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1. 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.

2. 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.

3. 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**

4. 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**

5. Deaths in India due to Left Wing Extremism reduced by 85% in recent years (Dec. 14, 2022)

Deaths in India due to Left Wing Extremism reduced by 85% in recent years

In a written reply in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Home, **Nityanand Rai** said on 14 November that deaths in the country due to **Left Wing Extremism (LWE)** have reduced by **85 percent** in recent years.

Important facts

- Incidents of LWE violence have reduced by **77 percent** from a high of **2213 in 2010 to 509 in 2021**.
- Similarly, resultant deaths of both Civilians and Security Forces also have reduced by **85 percent** from a high of **1005 in 2010 to 147 in 2021**.
- With the decline in the geographical spread of Left Wing Extremism, the number of districts with security related expenditure has come down from **126 in April 2018 to 90 and to 70 in July 2021**.
- Left-wing extremists, popularly known as Maoists worldwide and as Naxalites in India, has been a major threat to India since the 1960s.

Initiative taken by the Government

- A multi-pronged strategy has been implemented under the **National Policy and Action Plan** since 2015 to address Left Wing Extremism.
- The government has approved projects worth **Rs 971 crore** under the **Special Infrastructure Scheme**, which includes strengthening of special forces and special intelligence branches.
- Under the scheme, **2566 crore rupees** have been released to States since 2014-15.
- A total of **503 Fortified Police Stations** have been constructed till date and 147 approved in vulnerable LWE affected areas.
- An amount of over **Rs 3000 crore** has been released to the most Left Wing Extremism affected districts under the 'Special Central Assistance Scheme' to fill critical gaps in public infrastructure and services.
- A total of **11600 km roads** have been constructed and **2343 mobile towers** were installed in the affected districts.
- **1258 bank branches** and 4903 post offices were established in the last seven years for inclusive development in LWE affected districts.

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7. Parliament passes New Delhi International Arbitration Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2022 (Dec. 14, 2022)

Parliament passes New Delhi International Arbitration Centre

Parliament has passed the **New Delhi International Arbitration Centre (Amendment) Bill, 2022** with Rajya Sabha approving it on 14 December unanimously.

Highlights of the Bill

- The Bill seeks to amend the **New Delhi International Arbitration Center Act, 2019**.

- The Bill seeks to rename the **New Delhi International Arbitration Center** in New Delhi as the **India International Arbitration Centre**.
- The new Bill expands this in the Act to include the operation of other forms of alternative dispute resolution.
- The manner of conduct of arbitration and other forms of alternative dispute resolution shall be specified by the Central Government through regulations.
- The Bill allows the government to remove any difficulty in implementing the Act for five years from the date of enactment of the Act.
- This centre is not only for Delhi but will be for the whole of India and will also be for the people of the parties coming from abroad.

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9. Union Minister For Jal Shakti To Inaugurate India Water Impact Summit 2022 (Dec. 14, 2022)

Union Minister For Jal Shakti To Inaugurate India Water

The Union Minister for Jal Shakti **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** will inaugurate the **7th India Water Impact Summit (IWIS 2022)** on 15th December, 2022 in **New Delhi**.

Important facts

- The summit is being organized from **15th to 17th December, 2022** at Dr. **Ambedkar International Centre**, New Delhi by **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** and **Center for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (cGanga)**.
- Its aims to impart impetus towards developing water and environmental infrastructure to protect rivers and water bodies in India.
- **The theme of the Summit (IWIS 2022)** is 'Restoration and Conservation of Small Rivers in a Large Basin' with emphasis on the 'Mapping and Convergence of 5Ps' - People, Policy, Plan, Programme and Project.
- Experts from the country and abroad will discuss ways in which small rivers facing near-extinction in large river basins can be protected. Summit aims to give insight into potential causes for divergence and formulate strategy to achieve convergence.
- The **5 broad themes** of the summit are Science and Policy, Finance and Economics, Technology and Innovation, International and Implementation Challenges.
- In the **5th edition** of the India Water Impact Summit, understanding the concept and nuances of **Arth Ganga** was the key focus.

10. Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar inaugurates National Maternal Health Workshop (Dec. 14, 2022)

Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar inaugurates National Maternal Health Workshop

Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, **Dr. Bharati Pravin Pawar** inaugurated the **National Maternal Health Workshop in New Delhi** on 14 December.

Important facts

- The theme of the workshop was "**Striving for zero preventable maternal mortality**".
- During the event, Dr. Pawar unveiled the **Midwifery-Led Care Units (MLCUs) brochure** and **Standard Operating Protocol poster for the labour room**.
- She also introduced the Maternal health guidance **booklet for community health officers (CHOs)** and **SUMAN community linkages brochure**.
- India has achieved a momentous milestone in reduction of **maternal mortality ratio (MMR)** registering a significant decline from 130 in 2014-16 to 97 per lakh live births in 2018-20.
- India is on a positive path towards maternal health and child health and the Government of India is determined to meet the new challenges.

- For the implementation of “**Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan**”, doctors pledge one day of service per month for this campaign.
- More than 3.6 crore pregnant women have received comprehensive antenatal care under this program across all states and union territories.

Awards to states for remarkable efforts and achievements in the area of maternal health

Intensive efforts in reducing MMR: 1st position: Kerala and 2nd Maharashtra

- Performance as per the NFHS-5: Antenatal Care services & Institutional deliveries
- **In 4 ANC services**

1st position- Madhya Pradesh; 2nd position Rajasthan

- **Increase in Institutional Delivery in large states-**
- 1st position West Bengal; 2nd position Uttar Pradesh
- **Roll out of SUMAN:**
- **In bigger state category, highest SUMAN notification**
- 1st position- Punjab; 2nd position- Tamil Nadu
- **In smaller state category, highest SUMAN notification**
- 1st position - Goa; 2nd position- Tripura
- **Quality certifications under LaQshya:**
- **In the Bigger state category**, Karnataka bagged the first position.
- **In the small state category**, Chandigarh was the winner.
- **In absolute numbers of certifications**, Madhya Pradesh holds 1st position.
- **Gujarat won the state with the highest number of medical colleges prize.**
- **High-risk pregnancy management under PMSMA.**
- Tamil Nadu was the best performing state.
- Manipur bagged the first prize for rapid rollout of extended PMSMA.
- **Bolstering the teamwork among the frontline workers**, the best ANM- ASHA teams went to the State of Uttar Pradesh.
- **Midwifery initiative:** Best performing state was Telangana.