UPSC Daily Current Affairs| One Liners 23-02-2026

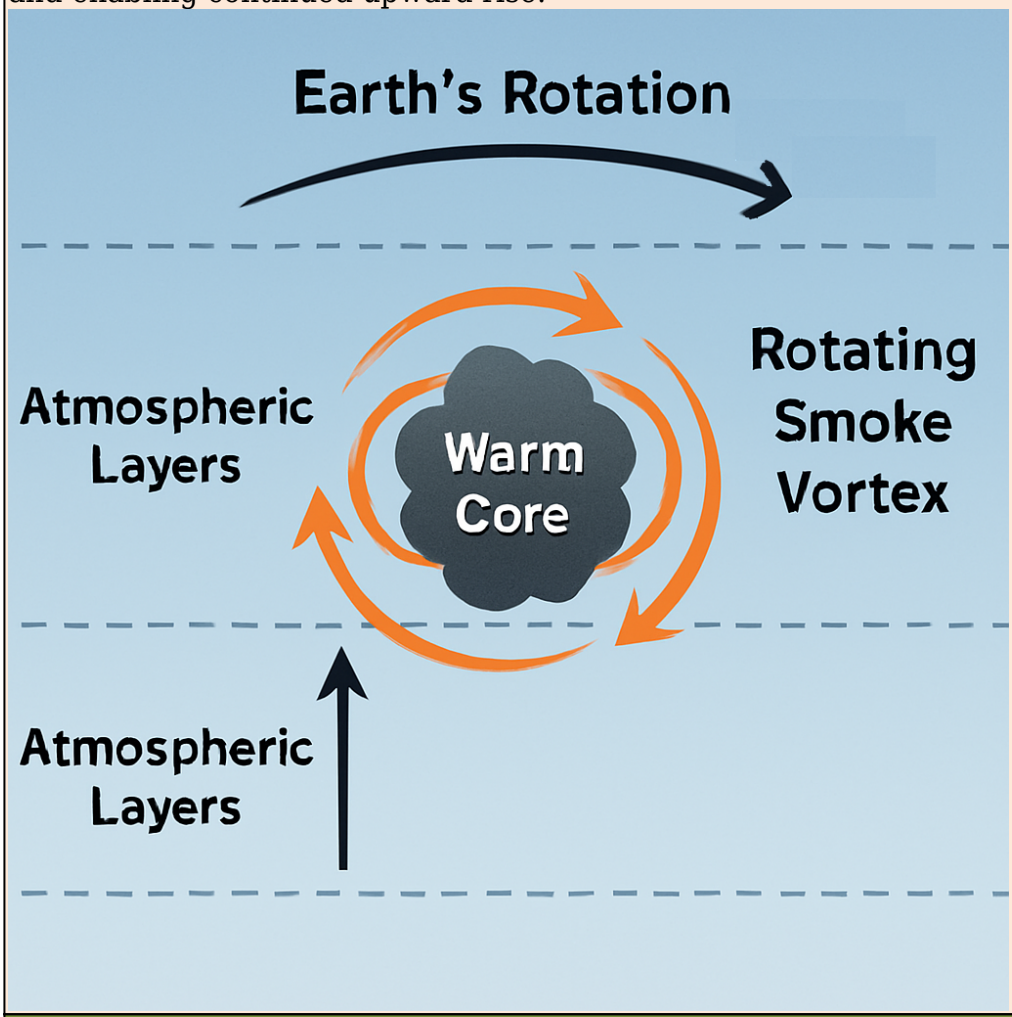
One Liners 23-02-2026

Geography

Smoke Swirl

Why does wildfire smoke swirl only one way in the air?

- **Phenomenon –** Wildfire smoke in the stratosphere can form compact, spinning bubbles (vortices) - *clockwise in the north, counter-clockwise in the south.*
- **Cause –** Smoke particles absorb sunlight, heating the air, making it buoyant and rise.
- **Rotation Mechanism –** As the warm core ascends through atmospheric layers, Earth's rotation nudges the air into a coherent spin that wraps around the smoke bubble.
- **Effect –** The vortex acts like a *container, keeping smoke concentrated, preventing mixing*, and enabling continued upward rise.



Economy

Fugitive Economic Offender

- A fugitive economic offender is an individual who commits specified offences involving Rs.100 crore or more and deliberately absconds from India or refuses to return to avoid criminal prosecution.
- **Declared by –** A special Delhi court under the *Fugitive Economic Offenders Act.*

Alpha Strategy

- **Alpha (α) –** It is an investing term that measures an investment strategy's ability to outperform the market, often called its "edge."
- It represents the *excess or abnormal return of an investment* compared to a benchmark index, adjusted for risk.
- **Alpha Fade Rate –** The speed at which an alpha strategy loses its effectiveness.
- **Causes –**
  - Information Symmetry.
  - Computational Power – Easy to test and replicate strategies.
  - Crowded Trades – Many managers apply similar strategies to the same stock universe.
  - Loss of Uniqueness.

Transit Corridor

PM Modi inaugurated India's 1st Namo Bharat RRTS and dedicated the Delhi–Meerut corridor.

- **Integrated Transit –** For the 1st time, Namo Bharat and Metro rail will operate from the same station and track, enabling seamless city and intercity travel.
- **Objective –** To accelerate the "Twin Cities" vision.

Environment

World Pangolin Day 2026

- It falls on the 3rd Saturday of February each year.
- **Observed this year on –** 21st February.
- **Objective –** To raise awareness about pangolins and the urgent threats they face.



Pangolin

- Pangolins are the *only scaly mammals*, found in *Asia and Africa* (four species each).
  - They curl into a ball when threatened.
- **Protection –** All 8 species are listed in CITES Appendix I, banning international commercial trade.
- Extremely high risk of extinction as per the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species assessments in 2019.*
- **Threats –** Heavily trafficked for scales (used in traditional medicine without scientific basis) and meat.
- Over 1 million pangolins trafficked in a decade, making them the most trafficked mammals globally.
- **CITES report –** It reveals over 500,000 pangolins were seized globally from 2016 to 2024.
- *China and Vietnam* emerged as major destinations, and *African countries* as primary sources.

Pangolin in India

- **India hosts 2 pangolin species —**
  - Indian pangolin (widely distributed, absent in the northeast).
  - Chinese pangolin (found in northern and northeastern states).
- **Distribution –**
  - **Indian pangolin –** Recorded in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, West Bengal; confirmed in 14 districts of Odisha and 90 villages in Maharashtra's Ratnagiri district.
  - **Chinese pangolin –** Found in Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam (Kaziranga, Manas), Sikkim, and Neora Valley NP in West Bengal.
- **Detection Methods –** Camera traps and community knowledge confirm presence in Assam landscapes and Eastern Ghats.
- **Data Gaps –**
  - India's population estimates are outdated; both species listed as Data Deficient in its 2021 CITES report.
  - India did not submit updated data for the 2025 CITES cycle, unlike 27 other Parties.

Water Crisis

- Half of the world's largest cities face severe water scarcity.
- **Extremely High Stress Cities (38) Includes –** Delhi, Beijing, New York, Los Angeles, Rio de Janeiro.
- **Drivers –** Poor water management and climate change.
- **Regional Hotspots –**
  - **Asia –** Northern India and Pakistan show the strongest drying trends.
  - **India –** States such as Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and parts of Kerala face extreme stress.
    - Chennai experienced *"Day Zero" in 2019.*
  - **Iran –** Theran faces its 6th consecutive drought, prompting consideration of relocating the capital (Tehran to Makran).

Global Water Bankruptcy: Living Beyond Our Hydrological Means in the Post-Crisis Era

- **Report by –** United Nation.
- **Published at –** UNU-INWEH's 30th anniversary and ahead of the 2026 UN Water Conference.
- **Highlights –**
  - **Scale of Crisis** – Nearly 4 billion people, almost half the global population, face severe water scarcity for at least one month annually.
  - **New Stage –** River basins and aquifers are increasingly unable to return to historical "normal."
  - **Water Bankruptcy –** Droughts, shortages, and pollution that once seemed temporary are now chronic, marking a post-crisis condition the report calls water bankruptcy.

Places in News

Chagos Archipelago

The United Kingdom has introduced draft legislation to ratify the transfer of sovereignty over the Chagos Islands to Mauritius.

- **Located in –** Central Indian Ocean, approximately 1,600 kilometres from India.
- It is an overseas territory of the United Kingdom, officially designated as the *British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT).*
- It comprises 60 islands, including Diego Garcia.



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