Interpretation Centre to Come Up in Odisha

The Odisha government has planned to set up a world-class interpretation centre at Dangamal near Bhitarkanika National Park to showcase its efforts in protecting crocodiles and preserving its rich mangrove diversity.

- The project has been approved under the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project.
- The state will develop the centre both as a tourist attraction and a place for students to learn about the environment.
- **Interpretation centres** are the places that provide interpretation of the place of interest (such as a country park, historical site, etc) through a variety of media, such as video displays and exhibitions of materials and artefacts related to the heritage significance of the sites.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project

- Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Project was launched by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change based on the recommendations of the expert committee report of the Prof M. S. Swaminathan. Society of Integrated Coastal Management (SICOM) was established under the Project.
- It is a World-Bank assisted project which aims to build national capacity for implementation of comprehensive coastal management approach in the country, and piloting the integrated coastal zone management approach in states of Gujarat, Orissa and West Bengal.
- There are four components to the project to be implemented by the SICOM-
    - **National ICZM capacity building**- the national component includes **mapping, delineation and demarcation of the hazard lines,** and delineation of coastal sediment cells all along the mainland coast of India.
        - The national component also includes the **establishment of a National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM)** at Chennai with its regional centres in each of the coastal States/Union territories to promote research and development in the area of coastal management including addressing issues of coastal communities.
    - **Piloting ICZM approaches in Gujarat**- includes the Gulf of Kachchh region
    - **Piloting ICZM approaches in Odisha**- includes the stretches of Paradip-Dhamra and Gopalpur-Chilika
    - **Piloting ICZM approaches in West Bengal**

Coastal Management in India

- In general, the east coast of India is considered to be more vulnerable than the west coast because of its low lying nature and hence the tendency of coastal flooding can rise if the sea level rises significantly.
- Multi-hazard approach that fully accounts for holistic coastal vulnerability arising from the Earthquake, Cyclones, Flood, Storm Surge and Tsunami etc. is considered for developing hazard-resistant design criteria for construction of on-shore infrastructure viz. houses, buildings, special economic zones (SEZs), ports, construction of bridges for evacuation of habitants in low lying zones like Sundarbans, Bay Islands etc., Industrial and Infrastructure Corridors.
- India's National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) outlines a strategy that aims to enable the country adapt to climate change and enhances the ecological sustainability of our development

path.

Bhitarkanika National Park

- Bhitarkanika National Park is one of Odisha's finest biodiversity hotspots and is famous for its green mangroves, migratory birds, turtles, estuarine crocodiles and countless creeks.
- The wetland is represented by 3 protected Areas, the Bhitarkanika National Park, the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary and the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary.
- Bhitarkanika is located in the estuary of Brahmani, Baitarani, Dhamra and Mahanadi river systems.
- It is said to house 70% of the country's estuarine or saltwater crocodiles, conservation of which was started way back in 1975.
- The mangrove forests had acted as a bio-shield in 1999 when coastal Odisha was battered by Super Cyclone. There was little impact of the cyclone in the mangrove-forested regions.
- Kalibhanjdia Island, a place in Bhitarkanika, possesses 70% of the total mangrove species of the world.