issues

Mobile Bidi Pustaka Hidi Campaign – Karnataka

- **Led by –** School Education Department.
- **Collaboration with –** Women & Child Welfare, Library, Health, and Police Departments.
- **Campaign slogan –** "Put down your mobile and pick up a book."
- **Objective**
  - To encourage schoolchildren to reduce screen time and develop a habit of reading books.
  - 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.
  - *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 –**
  - Highly prized for its deep red wood, used in *luxury furniture, musical instruments, and traditional medicine.*
  - Strong international demand, especially in East Asia, drives illegal trade.
- **Protection Status –**
  - **IUCN Red List –** Endangered.
  - **CITES –** Appendix II (regulated trade).
  - **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_2 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 µg/m³.
  - No city met the WHO safe guideline of 15 µg/m³.
- **Worst Performers –**
  - **Ghaziabad (U.P.) –** Most polluted, monthly average PM2.5 = 184 µg/m³; breached NAAQS daily.
  - **Delhi –** Second most polluted, monthly average = 169 µg/m³.
  - **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 µg/m³.
  - 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 ensures 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.