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Important Current News for UPSC & UPPSC



26th May 2026

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INFORMATION AGENTS

TH The Hindu

Google's new 'Information Agents' are a privacy and web infrastructure problem

At its annual developer conference a few days ago, Google unveiled something called information agents.



Why in News

Google unveiled **information agents** at its annual developer conference, introducing a feature built directly into Search to autonomously monitor the web for users.

What is an Information agent?

- An information agent is an intelligent **computational software entity** designed to proactively acquire, mediate, and maintain data.
 - It is specifically engineered to mitigate the challenges associated with user **information overload**.
 - The software navigates across **distributed and heterogeneous information sources**, including traditional databases and other active digital agents.
- Think of an Information Agent as an **automated personal shopper for data**.
 - Instead of you manually checking 10 different websites every day to buy a specific car, you tell the agent your criteria once (e.g., *Red SUV, under \$20k*).
 - The agent continuously checks all car sites in the background, filters out bad listings, and sends a single text to your phone the exact second a matching car goes live.

Core Functional Capabilities

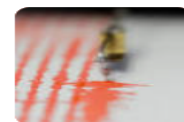
- It performs **proactive resource discovery** by searching varied online protocols like **FTP sites** to locate technical files.
 - An **FTP (File Transfer Protocol) site** is a dedicated network server used specifically for uploading, downloading, and storing files over the internet.
- The agent resolves information gaps between providers and consumers by offering **value-added information products**.
- It can extract deep context, such as identifying the specific contact details and credentials of **academic researchers**.

BIG ISLAND

THE Hindu

USGS evaluates Kilauea after magnitude 6 quake near Hawaii's Big Island

An earthquake of magnitude 6.0 struck near Honaunau-Napoopoo on the Big Island of Hawaii late on Friday (May 22, 2026) and the state's...



Why in News

- A significant **earthquake of magnitude 6.0** recently struck near Honaunau-Napoopoo on the Big Island of Hawaii.

Geological and Volcanic Structure

- The landmass is composed of **five distinct volcanoes: Kohala, Hualalai, Mauna Kea, Mauna Loa, and Kilauea.**
- **Kilauea** stands out as one of the most active planetary volcanoes and has been erupting continuously since **1983.**
- **Mauna Loa** is currently the quieter volcano but holds the distinction of containing the **most mass of any mountain on Earth.**



Geographical and Climatic Attributes

- It is the largest island in the state of **Hawaii**, which is a volcanic island state of the **United States** located in the **Pacific Ocean.**
- It spans an area of **10,432 square kilometers**, making it larger than all the other individual Hawaiian Islands combined.
- The island exhibits diverse macro-climates ranging from **tropical rainforests** to **volcanic deserts** and **snow-capped summits.**
- It hosts the **Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park**, which is recognized globally as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site.**

CONOCARPUS PLANT

THE Hindu

Ecologists warn against planting of Conocarpus plant species along highways and medians

Despite explicit warnings from environmentalists and blanket bans in States like Gujarat and Telangana, recent highway development projects...

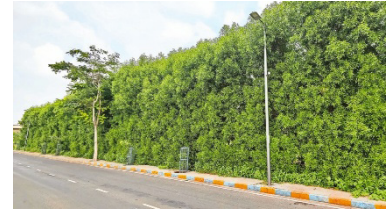


Why in News

Ecologists have issued a formal warning against the widespread landscaping use of **Conocarpus plant** species along highway medians.

Ecological and Health Disruption

- During winter, the tree sheds immense volumes of **airborne pollen**, triggers severe **seasonal allergies**, **chronic coughs**, and **asthma attacks**.
- The plant features a highly **aggressive and invasive root system** that penetrates and damages underground urban utility pipelines and sewers.
- Its massive daily consumption of water causes rapid **groundwater depletion** and dehydrates neighboring agricultural soils.
- The plant forms dense **root mats** that outcompete hardy native flora like **Nerium** and **Bougainvillea**, ruining local microbial habitats.



Botanical Characteristics

- Commonly known as **Buttonwood** or **button mangrove**, *Conocarpus erectus* is a mangrove shrub belonging to the family **Combretaceae**.
- It is highly resilient and maintains a **dark green foliage** throughout the year while thriving across both sandy and heavy clay soils.
- The plant is equipped with **two specialized salt glands** at the base of each leaf to safely expel excess salt from its vascular system.

Habitat and Distribution

- The species is native to tropical shorelines around the **Red Sea coasts, Yemen, Somalia, and Djibouti**.
- It grows extensively across the coastal subtropical zones of **Florida, Bermuda, the Bahamas, and South America**.

PM-AJAY SCHEME



[Union Minister Dr. Virendra Kumar launches the PM-AJAY Portal & AJAY Mobile App to digitize and strengthen the implementation of SC welfare schemes.](#)



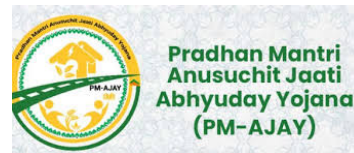
Union Minister Dr. Virendra Kumar launches the PM-AJAY Portal & AJAY Mobile App to digitize and strengthen the implementation of SC welfare...

Why in News

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched the **PM-AJAY portal** and a dedicated mobile application to digitize the entire scheme implementation.

Administrative Design and Governance

- **Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhyuday Yojana (PM-AJAY)** was introduced in the financial year 2021-22 for Scheduled Castes (SCs).
- It was created by merging **three Centrally Sponsored Schemes: PMAGY, SCA to SCSP, and Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana.**
- The program is implemented under the direct jurisdiction of the **Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.**



Target Beneficiaries and Eligibility

- Individual benefits are restricted to Scheduled Caste individuals living **below the poverty line.**
- For rural infrastructure grants, a village must contain a minimum of **50% or more Scheduled Caste population.**

Core Functional Pillars

- **Adarsh Gram Development:** Transforming SC-majority villages into model habitations by filling critical infrastructure gaps.
- **Grants-in-Aid:** Financial support for state livelihood projects, skill development, and building schools or hostels.
- **Hostel Construction:** Building student accommodations in high-ranking institutions under the **National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF).**

KATARNIAGHAT WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

 The Times of India

[Tiger kills woman in Katarniaghat forest; compensation claim disputed](#)

Tiger kills 40-year-old woman in Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary; officials say attack occurred inside forest, disputing villagers' claim...

Why in News

A fatal tiger attack occurred recently inside the boundaries of the **Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary** while a local resident was gathering firewood.

Geographic and Administrative Status

- It is situated within the **Terai belt** of the Upper Gangetic Plains in the **Bahraich district of Uttar Pradesh.**
- It forms an integral part of the **Dudhwa Tiger Reserve** along with **Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary and Dudhwa National Park.**

- The sanctuary provides a crucial **transboundary wildlife corridor** linking India's protected zones with the **Bardia National Park in Nepal**.
- It was officially brought under the protection of the central '**Project Tiger**' initiative in **1987**.

Floral and Phylogeographic Profile

- The sanctuary landscape consists of a mix of **grasslands, mixed deciduous forests, and moist deciduous forests**.
- The ecosystem is predominantly a **Sal Forest** featuring associated timber species like **Terminalia alata** (Asna) and **Adina cordifolia** (Haldu).

Faunal Diversity

- The sanctuary is one of the rare natural habitats in northern India supporting endangered **Gangetic dolphins**.
- The **Gairwa River** flowing through the sanctuary is a legally protected breeding zone for **Mugger** crocodiles and **Gharials**.
- It provides shelter to critically endangered species including the **Hispid hare**, **Swamp deer**, **Bengal florican**, and **White-backed vultures**.

KORAGA TRIBE

ThePrint

[Karnataka's Koraga tribe to urban renters—UN report highlights India's housing inequality](#)

Baku, Azerbaijan: For Karnataka's Koraga tribal community, the path to owning a house remains long and uphill.



Why in News

The **UN-Habitat World Cities Report 2026** highlighted the housing plight of the Koraga tribe, citing deep caste barriers to secure housing.

Socio-Cultural Dimensions

- The Koraga people are an indigenous tribal community officially designated as a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)**.
- They follow a traditional **matrilineal family system** structured around a distinct clan organization known as "**bali**".
- The social hierarchy of each village is headed and managed by an elder known as the **Mooppan**.
- They communicate primarily using their independent language, **Koraga Bhasha**, or through regional **Tulu**.

Economic and Art Forms

- The community relies primarily on **agriculture** and the extraction of **forest resources** to sustain their livelihood.
- They are highly skilled in traditional crafts, most notably **basket-making**.
- The community features a rich heritage of rhythmic drumming using traditional instruments like the **Dholu** (drum) and **Voote** (flute).

Geographical Distribution and Beliefs

- The population is mainly concentrated in the **Dakshina Kannada and Udupi** districts of Karnataka and the **Kasaragod** district of Kerala.
- While they practice **Hinduism**, they maintain distinct tribal beliefs focused on worshipping protective spirits called **“Bhutas”**.

OTHER IMPORTANT NEWS OF THE DAY

Places in News

CANADA

Why in News

The Union Minister of Commerce and Industry led the largest-ever **Indian business delegation** to Canada to spearhead the revival of bilateral economic relations.

Important points regarding Canada

- Located in northern North America, Canada is the **second largest country in the world** by land area.
- Its southern and northwestern frontiers form the **longest bi-national land border** in the world, shared with **12 US states** and **Alaska**.
- The sovereign nation is bounded by three major oceans: the **Arctic Ocean** to the north, the **Atlantic Ocean** to the east, and the **Pacific Ocean** to the west.
- Its designated federal capital city is **Ottawa**.



Hydrographic and Orogenic Features

- The international boundary is defined by the **five Great Lakes: Superior, Huron, Ontario, Erie, and Michigan** (which lies entirely within the US).
- The primary drainage systems of the country are formed by the **Mackenzie River, Yukon River, and Saint Lawrence River.**
- The major topographic mountain systems include the **Rocky Mountains, the St. Elias Mountains, and the Laurentian Mountains.**

Resource Profile and Climatic Zones

- The country contains immense mineral reserves of **uranium, rare earth elements, potash, diamonds, nickel, and copper.**
- The landmass is divided into **seven distinct climatic zones,** including the **Arctic, Subarctic, Prairie,** and **Great Lakes** regions.

**Environ-
ment**

MICROELEDONE GALAPAGENSIS

Why in News

Scientists from the **Charles Darwin Foundation** have discovered a new, miniature deep-sea octopus species named *Microeledone galapagensis*.



Morphological Attributes

- The creature displays an unusual **blue coloration** and is roughly the size of a **golf ball.**
- It features **smooth skin,** a large **funnel organ,** and prominent **rachidian teeth.**
- The species is characterized by a relatively **low number of suckers** on its arms and completely **lacks an ink sac.**
- Its physical appearance is unique for being **nearly pigment-free** on its dorsal surface.

Geographic and Environmental Context

- The species was discovered in the deep-sea habitat of the **Galápagos Marine Reserve in Ecuador**.
- The initial discovery of this marine organism occurred during a specialized **deep-sea expedition in 2015**.

Environmental Profile of the Galápagos Islands

- This volcanic archipelago is in the **Pacific Ocean**, approximately 600 miles off the west coast of **Ecuador**.
- The island chain is uniquely distributed on both sides of the **Equator** and was designated a **UNESCO World Heritage site in 1978**.
- The highest geographical point of the islands is **Mount Azul**, which reaches an elevation of **5,541 feet**.
- The regional climate is uniquely characterized by **low rainfall**, **low humidity**, and uncharacteristically **low air and water temperatures**.
- The islands support iconic endemic species including the **giant Galápagos tortoise (*Chelonoidis nigra*)** and the **marine iguana (*Amblyrhynchus cristatus*)**.

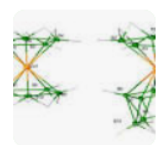
Science and Technology

FERROCENE

THE HINDU

[IIT-M, IISc team makes carbon-free version of the ferrocene sandwich](#)

A compound called ferrocene has been a landmark of chemistry for over seven decades. It consists of an iron atom sandwiched between two flat...



Why in News

Researchers have synthesized a new **carbon-free** molecule that replicates the distinct **sandwich structure** of the organometallic compound ferrocene.

Structural and Chemical Dimensions

- Ferrocene is an **organometallic compound** represented by the chemical formula $\text{Fe}(\text{C}_5\text{H}_5)_2$.
- The unique **sandwich architecture** consists of a single central **iron atom** positioned between two flat, parallel carbon ringed-molecules.

- It exhibits **aromatic properties** similar to benzene, making it highly prone to **substitution reactions**.
- The compound naturally occurs as **highly stable orange crystals** with a melting point of **174° C (345°F)**.
- It has a distinct **camphor-like odour**, demonstrates high solubility in organic solvents, and remains completely **insoluble in water**.

Historical Timeline

- The compound was first prepared in **1951** through a chemical reaction combining **sodium cyclopentadienide** with **iron(+2) chloride**.
- The discovery is widely credited with launching the modern field of **organometallic chemistry**.

Industrial and Technological Applications

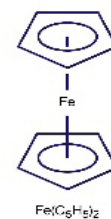
- It is extensively used as a versatile component in **advanced materials, electronics**, and modern **battery systems**.
- The compound plays a vital role in the synthesis of **pharmaceutical products** and biomedical applications.

Defence

KAUTILYA AND Q-FORCE DIGITAL SYSTEMS

Why in News

The Indian Army launched two **Artificial Intelligence-based** systems, **Kautilya** and **Q-FORCE**, to upgrade its command intelligence and logistics management.



Structure of ferrocene,
 $\text{Fe}(\text{C}_5\text{H}_5)_2$

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Architectural Framework and Functions

- **Kautilya** acts as an AI-powered **command intelligence platform** featuring **AI-enabled dashboards** and **Natural Language Processing (NLP)**.
- **Q-FORCE** operates as an **integrated digital application** designed to streamline inventory handling, supply chains, and sustainment operations.

- Kautilya processes inputs on personnel, weapons, and training, while functioning as an **AI co-pilot** via tablet-based data entry.
- Q-FORCE works by unifying multiple independent logistics and inventory networks to operate across **varied terrain** conditions.

Strategic and Governance Timeline

- The Indian Army has officially designated the year **2026** as the year of **networking and data centricity**.
- Full integration of **Artificial Intelligence** into active defense operations is projected for completion by **2027**.

Defense Projects and Heritage

- These platforms scale up initial military AI footprints established during **Operation Sindoor**, which deployed 23 distinct digital applications.
- Earlier tactical software deployments include **ECAS** and **TRI-NETRA**, which were integrated under **Project SANJAY**.
- **Project SANJAY** is the foundational defense initiative driving overall digital integration within Indian military operations.

UTTAR PRADESH IN NEWS

GANGA EXPRESSWAY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

Why in News

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the newly opened **594-km Ganga Expressway**, creating a vital multi-sector industrial corridor designed to link western and eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Technical and Geographical Specifications

- The expressway is built as a **six-lane** highway that is structurally expandable up to **eight lanes**.
- It connects **Meerut to Prayagraj** and slashes freight travel times between the two hubs from 10–12 hours down to **5–8 hours**.



- The route runs through **12 districts**, including **Hapur, Bulandshahr, Amroha, Sambhal, Budaun, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao, Raebareli, and Pratapgarh**.
- Future expansion protocols aim to extend the expressway to **Haridwar** in Uttarakhand via a proposed **Farrukhabad Link Expressway**.

Logistics and Financial Impact

- The operational corridor is projected to unlock massive annual logistics savings between **₹25,000 crore and ₹30,000 crore**.
- It streamlines transit for the northern zone, which commands **31.3% of India's total air freight movement**.
- The infrastructure is estimated to inject over **₹1 lakh crore** into the regional economy to support the state's **\$1 trillion** growth target.

Industrialization and Investment Capital

- The government has already received **987 investment proposals** valued at **₹46,660 crore** along the corridor.
- Authorities are developing **12 industrial nodes** across **6,507 acres** to host electronics, pharma, textile, and e-commerce hubs.
- The highway triggers a rise in warehousing centers across lower-cost terrain hubs like **Prayagraj, Hardoi, and Shahjahanpur**.
- The network integrates seamlessly with adjacent arterial routes, including the **Agra-Lucknow, Bundelkhand, Purvanchal, and Delhi-Mumbai** expressways.