

Union Cabinet Approves Census of India 2027

The Union Cabinet approved the Census of India 2027, a ~₹11,718 crore, fully digital exercise with two phases: House Listing (Apr-Sep 2026) & Population Enumeration (Feb 2027), using mobile apps, a monitoring portal (CMMS), and self-enumeration, aiming for faster, cleaner data for policy making, crucially including caste data for the first time since 2011, while tackling the delay from the 2021 census.

Key Highlights:

- **Budget & Timeline:** Approved ₹11,718.24 crore budget; Phase 1 (Houselisting) Apr-Sep 2026, Phase 2 (Population) Feb 2027 (with exceptions for snowbound areas in Sep 2026).
- **Digital Transformation:** First-ever fully digital census using mobile apps (Android/iOS) and a real-time Census Management & Monitoring System (CMMS) portal.
- **Caste Data:** Will include caste enumeration as decided by the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA) on April 30, 2025.
- **Phased Approach:** Two phases: Houselisting & Housing Census, followed by Population Enumeration.
- **Self-Enumeration:** Public will have the option to fill forms themselves via mobile app.
- **Field Operations:** Involves around 30 lakh field functionaries (teachers, etc.) and extensive publicity.
- **Data Accessibility:** Aims for faster, machine-readable, user-friendly data dissemination (Census-as-a-Service - CaaS) for policy use.

Explanation of Exam Oriented Key Points

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Caste Census

The Indian government has approved the inclusion of a caste enumeration in the upcoming Census 2027, marking the first time such data (beyond Scheduled Castes and Tribes) will be collected in a national census since 1931. The last decennial census, due in 2021, was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Purpose and Need:

- **Evidence-Based Policymaking:** The primary objective is to obtain updated, accurate data to replace outdated estimates (like the 1931 census data used by the Mandal Commission) for effective social justice policies and welfare schemes.
- **Equitable Resource Distribution:** The data will help identify genuinely disadvantaged groups and ensure that reservation benefits, scholarships, and housing schemes reach the most deprived communities, and not just the dominant groups within backward classes.
- **Sub-categorization:** It enables the sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes (OBCs), as recommended by the Justice Rohini Commission, to ensure a more equitable share of benefits among various sub-groups.
- **Constitutional Mandate:** The census helps fulfill the constitutional mandate under Article 340 to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes.

Challenges and Concerns:

- **Political and Social Division:** Critics argue that enumerating castes could harden caste identities, fuel caste-based political mobilization (vote-bank politics), and deepen existing social divisions, potentially hindering national integration.
- **Data Accuracy and Logistics:** India has thousands of castes and sub-castes with regional variations in names and classifications. The 2011 Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) recorded an unmanageable 46 lakh (4.6 million) caste names due to an open-ended format and self-reporting issues, highlighting the complexity of accurate data collection.

- **Legal Hurdles and Demands:** New data could trigger increased demands for reservations by various groups, potentially challenging the Supreme Court's 50% reservation ceiling and leading to prolonged legal battles.

Latest Status

- In May 2025, the central government approved the inclusion of caste enumeration in the upcoming national census, which was delayed from 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This marks a significant policy shift.
- The upcoming census will be conducted digitally using a mobile application and will employ a standardized caste code directory (merging central and state lists) to improve data accuracy and verification.
- States like Bihar, Karnataka, and Telangana have already conducted their own caste surveys to gather data for state-specific policies.

The move is expected to have a profound impact on governance, social justice efforts, and political dynamics in India.



Practice Questions:

1. Regarding the phased implementation and timeline of the Census of India 2027, consider the following statements:

- I. The Houselisting and Housing Census phase is scheduled to be conducted from April to September 2026
- II. Mandatory updation of the National Population Register (NPR) alongside the census, with separate budgetary allocation

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) I only
- b) II only
- c) Both I and II
- d) Neither I nor II

Answer: a

Explanation: Statement I is Correct: Official government announcements confirm that the first phase of the Census, the Houselisting and Housing Census, will be conducted between April and September 2026 across most parts of the country. This phase involves collecting data on housing conditions, household amenities, and assets. **Statement II is Incorrect:** The National Population Register (NPR) is usually updated alongside the Houselisting phase of the Census. While the recent cabinet approval focused on the budget for the Census 2027 itself (₹11,718.24 crore), it has been reported that **there is no separate budget** earmarked specifically for the NPR as of recent announcements, meaning its costs are likely integrated or handled via a different mechanism. The updation is considered mandatory as per government intent. The government has decided to go ahead with the NPR updation along with the Houselisting phase.

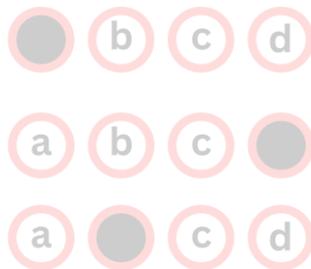
Answer: a

Explanation: Statement I is correct: The Union government officially designated the Kopra Reservoir as Chhattisgarh's first Ramsar site on December 12, 2025. **Statement II is Incorrect:** The Kopra Reservoir is a unique wetland system with both natural and man-made features, primarily a reservoir fed by rainwater and small seasonal streams, not a

wholly natural freshwater lake. While it is known for its rich aquatic systems and diverse avian species, the fact that it is not purely a natural lake makes this statement incorrect.

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Class Discussion Space

a	b	c	d
a	b	●	d
●	b	c	d
a	b	c	●
a	●	c	d

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