




09 March 2024

National and International News

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| <p>MethaneSAT</p>  <p>Adda247</p> | <p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MethaneSAT, a satellite launched aboard a SpaceX Falcon9 rocket from California, will track and measure methane emissions globally. • Methane is a potent greenhouse gas, the second largest contributor to global warming after carbon dioxide, responsible for 30% of global heating since the Industrial Revolution. <p>Why Track Methane Emissions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methane is 80 times more potent at warming than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period. • It contributes to the formation of ground-level ozone, which could be contributing to one million premature deaths every year. • Fossil fuel operations, accounting for about 40% of all human-caused methane emissions, are the main culprits. <p>About MethaneSAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed by the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) in partnership with Harvard University, the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, and the New Zealand Space Agency. • Will orbit the Earth 15 times a day, monitoring the oil and gas sector. • Will provide data on methane emissions, their sources, and trends over time, enabling stakeholders and regulators to take action to reduce emissions. <p>Features of MethaneSAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipped with a high-resolution infrared sensor and a spectrometer, enabling it to track methane concentrations as small as three parts per billion. • Has a wide-camera view of about 200 km by 200 km, allowing it to identify larger emitters known as "super emitters." |
| <p>Bengaluru's First Driverless Metro Train</p> | <p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited |



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(BMRCL) has received the first set of six train coaches for its under-construction yellow line.

- These coaches are part of the Communication-based Train Control (CBTC) system, enabling driverless operations.

What is CBTC-enabled Driverless Metro Train?

- Utilizes Communication-based Train Control (CBTC) technology.
- Relies on radio communication for precise train control.
- Enables trains to communicate with each other.
- **Unattended Train Operations (UTO) automate tasks like door operations and train movement.**
- Enhanced Supervision Capability from **Operations Control Centre (OCC)** ensures effective monitoring and management of train operations.

Manufacturing and Design:

- Manufactured by CRRCL Nanjing Puzhen Co Ltd, China, in collaboration with Titagarh Rail Systems Ltd., India.
- Part of the Make In India Initiative.
- A contract worth Rs 1,578 crore for 216 coaches was secured in 2019.

AI Integration:

- AI technology enhances **safety operations on the new line.**
- AI algorithms monitor tracks for anomalies using sensor data.
- Cameras on trains capture visual data for real-time analysis of safety concerns.
- Aims to improve track maintenance and ensure safe operations.



Special Features:

- Hot axle detection system monitors train bearings for overheating.
- Real-time location displays door status and arrival/departure information.
- Front and rear-view cameras aid in monitoring boarding and deboarding.
- **Emergency Egress Device (EED) allows passengers to request assistance during emergencies.**

Operation and Timeline:

- Initially, the train will have a train operator for at



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| | <p>least six months before transitioning to fully driverless operations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue operations will start with seven trains running at a 15-minute frequency. • Operational delays have pushed the expected commencement to December 2024. • Delays are primarily due to slow manufacturing and testing processes. |
| <p>India, four-nation EFTA bloc likely to ink FTA on March 10</p>  | <p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India and the four-nation European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which includes Switzerland, Finland, Norway and Liechtenstein, is likely to sign a long-negotiated free trade agreement on March 10, aimed at increasing trade and investment flows, job creation and economic growth, according to multiple sources. <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) is expected to lead to investments worth \$100 billion from the four-country bloc into India over the next 15 years generating an estimated one million jobs, officials said. • Notably, this FTA marks the first instance where India secures commitments on investment and employment from partner nations. • Officials anticipate that the pact will help address India's significant trade deficit with the EFTA bloc. |
| <p>Revision in PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana and Its Implementation</p>  <p>PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana - Lighting Up India with Solar Energy</p> | <p>Context:</p> <p>The Union government has modified the ₹75,000-crore PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, also known as the rooftop solar: free electricity scheme.</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially intended to fully subsidize 1 kW-3 kW solar systems in one crore households, the scheme now contributes up to 60% of the installation costs. • Interested households must now bear the remaining cost, with a minimum payment of ₹20,000, which can be mitigated through a low-interest, collateral-free loan. • Eligibility criteria include suitable roof conditions and an existing grid connection. Consumers are still responsible for paying for the net power supplied and consumed via the grid. |





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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net-metering allows unused solar power to flow back into the grid, offsetting the household's electricity bill. • Twelve public sector banks offer collateral-free loans at 1% above the prevailing RBI repo rate to eligible households. • A 3 kW-hour system can generate up to 300 units per month, with a maximum subsidy of ₹78,000 available. • Currently, the cost of a rooftop solar system is around ₹50,000 per kW. • Households can either pay the remaining balance or opt for a loan, with installation and maintenance costs factored in. • Over 40 lakh registrations have already been received, with installations underway in Gujarat. The target is to reach one crore houses within three years. |
| <p>Union Minister Anurag Singh Thakur Announces Two NCoE for Women</p> | <p>Context: Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Shri Anurag Singh Thakur, has declared the establishment of two National Centres of Excellence (NCOEs) for women in honor of International Women’s Day.</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These NCOEs will focus on 23 disciplines prioritized for medal-winning potential in global competitions like the Asian Games and the Olympics. • Shri Thakur, addressing the lack of trainers, coaches, and infrastructure at the state level, emphasized the importance of national support for sports development. • Collaboration between the Central government and state authorities is underway to identify key sports and allocate resources accordingly, ensuring a strategic approach to promoting sports like hockey, boxing, and athletics. • Efforts are being made to strengthen existing NCOEs and enhance coaching quality in collaboration with national sports federations. • The Sports Authority of India has established 23 NCOEs across India, equipped with advanced infrastructure, sports science facilities, personalized nutrition plans, and expert coaching staff to nurture promising athletes. |



Kerala Regional News

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| <p>Kerala can't borrow additional amount of Rs 19,370 cr, asserts centre</p> | <p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The central government has rejected Kerala's request to borrow an additional Rs 19,370 crore. • This comes after the Supreme Court advised both parties to resolve their differences on borrowing limits. <p>Issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kerala argues their borrowing limit was incorrectly set by the center. • The state claims they are entitled to borrow Rs 19,370 crore more. • The central government maintains Kerala has reached its borrowing limit. |
| <p>Students from Kerala develop web application to source skilled laborers</p>  | <p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students in Kerala, built a web application to connect skilled laborers with potential employers. • The application, called Thozhilportal.in, was developed by students at KKMGVHSS Orkkatteri as part of a government program. • It aims to benefit both job seekers and employers by providing a platform to find each other. • The initial focus is on Vadakara and Orkkatteri regions, with listings for electricians, plumbers, drivers, and other skilled workers. |
| <p>Fashion designer from Kozhikode makes Guinness bid for biggest handloom skirt</p>  | <p>Context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shemina Sasikumar, a fashion designer from Kozhikode, attempted to create the world's biggest handloom skirt in 2017. • This earned Shemina Sasikumar a Guinness World Record. <p>About:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The skirt boasted a massive circumference of 108 meters and featured Theyyam motifs, a tribute to Kerala's colorful ritual art form. |



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Kerala to get its first maritime cluster in Cherthala

Context:

- Kerala is set to establish its first maritime cluster in Cherthala, a coastal town in Alappuzha district
- This initiative was announced by Industries Minister P Rajeev.
- The cluster aims to create a supportive ecosystem for businesses in the maritime sector, with a focus on micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).
- The government has identified a 15-acre plot for the cluster and plans to develop essential infrastructure.
- There's also talk of collaborating with private companies to set up a testing lab for allied maritime equipment.
- This move aligns with the state's recent recognition of the maritime sector's potential for growth.

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