



## Current Affairs of the Day

### GS Paper II

- 'FCRA amendments crippling our work'

### GS Paper III

- The green panel allows Great Nicobar plan to advance
- 'Excessive use of oxygen in U.P. hospitals'



## 'FCRA amendments crippling our work'

The amendments to the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) enacted last year that among others made it compulsory for NGOs to open a bank account in Delhi has crippled the work of many organisations who are unable to receive foreign funds for COVID relief.

### Highlights:

1. Registered NGOs can receive the foreign contribution for five purposes — social, educational, religious, economic and cultural. An FCRA registration is mandatory for NGOs to receive foreign funds. There are 22,591 FCRA registered NGOs.
2. An NGO has now moved the Delhi High Court seeking exemption from the Union Home Ministry's March 31 deadline to open an FCRA account with the SBI branch at Parliament Street here.
3. The NGOs continue to face problems even as the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) wrote to all States to involve NGOs, faith-based organisations, religious and social trusts at the local level to handle the "unprecedented COVID-19 crisis".

## The green panel allows Great Nicobar plan to advance

The Environment Appraisal Committee (EAC) of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) had flagged serious concerns about NITI Aayog's ambitious project for Great Nicobar Island. The committee has, however, removed the first hurdle faced by the project. It has "recommended" it "for grant of terms of reference (TOR)" for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) studies, which in the first instance will include baseline studies over three months.

### Highlights:

1. The proposal includes an international container transshipment terminal, a greenfield international airport, a power plant and a township complex spread over 166 sq. km. (mainly pristine coastal systems and tropical forests), and is estimated to cost ₹75,000 crores.



## Concerns on site

1. Seismic and tsunami hazards,
2. freshwater requirement
3. Number of trees to be felled could run into millions since 130 sq. km. of the project area has some of the finest tropical forests in India.
4. The impact on the Giant Leatherback turtle: Galathea Bay is an iconic nesting site in India of the enigmatic Giant Leatherback, the world's largest marine turtle. Project want to develop this area.
5. The committee noted that the site selection for the port had been done mainly on technical and financial criteria, ignoring the environmental aspects.
6. It has now asked for an independent study/ evaluation for the suitability of the proposed port site with a specific focus on Leatherback Turtle, Nicobar Magapod (sic) and Dugong.
7. Ecological surveys in the last few years have reported a number of new species, many restricted to just the Galathea region. These include the critically endangered Nicobar shrew, the Great Nicobar crane, the Nicobar frog, the Nicobar cat snake etc

## Way Forward:

1. They include the need for an independent assessment of terrestrial and marine biodiversity,
2. a study on the impact of dredging, reclamation and port operations, including oil spills,
3. the need for studies of alternative sites for the port with a focus on environmental and ecological impact, especially on turtles,
4. analysis of risk-handling capabilities, a seismic and tsunami hazard map, a disaster management plan,
5. details of labour, labour camps and their requirements, an assessment of the cumulative impact, and
6. a hydro-geological study to assess the impact on ground and surface water regimes.



## 'Excessive use of oxygen in U.P. hospitals'

Some hospitals in Uttar Pradesh are consuming oxygen at levels several times higher than the average, the State government said based on the preliminary report of an oxygen audit conducted by it.

### Highlights:

1. Taking note of it, Chief Minister directed the Health and Medical Education departments to coordinate with such hospitals and take action to 'balance' the consumption.
2. The government's observation comes as hospitals and legislators of the ruling BJP are reporting a shortage of medical oxygen in the State. In the past 24 hours, 950 metric tonnes of oxygen was supplied and distributed in the State, the government said.
3. Last month the government announced an audit of the sale, purchase and consumption of oxygen. This audit was to be conducted via premier institutes such as the IIT-BHU, IIT-Kanpur and IIM-Lucknow for proper monitoring of the medical oxygen.