11 March 2024
National & International News

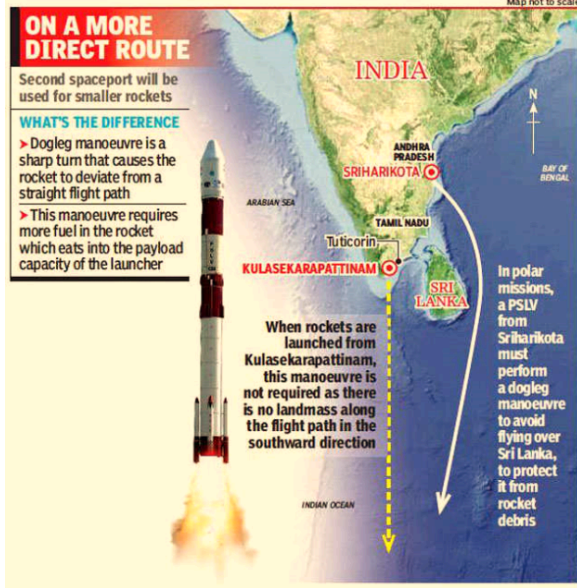| India signs free trade pact with 4 European countries	**Context:** ● India recently signed a landmark free trade agreement (FTA) **with four European countries - Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.** ● The agreement aims to boost investments in India to **$100 billion and create one million jobs within 15 years.** ● This Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) is the second full-fledged FTA signed by India, following the one with the United Arab Emirates. **Key points:** ● The **FTA with the EFTA** (European Free Trade Association) countries, separate from the EU, **includes significant tariff reductions, increased market access, and simplified customs procedures.** ● It also includes a unique chapter on **commitments to human rights and sustainable development, a first in such agreements.** ● The agreement will come into force after ratification by the EFTA states, expected possibly by the end of the year. ● Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal highlighted the investment clauses as a unique achievement, **with a goal to invest $100 billion in India from EFTA countries.** ● The agreement sets objectives t**o increase foreign direct investment from EFTA states into India by $50 billion within 10 years and another $50 billion in the next five years, aiming to generate 1 million jobs within 15 years in India.** ● If the goals are not met within 15 years, India can temporarily withdraw some trade concessions.
ISRO's second rocket launchport	**Context:** ● Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi initiated the construction of **ISRO's second rocket launchport.** **Why India Needs a New Launchport?** ● **Increasing Commercial Launches:** India expects a surge in commercial launches with the recent policy allowing private players in the space sector.

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ON A MORE DIRECT ROUTE

Second spaceport will be used for smaller rockets

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE
- Dogleg manoeuvre is a sharp turn that causes the rocket to deviate from a straight flight path
- This manoeuvre requires more fuel in the rocket which eats into the payload capacity of the launcher

When rockets are launched from Kulasekarapattinam, this manoeuvre is not required as there is no landmass along the flight path in the southward direction

In polar missions, a PSLV from Sriharikota must perform a dogleg manoeuvre to avoid flying over Sri Lanka, to protect it from rocket debris

- **Relieving Pressure on Existing Facility:** To avoid overloading ISRO's Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR in Sriharikota, a new launchport is essential.
- **Diverse Launch Capabilities:** The Kulasekarapattinam launchport will handle smaller payloads, allowing SHAR to focus on larger missions like lunar, Venus, and human-flight missions.
- **Facilitating Private Players:** Private companies can develop space systems, build satellites, and launch vehicles, **promoting private sector involvement in space.**
- **Dedicated Infrastructure:** It will provide dedicated launch infrastructure for on-demand commercial launches, ensuring smooth operations.

Why is the New ISRO Launchport in Tamil Nadu?
- **Geographical Advantage:** Kulasekarapattinam's coastal location in Tamil Nadu offers a natural advantage.
- **Optimized Trajectory for SSLV:** The launchport allows a direct southward trajectory, which is beneficial for Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) missions.
- **Reduced Fuel Consumption:** Kulasekarapattinam's westward location saves fuel for SSLV missions compared to the eastward trajectory required from SHAR.
- **Equatorial Proximity:** Located near the equator, both launchports significantly boost payload capacity due to the Earth's rotational velocity.
- **Enhanced Payload Capacity:** Proximity to the equator increases velocity due to Earth's rotation, benefiting geostationary satellites.

IRIS AI Robot

Context:
A pioneering advancement in education has emerged in **Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram, where a school has introduced India's first AI teacher robot, Iris.**

Key points:
- **Powered by Robotics and Generative AI technologies,** Iris boasts a dedicated Intel processor and coprocessor for seamless performance.
- Its Android App interface allows users to control and interact with the robot, ensuring a **personalized learning experience.**

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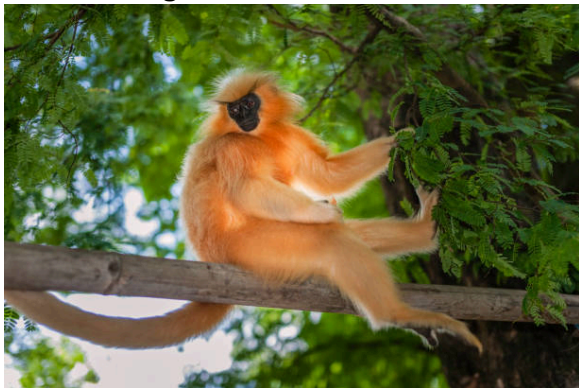|	
	● Not just a passive presence in the classroom, **Iris is a dynamic voice assistant and interactive learning tool.** ● Acts as an **AI voice-controlled assistant,** responding to user queries, providing explanations, and delivering educational content. ● Engages **users in interactive learning experiences through personalized content generation, quizzes, and interactive activities.** ● Equipped with a **4-wheel chassis, Iris can move freely within its environment,** facilitating user interaction and navigating through learning spaces. ● Its hands, **featuring 5 DoF each, enable Iris to manipulate objects, perform demonstrations, and engage in hands-on learning activities.** ● The robot can **teach subjects from nursery to Class 12.** ● Currently, Iris speaks three languages - **English, Hindi, and Malayalam.** ● Created by Maker Labs.
National Creators Award 	**Context:** ● Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented the **inaugural National Creators Award at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.** ● The award is being provided across **twenty categories** including the Best Storyteller Award; The Disruptor of the Year; Celebrity Creator of the Year; Green Champion Award; Best Creator For Social Change; Most Impactful Agri Creator; Cultural Ambassador of The Year; International Creator award; Best Travel Creator Award; Swachhta Ambassador Award; The New India Champion Award; Tech Creator Award; Heritage Fashion Icon Award; Most Creative Creator (Male & Female); Best Creator in Food Category; Best Creator in Education Category; Best Creator in Gaming Category; Best Micro Creator; Best Nano Creator; Best Health and Fitness Creator. **Key points:** ● **Disruptor of the Year award:** Ranveer Allahbadia (BeerBiceps) ● **Best Creator in Education Category(Male & Female):** Naman Deshmukh ● **Best Creator in Tech Category:** Gaurav Chaudhary(Technical Guruji) ● **Favourite Travel Creator:** Kamiya Jani

	● **Best Health and Fitness Creator:** Ankit Baiyanpuria ● **Best Creator in Food Category:** Kabita Singh (Kabita's Kitchen) ● **Celebrity Creator of the Year:** Aman Gupta ● **Green Champion Category:** Pankhti Pandey ● **Best Storyteller:** Keerthika Govindasamy ● **Cultural Ambassador of the Year:** Maithili Thakur ● **Most Creative Creator Female:** Shraddha Jain ● **Most Creative Creator Male:** RJ Raunac ● **Heritage Fashion Icon Award:** Jahnvi Singh ● **Best Creator for Social Change Award:** Jaya Kishori ● **Best Micro Creator Award:** Aridaman ● **Best Creator in Gaming Category Award**: Nishchay ● **Swachhta Ambassador Award:** Malhar Kalambe ● **Best International Creator Award:** Drew Hicks, Kili Paul, Cassandra Mae Spittmann ● **Best Nano Creator Award:** Piyush Purohit ● **Most Impactful Agri Creator:** Lakshay Dabas ● **The New India Champion Award:** Abhi and Niyu
Golden Langurs 	**Context:** ● The latest survey estimates India's golden langur **population at 7,396.** ● Conducted by the **Primate Research Centre NE India (PRCNE),** Assam Forest Department, Bodoland Territorial Council, Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON), and Conservation Himalayas. ● The golden langur's distribution covers the **Manas Biosphere Reserve and fragmented forests in western Assam.** ● Ripu Reserve Forest and Chakrashila Wildlife Sanctuary were identified as significant habitats for golden langurs. **Geographic Range:** ● Limited to **Assam, India, and neighboring Bhutan.** ● Inhabits an area surrounded by **four geographical landmarks**: the foothills of Bhutan (north), Manas River (east), Sankosh River (west), and Brahmaputra River (south). **Habitat:** ● Occupies moist evergreen and tropical deciduous forests, as well as some riverine areas and savannas.

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	- Primarily tree-dependent, living in the upper canopy of sub-tropical forests in the south and temperate forests in the north. - Found at **elevations close to sea level in the south and up to 3000 m at the foothills of Bhutan in the north.** **Conservation Status:** - IUCN: Endangered - CITES: Appendix I - Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule I
71st Miss World pageant 2024 Miss World 2024, Krystyna Pyszkova from Czech Republic Wins the Crown	**Context:** **Krystyna Pyszkova from the Czech Republic was crowned as the new Miss World 2024** at a grand event in Mumbai, India. The previous Miss World 2022, Karolina Bielawska from Poland, crowned her successor in a magnificent ceremony. **Runners-Up and Continental Winners** - First Runner-Up: Yasmina Zaytoun of Lebanon - Miss World Asia and Oceania: Yasmin Azaytoun of Lebanon - Miss World Europe: Krystyna Pyszková of Czech Republic - Miss World America and Caribbean: Aché Abrahams of Trinidad and Tobago - Miss World Africa: Lesego Chombo of Botswana **Humanitarian Award** - The Miss World Humanitarian Award was given to **Nita Ambani for her work at the Reliance Foundation, a non-profit organization**. Julia Morley CBE, the Chairwoman of the Miss World Organization, presented her with the award.