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Board Member Portraits

H.E. Dr. Amrith Rohan Perera



Dr. Perera has been serving as the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations in New York, since 2015.

Dr. Amrith Rohan Perera is a Graduate of Law, University of Ceylon (1971), and practised Civil Law. He served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a Legal Advisor until his retirement from public service in 2007. Dr. Perera has been involved in the area of bi-lateral, regional and multi lateral treaty negotiations. Dr. Perera served as member of the U.N. International Law Commission (ILC), and was also General Rapporteur. He Chairs the United Nations Ad-hoc Committee on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, which is currently negotiating the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism. At the Golden Jubilee Session of the Asian African Legal Consultative Organisation (AALCO) in Colombo, Dr. Perera was unanimously elected the Chairperson of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) which was constituted to advise the Secretary-General on the future work programme of AALCO.

Dr. Perera has also been, since 2009, a Consultant to the Commonwealth's dealing with Mutual Legal Assistance under the Commonwealth Schemes and Counter-Terrorism and Anti-Money Laundering Measures. He has also been a Lecturer in Public International Law. In May, 2010 Dr. Perera was appointed as a Commissioner of the Sri Lanka Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC), on promoting national Unity and reconciliation in Sri Lanka in the post-conflict phase.

Dueling US Messages at Global Climate Talks

By Lisa Friedman



Despite the decision of the President of the United States to withdraw from the Paris agreement in June, 7 in 10 Americans believe global warming is occurring, according to a Yale University survey. Former Vice President Al Gore, a longtime champion of strong action on climate change, said “President Trump does not speak for the country as a whole on the climate issue, of course he has the authority that any president has. But on this issue he is very much out of sync with the country as a whole.” Even with numerous governors, mayors, and Americans believing in climate change, the Trump administration plans to roll back federal climate change policies like the Clean Power Plan. Leaders from other countries were glad to see that the majority of Americans are still committed to the Paris agreement, but they weren’t sure which voice of American policy they should have confidence in.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/11/climate/un-climate-talks-bonn.html>

Australia Powers Up the World’s Biggest Battery— Courtesy of Elon Musk

By Adam Baidawi



“The state of South Australia announced on Friday that it had powered up the world’s biggest battery ahead of schedule: a feat already being heralded as one of this century’s first great engineering marvels and a potential solution to the country’s energy woes...The battery is the size of an American football field. It is capable of powering 30,000 homes, and its rapid deployment reflects the union of a blackout-prone state and a flashy entrepreneur, Elon Musk, the founder of Tesla Motors, who pledged to complete its construction in 100 days or do it for free.” South Australia has the highest electricity prices in the world. The high-capacity Tesla battery does not create energy, it stores wind and solar energy.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/30/world/australia/elon-musk-south-australia-battery.html>

Solar Panels Loom in Trump's First Trade Battle With China President

By Keith Bradsher



Trump has vowed to get tougher on trade and his first big international trade fight could be over solar panels. Chinese officials stated that they are helping the world move toward cleaner energy because “Everybody needs the kinds of cheaper panels, not only in China, but also the world,” said Li Junfeng, a senior Chinese economic adviser. The United States has already imposed tariffs on solar panels from China over the past five years. But now, the Trump administration has indicated it may raise the stakes by authorizing tariffs on all solar panel imports, including those from Southeast Asia. China and solar panel installers oppose the move because it simply would hurt solar panel buyers.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/01/business/trump-china-trade-solar.html>

U.S. Softens Its Hard Line As the World Talks Climate

By Lisa Friedman

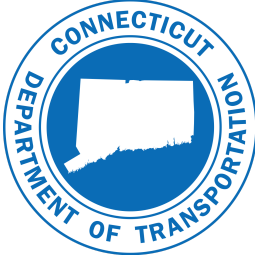


The senior American diplomat at the United Nations climate talks in Bonn, Germany, said that the U.S. would remain engaged in global climate change network even as it planned to exit the Paris agreement. However, during the talk, they made no mention of coal while promising to help other countries to “adapt to the impacts of climate change.” Todd D. Stern, the former State Department climate envoy under President Barack Obama who helped design the Paris agreement delivered a speech to other nations to “not let the retrograde conduct in Washington divert you from your purpose and your course and your commitment. It’s too important to let that happen. And I just firmly believe the U.S. will be back in.” The United States has cut its greenhouse gas emissions 11.5% percent through 2005, but it would likely be slowed in 2017. For the world to meet its climate goals, the U.S. would need to accelerate its efforts

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/16/climate/un-climate-talks-bonn.html>

Invest in Cleaner, Faster Transportation

By Emily Lewis O'Brien and Heather Burns



The world needs a fast, cleaner, and more efficient transportation system. Our roads are often congested and overdue for repairs, most drivers still rely on costly polluting fuels like imported gasoline, and state transportation funding for improvements, like better public transit remains insufficient. Transportations are the the largest contributor to the greenhouse gas emissions. If these emissions continue to go largely unaddressed, states will not reach its climate targets under the Global Warming Solutions Act - a 10% reduction below 1990 levels by 2020. Other than reducing the greenhouse gases, investing in electric transportation means improving local air quality and the health of citizens.

<http://www.ctpost.com/opinion/article/Emily-Lewis-O-Brien-and-Heather-Burns-Cap-12338333.php>

A New Perk for Londoners: Buses Fueled by Coffee

By Alan Cowell



London still chokes on heavy pollution as London officials are currently hunting for new sources of energy for the buses and to curb toxic diesel fumes. They want to convert the 300 single-deck buses to run on electricity or hydrogen, which produces no exhaust fumes. The latest idea? Coffee grounds. A company called Bio-bean, in partnership with the oil giant Royal Dutch Shell, introduced relatively small amounts of oil produced from coffee grounds into the mix of diesel and biofuels. The first bath of 6000 liters, or about 1580 gallons, would power one bus for a year. "It is a great example of what can be done when we start to re-imagine waste as an untapped source," Arthur Kay, the Bio-bean found said.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/20/world/europe/london-coffee-buses.html>

Forget Trump and Discover the World

By Thomas L. Friedman



While President Trump's been tweeting about bringing back "beautiful coal," India built a billion-user ID network bigger than Twitter and giant solar power plants that are cheaper than coal. "No new coal or gas power plants are being built in India today. Not because of regulations, but because solar, wind, hydro are all now able to compete with coal plants without subsidies."

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/28/opinion/forget-trump-and-discover-the-world.html>

By Lisa Friedman and Glenn Thrush



Thirteen federal agencies are contradicting much of the Trump administration's position on climate change by publishing reports that humans are the dominant cause of the global temperature rise, creating the warmest period in the history of civilization. The report proclaims that long-term warming trend is "unambiguous." The assessment concludes, based on extensive evidence, that it is extremely likely that human activities, especially emissions of greenhouse gases, are the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century. The report creates an unusual situation in which the current government's policies are in direct opposition to the science it is producing.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/03/climate/us-climate-report.html>

Climate Report by U.S. Agencies Counters Trump Stance

Producer: Roma Stibravy, President

Editor: Rani Putri and Erin Davies, Interns

