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1. Russia-Ukraine conflict forces over 4 million children into poverty: UNICEF (Oct. 18, 2022)

The UN agency **UNICEF** has revealed that the economic crisis due to **Russia-Ukraine conflict** has thrown more than **4 million children into poverty** across eastern **Europe and Central Asia**.

Important facts

- In an official statement, UNICEF said that children are bearing the biggest burden of the economic crisis caused by the Ukraine war.
- Conflict and rising inflation have pushed an additional 4 million children into poverty in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, a **19 percent increase** since 2021.
- UNICEF has concluded this from a study of data from **22 countries**.
- Russians and Ukrainian children have been the most affected since Russia's attack on Ukraine in February this year.
- On the other hand, the **World Food Program** estimates that around **19 million Afghans** face food insecurity.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

- It was established by the United Nations General Assembly on **11 December 1946**.
- Poland's physician **Ludwik Rauschmann** was instrumental in the formation of UNICEF.
- The main purpose of establishing it was to provide food and health services in case of emergency to children and mothers in countries devastated by World War II.

2. Review of site work progress of Maritime Heritage Complex at Lothal, Gujarat (Oct. 18, 2022)

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** reviewed the site work progress of the **National Maritime Heritage Complex** at **Lothal in Gujarat** on 18 October via video conferencing.

About National Maritime Heritage Complex

- It is being developed in **Lothal (Indus Valley civilisation)** region of Gujarat.
- The project not only showcases India's rich and diverse maritime heritage but also helps Lothal to emerge as a world class international tourist destination.
- The foundation stone of the project was laid by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and the master plan was agreed in March 2019.

- Work on this project started in **March 2022**, it is being developed at a cost of about **Rs 3500 crore**.
- This heritage theme park will cover an area of 400 acres with structures like the National Maritime Heritage Museum, Lighthouse Museum, Maritime Institute, and eco-resorts.
- It is one of the major projects under the **Sagarmala scheme** of the **Ministry of Culture (MoC) and Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW)**.

About Lothal

- Lothal was one of the southernmost sites of the ancient **Indus Valley civilization**, located in the **Bhil region** of the state of Gujarat.
- Construction of the city Lothal is believed to have begun around **2200 BCE**.
- Lothal was discovered in **1954 by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**.
- Lothal is known for the discovery of the oldest man-made dockyard.
- It was an important and thriving trade centre in ancient times, with its trade in pearls, gems and precious jewellery reaching the far corners of West Asia and Africa.

About Indus Valley Civilization

- It is also known as the **Harappan civilization** which developed in the western part of South Asia, contemporary Pakistan and western India around **2,500 BC**.
- It was basically an urban civilization and people lived in well-planned and well-built towns, which were also centres of trade.
- It had wide roads and a well-developed drainage system and houses were built of burnt bricks and had two or more storeys.

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4. Ulf Kristersson elected Sweden's new Prime Minister (Oct. 18, 2022)

Sweden's parliament on 17 October elected **Ulf Kristersson**, 59, leader of the Conservative Moderate Party, as the **new Prime Minister**.

Important facts

- He will head a coalition that is also backed by a once radical right-wing party.
- His government is expected to assume office on October 18.
- His alliance consists of three parties. Although the coalition does not have a majority, in Sweden, the prime minister can rule as long as there is no majority against him in parliament.
- His party emerged as the major winner in Sweden's 11 September general election, with a record **20.5 percent** of the vote, behind **outgoing Prime Minister Magdalena Andersen's Social Democrats**.
- The Social Democrats have dominated Swedish politics since the **1930s**.

- The new government plans to cut taxes, start the process of building new nuclear power plants, tighten immigration rules and give more police powers as part of a policy deal with the Sweden Democrats.

About Sweden

- It is located on the **Scandinavian Peninsula** in **northern Europe**.
- The ancient name of the country was **Svitiod**.
- Prime Minister - **Ulf Kristersson**
- Capital - **Stockholm**
- Currency - **Swedish krona**
- King - **Carl XVI Gustaf**

5. Diplomat Apoorva Srivastava appointed Ambassador to Slovak Republic (Oct. 18, 2022)

Apoorva Srivastava, a diplomat in the **Indian Foreign Service**, has been appointed to serve as **India's Ambassador to the Slovak Republic**.

Important facts

- Apoorva, a 2001 batch officer, is currently serving as the **Consul General at the Consulate General of India in Toronto**.
- Prior to this, she held various positions in the Ministry of External Affairs and was posted in Kathmandu and Paris, among other places.
- India and Slovakia have signed agreements ranging from defence and air services to economic and cultural.
- India and Slovakia regularly support each other's candidacy for top positions in multilateral organisations such as the International Court of Justice and the United Nations.

Slovak Republic

- Slovak Republic or Slovakia is a landlocked country of **central Europe**.
- It is bordered by Poland to the north, Ukraine to the east, Hungary to the south, and Austria to the southwest.
- Its former federal partner, the Czech Republic, lies to the west.
- Prime Minister - **Eduard Heger**
- Capital - **Bratislava**

- President - **Zuzana Caputova**
- Currency - **Euro**
- Official Language - **Slovak**

6. India-Africa Defence Dialogue (Oct. 18, 2022)

India-Africa Defence Dialogue (IADD) being held on 18 October on the sidelines of the **12th DefExpo in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.**

Important facts

- **The theme of the dialogue** is '**India-Africa : Adopting Strategy for Synergising and Strengthening Defence and Security Cooperation**'.
- **It aims** to explore new avenues of convergence for mutual engagement including in the areas of capacity building, training, cyber security, maritime security and counter-terrorism.
- **Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (MP-IDSA)**, India's leading think-tank for advanced research in international relations, is the **knowledge partner** for the **India-Africa Defence Dialogue.**
- India's approach towards Africa is guided by the **Kampala Principles** enunciated by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi in 2018.**
- On February 6, 2020, the first ever India-Africa Defence Ministers' Conference was held in **Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh** in conjunction with the DefExpo.

What are Kampala Principles?

- The Kampala Principles promote the ownership of private sector partnerships (PSEs) through development cooperation by partner countries.
- These principles ensure the alignment of PSE projects and programs with national sustainable development priorities.

About African continent

- It is the **second largest continent (after Asia)**, covering about one-fifth of the total land surface of Earth.
- It is **bounded by** the Atlantic Ocean in the west, the Mediterranean Sea in the north, the Red Sea and Indian Ocean in the east, and the Atlantic and Indian Oceans in the south.
- The island of **Madagascar**, off the coast of Africa, is one of the **largest islands in the world.**
- The African continent has a population of over **one billion**, with a combined **GDP of \$2.5 trillion**, making it a huge potential market.

- Africa is a resource-rich continent rich in **crude oil, gas, pulses and lentils, leather, gold and other metals**, all of which are lacking in substantial quantities in India.

7. Conference of the Secretaries of Civil Aviation (Oct. 18, 2022)

The **Conference of Civil Aviation Secretaries** of all States and Union Territories was organised by the **Ministry of Civil Aviation** on 17 October 2022 at **Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi**.

Important facts

- The inaugural session was presided over by **Rajiv Bansal, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation**, Government of India.
- Presiding over the inaugural session, Rajiv Bansal said that a lot of progress has been made in the aviation sector in the last year.
- He said domestic air traffic is almost near the pre-Covid level, many new airports have been inaugurated and new routes have been started.
- The government has taken several steps to promote drones, helicopter medical emergency services and fractional ownership, he said.
- During the conference, requested the states to reduce VAT on Aviation Turbine Fuel, ATF and appreciated the states which have already done so.
- Civil Aviation Minister **Jyotiraditya Scindia** addressed the Conference.

Objective of the conference

- The objective of the conference is to promote greater cooperation and synergy between the State Civil Aviation Departments and the Ministry of Civil Aviation to enhance the development of the civil aviation sector.

Government Initiatives in Civil Aviation sector

- National Civil Aviation Policy, 2016
- UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) Scheme
- The Government has allocated INR 10,667 crore for the Ministry of Civil Aviation in Union **Budget 2022-23**.
- The government has allowed **100% FDI under automatic route for greenfield projects**, while **74% FDI is allowed under automatic route for brownfield projects**.

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9. Iraq's Moqtada al-Sadr's movement refuses to join new government (Oct. 17, 2022)

Iraqi firebrand Shia leader Moqtada al-Sadr's movement announced its refusal to join a new government being formed by Prime Minister-designate **Mohammad Shia al-Sudani**. This is likely to prolong the political instability in the country. The Moqtada al-Sadr's movement announcement came after the Iraqi Parliament elected **Abdul Latif Rashid**, a 78-year-old Iraqi Kurd, as Iraq's new president on 13 October 2022.

The newly elected President named al-Sudani as prime minister in a bid to end a year of political gridlock in the country since the October 2021 elections.

Mohammad Shia al-Sudani, supported by Iran backed Coordination Framework coalition parties has one month, within which to form a government.

Political instability in Iraq

- The democratic institutions built in oil-rich Iraq since the 2003 US-led invasion that toppled Dictator Saddam Hussein remain fragile, and neighbouring Iran wields major influence in the Shia majority Iraq.
- After the toppling of Saddam Hussein there has been bitter sectarian conflict between the Iraqi populations divided into Kurdish, Sunni, and Shia groups.
- To tackle the sectarian problem a new power sharing system has been developed in Iraq .The **President** by convention is Kurdish, the **Prime minister** a Shiite Arab and the **parliament speaker** a Sunni Arab.
- Iraq has been without a new government since elections last October, when candidates loyal to Mr. Sadr won the single biggest bloc of seats and eclipsed rival Shiite political parties backed by Iran. His relationship with Iran is also not good.
- Moqtada al-Sadr, who has the ability to mobilise tens of thousands of his supporters with a single tweet, has repeatedly demanded early elections, while the Coordination Framework wants a new government in place before any polls are held.
- Tensions between the two rival Shia camps boiled over on August 29 when more than 30 al-Sadr supporters were killed in clashes with Iran-backed factions and the army.

Republic of Iraq

In ancient times the region where modern Iraq is was known as Mesopotamia (Land between the rivers).

The modern state of Iraq was created in 1921 by Britain.

It gained its independence from Britain in 1932.

It is an Oil rich Arab country and it is the **largest supplier of crude oil to India.**

Capital: **Baghdad**

Currency: **Iraqi Dinar**

President: **Abdul Latif Rashid**

10. President appoints Justice D Y Chandrachud as the 50th Chief Justice of India (Oct. 17, 2022)

In a tweet on 17 October 2022, the Union Minister for Law and Justice **Kiren Rijiju** said that the President Droupadi Murmu has appointed Supreme Court Judge. Justice **D Y Chandrachud** as the 50th Chief Justice of India (CJI) with effect from 9th November 2022.

The incumbent Chief Justice **Uday Umesh Lalit**, who took charge as CJI on 27 August 2022, will retire on November 8 this year.

Justice Chandrachud, who is set to be the 50th Chief Justice of India, would have a tenure of two years. He is due to retire on November 10, 2024.

Under article **124 clause 2** of the Indian constitution the President of India has the power to appoint the Chief Justice of India.

Supreme Court and its Chief Justice

The Supreme Court of India came into existence on 26 January 1950. The Federal Court which was set up under the Government of India act 1935 was converted into the Supreme Court of India.

Its first sitting was held on 28 January 1950.

The first Chief Justice of India was **Harilal J.Kania**.

The 16th Chief Justice of India, Yeshwant **Vishnu Chandrachud**, is the **longest-serving Chief Justice**. He was Chief Justice of India for over 7 years (February 1978 – July 1985).

The 22nd Chief Justice of India, **Kamal Narain Singh**, is the **shortest-serving Chief Justice**. He was the Chief Justice of India for 17 days (25 November 1991 – 12 December 1991).