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News Analysis (22 Nov, 2018)

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US Citizen killed by Tribals in Andaman

An American national who tried to contact protected Sentinelese tribes in Andamans north sentinel island was allegedly killed by them.

- In August 2018, in order to promote tourism in the remote Andaman and Nicobar islands, the government excluded 29 inhabited islands which also included North Sentinelese island from the restricted area permit (RAP) regime till December 31, 2022.
- The lifting of RAP means that foreigners are allowed to visit these islands without prior permission from the government is subject to certain conditions.
- Separate approvals of a competent authority would continue to be required for visiting reserved forests, wildlife sanctuaries, and tribal reserves.

Sentinelese

- The Sentinelese is a **pre-neolithic, negrito tribe who live in North Sentinel Island of the Andamans.**
- They are completely isolated with **no contact to the outside world.** The first time they were contacted by a team of Indian anthropologists in 1991.
- Due to no contact, the census of Sentinelese is taken through photographing the island individuals from distance. Census 2001 counted them at 39.
- Surveys of North Sentinel Island have not found any evidence of agriculture. Instead, the community seems to be hunter-gatherers, getting food through fishing, hunting, and collecting wild plants living on the island.
- Sentinelese are also listed under **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)** by the government of India.

- They are protected under the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956.**
 - It declares traditional areas occupied by the tribes as reserves, and prohibited entry of all except those with authorization.
 - Photographing or filming tribe members is also an offense.

Should Tribes be contacted?

The situation of the tribal or the Adivasi community in India has always been a challenge. To assimilate or let “them” be are ongoing debates.

- **Humans by Nature Social**

Anthropologists who studied “uncontacted tribes” have said that the tribes were interested in making contact with the outside world, but they were too afraid to do so. Hence, outside contact should be made but only when they have initiated it.

- **Destruction of Tribal Culture**

Contact to the outside world also risks the destruction of tribal culture, knowledge, and languages which can get overwhelmed by outside influence and eventually become extinct.

- **Health Risk**

- The “uncontacted people” are not vaccinated to various diseases, which outsiders may carry unknowingly. There is the health risk to these communities from outside contact.
- In America, the contact with outside diseases killed up to 100 million indigenous people following the European arrival.

Way Forward

- The academics have suggested that the best path forward is a policy of "**controlled contact**" with these communities instead of a policy of no contact. Carefully managed contact to avoid the spread of disease, but also enable the building of trust and providing aid and medical help if needed is the best way.
- Establishing contact with the outside world can also help governments to document their way of life, preserve their culture and their holistic development.

Uncontacted people: These are indigenous communities that have managed to exist almost entirely outside the purview of the nation-states in which they technically live.

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)

- PVTGs are centrally recognized special category from among the Scheduled Tribes and were constituted during the 4th five-year plan on the basis of the report of the Dhebar commission (1960-61).
- They are the most vulnerable section among tribals and generally inhabit the isolated, remote and difficult areas as small and scattered hamlets/ habitats.

Tribes of Andaman and Nicobar

The Andaman and Nicobar are home to **six tribes, Great Andamanese, Onge, Jarawa, Sentinelese, Nicobarese and Shompen.**

World's First Online Climate Summit

World leaders are set to participate in an innovative climate change summit that will take place entirely online which makes it a **carbon neutral summit.**

- By contrast, the **UN's COP21 climate talks in Paris in 2015** generated about **43,000 tons of carbon dioxide**, although much of this was later offset through carbon-credit schemes.
- The Virtual Climate Summit is the **brainchild of Marshall Islands President**, whose nation is facing the worst impacts of climate change.
- With participants including French President Emmanuel Macron and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres this will be the **first global political meeting to be held online.**
- It will consist of a rolling, **24-hour livestream** that will begin in the Marshalls' capital Majuro, then include addresses from leaders and panel discussions before delivering a declaration.

Objectives

- The virtual summit's main aim is to **encourage the international community** to restrict global warming to 1.5 C above pre-industrial levels.
- **Immediate objective is to cut carbon emissions** since flying is among the most harmful activities for the climate, accounting for about 2.5% of the world's carbon emissions. Also, the online platform will **not put additional pressure** on already resource constraint nation.
- A virtual summit also **flattens the playing field**, removes barriers like plane tickets and conference passes that inevitably leave out those most impacted by climate change. **It is more participative.**
- It is the **first time** that leaders from the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), have come together, and therefore it is also a chance for those on the front line of climate change to make their voices heard.

Climate Vulnerable Forum

- It is an international partnership of countries **highly vulnerable** to a warming planet. The forum serves as a **South-South cooperation** platform for participating governments to act together to deal with global climate change.
- The Forum first met in **Maldives in November 2009**.
- Other **initiatives taken by CVF** to deal with climate change:
 - **Vulnerable Twenty (V20)** Group of **Ministers of Finance** of the Climate Vulnerable Forum is a **dedicated cooperation initiative of economies** systemically vulnerable to climate change.
 - It was established on 08 October **2015 at Lima, Peru**.
 - It's primary objective is to promote the mobilisation of **climate finance**.
 - **Survive Thrive #1.5C** aims to promote actions to keep warming below 1.5°C and urges people to get involved and keep updated on limiting global warming to 1.5°C.

Earlier, a UN report warned that threshold could be reached as early as 2030 unless there was unprecedented global action to rein in emissions.

Important Facts for Prelims (22nd November 2018)

Ortolan Bunting in India

- In a rare sighting, 'Ortolan Bunting' bird has been photographed in Mangalore. It is said to be the **first photographic record** of an **Ortolan bunting in India**.
- The Ortolan or Ortolan Buntings (*Emberiza hortulana*) are **tiny finch-like songbirds** that are part of the bunting family.
- The bird **breeds from Mongolia to Europe** and **migrates to Africa via the Middle East**.
- The Ortolan Bunting migrates mostly through Middle East and while migrating, if an Ortolan loses its way, it may land anywhere.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) red list of threatened species has placed Ortolan bunting in the "**Least Concern**" category.
- However, it is considered a vulnerable species, especially in **France**, because the bird is trapped to be the centrepiece of a very **popular gourmet dish in French cuisine**.
- It is said to be the "**most sadistic dish**" ever as Ortolans used to be netted in great numbers, blinded using a pair of pincers, and kept in small dark boxes.
- This **inhumane trapping and slaughter was outlawed in 1999** but is still believed to be practised. In fact, until 2007 up to 50,000 of these birds were said to still have been killed due to lack of enforcement.

Devastation at Point Calimere

- After the **devastation caused by Cyclone Gaja**, Point Calimere resembles a forest in Vietnam that has been laid waste by Agent Orange.
- **Agent Orange** was a powerful herbicide (Operation Ranch Hand) used by U.S. military forces during the Vietnam War in the 1960s to eliminate forest cover and crops in Vietnam.
- In the **devastation caused by Cyclone Gaja**, thousands of birds that once made the Point Calimere sanctuary their home have died, trees have been uprooted or their branches broken or defoliated.
- The Point Calimere, the renowned wildlife and bird sanctuary on the seashore in Nagapattinam district (Tamil Nadu), is a **wetland of international importance** as it is one of the 26 designated **Ramsar** sites in India.
- The Point Calimere sanctuary consists of shallow waters, shores, long sand bars, intertidal flats and intertidal forests, **mangroves, dry evergreen forests**, saline lagoons, as well as human-made salt exploitation sites.
- **Great flamingo, Painted Stork**, Little Stint, Seagull and Brown-headed gull are normally found in the sanctuary.

Plane Flying With No Moving Parts

- Ever since the **Wright Brothers** flew the world's first plane more than a century ago, aircrafts have typically flown with the help of moving parts such as propellers, turbine blades and fans, and powered by the combustion of fossil fuels or battery packs.
- In a revolutionary change, **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)** engineers have built and flown a **prototype plane with no moving parts**.
- Instead of propellers or turbines, the aircraft is **powered by electrohydrodynamic thrust** or the so-called "**ionic wind**", a phenomenon first identified in the 1960s.
- When a current passes between two electrodes, it creates a wind in the air between. If enough voltage is applied, the resulting "ionic wind" can produce a thrust without the help of motors or fuel and power a small plane.
- Earlier, BAE Systems and the University of Manchester had successfully completed the first phase of flight trials with **MAGMA**, a small-scale unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), which does away with the need for mechanical moving parts used to move flaps to control the aircraft during flight.

Innovation Cell for Higher Education Institutions

- The **Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD)** has established an **innovation cell at the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)** with an aim to brainstorm new ideas about **promoting innovation in all higher education institutions** across India.

- Already, more than 1000 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have formed Institution's Innovation Councils (IICs) in their campuses to promote innovation through multitudinous modes leading to an innovation promotion eco-system in their campuses.
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