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National Commission for Minorities

- It is a forum for appeal, set up by the Government to safeguard the rights and interests of India's minority communities.
- It was set up under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992 as the first Statutory NCM was set up in 1993.
- Section 2 (c) of NCM Act, 1992 stipulates that 'Minority' for the purposes of the Act, means a community notified as such by the Central Government.
- NCM consists of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and five members and all of them shall be from amongst the minority communities.
- **Functions** of the Commission as laid down in Section 9(1) of the Act are related to the six notified minority communities i.e. Jain, Parsi, Sikh, Christian, Buddhist and Muslim.
- The functions of NCM broadly include
 1. Evaluate the progress of the development of minorities under the Union and States;
 2. Monitor the working of the safeguards provided in the Constitution and in laws enacted by Parliament and the State Legislatures;
 3. Make recommendations for effective implementation of safeguards for the protection of the interests of minorities by the Central Government or the State Governments;
 4. Look into complaints on deprivation of rights and safeguards of minorities and take up such matters with appropriate authorities;
 5. Cause studies to be undertaken into problems arising out of any discrimination against minorities and recommend measures for their removal;
 6. Conduct studies, research and analysis on the issues relating to socio-economic and educational development of minorities;
 7. Suggest appropriate measures in respect of any minority to be undertaken by the Central Government or the State Governments;
 8. Make periodical or special reports to the Central Government on any matter pertaining to minorities and in particular difficulties confronted by them; and
 9. Any other matter which may be referred to it by the Central Government.

India-Sweden Collaborative Industrial Research & Development Programme

- There is a call for Global Scientific Collaboration for bringing “Ease of Living” for common man.
- Recently, Prime Ministers of India and Sweden signed the India-Sweden Collaborative Industrial Research & Development Programme.
- The program aims to foster and support the development of collaborative R&D projects that bring together companies, and other collaborators from both countries for the joint development of innovative products or processes in the following technology sectors:
 1. Smart and sustainable cities and transport systems
 2. Clean technologies, IoT and digitalization
- This may include, but is not limited to:
 1. Transport & Mobility; Electrical vehicles, Autonomous vehicles, Traffic safety, Mobility as a service, Reduction in traffic congestion, Digital solutions, etc.
 2. Environmental technologies (Eco-system services, clean water and air, Waste management, Renewable energy, etc.)
 3. Circular and bio-based economy (Bio-based materials, Bio-fuels, Resource efficiency in consumption and production, Waste-to-wealth, etc.)
 4. Energy (Reduced energy consumption and CO₂ emissions, Alternative fuels, Renewable energy, Energy storage, etc.)
 5. City planning (ICT for urban technical supply, Geodata, tools for dialogue with citizens, etc.)

Eutelsat Quantum Satellite

- This is the world's first commercial fully reprogrammable satellite launched by the European Space Agency (ESA) from French Guiana.
- Eutelsat Quantum, developed under an ESA partnership project with satellite operator Eutelsat and prime manufacturer Airbus, is the world's first commercial fully flexible software-defined satellite.
- Eutelsat Quantum weighs 3.5 tonnes and consists of eight communication beams. Each of the beams can be modified to make changes to the coverage area and its telecommunications signal.
- **Benefits** - As the changes can be done in minutes, this satellite can be used in providing mobile coverage in moving objects successfully.
- Satellite can detect and characterise any rogue emission, enabling it to respond dynamically to accidental interference or intentional jamming.
- The Eutelsat Quantum will be covering the geographical area from West Africa to Asia in a 15 years period of time.

Reprogrammable Satellite

- These satellites allow the user to change the communications as per need, in real time.
- Even while orbiting in a fixed position at 35,000 kms above Earth, the satellite can be reprogrammed.
- Because it can be reprogrammed in orbit, it can respond to changing demands for data transmission and secure communications during its 15-year lifetime.

Kandla SEZ

- Situated on the Gulf of Kutch on the west coast of Gujarat, it is Asia's first Export Processing Zone (EPZ) and it is India's largest multi-product functional SEZ.
- It is the first Green SEZ to achieve the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) Green Cities Platinum Rating for Existing Cities.

Tigers in the Mountains

- Uttarakhand government highlighted the expanse of the state's tiger map from Corbett National Park to Kedarnath Wildlife Sanctuary.
- **Range** - Between the terai and the mountains, the tiger range is from an elevation of 1,181 ft (360 m) to 12,073 ft (3680 m) - a testimony of Uttarakhand's success in tiger conservation.
- Because, tiger's usual range is less than 6,000 ft. That makes its presence above 12,000 ft rare. But tigers have shown up before a strategically placed motion-triggered camera at higher altitudes.
- Since 2016, multiple records of tigers above 10,000 feet have been recorded in India.
- **Causes for concern** - Records of high-altitude tigers getting somewhat routine is alarming, as it signifies that warming induced by climate change is making the higher mountains tolerable for tigers.
- But the fact that tigers are found roaming the snow indicates that their upward movement is not deterred by the cold.
- Like Siberian tigers do not actually live in Siberia (but in temperate broadleaf-mixed-pine and pure deciduous forests), it is unlikely that tigers spotted in the snow have settled down there.
- Their survival still depends on the forests below. There can be no trade-off between traditional tiger habitat and these new heights of feline interest.

Source: PIB, The Indian Express, Deccan Herald