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# CIVIL SERVICES ACHIEVERS' POINT

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

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**THE ASSAM TRIBUNE ANALYSIS**

**DATE - 05 FEBRUARY 2021**

**For Preliminary and Mains examination**

**As per new Pattern of APSC (Also useful for UPSC and other State level  
government examinations)**

**CSAP**

**CIVIL SERVICES ACHIEVER'S POINT**

*Leadership through knowledge...*

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Answer of MCQs of 4-02-2021

1. A. February 02
2. A. February 4
3. B. Nagaland
4. A. Stomach Cancer
5. C. 1,2,4,5

MCQs of 5-02-2021

Q1. Consider the following statements about NPT and CTBT:

1. India has neither signed NPT nor ratified it.
2. India has signed CTBT but not yet ratified it.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q2. Wassenaar arrangement seeks to bring transparency in the export of

1. conventional arms
2. dual-use goods
3. small arms and light weapons
4. military aircraft

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1, 3 and 4 only
- c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Q3. 'Chillai Kalan' occasionally remains in the news, it refers to

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- (a) Intense dry period of Ladakh region.
- (b) Special shawls of the Himachal.
- (c) Intense winter period of Kashmir valley.
- (d) Famous handicraft work of Ajmer.

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. It was established in 1899.
2. It is headquartered in The Hague, Netherlands.
3. It deals with dispute resolution in the International arena.

The above statements most appropriately explains which of the following International bodies?

- (a) Permanent Court of Arbitration
- (b) International Court of Justice
- (c) International Criminal Court
- (d) European Court of Justice

Q5. With reference to 'Adopt a Heritage Project', consider the following statements:

1. It aims to develop tourism amenities at tourist sites spread across India for making them tourist friendly.
2. The Ministry of Tourism is solely responsible for the project implementation. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2

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(d) Neither 1 nor 2



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## NEWS ARTICLES

### US, Russia extend nuclear arms control treaty for 5 yrs

- Russia and the US have officially extended the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) by five years as the agreement on the extension of the key nuclear pact has entered into force, authorities from the two countries have confirmed.
- In a statement issued on Wednesday, the Russian Foreign Ministry said that it exchanged diplomatic notes on the completion of all domestic procedures required for the treaty's extension with the US Embassy, Xinhua news agency reported.
- "The New START treaty will operate in the form it was signed, without any changes or additions, until February 5, 2026," it added.
- According to the Ministry, the telephone conversation between the Presidents of Russia and the US on January 26 was key for this development to proceed.
- "We hope that the understanding reached with Washington regarding the fate of the landmark treaty for international security will help overcome the tendency that has prevailed in recent years as a result of the destructive US policy on breaking arms control and non-proliferation mechanisms," it emphasised.
- The Ministry has added that Russia is ready to continue constructive dialogue with the US to achieve new results that would strengthen the strategic stability in the world.
- The Ministry has added that Russia is ready to continue constructive dialogue with the US to achieve new results that would strengthen the strategic stability in the world.
- Also confirming the development, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said: "Extending the New START Treaty ensures we have verifiable limits on Russian ICBMs, SLBMs, and heavy bombers until February 5, 2026."
- He added that the extension "makes the US, allies and partners, and the world safer", adding that "especially during times of tension, verifiable limits on Russia's intercontinental-range nuclear weapons are vitally important".

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- Blinken noted that Washington would use the five-year extension period to seek arms control with Moscow that addresses all of the Russian nuclear weapons.
- The New START, which limits the numbers of deployed strategic nuclear warheads to 1,550 and delivery systems to 700 for each, is the last remaining nuclear arms control pact in force between the two nuclear superpowers.
- The treaty can be extended by a maximum of five years with the consent of the two countries.
- The former administration of President Donald Trump tried to conclude a shorter extension of the treaty last year after rounds of negotiation with Russia, but the two sides failed to finalise a formal agreement.
- Immediately after taking office, President Joe Biden proposed a full five-year extension of the treaty that expires on February 5, a move welcomed by the Kremlin.
- Russian President Vladimir Putin on January 29 signed a Bill into law ratifying a five-year extension of the New START with the US.
- The extension of the New START might be a bright spot for the US-Russia relations, but the overall tensions between Washington and Moscow are unlikely to decrease given their differences on issues of human rights, Ukraine, cybersecurity as well as their mutual accusation of interference in the domestic politics.

## ISIL-K's new leader heads India operations: UN

- Global terror group Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan's (ISIL-K) new leader Shihab al-Muhajir heads its operations in India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and is said to have had an earlier affiliation with the dreaded Haqqani Network, according to a report of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.
- The 12th report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (also known as ISIS and Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of member-states in countering the threat said that ISIL-K currently has 1,000-2,200 fighters in Afghanistan spread across several provinces.

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- "ISIL-K continued to demonstrate resilience in Afghanistan notwithstanding its degraded military capabilities, including in Nangarhar and Kunar Provinces," it said.
- The report said although ISIL-K faces challenges in its ability to seize and hold significant territory in those provinces, it has claimed responsibility for a number of recent high-profile attacks, including the devastating attack on a maternity hospital in Kabul in May, the assault on Jalalabad city prison in August, an attack on Kabul University in November and the killing of a female Afghan journalist in Nangarhar province in December.
- The Haqqani network, which has the backing of elements within the Pakistani security establishment, is one of Afghanistan's most experienced and sophisticated insurgent organisations, according to the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based non-partisan, non-profit, public policy research organisation.
- The Haqqani network maintains a safe haven in North Waziristan, Pakistan, across Afghanistan's southeastern border, it said. The extremist group has been behind some of the deadliest attacks across Afghanistan against US interests in the war-torn country.
- It said that online recruitment and radicalisation of ISIL sympathisers in South Asia continues to be a "concern, in particular through propaganda publications targeting followers, including in the Maldives and Sri Lanka."
- The Secretary General's report said that ISIL also remains resilient in South-East Asia with a number of factions, in particular in the southern Philippines, giving special urgency to initiatives developed by authorities in the region, including the promotion of narratives to counter violent extremism online.
- "Although counter-terrorism forces reported successes in disrupting some cells and averting imminent attacks, the region continued to experience violence initiated or inspired by ISIL," it said, adding that the prominence of women involved with ISIL, including in carrying out suicide bombings, continues to be a trend in South-East Asia.
- Two such attacks occurred in the Philippines in August, both involving women believed to be widows of Abu Sayyaf Group fighters.

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- Guterres said in the report that the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to pose significant strategic and practical challenges for member-states' efforts to prevent and counter terrorism and the underlying spread of violent extremism, in full compliance with international law.

## State's first heliport inaugurated at Majuli

- Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Thursday inaugurated the State's first heliport at Majuli.
- A Majuli district administration official informed that having a capacity for landing three helicopters, the heliport has been constructed at Keralagaon at a cost of Rs 50 lakh from the government's Untied Fund.
- Sonowal also inaugurated a guest house built with Rs 50 lakh at the heliport.
- In an interaction with newsmen, the Chief Minister stated that the heliport was set up in order to boost tourism on the Brahmaputra island. He said that Majuli being the nerve centre of Vaishnavite art and culture, having a spiritual environment and also possessing rich flora and fauna, was getting known across the globe.
- "In view of its unique identity, and having great potential for a global tourist destination, the government has initiated steps to develop infrastructure in the tourism sector on the island," Sonowal said.
- The Chief Minister said he was told by Dr Domborudhar Nath, the vice chancellor of the newly established Majuli University of Culture, that many scholars and researchers from European and American countries have expressed their desire to visit the university and carry out studies and research work.
- Sonowal said the heliport was expected to give a big enhancement to connectivity of Majuli and contribute to the growth of tourism sector on the island.
- Stating that works for development of road connectivity across the Brahmaputra had also been undertaken by the government, Sonowal said the tendering process for construction of the ambitious Jorhat-Majuli bridge was initiated by the Centre recently and within a few days, the process would conclude, following which construction will start soon.

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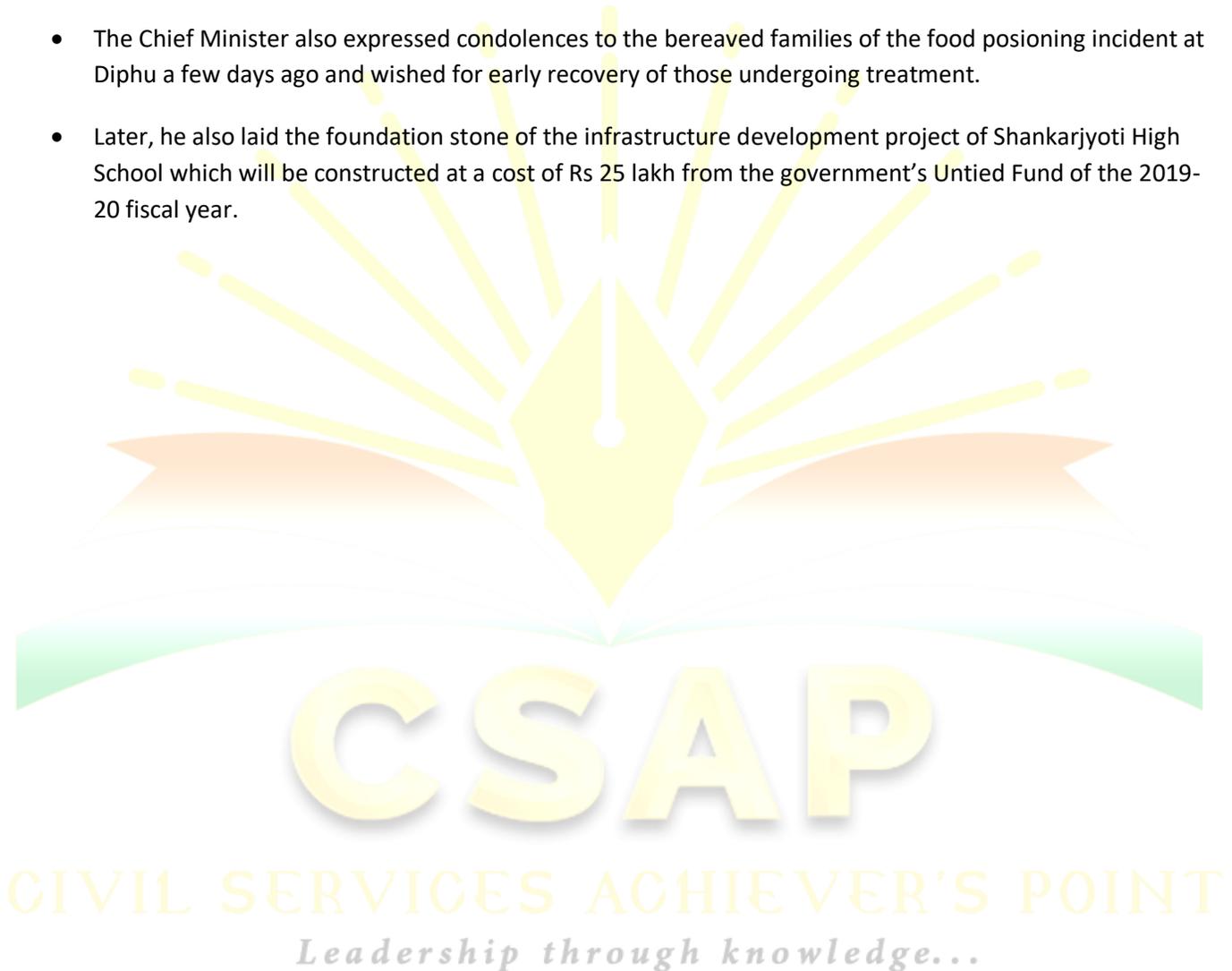


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- The Chief Minister announced that within this month, two ro-pax ferry services will be launched to boost waterway transportation to the river island. He said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was expected to visit Majuli soon.
- The Chief Minister also expressed condolences to the bereaved families of the food poisoning incident at Diphu a few days ago and wished for early recovery of those undergoing treatment.
- Later, he also laid the foundation stone of the infrastructure development project of Shankarjyoti High School which will be constructed at a cost of Rs 25 lakh from the government's Untied Fund of the 2019-20 fiscal year.



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## EDITORIALS

### Dangerous over-reliance on market forces

- A majority of Indians suffered in multiple ways during the last year. The crisis that started before Covid came to India, and became increasingly severe during the lockdown, is continuing after the gradual opening of the economy.
- A number of global and Indian studies have drawn attention to the severity of the crisis. The Davos India Supplement on rising inequalities in India, reports by the ILO, IMF, World Bank, the Global Hunger Report, CMIE and innumerable Indian studies have documented the rising unemployment, increasing hunger, malnutrition, deceleration in health, job losses and the increase in the overall vulnerability of the Indian middle and lower classes. The rich not only escaped this hardship but the wealth of Indian billionaires increased by 35% during the lockdown.
- During the gradual unlocking of the economy, the increase in employment has been labour saving, with low wages and no social security. The slow growth that India is experiencing today is profit-led and not wage-led. The expectation was that the budget would answer these concerns urgently.
- The first expectation was of a redistribution of wealth and income to fund the pro-poor growth with higher wealth tax, capital gains tax and income tax on the very rich, but this section has been left untouched.
- The basic approach of the budget is to push up the rate of growth of the GDP through market forces. The funding of the budget proposals will come from disinvestment (sale of PSUs and public properties), selling of surplus government land, relaxation for FDI, and privatization of public properties.
- This approach of the Government is very inefficient, as the markets in India are monopolistic or oligopolistic, and are likely to lead to further inequalities without benefiting workers and the poor.
- Also, it is a fallacy that the rich generate jobs. The adoption of the latest capital-intensive technologies by them to remain globally competitive will only make growth increasingly less labour intensive. The rising inequalities are dangerous for democracy as it strengthens the unholy alliance of the rich and the ruling party. In short, the basic ideology of the budget is dangerous for the country.

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- Another major expectation from the budget was in the field of education. There are two reasons for this: One, the blatant deprivation of education to masses of children, and two, the launching of the new National Education Policy with fanfare recently. To start with, 71% of government schools and 19% of private schools closed down during the lockdown, and are still closed, with the result that most poor children are deprived of education.
- In addition, many other children could not manage online studies either because they had no smartphone/tablet/laptop or only a phone shared with the family. Also, many could not keep up with online studies, for varying reasons including supporting the family with parents losing jobs.
- It is estimated that about 30-40% students could not manage online education. In short, the already wide gap between the education of students from rich and upper middle-class households and the others became much wider. Considering the fact most schools are still not opened, the gap is getting wider. This is the loss of the next generation and thus the loss of the country.
- The budget could have helped by taking a jump in facilitating digital education for disadvantaged children. It could have allotted funds for investing in tablets, smartphones or laptops. But that is clearly not a priority of our policymakers. To make matters worse, the budget for the midday meal scheme, which attracts children to school, is slashed by Rs 1400 crore.
- The NEP was launched recently with one major focus on early childhood development, which is critically important for the holistic development of our young ones. Looking at the fact that studies after studies have brought out a wider gap between the present Anganwadis and the concepts of early childhood development, one expected huge investment on infrastructure, training and appointment of highly-qualified persons in Anganwadis and nurseries.
- But the budget is totally silent on this. Instead of increasing the budget for education, it is less this year by as much as Rs 6087 crores. This can only be called the criminal neglect of India's future generation. Finally, with 79-80 % literacy the country cannot include the vast majority in the high-tech growth the Government talks about.
- The third major expectation was in the area of employment. It is now clear that the current economic growth today is not going to absorb all those who lost their occupations. Thus, many returned migrant workers are trying their luck in highly precarious petty jobs.

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- This is because growth is getting increasingly more labour saving, as employers are turning to more capital-intensive technologies. For example, labour intensive sectors like diamond cutting and polishing or the textiles and garment industry are using labour saving new technologies.
- Again, MSMEs that can be highly labour intensive have received a much smaller allocation in this budget. And, as seen above, the corporate sector will not generate large-scale employment.
- In such a situation, MGNREGA could be very useful. In fact, it has proved to be a good safety net during the lockdown. The budget allocation on MGNREGA, however, is cut by Rs 33,417 crore. It is important to note that MGNREGA is not a charity, or a mere safety net. It has two major roles to play in the economy: (1) regeneration of the environment and infrastructure development at the local level (not just national and State highways) and (2) improving the quality of employment in terms of wages as well as other facilities including social security.
- Both the roles are critical for the development of the local economy. Both generate massive employment in the second round also. In fact, one expected an urban employment guarantee programme also from the budget. Again, silence!
- In short, the future of employment does not appear to be very bright in India! The budget is a great disappointment to the Indian masses.
- Incidentally, the election orientation of the budget is something that is not hidden from the eyes of the public. The selection of States for upscaling infrastructure is evidently not need-based but is based on propaganda requirements for the forthcoming State elections!

## NABARD & rural uplift

- Any talk about development in the State will look out of place unless the development concerns in the rural areas are addressed. Indeed, the region's general development will be possible only when we have inclusive rural development all along, empowering the rural communities economically.
- We have vast potentials across our rural landscape waiting to be tapped but the lack of a sustained focus from successive governments has hindered realization of that goal. The NABARD chairman's assertion that it was looking to increase its involvement in the State is welcome and if NABARD can meet the goals in the region set by it, it will be a major boost to the rural economy.

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- With the Union Budget 2021-22 putting emphasis on creation of agriculture and rural infrastructure, NABARD has its job cut out. Being a facilitator of agriculture and rural development through creation of assets and infrastructure, it needs to give a harder push to meet its mandate. The role of the State Government will also be crucial here, as it needs to coordinate with NABARD in identifying the most needy requiring the interventions and addressing their concerns.
- Agriculture, horticulture, fishery, dairy, piggery, goatery, floriculture, etc., are areas holding immense scope in the State. No doubt, some progress has certainly been made in these spheres in recent years due to the active involvement of some local entrepreneurs and meaningful interventions by agencies such as NABARD but a lot still remains to be done.
- For realizing all this, the need is to prepare a roadmap with a vision and go about implementing it with local rural populaces as active stakeholders. The fishery sector in particular has seen some growth in the past few years with many youths taking to it in a big way.
- Since development is an interconnected matter that calls for interventions in diverse spheres, a holistic approach is a dire need. The farmers or the fish producers, for instance, will need proper all-weather road connectivity to sell their yield and earn adequate remuneration.
- Similarly, they will also need market linkage, institutional finance, etc., to begin their ventures and sustain it as well. A young entrepreneur who has done a commendable job in pisciculture and has successfully involved hundreds of villagers in the venture with NABARD support recently recalled how a reputed bank had denied him a loan of just Rs 10,000 which he needed to start his firm a few years back.
- If bank officials exhibit such a mentality, creating a bunch of spirited entrepreneurs will remain a mirage. Many a time, our prospective farmers or entrepreneurs lack the expertise and technological knowhow to be successful in their ventures.
- Thankfully, NABARD is now reaching out to many such needy farmers with the required interventions but it is still a long way to go. Promoting startups in the agriculture sector is another area where NABARD can play a key role.

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## Of sacrilege and sedition

- It is now almost a fortnight since the happenings at Delhi's iconic Red Fort took place. The vandalism and violence on Republic Day, which left scores of policemen injured and public property damaged, has been widely condemned. The organizers of the farmers' protests have disowned the violence and called it a subversive act carried out by a small section aimed at discrediting their two-month-long peaceful movement against the farm Bills.
- The police have now swung into action to arrest those alleged of involvement in the violence. But, now that some time has passed and immediate passions about 'desecration' of the Red Fort seem to have somewhat subsided, it would be appropriate to have a dispassionate look at the events.
- First of all, let us take up the role of the electronic media which is so vital in such situations. Most would agree that the media as a whole was so swept by narrow nationalist passions that it overlooked its primary duty of presenting the truth before the public. It too fell into the trap of terming the Red Fort incident as an act of sedition and a sacrilege.
- As Patricia Mukhim, leading journalist of the region, aptly commented that it appeared that "the entire media in this country has turned into apologists for the Government and has demonized the farmers' protests". Several television channels not only labelled the protesters as Khalistanis or Maoists but also took upon themselves the responsibility of suggesting the strongest legal and administrative measures against them for 'dishonouring' the national flag. Listening to these discussions, one couldn't help but wonder that the days of independent broadcasting are finally over!
- But, fortunately, there were some news channels as well as newspapers which kept the balance, expressing outrage at the events and at the same time trying to stick to the truth in describing the course of the protests in Delhi. One such channel which made us proud was Prag News and its chief editor, PrashantaRajguru.
- Beginning his show by condemning the violence and giving the administration's version of the events, Rajguru presented graphics to show that (a) the national flag flying from the ramparts of the Red Fort was not touched by the protesters and no dishonour was shown to it; (b) that no Khalistani flag had been raised; rather some protesters raised the religious flag of the Sikhs, the Nishan Sahib on a pole much below the tricolour; (c) that, interestingly, the peasant leaders had come to know well four days in advance on the January 22 itself that there would be an attempt to discredit the movement through

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violence; (d) that one Dip Siddhu, who was close to the ruling dispensation, was the main agent provocateur.

- Here was a journalist who refused to be swayed by the demands of partisan reporting and showed his fidelity to journalistic ethics by trying to place the facts before the public. This is indeed commendable at a time when the media has been marked by growing inability or unwillingness to sift truth from emotion.
- Similarly, a very balanced editorial of *The Assam Tribune* of January 28, while condemning the incident, said that agent provocateurs had infiltrated into the protesters. It did not say that the national flag was dishonoured and that the protesters “hoisted flags of their own beside the national tricolour”.
- Not blaming just the farmers alone for the happenings, the newspaper called for a dispassionate look at the event.
- I would like to quote the last lines of the edit because these are a really fine example of balanced, responsible observations by a newspaper while commenting on a happening which has unleashed so much of patriotic passion over clouding the rational mind: “Equally culpable is the Union Government, which has failed to take tangible measure to assuage the concerns of the farmers, no matter that the latter has been protesting for over two months.
- Far from weakening the farmers’ cause, the Republic Day episode should be a wake-up call to the Centre to resolve the issue before things get more out of hand.”
- The Government, however, seems set for confrontation with the farmers rather than dialogue. Although there is talk of willingness for dialogue, actual preparations on a war footing under way to tackle the farmers’ protest with a ban on internet services, the withdrawal of Twitter accounts and the final build-up at the entry points to Delhi.
- With three-tier barriers of barbed concertina wires, concrete road blocks, metal barricading, stone boulders and layers of nails, it appears as if the security forces are trying to block an invasion from a foreign army! Has the Government declared war on its own farmers despite the fact that the latter have made clear their resolve to continue with their protest peacefully?
- It is as if the farmers have lost all right to enter their own capital just because of the one-day happenings on Republic Day!

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# CIVIL SERVICES ACHIEVERS' POINT

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

- Not content with all these measures, FIRs have been lodged against the farmer leaders, sedition charges have been slapped on leading journalists of the country and attempts have been made to break up the protest by allowing 'locals' to enter the protest sites and uproot some tents.
- This has naturally led to confrontation with the farmers and the police moved in only after the situation almost went out of hand. The purpose was clearly to drive a wedge between the farmers and the local people.
- All this is part of a subtle attempt to play up the feelings of the citizens of Delhi that their city is under siege and that unruly farmers are out to create disorder. What is being forgotten or overlooked by those who see the Republic day events as a 'profanity' and 'sacrilege' is that this was a plain law-and-order situation which the administration was totally unprepared to face.
- To read more meanings into such protests and to view the farmer protesters as 'Khalistanis' and 'anti-nationals' would be doing great harm to the country's socio-political fabric. To adopt binaries like 'patriots' and 'anti-nationals' would be embarking on a dangerous course.
- Over the past few years, the time-honoured institutions of our country on which the wheels of democracy run have been seriously compromised and the diversity and plurality which have marked our polity since independence has been under severe strain in the face of polarizing politics.
- The strength of any democracy does not lie merely in elections but in a participatory exercise by its citizens in an atmosphere where dissent is not only acknowledged but also accommodated.
- In fact the strength of a democracy does not lie in a search for conformity but is proportionate to such dissent. To ignore this would be to facilitate the rise of authoritarianism as a first decisive step towards the slide towards fascism.

## Tea cheers

- The British, in the first half of the 19th century, had set up the Indian tea industry as an alternative source of the brew to that of China. It was the capitalist ethos of acquiring maximum profit with minimum investment that had been the guiding motive of the industry in colonial times.

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- Such crass commercialism had resulted in anomalous consequences whereby tea plantations took on the shape of insulated islands incapable of playing any tangible, beneficial role in the economies of the locales they had been set up in.
- The biggest victims had been, without doubt, the tea workers, originally conscripted from regions of central India to work in the plantations, and subjected to the harshest of work conditions by white planters who had been driven less by altruistic and more by mercenary motives.
- With India's independence, work and living conditions of the tea worker community have improved to an extent, but not to the desirable level. This had been because the industry had remained a capitalist one, a situation which had made successive Central and State governments leave worker welfare to the owners of plantations and adopt a hands off policy.
- While progressive tea companies and some proprietorial concerns tried their best to provide health, housing and education facilities to their workers, commercial compulsions had ensured that such facilities remained a far cry in many tea plantations.
- The State BJP Government in its first term had tried to address the issue by having workers open bank accounts and assist them with cash handouts. But such a method does not really contribute towards a holistic amelioration of their core needs which include health, housing and education facilities.
- It is in such a context that the budgetary provision of Rs 1,000 crore for the welfare of tea workers in West Bengal and Assam made by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman induces such cheer.
- Tea associations have hailed the provision in the expectation it will ensure that 'the tea estate population would be provided a more comprehensive coverage on welfare schemes related to housing, education, sanitation and medical facilities'. Since the tea industry is the biggest employer of women in the country, the allotment would also boost welfare schemes for this segment of society.
- Moreover, allocation for road improvement would develop communication infrastructure which is important for tea gardens located in remote regions. One, of course, must not quibble over the fact that the allocation, coming as it does on the eve of Assembly elections in Assam and Bengal, had been unabashedly made with an eye on netting voters, since similar allocations had not been made for other tea-growing States like Tripura.

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- But, as the saying goes, one must not look a gift horse in the mouth, and if the allocation improves the work and living conditions of tea workers, so be it!



# CSAP

CIVIL SERVICES ACHIEVER'S POINT

*Leadership through knowledge...*

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