

Editorial of the Day – 05.12.2025

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1. Freeze and thaw- On the winter session of Parliament(TH)

General Studies 2- Polity

Topic- Parliament and State Legislatures (Structure, functioning, conduct of business, powers & privileges and issues arising out of these.)

Parliament Winter Session- Issues and Agenda

Introduction

The Winter Session of Parliament, scheduled from December 1 to 19, 2025, has commenced amidst heightened friction between the Government and the Opposition. Spanning 15 sittings, this session is critical due to its heavy legislative agenda and the backdrop of sharp accusations regarding the erosion of parliamentary conventions and the shortening of schedules.

Overview of the Winter Session

Duration and Schedule- The session is relatively short, commencing on December 1 and concluding on December 19, comprising only 15 sittings.

Political Climate

Government Stance- The Prime Minister has cautioned against "political theatrics" while asserting the government's willingness to discuss any issue.

Opposition Grievances- The Opposition has criticized the truncated nature of the session. They have also alleged a break in convention regarding the exclusion of Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi from diplomatic engagements.

Role of the Chair- Expectations are placed on Vice-President C.P. Radhakrishnan (Rajya Sabha Chairman) to mediate and ease the strained relations between the treasury and opposition benches.

Legislative Agenda and Key Bills

The government has listed 14 Bills for consideration, several of which carry significant political and administrative implications-

Jan Vishwas (Amendment) Bill, 2025- Aims to further simplify criminal justice processes and decriminalize minor offenses to improve ease of doing business and living.

Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) Bill, 2025- Seeks to replace existing regulators like the UGC (University Grants Commission) and AICTE with a single overarching body. *Contentious Point-* States are likely to challenge this as it may infringe upon federal autonomy in education.

Health Security and National Security Cess Bill- Introduced by the Finance Minister, this bill aims to repackage/restructure the existing cess on tobacco products.

Other Significant Legislation- National Highways (Amendment) Bill, Atomic Energy Bill, Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill

Scheduled Debates and Electoral Issues

Electoral Reforms- A major focus will be on the Special Summary Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

Government View- Prioritizing the push for "One Nation, One Election" (synchronised national elections).

Opposition View- Raising concerns regarding alleged malpractices in the maintenance of electoral rolls and the general conduct of elections.

Historical Commemoration- A special discussion is scheduled to mark 150 years of the composition of Vande Mataram.

Opposition Demands and Concerns

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The Opposition is pushing for urgent debates on pressing national issues, specifically–

Internal Security– Discussions on the recent Delhi blasts.

Economic Distress– Rising prices (inflation) and agrarian/farmers' issues.

Environmental Crisis– Severe air pollution affecting major cities.

Institutional Integrity– Allegations regarding the misuse of federal investigation agencies against political opponents.

Conclusion

For the parliamentary system to function effectively, the focus must shift from political confrontation to substantive deliberation. Both sides need to engage constructively to address critical challenges like electoral integrity, national security, and economic stability. A productive session is essential to uphold the constitutional spirit of dialogue and ensure governance accountability.

Source– <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/freeze-and-thaw-on-the-winter-session-of-parliament/article70357837.ece>

2. Census is about who we are. It cannot ignore caste and migration (IE)

General Studies 1– Indian Society

Topic– Population and associated issues, Poverty and developmental issues, Urbanization, their problems and their remedies

Governance Implications of the Delay

Historic Gap– The Census 2021 was postponed citing the COVID-19 pandemic, despite elections continuing in several states. This has resulted in a 16–17-year void without updated population data, blinding policy formulation.

Resource Misallocation

Welfare Schemes– Critical programs (e.g., PDS, Food Security) and Finance Commission transfers continue to rely on outdated 2011 data, excluding millions of eligible beneficiaries.

Urban Planning– Cities are severely under-planned as they fail to account for the rapid population surge of the last decade.

Constitutional & Electoral Impact–

Delimitation Freeze– Naming the exercise "Census 2027" ensures compliance with the 84th

Constitutional Amendment, which froze delimitation until "the first Census taken after the year 2026" is published.

Women's Reservation– The implementation of the Women's Reservation Bill is constitutionally linked to delimitation. Since delimitation is a 4–6-year process, women's reservation in Parliament is unlikely to materialize before the mid-2030s.

Caste Enumeration– The Debate and Necessity

Historical Context– The last comprehensive caste enumeration occurred in 1931. Post-independence, Census data has been restricted to SCs and STs for constitutional reservation mandates. The SECC 2011 (Socio-Economic Caste Census) attempted full data collection but the data was never released due to quality concerns.

Necessity for Data–

Evidence-Based Policy– Essential for rationalizing OBC and SC/ST reservations and affirmative action policies.

Social Justice– Guides targeted resource allocation for education, employment, and poverty alleviation based on empirical backwardness rather than estimates.

Challenges & Risks

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Political Polarization- Fears that detailed caste data could deepen social fissures and lead to caste-based political mobilization.

Administrative Complexity- enumerating thousands of castes, sub-castes, and clan names requires scientific rigor to avoid errors.

Editorial Stance- Ignoring caste reality is not a neutral act. Census 2027 must enumerate caste with the same scientific rigor applied to variables like age, literacy, and occupation.

Migration- The Crisis of "Invisibility"

Current Issue- Millions of migrants are statistically counted in their native villages rather than the cities where they live and contribute economically.

Structural Implications

Urban Governance Deficit- Municipalities struggle to provide services (water, sanitation, housing) to populations that officially do not exist in their records.

Electoral Distortion- Migrants often cannot vote in their city of residence, rendering them politically invisible and reducing the incentive for urban leaders to address their needs.

Rural Misallocation- Villages receive funds for populations that have long migrated away.

Proposed Solutions

Residency-Based Counting- Register migrants at their place of residence if they have lived there for more than 6 months.

Inter-State Coordination- Update voter rolls and coordinate between source and destination states to ensure migrants are enfranchised where they live.

Digital Census- Opportunities vs. Risks

Advantages

Efficiency- Faster enumeration, reduced manual errors, and quicker publication of final results.

Tracking- Enables real-time monitoring and district-wise progress tracking.

Risks & Privacy Concerns

Surveillance- The collection of personal, biometric, and socio-economic data raises fears of state surveillance.

Data Linkage- Potential linking with Aadhaar, NPR (National Population Register), or voter rolls could compromise citizen privacy and lead to profiling.

Essential Safeguards-

Purpose Limitation- Census data must be strictly used for statistical purposes, never for law enforcement or citizenship verification (NRC).

Independent Audits- Robust privacy protocols and independent audits are required to validate data security and anonymization.

Transparency and Federal Trust

State Access- State governments must have real-time access to enumeration data to trust the process.

Public Monitoring- Public dashboards should be established to track district-wise progress and ensure accountability.

Data Release- To maintain credibility, all collected variables—including caste—must be published transparently after independent validation.

Conclusion

Census 2027 represents more than a mere statistical update; it is the bedrock of Indian governance and democracy. To be effective, it must evolve into a comprehensive exercise that accurately counts caste and migration, ensuring representation for the marginalized. By balancing technological efficiency with democratic accountability and strict privacy safeguards, the Census can

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empower evidence-based policymaking, ensure fair delimitation, and lay the groundwork for a more inclusive and just republic.

Source- <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/s-y-quraishi-writes-census-is-about-who-we-are-it-cannot-ignore-caste-and-migration-10402996/>

