Year End Review: Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change- Part-2

To know about, Part-1, click here

1. Cheetah Reintroduction in India

- In India, the cheetah was found from Jaipur and Lucknow in the north to Mysore in the south, and from Kathiawar in the west to Deogarh in the east.
- The cheetah was officially declared extinct by the Indian government in **1952**.
- **Reasons for extinction**
  - Over-hunting
  - Decimation of its relatively narrow prey base species
  - Loss of its grassland-forest habitat
- A plan to reintroduce cheetahs in India was endorsed in 2009 but it was shot down by the Supreme Court in 2013.
- The idea was revived in 2017 by the Narendra Modi government, and the SC cleared the move in 2020 "on an experimental basis".
- **Kuno-Palpur National Park, Madhya Pradesh** was found to be ready to receive the cheetah immediately, as it had already been prepared for the translocation of Asiatic Lion.
- **Need for reintroduction**- The main objective is
  - To restore India's historic evolutionary balance
  - To develop a cheetah metapopulation that will help in the global conservation of the animal
- As it is a **flagship species**, the conservation of the cheetah will revive grassland-forests habitat, much like Project Tiger has done for forests.

2. Ramsar Sites

- Recently, India added 10 wetlands to the **List of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Sites)** within the framework of Ramsar Convention.
- This takes the total number of Ramsar Sites in India to **75**, the highest in Asia.
- The network of Indian Ramsar Sites currently covers approximately **8%** of the known wetland extent of the country.
- India ratified the Ramsar Convention in **1982.**
- **Keoladeo National Park** (in Rajasthan) and **Chilika lake** (in Odisha) were the first two sites to be placed on the Ramsar list by India.

List of 10 new wetlands of India added to the Ramsar Sites list	
Koonthankulam Bird Sanctuary	Tamil Nadu

Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve	
Vembannur Wetland Complex	
Vellode Bird Sanctuary	
Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary	
Udhayamarthandapuram Bird Sanctuary	
Nanda Lake	Goa
Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary	Karnataka
Sirpur Wetland	Madhya Pradesh
Satkosia Gorge	Odisha

- **Ramsar Convention** – It is one of the oldest inter-governmental accords that was signed in **1971**.
- **Aim** - To preserve the ecological character of their wetlands of international importance.
- **Three pillars of the Ramsar Convention**
  - Wise use of wetlands
  - International Cooperation
  - Wetlands of International Importance - Designation and Management
- The convention dose **not directly bind** on the nation, but countries formulate policies based on it.
- The Ramsar sites are grouped into three categories.
  1. Marine and Coastal Wetlands
  2. Inland Wetlands
  3. Human-made Wetlands

Government Initiatives for Wetland Conservation
• **National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems** - To assist state governments in preparing and implementing integrated management plans for Ramsar sites and other priority wetlands. • **Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017** – Accords legal protection to Ramsar sites. • **Sahbhagita Guidelines** - Outlines an "all of society" approach and governance framework for wetlands conservation in the country.

3. Ban on identified Single Use Plastics

- Since July 1, 2022, India has banned the manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale, and use of single-use plastics with low utility and high littering potential as per the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021.
- Thickness of plastic carry bags to be increased from 50 microns
  - to 75 microns from 30th September, 2021
  - to 120 microns from the 31st December, 2022
- **Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2022-** The guidelines provide a framework to
  - Strengthen the circular economy of plastic packaging waste,
  - Promote the development of new alternatives to plastic packaging
- To develop alternatives to single use plastics **"India Plastic Challenge – Hackathon**

2021” was organized by MoEFCC, for start-ups and students of colleges and universities.

- **Prakriti - Messenger of the Earth** was launched as a mascot of sustainability and protection of environment spread awareness amongst general public.
- The Guidelines for Extended Producer Responsibility on plastic packaging focuses on ‘mindful consumption’ through reuse and sustainable plastic packaging.

Bangladesh became the first country to ban thin plastic bags in 2002.

4. TX2 International Award

- Tigers are apex predator in the ecosystem.
- India harbours **more than 70%** of the global tiger population and has honour of the largest tiger range country in the world.
- There are **53 tiger reserves** in the country.
- **TX2 Global Commitment -** The TX2 goal is a global commitment to double the world's wild tigers by 2022.
- The goal has been set by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) through the Global Tiger Initiative, Global Tiger Forum and other platforms.
- Tiger Conservation awards includes
    - **TX2 Award** - For achieving remarkable and measurable increase in tiger population since 2010.
    - **Conservation Excellence Award** – For achieving excellence in two or more of these five themes in tiger conservation.
- The TX2 award for the year 2021 was bagged by the **Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve**, Tamil Nadu for its role in increasing the tiger population from 25 individuals (2011) to 80.

Reference

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