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East Kolkata Wetlands

- East Kolkata wetlands is the biggest ecological asset of the city and a Ramsar Site.
- The east Kolkata wetlands are a fascinating natural resource to which tremendous value has been added by traditional knowledge.
- The wetlands have been historically created by a natural shift of the Bidyadhari, a tributary of the Ganga.
- The land on which Kolkata is built slopes to the east.
- So the British created canals to take out the city's waste water into in the wetlands.
- The traditional knowledge is used to treat this waste water.
- For the past century, the waste water has been first fed into settling ponds.
- There the biodegradation of organic components takes place.
- Then the nutrient-rich sewage is transferred into a fish pond to improve the organic quality of the water.
- Fish is grown in this pond and the used water is transferred to fields to irrigate crop.
- The government has assured to maintain the balance between ecology and development.
- But the reality is that the wetlands are slowly and steadily disappearing.
- Recently Kolkata Urban local bodies (ULB) were warned of punishment by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) for failing to comply with its order over waste disposal at East Kolkata Wetlands.
- They were accused of illegally dumping waste and contaminating water bodies in the area.

Ramsar Site

- A Ramsar Site is a wetland (shallow waters) which is designated to be of international importance under the Convention on Wetlands.
- It is an intergovernmental environmental treaty established nearly 50 years ago (1971) by UNESCO.
- It came into force in 1975 and takes its name from Ramsar, the Iranian

city where the convention was adopted.

Sarabhai Crater

- Recently, Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) named a crater as Sarabhai Crater on completion of one year of centenary celebrations.
- A crater is a bowl-shaped depression produced by the impact of a meteorite, volcanic activity, or an explosion.
- The Sarabhai Crater is around 250 to 300 kilometres east of the crater where the Apollo 17 and Luna 21 Missions had landed.
- It is eight kilometres in diameter and located in the Mare Serenitatis in the Northeast quadrant of the Moon.
- The Crater has a depth of around 1.7 Kms taken from its raised rim.
- Chandrayaan 2 orbiter's Terrain Mapping Camera–2 (TMC-2) instrument has captured a photograph of the Sarabhai Crater on the Moon.
- The crater's outer region is dominated by numerous smaller craters of various sizes and is distributed over the flat Mare plains,
- It has defining features like a raised rim, gradient inner walls and the small hummocky floor.

Mare Serenitatis

- It is one of the lunar mare regions on the Moon which were formed between 3.9 and 3.8 thousand million years ago with vast lava plains creating a flat surface
- It was during this period when the Moon was heavily bombarded by asteroids and the major impact basins on the Moon were formed.
- The Sarabhai crater is an 'excellent example' to study the impact process of the Mare Serenitatis.
- It will help the Space Scientists to understand further the process on the lunar region filled with lava.

Ninja UAVs

- Recently, Indian Railways started deploying "Ninja UAVs" for establishing a drone-based surveillance system.
- It will be deployed in railway areas like station premises, Railway track sections, yards, workshops, etc.
- They are capable of real-time tracking, video streaming and may be operated on Automatic Fail-Safe mode
- They can be used to launch surveillance on criminal and anti-social activities like gambling, throwing of garbage, hawking etc in Railway

premises.
- It can be used at disaster sites for helping in rescue, recovery and restoration and coordination in efforts of various agencies.
- A team of Railway Protection Force (RPF) has been trained for drone flying, surveillance and maintenance.

Micro plastics

- According to recent study Maldives beaches have the most Micro plastics in the world.
- These are small pieces of plastic, less than 5 mm in length, that occur in the environment as a consequence of plastic pollution.
- The debris can be of any size and shape, but those which are less than 5 mm in length (or about the size of a sesame seed) are called micro plastics.
- Micro plastics come from a variety of sources, including from larger plastic debris that degrades into smaller and smaller pieces.
- In addition, microbeads, a type of Micro plastic, are very tiny pieces of manufactured polyethylene plastic that are added as exfoliants to health and beauty products.
- These tiny particles easily pass through water filtration systems and end up in the ocean or other water bodies and cause serious environmental and food safety concerns.
- The problem with micro plastics is that, like plastic items of any size, they do not readily break down into harmless molecules.
- Plastics can take hundreds or thousands of years to decompose and in the meantime, wreak havoc on the environment.
- On beaches, micro plastics are visible as tiny multicolored plastic bits in sand.
- In the oceans, micro plastic pollution is often consumed by marine animals.

African Cheetahs

- Recently three African hunting cheetahs from South Africa has been introduced in Mysore zoo.
- A year after zoo lost its last surviving African hunting Cheetah Mysore zoo has received three big cats from Ann Van Dyke Cheetah Centre, South Africa.
- Mysuru is the second zoo to house hunting cheetah in India, Hyderabad zoo has a pair of big cats.

- In January 2020 SC has lifted its seven-year stay on a proposal to introduce African cheetahs from Namibia into the Indian habitat on an experimental basis.
- The plan was to revive the Indian cheetah population.
- In May 2012, the top court had stalled the plan to initiate the foreign cheetahs into the Palpur Kuno sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh fearing they may come into conflict with a parallel and a much-delayed project to reintroduce lions into the same sanctuary.

African Cheetahs

- Around 6,500-7,000 African cheetahs present in the wild.
- These are bigger in size as compared to Asiatic Cheetah.
- Were as Asiatic cheetahs has more fur, a smaller head and a longer neck and they have a more cat-like appearance.
- IUCN Status is Vulnerable for the animal.
- It is protected under CITES Appendix-I of the List.
- This List comprises of migratory species that have been assessed as being in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their range.

Digital Quality of Life (DQL) Index 2020

- DQL Index has been released by Surf Shark, an online privacy solutions provider.
- It is global research on the quality of digital wellbeing in 85 countries (81% of the global population).
- The study indexes the countries by looking at five fundamental pillars that define the digital quality of life namely, internet affordability, internet quality, electronic infrastructure, electronic security and electronic government.
- Underpinning these pillars are 12 indicators that are interrelated and work together to provide a measure of the overall digital quality of life.
- According to DQL India ranks among the lowest in the world in terms of Internet quality.
- India stands at the overall rank of 57 out of the 85 countries.
- However in internet affordability, India as secured 9th place and outperforms countries like the UK, the USA and China.

Source: Down to Earth, PIB, the Hindu, Times of India

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