



Ravidassias of Punjab

Why in News

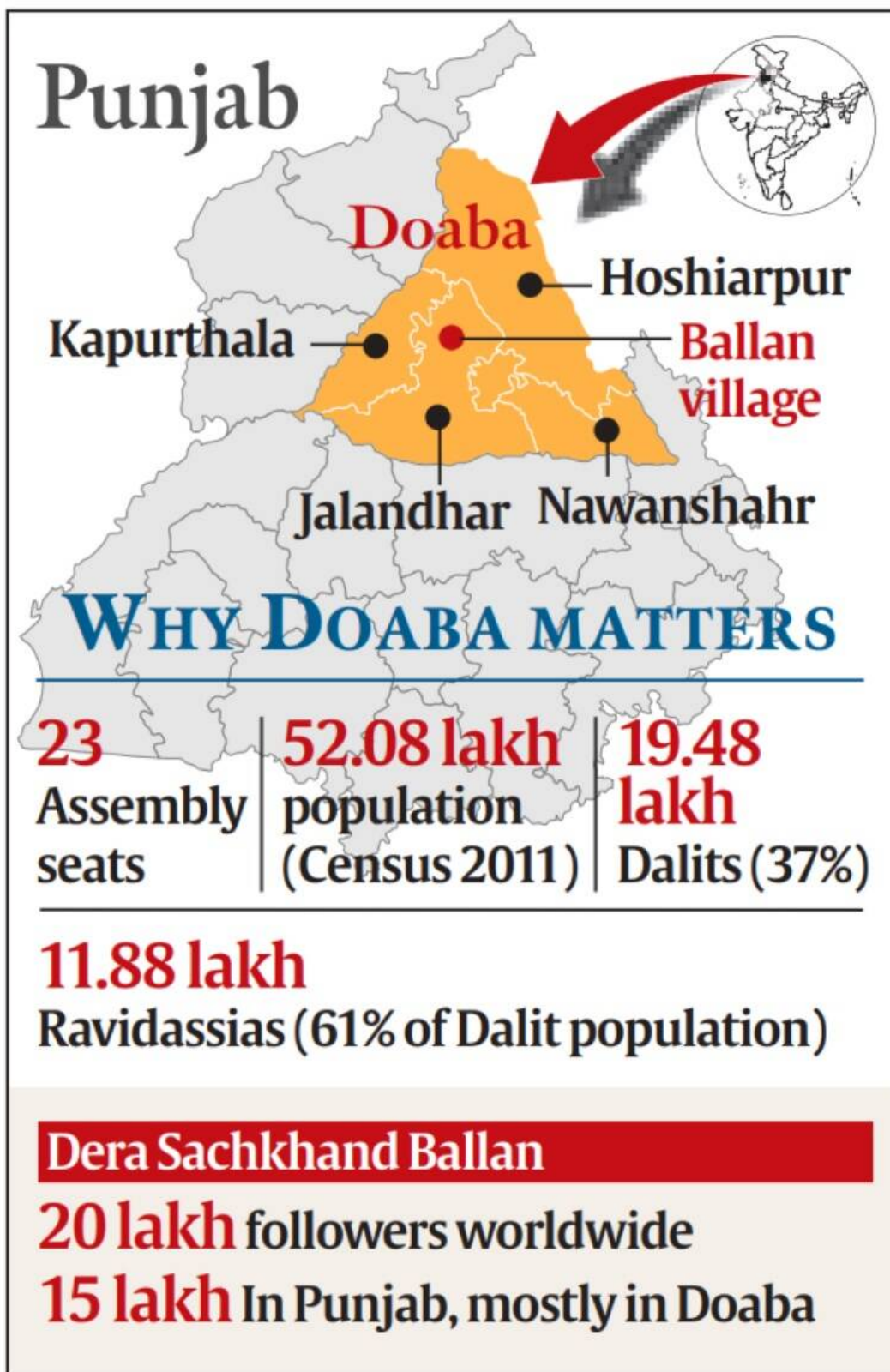
Recently, the [Election Commission of India \(ECI\)](#) has postponed polling for the Punjab Assembly election, which underlines the importance of the **Ravidassia community in the state.**

- The State government and political parties raised concern that many devotees would be in Varanasi (in a memorial temple) to celebrate **Guru Ravidas's birth anniversary** on 16th February and miss out on voting.
- Guru Ravidas's birth anniversary is celebrated on **Magh Purnima**, the full moon day in the month of Magh according to the Hindu lunar calendar.

Key Points

▪ About:

- The Ravidassias **are a Dalit community** of whom the bulk — nearly 12 lakh — live in the Doaba region.
- The **Dera Sachkhand Ballan**, their largest dera with 20 lakh followers worldwide, was **founded in the early 20th century by Baba Sant Pipal Das.**
- Once closely connected with Sikhism, the dera severed these decades-old ties in 2010, and announced they would follow the Ravidassia religion.
 - The announcement was **made on Guru Ravidas Jayanti in Varanasi.**
- From 2010, the Dera Sachkhand Ballan started **replacing the Guru Granth Sahib with its own Granth, Amritbani**, carrying 200 hymns of Guru Ravidas, in Ravidassia temples and gurdwaras.



▪ **Guru Ravidas:**

- Guru Ravidas was a mystic poet saint of the **Bhakti Movement** from the 15th and 16th centuries, and founded the **Ravidassia religion**.
- It is believed that he was **born in Varanasi in a cobbler's family**.
- He gained prominence due to his belief in one God and his unbiased religious poems.
- He dedicated his whole life to the **abolition of the caste system** and openly **despised the notion of a Brahminical society**.
- His devotional songs made an instant impact on the Bhakti Movement and around 41 of his

poems were included in '**Guru Granth Sahib**', the religious text of the Sikhs.

Source: IE

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