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PRAGATI

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, today chaired his twenty-eighth interaction through PRAGATI - the ICT-based, multi-modal platform for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation.

The Prime Minister reiterated that all systems should be made technology-driven, and human interface should be reduced to the minimum.

What is PRAGATI?

- PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation) is a multi-purpose and multi-modal platform existing in the Prime Minister's Office which apart from addressing common man's grievances, does monitoring and reviewing of important programmes and projects of the Government of India as well as projects flagged by State Governments.
- This was launched in March 2015 by Prime Ministry Shri. Narendra Modi.
- This platform is used exclusively by the Prime Minister to give suitable directions for redressal of grievances and also on compliance on the projects and programmes and to motivate all officers to work in coordinated manner for the outcome.

How does it work?

- The PRAGATI platform bundles three latest technologies:
- Digital data management, video-conferencing and geo-spatial technology.
- It brings on one stage the Secretaries of Government of India and the Chief Secretaries of the States.
- With this, the Prime Minister is able to discuss the issues with the concerned Central and State officials with full information and latest visuals of the ground level situation.
- It is also an innovative project in e-governance and good governance.

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Ocean Services, Technology, Observations, Resources Modelling and Science (O-SMART)

Why in News?

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for the umbrella scheme "Ocean Services, Technology, Observations, Resources Modelling and Science (O-SMART)", for implementation during the period from 2017-18 to 2019-20 at an overall cost of Rs.1623 crore.

The scheme encompasses a total of 16 sub-projects addressing ocean development activities such as Services, Technology, Resources, Observations and Science.

Impact:

- The services rendered under the O-SMART will provide economic benefits to a number of user communities in the coastal and ocean sectors, namely, fisheries, offshore industry, coastal states, Defence, Shipping, Ports etc.
- This will help in reducing the search time for fishermen resulting savings in the fuel cost.
- Implementation of O-SMART will help in addressing issues relating to Sustainable Development Goal-14, which aims to conserve use of oceans, marine resources for sustainable development.
- This scheme (O-SMART) also provide necessary scientific and technological background required for implementation of various aspects of Blue Economy.
- The State of Art Early Warning Systems established under the O-SMART Scheme will help in effectively dealing with ocean disasters like Tsunami, storm surges.
- The technologies being developed under this Scheme will help in harnessing the vast ocean resources of both living and non-living resources from the seas around India.

Details:

- Recognizing the importance of implementing schemes of highly multi-disciplinary in the ocean sector of national interests and international



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commitments, the ministry is proposing to continue the existing schemes in a focused way as a part of umbrella scheme of (O-SMART).

- As the resources on land are not adequate enough to meet the future demands, India is also embarking on blue economy for effective and efficient use of the vast ocean resources in a sustainable way.
- It would require a great deal of information on ocean science, development of technology and providing services.

Further, the coastal research and marine biodiversity activities are important to be continued also in the context of achieving United Nations Sustainable Development Goal-14 to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

Background:

In accordance of the Ocean Policy Statement enacted in November 1982, the Ministry has been implementing a number of multi-disciplinary projects in the field of ocean development primarily to

- (i) provide a suite of Ocean Information services,
- (ii) develop technology for sustainable harnessing the ocean resources,
- (iii) promote front-ranking research and
- (iv) conduct ocean scientific ocean surveys.

Asian Electoral Stakeholder Forum

Why in News?:

The *fourth edition of Asian electoral stakeholders forum (AESF-IV) was held in Sri Lanka* to discuss the state of elections and democracy in the region. It was jointly organised by Election Commission of Sri Lanka and Asian network for free elections (ANFREL).

Theme: 'Advancing Election Transparency and Integrity: Promoting and Defending Democracy Together'.

The key objectives of AESF-IV are:



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- To provide a venue for Election Management Bodies (EMBs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and other stakeholders to share and learn about the present electoral challenges as well as best practices in the region.
- To develop and endorse the “Colombo Strategy to Promote and Defend Electoral Democracy in Asia”.
- To institutionalize capacity building efforts in making elections more meaningful and credible through cooperation among stakeholders.
- To promote inclusiveness in elections by paying special attention to sectoral cooperation.

About AESF:

- The AESF is the largest gathering of its kind, and is sustained through a strong cooperation between the civil society and election commissions.
- The Forum will cover a wide array of crucial election issues like the current state of democracy in Asia, the common electoral challenges in the region, and various good practices employed to make elections better.
- It provides opportunity for Asian election commissions, election observers, non-government organizations (NGOs) and interstate bodies to gather and discuss state of elections and democracy in the region. It also provides platform for institutionalizing capacity building efforts to pave the way for more meaningful and credible election through cooperation among stakeholders.

Spitzer Space Telescope

Why in News?

NASA’s Spitzer Space Telescope, the youngest member of the “Great Observatory” programme, has completed 15 years in space.

Background

- Launched into solar orbit on August 25, 2003, Spitzer was initially scheduled for a minimum 2.5-year primary mission.



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- But the space telescope has lasted far beyond its expected lifetime, the US space agency said in a statement.
- In its 15 years of operations, Spitzer has opened our eyes to new ways of viewing the universe.

Contribution of Spitzer:

- Spitzer's discoveries extend from our own planetary backyard, to planets around other stars, to the far reaches of the universe.
- And by working in collaboration with NASA's other Great Observatories, Spitzer has helped scientists gain a more complete picture of many cosmic phenomena.
- It has illuminated some of the oldest galaxies in the universe, revealed a new ring around Saturn, and peered through shrouds of dust to study newborn stars and black holes.
- The space telescope also assisted in the discovery of planets beyond our solar system, including the detection of seven Earth-size planets orbiting the star TRAPPIST-1, among other accomplishments.

Orbital Path:

Spitzer orbits the Sun in an Earth-trailing orbit (meaning it literally trails behind Earth as the planet orbits the Sun) and has continued to fall farther and farther behind Earth during its lifetime.

Current Status:

- In 2016, Spitzer entered an extended mission dubbed "Spitzer Beyond".
- The spacecraft is currently scheduled to continue operations into November 2019, more than 10 years after entering its warm phase, the statement noted.

The Great Observatories are four big-ticket space telescopes — Spitzer, Hubble Space Telescope, the Compton Gamma Ray Observatory (CGRO), and the Chandra X-ray Observatory — designed to view the universe in different and complementary wavelengths of light.



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The SST

- Spitzer is the largest infrared telescope launched into space.
- At 2,090 lbs and worth \$800 million, the Spitzer satellite carries a 0.85-meter telescope and three other scientific instruments:
 - IRAC (Infrared Array Camera)
 - IRS (Infrared Spectrograph)
 - MIPS (Multiband Imaging Photometer for Spitzer)

