

24– 04 – 2022

News: National Smart Cities Mission

- Recently, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has announced that all 100 smart cities will have Integrated Command and Control Centers (ICCCs), under Smart Cities Mission (SCM).

Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs)

- Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs) **act as the “nerve center” for operations management in the city with day-to-day exception handling and disaster management.**
- ICCCs **provide smart solutions to the city's municipal corporation** and help manage safety and surveillance of the city.
- The **centres comprise video walls for real-time monitoring, emergency response system, operations planning to include critical ones and 24x7 manual maintenance.**
- The centres are being established to **enable smart living, smart environment, smart economy, smart governance, smart population and smart mobility.**

- The centre will also provide valuable insights by processing complex data sets at an aggregated level to derive intelligence for improved planning and policymaking.
- The ICCCs are now also linked to the CCTNS (Crime and Criminal Tracking Networks and Systems) network under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Aim of the ICCC is to aggregate information across multiple applications and sensors deployed across the city and provide actionable information with appropriate visualization for decision-makers.
- These operational ICCCs functioned as war-rooms for COVID management, and along with other smart infrastructure developed under the mission, helped cities in fighting the pandemic through information dissemination, improving communication, predictive analysis and supporting effective management.
- As on date, 69 smart cities have developed and operationalised their Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCCs) in the country.
- Recently, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has decided that the rest 31 cities will also have the Integrated Command and Control Centers (ICCC).

National Smart Cities Mission

- National Smart Cities Mission is an **urban renewal and retrofitting program** by the Government of India with the **mission to develop smart cities** across the country, making them **citizen friendly and sustainable**.
- It was **launched in 2015**.
- The **Union Ministry of Urban Development** is responsible for implementing the **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** in collaboration with the state governments of the respective cities. The mission initially included **100 cities**, with the deadline for completion of the projects set between 2019 and 2023.
- Key focus areas of the scheme include **construction of walkways, pedestrian crossings, cycling tracks, efficient waste-management systems, integrated traffic management and assessment**.
- The scheme also assesses various indices to track urban development such as the **Ease of Living Index, Municipal Performance Index, City GDP framework, Climate Smart Cities' assessment framework, etc.**

Smart City

- There is **no standard definition or template of a smart city**. In the context of our country, **the six fundamental principles on which the concept of Smart Cities is based are: Community at the Core (Considering communities at every level of**

planning and implementation), More from Less (Effective utilization of limited resources), Corporative and Competitive Federalism (Cities selected through healthy competition competing with each other along with supporting each other), Integration, Innovation and Sustainability (Innovative methods used), Technology as means, not the goal (careful selection of apt technology) and Convergence (Sectorial and Financial Convergence).

- Recently, the 10,000 acre Aurangabad Industrial City in Aurangabad, Maharashtra was inaugurated as the first Greenfield industrial smart city of India.

News: Vagsheer

- Recently, Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders launched the sixth Scorpene Submarine 'Vagsheer' of Project-75.

Kalvari Class Submarines (Project 75)

- 'Project-75' is a programme by the Indian Navy along with French Navy that entails building six Scorpene / Kalvari Class attack submarines.

- The first submarine 'INS Kalvari' under this project was commissioned on 2017.
- The second ship of the class 'INS Khanderi' was commissioned on 2019.
- The third ship of the class 'INS Karanj' was commissioned on 2021.
- The fourth ship of the class 'INS Vela' was commissioned to the Navy by 2021 November.
- The fifth ship of the class 'INS Vagir' was launched by 2020 November. It is expected to be commissioned to the Navy by 2022 last quarter.
- The sixth ship of the class 'INS Vagsheer' was launched by 2022 April. It is expected to be commissioned to the Navy by 2024 March.

Scorpene Class Submarines

- The submarines in the P75 Scorpene Class are powered by conventional diesel-electric propulsion system.
- Scorpene is one of the most sophisticated submarines, capable of undertaking multifarious missions including anti-surface ship warfare, anti-submarine warfare, intelligence gathering, mine laying, and area surveillance.
- However, few submarines are expected to be equipped with air-independent propulsion (AIP) technology, which is developed by DRDO to provide long-range and extended endurance capabilities under sea.

News: Earth Day

Earth Day

- Earth Day is celebrated every 22nd April by UN General Assembly and implemented by EARTHDAY.ORG, formerly known as Earth Day Network on behalf of UNGA.
- The earth is celebrated to demonstrate support for environmental protection.
- Theme for the year theme for the year 2021 is "Restore our Earth" theme for the year 2022 is "Invest in Our Planet".
- Earth Day was first observed in 1970 when 20 million took to the streets to protest environmental degradation on the call of US Senator Gaylord Nelson.
- The event was triggered by the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill, as well as other issues such as smog and polluted rivers.
- In 2009, the United Nations designated 22nd April as 'International Mother Earth Day'.
- News: Kuril Islands Dispute
- Recently, Japan in its Diplomatic Bluebook, called the Kuril islands as illegally occupied by Russia.

Diplomatic Bluebook

- The Diplomatic Bluebook of Japan is an annual report on Japan's foreign policy and international diplomacy published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan.
- It has been published every year since its first issue in September 1957.

Kuril Islands Dispute

- The Kuril Islands are stretched from the Japanese island of Hokkaido to the southern tip of Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula separating Okhotsk Sea from the North Pacific Ocean.
- It consists of 56 islands and minor rocks.
- The chain is part of the belt of geologic instability circling the Pacific and contains at least 100 volcanoes, of which 35 are still active, and many hot springs.
- Earthquakes and tidal waves are common phenomena over these islands.
- The islands are surrounded by rich fishing grounds and are thought to have offshore reserves of oil and gas.
- Rare rhenium deposits have been found on the Kudriavy volcano on Iturup.
- Nickel-based superalloys of rhenium are used in the combustion chambers, turbine blades, and exhaust nozzles of jet engines.

- The Kuril Islands dispute between Japan and Russia is over the sovereignty of the South Kuril Islands.
- The South Kuril Islands comprises Etorofu island, Kunashiri island, Shikotan island, and the Habomai island.
- These islands are claimed by Japan but occupied by Russia as the successor state of the Soviet Union.
- Japan also has a dispute with South Korea over the Northern territories.
- These islands are known as Southern Kurils by Russia whereas Japan calls them as Northern Territories and South Korea calls it as Dokdo Islands.
- The Kurils were originally inhabited by the Ainu people, and they were later settled by the Russians and Japanese, following several waves of exploration in the 17th and 18th centuries.
- The Ainu or the Aynu, also known as the Ezo in the historical Japanese texts, are an indigenous people of Japan and Russia.



News: Wildlife Protection (Amendment) Bill, 2021

- Recently, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment, Forests and Climate Change submitted its report on the proposed the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021.

Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021

- The Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Bill, 2021 seeks to implement provisions of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
- The Bill provides for the Union government to designate a management Authority, which grants export or import permits for trade of specimens.
- Every person engaging in trade of a scheduled specimen must report the details of the transaction to the Management Authority.
- As per CITES, the Management Authority may use an identification mark for a specimen.
- The Bill prohibits any person from modifying or removing the identification mark of the specimen.
- Additionally, every person possessing live specimens of scheduled animals must obtain a registration certificate from the Management Authority.

- The Bill also designates Union government to appoint a scientific Authority, which gives advice on aspects related to impact on the survival of the specimens being traded.

Rationalizing Schedules

- Currently, the original Act has six schedules for specially protected plants (one), specially protected animals (four), and vermin species (one).

The Bill reduces the total number of schedules to four by:

- Schedule I for species that will enjoy the highest level of protection,
- Schedule II for species that will be subject to a lesser degree of protection and
- Schedule III that covers plants.
- It removes the schedule for vermin species. Vermin refers to small animals that carry diseases and destroy food.
- It inserts a new schedule for specimens listed in the Appendices under CITES (scheduled specimens).

Invasive Alien Species

- The Bills empowers the central government to regulate or prohibit the import, trade, possession or proliferation of invasive alien species. Invasive alien species refers to plant or animal species which are not native to India and whose introduction may adversely impact wild life or its habitat.
- The Union government may authorize an officer to seize and dispose the invasive species.

Control of Sanctuaries

- The Act entrusts the Chief Wild Life Warden to control, manage and maintain all sanctuaries in a state.
- The Chief Wild Life Warden is appointed by the state government.
- The Bill specifies that the actions of the Chief Warden must be in accordance with the management plans for the sanctuary.
- For sanctuaries falling under special areas, the management plan must be prepared after due consultation with the Gram Sabha concerned.
- Special areas include a Scheduled Area or areas where the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 is applicable. Scheduled Areas are economically backward areas with a

predominantly tribal population, notified under the Fifth Schedule to the Constitution.

Conservation Reserves

- Under the original act, state governments may declare areas adjacent to national parks and sanctuaries as a conservation reserve, for protecting flora and fauna, and their habitat.
- The Bill empowers the Union government to also notify a conservation reserve.

Surrender of Captive Animals

- The Bill provides for any person to voluntarily surrender any captive animals or animal products to the Chief Wild Life Warden.
- No compensation will be paid to the person for surrendering such items.
- The surrendered items become property of the state government.

Violation and Penalty

- The Bill increases the fines prescribed for the violation of original act.