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KURMA

- Recently number of conservation agencies launched a mobile-based application called KURMA, aimed at turtle conservation.
- The application is developed by the *Indian Turtle Conservation Action Network (ITCAN)* in collaboration with *the Turtle Survival Alliance-India and Wildlife Conservation Society-India.*
- It provides users a database to identify a species and also provides the location of the nearest rescue center for turtles across the country.
- It has a built-in digital field guide *covering 29 species of freshwater turtles and tortoises of India.*
- It has *information on turtle identification, distribution, vernacular names, and threats.*
- If anyone reports a turtle from any part of the country using KURMA, he or she receives advice about the species and its conservation.

Wildlife Conservation Society India

- The Wildlife Conservation Society to conserve wildlife, backed by science.
- It works in partnership with the government and many dedicated local organizations.
- It deals with conservation challenges like human wildlife interactions, voluntary relocation of people from the forests, tourism in protected areas, and so on.

Difference between Tortoise and Turtles

Tortoises	Turtle
• Tortoises have more rounded and domed shells where turtles have thinner, more water-dynamic shells.	• Turtle shells are more streamlined to aid in swimming.
• Tortoises spend most of their time on land	• Turtles are adapted for life spent in water.

• Tortoises have club-like forelegs and 'elephantine' hind legs	• Turtles will have more flipper like legs, or webbed feet.
• Tortoise are often larger and heavier,	• Turtles are comparatively less heavy than tortoises.
• Their elephantine hind legs help them move around and carry the extra weight.	• Their webbed feet make it easier to cruise through the water

Investment Clearance Cell (ICC)

- Civil Aviation ministry has set up a single window clearance mechanism to expedite various investment proposals in the domestic aviation industry.
- *Investment Clearance Cell (ICC) will be setup for prompt assistance and clearance.*
- The setting up of the ICC was announced by finance ministry in the 2020-2021 union budget.
- The 10 member ICC will be *headed by Amber Dubey, Joint Secretary in the Aviation Ministry.*
- The ICC has been mandated to serve as a single window system for *attracting investment and its terms of reference* include accelerating investments, bringing projects to the Empowered Group of Secretaries (EGoS),

South Pole Wall

- Spectacular 3D maps of the universe have revealed inconceivable wall known as South Pole Wall.
- It stretches 1.4 billion light-years across that *contains hundreds of thousands of galaxies.*
- One light-year is roughly 6 trillion miles, or 9 trillion kilometers, so this "*biggest cosmic structure*" is mind-bendingly humongous.
- It has been hiding in plain sight, remaining undetected until now because large parts of it sit half a billion light-years away behind the bright Milky Way galaxy and Zone of Avoidance.
- *Zone of Avoidance is the disc of our home galaxy, a region thick and bright with dust and gas and stars.*
- The *South Pole Wall rivals in size the Sloan Great Wall*, the sixth largest cosmic structure discovered.
- Other, larger such walls is the *Hercules-Corona Borealis Great Wall*,

which spans 9.7 billion light-years.

Cosmic Web

- Astronomers have long noticed that galaxies are not scattered randomly throughout the universe but rather clump together in what's known as the cosmic web.
- Cosmic web is enormous strands of hydrogen gas in which galaxies are strung like pearls on a necklace that surround gigantic and largely empty voids.
- Mapping these intergalactic threads belongs to the field of cosmography, which is *"the cartography of the cosmos".*

Solar Orbiter Mission

- Solar Orbiter is a joint ESA & NASA mission to study the Sun.
- It was launched in February 2020
- Solar Orbiter will address big questions in Solar System science like how our star creates and controls the giant bubble of plasma that surrounds the whole Solar System and influences the planets within it.
- Recently scientists from NASA and ESA (European Space Agency) released first data captured solar orbiter.
- In mid-June, Solar Orbiter made its first close pass of the Sun, it has *captured the closest images ever taken of the Sun.*

Disaster Management Fund

- Recently Ministry of Home Affairs has applied an unused provision in the Disaster Management Act, 2005.
- It aims *to allow any person or institution to contribute to the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF)* for the purpose of disaster management.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) had invoked the Disaster Management Act, 2005 *for the first time in March this year in wake of COVID-19.*
- The pandemic was notified as a "disaster," paving the way for the States to utilize the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) for treatment of patients and other logistics such as quarantine centers, setting up laboratories among other things.
- The other notified disasters are cyclone, drought, earthquake, fire, flood, tsunami, hailstorm, landslide, avalanche, cloudburst, pest attack, frost and cold waves.
- As per Section 46 of the DM Act, the "NDRF supplements the State

Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) in case of a disaster of severe nature, provided adequate funds are not available in the SDRF.

- The *States have to submit utilization certificates, pending which no future allocation is made.*
- The SDRF is the primary fund available with State governments to *meet the expenses of relief operations of an immediate nature, for a range of specified disasters.*
- The Centre *contributes 75% of the SDRF allocation for general category States and Union Territories,*
- *90% for special category States* (northeast States, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu & Kashmir).

Source: The Hindu, Live Science

