

UPSC Daily Current Affairs 25 May 2021

1. Belarus

(Topic- GS Paper I – Geography, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently the European Union is considering shunning Belarus's airspace and banning national carrier Belavia from EU airports after Belarusian authorities scrambled a warplane and forced a Ryanair jetliner to land in Minsk.

About Belarus

- It is a country of Eastern Europe.
- Until it became independent in 1991, Belarus, formerly known as Belorussia or White Russia, was the smallest of the three Slavic republics included in the Soviet Union (the larger two being Russia and Ukraine).



Iran inspection agreement extended by one month: IAEA

(Topic- GS Paper II –International Organisation, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- The UN nuclear watchdog (IAEA) and Iran have agreed to extend an understanding to monitor Tehran's activities by one month while talks in Vienna try to save the 2015 nuclear deal.

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More on the news

- According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi , the equipment and the verification and the monitoring activities that we agreed will continue as they are now for one month expiring on June 24th, 2021.
- Iran in late February limited the IAEA's access to nuclear sites it has been monitoring as part of the 2015 landmark deal.

About the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

- It is an international organization that seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to inhibit its use for any military purpose, including nuclear weapons.
- It is entrusted with the task of upholding the principles of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1970.

Establishment

- It was established as an autonomous organisation on July 29, 1957, at the height of the Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

Headquarter

- Its headquarter is at **Vienna, Austria**.

Objective

- The Agency works with its Member States and multiple partners worldwide to promote safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies.
- In 2005, it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their work for a safe and peaceful world.

2. Ethiopia Tigray crisis

(Topic- GS Paper II –International Relation, Source- Business Standard)

Why in the news?

- The United States has recently begun restricting visas for people undermining efforts to resolve the deadly fighting in Ethiopia's Tigray region.

More on the news

- Thousands of people are estimated to have died in the six months the conflict between Ethiopian troops and the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front has raged in the northern regional state.

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- The U.S. called on the Ethiopian government to meet public commitments to hold accountable all those responsible for human rights violations and abuses, to protect civilians, and to ensure unhindered humanitarian access.

Background

Ethiopia's Tigray crisis

The key events leading to the state of emergency in Tigray



- The crisis began in November after Ethiopia accused former leaders of the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front, or TPLF, of ordering an attack on an Ethiopian army base in the region.
- Troops sent by Ethiopia's leader, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, quickly ousted the TPLF from major cities and towns, but guerrilla fighting was still reported across the Tigray region.
- Troops from neighboring Eritrea joined in support of Ethiopian forces.

About Ethiopia

- Ethiopia is a country on the Horn of Africa.
- The country lies completely within the tropical latitudes and is relatively compact, with similar north-south and east-west dimensions.
- The capital is Addis Ababa (“New Flower”), located almost at the centre of the country.
- Ethiopia is the largest and most populated country in the Horn of Africa.
- With the 1993 secession of Eritrea, its former province along the Red Sea, Ethiopia became landlocked.

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India-Ethiopia Relations

- Ethiopia is one of the largest recipients of long term concessional credit from India in Africa.
- **Lines of Credit worth more than USD1 billion** have been sanctioned to Ethiopia for sectors such as rural electrification, sugar industry and railways.
- **Tele-Education and Tele-Medicine services** under the Pan African e-network Project was launched in Addis Ababa in July 2007.
- The Tele-Education project has been replicated by the Ethiopian side and linkages established between the Addis Ababa University and the Indian Institutes of Technology at Delhi and Kanpur.
- **Indian Mission has been celebrating the International Day of Yoga in Addis Ababa.**

3. Central Bureau of Investigation

(Topic- GS Paper II – Polity, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- Recently, a high-powered committee, headed by Prime Minister and comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) and Leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha, met to finalise the choice of the next Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

About the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)

- It was set up in 1963 by a resolution of the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Later, it was transferred to the Ministry of Personnel and now it enjoys the status of an attached office.
- The establishment of the CBI was recommended by the **Santhanam Committee on Prevention of Corruption (1962–1964)**.
- **The CBI is not a statutory body.**
- It derives its powers from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946.

Provision of prior permission

- The CBI is required to obtain the prior approval of the Central Government before conducting any inquiry or investigation into an offence committed by officers of the rank of joint secretary and above in the Central Government and its authorities.
- It means it does not have **Suo Moto power**.

Legal provisions for the appointment of Director of the CBI

- The Director of the CBI is appointed as per section 4A of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act of 1946.

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- The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act (2013) amended the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act (1946) and made the following changes with respect to appointment of the Director of CBI.
- The Central Government shall appoint the Director of CBI on the recommendation of a threemember committee consisting of
 - The Prime Minister as Chairperson
 - The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha
 - The Chief Justice of India or Judge of the Supreme Court nominated by him.
- Later, the Delhi Special Police Establishment (Amendment) Act, 2014 made a change in the composition of the committee related to the appointment of the Director of **Central Bureau of Investigation**.
- It states that where there is no recognized leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, then the leader of the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha would be a member of that committee.

4. New land regulations in Lakshadweep

(Topic- GS Paper II + III – Governance + Environment, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news ?

- Recently, high dissatisfaction in the Lakshadweep group of islands over a slew of regulations introduced by the new administrator Praful Khoda Patel.

More on the news

- The latest draft regulation for the creation of a Lakshadweep Development Authority (LDA) is widely resented as the people suspect that this might have been issued at the behest of ‘real estate interests’ seeking to usurp the small holdings of property owned by the islanders, a majority of them (94.8% as per the 2011 census) belonging to the Scheduled Tribes.

Definition of Development in the draft

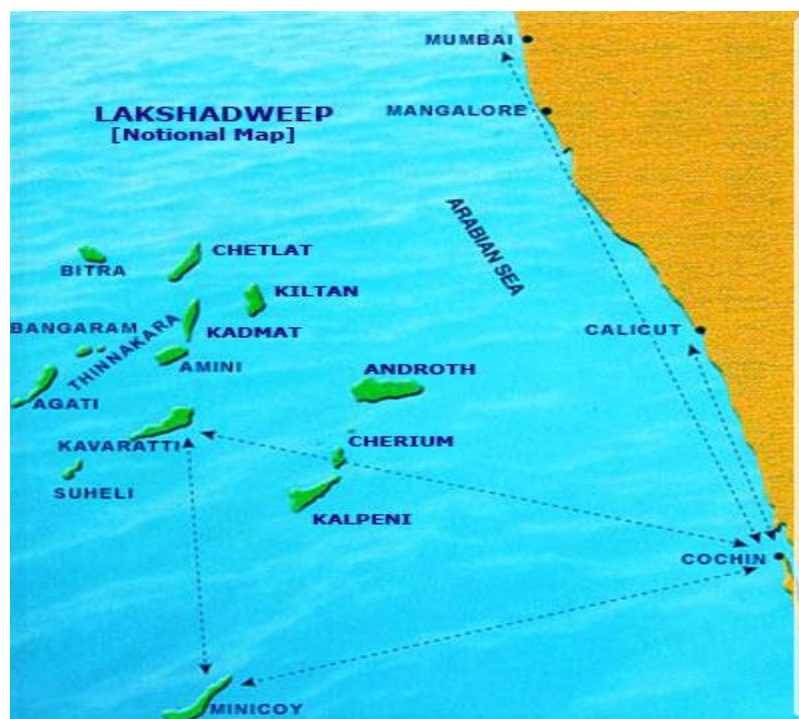
- The draft regulation defines development as the “carrying out of building, engineering, mining, quarrying or other operations in, on, over or under land, the cutting of a hill or any portion thereof or the making of any material change in any building or land or in the use of any building or land.
- The regulation empowers the government, identified as the administrator, to constitute Planning and Development Authorities under it to plan the development of any area identified as having “bad layout or obsolete development”.
- Only cantonment areas are exempted from this

Concern

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- One of the petitions seeking the withdrawal of the LDA regulation says the legislation vests such powers with the authority that it can prepare comprehensive development plans for any area and relocate people regardless of their will.
- It provides for forcible eviction, puts the onus on the owner to develop his holding as per the plan prepared by the authority as also to heavily penalise them in the event of non-compliance.
- -The island community is a close-knit group with families living in close proximity.
- The regulation will destroy the way of life practised by them for generations.

About Lakshadweep



- It is a tropical archipelago of 36 atolls and coral reefs in Arabian Sea.
- The name Lakshadweep in Malayalam and Sanskrit means ‘a hundred thousand islands’.

Some important island of Lakshadweep

- a. Amindivi Islands (consisting of six main islands of Amini, Keltan, Chetlat, Kadmat, Bitra and Perumul Par).
- b. Laccadive Islands (consisting of five major islands of Androth, Kalpeni, Kavaratti, Pitti and Suheli Par) and
- c. Minicoy Island: It is the largest island of Lakshadweep.

5. FDI received in FY21

(Topic- GS Paper III –Economics, Source- The Hindu)

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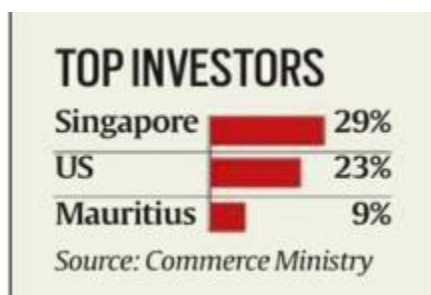
Why in the news?

- According to the Commerce and Industry Ministry Recently, the Foreign direct investment (FDI) flows into India grew 10% in 2020-21 to touch a record \$81.72 billion, with FDI equity inflows rising 19% to almost \$60 billion.

Key highlights

Top Investor

- Singapore emerged as the top investor with almost a third of all investments, followed by the U.S. which accounted for 23% of FDI and Mauritius from where 9% of the capital flows originated.



Sharp growth

- However, the sharpest growth among the top 10 FDI-origin countries was recorded from Saudi Arabia.
- Investments from the oil-rich nation jumped from a mere \$90 million in 2019-20 to \$2.8 billion last year.

Top FDI destination

- Gujarat was the top FDI destination in FY21, accounting for 37% of the foreign equity inflows, followed by Maharashtra that got 27%.
- Karnataka accounted for another 13% of the equity investments, indicating that the rest of the country got a disproportionately less 23% of foreign equity capital.

Top Sector

- Computer software and hardware has emerged as the top sector during 2020-21 with about 44% share of the total FDI equity inflow followed by construction (infrastructure) activities (13%) and services sector (8%), respectively,” the Ministry said.

About Foreign direct investment (FDI)

- FDI is the process whereby residents of one country (the home country) acquire ownership of assets for the purpose of controlling the production, distribution and other activities of a firm in another country (the host country).

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- Generally, FDI takes place when an investor establishes foreign business operations or acquires foreign business assets, including establishing ownership or controlling interest in a foreign company.

FDI has three components:

- Equity capital** is the foreign direct investor's purchase of shares of an enterprise in a country other than its own.
- Reinvested** earnings comprise the direct investors' share (in proportion to direct equity participation) of earnings not distributed as dividends by affiliates, or earnings not remitted to the direct investor.
 - Such retained profits by affiliates are reinvested.
- Intra-company loans** or intra-company debt transactions refer to short- or long-term borrowing and lending of funds between direct investors (or enterprises) and affiliate enterprises

Where is FDI made?

- Foreign Direct Investments are commonly made in open economies that have skilled workforce and growth prospect.
- FDI's not only bring money with them but also skills, technology and knowledge.

FDI in India

- FDI is an important monetary source for India's economic development. Economic liberalisation started in India in the wake of the 1991 crisis and since then, FDI has steadily increased in the country.
- India today is a part of top 100-club on Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) and globally **rank number one in the Greenfield FDI ranking.**

Routes through which India gets FDI

- **Automatic route:** The non-resident or Indian company does not require prior nod of the RBI or government of India for FDI.
- **Government route:** In this, the foreign entity has to take the approval of the government

6. Yellow Fungus

(Topic- GS Paper III – Science and Technology, Source- TOI)

Why in the news?

- Recently, at a time when several states are witnessing surge in number of black and white fungus cases, a 45-year-old patient in Uttar Pradesh's Ghaziabad found infected with yellow fungus.

What Causes Yellow Fungus Infection?

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- It is believed that poor hygiene standards or consumption of unhygienic food causes yellow fungus infection.
- Excess use of steroids or anti-fungal medicines is also a possible reason behind sudden surge in such infections in Covid-19 patients, even if recovered.

Symptoms

- Initially, the patient suffering from yellow fungus complains of
 - a. extreme tiredness
 - b. Low or no appetite at all which leads to weight loss.
- Subsequently, the weight of the patient starts decreasing rapidly and it becomes quite fatal.

Treatment

- Anti-fungal drug Amphotericin-B is being considered as a primary treatment of yellow fungus.
- The same injection is being used currently to treat black or white fungus cases in the country.

Is Yellow Fungus More Dangerous than Black or White Fungus?

- In case of black fungus or white fungus, the symptoms are facial swelling, blackening or discolouration over the nose, blurred or double vision, chest pain, breathing difficulties, coughing blood and severe headache.
- However, the doctors have reportedly said that the yellow fungus starts infecting the patient internally and disturbing vital bodily processes.
- Hence, the patients are advised to seek the medical treatment at the earliest once they experience symptoms such as body fatigue, low appetite and weight loss.

How does it spread?

- Fungal infections spread when a person inhales moulds, and are found in the environment.
- Now, yellow fungus infections could also be spread via high levels of humidity or presence of old, contaminated food.
- However, poor hygiene and unsanitary conditions remain to be the prime reasons for infection.

Related Information

About White Fungus or Candidiasis

- It is a fungal infection caused by a yeast (a type of fungus) called Candida.
- Candida normally lives on the skin and inside the body, in places such as the mouth, throat, gut, and vagina, without causing any problems.
- Candida can cause infections if it grows out of control or if it enters deep into the body (for example, the bloodstream or internal organs like the kidney, heart, or brain).

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- **The most common species that causes infection is Candida albicans.**

Symptoms

- People experience symptoms similar to COVID- 19 if it reaches the lungs such as chest infection, despite testing negative for the virus.
- White fungus affects the lungs as well as other parts of the body including the nails, skin, stomach, kidney, brain, private parts and mouth.

About Mucormycosis

- Mucormycosis, commonly called black fungus, is a rare but serious fungal infection caused by a kind of fungus called mucormycete, which is abundant in the environment.
- It mainly affects people who have health problems or take medicines that lower the body's ability to fight germs and sickness.

Symptoms

- These include pain and redness around eyes and/or nose, fever, headache, coughing, shortness of breath, bloody vomits, and altered mental status.
- Warning signs can include toothache, loosening of teeth, blurred or double vision with pain.

Who is vulnerable ?

- Vulnerable groups include people who have health problems or take medicines that lower the body's ability to fight germs and sickness.
- These include those with diabetes, cancer, or those who have had an organ transplant.

Prevention

- Use masks if you are visiting dusty construction sites.
- Wear shoes, long trousers, long-sleeved shirts and gloves while gardening.
- Maintain personal hygiene including a thorough scrub bath.
- Mucormycosis does not spread between people or between people and animals.

Diagnosis

- It depends on the location of the suspected infection.
- A sample of fluid from your respiratory system may be collected for testing in the lab; otherwise a tissue biopsy or a CT scans of your lungs, sinuses etc may be conducted.

Treatment

- Mucormycosis needs to be treated with prescription antifungal medicine.
- In some cases, it can require surgery.

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