

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEBRUARY 16, 2022

SCHEMES

- On February 16, Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Dr Virendra Kumar - launched the “Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs (SEED)” for the welfare of De-notified, Nomadic and Semi Nomadic Communities.



- ✓ The scheme will involve an expenditure of Rs.200 crore to be spent over five years beginning 2021-22
- ✓ During the event, the minister launched a dedicated portal to ensure seamless registration to avail benefits under the scheme
- ✓ Further, the portal will also act as a repository of the data on these communities.
- ✓ The scheme is an umbrella initiative to ensure that benefits of its schemes in education, healthcare and housing sectors reach the beneficiaries across the country
- ✓ Under the scheme, the government seeks to provide free coaching to students for civil services examinations, competitive exams for admission to professional courses; health insurance; livelihood support and housing
- ✓ Approximately, 6,250 students will be provided free coaching under this component in five years at a total budget of Rs 50 crore

- ✓ Under the health insurance initiative, 4,44,500 families will be covered under the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana for a period of five years and at a cost of Rs 49 crore.
- ✓ Under the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), the government plans to create nearly 2,000 clusters to generate employment for these communities
- ✓ Further, the government has proposed to set aside a separate outlay for Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) to support specific importance in providing houses only for the communities.
- ✓ The denotified tribes, nomadic tribe and semi-nomadic tribes are among the most neglected, marginalised and economically deprived communities

STATES

- **The historic Medaram jathara, the largest tribal congregation in the country – begins in Telangana on February 16**



- ✓ Medaram Jathara is the second-largest fair of India, after the Kumbh Mela
- ✓ It is celebrated by the second-largest Tribal Community of Telangana - the Koya tribe
- ✓ This year it is being celebrated from 16th-19th February, 2022, signifying the age-old Adivasi customs, traditions and beliefs.
- ✓ The State government has allocated ₹75 crore for the jathara to ensure basic amenities to the devotees
- ✓ The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has sanctioned ₹2.26 crore for various activities pertaining to jathara related activities for this year
- ✓ At present, the Jathara festival is biennially celebrated and organized by the Koyas in collaboration with the Tribal Welfare Department, Government of Telangana
- ✓ Considering its auspicious significance, the Jathara was declared a State Festival in 1996.
- ✓ The Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, for the Jatharas held in the years 2018 and 2020, released 2.00 crore in each year
- ✓ In addition to this, under Article 271(1), the Ministry sanctioned a total of Rs. 7.00 crore in 2019-20 and Rs. 5.00 crore in 2021-22 for the construction of infrastructure

- ✓ Medaram Jathara, also known as Sammakka Saralamma jathara, is conducted in honour of the mother-daughter duo Sammakka and Saralamma, who fought the reigning rulers against an unjust law during the Kakatiya reign in the 12th Century
- ✓ It is celebrated once in two years in the month of “Magha” (February) on the full moon day
- ✓ The festival involves tribals mainly from the villages of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Odisha and other parts of Gondwana region
- ✓ The Jathara begins at Medaram in Tadvai Mandal in Warangal district.
- ✓ Medaram is a remote place in the Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary, a part of Dandakaranya, the largest surviving forest belt in the region
- ✓ The Village is located on the banks of Jampanna vagu, a tributary of the Godavari, in Telangana’s Mulugu district
- ✓ Koya tribe is the largest adivasi tribe of Telangana and listed as Scheduled Tribe in Telangana.

NATIONAL

- **On February 15, a special CBI court in Ranchi - held RJD chief and former Bihar Chief Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav guilty of fraudulent withdrawal of ₹139.5 crore from Doranda Treasury**



- ✓ This is the fifth and final case against the former Union railways minister, who also headed the state finance portfolio then in 1995-96, in the ₹950-crore fodder scam
- ✓ The Animal Husbandry Department had allegedly issued fake bills for large disbursements from government treasuries in various districts of undivided Bihar
- ✓ The judge convicted a total of 75 people while acquitting 24 accused persons
- ✓ The hearing for the pronouncement of quantum of punishment for Yadav has been scheduled for February 21
- ✓ The matter was first unearthed by then Chaibasa deputy commissioner Amit Khare at the Animal Husbandry Department in January 1996.
- ✓ In June 1997, Yadav was named an accused in the case for the first time in the CBI’s charge sheet
- ✓ The special CBI court began a trial in the fodder scam case in February 2002.

- ✓ The RJD supremo, who has been sentenced to 14 years in prison and slapped with a total fine of ₹60 lakh, has secured bail in the four cases related to Dumka, Deoghar and Chaibasa treasuries
- ✓ Lalu Yadav has already been found guilty in four other cases related to the fodder scam - the fraudulent withdrawals of ₹ 37.7 crore and ₹ 33.13 crore from the Chaibasa treasury, ₹ 89.27 crore from the Deoghar treasury, and ₹ 3.76 crore from the Dumka treasury.
- ✓ For his conviction in the Dumka case he was also handed a fine of ₹ 60 lakh
- ✓ One more case — pertaining to the illegal withdrawal of money from the Bank-Bhagalpur treasury — is pending before the CBI court in Patna, Bihar
- ✓ The fodder case involves funds taken by Bihar's Animal Husbandry Department between 1991 and 1996, when Yadav was Chief Minister

HIGH COURT VERDICT

- **On February 14, Karnataka High Court - struck down the amendments to the Karnataka Police Amendment Act in 2021 prohibiting certain online gaming activities**
 - ✓ The division bench was headed by Chief Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi and Justice Krishna S. Dixit.
 - ✓ The Act provides maximum imprisonment of three years and penalty up to Rs. 1 lakh for violation of the provisions
 - ✓ On September 21, 2021, the state legislature passed a legislation to amend the Karnataka Police Act to impose a complete ban on gambling in the state
 - ✓ The state government by amending the Karnataka Police Act, 1963, had prohibited and criminalised playing of games of skill including online games by risking money or otherwise.
 - ✓ Similar laws banning online gaming in Kerala and Tamil Nadu have been struck down by the Kerala and Madras High Courts respectively
 - ✓ The Kerala High Court had struck down a State law amending the Kerala Gaming Act, 1960 banning online rummy.
 - ✓ On August 3, 2021, the Madras High Court had struck down a law passed by the Tamil Nadu assembly, the Tamil Nadu Gambling and Police Laws (Amendment) Act, 2021, banning all kinds of online games, including skill-based games

INTERNATIONAL

- **Lassa fever - has reportedly claimed three lives in UK, where the cases of new viral infection were detected last week**
 - ✓ The three cases were within the same family in the east of England and were linked to recent travel to West Africa.
 - ✓ Lassa fever is an acute viral haemorrhagic illness caused by Lassa virus
 - ✓ It is a zoonotic disease, meaning that humans become infected from contact with infected animals

- ✓ The host of Lassa virus is a rodent of the genus Mastomys, commonly known as the “multimammate” rat.
- ✓ People usually become infected with Lassa virus through exposure to food or household items contaminated with urine or faeces of infected rats
- ✓ The virus can also be spread through infected bodily fluids.
- ✓ The incubation period of Lassa fever ranges from 6–21 days
- ✓ The antiviral drug ribavirin is considered an effective treatment for Lassa fever if given early on in the course of clinical illness
- ✓ There is currently no vaccine that protects against Lassa fever
- ✓ According to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, about 80% of the cases are asymptomatic and therefore remain undiagnosed.
- ✓ According to CDC, an estimated 100,000 to 300,000 infections of Lassa fever occur annually, with approximately 5,000 deaths.
- ✓ The death rate associated with this disease is low, at around 1%
- ✓ Prior to these three cases, there have been eight cases of Lassa fever imported to the UK since 1980 with the last two cases occurring way back in 2009.
- ✓ The Lassa fever-causing virus is found in West Africa and was first discovered in 1969 in Lassa, Nigeria after two nurses died due to the virus
- ✓ The fever is spread by rats and is primarily found in countries in West Africa including Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Benin, Mali, Guinea, and Nigeria where it is endemic.
- ✓ Meanwhile, the WHO informed that in Nigeria, 211 laboratory confirmed Lassa fever cases including 40 deaths have been cumulatively reported during January 2022

APPOINTMENTS

- **Kala Ramachandran, a 1994-batch Haryana-cadre IPS officer - has become the first woman police commissioner of Gurgaon**



- ✓ She will take over the charge from outgoing Police Commissioner K K Rao who has been transferred to the Centre for Police Training and Research at Bhondsi near Gurgaon

- ✓ Kala Ramachandran is originally from the Tamil Nadu cadre of IPS officers and she started her work with the Haryana cadre only after getting married to the senior IPS officer Navdeep Singh Virk
- ✓ Kala was earlier posted as the Principal Secretary to the Government of Haryana, Transport Department, with the additional charge of ADGP State Vigilance Bureau (H).
- ✓ She also worked as superintendent of police in Rewari, Fatehabad and Panchkula districts,
- ✓ She was also on central deputation to the Intelligence Bureau from 2001 and headed the North Eastern Police Academy in Meghalaya from 2017 to 2020.
- ✓ She returned to her home cadre in August 2020 and served as additional director general of police of Crime Against Women Cell and Vigilance at Haryana police headquarters besides the principal secretary of transport

