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## **1. MethaneSAT, a satellite which will 'name and shame' methane emitters**

### **Why in News?**

MethaneSAT — a satellite which will track and measure methane emissions at a global scale — was launched aboard a SpaceX Falcon9 rocket from California recently.

While the satellite is not the first spacecraft to identify and quantify methane emissions, it will provide more details and have a much wider field of view than any of its predecessors.

Here is all you need to know about MethaneSAT.

### **But first, why do we need to track and measure methane emissions?**

Methane is an invisible but strong greenhouse gas, and the second largest contributor to global warming after carbon dioxide, responsible for 30 per cent of global heating since the Industrial Revolution.

The gas also contributes to the formation of ground-level ozone — a colourless and highly irritating gas that forms just above the Earth's surface. According to a 2022 report, exposure to ground-level ozone could be contributing to one million premature deaths every year. Therefore, it is crucial to cut methane emissions.

### **What is MethaneSAT?**

The entity behind MethaneSAT is the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) — a US-based nonprofit environmental advocacy group. To develop the satellite, EDF partnered with Harvard University, the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory, and the New Zealand Space Agency. Essentially, MethaneSAT will orbit the Earth 15 times a day, monitoring the oil and gas sector. It will create a large amount of data, which will tell "how much methane is coming from where, who's responsible, and are those emissions going up or down over time", according to a statement by EDF.

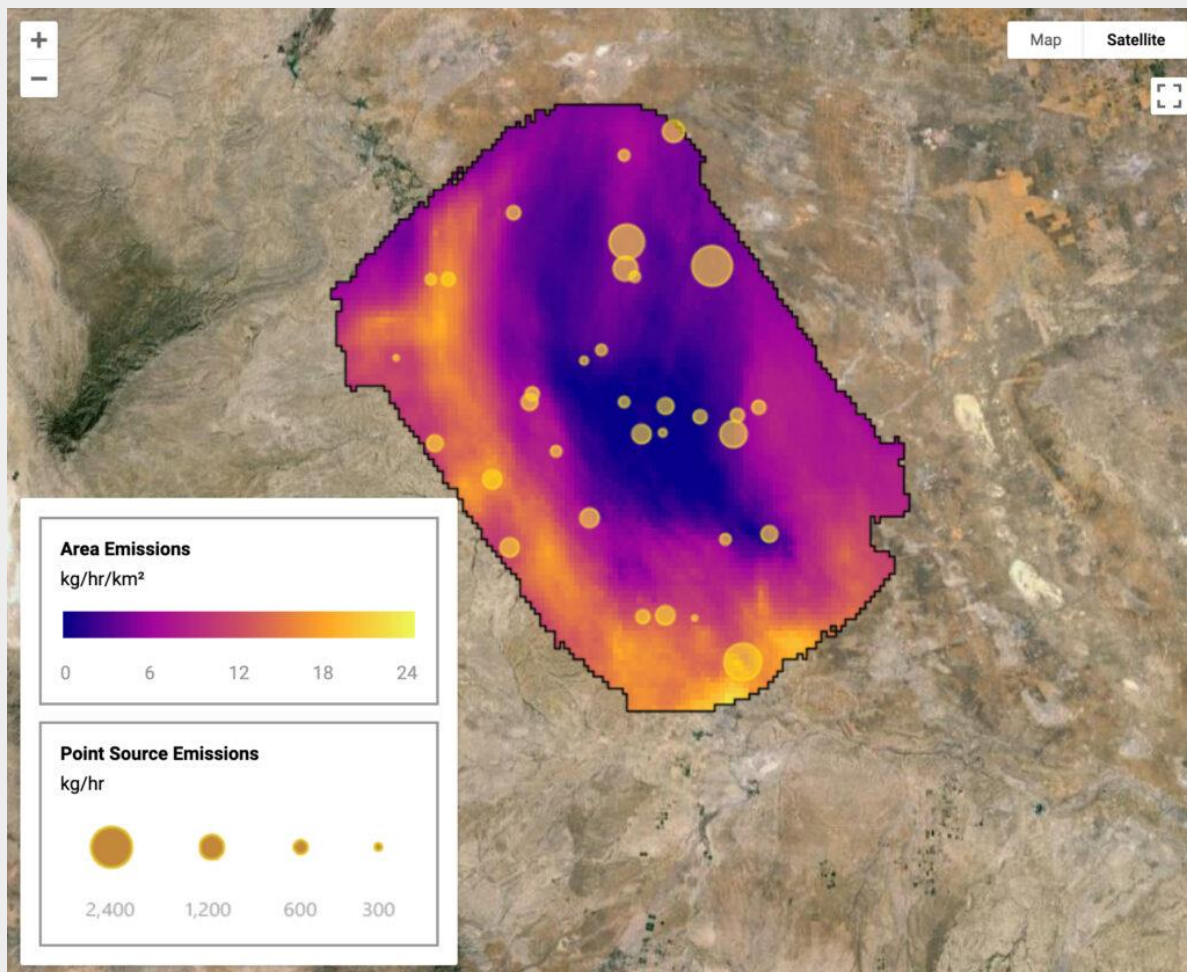
The data collected by MethaneSAT will be made public for free in near real-time. This will allow stakeholders and regulators to take action to reduce methane emissions.

The collected data will be analysed using cloud-computing and AI technology developed by Google — the company is a mission partner — and the data will be made public through Google's Earth Engine platform.

### **Why is it significant?**

The launch of MethaneSAT has come at a moment when the world is implementing more stringent methane management policies. For instance, more than 150 countries signed the Global Methane Pledge in 2021, to cut their collective methane emissions by at least 30 per

cent from 2020 levels by 2030. At last year's COP, more than 50 companies committed to virtually eliminating methane emissions and routine flaring. MethaneSAT will help them meet these targets.



The satellite will also usher in a new era of transparency. Its publicly available data, which can be accessed by anyone in the world, will keep track of methane commitments made by governments and corporations.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Source: The Indian Express

## 2. A new report card, where students, their friends, parents get a say: What has NCERT changed, why

### Why in news?

The traditional report cards students receive in schools are set to undergo a major change, with the National Council for Educational and Research Training (NCERT) introducing a new 'holistic progress card' (HPC), which will measure, apart from academic performance, a child's progress in interpersonal relationships, self-reflection, creativity, and emotional application in classrooms.

The HPCs have been devised by Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development (PARAKH), a standard-setting body under the NCERT, for the foundational stage (Classes 1 and 2), preparatory stage (Classes 3 to 5) and middle stage (Classes 6 to 8), as per suggestions by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Report cards for the secondary stage (beyond Class 9) are still being prepared.

### **What is a Holistic Progress Card?**

The Holistic Progress Card, or HPC, will no longer depend on marks or grades to evaluate a student's academic performance. Instead, it will rely on a 360-degree evaluation.

Under the HPC model, the students will be regularly assessed through class activities where they are not just passive learners but active agents. The activities will prompt students to apply diverse skills and competencies that will demonstrate whether they have been able to grasp concepts. The difficulty level they experience while performing a task will also be assessed.

## **WHAT IS HOLISTIC PROGRESS CARD**

- New form of student evaluation based on recommendations of NEP 2020

- Doesn't depend on marks or grades to evaluate a student's academic performance

- Instead, it gives greater role to parents in tracking a student's achievements in class



- Students' own perception of their performance and what they wish to achieve in school included for the first time

Teachers, thus, will be able to register the strengths of a student, such as their ability to "collaborate", "follow instructions", show "creativity" or "empathy", etc. Similarly, weaknesses like "lack of attention", "peer pressure", "lack of preparation" will help teachers identify areas where students need help.

A key feature of the HPC is that students will have a say too, evaluating their own as well as their classmates' performance. For instance, at the foundational stage, a student will circle appropriate responses like 'Yes', 'No' or 'Do not know', to descriptive statements like "I liked

doing this work" or "I found this work easy". Similarly, a student will assess her peers by answering whether "my friend liked doing this work" or "my friend found this work easy".

The HPC will also link home and school by making parents an integral part of a child's learning process. Parents' inputs on their child's ability to do homework and whether a child is able to follow lessons in the classroom will be included. Even the child's ability to balance screen time with extra curricular activities at home are now part of the progress report card.

#### **When will it be rolled out for all classes?**

After PARAKH prepared the HPCs for students till Class 8, it was sent to all states and Union Territories in September 2023, with the NCERT asking them to either adopt the HPC or make modifications that suit their regional requirements. Presently, 15 to 16 states and UTs are already using the new method at the foundational and preparatory stages.

#### **What are its benefits?**

The HPC goes beyond numerical grades, focusing on descriptive and analytical evaluations that encompass academic achievements as well as the development of critical skills in a child. It promotes a shift from summative to formative assessment, fostering competency-based evaluation and holistic growth. Additionally, it seeks to provide teachers and parents with insights to support each student in learning.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper I; Social Issues

Source: Indian Express

### **3. SC upholds Rajasthan rule barring those with more than 2 kids from police force**

#### **Why in News?**

The Supreme Court has affirmed the Rajasthan government's decision to bar candidates with more than two children from applying for a police constable post. The Supreme Court bench ruled that Rule 24(4) of the Rajasthan Police Subordinate Service Rules, 1989, which stipulates a maximum limit of two children per candidate, is non-discriminatory and constitutional.

#### **What do the 1989 Rules say?**

The Rajasthan Police Subordinate Service Rules, 1989, apply to the entire police establishment in the state of Rajasthan. Broadly, Rule 24 deals with "Disqualification for Appointment." Apart from those with over two children on or after June 1, 2002, it also disqualifies male candidates with more than one living wife, unless the government is satisfied there exist special grounds for it. Similarly, female candidates married to those who already have a living wife are disqualified unless the government is satisfied there are special grounds for it. Candidates accepting dowry at the time of marriage have also been disqualified.

While accepting or demanding a dowry is illegal, having more than a certain number of children has not been declared a crime in the statute books. However, both the Centre and the state governments have made multiple attempts to push the population towards the two-child policy.





### **What was the case?**

The court was acting on an ex-serviceman's plea. After retiring from defence services on January 31, 2017, he applied for the post of constable in the Rajasthan Police on May 25, 2018, but his candidature was rejected as he had more than two children after June 1, 2002.

Subsequently, he approached the Rajasthan HC, where a two-judge Bench on October 12, 2022, turned down his claim. This led the ex-serviceman to approach the top court.

### **What did the SC rule?**

In its February 20 order, the Supreme Court dismissed the ex-serviceman's challenge to the Rajasthan HC order.

Recalling that a "somewhat similar provision" was introduced as an eligibility condition to contest panchayat elections and was upheld by the SC in its 2003 ruling in "Javed vs. State of Haryana", the court upheld Rule 24 (2).

### **What is the 2003 Javed vs Haryana ruling the SC relied on?**

In Javed vs. the State of Haryana, a three-judge Bench of the top court upheld the Haryana Municipal (Second Amendment) Act, 1994, and consequently affirmed the two child-policy for holding the offices of sarpanch or up-sarpanch in the state.

A Bench led by then Justice RC Lahoti held that the classification which disqualifies candidates for having more than two living children was "non-discriminatory" and "intra-vires the Constitution" since the objective behind the provision was to promote family planning.

### **Are there such policies in other states?**

"Population control and family planning" is a subject on the concurrent list, which contains matters both the Centre and the states can legislate on.

Thus, several states have included a small family as a criterion to qualify for various positions. The Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Act 1994 disqualifies those with over two children from contesting elections as a panch or a member.

The Odisha Zilla Parishad Act, 1991, bars those with more than two children from contesting. The Gujarat Local Authorities Laws (Amendment) Act, 1962, disqualifies those with more than two children from contesting elections for bodies of local self-governance, like panchayats, municipalities, and municipal corporations.

While similar laws exist for local body elections in states like Maharashtra, Assam, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh, some of these states have gone a step further, bringing such two-child policies into the realm of public employment.

For instance, the Maharashtra Civil Services (Declaration of Small Family) Rules came into force in 2005 and mandated the filing of a "small family declaration" while applying for a government job.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: The Indian Express