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1. Equatorial Guinea appoints Manuela Roka Botey as first female PM (Feb. 2, 2023)

Equatorial Guinea appoints Manuela Roka Botey as first female PM

Equatorial Guinea has appointed **Manuela Roka Botey** as prime minister on 31 January.

An overview of the news

- She is the **first woman in the country to reach this position.**
- She was appointed by President **Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo** who has ruled the country since **1979.**
- Bote, who was the deputy minister of education in the West African country, replaced **Francisco Pascual Obama Asue**, who held the position of prime minister for nearly eight years.
- The country of about 1.5 million people has had only two presidents since independence from **Spain in 1968.**
- Obiang overthrew his uncle, Francisco Macías Nguema, in a coup in August 1979.

Equatorial Guinea

- It is located on the **west coast of Africa.**
- Capital: **Malabo**
- President: **Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo**
- Currency -**franc**

2. United Nations Reforms (Feb. 1, 2023)

The urgent need for reforms in the **United Nations**, ongoing Ukraine conflict and developmental issues figured prominently during talks between External Affairs Minister **S. Jaishankar** and United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) President **Csaba Korosi.**

An overview of the news:

The crucial hurdle in the way of reforming the United Nations comes from the disunited state of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), said Csaba Korosi, President of the **77th UNGA, in New Delhi** on January 30, 2023.

Reform of the United Nations:

On **31 May 2018**, the General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution “Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system ”.

The landmark resolution contains measures to enhance the capacity of the **United Nations Development System (UNDS)** to better support countries in implementing the

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and provides guidance to the Secretary-General and the UNDS on their implementation.

A new generation of **UN Country Teams (UNCTs)** and **UN Development Nations Assistance Framework (UNDAFs)**.

A reinvigorated Resident Coordinators (RCs) system with enhanced capacity, leadership, accountability and impartiality.

Common business service and back offices functions.

A revamped UNDS regional approach to better support work on the field.

Enhanced transparency and accountability of system-wide results and stronger capacities for system-wide evaluations.

A system-wide approach to partnerships for the 2030 Agenda.

A Funding compact to deliver on the 2030 Agenda.

A system-wide strategic document to accelerate the system’s alignment to the 2030 Agenda.

3. Ajit Doval launches US-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (Feb. 1, 2023)

National Security Advisor **Ajit Doval**, US counterpart **Jake Sullivan** launched the **US-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET)** in **Washington** on 31 January.

An overview of the news

- iCET reflects conv.of **strategic, commercial, and scientific** approaches in the field of technology.
- iCET was announced by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi and President Biden**.
- The United States and India concluded the US-India iCET meeting and also decided to launch a new Innovation Bridge.
- In May 2022, US President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced iCET to enhance and expand their strategic technology partnership and defence industrial cooperation between governments, businesses and academic institutions of the two countries.

- Both countries also underlined their commitment to work to resolve issues related to
- regulatory barriers, trade and talent mobility through a permanent mechanism under the iCET.

4. Presidential election in the Czech Republic (Jan. 29, 2023)

In the Czech Republic, **retired army general Petr Pavel won the presidential election, defeating billionaire businesswoman Andrej Babis.**

An overview of the news

- Retired general **Petr Pavel will replace controversial incumbent President Milos Zeman.**
- During the election, General Pavel got 58.2 percent of the votes while Andrzej Babis got 42.8 percent.
- General **Powell has been Chairman of the Military Committee of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).**
- General Powell has been an outspoken supporter of the European Union and NATO.
- Pavel has repeatedly expressed his support for providing military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine during the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

About Czech Republic

- It is a landlocked country in Central Europe.
- Prime Minister - Petr Fiala
- **Capital - Prague**
- Currency - Czech koruna.

5. UN General Assembly president to visit India from Jan 29-31 (Jan. 28, 2023)

UN General Assembly president to visit India from Jan 29-31

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) President **Saba Korosi** will visit **India** from January 29-31 to discuss multilateral and regional issues.

An overview of the news

- Korosi, **Hungarian diplomat** who served as his **country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations**, is visiting India at the invitation of External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar.**

- He became the President of the **77th session of the United Nations General Assembly** in September 2022.
- Besides holding talks with Jaishankar on key multilateral and regional issues of mutual interest, Korosi will hold talks with senior officials of **NITI Aayog and India's G20 Presidency team**.
- On January 30, Korosi will deliver a public speech at the **Indian Council of World Affairs** on the topic "**Solidarity, Sustainability and Solutions through Science at the United Nations**".
- He will also attend the "**Beating the Retreat**" ceremony on January 29 and pay floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat on January 30 on the occasion of Martyrs' Day.
- On January 31, Korosi will travel to Bengaluru, which will include an interaction with scientists from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and a field visit to an IISc-led water conservation project.

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

- It is the United Nation's chief policy-making and representative organ and was **created in 1945**.
- It is one of the **six principal organs** of the United Nations (UN).
- It serves as the main deliberative, policy making and representative organ of the United Nations.
- Its powers, structure, functions and procedures are set out in **Chapter IV of the United Nations Charter**.
- Its main functions are to prepare the budget of the United Nations, appoint non-permanent members to the Security Council, appoint the Secretary-General of the United Nations, receive reports from other parts of the United Nations system, and make recommendations through resolutions.

6. India, South Africa sign MoU to introduce 12 African Cheetahs annually over next eight to ten years (Jan. 27, 2023)

India and South Africa on 27 January signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** to introduce **12 African Cheetahs** annually over the **next eight to ten year**.

An overview of the news

- As per the agreement, an initial batch of **12 cheetahs** will be brought from South Africa to India during **February 2023**.
- These cheetahs will be joined by **eight cheetahs** brought to **India from Namibia during 2022**.

- Increasing the cheetah population is a priority for the Government of India and its conservation will have important and far-reaching consequences, aiming to achieve a number of ecological objectives.
- After the import of 12 cheetahs in February, there are plans to move **12 cheetahs annually for the next 8 to 10 years.**
- The initiative to reintroduce the cheetah to India comes after a request from the Indian government, after the species had become **locally extinct** due to over-hunting and habitat loss.

Reintroduction Action Plan

- Reintroduction of a species means releasing it in an area where it is capable of surviving.
- Under the scheme, **50 cheetahs will be released in various national parks** of the country over a period of 5 years.

Extinction of cheetahs

- The last cheetah of the country was found dead in the **year 1947 in Chhattisgarh** and in the year 1952 it was declared extinct in the country.
- Habitat loss, conflict with humans, poaching and high susceptibility to diseases are the major causes of their extinction.

About 'Project Cheetah'

- This is a one of its kind project in which a species is being brought out of the country (**from South Africa / Namibia**) and restored to the country.
- The subspecies of the extinct cheetah in India was the **Asiatic cheetah (Acinonyx jubatus venaticus)** and the subspecies of the cheetah being brought back to the country is the **African cheetah (Acinonyx jubatus jubatus).**
- Research has shown that the genes of both these subspecies are similar.

7. Senior ISIS leader Bilal al-Sudani killed in US raid in Somalia (Jan. 27, 2023)

Senior ISIS leader Bilal al-Sudani killed in US raid in Somalia

Bilal al-Sudani, a prominent regional leader of the **Islamic State group**, was killed on January 25 in a **US military raid** in **Somalia** ordered by President **Joe Biden**.

An overview of the news

- The US military operation has also killed **10 members of the terrorist group.**
- The US President authorised the strike earlier this week after consulting with top defence, intelligence and security officials.

- Bilal al-Sudani had been on the radar of **US intelligence officials** for the past several years.
- He played a key role in providing financial support to IS operations in **Africa** as well as **ISIS-K**, a terrorist organisation operating in **Afghanistan**.

About Islamic State

- **ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria)**, also known as **ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant)**.
- It is an **Islamist militant jihadist group** that follows **Salafi jihadist doctrine** based on the **Sunni branch** of Islam.
- It was founded in **1999** by **Abu Musab al-Zarqawi** and gained global prominence in **2014**.
- It soon took control of large parts of **Iraq and Syria**, raised its flag and imposed strict Islamic rule.
- It strictly enforces **Sharia or Islamic law**.

8. India-Pakistan on brink of nuclear war after Balakot strike: Never give an inch (Jan. 27, 2023)

Never Give An Inch: Fighting for the America I Love'written by former United States Secretary of StateMike Pompeo

The book '**Never Give An Inch: Fighting for the America I Love**' written by former United States Secretary of State **Mike Pompeo** has been in the limelight, commenting on India and many of its politicians.

An overview of the news:

- Pompeo mentioned in his book 'Never Give An Inch' that India-Pakistan were on the brink of nuclear war after the **Balakot strike** in February, 2019.
- Mike Pompeo said that the then Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj had told him that Pakistan was preparing for a nuclear attack after the strike and India was also preparing an aggressive response.
- Referring to this matter, Pompeo said that after the Balakot strike, his team held talks with India and Pakistan overnight to avoid nuclear confrontation between the two countries. His effort prevented a possible war between the two countries, which could turn into a nuclear war at any time.
- In his book, Pompeo does not use respectful words for former Indian External Affairs Minister late Sushma Swaraj, while praising National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, and in some cases describing S Jaishankar as his superior.

9. Egypt plans to allot land to Indian industries in Suez Canal Special Economic Zone (Jan. 27, 2023)

Egypt plans to allot land to Indian industries in Suez Canal Special Economic Zone

Egypt is considering allotting a **special zone** to Indian industries in the **Suez Canal Economic Zone (SCEZ)** and the Indian side may prepare a **master plan** for the same.

An overview of the news

- The proposal is in the context of India's proposal to encourage companies with the potential to make foreign investments to make use of the investment opportunities available in Egypt.
- Egypt welcomes the flow of more Indian investments and promises to provide incentives and facilities in accordance with applicable regulations and framework.
- The trade between India and Egypt currently **exceeds \$3.15 billion**.
- Prime Minister Modi and the President of Egypt agreed to encourage businesses to explore mutually emerging economic and investment opportunities.
- Egyptian President **El-Sisi**, who arrived in Delhi on a three-day visit to India, attended the Republic Day celebrations as the chief guest.

About Suez Canal

- The **Suez Canal** is an artificial sea-level waterway running **north to south** from the **Isthmus of Suez in Egypt** to connect the **Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea**.
- This canal separates the continent of **Africa from Asia**.
- It provides the **shortest sea route** between Europe and the lands surrounding the Indian and Western Pacific Oceans.
- The Suez Canal is **one of the busiest trade routes** in the world. About **12 percent** of the world's total trade passes through this canal daily.

10. India-Egypt signed MoU between Prasar Bharati and National Media Authority of Egypt (Jan. 26, 2023)

India-Egypt signed MoU between Prasar Bharati and National Media Authority of Egypt

India and Egypt on 25 January **signed an MoU** to facilitate content exchange, capacity building, and Co-Productions between **Prasar Bharati and the National Media Authority of Egypt**.

An overview of the news

- Information and Broadcasting Minister **Anurag Singh Thakur** and Foreign Minister **Sameh Hassan Shoukry**, Government of Egypt signed the MoU.
- The MoU was exchanged in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Egyptian President **Abdel Fattah El-Sisi** in New Delhi.
- Under this MoU, broadcasters of both the countries will exchange their programs on bilateral basis in different genres of sports, news, culture, entertainment and many other fields and these programs will be broadcast on their radio and television platforms.
- The validity of this MoU will be for three years.

Arab Republic of Egypt

- It is an Arab country which is located on the African continent.
- President: **Abdel Fattah al-Sisi**
- Capital: **Cairo**
- Currency: **Egyptian pound**