



Current Affairs of the Day

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Centre likely to postpone Census to 2022

The Centre is on track to push the 2021 Census to 2022 on account of the country's continuing preoccupation with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Highlights:

1. The Census exercise was to be conducted in two phases — House Listing and Housing Census from April to September 2020 and Population Enumeration from February 9 to February 28, 2021.
2. The first phase of the Census and the updating of the National Population Register (NPR) were initially to be rolled out in some States on April 1, 2020 but were postponed due to the pandemic.
3. The entire process had become controversial after Parliament approved the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in December 2019 that sought to give citizenship to persecuted minorities from Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan who entered India on or before December 31, 2014.
4. However, the rules required for implementing the CAA have not been framed so far — more than a year after the passage of this key legislation.
5. Diplomatic sources believe that strong opposition from Bangladesh is one of the factors that led to the CAA remaining on hold.
6. Tens of thousands of people had taken to the streets across the country protesting against the Centre's decision to update the NPR, which is considered the basis for the preparation of a National Register of Citizens (NRC) that could potentially exclude millions of people born in India.

A bullet through an island's heart

A plan for the sustainable and holistic development of the 680 sq km, fragile Little Andaman Island in the Andaman and Nicobar group has raised alarm among conservationists.

Highlights:

1. The 'Sustainable Development of Little Andaman Island - Vision Document', is the NITI Aayog's proposal to leverage the strategic location and natural features of the island.
2. This, the vision says, will be done by building a new greenfield coastal city there, that will be developed as a free trade zone and will compete with Singapore and Hong Kong.



‘Blocks’ to development:

1. There are certain factors, the vision document notes, that could prevent Little Andaman from becoming the new Singapore.
2. These include lack of good connectivity with Indian mainland and global cities, fragile biodiversity and natural ecosystems and certain Supreme Court notifications that pose an impediment to development.
3. Another key factor is the “presence of indigenous tribes and concerns for their welfare.
4. There are other concrete obstacles that the vision takes note of 95% of Little Andaman is covered in forest, a large part of it the pristine evergreen type.
5. Some 640 sq km of the island is Reserve Forest under the Indian Forest Act, and nearly 450 sq km is protected as the Onge Tribal Reserve, creating a unique and rare socio-ecological-historical complex of high importance.
6. The Report has no mention of the geological vulnerability of the place, which was amongst the worst-affected in the earthquake-tsunami combination in 2004. The waves hit Little Andaman so hard that it was physically displaced and it’s orientation changed.
7. It is today a secluded and difficult to reach part, one of the most important nesting sites of the globally endangered Giant Leatherback sea turtle.

The threat of Deforestation and Displacement

1. The vision needs 240 sq km (35%) of this land and the solutions suggested are simple and straightforward — de-reserve 32% of the reserved forest and de-notify 138 sq km or 31% of the tribal reserve.
2. And if the tribals become an impediment, the vision suggests that they “can be relocated to other parts of the island”.

Garbage-to-power plant in the veggie market gets PM’s pat

The Future: Biomethanation

1. The garbage-to-power plant in the Dr B.R. Ambedkar Agriculture Market in Bowenpally is using Vegetable and fruit waste to generate power to the extent of 500 units a day and 30 kilos of green manure at the plant.



2. This is being done by making use of 10 tonnes of leftover market waste. The power generated is being used to light up the market and also run the canteen in the premises enabling the market committee to make substantial savings in power bills.
3. Mr Modi said it was amazing that the market waste was being used profitably. This is the power of innovation, it was nice to learn about it. This is the journey of turning garbage into gold.
4. This can be scaled up for all the mandis in India significantly reducing pollution, improving infrastructure at mandis.

Modi praises solo effort at lake clean-up

The untiring efforts of a 69-year-old man, paralysed below his knees, towards cleaning up Vembanad Lake, have earned recognition from the highest office of the country.

Highlights:

1. In this month's edition of his radio programme, Mann Ki Baat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday hailed the commitment of N.S. Rajappan, a differently-abled man from Kaipuzha Muttu, near Kumarakom, Kottayam.
2. For several years, he has been earning a living by collecting plastic bottles floating on the lake and the streams linked to it.