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Galapagos Islands

- The Galapagos Islands are located in the Pacific Ocean around 1,000 km away from the South American continent.
- Ecuador made a part of the Galapagos a wildlife sanctuary in 1935, and the sanctuary became the Galapagos National Park in 1959.
- In 1978, the islands became UNESCO's first World Heritage Site.
- It contains aquatic species such as manta rays and sharks which have been endangered by commercial fishing.
- It also hosts a wide array of aquatic wildlife, including marine iguanas, fur seals, waved albatrosses and giant tortoises 'Galápagos'.
- Galapagos area is natural habitat of critically endangered scalloped hammerhead sharks.
- Recently, Ecuador has expressed an official discomfort over the sighting of Chinese fishing vessels near the Galapagos archipelago.
- Chinese fishing ships are frequent in Ecuador's waters during august month of the year as the cold Humboldt Current brings in nutrients that lead to a high congregation of hammerhead sharks.

Humboldt Current

- The Humboldt Current, also called the Peru Current, is a cold, low-salinity ocean current that flows north along the western coast of South America.
- The Humboldt Current is a highly productive ecosystem.
- It accounts for roughly 18-20% of the total worldwide marine fish catch.

BeiDou

- China's administration has officially commissioned BeiDou Navigation Satellite System constellation.
- It was initiated in 1994.
- It aims to integrate its application in different sectors, including fishery, agriculture, special care, mass-market applications, forestry and public security.
- It now offers services including accurate positioning, navigation and

timing as well as short message communication.

- BeiDou uses a network of satellites and can provide positional accuracies of under 10 meters, whereas GPS provides positioning accuracies of under 2.2 meters.
- Chinese military has employed Beidou-guided conventional strike weapons to counter a US intervention in a potential contingency, if access to GPS is denied.
- Navigation Systems of other countries are as follows

1. NAVIC – India
2. GPS - USA
3. GLONASS - Russia
4. GALILEO – EU

Dhole

- Dhole is also known as Asian wild dog, Asiatic wild dog, Indian wild dog, whistling dog, red dog, and mountain wolf.
- Besides the tiger, the dhole is the only large carnivore in India that is under the IUCN's 'endangered' category.
- It play an important role as apex predators in forest ecosystems.
- A research paper on conserving the endangered dhole was published in Mammal Review.

Highlights

1. Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh rank high in the conservation of the endangered dhole in India.
2. On the other hand, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Telangana and Goa will need to increase reduce the ease of granting forest clearances for infrastructure projects.
3. Improving habitat conditions and prey densities in the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Odisha would "strengthen the link" between dhole populations in the Western Ghats and central India.
4. India has the highest number of dholes in the world, but India don't have targeted management plans for scientific monitoring of the species.

Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Genetic Resources (MAPGRs)

- National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB) and ICAR-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR) have entered into a MoU to conserve

the Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Genetic Resources (MAPGRs).
- The conservation will be done in long-term storage module in the National Gene bank and/or at Regional Station for medium term storage module.
- The authorized institute NMPB and the ICAR-NBPGR on behalf of the ICAR would develop detailed modalities for seed storage of MAPGRs.

National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB)

- It was set up in 2000.
- It is working under Ministry of AYUSH.
- Mandate – To develop appropriate mechanism for coordination for overall growth of medicinal plants sector both at the Central /State and International level.

National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources

- It was established in 1977.
- It is under Department of Agricultural Research and Education.
- It plays a pivotal role in the improvement of various crop plants and diversification and development of agriculture through germplasm introduction.

Agatti Island

- It is in the UT of Lakshadweep.
- It is at a distance of 459 km (248 nautical miles) from Kochi and is located to the west of Kavaratti Island.
- The lagoon area of this island is habitat of coral growth and multicolored coral fishes in the lagoons.
- Fishing is the most important industry which is perhaps the only island besides Minicoy getting surplus fish.
- Next to fishing, coir (coconut fibre) and copra (dried meat or kernel of the coconut) are the main industries.
- Recently, the southern bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has granted an interim stay on felling of coconut trees on Agatti Island in Lakshadweep.
- The tree-felling is also violating the Union Territory's (UT) Integrated Island Management Plan (IIMP).
- IIMP was formulated on the basis of a report submitted by the Supreme Court-appointed Expert Committee, headed by Justice R.V. Raveendran.
- It includes holistic island development plans prepared by the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM) for implementation

by coastal States/ UTs.

Yellow Fever

- Yellow fever is caused by a virus that is spread by the Aedes aegypti mosquito.
- These mosquitoes thrive in and near human habitations where they breed in even the cleanest water.
- It is endemic in 34 countries in the sub-Saharan African region, despite the existence of a vaccine for the disease.
- There are three transmission ‘cycles’ for the disease in Africa - Urban, zoonotic and intermediate.
- The urban cycle mediated by Aedes aegypti mosquitoes is responsible for explosive outbreaks.
- According to new study the disease is projected to shift to Central and East Africa from West Africa by 2050.
- The study also highlighted that vaccination is the most important and effective measure against yellow fever.

Source: The Hindu, Indian Express, News on AIR

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