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1. Global Hunger Index 2022 (Oct. 15, 2022)

India ranked **107 out of 121 countries** in the **Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2022** that was released on 14 October 2022.

India's Performance

- India is in a worse position than all the countries of **South Asia** except war-torn **Afghanistan**.
- Hunger levels in India have been placed in the "**severe**" category with a score of **29.1**.
- Neighbouring **Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Myanmar** have **been ranked 99, 64, 84, 81, and 71 respectively** – all countries above India.
- The wasting rate (underweight by height) of children in India is **19.3%**, worse than the levels recorded in **2014 (15.1%)**.
- The prevalence of undernutrition in India has increased from **14.6% in 2018-2020 to 16.3% in 2019-2021**.
- It is estimated that 224.3 million people in India are malnourished, out of a total of 828 million people who are malnourished globally.
- India has shown **improvement in two indicators** – child stunting has declined from 38.7% to 35.5% between 2014 and 2022, and child mortality has fallen from 4.6% to 3.3% in the same period.
- In 2021, India ranked **101 out of 116 countries**, while in 2020, India stood at 94th position.

Global Scenario

- According to the index, there are 44 countries that currently have "**severe**" or "**alarming**" levels of hunger.
- Globally, progress against hunger has largely stalled in recent years.
- For the world a GHI **score of 18.2 in 2022** is considered "**moderate**", but 18.2 in 2022 represents a slight improvement from 19.1 in 2014.
- This is due to conflicts, climate change, the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as crises such as the Ukraine War, which have increased global food, fuel and fertilizer prices and are expected to worsen in 2023.

About Global Hunger Index

- GHI is a tool for comprehensively measuring and tracking hunger across nations.
- It is an annual report jointly published by **Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe**.

- It was first released in **2006**, it is released every year in the month of October. Its 2022 edition refers to the 17th edition of the GHI.
- It is calculated on the basis of four indicators –

1. **Undernutrition** - a population with insufficient caloric intake
2. **Child wasting** - Children under the age of five, who are underweight for their height, show acute malnutrition.
3. **Child stunting** - children under the age of five who are underweight for their age, indicating malnutrition
4. **Child Mortality Rate** - Mortality rate of children under five years of age

2. NHIDCL signs MoU with IIT Patna for innovation in highways construction (Oct. 14, 2022)

National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL), a Central Public Sector Enterprise under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, on 14 October signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Patna** for innovative solutions collaboration in highway construction.

Important facts

- The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by IIT Patna Director **TN Singh** and Managing Director of NHIDCL **Chanchal Kumar**.
- NHIDCL has signed agreements with several IITs and other institutions to promote innovation in highway construction.
- It has signed MoUs with CSIR-CBRI, IIT Roorkee, IIT Kanpur and NSDC during the year 2022-23.
- Earlier, MoUs were signed with IIT Bombay and IIT Guwahati to share knowledge of innovative ideas and technologies in the field of Highway Engineering.
- This will help NHIDCL to introduce innovative technologies and find practical solutions to the issues of highway construction in challenging hilly and border areas.

3. 10th India -UAE High Level Joint Task Force on Investments held in Mumbai (Oct. 11, 2022)

The 10th meeting of the **UAE-India High Level Joint Task Force on Investments** took place in **Mumbai** on 11 October 2022. It was co-chaired by the Union Minister for Commerce and Industry **Piyush Goyal** and His Highness Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Member of the Executive Council of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

The Joint Task Force was established in 2013 to promote trade, investment and economic ties between the UAE and India.

This was the first meeting of the Joint Task Force since the signing of the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and unveiling of the Joint UAE-India Vision Statement in February 2022 during the virtual summit between India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

India -UAE Trade relation

- The United Arab Emirates is the **third largest trading partner of India** after the United States and China in 2021-22.
- In 2021 - 22, total trade between India and the UAE was \$72.8 billion, with India's exports of \$28 billion and imports of \$44.8 billion.
- UAE is a major market for Indian commodities such as basmati rice, tea, electrical equipment, apparel and machinery among others.
- One of the key goals of the CEPA is to increase bilateral trade between the UAE and India over \$100 billion in the next five years, including raising services trade beyond \$15 billion.
- Besides trade, the UAE is a major employment destination for Indians. Of the nearly 90 lakh Indians living in West Asia, Emirates is home for 34 lakh of them, who work there in the finance industry, hospitality, medical sector, oil industry, construction and others.

United Arab Emirate (UAE)

- It is a federation of seven Emirates of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras Khaimah, Ajmain, Fujairah, Umm -Al-Quwain. It is an Arabian country.
- Abu Dhabi is the largest of the emirates and is the centre of UAE oil business.
- It is situated in the West Asia /Middle East region of the world in the Arabian Peninsula.
- UAE in its present form came into existence in 1971.

Capital of UAE: **Abu Dhabi**

Currency: **Emirati Dirham**

President of UAE: **Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan**. He is the king of Abu Dhabi and the supreme commander of the UAE Armed Forces.

4. Telecom Technology Development Fund scheme launched by Universal Service Obligation Fund (Oct. 1, 2022)

The Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), a body under the Department of Telecommunications, officially launched the Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF) Scheme on 1st October 2022, to promote indigenous telecom technology.

Aim of the Telecom Technology Fund

It aims to fund Research and Development in rural-specific communication technology applications and form synergies among academia, start-ups, research institutes, and the industry to build and develop the telecom ecosystem.

The scheme aims to promote technology ownership and indigenous manufacturing, create a culture of technology co-innovation, reduce imports, and boost export opportunities and creation of Intellectual Property.

The scheme entails grants to Indian entities to encourage and induct indigenous technologies tailor-made to meet domestic needs.

What is USOF (Universal Service Obligation Fund)

- To provide good quality telecom service in rural and inaccessible areas where the private sector won't go due to low profit or loss, the government of India came up with the Policy of Universal Service obligation.
- Under this policy a Universal Service obligation Fund was set up which will provide funds for creating telecom facility in the rural and inaccessible areas.
- Every private telecom companies has to pay a certain percentage of its income to this fund.
- The Universal Service Support Policy came into effect from 01.04.2002.
- USOF comes under the Department of Telecommunication, Ministry of Communication, and Government of India.
- The infrastructure created under USOF comes under Government-owned Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL)

5. India, Netherlands formalise fast track mechanism for investments (Sept. 28, 2022)

The **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** and the **Embassy of the Netherlands** on 27 September officially signed a Joint Statement to formalize the Bilateral **Fast-Track Mechanism (FTM)** between India and the Netherlands.

Important facts

- The Ambassador of The Netherlands to India, **Marten van den Berg**, and Secretary, DPIIT, **Anurag Jain**, formally signed the Joint Statement on 27th September 2022.
- It aims to serve as a platform for faster resolution of investment cases of Dutch companies operating in India.
- **Invest India**, the National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency, is the **executive body** of bilateral FTMs.
- The FTM will function in close collaboration between DPIIT, the concerned Ministries and Departments, Invest India and the Embassy of the Netherlands.
- This mechanism will strengthen bilateral efforts to enhance mutual investment activities, as well as support and develop business cooperation between companies in the two countries.

Diplomatic relations between India and The Netherlands

- The diplomatic relations between both countries were established in **1947**.
- Since then, the two countries have developed strong political, economic and commercial ties and various regional cooperations.

- According to official Indian statistics, the Netherlands is the **fourth largest foreign direct investor** in India.
- Between April 2000 and June 2022, the cumulative inflow of foreign direct investment from the Netherlands to India reached approximately **US\$ 42.3 billion**.
 - In 2021-2022, the bilateral trade between the two countries stood at **USD 17 billion**.
 - India exports mainly mineral fuels and mineral based products, organic chemicals, electrical machinery and equipment, aluminum, iron and steel and pharmaceutical products to the Netherlands.

6. 13th FICCI Global Skills Summit 2022 inaugurated by Dharmendra Pradhan (Sept. 27, 2022)

Union Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan** inaugurated the **13th FICCI Global Skills Summit 2022** in **New Delhi** on 27 September 2022.

The two-day (27-28 September) Summit has been organised by Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) Skills.

Theme of the 13th FICCI Global Skills Summit 2022: "Education to Employability - Making It Happen."

Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

It is a business lobby group of top business houses in India which was founded by Ghanshyam Das Birla.

It was set up in 1927

It articulates the views and concerns of industry and tries to influence the government to make policy which is in favour of the industry and business.

Headquarters: **New Delhi**

President: **Sanjiv Mehta**

7. Chandigarh International Airport to be named after Bhagat Singh: PM (Sept. 25, 2022)

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** during his monthly Mann ki Baat radio programme on 25 September 2022 announced that the Chandigarh International Airport will be named after freedom fighter Bhagat Singh.

The announcement of the Prime Minister comes after an agreement was reached between the Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and Haryana deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala on 20 August 2022, to name the airport as **Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh**.

The **construction cost** of the International Airport will be shared between the Haryana, Punjab Government and the Chandigarh administration.

Chandigarh is a Union Territory under the administration of the Central government and is the joint capital of Haryana and Punjab.

The birth anniversary of freedom fighter Bhagat Singh is on 28 September.

8. Coal India Ltd to ink MoU with Three PSUs for Coal to Chemical Products (Sept. 24, 2022)

Coal India Limited (CIL) will sign MoU with three major public sector undertakings - Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) and GAIL (India) on 27 September for setting up four Surface Coal Gasification (SCG) projects.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- These public sector undertakings will join hands to set up coal-to-chemical projects through the **Surface Coal Gasification (SCG) route**.
- Through the SCG route, coal is converted into syngas which can then be processed for downstream production of value-added chemicals. They are produced through imported natural gas or crude oil currently.
- The envisaged end products are **di-methyl ether, synthetic natural gas and ammonium nitrate**.
- The proposed projects will reduce foreign exchange expenditure and create more than **23,000 direct and indirect employment** opportunities.
- A target of achieving **100 million tonnes** of coal gasification by **2030** has been set by the Ministry of Coal.

What is Syngas ?

- It is an abbreviation for synthesis gas, which is a mixture of carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and hydrogen.
- This is produced by gasification of a carbon containing fuel to a gaseous product that has some heating value.

9. Scientist and Entrepreneur Swati Piramal conferred France's highest civilian award (Sept. 17, 2022)

The visiting French Minister for Europe & Foreign Affairs Catherine Colonna conferred the highest civilian award of France Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur (Knight of the Legion of Honour) on scientist and entrepreneur Swati Piramal in Mumbai on 16 September 2022.

Earlier in August, 2022 the French government had announced that senior congressman and Lok Sabha MP from Thiruvananthapuram **Shashi Tharoor** has been chosen for the Knight of the Legion of Honour award.

Dr. Swati Piramal who is the Vice Chairperson of the Piramal group was awarded France's second Highest civilian award Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Merite (Knight of the Order of Merit) in 2006.

She was earlier honoured with Padma Shri by the government of India in 2012.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur :

- The Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur (Knight of the National Order of the French Legion of Honour), was started by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802.
- It is the highest civilian award given by the French Government to a French national or any country's national for outstanding contribution to the recipient's field of expertise.
- The Legion has five classes, listed in descending rank: grand cross, grand officer, commander, officer, and knight, or chevalier (unlimited).

Which other Indians have received it :

- The first Indian to be awarded with the Legion of Honour was **Maharaja Pratap Singh of Idar in 1918.**
- Since then, more than 40 Indians have been honoured with the award.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -

Some of the famous recipients are :

- JRD Tata (1983), Satyajit Ray (1987), Pandit Ravi Shankar (2000), Zubin Mehta (2001), E Sreedharan (2005), Amitabh Bachchan (2007), Lata Mangeshkar (2007), Shah Rukh Khan (2014), Kamal Haasan (2016), Ratan Tata (2016), Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw (2016), and Azim Premji (2018).

10. India's first Lithium- ion cell manufacturing plant to start its trial run (Sept. 15, 2022)

India's first Lithium -cell -ion cell manufacturing plant will start its trial run on 16 September 2022. It will be inaugurated by Union minister of state for electronics and IT, Rajeev Chandrasekhar.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The lithium cell -ion cell manufacturing plant has been set up by the Chennai based **Munoth Industries limited (MIL)** at **Tirupathi in Andhra Pradesh.**

- MIL has tied up with China-based Tianjin Lishen, BPI and Amprius for technology and the end product for its Lithium cell manufacturing plant.
- MIL will invest Rs 799 crore in three phases.
- In the first phase it will produce lithium-ion cells for the consumer electronics segment such as mobile phones, hearable and wearable devices, followed by an energy storage system and two-and-three wheel electric vehicles.
- According to the company India imports Rs 15,000 crore-Rs 20,000 crore of lithium-ion cells from China, South Korea, Vietnam and Hong Kong. With the establishment of the new facility, it would take care of 60% of India's requirements.