



11 March 2024

**National and 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:**

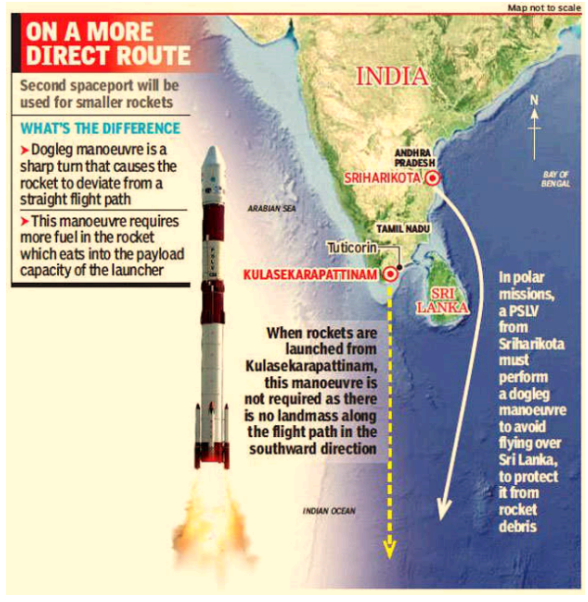
- The **FTA with the EFTA** (European Free Trade Association) countries, separate from the EU, **includes significant tariff reductions, increased market access, and simplified customs procedures.**
- It also includes a unique chapter on **commitments to human rights and sustainable development, a first 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 to **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.
- **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, beneficial for the 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**.
  - 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 interaction with users 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.

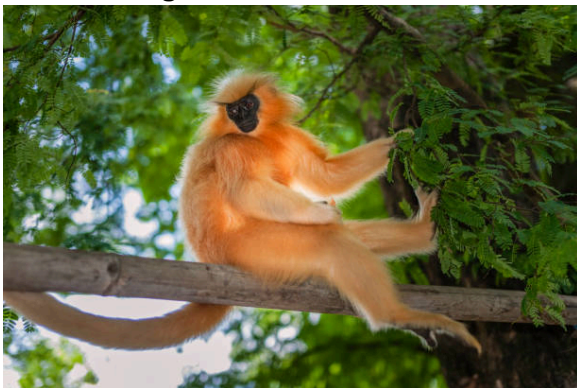
Key points:

- **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 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.
- 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**



**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.



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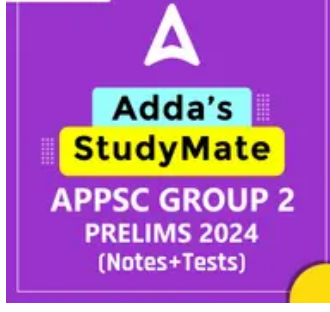
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