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Important Current News for UPSC & UPPSC

28th May 2026

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10. LUCKNOW URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

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1. SARTHAK PDS SCHEME

TH The Hindu

Cabinet approves extension of SARTHAK-PDS scheme with central outlay of ₹25,530 crore

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday (May 27, 2026) approved extension of the 'SARTHAK-PDS' scheme, with an outlay of ₹25,530 crore,...



WHY IN NEWS

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by the Prime Minister, approved the SARTHAK Public Distribution System (PDS) Scheme.

Core Architecture & Objectives

- SARTHAK expands to **Scheme for Assistance in Ration Transport and Handling-Income with Automation in PDS**.
- It functions as an **umbrella scheme** that integrates two existing PDS initiatives under a single administrative structure.
- First merged scheme: **Assistance to State Agencies for intra-state movement of foodgrains and FPS dealers' margin under NFSA**.
- Second merged scheme: **SMART PDS — Scheme for Modernisation and Reforms through Technology in PDS**.
- Primary aim: strengthen implementation of the **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013**; the scheme will remain operational until **March 2031**.



Technology & Digital Integration

- The scheme deploys **Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Natural Language Processing (NLP), and Blockchain** to streamline PDS operations.
- It proposes creation of **unified databases and standardised digital architecture** for real-time monitoring of the PDS network.
- AI-enabled analytics and **grievance redressal systems** will be established alongside **State Command Control Centres** for data-based oversight.

Governance Standards

- Government will introduce **ISO-certified process frameworks** to enhance transparency, security standards, and operational sustainability.
- The scheme directly supports the **One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC)** framework by building interoperable digital infrastructure.

2. CLEAR TECHNOLOGY

DD News

[Scientists develop 'CLEAR' technology for advanced protein imaging in cancer research](#)

Researchers at the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) have developed a novel imaging platform that could...

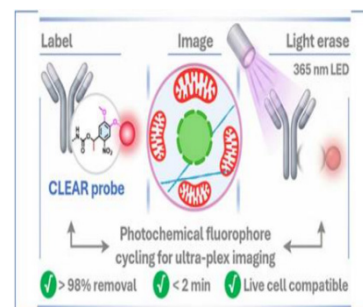


WHY IN NEWS

Researchers at JNCASR developed a novel imaging platform called CLEAR — Cleavable Light-Erased Antibody Reporter.

What is CLEAR?

- CLEAR stands for **Cleavable Light-Erased Antibody Reporter**, a novel protein imaging platform developed by JNCASR, with collaboration from IISc.
- It enables visualization of a **large number of proteins within the same biological sample** using a single fluorescent marker, overcoming a major challenge in spatial protein mapping.



Scientific Mechanism

- A **light-cleavable probe system** allows repeated cycles of protein labelling and imaging within the same spectral window.
- After imaging, the fluorescent signal is erased with a gentle pulse of **365 nm LED light**, enabling a fresh labelling cycle.
- CLEAR combines **high multiplexing capability, speed, spatial resolution**, and compatibility with live cells — unlike existing multiplex imaging methods.
- It generates detailed protein maps across specimens ranging from **single cells to complex tissue sections**.

Applications & Strategic Importance

- CLEAR can improve early detection of **cancers and neurological disorders**, and help researchers understand immune responses and cellular behaviour.
- In the long term, the platform could contribute to **precision medicine** by enabling detailed molecular analysis for targeted and personalised therapies.

3. NATIONAL HEALTH ACCOUNTS (NHA) ESTIMATES 2022–23



[Union Health Ministry Releases The National Health Accounts Estimates for India 2022-23](#)



Union Health Ministry Releases The National Health Accounts Estimates for India 2022-23. Government Health Expenditure (GHE) Increases by...

WHY IN NEWS

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released the National Health Accounts (NHA) Estimates for India 2022–23 — the 10th edition in the series.

Institutional Framework

- Prepared by **National Health Accounts Technical Secretariat (NHATS)** under the National Health Systems Resource Centre, MoHFW.
- Uses the internationally accepted **System of Health Accounts (SHA) 2011** framework; the series began in 2013–14.

Key Data Points — Prelims Focus

- Government health expenditure rose from **₹1.30 lakh crore (2013–14)** to **₹3.85 lakh crore (2022–23)**.
- Share of government health expenditure in GDP: **1.15% (2013–14) → 1.43% (2022–23)** (1.48% under new GDP base year 2022–23).
- Per capita government health expenditure increased nearly **2.7 times**, from ₹1,042 to ₹2,786 between 2013–14 and 2022–23.
- Share of government health expenditure in total health expenditure increased by **~15 percentage points**: from 28.6% to 43.7%.
- Out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE) fell sharply: **64.2% (2013–14) → 43.4% (2022–23)**.

Expenditure Trends

- Share of **Social Security Expenditure (SSE)** — including AB PM-JAY — rose from 6% to 9.9% in total health expenditure.
- Share of **private health insurance** grew from 3.4% to 9.2% in total health expenditure.
- Government spending on **primary healthcare more than doubled**: ₹0.5 lakh crore (2013–14) → ₹1.4 lakh crore (2022–23).

4. HUMBOLDTIA NAIRIANA

WHY IN NEWS

Researchers discovered a new evergreen tree species from the southern Western Ghats of Kerala, officially named *Humboldtia nairiana*.

Taxonomic & Morphological Profile

- ***Humboldtia nairiana*** belongs to genus **Humboldtia**, family **Fabaceae (legume family)**; identified in the riparian forests of **Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary**, Kerala.
- A medium-sized evergreen tree growing **5 to 8 metres** in height; distinguished by a unique **warty, pale brown bark with creamy-white blaze** and angled, glabrous branchlets.
- Produces **elliptic-oblong fruits with a shorter beak**; distinctly shorter, sparsely hairy, isometric stipules and appendages.



Conservation & Endemism

- Strictly endemic to **Kerala**; currently known only from the biodiversity-rich **Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve** at an elevation of ~300 metres.
- Its narrow distribution and habitat specificity make it ecologically vulnerable and a priority for conservation.

About Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary

- Located in the **southern Western Ghats, Belagavi district, Kerala**; forms part of **Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve**.
- Major rivers: **Shendurney, Kazhuthuruthy, and Kulathupuzha**, which join to form the **Kallada River**.
- Vegetation: **tropical evergreen, semi-evergreen, and moist deciduous forests**.

5. PM-WANI FRAMEWORK

DD News

PM-WANI gets major upgrade with QR-based login, short-duration plans

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) on Tuesday introduced a series of citizen-friendly reforms under the PM-WANI (Prime Minister's...



WHY IN NEWS

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) introduced user-friendly reforms under the PM Wi-Fi Access Network Interface (PM-WANI) framework.

Genesis & Objectives

- **PM-WANI: Prime Minister Wi-Fi Access Network Interface**; launched by **DoT** in **December 2020** to proliferate public Wi-Fi hotspots, especially in rural areas.
- Core objectives: bridge the **digital divide**, enable affordable internet access, and empower local entrepreneurs as internet service providers.

Ecosystem Components

- **Public Data Office (PDO)**: Establishes WANI-compliant Wi-Fi access points; **no license, registration, or fee** required from DoT.
- **Public Data Office Aggregator (PDOA)**: Aggregates PDOs; performs functions related to authorisation and accounting.
- **App Provider**: Develops apps to register users and discover WANI-compliant Wi-Fi hotspots nearby.
- **Central Registry**: Maintains details of App Providers, PDOAs, and PDOs; currently managed by **Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DoT)**.

6. GYNACANTHA KHASIACA

WHY IN NEWS

Citizen scientists recorded *Gynacantha khasiaca* — the long-tailed duskhawker — from Namdapha National Park, Arunachal Pradesh, after 110 years.



Species Profile

- *Gynacantha khasiaca* is a rare dragonfly, commonly known as the **long-tailed duskhawker**; last officially recorded in Arunachal Pradesh in **1914 (Abor Hills)**.
- Visually striking: **pale blue-green eyes, bright green thorax with dark stripes, transparent amber-tinted wings**, long black-tipped abdomen (~5 cm).
- Classified as **“Data Deficient”** on the **IUCN Red List**.

Distribution

- Found in dense rainforests of **Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh**; first confirmed record from the state in 110 years.
- Outside India, reported from **Nepal, Myanmar, and Bangladesh**; within India, records exist from Assam, Meghalaya, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, and Maharashtra.

7. FIJI—GEOGRAPHICAL & STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

WHY IN NEWS

The Quad (US, Australia, India, Japan) announced a ‘model port’ project in Fiji worth USD 1.82 billion to relocate the nation’s main dock.



Geographical Profile

- Located in the **South Pacific Ocean, surrounding the Koro Sea**; northeast of New Zealand and southwest of Hawaii; shares **no land borders** with any country.
- Comprises **~300 islands** (only ~100 inhabited); largest island: **Viti Levu** (‘Great Fiji’), hosting the capital **Suva**.
- Highest peak: **Mount Tomanivi at 1,324 m**; islands are largely products of volcanic action, sedimentary deposit, and coral formation.
- Major languages: **English, Fijian, and Hindi**; major religions: Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam; currency: **Fiji dollar**.

Political & Economic Profile

- Became independent in **1970** after ~a century as a British colony, initially adopting the **Westminster parliamentary system**.
- Series of coups in **1987, 2000, and 2006**; current governance under the **2013 Constitution of Fiji**; has a **55-seat unicameral Parliament**.
- Economy is one of the most developed in the Pacific, relying on **tourism and the sugar industry**.

Quad’s Strategic Significance

- The Quad port project in Fiji reflects strategic competition in the **Indo-Pacific**, countering Chinese infrastructure diplomacy in **Pacific Island nations**.

8. ALGOZA

WHY IN NEWS

- Folk artist Taga Ram Bheel received the Padma Shri in Art for preserving the traditional music of the Thar Desert through the Algoza instrument.

Instrument Profile

- Algoza is a **traditional pair of woodwind instruments**, one of India’s oldest surviving folk wind instruments, associated with **Rajasthan, Punjab, Sindh, and western India and Pakistan**.
- The name derives from the concept of ‘**two flutes**’: two wooden pipes played simultaneously — one for melody, one for continuous drone.

Playing Technique & Cultural Significance

- Players must master **circular breathing**, a demanding technique that allows uninterrupted, continuous blowing without pausing for breath.
- Quick breath recapture on each beat creates a **bouncing, swing rhythm**, making performances sound seamless and meditative.
- Intrinsically linked to the **folk musical heritage of the Thar Desert**; classified under Rajasthan's intangible cultural heritage.



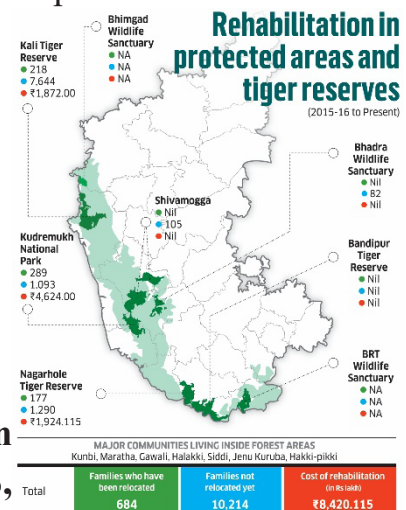
9. BHIMGAD WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

WHY IN NEWS

The Karnataka state government issued rules to regulate development works around Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary in Belagavi district.

Location & Historical Context

- Located in the **Western Ghats, Belgaum (Belagavi) district, Karnataka**; notified on **1st December 2011**.
- Derives its name from **Bhimgad Fort**, built by **Chhatrapati Shivaji** in the 17th century as a strategic outpost against Portuguese expansion from Goa.
- Shares boundaries with **Dandeli WLS, Bhagwan Mahaveer Sanctuary, Mollem NP, Netravali WLS, and Mhadei WLS**.



Biodiversity & Ecological Significance

- Famous for **Barapede Caves** — the only known breeding ground of **Wroughton's Free-tailed Bat**, a threatened species on the verge of extinction.
- Serves as breeding ground for the **King Cobra (Ophiophagus hannah)**, the world's longest venomous snake.
- Notable fauna: **Indian sloth bear, Indian pangolin, Black Panther, Malabar giant squirrel, gaur, Malabar trogon, Great Indian Hornbill**.
- Source of rivers: **Mhadei, Malaprabha, and Tillari**; dominant vegetation is **tropical and subtropical moist broadleaf forests**.

Flora & Terrain

- Forests dominated by **Malabar teak, rosewood, and dipterocarps**, alongside numerous medicinal plants.
- Features rugged terrain with **limestone formations and several caves**, contributing to its unique biodiversity.

UTTAR PRADESH IN NEWS

10. LUCKNOW URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

WHY IN NEWS

CM Yogi Adityanath inaugurated and laid foundation stones for 342 developmental projects worth ₹413.07 crore for Lucknow, managed by the Lucknow Municipal Corporation (LMC).

Project Scale & Division

- Includes **266 completed projects worth ₹136.12 crore** and **76 new projects worth ₹276.95 crore** for which foundation stones were laid.
- A **mega convention centre with 10,000-seat capacity** was officially approved for Lucknow.
- Key civic projects: **new LMC headquarters (Gomti Nagar), underground parking (Chakbast Kothi), Kukrail Urban Plaza**, and eco-friendly gas crematoriums.

Sector-wise Allocations

- Roads and connectivity (CC roads, paver roads, road widening, footpaths): **₹70–80 crore.**
- Drainage and sewage (RCC drains, underground sewage lines, drain covering): **₹55–65 crore.**
- Urban redevelopment and mega civic infrastructure: **₹265–285 crore** (lion's share of the budget).

Integrated Urban Renewal — Concept

- Integrated Urban Renewal combines **underground upgrades (sewage, drainage) with surface improvements (roads, smart city) and civic amenities (convention centres, plazas)** simultaneously.
- Ghaila dumping site was reclaimed into **'Rashtra Prerna Sthal'**; over **1.85 million metric tonnes of legacy waste** cleared from the Shivri site.
- The initiative aims to create a **Swachh, Sundar, Samarth** (Clean, Beautiful, Capable) Lucknow by addressing foundational infrastructure alongside high-end civic development.