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1. Meenaskshi Lekhi leads Indian delegation at the 6th CICA Summit meeting at Astana (Oct. 13, 2022)

Union Minister for External Affairs **Meenaskshi Lekhi** led the Indian delegation at the 6th Conference on Confidence Building Measures and Interaction in Asia (CICA) summit held on 12-13 October 2022 at the Kazakhstan capital, [Astana](#).

Replying to the Statement of the Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif on Kashmir she said that Pakistan is misusing the CICA for propagating malicious propaganda against India. She said that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India.

Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA)

The Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) is a multi-national forum for enhancing cooperation towards promoting peace, security and stability in Asia.

The idea of convening CICA was first proposed by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan **Nursultan Nazarbayev**, on 5 October 1992, at the 47th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

27 countries including India, China, and Pakistan are members of CICA.

Summit meetings of CICA

The First summit meeting was held in **Almaty, Kazakhstan** on 4 June 2022. It was attended by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

The second CICA summit was held in **Almaty, Kazakhstan** on June 17, 2006

The third CICA Summit was held in **Istanbul, Turkey** on 8 June 2010

The Fourth CICA Summit, was held in **Shanghai, China** on 21 May 2014

The Fifth CICA Summit was held in **Dushanbe, Tajikistan**, on 15 June 2019.

2. IAEA chief Rafael Gross calls for protecting Zaporizhzhia nuclear power in a meeting with President Putin in Russia (Oct. 13, 2022)

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael **Gross** met the Russian President **Vladimir Putin** in **St Petersburg**, amid concern over the safety of the Russian-held Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in Ukraine.

Rafael Gross met Putin after his meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv last week.

Rafael Gross called for setting up a protection zone around the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear power plant and asserted that they cannot lose any more time. He emphasised that Russia and Ukraine must do everything to help in ensuring that a nuclear accident does not occur during the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine.

Concern over the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant

The 6000 MW Zaporizhzhia nuclear power complex is the **largest European nuclear power complex** which has been occupied by the invading Russian forces since early March 2022.

The area has been heavily fortified by the Russian military and the Ukrainian forces are also launching a counter attack. This has led to the fear that the nuclear complex could be hit in an attack which could lead to a nuclear catastrophe in the area.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

The IAEA was set up in 1957 as an agency of the United Nations.

The IAEA was set up to work with the member countries and multiple partners worldwide to promote safe, secure and peaceful nuclear technologies.

The International Atomic Energy Agency is the world's central intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical co-operation in the nuclear field.

Member Countries: **175**

The IAEA headquarters is at **Vienna, Austria** and it has two regional offices located in Toronto, Canada and Tokyo, Japan,

Director General: **Rafael Gross**

3. Two day conference of Power and renewable energy ministers of States (Oct. 13, 2022)

Power Ministry to hold a **two day conference of Ministers of Power and New & Renewable Energy** of States and Union Territories in **Udaipur, Rajasthan** on 14 October 2022.

Important facts

- The two-day conference will discuss the emerging issues in the power sector.
- The conference will be inaugurated by **Union Energy Minister RK Singh**.
- The conference is expected to deliberate on strengthening the power sector with a focus on energy conservation, renewable energy and reforms in the power sector.
- In the conference, discussions will also be held on ensuring round the clock power supply through investments, feasibility of state power distribution companies, smart metering, rights of consumers and future power systems.

Agenda of discussion

- Viability of DISCOMs
- Smart Metering
- Renewable Energy and Storage

- Power Sector Reforms
- Ensuring 24 x 7 power supply through timely investment
- Rights of Electricity Consumers
- Future power system in the year 2030
- Energy Conservation

4. World's first space tourist Dennis Tito to ride to moon again on SpaceX (Oct. 13, 2022)

World's first space tourist, **Dennis Tito**, has signed up with the Elon Musk Company SpaceX, to fly around the Moon aboard the Starship rocket.

The SpaceX Company on 12 October 2022 said that the rocket will take Tito and his wife, Akiko, within 200km (125 miles) of the far side of the Moon without landing on its surface. The date of the launch has yet to be announced as the Starship is yet to be tested.

Dennis Tito, an American engineer and entrepreneur became the first human space tourist to visit the International Space Station in 2001.

He was launched onboard a Russian rocket with the help of US-based Space Adventures in 2001.

Few companies in the world are striving to make space travel a reality. They are **SpaceX**, Richard Branson-founded **Virgin Galactic SPCE.N**, and **Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin** which currently offers suborbital joyrides that hit an altitude of about 106km (66 miles) above the Earth.

90 year old American actor, **William Shatner**, who played the role of Captain James T Kirk on the TV series Star Trek, became the **oldest person** to ride a rocket into space when he travelled on a Blue Origin flight last year.

Human Space Flight

The first person to go into space was **Yury Gagarin** of the Soviet Union on 12 April 1961 onboard the Vostok Rocket.

The first woman to go into space was **Valentina Tereshkova** of the Soviet Union on 16 June 1963 onboard the Vostok 6 Rocket.

The first American to go into space was **Alan Shepard** in 1961.

Wing Commander **Rakesh Sharma** is the only Indian to go into space. He was part of the Soviet mission aboard Soyuz T-11 on 3 April 1984.

5. Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2022 gets Cabinet approval (Oct. 13, 2022)

The Union Cabinet on 12 October 2022 has approved the **Multi-State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2022**.

Important facts

- This bill has been brought to amend the **Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act, 2002**.
- The aim of the amendment bill is to strengthen the cooperative movement in the country.
- The amendment to the Act will improve governance, increase transparency and accountability and reform the electoral process in multi-state cooperatives.
- Election authority will be constituted to ensure fair, free and timely elections.
- This amendment is an attempt to improve the ease of doing business and bring in more transparency.

Highlight of the bill

- The Bill includes provisions relating to representation of **women** and members of the **Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes** on the boards of multi-state cooperatives.
- The bill will include provisions of the **97th** Constitutional Amendment.
- The Constitution (97th Amendment) Act, 2011 deals with the cooperative societies operating in India.
- The bill will expand the composition of the board and ensure **financial discipline**, apart from enabling multi-state cooperatives to raise funds.
- The Bill has specific provisions for the establishment of a Co-operative Election Authority, a Co-operative Information Officer and a Co-operative Ombudsman.
- There is a provision to ban the offenders for three years to bring more electoral discipline.
- The Bill provides for bringing in selected directors with experience in the fields of banking, management, cooperative management and finance.

Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act, 2002

- Co-operative is a state subject, but there are many societies such as sugar and milk, banks, milk unions etc. whose members and areas of operation are spread over more than one state.
- This act was passed to govern the multi state cooperative societies.
- For example, the **Karnataka-Maharashtra** border has most of the sugar mills that procure sugarcane from both the states.
- **Maharashtra** has the highest number of such cooperative societies followed by **Uttar Pradesh and New Delhi**.

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7. Center approves 'Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region (PM-DevINE) Scheme' (Oct. 12, 2022)

To boost economic and social development in the North Eastern region the central government has decided to launch a 100% centrally funded scheme **Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region (PM-DevINE)**. The scheme was approved by the Union Cabinet in a meeting held on 12 October 2022 and chaired by the Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**.

PM-DevINE, was announced in the Union Budget 2022-23 to address development gaps in the North Eastern Region.

Duration of the Scheme

The scheme will be of **four year** duration from 2022-23 to 2025-26, which will coincide with the remaining period of the 15th Finance Commission.

Outlay on the scheme

The scheme is 100% centrally funded and the outlay for the scheme is **Rs 6,600 crore** for the next four years.

Who will implement the scheme?

The Scheme will be implemented by the Union Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) through North Eastern Council or Central Ministries/ agencies.

Objectives of the new Scheme

PM-DevINE will provide support to infrastructure and social development projects which may be larger in size and will also provide an end-to-end development solution instead of isolated projects.

PM-DevINE will lead to creation of infrastructure, support industries, social development projects and create livelihood activities for youth and women, thus leading to employment generation.

The objectives of PM-DevINE are to:

- (a) Fund infrastructure convergent, in the spirit of PM Gati Shakti;
- (b) Support social development projects based on felt needs of the NER;
- (c) Enable livelihood activities for youth and women;
- (d) Fill the development gaps in various sectors.

North Eastern States in India

Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura, Nagaland and Sikkim.

Union Ministry for Development of North Eastern Region: **Kishan Reddy**

8. Grant of Rs 22, 000 crore approved by the government for oil PSU to compensate for LPG loss (Oct. 12, 2022)

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on 12 October 2022 has approved a onetime grant amounting to **Rs.22,000 crore** to three Public Sector Undertaking Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs). The grant will be distributed among Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL).

In India LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) is mainly used for cooking purposes and its price is linked to the International price. India imports about half of its requirement of LPG.

Government Subsidy on LPG

The Government of India has freed the price of the LPG and linked it with the International market. However, the government of India also provides subsidies on LPG cylinders to certain sections of society .

The Centre provides subsidy, through direct bank transfer, on 12 LPG cylinders (14.2 kg) a year per household. On purchases beyond 12 cylinders a year, the household has to pay the non-subsidised price.

Losses incurred by the PSU Oil Marketing Companies

In theory the prices of the LPG are determined by the international prices but in reality the government of India puts pressure on the PSU OMC not to increase the prices of LPG too much as it may hurt the public. So if the price of LPG goes up in the market and the prices are not increased in India then the loss is borne by the OMC.

During the period from June 2020 to June 2022, the international prices of LPG increased by around 300%. However, to insulate consumers from fluctuations in international LPG prices, the cost increase was not fully passed on to consumers of domestic LPG. Accordingly, domestic LPG prices have raised by only 72% during this period.

TO compensate the OMC government is giving them a grant.

Grant means that the OMC will not return the money back to the government .

Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas: **Hardeep Puri**

9. 4 member committee to probe WHO report on contaminated syrup supplied by Maiden Pharma (Oct. 12, 2022)

The Government of India on 12 October 2022 has set up a four-member expert committee to investigate the report sent by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on the deaths of 66 children in Gambia due to consumption of cough syrups from Sonipat-based Company **Maiden Pharmaceuticals Limited**.

The government has already suspended the production of cough syrup by Maiden Pharmaceuticals Ltd after the report of the WHO.

The committee consists of **Dr YK Gupta**, Vice Chairperson, Standing National Committee on Medicines ; **Dr Pragya Yadav**, ICMR -National Institute of Virology(NIV), Pune; **Dr Arti Bahl**, Division of epidemiology, National Center for Disease Control(NCDC), New Delhi and **AK Pradhan**, JDC(I), CDSCO(Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation).

According to the reports, an American company Atlantic Pharmaceuticals Company Ltd which has permission to export medicines to Gambia, ordered combined syrup from Maiden Pharmaceuticals limited.

The cough syrup was subsequently found contaminated by the WHO leading to the death of children in Gambia.

Republic of Gambia

It is a West African situated along the Atlantic Ocean.

The country derives its name from the river Gambia.

Capital: **Banjul**

Currency: **Dalasi**

President: **Adama Barrow**

World Health Organisation (WHO)

- The World Health Organisation is a specialised agency of the United Nations which was founded on 7 April, 1948.
- Headquarters of WHO : Geneva, Switzerland
- Director General of WHO: **Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus** of Ethiopia.

10. India improves its ranks to 123 on the Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index 2022 (Oct. 12, 2022)

India has improved its ranking by 6 places in the recently released Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index (CRII) 2022. It has been ranked **123th** in the world out of **161 countries**. India was ranked 129 in the 2020 Index.

India's rank has improved primarily due to improvement in indicators quantifying the impact of public spending and the impact of tax on reducing inequality.

The index ranks the countries on the policies made by the government and action taken to fight inequality in the first two years of covid pandemic.

Norway has been ranked as the top country followed by Germany and Australia. **South Sudan has been ranked 161st at the bottom of the Index.**

Composition of the Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index (CRII)

The Index which is prepared by **Oxfam International** and **Development Finance International (DFI)** measures governments policies and actions in three areas proven to have a major impact on reducing inequality.

The three areas are **public services** (health, education, and social protection), **taxation** and **workers' rights**.

India's performance

Public service

India has been ranked **129th in the Public service spending**. It was ranked 141 in the 2020 report.

According to the Index, India features among the lowest performers on health spending. It dropped to 157th rank, a drop of two places. The Indian government spends 3.64 % of all it's spending on health which is lowest among all neighbouring countries. Pakistan spending is at 4.3%, Bangladesh is at 5.19%, Sri Lanka is at 5.88%, and Nepal is at 7.8%,

Progressive taxation

India was ranked **16 on progressive taxation** in 2022 while it was ranked 19 in 2020.

Labour Ranking (workers' rights and wages)

India was ranked 151 on labour ranking (which includes workers' rights) while in 2020 also it was ranked 151.

South Asian country's ranking

| Country | Public service ranking | Tax ranking | Labour ranking | Regional ranking |
|-------------|------------------------|-------------|----------------|------------------|
| Maldives | 71 | 12 | 54 | 1 |
| Bangladesh | 136 | 47 | 101 | 2 |
| Sri Lanka | 128 | 85 | 93 | 3 |
| Nepal | 116 | 36 | 126 | 4 |
| Bhutan | 114 | 27 | 140 | 5 |
| India | 129 | 16 | 151 | 6 |
| Pakistan | 151 | 77 | 113 | 7 |
| Afghanistan | 158 | 115 | 117 | 8 |

OXFAM International

Oxfam International was formed in 1995 by a group of independent non-governmental organizations. They joined together as a confederation to maximize efficiency and achieve greater impact to reduce global poverty and injustice.

The name "Oxfam" comes from the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief, founded in Britain in 1942.

The Oxfam International Secretariat is based in **Nairobi, Kenya**

Oxfam India CEO : Amitabh Behar