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CURRENT AFFAIRS**

Important Current News for UPSC & UPPSC

19th May 2026

TOPICS:-

- 1. Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)**
- 2. National One Health Mission**
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PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OF INTERNATIONAL CONCERN (PHEIC)

TH The Hindu

[Why has the WHO declared a PHEIC over the Ebola outbreak in Africa ?](#)

The WHO declared a PHEIC for the Ebola outbreak in Africa due to rising cases and concerns about transmission and containment.



Why in News

- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** recently declared the Ebola outbreak in **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** and Uganda a **Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)**.



- A **PHEIC** is the highest level of global health alert issued by the **WHO**.
- It is declared during extraordinary events posing risks through international disease spread.
- The declaration is governed under the **International Health Regulations (IHR), 2005**.
- The decision is taken by the **IHR Emergency Committee**, constituted after the **2002–04 SARS outbreak**.
- The declaration is reviewed every three months and renewed if necessary.

Institutional and Legal Framework

- The **IHR** was first adopted by the **World Health Assembly in 1969**.
- The regulations were comprehensively revised after the global SARS crisis.
- The updated **IHR 2005** became a legally binding agreement among **196 countries**.
- WHO acts as the coordinating authority for implementation of global health security measures.

Scope and Strategic Relevance

- PHEIC declarations may **involve infectious diseases, chemical hazards, or radioactive emergencies**.
- Such declarations **enable coordinated global surveillance, travel advisories, and emergency responses**.
- They strengthen **international cooperation for pandemic preparedness** and disease containment.

NATIONAL ONE HEALTH MISSION

 News On AIR

One Health mission focuses on national preparedness against emerging public health threats



The Fifth Meeting of the Scientific Steering Committee on One Health was held in New Delhi today. The meeting held under the chairmanship of...

Why in News

- The fifth meeting of the Scientific Steering Committee of the **National One Health Mission** was recently held in **New Delhi**.

Governance Architecture

- The mission was launched in **2024** to integrate human, animal, and environmental health systems.
- The nodal implementing agency is the **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** under the **Office of Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA)**.
- The **Executive Committee** is chaired by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.
- The **Scientific Steering Committee** is chaired by the **Principal Scientific Adviser**.

Health Security Dimensions

- The mission aims to **strengthen integrated disease surveillance** and pandemic preparedness.
- It promotes coordinated response mechanisms across veterinary, environmental, and public health sectors.
- The approach recognizes interlinkages between zoonotic diseases and ecosystem degradation.

Policy Significance

- The initiative supports **India's preparedness against future pandemics** and antimicrobial resistance.
- It enhances coordination among ministries, states, and scientific institutions.
- The framework aligns with **global "One Health" strategies** promoted by international agencies.

JAGGERY



[Press Release Page | Press Information Bureau](#)

India accounts for over 70% of global jaggery production, firmly establishing itself as the world leader in natural sweeteners.



Why in News

- India contributes over **70% of global jaggery production**, making it the world's largest producer.

Production and Distribution

- Jaggery, commonly called **gur**, is an unrefined natural sweetener prepared from sugarcane juice.
- **Uttar Pradesh** contributes around **48.5%** of India's jaggery production.
- **Maharashtra and Karnataka** are the second and third largest producers respectively.

Nutritional and Health Importance

- Jaggery retains minerals like **iron, calcium, magnesium, potassium, and zinc**.
- It also contains trace amounts of **vitamins A, C, D, E, and B-complex vitamins**.
- Consumption of jaggery helps in improving immunity and addressing anemia.

GI-Tagged Varieties

- **Kolhapur Jaggery** of Maharashtra is known for high sucrose content and golden colour.
- **Muzaffarnagar Gur** of Uttar Pradesh is an export-oriented variety.
- **Marayoor Jaggery** and **Central Travancore Jaggery** from Kerala have medicinal value and regional distinctiveness.

RED SAND BOA

TH The Hindu

[DRI recovers two Indian Red Sand Boa snakes in Warangal, hands suspect over to forest officials](#)

DRI seizes two Indian Red Sand Boa snakes in Warangal and apprehends a suspect linked to illegal wildlife trade.



Why in News

- The **Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI)** recently seized live **Indian Red Sand Boa** snakes in Warangal linked to illegal wildlife trade.

Species Characteristics

- The Red Sand Boa is a **non-venomous snake** scientifically known as **Eryx johnii**.
- It is a **nocturnal and fossorial species** spending most of its time underground.
- The snake has a thick tail resembling a second head, giving it a “**double-headed**” appearance.

Habitat and Distribution

- The species is endemic to **India, Pakistan, and Iran**.
- It prefers dry, sandy, and loose-soil habitats.
- The species is ovoviviparous, meaning eggs hatch inside the female body.

Conservation Relevance

- The species is listed as **Near Threatened** on the **IUCN Red List**.
- Illegal wildlife trafficking threatens its population in South Asia.
- The case highlights concerns regarding exotic pet trade and biodiversity crimes.

MATUA COMMUNITY

TT Telegraph India

[Matua misery: SIR voter deletions push community into citizenship crisis and uncertainty](#)

BJP candidate Ashim Biswas from Ranaghat Northeast was also optimistic. “About 5,000-7,000 names have been deleted, but it won't affect the...”



Why in News

- Many members of the **Matua community** reportedly lack sufficient documentation to apply for citizenship under the **Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)**.

Historical Background

- The Matua movement was founded by **Harichand Thakur** in the **1860s** in Bengal.
- The movement emerged against caste discrimination within Hindu society.
- Many Matua families migrated to India after the **Partition of Bengal in 1947**.

Religious and Social Features

- The community mainly belongs to the **Namashudra** caste group.
- The Matua sect follows monotheism and rejects rigid Vedic ritual practices.
- Their principal religious scripture is **Shrishriharililamrta**.
- The movement emphasizes equality, dignity, devotion, and social reform.

Political and Demographic Relevance

- Matuas constitute the second-largest **Scheduled Caste (SC)** population in **West Bengal**.
- The community holds significant electoral influence in several border districts of the state.
- Citizenship and migration issues have increased the community's political relevance.

PM-SHRI SCHEME

TT Telegraph India

PM SHRI Schools Scheme Now in West Bengal? Centre, WB Govt Sign MoU; Check Details

Our Web Correspondent. Posted on 19 May 2026. 15:12 PM. MoE's X handle.

Summary. The Ministry of Education recently signed a memorandum of understanding...



Why in News

- The **Ministry of Education** recently signed an MoU with the **West Bengal Government** for implementation of the **PM-SHRI Scheme**.

Scheme Objectives

- **PM SHRI** stands for **Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India**.
- The scheme aims to develop over **14,500 model schools** aligned with **NEP 2020**.
- The scheme is implemented from **2022–23 to 2026–27**.

Institutional and Funding Structure

- Schools are managed by states, local bodies, **KVS**, and **NVS**.
- General states follow a **60:40 Centre–State funding pattern**.
- Northeastern and Himalayan states receive **90:10** funding support.
- Union Territories without legislatures receive **100% central funding**.

Educational Reforms

- The scheme promotes smart classrooms, digital learning tools, and modern laboratories.
- It encourages holistic and play-based learning approaches.
- School performance is monitored through the **School Quality Assessment Framework (SQAF)**.

SMILE MISSION

European Space Agency

Smile lifts off on quest to reveal Earth's invisible shield against the solar wind



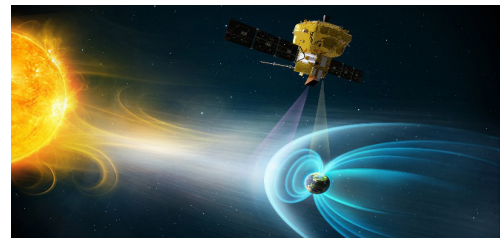
The Smile spacecraft lifted off on a Vega-C rocket from Europe's Spaceport in French Guiana at 04:52 BST / 05:52 CEST (00:52 local time) on...

Why in News

- The **European Space Agency (ESA)** and the **Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS)** are jointly launching the **SMILE Mission**.

Mission Profile

- SMILE stands for **Solar wind Magnetosphere Ionosphere Link Explorer**.
- The mission will study interactions between solar wind and Earth's magnetosphere.
- It will operate from a highly elliptical orbit around Earth.



Scientific Objectives

- The mission aims to **capture X-ray images of Earth's magnetic shield**.
- It will help understand magnetic disturbances occurring on Earth's dark side.
- The mission **will improve forecasting of solar storms** and space weather events.

Payloads and Technical Features

- The mission carries four scientific instruments operating in X-ray and ultraviolet wavelengths.
- ESA developed the **Soft X-ray Imager (SXI)** payload.
- China developed the **Magnetometer, Light Ion Analyser (LIA), and Ultraviolet Imager (UVI)**.
- The spacecraft weighs around **2,600 kg** and has a mission life of three years.

OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS OF THE DAY

Person in News

TUSHAR KUMAR BECOMES YOUNGEST INDIAN-ORIGIN MAYOR IN UK

TOI The Times of India

[23-year-old Tushar Kumar becomes UK's youngest Indian-origin mayor in Borehamwood](#)

UK News: Tushar Kumar, a 23-year-old Councillor, has made history as the youngest Indian-origin mayor in the UK. taking office in Elstree...



Why in News

- **Tushar Kumar**, a 23-year-old **Labour Party** councillor, became the youngest Indian-origin mayor in the history of the **United Kingdom** after being elected Mayor of **Elstree and Borehamwood** on 13 May 2026.

Key Facts

- **Elstree and Borehamwood Town Council** is located in **Hertfordshire, England**.
- A mayor in the UK mainly performs ceremonial and civic representation functions.
- Tushar Kumar studied at **King's College London**, founded in **1829**.
- He earlier served as **Deputy Mayor** and joined the council in **2023**.



Mayoral Priorities

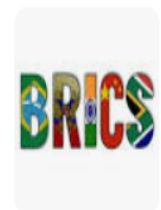
- His focus areas include youth participation, community engagement, and local charity support.
- He selected **WD6 Food Support** as the official charity for his term.

Places in News

ZIMBABWE



[Zimbabwe begins formal negotiations for membership to BRICS New Development Bank](#)



Zimbabwe has begun formal negotiations for membership in the BRICS New Development Bank. Zimbabwe's Minister of Finance,...

Why in News

- Zimbabwe has started formal negotiations to join the **BRICS New Development Bank (NDB)**.

Geographical Profile

- Zimbabwe is a landlocked country located in **South-ern Africa**.
- It shares borders with **Mozambique, South Africa, Botswana, and Zambia**.
- The capital city of Zimbabwe is **Harare**.
- The country contains parts of the **Kalahari Desert**.



Physical Features

- Zimbabwe is dominated by a high plateau region called the **Highveld**.
- The highest peak is **Mount Nyangani** with an elevation of **2,592 metres**.
- Important rivers include the **Zambezi, Limpopo, Sabi, and Runde** rivers.
- **Lake Kariba** lies on the Zambia–Zimbabwe border.

Economic and Resource Significance

- Zimbabwe possesses reserves of **coal, lithium, platinum, chromium ore, and tin**.
- Gold and platinum group metals are major mineral exports of the country.
- The country enjoys subtropical climatic conditions despite lying within the tropics.

Environ-
ment

BARDA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

 India Today

[Why India needs Barda Wildlife Sanctuary to save Asiatic lions as Gir fills up](#)



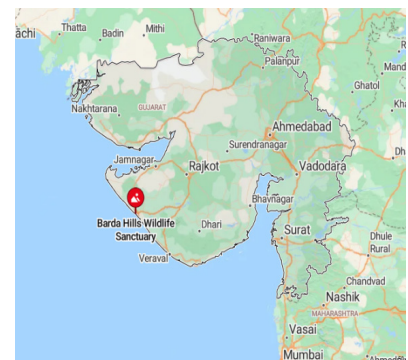
In 2018, a single virus killed 28 Asiatic lions in Gir in weeks, and every wild Asiatic lion on Earth still lives in that one forest.

Why in News

- **Barda Wildlife Sanctuary** is being developed as the second habitat for **Asiatic Lions** outside the **Gir Forest**.

Geographical Features

- The sanctuary is located in the **Barda Hills of Gujarat** near **Porbandar**.
- Rivers flowing through the sanctuary include the **Bileshvary** and **Joghri** rivers.
- The sanctuary also contains the **Khambala** and **Fodara** dams.



Conservation Importance

- The **Gir-Barda Project** was launched in **1979** to develop a satellite lion habitat.
- Barda is Gujarat’s first fully protected secondary habitat for Asiatic lions.
- The initiative reduces extinction risks caused by concentration of lions in Gir alone.

Biodiversity Profile

- The sanctuary supports species like **leopard, wolf, hyena, sambar, chinkara, and nilgai**.
- Important bird species include **crested serpent eagle, owls, and partridges**.
- Flora includes **Babul, Bamboo, Jamun, Ber, Rayan, and Dhav** species.

Space

IN-SPACE

III The Hindu

Space Meetings Veneto 2026: Nine Indian space startups sign multiple strategic collaborations in Italy

Nine Indian space-tech companies which were part of the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACe) led delegation...



Why in News

- Indian space-tech firms recently signed several collaborations at **Space Meetings Veneto 2026** under the leadership of IN-SPACe.

Institutional Structure

- IN-SPACe stands for **Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre**.
- It functions as an autonomous agency under the **Department of Space (DoS)**.
- The headquarters of IN-SPACe is located in **Ahmedabad, Gujarat**.

Role in Space Sector Reforms

- IN-SPACe acts as a single-window agency for private participation in the space sector.


- It **authorizes and supervises** non-governmental entities involved in space activities.
- The agency facilitates sharing of ISRO infrastructure with private players.

Strategic Significance

- The institution **supports commercialization and innovation** in India's space economy.
- It strengthens public-private partnerships in satellite and launch vehicle development.
- The reforms aim to increase India's share in the global space market.

UTTAR PRADESH IN NEWS

UP STATE DEDICATED BACKWARD CLASSES COMMISSION

 The Indian Express

UP government forms five-member OBC panel for reservation in panchayat polls



In a late-night decision, the Uttar Pradesh government on Wednesday constituted a five-member State Rural Local Bodies Dedicated Backward...

Why in News

- The **UP Cabinet** approved formation of the **UP State Dedicated Backward Classes Commission** for OBC reservation in panchayat elections.

Key Facts

- The move follows the **Supreme Court** and **Allahabad High Court** mandated “**triple test**” for **OBC reservation**.
- The triple test requires a dedicated commission, empirical study, and reservation within constitutional limits.
- Reservation in Panchayati Raj institutions is provided under **Article 243D** of the Constitution.
- OBC reservation in UP panchayats will remain capped at **27%**.

Political Significance

- Panchayat elections in UP involve more than **8 lakh posts** across rural local bodies.

- Political parties view these polls as crucial before the **2027 UP Assembly elections**.

Commission Composition

- The commission will have **five members**, including a **retired High Court judge as chairperson**.
- It will study backwardness among OBC communities and recommend reservation provisions.