



## Chakmas and Hajongs Communities

**For Prelims:** Chakmas and Hajongs Community

**For Mains:** Challenges faced by Chakmas and Hajongs communities and ways to address them, Laws, Institutions and Bodies constituted for the Protection and Betterment of these Vulnerable Sections.

### Why in News

Recently, the [National Human Rights Commission \(NHRC\)](#) in its order directed Ministry of Home Affairs and Arunachal Pradesh to submit action taken report within six weeks against alleged **racial profiling and relocation of the Chakmas and Hajongs from the State**.

- Also both the authorities were directed to **"ensure that human rights of the Chakmas and Hajongs are protected by all the ways"**.
- Members of the two communities have allegedly been victims of [hate crime](#), **police atrocities and denial of rights and beneficiary programmes**.

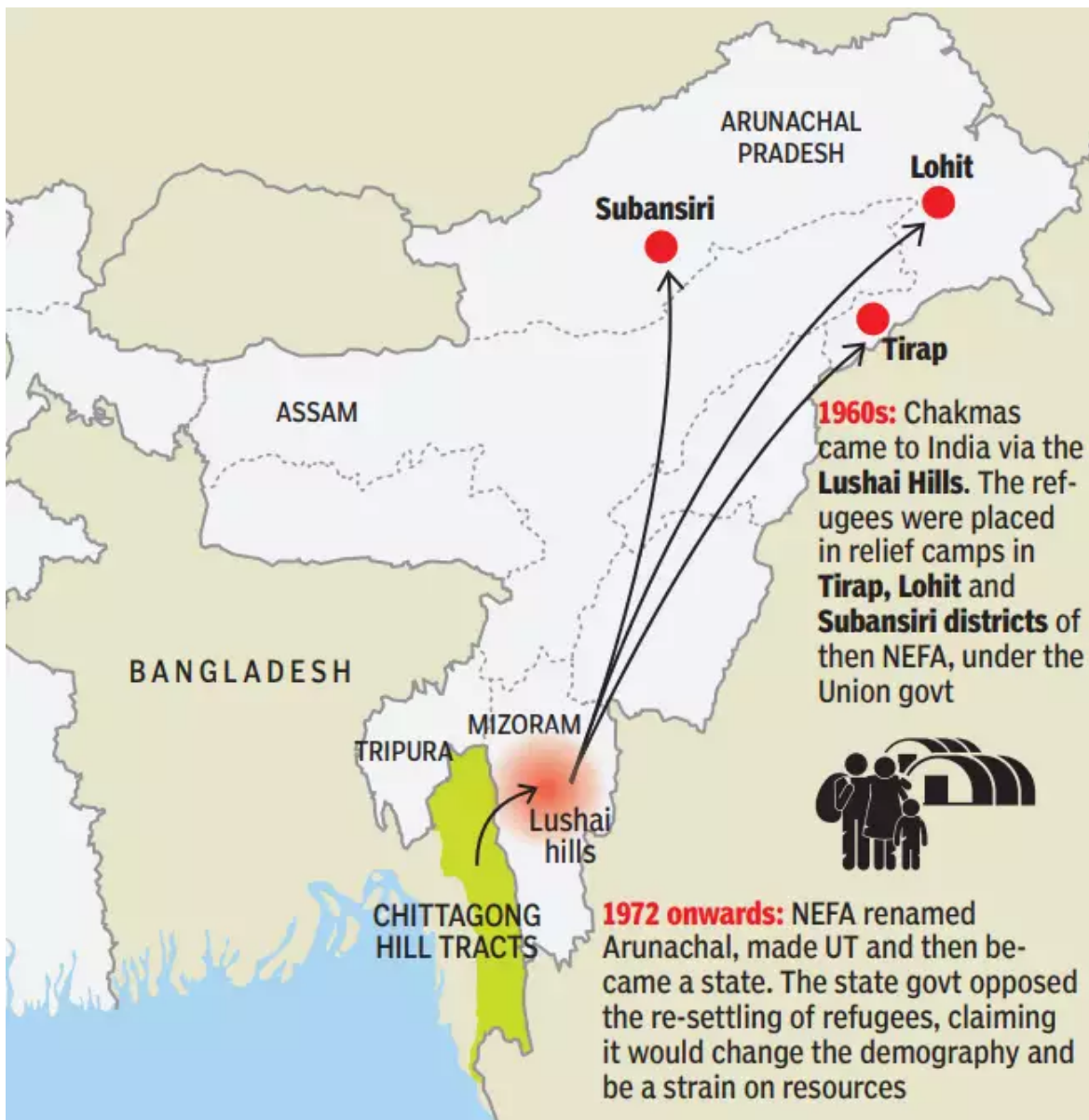
### Key Points

- **Background:**
  - In 2015, the **Supreme Court directed the State to grant them citizenship**, but this had not yet been implemented.
    - In a judgment in 1996, the Court had stated that the **"life and personal liberty of every Chakma residing within the State shall be protected"**.
  - In light of these orders and given that **most of the Chakma/Hajong community members were born in the State** and have been living peacefully, the Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister's announcement, in August 2021, that they would be **relocated outside the State** and that steps would be taken for a "census" of the communities was clearly unwarranted.
  - After that **Chakma Development Foundation of India (CDFI)** requested urgent intervention of the NHRC against racial profiling of 65,000 Chakma and Hajong tribals of Arunachal Pradesh through illegal census which was scheduled to commence from **31<sup>st</sup> December, 2021** (later plan of census was dropped) for their **deportation / expulsion/ relocation from the State**.
    - **Racial profiling** is government or police activity that involves using people's racial and cultural characteristics to identify people to investigate.
- **Issues with the Special Census:**
  - Chakma organisations said the census was nothing but **racial profiling of the two communities** because of their ethnic origin and **violated Article 14 of the Constitution of India and Article 1** of the [International Convention on Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#) ratified by India.
    - Article 14 says that no person shall be denied treatment of equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.
    - The [United Nation General Assembly](#) in October 1966 proclaimed 21st March as

the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, to be commemorated annually.

▪ **Chakmas and Hajongs:**

- Mizoram and Tripura have a sizeable population of the **Buddhist Chakmas** while the **Hindu Hajongs mostly inhabit the Garo Hills of Meghalaya** and adjoining areas of Assam.
- The Chakmas and Hajongs of Arunachal Pradesh are migrants from the Chittagong Hill Tracts of erstwhile **East Pakistan, now Bangladesh**.
- Displaced by the Kaptai dam on the Karnaphuli River in the 1960s, they sought asylum in India and were settled in relief camps in the southern and south-eastern parts of Arunachal Pradesh from 1964 to 1969.
  - A majority of them live in the **Changlang district** of the State (**Arunachal Pradesh**) today.



▪ **Citizenship Status:**

- Out of the 65,000 Chakmas and Hajongs, about 60,500 are citizens by birth under Section 3 of the **Citizenship Act, 1955**, after having been born before 1<sup>st</sup> July 1987, or as descendants of those who were born before this date.
  - The applications of the remaining 4,500 surviving migrants following the 1996 **Supreme Court order have not been processed to date**.
- The **Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2019**, which amended two sections of the 1955 Act, has nothing to do with the Chakma-Hajongs since they were permanently settled by

- the Union of India in the 1960s.
- And since 95% of the migrants were born in the **North-East Frontier Agency or Arunachal Pradesh**, the **Inner Line Permit** mandatory under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873 for outsiders seeking to visit the State, also does not apply to them.

## Way Forward

- The solution to the decades-old issue lies in the **State respecting the rule of law and the judgements of the Supreme Court.**
- There has to be an **end to politicians and political aspirants** deriving mileage from the Chakma-Hajong issue.

**Source: TH**

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