



UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Current Affairs Today – January 22, 2026

22 January 2026

SUBJECTS COVERED**POLITY****ECONOMY****IR****SCIENCE & TECH****SECURITY & DEFENCE****ENVIRONMENT****SOCIAL ISSUES****CURATED & WRITTEN BY****Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator •

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

Free UPSC & State PCS Resources

ujiyari.com

Current Affairs Today — January 22, 2026

22 January 2026

WHY IN NEWS

January 22, 2026 saw major action across governance, economy, and international relations — from a historic judicial removal notice in Parliament to a landmark MSME green transition roadmap, a European power joining India's Indo-Pacific framework, and the strongest solar storm in over two decades.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Judicial Removal Notice — Justice G.R. Swaminathan (Madras HC)

107 INDIA bloc MPs submitted an impeachment notice to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla seeking the removal of Justice G.R. Swaminathan of the Madras High Court. The notice was handed over by DMK Parliamentary leader Kanimozhi Karunanidhi, supported by Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi and SP chief Akhilesh Yadav.

Constitutional basis: Articles 124(4) and 124(5) of the Constitution, read with the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968. The threshold requirement is 100 Lok Sabha or 50 Rajya Sabha signatures, after which a three-member inquiry committee is constituted. Removal requires a two-thirds majority in both Houses.

Trigger: Justice Swaminathan's November 2025 ruling directed Tamil Nadu authorities to allow Karthigai Deepam lamp lighting at Thiruparankundram Hill despite law-and-order objections. Opposition MPs alleged the ruling favoured a particular political-religious ideology and violated secular norms.

Historical note: India has never successfully impeached a judge. The attempt to remove Justice V. Ramaswami in 1993 failed when the ruling party abstained. The 2018 motion against CJI Dipak Misra was rejected by the Rajya Sabha Chairman at the admission stage.

UPSC Angle: Judicial independence vs. judicial accountability is a recurring Mains GS-2 theme. The Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968 procedure and its structural bottlenecks are frequently tested.

National Legislative Index (NLI) — 86th AIPOC

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla announced the National Legislative Index (NLI) at the valedictory session of the 86th All India Presiding Officers' Conference (AIPOC), held at UP Vidhan Bhavan, Lucknow (January 19–21, 2026). It was the largest AIPOC ever, with 36 Presiding Officers from 24 States and UTs participating.

NLI purpose: A performance-evaluation framework to objectively rank Parliament and State Legislatures on measurable indicators — number of sittings, legislative output, committee work, and House time utilisation. A dedicated committee of Presiding Officers was constituted to finalise parameters.

UPSC Angle: GS-2; legislative accountability, parliamentary functioning, cooperative federalism.

UGC Equity Regulations — Supreme Court Stay

The Supreme Court placed a stay on the newly-released UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026, directing that the 2012 Regulations continue to remain in force. The stay was issued two weeks after the new regulations were released.

Section 17A, Prevention of Corruption Act — Split Verdict

A two-judge Supreme Court Bench delivered a split verdict on the constitutional validity of Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 1988, which requires prior government sanction before investigating a public servant for acts done in their official capacity. The matter will be referred to a larger bench.

ECONOMY & FINANCE

SIDBI Equity Infusion — ₹5,000 Crore

The Union Cabinet approved a ₹5,000 crore equity infusion into the Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) in three tranches: ₹3,000 crore in FY2025–26, and ₹1,000 crore each in FY2026–27 and FY2027–28.

Targets: MSMEs receiving SIDBI financial assistance to grow from 76.26 lakh (FY25) to 102 lakh by FY28 — a net addition of ~25.74 lakh enterprises. Expected job creation: ~1.12 crore additional jobs.

SIDBI background: Established under the SIDBI Act, 1989 in April 1990; headquartered in Lucknow. One of five All India Financial Institutions (AIFIs) supervised by RBI. Became independent from IDBI Bank in March 2000.

NITI Aayog — Roadmap for Green Transition of MSMEs

NITI Aayog released a 10-year strategic action plan titled *Roadmap for Green Transition of MSMEs*, targeting India's ~69 million MSMEs. Three decarbonisation levers identified: Energy Efficiency, Green Electricity, and Alternative Fuels.

Key data: MSMEs contribute ~30% of GDP, 45.7% of exports, and employ ~250 million people. They emitted 135 million tonnes CO₂e in 2022 and consume 25% of India's industrial energy.

New institutions proposed: National Project Management Agency (NPMA) and Climate Sister Impact Fund (CSIF). A PM-Suryaghar-like scheme with Viability Gap Funding (VGF) of ₹6,000 crore was also proposed.

EU CBAM trigger: The EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), effective 2026, will impose carbon-linked costs on Indian MSME exports in textiles, steel, and engineered goods — a major external driver for the green push.

Atal Pension Yojana — Extension to 2030–31

The Union Cabinet approved continuation of the Atal Pension Yojana (APY) beyond its original timeline through 2030–31, with extended funding for outreach, development, and gap funding. APY targets unorganised sector workers and is administered by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Spain Joins Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)

Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares handed over Spain's signed Declaration of Accession to External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on January 21, 2026, during Albares's India visit. Spain becomes the fourth major European power to join the IPOI, after the UK, France, and Italy.

IPOI background: A non-treaty, voluntary, cooperative maritime framework proposed by PM Narendra Modi at the East Asia Summit in Bangkok on November 4, 2019. It has seven pillars: Maritime Security, Maritime Ecology, Maritime Resources, Capacity Building and Resource Sharing, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, Science Technology and Academic Cooperation, and Trade Connectivity and Maritime Transport.

India–Spain Dual Year was also launched simultaneously.

India–Namibia Foreign Office Consultations

The 5th round of India–Namibia Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) was held January 19–20, 2026. Both sides agreed to deepen cooperation in defence, critical minerals, health, agriculture, and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI).

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

S4 Severe Solar Radiation Storm — Strongest in 20+ Years

An X1.9-class solar flare from solar Region 4341 on January 18, 2026 at 18:09 UTC triggered an S4 (Severe) Solar Radiation Storm — the strongest since the October 2003 “Halloween” storms. NOAA’s GOES-19 satellite confirmed the event.

A Coronal Mass Ejection (CME) arrived at Earth on January 19, triggering a G4 (Severe) Geomagnetic Storm.

Impacts: Precision GPS disruptions globally (affecting precision agriculture, surveying, autonomous navigation), polar aviation route diversions, degraded High-Frequency (HF) radio communications, elevated radiation risk for astronauts and polar-route flights. Auroras were visible across Northern Europe — Scotland, Ireland, Netherlands.

UPSC Angle: Space weather, its impact on critical infrastructure, and India’s ISRO role in space weather monitoring are relevant for GS-3 (Science & Technology).

SECURITY & DEFENCE

Operation Trashi-I — Counter-Terror, Kishtwar, J&K

Operation Trashi-I entered its fourth day around January 22, 2026, in the Chatroo region, Kishtwar district, J&K. It is a joint operation by the Indian Army, J&K Police Special Operations Group (SOG), and CRPF.

Objective: Track and neutralise terrorists, destroy hideouts, and disrupt militant transit via the Kathua–Udhampur–Doda corridor. The operation uses aerial surveillance, detection dogs, and intelligence-led targeting.

Significance: Marks the shift of militant activity from the Kashmir Valley to the forested hill districts of the Jammu region — a key strategic trend for Internal Security (GS-3).

DIGITAL GOVERNANCE

SAMPANN–UMANG Integration

The SAMPANN pension system (for Department of Telecommunications pensioners) was integrated with the UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance) platform. Around 4 lakh DoT pensioners can now access Pension Payment Order (PPO) details and Life Certificate validity digitally.

PERSONS IN NEWS

Om Birla — Lok Sabha Speaker; announced the National Legislative Index at the 86th AIPOC in Lucknow.

Kanimozhi Karunanidhi — DMK Parliamentary leader; led the submission of the impeachment notice against Justice Swaminathan.

Jose Manuel Albares — Spanish Foreign Minister; signed Spain's accession to IPOI during India visit.

UPSC RELEVANCE

SIDBI founding year (1990/Act 1989), headquarters (Lucknow), RBI supervision; IPOI founding (November 4, 2019, Bangkok EAS), Spain as 4th European member; SAMPANN-UMANG integration; Atal Pension Yojana (PFRDA); S4 storm classification (NOAA scale); Articles 124(4), 124(5); Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968

MAINS GS-2:

Judicial accountability and the structural flaws in India's impeachment process; NLI and parliamentary performance measurement; cooperative federalism in legislative functioning

MAINS GS-3:

MSME green transition roadmap — CBAM, VGF, NPMA, emissions data; SIDBI's role in development finance architecture; Solar radiation storm and space weather infrastructure risks; Counter-insurgency operations in J&K

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGE PEDIA
SIDBI:

Established: April 1990 | Act: SIDBI Act, 1989

Headquarters: Lucknow

Supervision: RBI (as one of five All India Financial Institutions)

Became independent of IDBI Bank: March 2000

Current equity infusion: ₹5,000 crore (3 tranches: ₹3,000 cr + ₹1,000 cr + ₹1,000 cr)

MSME target: 76.26 lakh (FY25) → 102 lakh (FY28); ~1.12 crore jobs expected

NITI AAYOG — MSME GREEN TRANSITION:

India MSMEs: ~69 million | GDP share: ~30% | Exports: 45.7% | Employment: ~250 million

CO₂ emissions: 135 MtCO_{2e} (2022) | Energy share: 25% of industrial energy

VGf proposed: ₹6,000 crore | New bodies: NPMA, CSIF

EU CBAM: effective 2026; affects textiles, steel, engineered goods

IPOI:

Proposed by: PM Modi at East Asia Summit, Bangkok, November 4, 2019

Nature: Non-treaty, voluntary maritime framework

Seven pillars: Maritime Security, Ecology, Resources, Capacity Building, Disaster Risk Reduction, Science & Technology, Trade Connectivity

European members: UK, France, Italy, Spain (4th, joined Jan 2026)

SOLAR RADIATION STORM:

Classification: S4 (Severe) on NOAA 5-point scale

Trigger: X1.9-class solar flare from Region 4341, January 18, 2026

Strongest since: October 2003 “Halloween” storms

Satellite: NOAA GOES-19; CME triggered G4 Geomagnetic Storm on January 19

JUDICIAL REMOVAL (IMPEACHMENT):

Constitutional basis: Articles 124(4), 124(5) [HC judges via Articles 217, 218]

Threshold: 100 Lok Sabha MPs or 50 Rajya Sabha MPs

Procedure: Inquiry committee → In-house investigation → 2/3rd majority in both Houses + President’s address

Governing statute: Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968

Historical failures: V. Ramaswami (1993), CJI Dipak Misra (2018 — rejected at admission)

India has NEVER successfully impeached a judge

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

AIPOC (All India Presiding Officers’ Conference): 86th edition at UP Vidhan Bhavan, Lucknow (Jan 19–21, 2026); 36 Presiding Officers from 24 states/UTs

APY (Atal Pension Yojana): Administered by PFRDA; extended to 2030–31

Section 17A PCA: Requires prior government sanction for investigating public servants — split verdict referred to larger bench

SAMPANN: Pension system for DoT employees; UMANG: Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance

Operation Trashi-I: Joint Army/Police/CRPF counter-terror operation, Kishtwar (Chatroo region), J&K

Sources: Insights on India, PIB, DD News

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

 [linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

Published on ujjari.com · Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs