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CIVIL SERVICES ACHIEVERS' POINT

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

THE ASSAM TRIBUNE ANALYSIS

DATE - 12TH APRIL 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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Leadership through knowledge...

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NEWS ARTICLES

Indian should cherish 'current positive trend', says PLA

- With no forward movement at the latest round of Sino-India military talks on disengagement from the remaining areas in eastern Ladakh, the Chinese military has said that India should cherish the “current positive trend” of de-escalation and cooling down of tensions in the border area.
- A day after the 11th round of Corps Commander-level talks that lasted for 13 hours, the Indian Army said in a statement on Saturday that both sides held a detailed deliberation on the disengagement of troops in the remaining friction points of Hot Springs, Gogra and Depsang in eastern Ladakh and agreed to jointly maintain stability on the ground, avoid any new incidents and resolve the outstanding issues in an “expeditious manner”.
- There was no visible forward movement at the latest round of military talks between the two countries as the Chinese delegation came to the talks with a “premeditated mindset” and did not show any flexibility in moving forward on the disengagement process at the remaining friction points in eastern Ladakh, people familiar with the negotiations said in New Delhi on Saturday.
- In its press release on the latest round of talks between two militaries held on April 9, China’s People’s Liberation Army (PLA) said India should cherish the de-escalation and cooling in the border area, in an apparent reference to the disengagement of troops from the most contentious area of the Pangong Lake in February.
- Both sides should also adhere to the consensus reached in the previous talks, the state-run China Global Television Network (CGTN) on Sunday quoted the press release by a PLA spokesperson on the talks held at the Chushul border point on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.
- “We hope the Indian side could cherish the current positive trend of de-escalation and cooling in the border area, adhere to the relevant agreements between the two armies and the consensus of the previous talks and move towards the same direction as the Chinese side to jointly maintain peace and tranquility in the border area,” a spokesperson for the Western Theater Command of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) said in a statement.
- The Indian Army statement said it was highlighted at the talks that completion of disengagement in other areas would pave the way for considering “de-escalation of forces” and ensure full restoration of peace and tranquillity in the region.
- The Indian delegation, led by Commander of the Leh-based 14 Corps Lt Gen PGK Menon, particularly insisted on resolving outstanding issues in Hot Springs, Gogra and Depsang.

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- “The two sides had a detailed exchange of views for the resolution of the remaining issues related to disengagement along the LAC in eastern Ladakh,” the Indian Army said. – PTI

India, Lanka finalise ‘air bubble’ pact

- Travel between India and Sri Lanka will become easier in the near future as the two countries have finalised an ‘air bubble’ agreement.
- Notably, the current international flights are operated under the ‘air bubble’ agreements between India and other countries.
- This special arrangement mandates certain prerequisites along with permissions which are needed for passengers to undertake travel.
- At present, all international flights to and from India are suspended sans those which are specially allowed or are under the bubble agreements.
- According to a tweet by the Ministry of Civil Aviation: “Attention travellers! India has finalised an air bubble agreement with Sri Lanka, making it the 6th such arrangement in SAARC region & the 28th in total. All the eligible passengers will be able to travel between the 2 countries in the near future. Travel safe!”
- Earlier, the domestic airlines operated to Sri Lanka from various Indian cities. – IANS

Govt may hike FDI limit in pension sector to 74%

- The government may hike foreign direct investment (FDI) limit in the pension sector to 74 per cent and a Bill in this regard is expected to come in the next Parliament session, according to sources.
- Last month, Parliament approved a Bill to increase FDI limit in the insurance sector from 49 per cent to 74 per cent. The Insurance Act, 1938 was last amended in 2015 which raised FDI limit to 49 per cent, resulting in foreign capital inflow of Rs 26,000 crore in the last 5 years.
- Amendment to Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Act, 2013 seeking to raise FDI limit in the pension sector may come in the monsoon session or winter session depending on various approvals, sources said.
- Currently, the FDI in the pension fund is capped at 49 per cent.
- Besides, sources said, the amendment Bill may contain separation of NPS Trust from the PFRDA.

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- The powers, functions and duties of the NPS Trust, which are currently laid down under the PFRDA (National Pension System Trust) Regulations 2015, may come under a charitable trust or the Companies Act, they said.
- The intent behind this is to keep NPS Trust separate from the pension regulator and managed by a competent board of 15 members. Out of this, the majority of members are likely to be from the government as they, including States, are the biggest contributor to the corpus.
- The PFRDA was established for promoting and ensuring the orderly growth of the pension sector with sufficient powers over pension funds, the central recordkeeping agency and other intermediaries. It also safeguards the interest of members.
- The National Pension System (NPS) was introduced by the Government of India to replace the defined benefit pension system. NPS was made mandatory for all new recruits to the Central government service from January 1, 2004 (except the armed forces in the first stage) and has also been rolled out for all citizens with effect from May 1, 2009, on voluntary basis.
- The government had made a conscious move to shift from the defined benefit, pay-as-you-go pension scheme to defined contribution pension scheme, NPS, due to rising and unsustainable pension bill. The transition is aimed at freeing the limited resources of the government for more productive and socio-economic sectoral development. – PTI

Tezpur fast losing its sheen due to haphazard growth, encroachments

- The historically significant town of Tezpur is today a picture of utter neglect.
- Considered as the State's culture capital and a popular tourist destination, Tezpur is fast losing its past glory as it is afflicted with the malaise of encroachment on wetlands and government land, deteriorating civic amenities, haphazard construction, traffic woes, so on and so forth.
- Due to an alleged unholy nexus among a section of unscrupulous builders, government officials and land mafia, wetlands and plots of vacant government land under the Tezpur revenue circle have been encroached upon and commercial as well as residential buildings are being constructed in those areas in a haphazard manner.
- An ill-maintained traffic system and a lack of proper waste disposal measures, especially at the tourist spots, are spoiling the beauty of the town, which is endowed with unique natural surroundings and sites of archeological and mythological significance such as Agnigarh hillock, Chitrallekha Udyan (previously known as Cole Park), Owguri hillock, Dalimi Pahar (an archeological site), Ganesh Ghat, Bam-Parbatia stone archway, Rudrapad, and Ketakeshwar Dewalaya.

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- “Wetlands that serve as a natural drainage system of the town have now become wastelands due to human depredation,” rued noted environmentalist Saurav Barkataki.
- For the sorry state of affairs, he blamed the administration’s alleged failure to rein in those involved in the illegal activities.
- Barkataki urged the district administration to intervene immediately for the sake of restoring the past glory of the historic town.
- The wetlands in the heart of the town serve as natural drainage basins and play a key role in preventing waterlogging during the rainy season.
- Earlier, denizens of Tezpur had never experienced major civic problems like waterlogging, but nowadays due to the gradual encroachment on the wetlands, the town has begun experiencing this problem.
- There have been allegations that a rift between civic bodies like Tezpur Municipal Board and Town Development Authority is also posing hurdles in the efforts to develop the town and improve its civic amenities.



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Cheap nation, cheaper lives

- Recently in a tragic road accident, an elderly person in his 70s was instantly killed by a high-speeding motorcycle, witnessed helplessly by his own son at about 11.30 am, near the Jorhat Deputy Commissioner's office.
- One middle-aged person coming out of home with his spouse for an evening stroll was hit so hard by a speeding dumper near the Jorhat Christian Medical Hospital that the person was flung into air and drifted 20 feet away. A few years back in an almost identical accident, this writer lost his brother, an engineer, at a busy intersection in Guwahati. Hundreds of such unfortunate incidents keep happening day in and day out across Assam, which are more than enough for the multitude of our authorities that administer the governance at different layers in the State to stand up, take notice and initiate drastic measures.
- Our so-called welfare state is virtually in a deep stupor, totally unmindful of the disastrous consequences that our naive and unsuspecting common people have to endure in their day-to-day life while going out for their livelihood and sundry works.
- Surprisingly, the construction of our highways has so far been on-again and off-again basis for the last several years. The highways have thus turned themselves into dreaded killing fields with numerous accidents occurring everyday across Assam and no one knows when it is going to be a thing of the past.
- But the moot question is, does anyone ever get concerned over these gruelling episodes and their consequential social, economic and emotional quotient that bear upon the victim's relatives who have to silently tolerate the pain and miseries of a perennial kind due to the loss of the sole breadwinner and the loved ones, while the surviving ones left incapacitated for life with no social and government support mechanism to enable them to continue the daily drudgery called 'life'.
- One is constrained to strike a sour note that people who have been experiencing such intolerable pangs of suffering have to face a harrowing time of running from pillar to post to obtain reports, settlement of issues at police stations, hospitals, courts, insurance companies, banks and a host of other authorities to get justice and fair play, which is another episodic narrative that is no less painful than the death of the dear ones.
- The quality of governance is sliding at such a fast rate that the local public utilities of our towns and cities or the regulatory bodies of the government fall much short of their mandated role of enforcement of rules and regulations. The people manning these institutions fail to take the

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leadership role in ensuring compliance of even the most fundamental duties and responsibilities of a civilized life.

- Year after year the same kind of work ethics persists that have unabashedly failed to galvanize the mode or pace of doing work in public utilities or the government departments. Thus, all the tall talk of bringing them to a desired standard expected of a civilized human being is still a distant dream.
- The only sphere where the standard of governance has changed is the computerization, i.e., use of computers in typing, keeping records, scanning documents and sending reports to the higher-up through email. What is critically lacking is an urge to render service selflessly with a sense of duty and purpose. Very few government officials are forthcoming who can well relate themselves with the needs of the people around in a harmonious way.
- A cursory look around the towns/cities is suffice to figure out the indices of developmental works coming out in terms of utility services like public toilet, street light, parking space, children park, footways, etc.
- Whatever development has taken place is patchy and half-hearted, giving least thought and concern to the necessity of different age groups of people. It is hazardous for the children and old people to venture out for a morning or evening stroll or go on cycling as practically no free space is available for them. In the evening, reckless or drunk driving (commonplace in Assam) is a menace more dangerous than a pandemic.
- Some people, mostly young ones, leave their good senses at home not caring a hoot to traffic rules that make life hellish on the road, so it is better to stay put at home rather than to be hit hard and land in a hospital death bed or to be left disabled for life. It is ironic that last year, Assam witnessed more people dying in fatal road accidents than in the Covid-19 pandemic.
- So, the situation calls for a simple but determined and ruthless action by the district police and transport departments to minimize the road accidents and create civic sense among the masses for the well-being of all the citizens. We have a surfeit of laws and regulation to handle all kinds of rash, drunk and negligent driving and thereby to devise harsh measures against the violators, irrespective of all levels.
- A lax nation not knowing how to respect the laws of the land in the strictest sense of the term is not a disciplined lot. The life of the commoner is getting cheaper and cheaper as the government machinery is feeble and unwieldy. The better days will not be in sight soon unless of course the people mend themselves and learn to live in a civilized manner respecting the laws of the land. Until then no government on earth can make things better.

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