

UPSC Daily Current Affairs 31 May 2021

1. Steadfast Defender 21

(Topic- GS Paper II – International Organization, Source- Financial Express)

Why in the news?

- Recently, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is organising “Steadfast Defender 21 war games” military exercises in Europe as tensions with Russia increases.

About the Steadfast Defender 21

Exercise Steadfast Defender 2021 is NATO's flagship exercise for the year and is the first of a new series of long-planned NATO exercises to ensure that our forces are trained, able to operate together and ready to respond to any threat from any direction

RAPID REACTION **REINFORCEMENT BY SEA** **REINFORCEMENT BY LAND**

SECURING THE ATLANTIC TO ENABLE EUROPEAN REINFORCEMENT BY NORTH AMERICAN ALLIES

F-35 stealth jets, Cyber & Space capabilities and Naval Warships from 11 nations will demonstrate their ability to secure the strategic lines of communication across the Atlantic from **Seabed to Space**.

HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH is one of more than **18 Ships** and **50 Aircraft** in the Exercise.

NATO OTAN

<https://shape.nato.int/steadfast-defender>

OVER **9,000** PARTICIPANTS
NEARLY **650** PIECES OF EQUIPMENT
MORE THAN **20** PARTICIPATING NATIONS

#SteadfastDefender21

Aims

- The exercise aimed at simulating the 30-nation military organization's response to an attack on any one of its members.
- It will test NATO's ability to deploy troops from America and keep supply lines open.
- The military exercises stretching across the Atlantic, through Europe and into the Black Sea region.

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- The war-games, dubbed Steadfast Defender 2021, are aimed at simulating the 30-nation military organization's response to an attack on any one of its members.

About North Atlantic Treaty Organization

- It is an international alliance that consists of 30 member states from North America and Europe.
- It was established at the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty on 4 April 1949.
- NATO is committed to the principle that an attack against one or several of its members is considered as an attack against all.
- This is the principle of collective defence, which is enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.
- It's headquarter at **Brussels, Belgium**.

2. Center vs State: How IAS officers are put on central deputation

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

Why in the news?

- Recently, West Bengal Chief Secretary Bandyopadhyay, an IAS officer of the 1987 batch, the Centre has asked him to report to the Government of India.

More on the news

- The West Bengal government issued an order, citing the Centre's approval "in the interest of public service" to extend Bandyopadhyay's services for three months.
- Few days after it the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) wrote to the Chief Secretary that the Appointment Committee of the Cabinet has approved the placement of the services of Bandyopadhyay with the Government of India and requested the state to relieve the officer with immediate effect.
- This came after Chief Minister and Bandyopadhyay skipped a meeting with the Prime Minister during his visit to the state.

How officers get an extension?

- Rule 16(1) of DCRB (Death-cum-Retirement Benefit) Rules says that "a member of the Service dealing with budget work or working as a full-time member of a Committee which is to be wound up within a short period may be given extension of service for a period not exceeding three months in public interest, with the prior approval of the Central Government".
- For an officer posted as Chief Secretary of a state, this extension can be for six months.

Central deputation

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- In normal practice, the Centre asks every year for an “offer list” of officers of the All India Services (IAS, IPS and Indian Forest Service) willing to go on central deputation, after which it selects officers from that list.
- **Rule 6(1) of the IAS Cadre Rules says an officer may**, “with the concurrence of the State Governments concerned and the Central Government, be deputed for service under the Central Government or another State Government...”
- It says “in case of any disagreement, the matter shall be decided by the Central Government and the State Government or State Governments concerned shall give effect to the decision of the Central Government.”

Rule 7 of the All India Services (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1969

- The Centre can take no action against civil service officials who are posted under the state government.
- Rule 7 of the All India Services (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1969, states that
- The “authority to institute proceedings and to impose a penalty” will be the state government if the officer is serving in connection with the affairs of a state.
- For any action to be taken against an officer of the All India Services, the state and the Centre both need to agree.

Recent Development

- In a PIL in the Supreme Court in January 2021, lawyer Abu Sohail pleaded that Rule 6(1) be struck down.
- He contended that because of the Rule, states have to bear the brunt of arbitrary actions taken by the Centre, while the Rule makes it difficult for the Centre to enforce its will on a state that refuses to back down.
- Ruling on March 1, a Bench of Justice L Nageswara Rao and Justice S Ravindra Bhat did not find any merit in the petition.

3. Namibia Genocide

(Topic- GS Paper II – International Relation, Source- Indian Express)

Why in the news?

- Recently, Germany for the first time has recognised that it committed genocide against the Herero and Nama people in present-day Namibia during its colonial rule over a century ago.
- It also promised financial support of over a billion euros to the Southern African nation.

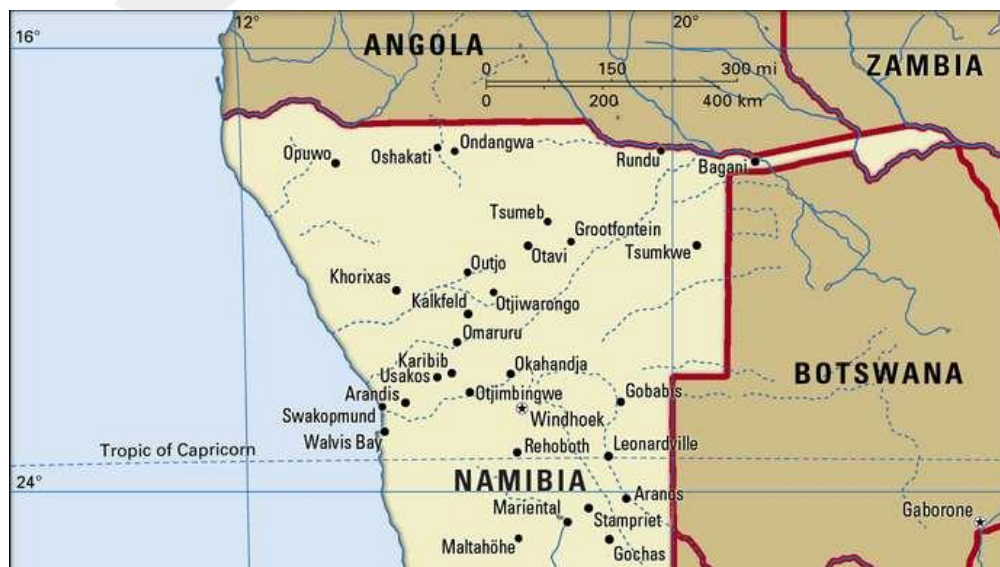
What was the Herero and Nama Genocide?

- Between 1904 and 1908, German colonial settlers killed tens of thousands of men, women and children from the Herero and Nama tribes after they rebelled against colonial rule in what was then called German South West Africa.
- While Germany has previously acknowledged the atrocities, they refused to pay direct reparations for many years.
- Violence first broke out between Herero fighters and German settlers in a small town called **Okahandja**.
- The Herero, who by then had embraced some symbols of modernity such as guns and horses, laid siege on a German fort.

Battle of Waterberg

- During **the Battle of Waterberg**, around 80,000 Herero, including women and children, were chased across the desert by German troops.
- A mere 15,000 survived.
- Over the next three years, thousands of **Nama and Herero** men, women and children were exiled to the Kalahari desert where many died of thirst.
- Several others were sent to bleak concentration camps, and used for forced labour.
- The Germans continued to rule the region till 1915, following which it fell under South Africa's control for 75 years.
- **Namibia finally gained independence in 1990.**

About Namibia



- It is officially called Republic of Namibia.
- It is located on the southwestern coast of Africa.

- It is bordered by Angola to the north, Zambia to the northeast, Botswana to the east, South Africa to the southeast and south, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west.

4. UAE's Golden Visa

(Topic- GS Paper II – International relation, Source- AIR)

Why in the news?

- Recently, Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt received his golden visa from the UAE government.

About the Golden Visa



- The Golden Visa system essentially offers long-term residency (5 and 10 years) to people belonging to the following groups: investors, entrepreneurs, individuals with outstanding talents the likes of researchers, medical professionals and those within the scientific and knowledge fields, and remarkable students.

Benefits

- The main benefit of the visa will be security as through the issuance of the Golden Visa, the UAE government has made it clear that they are committed to providing expatriates, investors and essentially everyone looking to make the UAE their home an extra reason to feel secure about their future.

Recent Development

- In September that year, the Dubai government also launched a **five-year renewable Retirement Visa for foreigners aged 55 and over to live in the emirate.**
- The programme, called Retire in Dubai, is open to all retirees as long as they earn a monthly income of at least \$5,500, have savings of \$275,000, or own a property in Dubai worth \$550,000.

5. YUVA - Prime Minister's Scheme

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

Why in the news?

- The Ministry of Education, Department of Higher Education has recently launched YUVA- Prime Minister's Scheme For Mentoring Young Authors.

About YUVA - Prime Minister's Scheme

- YUVA(Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors) is a part of India@75 Project (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav) to bring to the fore the perspectives of the young generation of writers on themes like Unsung Heroes, Freedom Fighters, Unknown and Forgotten Places and their role in National Movement.
- This scheme will thus help to develop a stream of writers who can write on a spectrum of subjects to promote Indian heritage, culture and knowledge system.
- The books prepared under this scheme will be published by National Book Trust, India; and will also be translated into other Indian languages ensuring the exchange of culture and literature, thereby promoting 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.

Implementing Agency

- The National Book Trust, India under the Ministry of Education act as the Implementing Agency of this Scheme.

Highlights of YUVA (Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors):

LAUNCHING 'YUVA'
PRIME MINISTER'S SCHEME FOR
'YOUNG, UPCOMING AND
VERSATILE AUTHORS'

ON THE OCCASION
OF 'AZADI KA
AMRIT MAHOTSAV'
2022

HIGHLIGHTS

- TO MENTOR budding young writers (below 30 years)
- Themes: Unsung Heroes, Freedom Fighters, National Movement etc
- Selection through All India Contest (<https://www.mygov.in>)
- Contest Period: 1st June–31st July 2021
- Total 75 authors to be selected
- Selected authors to be announced on 15th August 2021
- Winner entries to be ready for publication by 15th December 2021
- Published books to be launched on 12th January 2022 on YUVA DIVAS (National Youth Day)
- Scholarship: Rs.50,000 per month for a period of six months

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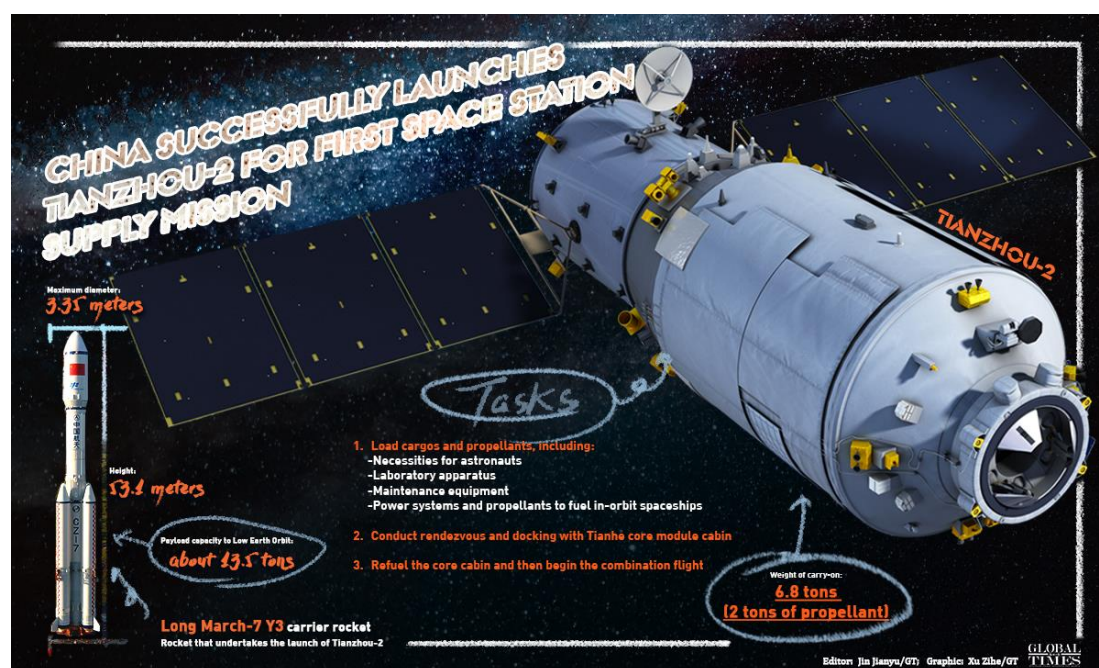
6. Tianzhou-2 cargo spacecraft

(Topic- GS Paper III –Science and technology, Source- The Hindu)

Why in the news?

- China took another step towards completing the construction of its first space station by the end of next year following the launch and docking of a cargo spacecraft **Tianzhou-2 cargo spacecraft** recently.

About Tianzhou-2 cargo spacecraft



- It has been described by China’s state media as “**the delivery guy for China’s space station.**”
- It was launched by a Long March-7 rocket from the island of Hainan.
- The Tianzhou-2 spacecraft carried a range of supplies, the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) said, and will be followed by the launch of another cargo spacecraft, Tianzhou-3, and two manned missions, Shenzhou-12 and Shenzhou-13, this year, each carrying three astronauts who will spend several months in orbit.
- The Shenzhou-12 launch is slated for mid-June.

Background

- The launch was a third landmark for China’s space programme in recent weeks.
- China landed a spacecraft in Mars on May 15 carrying its first Mars rover, Zhurong.

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- The Tianhe module, which the cargo spacecraft docked with on Sunday, was launched on April 29.

7. Jayanti: new spider cricket

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

Why in the news?

- Recently, Jayanti has become the twelfth subgenus, or species, of cricket identified under the genus *Arachnomimus* Saussure, 1897.
- It has been found in the Kurra caves of Chhattisgarh in April 2021.

About the New Spider Cricket



- The new species of cricket has been identified under the genus *Arachnomimus* Saussure, 1897.
- The new species was named after Professor Jayant Biswas, one of the leading cave explorers in the country.
- **Jayanti has led to the new subgenus 'Indimimus'.**
- Males of the new Jayanti subgenus cannot produce sound and their females don't have ears.
- They may be communicating by beating their abdomen or any other body part on the cave walls.
- **Another Species are noticeable for their loud calls, especially at night.**
- Male crickets produce this sound by rubbing their wings against each other to attract females.

What is *Arachnomimus* Saussure, 1897?

- Arachnomimus is the genus name given by Swiss Entomologist Henri Louis Frédéric de Saussure in 1878 to crickets that resembled spiders.

Significant of the discovery

- Their skills of vibrational communication may help in **designing hearing aids for human** which can capture quietest signals and amplify to an audible hearing range.
- **Vibrational communication** is one of the softest but fastest modes of signal transmission.
- Vibrational communication can be regarded as an interaction between the physical properties of the environment and insect's anatomy and physiology and resulting behavior.

8. Monsoon onset over Kerala delayed: IMD

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

Why in the news?

- According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the arrival of the southwest monsoon over Kerala has been delayed to June 3.

More on the news

- Skymet, a private weather forecast agency, however, said the monsoon had arrived. This was because two of the three criteria — as defined by the IMD — had been met.

These two criteria are

- a. The criteria are rain-bearing westerlies being at a minimum depth and speed; at least 60% of the available 14 stations in Kerala and coastal Karnataka.
- b. certain degree of clouding, indicated by a parameter called ‘**outgoing longwave radiation**’ (OLR), being below 200 W/square metre.

Models for Forecasting

a. Dynamical Model

- It is also called the **Monsoon Mission Coupled Forecast System**.
- It was deployed by the India Meteorological Department under National Monsoon Mission (NMM).
- It relies on the supercomputers, mathematically simulating the physics of the ocean and the atmosphere.

b. Statistical Model

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- It takes into consideration the global weather models pointing to negligible chances of El Nino, a warming of the central equatorial Pacific which is associated with the drying up of monsoon rain.
- **The India Meteorological Department relies on this model.**

About National Monsoon Mission

- It was has launched by Union Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- The Ministry has bestowed the responsibility of execution and coordination of this mission to Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune.

Mission Objective:

- a. To build an ocean atmospheric model for
 - Improved prediction of monsoon rainfall on extended range to seasonal time scale of up to 16 days to about one season
 - Improved prediction of rainfall, temperature as well as extreme weather events on short to medium range time scale up to 15 days.

About India Meteorological Department (IMD)

- It is an agency of the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- It is responsible for meteorological observations, weather forecasting and seismology.
- It is headquartered in Pune with regional offices at Mumbai, Kolkata, Nagpur and Delhi.

Also in news

Govt. cited 'Indian double mutant strain' in SC affidavit

- The Centre used the term “Indian double mutant strain” in an affidavit filed in the Supreme Court just days before it officially objected to affixing nationality to the virus variant.
- The affidavit was filed in the court three days prior to a Ministry of Health statement on May 12, taking exception to media reports which referred to the B.1.617 variant as an “Indian variant”.
- It said the World Health Organization (WHO) had not associated B.1.617 with the term “Indian variant”.
- Instead, it considered the virus a variant of “**global concern**”.
- In fact, the affidavit calls variants “UK variant, Brazil variant, South African variant” and caps the list with the “Indian double mutant strain”.