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1. Tokyo Makes Solar Panels Mandatory for New Homes Built After 2025 (Dec. 17, 2022)

Tokyo Makes Solar Panels Mandatory for New Homes Built After 2025

On December 15, the **Japanese capital's local assembly** passed a new rule mandating that all new homes in Tokyo built by large-scale home builders after April 2025 must **install solar power panels** to cut household carbon emissions.

Important facts

- This new rule for newly built homes mandates about **50 major builders** to equip homes of up to **2,000 square metres (21,500 sq ft)** with renewable energy sources, mainly solar panels.
- The **Tokyo Metropolitan Government** aims to halve greenhouse gas emissions by **2030 compared with 2,000 levels**.
- Japan is the **fifth largest carbon emitter in the world**. It has committed to achieve carbon neutrality **by 2050**.
- Meanwhile, scientists at the **California Institute of Technology** also launched a space solar program in 2013 following a \$100 million grant, while teams from countries including Japan, Russia and India are also studying the possibilities.

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. 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**

4. 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.

5. 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**

6. 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**

7. US announces historic nuclear fusion breakthrough (Dec. 14, 2022)

US announces historic nuclear fusion breakthrough

US researchers announced a **historic nuclear fusion breakthrough** on December 13, marking a "**landmark achievement**" toward a source of unlimited, clean energy and an end to dependence on fossil fuels.

Important facts

- This breakthrough in nuclear fusion could bring unlimited clean energy and could help in the fight against climate change.
- For the first time in history, American scientists have carried out a nuclear fusion reaction at the **National Ignition Facility at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California, USA**, due to which pure energy (carbon free energy) was produced just like the Sun.
- According to scientists, if everything goes right, America's dependence on fossil energy like gas, petrol and diesel can be reduced.

What is Nuclear fusion?

- Nuclear fusion is the process by which two light atomic nuclei combine to form a single heavier one while releasing massive amounts of energy.
- It is the process that powers the Sun and other stars. This light works by taking pairs of atoms and forcing them together and generates enormous amounts of energy.

8. Rajeev Chandrasekhar attends the India Global Forum at Dubai (Dec. 13, 2022)

Rajeev Chandrasekhar attends the India Global Forum

Union Minister of state for Electronics and Information Technology, **Rajeev Chandrasekhar** attended the **India Global Forum** at **Dubai** on 13-15 December, 2022.

Important facts

- He attended the **ministerial roundtable - globalization of Indian tech and innovation talent.**
- He put forward Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision on creating reliable **corridors of technologies and innovation.**
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision is to build credible corridors for technologies and innovation with various countries in collaboration with young Indian innovators.
- The objective of these discussions is to assess avenues of collaborations with entrepreneurs who are aspirational of expanding their footprint in India.

About India Global Forum

- It is the **agenda-setting forum** for international business and global leaders.
- It selects platforms that international corporate and policy makers can leverage to interact with stakeholders in their sectors and geographies of strategic importance.

9. India, Poland hold 10th round of Foreign Office Consultations in Warsaw (Dec. 13, 2022)

India, Poland hold 10th round of Foreign Office Consultations

India and Poland held the **10th round of Foreign Office Consultations in Warsaw** on December 12.

Important facts

- During the meeting, the two sides discussed regional and international issues, including developments in the Indo-Pacific, India's neighbourhood, the Ukraine conflict, cooperation in multilateral fora including the United Nations, and United Nations Security Council reforms.
- During the meeting, India and Poland identified agriculture, food processing, information technology and green transformation as areas of interest to further enhance bilateral ties.
- Both sides expressed satisfaction at the discussions at the **sixth round of the India-Poland Joint Commission Meeting on Economic Cooperation** to be held in October 2022.
- The Indian side in the meeting was led by **Sanjay Verma**, Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs.
- Both countries agreed to hold the next round of Foreign Office Consultations on mutually convenient dates in **New Delhi**.

Bilateral Trade

- The two nations noted the potential of bilateral trade and investment ties.
- According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the bilateral trade between India and Poland has witnessed steady growth in recent years and it stood at **USD 4.3 billion in 2021**.
- Indian companies have invested over **USD 3 billion** in Poland while Polish investments in India stand at USD 700 million.

About Poland

- Prime Minister - **Mateusz Morawiecki**
- President - **Andrzej Duda**
- Capital - **Warsaw**
- Currency - **Polish zloty**

10. UAE successfully launches first ever Arab-Built lunar spacecraft (Dec. 12, 2022)

UAE successfully launches first ever Arab-Built lunar spacecraft

A **SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket** on 11 December carried into space the **first ever Arab-built lunar spacecraft**. It was launched from the **Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida**.

Important facts

- Named as **Rashid Rover** was built by **Dubai's Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC)**, in the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**, and is being delivered by the **HAKUTO-R** lander, engineered by Japanese lunar exploration company **ispace**.
- If the landing is successful, HAKUTO-R will also become the **first commercial spacecraft** ever to make a controlled landing on the moon.
- Rashid rover will provide 'novel and highly valued data, images, and insights,' as well as 'collect scientific data on matters relating to the origin of the solar system, our planet and life.'
- Its rover weighs just **22 pounds (10 kg)** and will work on the surface for about 10 days.