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CIVIL SERVICES ACHIEVERS' POINT

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

THE ASSAM TRIBUNE ANALYSIS

DATE - 2ND 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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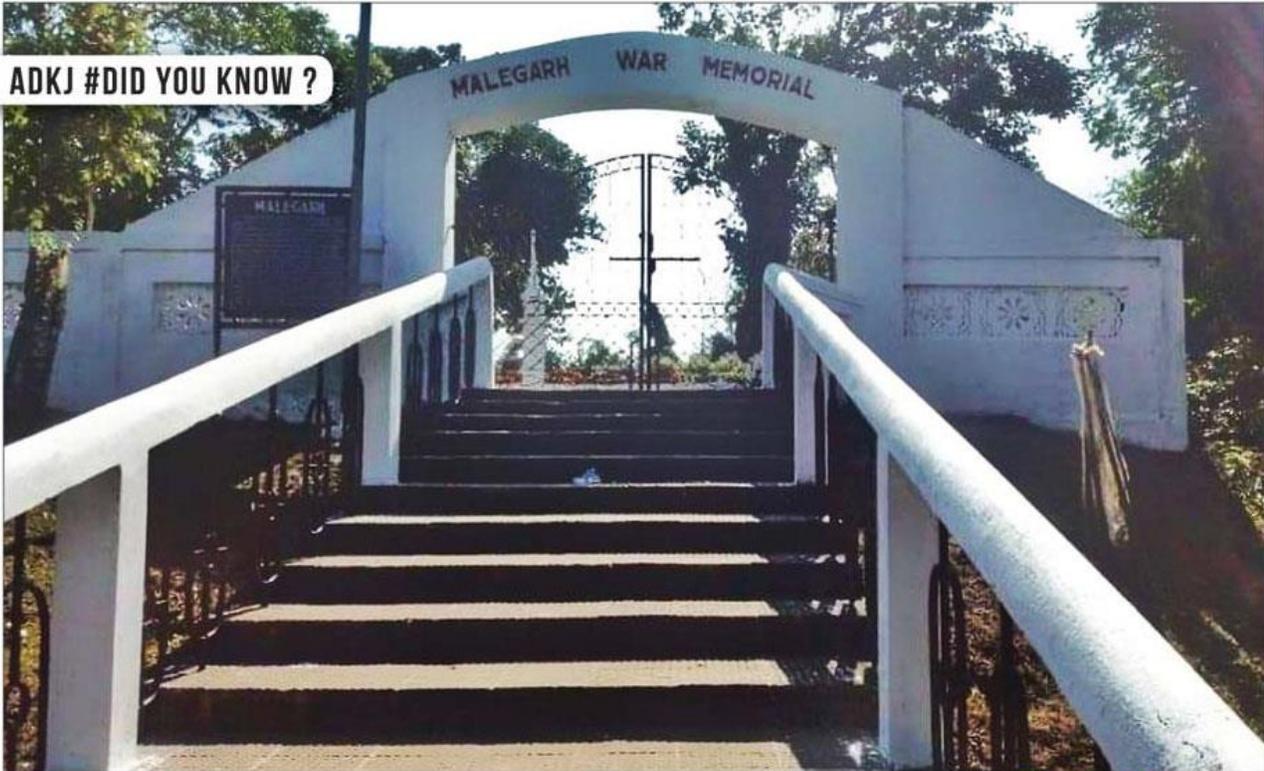


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ADKJ #DID YOU KNOW ?



Mutiny at Malegarh

Malegarh Fort located near Indo-Bangla border in Karimganj district is the only site of Sepoy Mutiny in the North-East. Twenty-six sepoys of the revolting 34th Native Infantry and five soldiers of East India Company including Maj. Byng, commandant of Sylhet Light Infantry, were buried at the Fort.



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ARTICLES

'Influx of Myanmarese refugees at Indian, Thai borders likely just the start'

- The influx of refugees from Myanmar at the Indian and Thai borders and elsewhere is “ominous” and likely just the beginning, UN Secretary General’s Special Envoy on Myanmar has told the Security Council, warning that regional security could deteriorate further and no country in the region would want a “failed state” as their neighbour.
- Myanmar’s military toppled the country’s government on February 1 and seized power for one year, detaining top political figures, including de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi and President U Win Myint. The coup sparked protests and other acts of civil disobedience, leading to the deaths of hundreds in military crackdown.
- The 15-nation Council held closed consultations on Myanmar on Wednesday, days after the country witnessed the bloodiest day since the demonstrations against the February 1 coup began, with security forces killing at least 107 individuals – including seven children on March 27.
- In her remarks to the closed meeting of the Council, obtained by PTI, Special Envoy of Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Myanmar Christine Schraner Burgener said that a robust international response requires a unified regional position, especially with the neighbouring countries leveraging their influence towards stability in Myanmar.
- “The regional security and economic consequences are getting worse and could deteriorate further. The influx of refugees at the Indian and Thai borders and elsewhere is ominous and likely just the beginning,” she said.
- Burgener said she intends to visit the region soon, hopefully next week, in continuation of her close consultations with members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other leaders. “I firmly believe that no ASEAN countries or others sharing their borders with Myanmar would want a failed state as their neighbour,” she said.
- Burgener told the Council that she counts on the regional actors to play their “unique and important” roles to convince the military what they are aiming for will not work and help navigate an orderly and peaceful way out of this situation.
- The special envoy called on those who have access to the Tatmadaw, Myanmar’s armed forces, to let them know how severely its actions have damaged the reputation of the country, “has become a threat to the future of its citizens as well as the security of neighbouring countries.”
- She stressed it is important “we do not lend legitimacy to its rule or recognise its power or attempts by the military to create a facade of “business as usual”.

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- Myanmar shares an over 1,600-km-long unfenced and porous land border with India as well as a maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal. Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram share an international boundary with Myanmar. Arunachal Pradesh shares a 520-km border with Myanmar while Nagaland shares a 215-km border with the country.
- Last week, the Manipur government issued a circular to the Deputy Commissioners (DCs) of districts bordering Myanmar not to open camps to provide food and shelter to refugees fleeing the neighbouring country after the coup but withdrew it three days later to avoid potential public anger.
- While advising the DCs to “politely turn away” those trying to sneak into India, Special Secretary (Home) H Gyan Prakash wrote that in case of grievous injuries, medical attention may be provided on humanitarian considerations. – PTI

India slams violence in Myanmar, urges maximum restraint

- India has condemned the violence in Myanmar and condoled the loss of life, as it urged maximum restraint and called for the release of detained leaders.
- Myanmar’s military toppled the country’s government on February 1 and seized power for one year, detaining top political figures, including de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi and President U Win Myint. The coup sparked protests and other acts of civil disobedience, leading to the deaths of hundreds in military crackdown.
- The UN Security Council held closed consultations on the situation in Myanmar on Wednesday.
- India’s Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador T S Tirumurti tweeted that in his remarks in the closed meeting, he “made these points: Condemn violence, Condole loss of lives, Urge maximum restraint, Our steadfast commitment to democratic transition, Release of detained leaders and welcome @ASEAN efforts.”
- He added that during the meeting he emphasised for the “Situation to be resolved peacefully, Need greater engagement, Meet the hopes and aspirations of the people and extend assistance to Rakhine state development programme.” Last week, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned in the “strongest terms” the killing of dozens of civilians, including children and young people, by security forces in Myanmar.
- “The continuing military crackdown, which today resulted in the highest daily death toll since demonstrations against the coup began last month, is unacceptable and demands a firm, unified and resolute international response. It is critical to find an urgent solution to this crisis,” the UN chief had said on March 27, the bloodiest day since the demonstrations against the February 1 coup began, when security forces killed at least 107 people, including 7 children.

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- Guterres reiterated his urgent appeal to the military to refrain from violence and repression and said those responsible for the serious human rights violations committed in Myanmar must be held accountable. The Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Myanmar, Christine Schraner Burgener also briefed the Council's closed consultations. – PTI

Govt cites oversight, withdraws small savings schemes rate cut

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman today said the government will roll back a steep interest rate cut on small saving schemes such as PPF and NSC, saying it was an oversight – a move being seen as an attempt by the BJP to contain the fallout of a decision hitting the common man in the ongoing elections in West Bengal, Assam and three other States.
- While the government routinely announces interest rates for small saving schemes at the end of every quarter, the Wednesday's decision to cut interest rate by up to 1.1 per cent across various small savings schemes, including the National Savings Certificates (NSC) and Public Provident Fund (PPF), came a day before the second phase of polling in West Bengal including the political hotbed Nandigram, from where West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is contesting.
- The decision to roll back citing "oversight" was taken hours after announcing the steepest cut in the rate on small savings schemes.
- "Interest rates of small savings schemes of GoI shall continue to be at the rates which existed in the last quarter of 2020-2021, i.e., rates that prevailed as of March 2021. Orders issued by oversight shall be withdrawn," Sitharaman said in an early morning tweet.
- Interest rate on Public Provident Fund (PPF) was reduced by 0.7 per cent to 6.4 per cent while National Savings Certificate (NSC) was to earn 0.9 per cent less at 5.9 per cent.
- The highest cut of 1.1 per cent was effected in the one-year term deposit. The new rate was brought down to 4.4 per cent as compared to 5.5 per cent.
- Interest rates for small savings schemes are notified on a quarterly basis.
- Taking a dig at the Finance Minister after she announced that the government will withdraw orders to cut interest rate on small savings schemes, the Congress on today said one can imagine the functioning of the economy when such a duly approved order affecting crores of people can be issued by an "oversight".
- Once restored, PPF and NSC will carry an annual interest rate of 7.1 per cent and 6.8 per cent, respectively.
- One-year term deposit scheme to earn a higher interest rate of 5.5 per cent during the first quarter of the current fiscal while the girl child savings scheme Sukanya Samridhi Yojana account will earn 7.6 per cent as against reduced rate of 6.9 per cent.

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- Accordingly, the interest rate for the five-year senior citizens savings scheme would be retained at 7.4 per cent. The interest on the senior citizens' scheme is paid quarterly.
- Interest rate on savings deposits to be restored at 4 per cent annually from the reduced rate of 3.5 per cent.
- Term deposits of one to five years will fetch interest rates in the range of 5.5-6.7 per cent, to be paid quarterly. – PTI

RBI extends compliance timeline by 6 months

- The Reserve Bank of India on Wednesday extended the timeline by six months to comply with its guidelines related to recurring online transactions with Additional Factor of Authentication (AFA), but reprimanded players that the non-compliance is a “serious concern”.
- RBI had directed all banks including RRBs, NBFCs, and payment gateways to comply with AFA for automatic recurring payment by March 31, 2021, in order to make digital transaction safe and protect customers from fraudulent transactions.
- However, some of the players failed to meet the deadline and approached the RBI seeking extension of the deadline.
- “It is, however, noted that the framework has not been fully implemented even after the extended timeline. This non-compliance is noted with serious concern and will be dealt with separately. The delay in implementation by some stakeholders has given rise to a situation of possible large-scale customer inconvenience and default,” RBI said in a statement.
- To prevent any inconvenience to the customers, Reserve Bank of India has decided to extend the timeline for the stakeholders to migrate to the framework by six months, i.e., till September 30, 2021, it said.
- “Any further delay in ensuring complete adherence to the framework beyond the extended timeline will attract stringent supervisory action,” RBI cautioned.
- In August 2019, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had issued a framework for processing of e-mandates on recurring online transactions. Initially applicable to cards and wallets, the framework was extended in January 2020 to cover Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions as well.
- The statement said the requirement of AFA has made digital payments in India safe and secure. – PTI

Leadership through knowledge...

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Dada Saheb Phalke award for Rajinikanth

- Superstar Rajinikanth will be honoured with the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar announced on Thursday.
- Dadasaheb Phalke Award, Indian cinema's highest honour for an artiste, for the year 2019, will be presented to Rajinikanth on May 3.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed Rajinikanth for his contribution to cinema while congratulating him on the honour. The superstar dedicated his award to people who have been a part of his journey.
- Announcing the award for Rajinikanth, Javadekar said, "India every year gives Dadasaheb Phalke award to a film personality. This year this selection has been made by a jury comprising Asha Bhonsle, Mohanlal, Biswajit Chatterjee, Shankar Mahadevan and Subhash Ghai."
- "They unanimously recommended that superstar Rajinikanth be conferred with Dadasaheb Phalke award and we accepted it," he said.
- For about 50 years, Rajinikanth has been the "uncrowned king" of the film world, Javadekar said, hailing the superstar.
- "He (Rajinikanth) has been shining like the sun in the film world. He has created a space in the hearts of the people through his talent, hard work and diligence," he said.
- The Information and Broadcasting Minister expressed confidence that the country will be delighted on Rajinikanth being bestowed with this honour.
- He said the award will be presented to Rajinikanth on May 3 along with the National Film Awards.
- To a question that the announcement comes just ahead of Assembly polls in Tamil Nadu, Javadekar shot back, "This is an award related to the film world and Rajinikanth has been working for 50 years...one must ask proper questions." – PTI

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Improving social skills in autism

- When a child has been recently diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), there arose an uncomfortable wave of emotions in the family. Even though the parents had suspected something was not alright for a while, a denial of the fact is natural on their part.
- However, denial is not a wise decision as it only delays intervention and treatment of the condition. Besides, parents can also be waylaid by a lot of misguided information. However, this emotional upheaval can be used rather productively towards a goal to help our child live a fulfilling life.
- The biggest concern in such a situation is misinformation regarding ASD which the parents might gather from not so correct sources. Whatever might be the presenting features of autism, a few core features are constant with or without the comorbidities. These core clinical features include: impaired social communication and interaction (e.g., non-verbal communication, verbal communication, social relationships); restricted and repetitive behaviour, interests and activities (e.g., stereotyped behaviours, insistence on sameness).
- Most parents get alarmed only when they realize that their child is not speaking in the same manner as his/her sibling, cousin or the neighbourhood child does. But unless a child learns how to interact with people, observe and imitate people and understand what is being said, he/she will never pick up the nuances of speech and language. Therefore, this important milestone of developing social communication skills must be present for simultaneous language development.
- The ingredients for speech and language development include interacting skills, understanding skills and expressive skills. A typically developing two- or three-month-old baby would look intently at the mother and smile back at her when smiled at.
- When a mother tries to draw the attention of an eight- or a 10-month-old baby towards an object, the child must look at the object along with purposeful looking back and forth between the object of interest and the mother. This 'joint attention' is an important milestone to be achieved for development of social communication skill and this is lacking or impaired in individuals with autism.
- Besides this, if a child does not respond to his/her name call consistently by 12 months, shows more interest in objects and gadgets than people and if it is difficult to grab the attention of the child when we talk to them, then it should be alarming to the parents and an opinion from the paediatrician should be taken.
- Understanding skills is another important foundation for language development. By 12-18 months of age, a child should be able to follow directions given to them. By one year a child should be

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able follow one step command, by two year two steps and by three years, three steps command. This is the development of receptive language.

- Similarly, expressive skill development should occur according to age. A child must have an intention to communicate through gestures or expressions like waving a bye, blowing a kiss or pointing to an object of interest before they actually start to speak.
- Therefore, we must encourage the development of these skills in the initial years of life whether there is delay or not. Getting down to your child's level, playing social interactive games, reading aloud and talking to them are so immensely beneficial.
- You must also encourage your child to look at you to share experiences. Even if he is playing with his favourite toy, you must be included in the game. Play is the child's most natural form of expression and is not trivial or frivolous. Limiting screen time cannot be overemphasized as the screen can never be a replacement to an interactive parent. One has to be silly, funny, animated and playful with the child.
- In order to improve understanding skills, simplify what you say to the child and speak in short, clear phrases. We can talk about what the child is paying attention to and ask the child to follow requests throughout the day like: 'show me this', 'give me the ball', 'where is the doll', etc. Teach the child how to follow your commands with prompting and gestures.
- Improving their expressive skills can be worked upon by teaching them how to imitate actions during play, bathing time and meal time.
- We can practice speaking in simple familiar words and encourage them to repeat. Focusing on words your child needs to say to get what he/she wants like words for toys, food items and events can be helpful.
- A joint assessment of any child with developmental delay by a paediatrician, a clinical psychologist, a speech pathologist and an occupational therapist is essential as it is a holistic approach and many other comorbidities may be associated.
- Parents make a big impact on the child's developing skills. They must get their child out in the community. They can join the parents' support group and support each other, educate family and friends. As the African proverb goes, 'It takes a village to raise a child.' Likewise, the school, neighbourhood and community can contribute a lot towards the development of the child.
- Lastly, parents must take care of themselves and make some time for themselves so that they can be of help to their own child.

Non-implementation of Clause 6 report

Leadership through knowledge...

- The recent comments of Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, one of the seniormost and influential ministers of Assam Government, regarding the report on the Clause 6 of the Assam Accord presented by the

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high-level committee led by former Justice Biplab Kumar Sharma and the uncertainty over its implementation, have initiated a new controversy across the State.

- Dr Sarma often by commenting on sensitive matters intends to maintain the political attention and the intention behind highlighting such an issue has got deep meanings certainly associated with vote bank politics.
- The question is, why did Dr Sarma make such comments on this particular issue all of a sudden even though the Assam Government is not authorized to do so? When the entire Assam was in turmoil demanding the scrapping of the CAB 2016, then to extinguish the people's anger, a high-level committee was formed. On January 6, 2019, the Union Cabinet formed a high-level committee under the chairmanship of retired IAS officer, Madan Prasad Bezbaruah, to make the Clause 6 of the Assam accord functional under which the Assamese people will enjoy constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards.
- The members of this committee were Subhash Chandra Das, former president of the Asam Sahitya Sabha Dr Nagen Saikia, former editor of *The Sentinel* Dhirendranath Bezbaruah, educationist Dr Mukunda Rajbangshi, the then Advocate General of Assam Ramesh Borpatragohain, renowned writer Rongbong Terang, a delegate member of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) and a Joint Secretary of the Union Home Ministry.
- This committee which proposed to submit a report within seven months had promised to extend suggestions to make necessary laws to secure the languages of Assamese and other indigenous communities, Assamese identity, culture and heritage. Coining the formation of this committee as a historic incident, Finance Minister of Assam Government Dr Sarma, in a press meet, commented that Assam is gradually in the process of becoming an indigenous State.
- After extending the appropriate suggestions by the committee to the Central Government, Assam's Legislative Assembly, *panchayats* and municipalities would become the base for the indigenous people. It is because, based on the suggestions of the committee, the Central Government would reserve seats for the indigenous communities. On January 6, 2019, Dr Sarma while addressing a press meet stated that "We will do everything for the interest of the indigenous people.
- If required we shall amend the Constitution." Mentioning the matter of constitutional safeguards to the Assamese community, he brought Article 371 of the Indian Constitution to everyone's notice and said: "...once it is included in Article 371 of the Constitution, the decision cannot be challenged in the court of law."
- After this, the AASU alleged that the Central Government has already violated Clause 5 of the Assam Accord by enforcing the mentioned Act. That is why, there lies no point in implementing Clause 6. Instead of reforming the previous committee which was formed under the chairmanship of Home Secretary GK Pillai along with the Assam Government, Central Government and the

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representatives of the AASU, the formation of a new committee was considered a deception to the Assamese people and the AASU refused to be a part of this new committee.

- Subsequently, one after another the members started to resign from the committee. And at last, the committee became invalid after the resignation of the chairman himself. The immediate collapse of this Clause 6 implementation committee in its initial stage did not bother Dr Sarma and the Assam Government did not pay any heed at all.
- The BJP-led State Government did not even form another committee instantly. Rather, after completing the process of implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), Dr Sarma in January 2020 showed utter disrespect to the Assam Accord by stating, "Despite the huge protests by the Assamese people, the Hindu Bangladeshis will be settled in Assam. According to the CAA, 2019, providing citizenship to the Hindu Bangladeshis who entered India till December 31, 2014 will not be a violation of the Assam Accord. The Assam Accord is not a foolproof document."
- Even though the next committee formed by the Central Government in July 2019 submitted a new report on February 25, 2020, it was both amusing and significant to see Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma commenting on it after the question of what the Assam Government had done with the report in the entire year was raised. Significantly, on September 20, 2020, Union Home Minister Amit Shah expressed that this report produced by the high-level committee would be examined by the constitutional experts.
- Following the Home Ministry's decision, Dr Sarma said: "If any legal flaw arises in the report, it will be sent back to the State and the Home Minister doesn't want this to happen. Therefore, in order to avoid legal problems in future, he wants it to be examined by constitutional experts. If the report gets rejected due to legal flaws, it will send a wrong message to the people of Assam."
- Now the questions are: 1) Is there any committee formed by the Home Ministry in order to check the constitutional validity of the report produced by the high-level committee chaired by a former high court judge? If so, then who are the expert members of this committee? 2) If the Central Government has formed such a committee, did they provide any opinion regarding this report? Did this committee opine on the possibilities, or otherwise, of implementing the recommendations of the Clause 6 panel? If the ministry did not form any such expert committee till now or not make any comment even after its formation, then, on what account Dr Sarma said that the committee's suggestions cannot be implemented?
- It can be understood that such comments are made with some purpose. The Hindu Bangladeshis have realized that although they can acquire citizenship through the CAA, they wouldn't enjoy any rights even after being India's citizens if Clause 6 of the Assam Accord gets implemented.
- So, such comments claiming that the recommendations made by the high-level committee are non-implementable, that too prior to the State Assembly election, will only benefit the BJP in its vote

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bank politics. It is with this intention, in all probability, such politically-motivated comments were made.



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