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Bhuvan Panchayat

- Bhuvan Panchayat is a Web portal developed by ISRO.
- The Web Geo portal is developed for the benefit of Gram Panchayat members and other stakeholders, able to perform the following
    1. Database visualization,
    2. Data analytics,
    3. Generation of automatic reports,
    4. Model based products and services
- The targeted audience for this portal are Public, PRIs and different stakeholders belonging to the gram panchayats.
- ISRO National Remote Sensing Centre, which is the national repository of earth imageries, aids rural planners to plan and locate a healthcare unit, water harvesting, and rural communication network even from the panchayat office.

SISDP-Update Project

- Satellite imagery-based database of rural natural resources, called SISDP, was launched by ISRO.
- It will be the backbone of planning and decision-making in the country's 2.5 lakh village panchayats, according to its main stakeholders in the departments of Space and Panchayat Raj.
- The recent update to the project is short for Space-based Information Support for Decentralized Planning — uses high-resolution data from recent earth observation satellites and offers detailed information to panchayats about their key assets.

Wetlands

- Wetlands are areas where water is the primary factor controlling the environment and the associated plant and animal life.
- They occur where the water table is at or near the surface of the land, or where the land is covered by water.
- Wetlands provide a wide range of important resources and ecosystem services such as food, water, fiber, groundwater recharge, water

purification, flood moderation, erosion control and climate regulation.

- They are, in fact, are a major source of water and our main supply of freshwater comes from an array of wetlands which help soak rainfall and recharge groundwater.
- Five major wetland types are generally recognized:

    1. **Marine -** Coastal wetlands including coastal lagoons, rocky shores, and coral reefs.
    2. **Estuarine -** Including deltas, tidal marshes, and mangrove swamps.
    3. **Lacustrine -** Wetlands associated with lakes.
    4. **Riverine -** Wetlands along rivers and streams.
    5. **Palustrine -** Meaning “marshy” - marshes, swamps and bogs.
    6. **Human-made wetlands -** such as fish and shrimp ponds, farm ponds, irrigated agricultural land, saltpans, reservoirs, gravel pits, sewage farms and canals.

Ramsar Convention

- The Ramsar Convention was signed on February 2, 1971.
- It is one of the oldest inter-governmental accord signed by members countries to preserve the ecological character of their wetlands of international importance.
- The aim of the Ramsar list is to develop and maintain an international network of wetlands, which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes and benefits.
- Wetlands declared as Ramsar sites are protected under strict guidelines of the convention.
- The convention dose not directly bind on the nation, but countries formulate policies based on it.
- The Ramsar Convention has adopted a Ramsar Classification of Wetland Type which includes 42 types, grouped into three categories:

    1. Marine and Coastal Wetlands,
    2. Inland Wetlands,
    3. Human-made Wetlands

- Recently 10 more wetlands from India gets the Ramsar site tag.
- Maharashtra gets its first, Punjab adds 3 and UP 6 to its list.
- The total number of Ramsar sites in India are now 37 & the surface area covered by these sites is 1,067,939 hectares.

List of Ramsar Sites in India are as follows

S.No	State	Site Name
1	Andhra Pradesh	1. Kolleru Lake
2	Assam	2. Deepor Beel
3	Gujarat	3. Nalsarovar Sanctuary
4	Himachal	4. Pong Dam Lake 5. Renuka Wetland 6. Chandertal
5	J&K	7. Hokera Wetland 8. Surinsar-Mansar Lakes 9. Wular Lake
6	Kerala	10. Vembanad Kol Wetland 11. Sasthamkotta Lake 12. Asthamudi Wetland
7	Ladakh	13. Tsomoriri Lake
8	Madhya Pradesh	14. Bhoj Wetlands
9	Maharashtra	15. Nandur Madhameshwar (added in 2020)
10	Manipur	16. Loktak Lake
11	Orissa	17. Chilka Lake 18. Bhitarkanika Mangroves
12	Punjab	19. Harike Lake 20. Kanjli Lake 21. Ropar Lake 22. Keshopur-Miani, 23. Beas Conservation Reserve, 24. Nangal
13	Rajasthan	25. Keoladeo National Park 26. Sambhar Lake
14	Tamilnadu	27. Point Calimere
15	Tripura	28. Rudrasagar Lake
16	U.P	29. Upper Ganga River (Brijghat to Narora Stretch) 30. Nawabganj, 31. Parvati Agra, 32. Saman, 33. Samaspur, 34. Sandi 35. Sarsai Nawar
17	West Bengal	36. East Calcutta Wetlands 37. Sundarbans Wetland

National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)

- The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) was established in December 2005 following a recommendation of the Tiger Task Force.
- Tiger Task Force was constituted by the Prime Minister of India for reorganized management of Project Tiger and the Tiger Reserves in India.
- The Government of India in co-operation with WWF started 'Tiger Protection Program' (popularly known as Project Tiger) in 1973,.

African Cheetahs

- The cheetah is a large cat of the subfamily Felinae that occurs in North, Southern and East Africa, and a few localities in Iran.
- It inhabits a variety of mostly arid habitats like dry forests, scrub forests, and savannahs.
- The species is IUCN Red Listed as Vulnerable, as it suffered a substantial decline in its historic range in the 20th century due to habitat loss, poaching for the illegal pet trade, and conflict with humans.
- By 2016, the global cheetah population has been estimated at approximately 7,100 individuals in the wild.
- Several African countries have taken steps to improve cheetah conservation measures.
- African cheetahs are capable of accelerating up to 112 km/h (70 mph) on short distances of 100 m (330 ft), therefore they are the fastest land animal.
- Recently Supreme Court lifted its seven-year stay on a proposal to introduce African cheetahs from Namibia into the Indian habitat on an experimental basis.
- It is to revive the Indian cheetah population in the Palpur Kuno sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh.

Spitzer Mission

- The Spitzer Space Telescope is a space-borne observatory, one of the elements of NASA's Great Observatories that include the Hubble Space Telescope and the Chandra X-Ray.
- Using different infrared wavelengths, Spitzer was able to see and reveal features of the universe including objects that were too cold to emit visible light.
- Apart from enabling researchers to see distant cold objects, Spitzer could also see through large amounts of gas using infrared wavelengths to find objects that may otherwise have been invisible to human beings.
- These included exoplanets, brown dwarfs and cold matter found in the space between stars.
- NASA's Spitzer Mission, studied the universe in infrared light for more than 16 years.

- It will come to an end since it is low on fuel and has been drifting away from Earth for a few years now.
- Engineers will decommission the Spitzer aircraft, after which it will cease to conduct science operations.

Seafarers' Competency Certificates

- In Shipping Industry Seafarers' Competency Certificate stands for Certificate of Competency.
- Certificate of Competency is a license to sail and work on board a ship, in different capacities.
- It is issued under the provisions of Indian Merchant Shipping Act,1958 and International Convention on STCW for seafarers, 1978(as amended).
- Union government approved a model pact with foreign countries for recognition of seafarers' competency certificates.
- This will pave the way for mutual recognition of maritime education and training of seafarers by the countries involved.

Operation Vanilla

- Madagascar has been hit by a cyclone and there has been heavy flooding and landslips causing loss of lives and displacement of a number of people.
- Indian Navy launched 'Operation Vanilla' in support of the national disaster in flood-hit Madagascar and diverted a large amphibious ship to provide assistance.
- "INS Airavat, which was mission deployed has been diverted for the operation.
- This operation signifies that Indian Navy has been the first responder for Humanitarian and Disaster Relief (HADR) in the Indian Ocean Region.

Source: PIB, the Hindu

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