UPSC Daily Current Affairs| One Liners 23-01-2026

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History, Art and Culture

Excavation in Lakkundi village

A century-old treasure of gold ornaments and artifacts was unearthed in Lakkundi village, Gadag district.

• **Discovered –** Gold ornaments and other articles in a copper container.
• **Location –** Lakkundi village, Gadag district, Karnataka.
• **Significance of Lakkundi –** Known for ancient *Chalukyan architectural monuments.*
• **Depth of Discovery –** 5 feet during house foundation excavation.



Social Issues

Equality in society

Supreme Court's emphasis on schools as the starting point for societal equality, highlighting the transformative potential of the Right to Education (RTE) Act.

• **Court's observation –** Equality in society must start in school, where children from diverse backgrounds (rich/poor) sit together.
• **Legal Basis –** Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009.
• **RTE Act's Obligation –** It ensures neighbourhood schools admit children from weaker and disadvantaged sections.
• **Constitutional basis –** Earnest implementation of Article 21A (Right to Free and Compulsory Education).

Polity & Governance

What is Section 17A?

Section 17A, added to the Prevention of Corruption Act in 2018, requires prior government approval to investigate all serving and retired public servants for offences tied to official recommendations or decisions

TOP COURT SPLIT ON PROVISION

Justice BV Nagarathna



- Section 17A is contrary to binding precedents of the Supreme Court, further noting that the mechanism is fundamentally incompatible with fair investigation.
- Mandating prior approval even before the initiation of an inquiry undermines the rule of law and enables the executive to exercise control over investigative agencies in a manner previously disapproved by the court

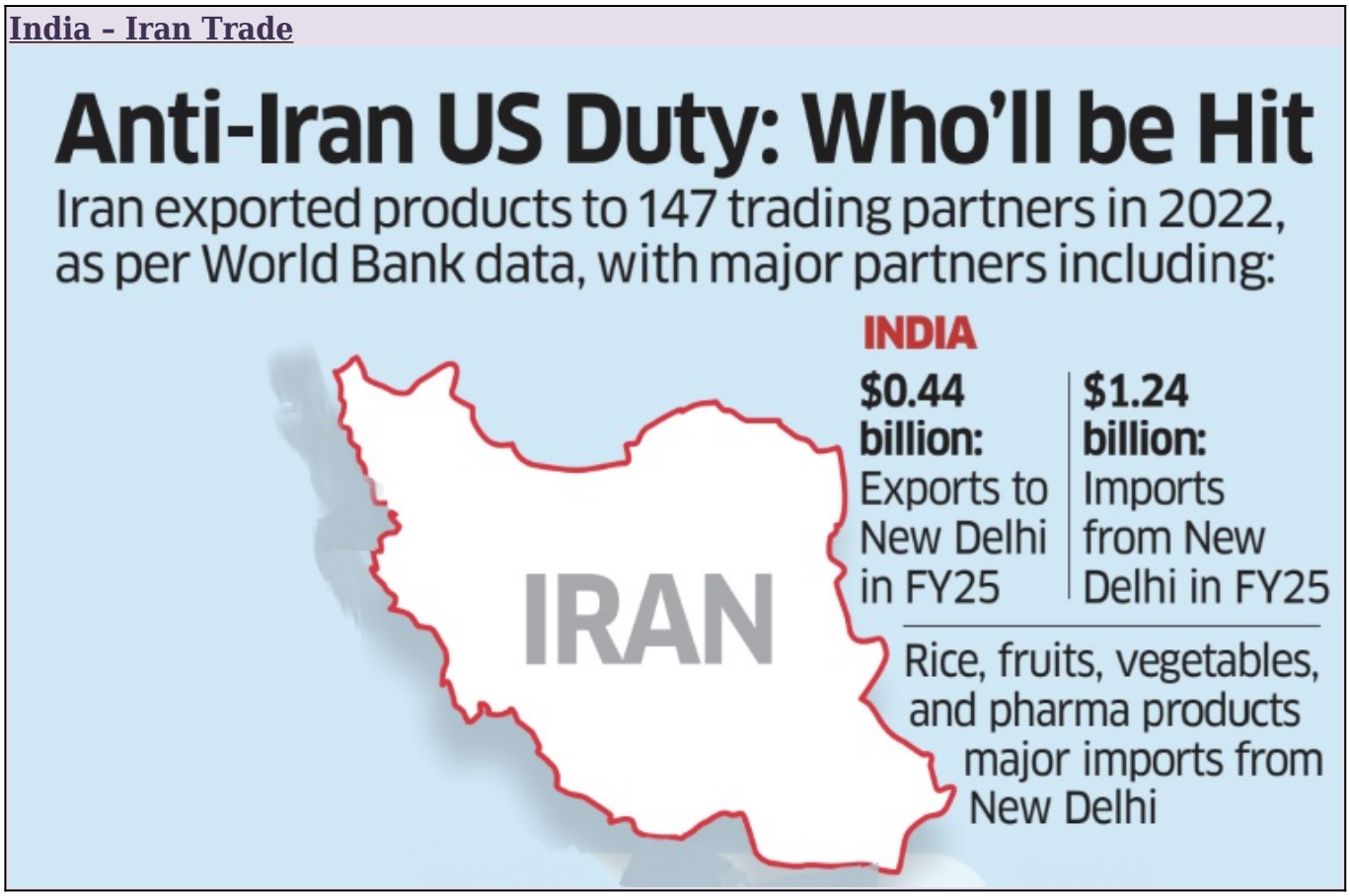
Justice KV Viswanathan



- Striking down Section 17A could lead to **policy paralysis as fear of criminal investigation** could drive honest officers into a "play-it-safe" mode
- Provision could be constitutionally sustained if complaints are first subjected to independent screening, preventing frivolous or motivated complaints while ensuring that genuine cases of corruption are not stifled at inception



India - Iran Trade



Shaksgam Valley Dispute (India-China-Pakistan Territory)

China-Pakistan signed the 1963 boundary agreement, granting China 5,180 sq.km (Shaksgam Valley); India continues to claim it.

• **Key History**

- **Part of –** A Larger Jammu & Kashmir dispute
- **1963 agreement –** Pakistan ceded territory to China (controversial).
- Pakistan controls the ground; China shows interest via the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) infrastructure project.
- **India's position –** Invalidated the agreement.

• **Current Status –**

• CPEC running through the region which shows connectivity and military significance.

• India protest against unrecognised occupation; it has never acknowledged the agreement.

• **Geographic reality –** India has a long-standing claim but no ground control in the region.



Environment

Valley of Flowers

A forest fire in the Valley of Flowers, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, led Uttarakhand to seek Indian Air Force assistance.

• **Location –** Spread over an area of 87 sq.km in the Chamoli district, the *Valley of Flowers National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site* and forms one of the two core zones (the other being the Nanda Devi National Park) of the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve.
• **Altitude –** *3,600 metres above sea level.*
• **Biodiversity –** Around *600 exotic flower varieties* like orchids, poppies, primulas, marigold, daisies and anemones are an eye-catching spectacle.
• **Flora –** *Sub-alpine forests birch and rhododendron* cover parts of the park's area.
• **Fauna –** Home to such rare and amazing wildlife species like the *gray langur, the flying squirrel, the Himalayan weasel, and black bear, the red fox, the lime butterfly, the snow leopard and Himalayan monal*, to name a few.
• **Unusual Aspect –** The forest fire occurred in early January, although such incidents generally reach their peak during May–June, likely due to *minimal snowfall.*

Environmental impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

• **GHG Emissions –** ICT industry (including AI) estimated *1.8%-3.9% of global GHG emissions.*
  - Training a single Large Language Model (LLM) can generate *3,00,000 kg of carbon emissions.*
• **Water consumption –** AI servers may *use 4.2-6.6 billion cubic meters of water by 2027*, leading to scarcity.
• **Comparison –** ChatGPT request consumes *10X more energy than a Google search.*
• **Global Response –** UNESCO (Ethics of AI), US (AI Environmental Impacts Act), EU (harmonized AI rules).

Recommendations for India

Need for India to develop policies and standards to address AI environmental impacts.

• Expand EIA to cover AI's environmental impacts.
• Develop measurement standards with input from tech firms, NGOs, and think tanks.
• Track sustainability metrics like GHG emissions, energy, water, and land use.
• Integrate AI's footprint into ESG disclosures under MCA and SEBI.
• Encourage sustainable AI practices such as using pre-trained models and renewable-powered data centers.

Carbon Credit Monetisation Framework

Delhi government approved a 'Carbon Credit Monetisation Framework' to generate revenue from green initiatives.

• **Objective –** To generate revenue by scientifically measuring emission reductions and converting them into carbon credits.
• **Mechanism –** Sale of carbon credits in both national and international carbon markets.
• **Sources of Credits –** Electric buses, plantation drives, solar energy promotion, and enhancement of waste management practices.
• **Revenue Usage –** Funds are deposited into the Consolidated Fund of the State, used for public welfare schemes.

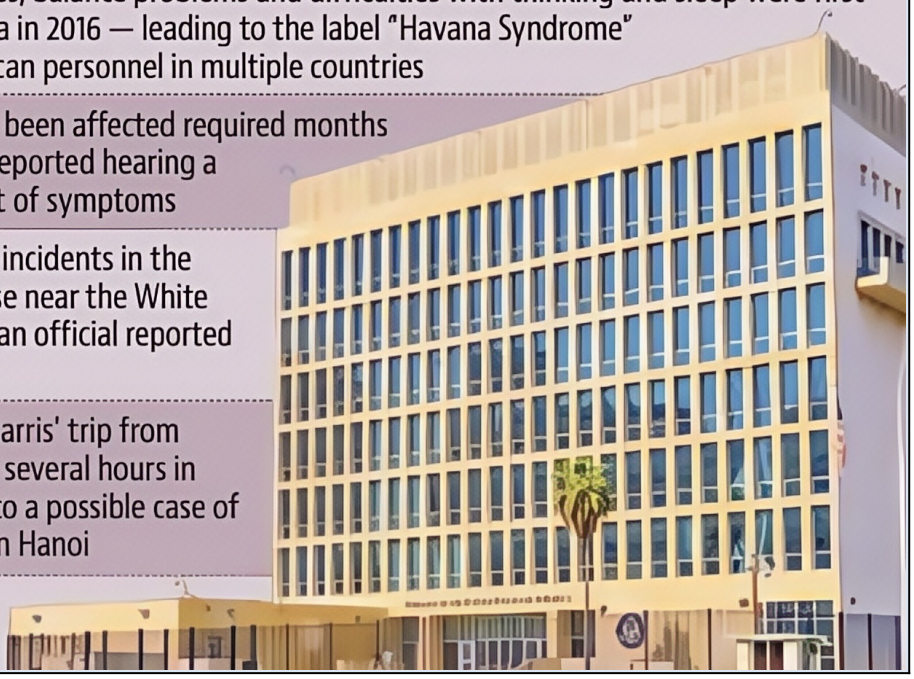
Science

Havana Syndrome

What is Havana Syndrome?

Cuba's capital - Havana

- Symptoms that include headaches, balance problems and difficulties with thinking and sleep were first reported at the US Embassy in Cuba in 2016 — leading to the label "Havana Syndrome" — and later by hundreds of American personnel in multiple countries
- People who are believed to have been affected required months of medical treatment. Some have reported hearing a loud noise before the sudden onset of symptoms
- There were at least two possible incidents in the Washington area, including one case near the White House in November 2020 in which an official reported dizziness
- Then US Vice President Kamala Harris' trip from Singapore to Vietnam was delayed several hours in August 2021 by an investigation into a possible case of the so-called "Havana Syndrome" in Hanoi



The US embassy in the city of Havana

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