

Spitzer Space Telescope

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Why in news?

After 16 years of its exploration, Spitzer Telescope is going to be shut down by NASA.

What is this telescope?

- NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope was launched in 2003 to study the universe in the infrared.
- It is the last mission of the NASA Great Observatories program, which saw four specialized telescopes which are used for various electromagnetic radiations like visible light (Hubble, still operational), gamma-rays (Compton Gamma-Ray Observatory, no longer operational) and X-rays (the Chandra X-Ray Observatory, still operational.)
- Spitzer's highly sensitive instruments allow scientists to peer into cosmic regions that are hidden from optical telescopes, including dusty stellar nurseries, the centres of galaxies, and newly forming planetary systems.
- Spitzer's infrared eyes also allow astronomers see cooler objects in space, like failed stars (brown dwarfs), extrasolar planets, giant molecular clouds, and organic molecules that may hold the secret to life on other planets.