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1. India successfully carries out trials of nuclear-capable "Agni-5 missile" (Dec. 16, 2022)

"Agni-5 missile"

India on 15 December successfully carried out the **night trials** of the **Agni-5 nuclear-capable ballistic missile**. The test comes days after a clash between Indian and Chinese troops in Arunachal Pradesh's **Tawang district**.

Important facts

- Agni 5 missile capable of striking targets at ranges up to **5,000 kilometres** with a very high degree of accuracy.
- The test was conducted to validate new technologies and equipment on the missile, which is now lighter than before.
- Defense sources said the test proved the capability of extending the range of the Agni 5 missile if required.
- The trial was aimed at enhancing the range of the Agni-5 missile if required.

About Agni 5 Missile

- Agni-5 is an ingeniously built advanced surface-to-surface ballistic missile developed under the **Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP)**.
- It is a **fire-and-forget missile**, which cannot be stopped without an interceptor missile.
- The Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) is the brain-child of **Dr A P J Abdul Kalam**, who aimed at making the country self-sufficient in the field of missile technology.
- The program had five missiles **P-A-T-N-A, Prithvi, Agni, Trishul, Nag, and Akash**.
- It was aimed at boosting India's nuclear deterrence against China, which has missiles such as the **Dongfeng-41**, which have a range between **12,000-15,000 km**.
- The Agni 1 to 4 missiles have ranges from **700 km to 3,500 km** and they have already been deployed.

Agni Class of Missiles

- **Agni 1** : Range of 700-800 km.
- **Agni 2**: Range more than 2000 km.
- **Agni 3**: Range of more than 2,500 Km
- **Agni 4**: Range is more than 3,500 km.

- **Agni-5:** The longest of the Agni series, an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) with a range of over 5,000 km.
- **Agni-P (Prime):** It is a canisterised missile with a range capability between 1,000 and 2,000 km. It will replace the Agni I missile.

2. US President Joe Biden signed gay marriage legislation (Dec. 15, 2022)

Joe Biden signed gay marriage legislation

United States (US) President **Joe Biden** signed **gay marriage law**. On the occasion, the President said that "the law that protects love strikes a chord against hate in all its forms".

Important facts

- This law establishes statutory authority for **same-sex and interracial marriages**.
- The House of Representatives passed the law on December 8 by a vote of 258-169-1.
- The new law officially repeals the **Marriage Act of 1996**, which defined marriage as between a man and a woman.
- In 2015, the **U.S. Supreme Court** in its decision legalized same-sex unions nationwide.
- States would not be required to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples if the court overturns its 2015 ruling. But they will be required to recognize marriages conducted elsewhere in the country.

Status of Same-Sex marriage around the world

- Same-sex marriage is the marriage of two people of the same gender.
- As of 2022, marriage between same-sex couples is legally recognized in **33 countries**, including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, etc.
- This does not usually include adoption rights, although most countries with same-sex marriage allow those couples to adopt jointly, as can other married couples.
- The first law providing for marriage equality between same-sex and opposite-sex couples was passed by the **Netherlands in 2000**.
- The right to marry is a fundamental right under **article 21**. However, same-sex marriage is not legalized in India.

3. Lok Sabha passes Constitution (ST) Order (Second Amendment) Bill, 2022 (Dec. 15, 2022)

Lok Sabha passes Constitution

The Lok Sabha on 15th December passed the **Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Second Amendment) Bill, 2022**.

Important facts

- The Bill will amend the **Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950**, with respect to its application to **Tamil Nadu**.
- The Order lists the tribal communities deemed to be Scheduled Tribes in states and union territories.
- The bill includes **Narikoravan and Kurivikkaran communities** in the list of **Scheduled Tribes in Tamil Nadu**.
- The Bill includes the **Hattee community of Trans Gori area of Sirmour district** in the list of Scheduled Tribes in **Himachal Pradesh**.
- It also aims to amend the Scheduled Tribe order to recognize the **Gond community in Chandauli, Kushinagar, Sant Kabir Nagar and Sant Ravidas Nagar** districts of Uttar Pradesh from Scheduled Caste to **Scheduled Tribe**.

4. UN ranks 'Namami Gange' project among world's top 10 initiatives (Dec. 15, 2022)

UN ranks 'Namami Gange' project among world's top 10

India's '**Namami Gange**'- river Ganga rejuvenation project- has been recognised as one among **world's 10 most "ground-breaking" initiatives** for restoration of natural ecosystems, according to a report released during the **UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15)**.

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has won the "**Public Water Agency of the Year**" award at the Global Water Awards, 2019 by Global Water Intelligence.

Important facts

- The award was received by **G Ashok Kumar**, Director General, Namami Gange, at the **15th Conference of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) in Montreal, Canada** on 14 December 2022.
- Namami Gange was selected from over 150 such initiatives from 70 countries across the globe.
- They were selected under the banner of the **United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**, a global movement coordinated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
- Recognized initiatives, including Namami Gange, will now be eligible to receive UN support, funding or technical expertise.

Other initiatives included in the World Restoration Flagship

- **Trinational Atlantic Forest Pact**, which aims to protect and restore the forest in Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina.
- **Abu Dhabi Marine Restoration project** that targets safeguarding the world's second-largest dugong population in Abu Dhabi.
- **Great Green Wall** for restoration to restore savannahs, grasslands and farms across Africa.
- **Multi-Country Mountain Initiative** based in Serbia, Kyrgyzstan, Uganda and Rwanda.
- **The Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative** in Kazakhstan to restore the steppe, semi-desert and desert ecosystems.
- **The Central American Dry Corridor**
- **Shan-Shui Initiative in China**

About Namami Gange

- It was approved as a '**Flagship Programme**' by the Central Government in **June 2014**.
- It was launched to serve the twin objectives of effective abatement of pollution and conservation and **rejuvenation of the national river Ganga**.
- It is being operated under the **Ministry of Water Resources**, Department of River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation and Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- The program is being implemented by the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** and its State Program Management Groups (SPMGs).

5. India gets Rafale's 36th and last aircraft from France (Dec. 15, 2022)

India gets Rafale's 36th and last aircraft from France

Rafale, the last of the **36 IAF Rafale aircraft**, has landed in New Delhi after refuelling by a UAE Air Force tanker aircraft after taking off from **France**.

Important facts

- With the landing of the last Rafale aircraft, the delivery of **36 Rafale fighter jets** to the country has been completed.
- The **first batch of five state-of-the-art Rafale fighter jets** arrived in India on **July 29, 2021**, nearly four years after India signed an inter-governmental agreement with France to procure 36 aircraft at a cost of around **Rs 60,000 crore**.
- Earlier, according to the deal, France had handed over 35 Rafale fighter jets to India.

- These jets are stationed at **Ambala, Haryana and Hashimara in West Bengal.**
- The 36th aircraft with **RB tail number** has been handed over to India by France and all its parts and other components have been replaced as it was being used for upgrading.

About Rafale aircraft

- It is a **French twin-engine multirole fighter aircraft** designed by **Dassault Aviation Company of France.**
- It was introduced in the **year 2001.**
- State-of-the-art technology has been used in it and it is a **4.5 generation fighter aircraft.**
- The Meteor missile, SCALP cruise missile and MICA missile system present in it make it very important from the point of view of security.
- It can fly at a speed of **2,222 kilometres per hour** and a **height of 50,000 feet.**
- Its length is about **15.27 meters** and it can carry **9,500 kg** of bombs and ammunition at a time.

6. Peru govt announces nationwide emergency amid fiery protests (Dec. 15, 2022)

Peru govt announces nationwide emergency amid fiery protests

The **Peruvian government** declared a nationwide state of **emergency** on 14 December amid raging protests.

Important facts

- Peru's Defense Minister removed **President Pedro Castillo** from office on 7 December by impeaching him. Due to which protests are going on in the country.
- Amid political turmoil, protests are taking place in the country demanding general elections. Meanwhile, **8 people have died** during the violent protests.
- Peru has gone through years of political turmoil that have seen corruption, repeated impeachment attempts on several leaders, and curtailment of presidential terms.

About Peru

- Peru is the **third largest country in South America**, after Brazil and Argentina.
- President: **Dina Boluarte**
- Capital: **Lima**
- Currency : **Nuevo Sol**

- Major Mountain Ranges: **Andes**
- Major Rivers: **Amazon, Ucayali, Madre de Dios**

7. G-7 agrees \$15.5B energy deal with Vietnam to cut emissions (Dec. 15, 2022)

G-7 agrees \$15.5B energy deal with Vietnam to cut emissions

The **Group of Seven (G-7)** rich industrialised nations has approved an agreement to provide **\$15.5 billion** to **Vietnam**.

Important facts

- This will help the **Southeast Asian nation** rapidly move from coal-fired power to **renewable energy**, thereby reducing its climate-damaging pollution.
- The Group of Seven major economies, along with **Norway and Denmark**, said that the aim is to help Vietnam reduce its emissions to **“net zero” by 2050**, a goal which experts say needs to be met globally to cap global warming at **1.5 degrees Celsius** (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit).
- The Just **Energy Transition Partnership** with Vietnam is among a series of agreements that developing and rich nations are negotiating.
- The first such deal was signed with **South Africa** last year, and a similar agreement was reached with Indonesia last month.
- The **\$15.5 billion** of funding will come from public and private sources over the coming three to five years.

About G7

- The G7 or the **Group of Seven** is a group of the seven most advanced economies.
- The seven countries are **Canada, the USA, UK, France, Germany, Japan and Italy**.
- It was formed in **1975**.
- G7 countries meet annually to discuss issues of common interest like global economic governance, international security and energy policy.
- All the G7 countries and India are a **part of G20**.
- The G7 does not have a fixed headquarters.
- The **UK currently chairs** the G7 and has invited India along with Australia, the Republic of Korea and South Africa as guest countries for the G7 summit.

8. Narendra Singh Tomar chairs 32nd meeting of Board of Directors of NHB (Dec. 15, 2022)

Narendra Singh Tomar chairs 32nd meeting of Board of Directors of NHB

The **32nd meeting** of the **Board of Directors of the National Horticulture Board (NHB)** was held in **New Delhi** on 14th December under the chairmanship of the Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and Chairman of the Board, **Narendra Singh Tomar**.

Important facts

- It was decided in the meeting that the process of approval of horticulture projects would be simplified for the farmers.
- Instead of two stages, now the process of approval of these projects will be completed in one go and it will be completely digital, as well as minimum documents will be required, due to which the farmers will not face any kind of trouble.
- It is noteworthy that many projects which used to be approved in a time period of about 6 to 8 months, will now be approved **in just 45 days**.
- The scheme framework, application filing system, documentation and approval process have been further simplified.
- The new simple design will come into effect from **January 1, 2023**.
- This process will make the system more transparent and efficient, promote ease of doing business for the benefit of the farming community and generate more hi-tech commercial projects for NHB funding.
- Under NHB, a new vertical has been created to promote organic and natural farming, which will oversee planning, monitoring, area expansion-market promotion for production, value chain development and infrastructure development.

Swachh Plant Programme

- The meeting also discussed in detail the new initiative of NHB- **Swachh Plant Programme**.
- Under the programme the problem of availability of planting material to the farmers will be solved by spending **Rs 2100 crore** with the assistance of **Asian Development Bank (ADB)**.
- This will largely solve the problem of planting material, especially for many commercially important fruits.
- This programme will go a long way in providing a major contribution to the much needed quality planting material for horticulture crops in the country.

National Horticulture Board (NHB)

- It was set up by the Government of India in **1984** as an **Autonomous organisation** under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare**.
- It is registered as a society under Societies Registration Act with its headquarters at **Gurugram**.
- Its main objective is to improve the integrated development of the horticulture industry and help in maintaining and coordinating the production and processing of fruits and vegetables.

9. UK, France, and UAE extend support for India's permanent membership at UNSC (Dec. 15, 2022)

UK, France, and UAE extend support for India's permanent membership at UNSC

The **UK, France and UAE** on 14 December extended support for **India's permanent membership at the [United Nations Security Council \(UNSC\)](#)**.

Important facts

- India is holding the presidency of the United Nations Security Council for the **month of December 2022**.
- The **United Arab Emirates** has also supported India's bid for permanent membership of a reformed Security Council.
- There is a **need for reform in UNSC**, due to the undemocratic nature of UNSC, barring two regions (North America and Europe), other regions are either underrepresented (like Asia) or not represented at all (Africa, Latin America and the Small Island developing states).
- Veto power is also misused in UNSC. Veto power is used by the P-5 countries to serve their own and their allies' strategic interests.
- India being the largest democracy and second most populous country in the world, is the primary reason for granting it permanent membership in the UNSC.

About United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

- It was established in **1945 by the United Nations Charter**.
- It is one of the **six major organs of the United Nations**.
- The other **5 organs of the United Nations are** - the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the Trusteeship Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat.
- It has five permanent members - **China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States**, collectively known as the **P5**.

- India is currently a **non-permanent member** of the UNSC for a two-year term, which expires in December.
- Any one of them can veto a resolution.
- Headquarters - **New York**

10. New Zealand passes world's first tobacco law to ban smoking (Dec. 14, 2022)

New Zealand passes world's first tobacco law to ban smoking

The New Zealand government on 13 December passed a law to **completely end tobacco smoking** by banning youth from buying cigarettes for life.

Important facts

- The **Smoke Free Environments and Regulated Products (Smoking Tobacco) Amendment Bill** has been passed in New Zealand which aims to make New Zealand **smoke free by 2025**.
- The bill aims to ban the sale of tobacco to anyone born after **January 1, 2009**, and reduce the number of cigarette retailers in the country.
- The bill has received bipartisan support in New Zealand's parliament and Prime Minister **Jacinda Ardern** also plans to reduce the amount of nicotine allowed in smokeless tobacco products.
- Passage of the bill would reduce the number of tobacco retailers nationwide to about one-tenth of the **current number of 6,000**.
- This will lead to thousands of lives longer and an **additional \$5 billion** less burden on the health system as there will be no need to treat diseases caused by smoking, such as many types of cancer, heart attacks, strokes, amputations.
- The legislation aims to prevent the high number of deaths caused by tobacco consumption in New Zealand which disproportionately affects the native **Māori population**.

About New Zealand

- Prime Minister: **Jacinda Ardern**
- Capital: **Wellington**
- Currency : **New Zealand dollar**