

## DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

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### Table of Content

NHRC Stressed on Implementation of Idate Commission Report

India and Cuba

Digital study material in Indian languages

Simultaneous Polls

Public stockholding for Food Grains

Mosquitofish

### NEWS IN SHORTS

Scrub Typhus

Madhika Language

Zambia

## NHRC STRESSED ON IMPLEMENTATION OF IDATE COMMISSION REPORT

### Context

- The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has stressed on the need to implement the **Idate Commission** report for welfare of NTs, SNTs, and DNTs.

### Nomadic, Semi Nomadic, and Denotified Tribes (NTs, SNTs, and DNTs)

- Nomadic and semi-nomadic communities** are defined as those who move from one place to another rather than living at one place all the time.
- Denotified tribes (DNTs)** are communities that were 'notified' as being 'born criminal' during the British regime under a series of laws starting with the **Criminal Tribes Act of 1871**.
- These are communities who are the most vulnerable and deprived.

### Challenges faced by NTs, SNTs, and DNTs

- Lack of Recognition and Documentation:** Denotified communities lacking citizenship documents, which makes their identity invisible and causes hindrances in obtaining government benefits, constitutional, and citizenship rights.
- Limited Political Representation:** Inadequate representation for these communities making it challenging for them to voice their concerns and advocate for their rights.
- Social Stigma and Discrimination:** NTs, SNTs, and DNTs often face discrimination and social stigma, both due to their historical denotified status and their distinct way of life.
- Economic Marginalization:** Lack of access to resources, markets, and employment opportunities results in economic marginalization of these communities.
- Educational Deprivation:** Educational opportunities for these tribes are limited, leading to high illiteracy rates.

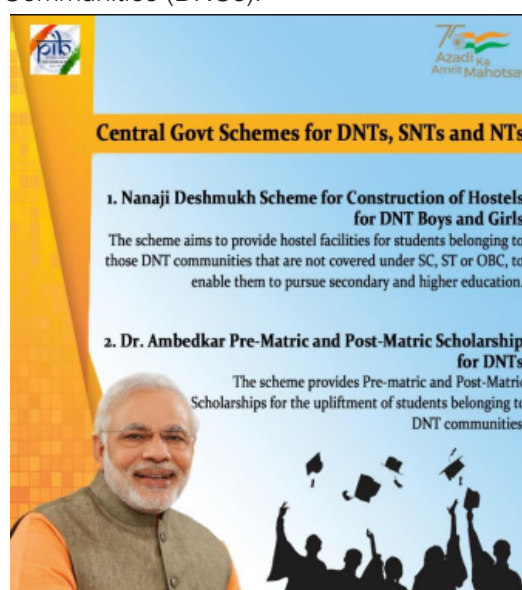
### Idate Commission

- In **2014**, a National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi Nomadic Tribes was constituted under the Chairmanship of Bhiku Ramji Idate for a period of three years.

- The commission has given the following recommendations;
  - There is a need to identify challenges faced by the NTs, SNTs, and DNTs owing to the stigma imposed by the enactment of the **Criminal Tribes Act, 1871** and later by the **Habitual Offenders Act, 1952** and figure out a way to modify discriminatory provisions of the latter.
  - It also suggested the non-inclusion of DNTs/NTs/SNTs under the SC/ST/OBC and formulation of specific policies for the former, among many others.
  - Setting up a permanent commission** for Nomadic, Semi Nomadic, and Denotified Tribes (NTs, SNTs, and DNTs) in India.
  - It stressed on taking measures to discern hurdles endured by the communities in availing basic facilities such as education, employment, health care, and legal documents, among others.

### Steps taken by government

- Based on the recommendations of the Idate Commission the Government of India constituted the **Development and Welfare Board for DNTs, SNTs & NTs (DWBDNCs)** in 2019.
- A committee has also been set up by the NITI Aayog to complete the process of identification of the De-Notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities (DNCs).



- Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs (SEED):** The scheme was launched in **2022** for the welfare of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi Nomadic Communities.

- ♦ **Budget:** The Ministry has been allocated **Rs. 200 crore** for this scheme to be spent over five financial years from **2021-22 to 2025-26**.
- ♦ **Components:** The four components of the Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs are;
  - To provide **good quality coaching** for DNT candidates to enable them to appear in competitive examinations;
  - To provide **Health Insurance** to them;
  - To facilitate **livelihood initiative** at community level; and
  - To provide financial assistance for **construction of houses** for members of these communities.

### Way Ahead

- **The colonial mindset** about the Denotified Tribes having “criminal tendencies” needs to change to ensure their human rights are not violated.
- **Proper documentation** of their identities needs to be speeded up so that they get the benefits of welfare schemes and the basic needs are provided to them.
- **The NHRC** has suggested that there is a need to ensure representation of Denotified tribes in parliament, government institutions and higher education to mitigate the challenges faced by them.

#### National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India

- The NHRC is a **statutory public body** constituted in **1993**.
- It is responsible for the protection and promotion of human rights, defined by the act as “Rights Relating to **Life, liberty, equality and dignity** of the individual guaranteed by the constitution or embodied in the international covenants and enforceable by courts in India.

Source: **TH**

## INDIA AND CUBA

### In News

- Memorandum of Understanding signed between **India and Cuba** on Cooperation in the field of **Sharing Successful Digital Solutions** Implemented at Population Scale for Digital Transformation

### India and Cuba Ties

- **Beginning :** India and Cuba enjoy excellent bilateral relations and have been traditionally warm and friendly.
  - ♦ India was among the first countries to extend recognition to the new Cuban government following the Cuban revolution in January 1959.
- **Trade:** Bilateral trade has been moderate. The main items of Indian export to Cuba are pharmaceutical products, organic chemicals, plastic products, medical equipment, engineering goods, textile products, metal products, mineral oil products and tools.
  - ♦ Imports from Cuba primarily comprise pharmaceutical and tobacco products.
- **Development Cooperation:** Development Assistance has been a priority area in bilateral relations.
  - ♦ India has granted disaster relief assistance to Cuba in the wake of devastation caused by various hurricanes over the years.
- **Energy:** Energy cooperation is one of the main aspects of India-Cuba relations. Cuba is a member country and the Vice-President of Latin America & the Caribbean region at International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- **Science & Technology, Biotechnology and Health:** India-Cuba relations in the field of S&T and health have been strengthened by ministerial level visits from both sides.
- **Cultural relations:** Indian culture and civilization is well appreciated in Cuba.
  - ♦ Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru and Tagore occupy a special place in Cuba
- **Indian Community:** Indian Community in Cuba is small. One of the components of the community is the people of Indian origin, descendants of Indians who came to Cuba in the early twentieth century from Jamaica and other part of the West Indies to work on sugarcane plantations.

#### Cuba: Key Facts

- **Capital:** Havana
- **Location:** Cuba is located where the northern Caribbean Sea, Gulf of Mexico, and the Atlantic Ocean meet.
  - ♦ **West:** Mexico
  - ♦ **North:** American state of Florida and the Bahamas.

- ♦ **Southeast:** Haiti/Dominican Republic
- ♦ **South:** Jamaica and the Cayman Islands



- **Political features:**
  - ♦ Cuba has had a socialist political system since 1959 based on the **"one state – one party" principle**.
  - ♦ Cuba is constitutionally defined as a **Marxist–Leninist socialist state** guided in part by the **political ideas of Karl Marx**.
- **Geographical features:**
  - ♦ **Island nation:**
    - Cuba is an archipelago of nearly **4,200 islands, cays and islets**.
    - It comprises of the **island of Cuba**, as well as **Isla de la Juventud** and several **minor archipelagos**.
    - **White sand beaches**, as well as mangroves and marshes, are found in the coastal area.
  - ♦ Cuba's terrain is mostly flat or rolling plains, with rugged hills and mountains in the southeast.
  - ♦ **Highest point:**
    - Highest point is **Pico Turquino** at 6,476 ft.
    - It is a part of the **Sierra Maestra Mountain range**, located in the southeast of the island.
  - ♦ **Freshwater:** Cuba has negligible inland water area.
    - The largest natural water mirror is **Laguna de Leche**.



Source: **PIB**

## DIGITAL STUDY MATERIAL IN INDIAN LANGUAGES

### Context:

- The Government of India has decided that **study material for all courses** under school and higher education will be made **available digitally** in Indian **languages included in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution**.

### Rationale behind the move

- The above directions emerge from the **recommendations of the National Education Policy** for **promoting multilingualism** in education at every level, so that students get the opportunity to study in their own language, and **can have better learning outcomes**.
- The decision was aimed at **providing students with the opportunity to study in their own language**.
- Studying in one's own language can **provide a student the natural space to think innovatively without any language barrier**.

### Challenges

- Developing and distributing study materials in other languages **can be expensive**.
- Ensuring the **quality and accuracy of content** in other languages can be challenging.
- **Limited access to technology** and digital resources in local languages can be a significant hurdle.
- **Difficulty in finding opportunities** in the education sector.

### Steps by Government

- **Anuvadini AI based App:** It translates **Engineering, Medical, Law, UG, PG and Skill books** with the help of Artificial Intelligence.
- **e-kumbh portal:** It hosts translated books that are available in various Indian languages.
- **DIKSHA:** In the school education ecosystem also study material is available in **multiple Indian languages** including over 30 languages on DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing).
- **Conducting exams in regional languages:** Competitive exams like JEE, NEET, CUET are being held in 13 Indian languages.

#### Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India

- It lists the **22 official languages** recognized by the Indian government.
- **Purpose:** It defines the **languages considered "official" for purposes of communication** with the government, use in official documents and publications, and promotion within the country.
- **Listed Languages:** Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Maithili, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu.
  - ♦ The Eighth Schedule **originally included 14 languages** when the Constitution was adopted in 1950.
  - ♦ Over the years, **eight more languages have been added** through various amendments, reflecting the linguistic diversity of the country.
- **Significance:** Including languages in the Eighth Schedule grants them certain **privileges**:
  - ♦ **Representation on the Official Languages Commission:** a body that advises the government on language development and policy.
  - ♦ **Use in official communications and publications:** of the central government, although Hindi and English remain the primary languages for such purposes.
  - ♦ **Literary Recognition:** The **National Sahitya Akademi automatically recognizes languages in the Eighth Schedule** as literary languages, making them eligible for various awards and grants for literary development.

- ♦ **Promotion and development:** Through initiatives like translation projects and cultural programs.

Source: **PIB**

## SIMULTANEOUS POLLS

### Context:

- The Union Law Ministry recently informed that the Panel on 'One Nation One Election' has received 81% of citizens' affirmation of the idea of simultaneous polls.

### Simultaneous Elections in India

- It refers to the idea of holding elections of Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly together, intending to reduce the frequency of elections and their associated costs.
  - ♦ It is on the line of 'One Nation One Election'
- The concept of 'One Nation, One Election' in India was followed for the first three Lok Sabha elections until 1967.
  - ♦ However, the cycle was disrupted due to political instability and the invocation of a National Emergency under Article 356 of the Constitution.

### Related Reports

- **The Annual Report of ECI (1983):** It recommended that a system should be evolved so that elections could be held simultaneously.
- **The 170th Report of the Law Commission (1999):** It stated that we must go back to the past when the elections to Lok Sabha and all the Vidhan Sabha were held simultaneously.
- **The 79th Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee (2015):** It favored the idea of simultaneous elections which was **reiterated by a NITI Aayog paper in 2017.**

### Implementation

- For simultaneous polls, there has to be a **political consensus** about the changes in the electoral system. Furthermore, amendments to the Constitution need to be formulated.
- A few of the important Articles that need to be amended for implementation of 'one nation one election' are:

- ♦ **Article 172 and Article 83** deal with the duration of the Houses of Parliament, and guarantee a five-year term to both the elected Lok Sabha and state assemblies, unless they are dissolved sooner.
- ♦ **Article 85** deals with the powers of the President to summon Parliamentary sessions, not exceeding a gap of more than six months.
  - The President also carries the power to adjourn either House of the Parliament and the dissolution of the Lok Sabha.
- ♦ **Article 356** comes into action in case of governance and constitutional failure in a state and deals with the President's Rule.
- Amendments to the **People's Representation Act (RPA), 1951**, and the Anti Defection Law must be made for organised conduct and stability in both Lok Sabha and state assemblies.

### Benefits of Simultaneous Elections

- **Cost Efficiency:** India has had either a State or a national election every year for the last 36 years.
  - ♦ This devours enormous financial resources and efforts, and the time of the government and political parties is the seeming concern.
  - ♦ The ECI would require an estimated Rs 10,000 crore every 15 years to procure new EVMs if simultaneous polls are held for Lok Sabha and State assemblies.
- **Smooth Implementation of Government Policies:** An election held constantly in some parts of the country with a '**model code of conduct**' distracts from governance and leads to policy paralysis.
- **Hampering essential services:** Regular elections hamper the delivery of essential services due to the engagement of public servants, including a large number of teachers, in the election process.
- **Pressure on National Parties:** The national parties are the ones that may feel the pressure of constant elections because municipal or State elections held in any part of the country involve their national leadership.
- **Engagement of security forces:** Deployment of security forces is normally throughout the elections and frequent elections take away a portion of such armed police force which could otherwise be better deployed for other internal security purposes.

### Associated Concerns

- **The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR):** It expressed that simultaneous elections would lead to 'artificially cutting short or extending the terms of elected assemblies which strikes at the root of Parliamentary democracy'.
  - ♦ It mentioned that there were '**serious apprehensions**' that the advocacy of simultaneous elections was a 'sleight of hand aimed at **changing the federal character** of the Constitution to a unitary structure'.
- **Hamper federalism:** It undermines the fundamental principle of federalism, which constitutes a basic component of our Constitutional structure.
- **Logistical Challenges:** All states and the central government face massive logistical challenges including coordinating the schedules, resources, etc.
- **Regional Variations:** Synchronizing elections may not account for these regional variations adequately.
- **Financial Implications:** Conducting elections is expensive and requires significant resources, like Manpower.
- **Issue of dissolution:** Prematurely dissolution on account of a vote of no-confidence.
  - ♦ Holding simultaneous elections for the whole country has many practical difficulties for the Election Commission.
  - ♦ It raises the question if the ruling party holds an absolute majority in all 29 states. Thus, whether new elections would be required.
- **Disadvantage for regional parties:** It will help the dominant national party or the incumbent at the Centre.

### Conclusion

- The idea of simultaneous elections could potentially bring about several benefits, but it also presents significant challenges that need to be addressed.
- It needs the careful consideration of these challenges, as well as extensive dialogue and consultation with various stakeholders.
- If simultaneous polls do reduce the duration of conducting polls, political parties will have ample time to address national issues and enhance governance.

Source: TH

## PUBLIC STOCKHOLDING FOR FOOD GRAINS

### Context

- India, in the 13th ministerial conference (MC13) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) will push for a solution of the issue on public stockholding for food grains.

### What is the issue of Public Stock Holding?

- Public stockholding programme** is a policy tool used by the government to meet food security and safeguard millions of its hunger-stricken population.
- As per WTO norms, agricultural subsidies should not exceed **10 percent** of the value of agricultural production for developing countries.
- However India and many other developing countries have been pushing for a permanent solution to the issue of providing subsidies for PSH, as it would allow them to expand schemes like MSP for foodgrains without worrying about breaching limits.

### Peace Clause

- WTO members at the **Bali ministerial meeting in 2013** put in place a mechanism called the **Peace Clause** to tackle the differences between nations on food subsidy.
- Under this clause, developing nations could not be dragged to arbitration if they did breach the prescribed limit of **10 per cent** on support to farmers.
- However, there was confusion over whether the temporary reprieve would continue after four years.

### Concerns of Western nations

- Large agriculture commodity exporters such as the US and Canada are critical of such a move as they believe that higher subsidies are distorting agriculture prices in the global market.
- It is also argued that public stockholding at administered prices gives countries such as India an unfair competitive advantage in trade, contradicting the WTO's principles of open and fair trade.

- The US stated that the decision in the Bali agreement had caused detrimental consequences and enabled India to become the biggest rice exporter.

### India's stand

- India, proposed that domestic support provided by a developing country for PSH programmes should be considered compliant with the **WTO's AoA (Agreement on Agriculture) rules** and not subject to reduction commitments.
- The external reference price** for calculating the subsidy element is pegged to **1986-88 prices**, which leads to inflated subsidy calculations because existing international prices are much higher.
- It also argued that it has enacted the **National Food Security Act, 2013**, to provide subsidized foodgrains to protect the interest of the farmers and poor population. Hence public procurement at subsidized rates and storage is required.

### World Trade Organization (WTO)

- WTO** is the international organization that deals with the rules of trade between countries.
- History:** WTO was founded in **1995**. It is the successor to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) established in the wake of the Second World War.
- Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland
- Member:** The WTO is run by its 164 members.
- Mandate:** Its aim is to promote free trade, which is done through trade agreements that are discussed and signed by the member states.
  - The WTO also provides a forum for countries to negotiate trade rules and settle economic disputes between them.

### WTO's Ministerial Conference

- The Ministerial Conference is the WTO's **top decision-making body**. It usually meets every two years.
- All members of the WTO are involved in the Ministerial Conference and they can take decisions on all matters covered under any multilateral trade agreements.

Source: BS

## MOSQUITOFISH

### Context:

- Recently, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, and Punjab have **released mosquitofish into local water bodies to address a mosquito menace.**

### About Mosquitofish

- The **biological control of mosquitoes**, introducing mosquitofish in freshwater ecosystems **to feed on mosquito larvae** became a prominent way to control mosquito menace.
- It is a **prominent alternative to chemical solutions** like pesticides that have **dire adverse effects on both human health and the ecosystem.**
- Among mosquito predators were **two species of mosquitofish, *Gambusia affinis* and *Gambusia holbrooki*.**
- In **1928, *Gambusia* was first introduced in India** during British rule. The idea of this scheme was that the **newly introduced species would prey on or compete with mosquito larvae**, reducing the latter's population.
- The strategy was well-intentioned but it backfired, **leading to severe ecological and environmental problems.**

### Major concerns

- The mosquitofish began to proliferate with their populations **eventually spreading far beyond their original habitats.**
  - These species of mosquitofish **originated in the U.S. but today have become global inhabitants.**
- They are **notorious for their detrimental ecological impact**, including,
  - displacing and preying on native fauna,
  - leading to the extinction of native fish, amphibians, and various freshwater communities.
- The authors who recently investigated the diversity of **haplotypes and genotypes within *Gambusia* species in India**, consider mosquitofish to be among the hundred **most detrimental invasive alien species.**
  - Haplotypes are DNA variants** likely to be inherited together; the **genotype is an organism's entire genetic material.**
- Aside from their resilience, these fish also **have voracious feeding habits and have demonstrated aggressive behaviour** in habitats to which they are introduced.

- Studies conducted in other countries have consistently revealed the **harmful consequences of the presence of *Gambusia*** in water bodies.
  - For example, in **Australia**, introduced mosquitofish have led to the **local extinction of the red-finned blue-eye** (*Scaturiginichthys vermeilipinnis*), an endemic fish species.
- In India, some reports have indicated a **decline in *Microhyla* tadpoles** following the introduction of *Gambusia*.

### Steps taken:

- The **World Health Organisation stopped recommending *Gambusia* as a mosquito control agent in 1982.**
- In 2018, the **National Biodiversity Authority** of the Government of India also **designated *G. affinis* and *G. holbrooki* as invasive alien species.**

### Way Ahead

- India's *Gambusia* story thus underscores the **importance of careful consideration, research, and monitoring when using biological control methods to manage pest species.**
- At this time, **more stringent enforcement measures are crucial** to prevent the species from continuing to be introduced to freshwater ecosystems.
- Alternatives to *Gambusia* should come from **local solutions. Native fish species that are capable of controlling mosquito larvae need to be introduced.**

Source: [TH](#)

## NEWS IN SHORT

### SCRUB TYPHUS

#### Context

- According to a study conducted in Tamil nadu, an increase in rainfall could lead to rise in monthly **scrub typhus cases.**

#### What is Scrub typhus?

- It is an infectious disease caused by bacteria called ***Orientia tsutsugamushi*** and transmitted through infected **mites (chiggers).**
- Symptoms:** It include fever, headache, body ache and sometimes a rash.

- ♦ In severe cases, the infection can lead to respiratory distress, brain and lung inflammation, kidney failure and multi-organ failure, ultimately resulting in death.
- **Causes:** Mites carrying the disease are generally found in the **bush, jungle and paddy areas**. Several factors, like exposure to farming, owning domestic animals, outdoor activities and sanitation, affect its prevalence.
- **Diagnosis:** Elisa test is used to diagnose the disease.

### Prevention and Treatment

- **No vaccine** is available to prevent scrub typhus. The risk of the infection can be reduced by avoiding contact with infected chiggers.
- If someone gets infected by scrub typhus then it should be treated with the **antibiotic doxycycline**.

### Role of climate in spread of Scrub Typhus

- ♦ The study found that **temperature, humidity and rainfall** had a major role in the incidence of scrub typhus.
- ♦ For every millimeter increase in rainfall could lead to a **0.5 to 0.7 percent** rise in monthly scrub typhus cases.
- ♦ Similarly monthly scrub typhus cases increased by **7.6 percent** for every per cent jump in mean relative humidity.

Source: **DTE**

## MADHIKA LANGUAGE

### Context:

- Madhika, a language spoken by the Chakaliya community, is fast becoming extinct with the younger generation opting for Malayalam.

### About:

#### About the Madhika Language:

- It is spoken by the **Chakaliya community** in Kookanam, Kerala.
- It sounds similar to Kannada, and it **encompasses Telugu, Tulu, Kannada, and Malayalam**.

#### Chakaliya Community:

- They were once nomadic and worshippers of Thiruvengattaramana and Mariamma.
- They migrated from the hilly regions of Karnataka to northern Malabar in Kerala.
- Initially recognized as a Scheduled Tribe, they were later included in the Scheduled Caste category in Kerala.

### Concerns:

- It is struggling for survival, and there are **only two speakers** who fear that the language will be lost to the world.
- ♦ The younger generation of the community shows little interest in preserving Madhika and prefers to use Malayalam, causing its decline.
- There is no script available to preserve the language.

### Efforts to Preserve:

- The government of India has initiated a Scheme known as the **'Scheme for Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages of India'**.
- It is hoped that such initiatives will help in the preservation of languages like Madhika and ensure that they do not fade into oblivion.

Source: **TH**

## ZAMBIA

### In News

- The Mines Ministry has proposed sending an Indian industry delegation to copper-rich Zambia to discuss potential copper exploration and mining projects in the southern African country.

### About Zambia

- It is a large, landlocked, resource-rich country with sparsely populated land in the centre of Southern Africa.



- **Lusaka** is the capital city of the Republic of Zambia.
- It shares its border with eight countries (**Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe**) that expands its regional market for goods and services.

- Zambia possesses four distinct geographical regions: the central plateau, the major valleys, the eastern highlands, and the western sandy plains.
- The most significant river in Zambia is the **Zambezi River**

**Do you know ?**

- Zambia has about **6 percent of the world's copper reserves** and was the **eighth-largest producer of copper** in 2022.

- ♦ Copper is widely used in sectors like construction, consumer durables, transportation, and industrial manufacturing.
- ♦ It is also used in clean energy technologies including solar panels, EVs, and energy efficient motors. China Nonferrous Mining Corporation (CNMC) is among the largest producers of copper in Zambia.

Source: *IE*

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