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Portal to Block and Trace Stolen Mobiles

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Why in News

Recently, the government has launched a portal that will enable blocking and tracing of stolen or lost mobile phones.

The initiative was launched in **Mumbai in September 2019** and has been rolled out for **Delhi-NCR now**. It will be extended to **other parts** of the country in **2020**.

Key Points

- The project is **backed by the Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) system**, which was undertaken by the telecom department for addressing security, theft and other concerns including reprogramming of mobile handsets.
- It will facilitate requests for **blocking** of stolen or lost mobile phones by customers, allowing services to other existing customers having mobile phones with the same **International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) number**, **sharing of traceability data** with police authorities, as well as **unblocking** of recovered phones.

International Mobile Equipment Identity

- Every phone or mobile broadband device has this **unique 15 digit code** that precisely identifies the device.
- Mobile phone manufacturers assign IMEI numbers to each device based on ranges allotted to them by the **Global System for Mobile Communications Association**.
- Dual-SIM phones will have two IMEI numbers.

- IMEI number is programmable and criminals can reprogramme the 15-digit unique number, which results in the cloning of IMEI. Consequently, there are multiple phone devices and hundreds of numbers with the same IMEI number.
- If such IMEI is blocked, a large number of mobile phones stand the risk of being blocked causing inconvenience to genuine customers.

The software that has been developed now allows an individual phone to be blocked even if it is on a cloned IMEI number.

- Moreover, because of the centralised nature of the register or database, all the operators can block the particular stolen or lost device across the country even though the phone is being serviced by one particular operator.

Source: TH