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1. Senior Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge elected as new party chief (Oct. 19, 2022)

new Congress President

Mallikarjun Kharge was elected as the new **Congress President** on October 19, 2022 after securing 7,897 votes out of 9,385 votes. He defeated former Union Minister **Shashi Tharoor**.

Important facts

- This is the first time in more than 20 years that the Congress president will be from a non-Gandhi family, with Sitaram Kesari being removed without any formalities in 1998, two years after his five-year tenure.
- Kharge replaces Sonia Gandhi who is the widow of late PM Rajiv Gandhi, who served as the party president for 19 years.
- His son Rahul Gandhi was elected unopposed in 2017 but stepped down two years later, taking responsibility for the party's defeat in the 2019 general elections.
- Since then, Mrs Gandhi has been leading the party as interim president.

About Mallikarjun Kharge

- He is a member of the Dalit community from the southern state of Karnataka.
- He was born in 1942 in Bidar district.
- He studied law in his early days and represented labour unions, took an active interest in politics from his student days and joined the Congress party in 1969.
- He emerged as a Dalit leader, but he has been very fair with all other communities as well.
- Kharge served as a minister in several state governments.
- In 2009, he moved to central politics in Delhi and was elected as a Lok Sabha member from Gulbarga constituency for the first time.
- In 2009, he moved to central politics in Delhi and was elected as a Lok Sabha member from Gulbarga constituency for the first time.
- In 2021, he was elected to the upper house.
- In the 2019 elections, the Congress won only 53 seats as the BJP swept the elections with 303 seats in the 545-member house.

2. World Bank appoints neutral expert and chairman of Court of Arbitration for 'Kishanganga' and 'Ratle' hydroelectric project (Oct. 18, 2022)

The World Bank has appointed a "neutral expert" and a chairman of the Court of Arbitration regarding the **Kishanganga** and **Ratle** hydroelectric power plants, in view of disagreements and differences between India and Pakistan over the 1960 Indus Water Treaty.

Under the Indus water treaty if there is a dispute between India and Pakistan on the provisions of the treaty then the World Bank will mediate between the two.

Michel Lino, Chairman of the International Large Dam Commission has been appointed as the Neutral Expert and **Sean Murphy** has been appointed as Chairman of the Court of Arbitration.

Pakistan asked the World Bank to facilitate the establishment of a Court of Arbitration to consider its concerns about the designs of the two hydroelectric power projects, while **India** asked for the appointment of a Neutral Expert to consider similar concerns over the two projects.

What is the Indus Waters Treaty?

The 1960 Indus Waters Treaty was mediated by the World Bank and signed by the then prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan's president Ayub Khan.

- It has allotted western rivers; **Indus, Jhelum and Chenab to Pakistan** and Eastern flowing rivers; **Sutlej, Ravi and Beas** to India.
- Under the treaty India will not restrict the flow of the river which is assigned to Pakistan but it can use the river for hydroelectric purposes on the condition that the flow of water to Pakistan is not affected significantly.
- Due to this provision of the Indus water treaty, India has designed the Rattle and the Kishanganga project as **run of the river** project.

Run of the River project

In the run of the river project, reservoirs are not built for water storage purposes and the natural flow of water from a height is used to run micro turbines to produce electricity.

According to India such hydel projects do not contravene the Indus Water Treaty as river waters are not stored.

Dispute over Kishanganga and Ratle project

Kishanganga or Neelum (for Pakistan) is a tributary of river **Jhelum**. India has constructed a run of the river hydroelectric projects with a capacity of 330 MW in Jammu and Kashmir.

The project was inaugurated by PM Modi in 2018. Pakistan argues that the flow of the river which enters Pakistan has been affected due to the faulty design of the project.

Ratle Hydroelectric Project

It is also a run of the river hydroelectric project being built on the **Chenab river** in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir. In 2013 Pakistan government objected to the project as it was a violation of the Indus water treaty. In 2017 the World Bank allowed India to start the project which was opposed by Pakistan. After fresh objections from Pakistan, both countries approached the World Bank.

3. Asia's largest Compressed Bio Gas plant inaugurated in Sangrur by Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri (Oct. 18, 2022)

The Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas and Housing & Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri inaugurated **Asia's largest Compressed Bio Gas (CBG)** plant in **Lehragaga, Sangrur**, and Punjab on 18 October 2022.

The plant has been set up by German company Verbio AG at an investment of Rs 220 crore. Initially the plant will have the production of 6 tonnes per day of CBG which is likely to be increased to 33 tonnes per day of CBG.

Benefit of the Compressed BioGas (CBG) plant

The plant will procure 1 lakh tonnes of paddy straw from farmers thereby providing them an additional source of income.

The paddy stubble which is burnt by the farmers in the field will now be used in the plant thereby reducing pollution in the surrounding areas.

This Plant will reduce stubble burning of 40,000 – 45,000 acres of fields, translating into an annual reduction of 150,000 tons of CO₂ emissions,

The plant will produce about 600-650 Tons of Fermented Organic Manure per day, which can be used for organic farming.

What is a compressed biogas plant?

Waste/Bio-mass sources like agricultural residue, cattle dung, sugarcane press mud, municipal solid waste, sewage treatment plant waste, etc. produce Bio-Gas through the process of anaerobic decomposition.

The Bio-Gas is purified to remove hydrogen sulphide (H₂S), carbon dioxide (CO₂), water vapour and compressed as Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG), which has methane (CH₄) content of more than 90%.

CBG has calorific value and other properties similar to CNG and hence can be utilized as green renewable automotive fuel.

Thus it can replace CNG in automotive, industrial and commercial areas, given the abundance of biomass availability within the country.

4. Bharti Das took charge as the Controller General of Accounts (Oct. 18, 2022)

Ms **Bharati Das** took over as the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) on 18 October 2022.

Ms Das is the 27th Controller General of Accounts (CGA), Ministry of Finance, and Government of India.

Ms Bharati Das, a 1988-batch Indian Civil Accounts Service (ICAS) officer.

Controller General of Accounts (CGA)

Controller General of Accounts (CGA) is 'the Principal Advisor' on accounting matters to the Union Government. CGA is responsible for establishing and managing a technically sound Management Accounting System and preparation & submission of the accounts of the Union Government. CGA is also responsible for exchequer control and internal audits for central Government.

5. Adani Airports appoints Ericsson veteran Arun Bansal as CEO (Oct. 18, 2022)

Adani Airport Holdings has appointed Ericsson veteran **Arun Bansal** as its **chief executive**.

Important facts

- Bansal, who spent 25 years at the Swedish telecom network company, was most recently its president in Europe and Latin America.
- The appointment will help strengthen the agenda of digital transformation and business development.
- Adani airports handle 25% of the traffic, it covers 40% of India's air cargo.
- Bansal will primarily be based in Ahmedabad and may report to Adani Group's longtime executive Malay Mahadevia, director of operations at the airport company.
- Adani Group Chairman - **Gautam Adani**
- Adani Airport Headquarters - **Ahmedabad**

6. United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres arrives in India for a three day visit (Oct. 18, 2022)

The United Nations Secretary-General, **Antonio Guterres** arrived in India on a three day (18-20 October 2022) visit. This will be his first visit to India, since he commenced his second term in office in January 2022. He had earlier visited India (in his first term) from 01- 04 October 2018.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs, Guterres will pay tribute to the victims of the 26/11 terror attacks at the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel in Mumbai.

He will also deliver a public address at IIT Mumbai on the subject - "India @75: UN-India Partnership: Strengthening South-South Cooperation".

On 20 October 2022 in Gujarat (Ekta Nagar, Kevadiya), he will join Prime Minister Modi at the launch of the Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment) booklet, logo and tagline.

In Kevadiya, the Secretary-General will pay floral tributes at Sardar **Patel's Statue of Unity**. He will also visit India's first solar-powered village in [Modhera](#) (Gujarat).

United Nations Secretary General

The United Nations Secretary General is the chief administrative officer of the United Nations and head of the United Nations Secretariat.

The United Nations Secretary General is appointed by the United Nations General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council.

They have a term of **five years** and are eligible for re-appointment.

The Secretary General of United Nations

First; Trygve Lie of Norway. He was in office from February 1946 to his resignation in November 1952;

Second; Dag Hammarskjöld of Sweden. He was in office from April 1953 until his death in a plane crash in Africa in September 1961;

Third; U Thant of Burma, now Myanmar. He was Secretary-General from November 1962 to December 1971;

Fourth; Kurt Waldheim of Austria. He was in office from January 1972 to December 1981;

Fifth; Javier Pèrez de Cuèllar of Peru. He was in office January 1982 to December 1991;

Sixth; Boutros Boutros-Ghali of Egypt. He was in office from January 1992 to December 1996;

Seventh; Kofi Annan of Ghana. He was in office from January 1997 to December 2006;

Eight; Ban Ki-moon of South Korea, He was in office from January 2007 to December 2016;

Ninth; Antonio Guterres of Portugal. He has been in office since 2017.

7. BCCI elects Roger Binny as the new President; to start women IPL (Oct. 18, 2022)

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has unanimously elected former Indian all-rounder **Roger Binny** as the **36th President** of the BCCI at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the BCCI which was held in **Mumbai** on 18 October 2022. The BCCI also decided to start the women's IPL and not to participate in the Asia cricket cup to be held in Pakistan in 2023.

Roger Binny who represented Karnataka and India, played 27 Tests and 72 ODIs for India and was also a National selector. He will replace **Saurav Ganguly** whose three-year tenure as the board chief came to an end.

Other Office Bearers of BCCI

All the other office bearers of the BCCI were also elected unanimously including;

- **Jay Shah** as Secretary ,
- **Rajeev Shukla** as Vice-President.
- **Ashish Shelar** as Treasurer and
- **Devajit Saikia** as Joint Secretary.
- **Arun Dhumal** was elected as the new Indian Premier League (IPL) **chairman**. He will replace Brijesh Patel.

Women's IPL approved

The General Body also approved the inaugural Women's IPL which will consist of five teams and will be held in **March 2023** just after the **Women's T20 World Cup** ends in South Africa on February 26.

India will not tour Pakistan for Asia Cup 2023.

The BCCI **secretary Jay Shah** who is also the President of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) announced that India will not be going to Pakistan next year to participate in the Asia cup.

India have not toured Pakistan since 2006 and have not played bilateral cricket against them since 2012 because of strained relations between the governments of the two countries. Their contests have taken place only at ICC and Asian events.

Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)

It is the governing body of men's and women's cricket in India. It selects the Indian team for International tours and for International Cricket Council (ICC) and Asian Cup tournaments.

The BCCI is an autonomous, private organisation and does not fall under the purview of the National Sports Federation of India.

It was set up in 1928.

Grant Govan was the first President of the BCCI.

Headquarters: **Mumbai**, Maharashtra

8. 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**

9. 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**

10. 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**