



Mines Surveillance System | Uttarakhand | 20 Jun 2024

Why in News?

Recently, The Uttarakhand government approved a Rs 93-crore proposal for the installation of **Mining Digital Transformation and Surveillance System (MDTSS)**, across the state to curb [illegal mining](#).

Key Points

- The systems will be installed at 40 check gates across **Dehradun, Haridwar, Nainital, and Udham Singh Nagar**.
- The new system equipped with bullet cameras, [Radio Frequency Identification \(RFID\) radars](#), and [Light Emitting Diodes \(LED\) floodlights](#) will not only **help monitor illegal mining activities** but also **boost the state government's revenue**.
- **A Mining State Control Centre (MSCC)** will be set up in Dehradun, along with mini command centres at district headquarters in Dehradun, Haridwar, Nainital, and Udham Singh Nagar.

Illegal Mining

- **About:**
 - Illegal mining is the extraction of minerals, ores, or other valuable resources from land or water bodies **without the necessary permits, licenses, or regulatory approvals** from government authorities.
 - It can also involve the violation of environmental, labor, and safety standards.
- **Issues:**
 - **Environmental Degradation:**
 - It can lead to deforestation, soil erosion, and water pollution and can result in the **destruction of habitats for wildlife**, which can have serious ecological consequences.
 - **Hazards:**
 - Illegal mining often involves the **use of hazardous chemicals such as [mercury](#) and [cyanide](#)**, which can pose serious **health risks to miners** and nearby communities.
 - **Loss of Revenue:**
 - It can lead to a **loss of revenue for governments** as miners may not pay appropriate taxes and royalties.
 - This can have significant economic impacts, particularly in countries where natural resources are a major source of revenue.
 - **Human Rights Violations:**
 - Illegal mining can also result in [human rights violations](#), including forced labor, child labor, and exploitation of vulnerable populations.

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) radars

- RFID is a **type of passive [wireless technology](#)** that allows for tracking or matching of an item or individual.
- **The system has two basic parts: Tags and Readers.**
 - The **reader gives off radio waves and gets signals back from the RFID tag**, while the **tag uses radio waves to communicate** its identity and other information.

- A tag can be read from up to several feet away and does not need to be within the direct line-of-sight of the reader to be tracked.
- The technology has been **approved since before the 1970s** but has become much more **prevalent in recent years** due to its usages in things like global supply chain management and pet microchipping.

Special Tourist Train | Uttarakhand | 20 Jun 2024

Why in News?

According to the sources, The [Uttarakhand Tourism Department](#) has partnered with Indian [Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation \(IRCTC\)](#) to operate a dedicated tourist **train** bound for **south India**.

Key Points

- The unique train approved by the Central government, called **Kedar Badri Kartik (Murugan) Koil Yathirai**, will commence its inaugural journey with **165 travelers from Madurai in Tamil Nadu to Rishikesh**.
- All 165 passengers boarding the train have been given **special tour packages for 12 days and nights**.
 - It includes visits to the newly found tourist place [Kartik Swami Temple](#) in [Rudraprayag](#), [Badrinath](#), and [Kedarnath](#).
 - The tour package includes complete lodging and boarding facilities for the tourists.
- The Uttarakhand Tourism aims at attracting more pilgrims from the south, especially Chennai, to associate them with Kartik Swami Temple, a newly developed important tourist destination in Rudraprayag district.
 - According to the belief **lord Kartikeya**, son of Shiva, came here with his parents and **handed out his bones to the father and flesh to the mother**.
 - It's said **these bones are present in the temple**. In north India, this is the **lone temple of lord Kartikeya**, known as the [deity Murugan](#) in South India.
- The Uttarakhand Tourism Department has collaborated with IRCTC to operate special trains from various regions of India, particularly Western and South India.
 - Two such special trains called **Manaskhand Express** were launched from Pune in March and April, 2024 to **attract tourists from Maharashtra and other states** in the west to the **Kumaon regions**.

Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC)

- It is a **Mini Ratna Category-I (conferred in 2008) Central Public Sector Enterprise** that is wholly-owned by and is under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Railways**.
- It is a registered enterprise and its corporate office is situated at New Delhi.
- IRCTC was incorporated in September **1999** as an extended arm of the Indian Railways to upgrade, professionalize and manage the **catering and hospitality services at stations**, on trains and other locations.
- The firm currently operates in 4 business segments namely, **Internet ticketing, Catering, Packaging Drinking Water, and Travel and Tourism**.
- It is the only entity that is authorized by Indian Railways to provide catering services to railways, online railway tickets and packaged drinking water at railway stations and trains in the country.
 - This gives it advantages in increasing market share in e-ticketing, packaged drinking water, and in e-catering.

