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International & National News

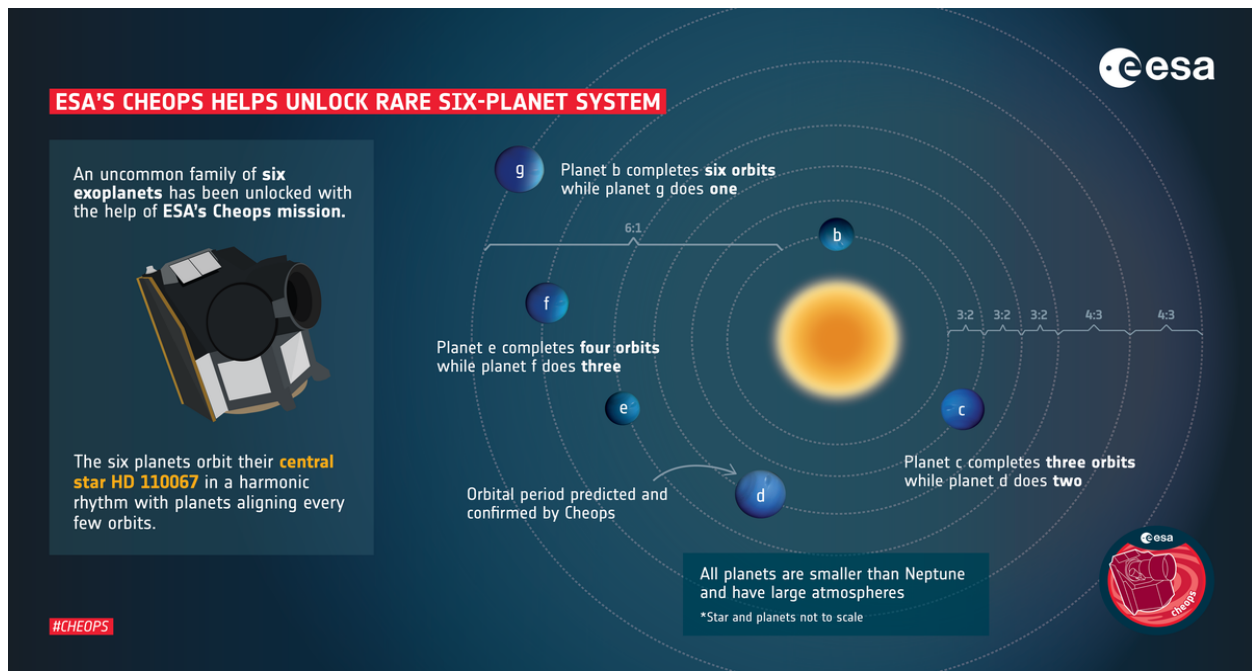
Six exoplanets found orbiting a nearby bright star

Context

- Six exoplanets orbiting around a nearby **bright star (HD 110067)** in the Coma Berenices constellation have been discovered.

Key points

- HD 110067 is the bright star in the **Coma Berenices constellation** (around 100 light-years away), which is visible from Earth's Northern Hemisphere
- The masses of the planets and estimated **densities are relatively low**
- The low densities could be explained by large, hydrogen-rich atmospheres.
- All six planets are **in resonant orbits**, in which the planets exert regular forces on each other as they orbit.
- This feature suggests that the system remains practically unchanged since its birth, at least four billion years ago.
- **Scientific Significance:** Enhances understanding of exoplanetary systems.



Visa-free entry to Indian citizens

Context

- **Malaysia** has become the latest country to extend the advantage of visa-free travel to Indian citizens.
- The facility will be extended to Indian travellers till December 31, 2024, and will be **valid for 30 days** from the date of entry.



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Key points

- The initiative is aimed at ensuring **hassle-free travel for Indians** who have emerged as one of the major tourist groups visiting Malaysia in the recent past.
- At present there are **around 26 countries** that extend visa-free entry to Indian citizens for various reasons.

Context

India reported a total of over **1.7 lakh suicides** in 2022, nearly **one-third of whom were daily wage earners, agricultural labourers, and farmers**, according to the **National Crime Record Bureau's (NCRB) Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India (ADSI) 2022 report**

Key points

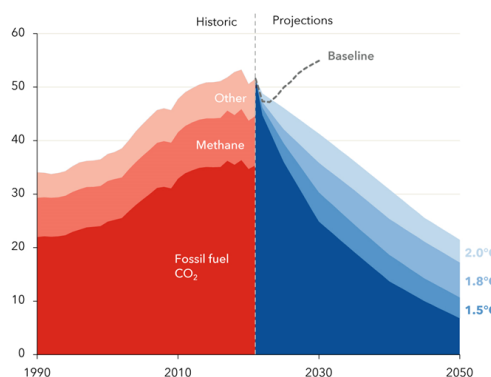
- The suicide data published in the **ADSI-2022 report** showed that the **maximum suicides** in the year were reported from **Maharashtra (22,746)**, Tamil Nadu (19,834), Madhya Pradesh (15,386), Karnataka (13,606), Kerala (10,162), and Telangana (9,980).
- Apart from daily wage earners, and agricultural workers and farmers, the ADSI data showed that **9.6% of the suicides in 2022** were of persons who were **self-employed or salaried professionals**.
- This was followed by unemployed persons, who comprise **9.2% of all suicides reported in India in 2022**.
- Among all suicides reported in the year, over **12,000 were of students**.

One-third of all 2022 suicides were of daily wage earners, farmers, says NCRB report

Methane

Methane matters

Methane is second only to CO₂ emissions from fossil fuels as a cause of global warming.
(global GHG emissions, GtCO₂e per year)



Source: IMF staff calculations.
Note: Excludes emissions from land use and changes to land use.

Context

At the ongoing COP-28 climate talks in the United Arab Emirates, a group of well-endowed philanthropic bodies, including the **Sequoia Climate Foundation and the Bezos Earth Fund**, announced that they would collectively invest **\$450 million** in solutions to tackle methane emissions.

About

- Methane is an **organic compound**.
- Its molecule consists of carbon and four hydrogen atoms (CH₄).
- It's in the news of late because of its character as a **potent climate pollutant**.
- Methane has a **greater global warming potential (GWP) than carbon dioxide**.
- However, while carbon dioxide lasts for several decades at a time in the atmosphere before breaking down, methane breaks down in a matter of years. That is, it's a **short-lived climate pollutant**.
- Its sources include cattle farming, landfills, wastewater treatment facilities, rice cultivation, and some industrial processes.



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Daily Current Affairs Encyclopedia

What is GWP?

- The GWP is a **measure of the warming caused by a substance relative to that due to the same mass of carbon dioxide**; the GWP100 measures this over a century at a time.
- If carbon dioxide has a GWP100 of 1, methane is 28, nitrous oxide is 265, and sulfur hexafluoride is 23,500.

RS passes the Post Office Bill

Context

The Rajya Sabha passed the Post Office Bill, which repeals and replaces the **Post Office Act of 1898**.

Key points

- The bill will ensure the **effective functioning of the postal department** as a messenger service and as a provider of banking facilities.
- **Section 9** of the Bill gives the power to intercept, open or detain any item or deliver item to customs authority by the post office officials.
- The provisions **empowering any officer to intercept, open or detain any postal item** in the interest of the security of the State is also a concern that giving such a free hand to officers will harm the right to privacy.

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