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CIVIL SERVICES ACHIEVERS' POINT

A ONE STOP SOLUTION FOR UPSC/APSC/SSC & BANKING

THE ASSAM TRIBUNE ANALYSIS

DATE - 15 FEBRUARY 2021

For Preliminary and Mains examination

As per new Pattern of APSC

(Also useful for UPSC and other State level government examinations)

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Answer of MCQs OF 13-02-2021

1. d. Leh
2. a. Astra
3. d. Ladakh

Explanation :

Ladakh Lok Sabha constituency is one of the six Lok Sabha constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir state in northern India. Now Ladakh is Union Territory of India. Ladakh Lok Sabha constituency is the largest Lok Sabha constituency in India in terms of area with a total area of 173266. 37 km.

Lok Sabha constituency in India in terms of number of electors.

Largest : Malkajgiri (Telangana)

Smallest : Lakshadweep

Lok Sabha constituency in India in terms of area

Largest : Ladakh

Smallest : Chandni Chowk (National Capital Territory of Delhi)

4. d. Madhya Pradesh

5. a. 1985

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MCQs of 15-02-2021

Q1. Which among the following countries is the largest troop contributor to the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission? (APSC 2016)

- a. China
- b. India
- c. Bangladesh
- d. Pakistan

Q2. Which of the following is not an official language of the United Nations? (APSC 2016)

- a. Arabic
- b. Chinese
- c. Portuguese
- d. Spanish

Q3. Who was the President of the 'Swaraj Party in Assam during freedom movement? (APSC 2016)

- a. Bishnuram Medhi
- b. Maniram Dewan
- c. Gopinath Bordoloi
- d. Tarun Ram Phookan

Q4. Which one of the following was the first English

in the year 1780? (APSC 2016)

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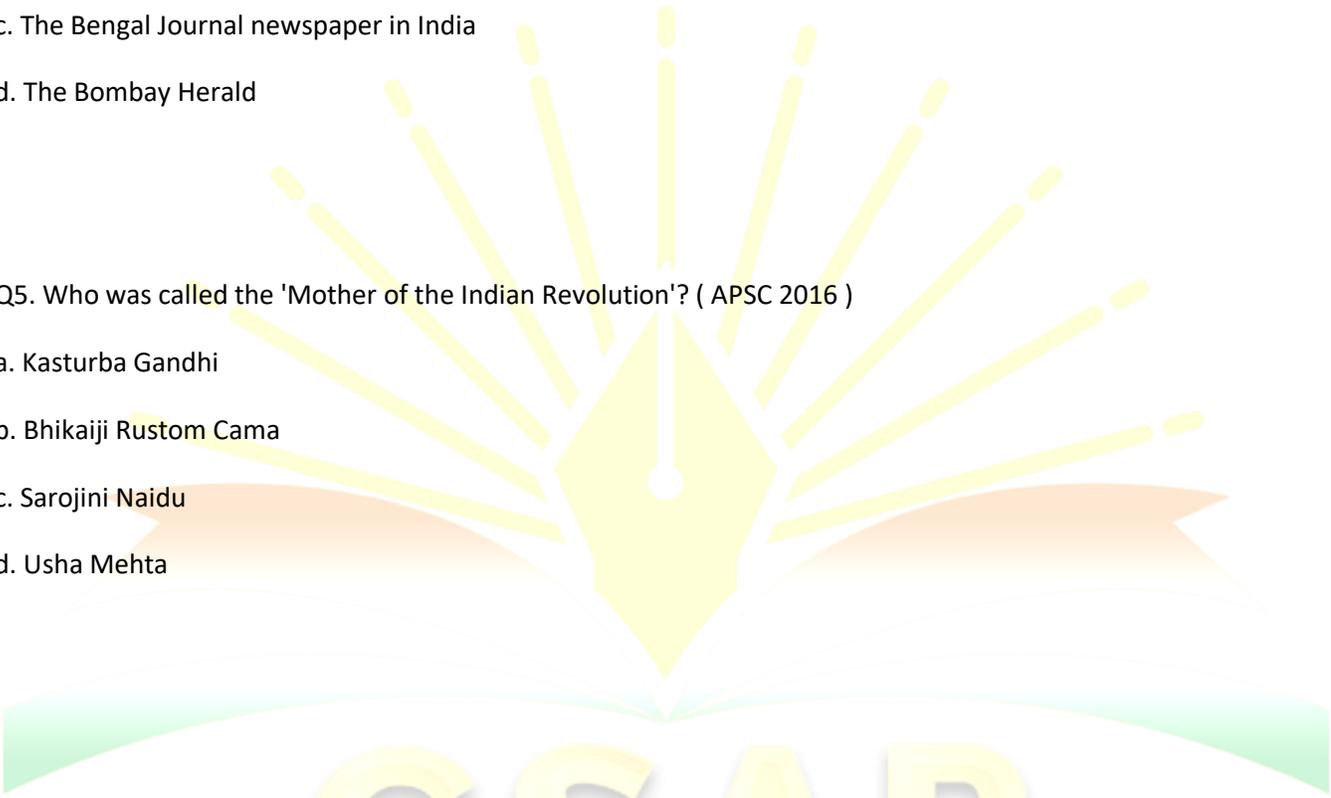
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- a. The Calcutta Gazette
- b. The Bengal Gazette
- c. The Bengal Journal newspaper in India
- d. The Bombay Herald

Q5. Who was called the 'Mother of the Indian Revolution'? (APSC 2016)

- a. Kasturba Gandhi
- b. Bhikaiji Rustom Cama
- c. Sarojini Naidu
- d. Usha Mehta



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Centre makes FASTag mandatory from midnight today

- The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has decided that all lanes in the fee plazas on national highways shall be declared as "FASTag lane of the fee plaza" with effect from midnight of February 15-16, and vehicles without a valid FASTag would be charged double the toll.
- "As per NH Fee Rules 2008, any vehicle not fitted with FASTag or vehicle without valid, functional FASTag entering into the FASTag lane of the fee plaza shall pay a fee equivalent to two times of the fee applicable to that category," an official statement said.
- The ministry has clarified that this has been done to further promote fee payment through digital mode, reduce waiting time and fuel consumption, and provide for a seamless passage through the fee plazas.
- The Ministry had mandated fitment of FASTag in 'M' and 'N' categories of motor vehicles with effect from January 1, 2021.
- Category 'M' stands for a motor vehicle with at least four wheels used for carrying passengers, and the category 'N' stands for a motor vehicle with at least four wheels used for carrying goods, which may also carry persons in addition to goods.
- Earlier, Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari today said the deadline for implementation of FASTag would not be extended further, and the vehicle owners should immediately adopt the e-payment facility.
- Replying to a query on FASTags, Gadkari said the government had extended FASTag registration date limit two-three times before and now it would not be extended further. Now, everybody should immediately buy FASTags, he added.
- The FASTag registration has gone up to 90 per cent on some routes and only 10 per cent people are left. FASTag is also available on toll nakas and people should purchase and use it for seamless traffic, he told reporters at the Nagpur airport. – Agencies

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State to seek more Central forces for polls

- With the Assembly election approaching, police and security forces are gearing up to ensure violence-free polls, while the State government is planning to seek additional Central forces so that adequate security coverage can be given in all the polling stations and other vulnerable areas.
- Talking to *The Assam Tribune*, Director General of Assam Police Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta said that vulnerability mapping of the State has been done and all records of past disturbance during the polls have been collected to take adequate precautionary measures. He said an all-out drive has been launched against illegal weapons and contraband items, including drugs.
- The police chief said the drive is paying dividends as a large number of illegal weapons and ammunition have been recovered from different parts of the State, particularly from the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR). The drive against drugs is also yielding desired results, he added.
- Mahanta said the Election Commission of India has already started issuing directives to the police for conduct of free and fair elections and all the directives are being strictly followed. He, however, did not divulge the quantum of additional forces to be sought by the State government and said it would depend on the poll schedule, which is yet to be announced.
- If the Election Commission announces a single-phase election, the requirement will be more and it will be less if the elections are held in phases. The State administration has already requested the Election Commission to hold the polls in three phases.
- As the elections will be held by maintaining COVID-19 protocol, the number of polling stations will have to be increased. This time, there will be 32,000 polling stations in the State.
- The number of polling stations was 24,000 in the last Assembly elections and it was increased to 28,000 in the last Lok Sabha polls.
- The Assam Police is planning to deploy armed personnel in all the polling stations, but it will depend on the availability of additional forces from the Centre.
- Meanwhile, the Assam Police has started liaison with its counterparts in the northeastern states and the meetings are being held at different levels. The State DGP has spoken to his counterparts in the other states of the region. He has also written to them seeking cooperation to ensure that no militant or other antisocial element can sneak into Assam from the neighbouring states.
- As the elections in Assam and West Bengal will be held at the same time, the police chiefs of both the states have discussed how the security measures in the inter-state border areas could be intensified. The Inspector General of Police, BTR already had a meeting with the IGP in-charge of North Bengal.

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Astronomy gallery, virtual reality zone inaugurated at planetarium

- A new astronomy gallery and a virtual reality zone were inaugurated at the Guwahati Planetarium here today.
- The astronomy gallery has been built in collaboration with Creative Museum Designers, Kolkata and the Department of Design, IIT Guwahati.
- The inauguration programme was a part of the completion of the silver jubilee year of the planetarium in 2020.
- Keshab Mahanta, Minister, Science and Technology, Assam, inaugurated the astronomy gallery and the virtual reality zone at 11 am. He also gave away prizes and certificates to the winners for various competitions, including online quiz, online essay contest, art, extempore speech, science model and astronomical measurement, held to commemorate the silver jubilee year of the planetarium.
- Speaking on the occasion, Mahanta lauded the steps taken for the first time in North-east by the Guwahati Planetarium to popularise astronomy among the students and the general public. He urged all to visit the astronomy gallery and the virtual reality zone and said those additions would act as tools to develop scientific temperament.
- The virtual reality zone will transport viewers to such places such as the international space station (ISS) and give them the feel of being astronomers in space.
- The inauguration ceremony was also attended by Syedain Abbasi, Additional Chief Secretary, Assam; Kimnei Changsan, Director, ASTEC and Director, Guwahati Planetarium; and Prof Anil Kumar Goswami, noted scientist and president of Pragjyotish Amateur Astronomers Association, Guwahati Planetarium among others.
- A souvenir titled *Taraghar* was also inaugurated by the Minister. The souvenir has been edited by Jaideep Baruah, Head, Environment Division, ASTEC and Dr Chandra Rekha Mahanta, Associate Professor, Gauhati University.

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PROTEST

- On October 7, 2020, the Supreme Court of India, ruling on the Shaheen Bagh protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, had asserted that the right to protest in public places was not absolute and public places cannot be occupied indefinitely for such protests.
- It has reiterated its postulate that the right to protest cannot be anytime and everywhere, while dismissing a plea seeking review of the earlier verdict. No doubt the Indian Constitution empowers citizens with the right to protest and express dissent, but the need to be responsible entails that such powers be exercised with provisos.
- Public spaces cannot be occupied indefinitely and demonstrations expressing dissent have to be in designated places alone, the onus of selecting the places being with the authorities. It had also said that the mode and manner of dissent against colonial rule during India's freedom struggle cannot be equated with dissent in a self-ruled democracy.
- The court had said that the manner in which occupants should be removed to clear public places is to be decided by government authorities and they should not hide behind or wait for court orders in order to carry out their functions. No doubt they had been right in pointing out that dissent and democracy go hand in hand but protests must be carried out in designated areas so that the general public does not face inconvenience.
- Yet such provisos would have carried more weight had India been an ideal democracy where protests were tolerated as acceptable mode of dissent and elicited positive response from the powers that be. It may be noted that the earlier judgment had given the authorities and the police with almost unbridled power to select protest locations and decide when and how a particular protest could be declared illegal and forcibly broken up, a situation which appears to contradict democratic and constitutional norms and provisions.
- As the review petition had contended, such directives would in all likelihood lead to a situation where the administration would never engage in dialogue with protesters but instead take action against them. As for designating venues, in the context of Indian democracy, the administration was most likely to select one which would dilute the impact of the protests, as had been observed during the current demonstrations by farmers, who had rejected the venue the Home Ministry had initially selected.
- Thus it would have been more conducive to the functioning of our democracy if the apex court had simultaneously laid down specific guidelines to the authorities on the granting of permission and designation of venues, thereby restraining them from arbitrary, undemocratic behaviour.

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- Equally unfortunately, the court has also been silent on bandhs and similar modes of protest, a majority of these called by political parties, which cause greater inconvenience to the people than mere blocking of a road!

Are our varsities scrambling to go online?

- Although the NEP seeks to restrict politics and free speech within the academia or incorporated few new workload and redesigned promotional norms for the Central university teachers, we have doubts that we will be able to see a stress-free university campus until the core issues of the Indian universities through which they are fused with the Indian society are addressed and focused.
- It sounds nice when we talk about practising online education and hi-tech interactive classes in the formal university education systems. However, this intent of the Union Ministry of Human Resource and Development requires several aspects to deal with, if looked in the context of the Indian scenario.
- Indian universities have hardly readied themselves to imbibe the shocks of shifting to the online mode from the offline one overnight. Here, the reason of unpreparedness is not the insufficient trained faculties with technical knowhow for such practice, the mindset of the Indian universities and their regulators.
- Former President S Radhakrishnan in his essay 'True Knowledge' wrote, "Universities are the means by which traditions of a country – intellectual, artistic and ethical and the technical skills – are transmitted from one generation to another."
- The Indian heritage and culture hypothetically adopt the later as the true meaning of 'university'. The heterogeneous objective of university is inherent in this definition. As per the statistics maintained by the UGC (2020), India has 935 universities, of which 50 are central, 409 State, 349 private and 127 deemed universities. Unofficially, more than two crore students get enrolled every year in different universities and pursue their higher education.
- In short, with hardly 935 universities, India accommodates only 1% of the total population in the university system every year. Literally, the transmission of intellectual, artistic and ethical and technical skills are never achieved at the fullest here. Almost 99% of the population are left out to live in a half-crossed zigzag educational ladder, without endorsing any specific skill and ethics. Probably, this is the root of corrupt politics in the Indian scenario where intellectuals are few, ethical values are costly and technical skills are secondary.

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- Forget the issue of faculties who are unskilled to kick-start online education; we have been suffering from huge shortage of faculties in universities for offline education. In 2019, around 50% of faculty posts were vacant only in Central universities. The situations are worse in State universities. However, a rapid effort by the UGC and MHRD to fill up vacancies in the universities by the end of November 2019 was a good thing.
- But the dark side is, several universities have not received sufficient applications to fill up their positions in Associate Professor and Professors. Although the UGC's notification on 'maintaining minimum standard in teaching posts' has relaxed the norms of qualifications for application to these posts, the uncompetitive status in many of these cadres indicate the stress at source, i.e., poor arithmetic of demand-availability ratio in the universities.
- On top of that, the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) at these levels offered as ornamental reservation with no application at all. In EWS, the person claiming reservation under EWS category should not have a total income of more than Rs 8 lakh per annum.
- After implementation of the 7th Pay Commission, the cut-off levels of income status of assistant professor and above stand more than Rs 8 lakh, and the annual income of these positions are too fat to claim reservation under the EWS category. So 10% of the posts advertised at each cadre at associate professor and professor levels would straightway remain unfilled forever if the current limit of income for EWS is not amended.
- Apart from manpower, if we review the infrastructure, the hole in our pockets for higher education is visible like a daylight saga. In 2014, the UGC visited several universities and marked infrastructural deficiencies as a major cause of limitation to impart efficient education. Probably, and invariably, that was the reason for which we got the Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) to offer loan with interest for development of infrastructural facilities in higher educational institutions.
- The painful part is that major sections of universities are non-profit institutions by nature, and a loan with interest amounting to crores of rupees is a burden on them. People of India pay taxes to the government for facilitating subsidized or free education to its youths, not to be loaned.
- The only way to pay back such loans for our traditional universities is to hike the admission and monthly fees of the students. Reasonably, the students have opposed such fee hikes, and protests staged at several leading universities are the best example to cite here. In brief, it feels like the HEFA placed "education in the marketplace rather than at the disposal of the social good".

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- It is instructed that the loans borrowed under the HEFA are to be recovered through fee hikes and other "internal resource generation". Obviously, a business model with acute professionalism is now a demand for the universities to run these institutions, not the social cohesiveness.
- We may agree that cronyism in Indian universities must not be perpetuated, stereotypism needs to be scrapped, but not at the cost of social institutions. Here, the ambitious jump to online education cripples, as the question of mass digital infrastructure and provision of free wi-fi would come at the cost of loan or fee hike.
- These backgrounds explain the accrued stress experienced by our higher educational institute, especially universities, over the last few years. Forget about the so-called political scrubbers, muddled regulators and odd placements create chaos and unrest in these institutions. Unfortunately, for the last few years we have hardly heard sound debates on educational reforms and India's educational policies in the context of societal need across the constitutionally empowered platforms.
- The ambiances of universities are gradually shaded with protests and violence. Although India's National Education Policy (NEP) seeks to restrict politics and free speech within the academia or incorporated few new workload and redesigned promotional norms for the Central university teachers, we have doubts that we will be able to see a stress-free university campus until the core issues of the Indian universities through which they are fused with the Indian society are addressed and focused. We may not require a new syllabus, or a hi-tech online educational policy, but we need to help our universities to understand our problems and imbibe the pulse of every social section.
- Prior to the Covid-19 lockdown, the practice of online education was merely a silhouette in the Indian universities, and the infusion of SWAYAM platform by the UGC was an attempt to strengthen that practice with vividity. However, such a slime-coated task would leave us all in an undeservedly enigmatic state.
- The upcoming NEP or its forthcoming amendments might accommodate some ambitious vigour like digital education to our universities, but prior to that, our universities are to be made stress-free campuses. Otherwise, the way the Covid-19 has flatten our economic curve, the quality of our education would also meet the same fate.

Remembering Karmavir Nabin Chandra Bordoloi

- Karmavir Nabin Chandra Bordoloi was a visionary, great statesman with a rare political acumen, brilliant orator, freedom fighter, singer-composer, writer and an erudite scholar.
- At a time when Assam was viewed as a backward region, inhabited by uncivilized and scantily clothed people, vast forests and wild animals, in spite of its vibrant socio-cultural heritage and rich natural

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resources, Bordoloi emerged as a messiah, who thwarted the imperial rulers' nefarious design to make Assam the eastern frontier safeguard.

- They imposed all forms of coercive measures like the Watson Wells resolution to make Assam a provincial state. He fought tooth and nail to pull out his bleeding motherland from the quagmire. In fact, Bordoloi went all the way to the UK to plead with the colonial rulers to accord Assam a status at par with the other States, and by dint of his exceptional personality and brilliant oration, he succeeded in his endeavour.
- Nabin Chandra Bordoloi was born with a silver spoon in his mouth as he was the son of Raibahadur Madhav Chandra Bordoloi, SDO (Civil) of Barpeta. Raibahadur Madhav Chandra Bordoloi's superhuman efforts in evacuating and transporting thousands of people rendered homeless due to the devastating earthquake of 1897 were hailed and applauded by all, including the British rulers.
- Since his birth, he tasted all the amenities of a luxurious and stress-free existence. However, sometimes destiny compels us to abandon everything and plunge headlong into a more trying situation, filled with toil, torture, criticism, etc. Bordoloi also opted for such a life because he was a Karmayogi.
- In 1826, Assam was passing through extreme anguish and anxiety due to the existential crisis, as apprehension about the slow and silent death of the Assamese language and literature was imminent. Fortunately, due to the intervention of late Jagannath Baruah and late Manik Chandra Baruah, the Assam Association was formed. Late Padmanath Buragohain, Ghanashyam Baruah and several other conscious citizens under a competent president Nabin Chandra Bordoloi, our mother tongue was saved from extinction.
- The colonial rulers suffered a rude shock after the First World War in 1915 as a great awakening was generated in the political arena, consequent to the inspiring speech delivered by Nabin Chandra Bordoloi. "I hail all of you great sons of the motherland," he exhorted, "Imbibe the spirit of patriotism and sacrifice personal comforts to free our motherland from the colonial rulers.
- Patience and tolerance would be our heroic actions... we pledge to build the temple of freedom in our beloved country by sacrificing our lives with the weapon of love...." Thousands of youth responded to the clarion call; greatly invigorated, they came out, each one holding a flag to fight for their freedom. Umesh and Apurva Bordoloi, the two sons of Nabin Chandra Bordoloi, were also called to join the freedom struggle. In due course of time, the Chattra Parishad was formed and the first batch of volunteers protested against the grass tax imposed upon them.
- In 1919 the discriminatory attitude of the colonial rulers was revealed as Assam was exempted from the Chelmsford-Montague administrative reform policy. An infuriated Nabin Chandra Bordoloi opposed this biased decision vociferously. He immediately decided to leave for the UK with late Prasanna Baruah (a

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reputed tea planter of the time), his brother-in-law. Chandranath Sharma, a patriot, slugged day and night to arrange money for Bordoloi's tour.

- On the eve of his departure, an emotional Bordoloi spoke to Bipin Pal, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya and Lokmanya Tilak, ventilating his anxiety. They were impressed and showered blessings upon him. Through his exceptional convincing ability and oratory, he succeeded in persuading the colonial rulers to include Assam in the Chelmsford-Montague administrative reform policy.
- Another milestone achieved by Bordoloi was the recognition for the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee; a proposal for the same was rejected at the Congress Session at Kolkata. His perseverance bore fruit as in the Nagpur Congress Session, the committee received due recognition.
- The darkest phase of his life came in the form of prolonged periods of rigorous imprisonment. Although he was an A-grade prisoner, he was denied the basic amenities, which took its toll on his health. He rejected the Government's offer to send him to England for treatment. Had he heeded it, he could have got a few more years of service to his motherland. As he shunted from Jorhat to Sylhet, misfortunes followed one after another, starting with the death of his five-year-old grandson Putoli.
- During his imprisonment, the family suffered acute financial crunch and hunger. On returning home, he had to resume his legal practice to provide for his family. Simultaneously, he conscientiously pursued his assignments towards his party, attended every Congress sessions in different parts of the country, mesmerizing the audience with his eloquent speeches wherever he went.
- His greatest achievement was the holding of the Congress Session in Assam although everybody discouraged him as such a mega event seemed impossible. Through determination, immaculate planning and dynamism, the conference was arranged. A spectacular event at Pandu, attended by Gandhi, Srinivas Iyengar and Vishnu Digambar, the great classical maestro, regaled the participants. The major share of the expenses was borne by him, involving a loan of one lakh rupees which was later cleared by his elder son Dr Umesh Bordoloi.
- What he achieved within such a brief span of time is incredible and to enlist the same is even more difficult. It was Bordoloi, who moved a motion in the Assembly to pressurize the need to ensure that the revenue accruing from taxes on petroleum should come to Assam. It was at his initiative the Cotton College was established. Several other institutions like the Earle Law College, Kamal Dev Institution and Ananda Library at North Guwahati, Kumar Bhaskar Natya Mandir, a khadi mill, Asom Seva Sangha, among others, came up as a result of his relentless efforts.
- Excessive mental and physical pressure and total negligence towards own health led to his untimely demise on February 15, 1936, depriving Assam of one of the most charismatic leaders of Assam, a true Karmayogi who sacrificed his life for the nation.

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CIVIL SERVICES ACHIEVER'S POINT

Leadership through knowledge...

CENTRES: BELTOLA, SILCHAR, KOKRAJHAR, COTTON UNIVERSITY, SONAPUR COLLEGE, MARGHERITA