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CIVIL SERVICES ACHIEVERS' POINT

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

THE ASSAM TRIBUNE ANALYSIS

DATE - 8TH 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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ADKJ #DID YOU KNOW ?



Akshaya Patra

Akshaya Patra Foundation runs the world's largest Mid-Day Meal programme, serving food to school children in many states of India. "Akshaya Patra" was a divine vessel that provided unlimited food and gifted by Surya (sun god) to Yudhishtira in the *Mahabharata*.



/apnedeshkojano contribution@apnedeshkojano.com

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NEWS ARTICLES

India, Japan sign MoU on research cooperation

- The Union Cabinet on Wednesday was apprised of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between India and Japan in areas of atmospheric science and technology, a statement said.
- The pact was signed between National Atmospheric Research Laboratory (NARL) and Department of Space and Research Institute for Sustainable Humanosphere (RISH), Kyoto University for academic and research cooperation and exchange in November 2020.
- “This MoU shall enable NARL and RISH to continue their cooperation in areas of atmospheric science and technology, collaborative scientific experiments/campaigns and related modelling studies utilising the research facilities of RISH and NARL, exchange of scientific materials, publications and information, joint research meetings and workshops, exchange of faculty members, students and researchers,” the statement said.
- The agreement would lead to mutual utilisation of facilities such as the Middle and Upper atmosphere (MU) radar in Shigaraki, Japan, the Equatorial Atmosphere Radar (EAR) in Kototabang, Indonesia and complementary instruments available from RISH, and the Mesosphere-Stratosphere-Troposphere (MST) radar and complementary instruments available at NARL.
- NARL and RISH have been collaborating in the area of atmospheric science and technology as well as exchange of scientists.
- This arrangement was formalised in 2008 through MoU, the statement added.
- The MoU was renewed in the year 2013. A fresh pact to promote collaborative research, as per the new guidelines, was signed in November 2020 by both sides and exchanged. – PTI

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Iran ship said to be Red Sea troop base off Yemen attacked

- An Iranian ship believed to be a base for the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard and anchored for years in the Red Sea off Yemen has been attacked, Tehran acknowledged on Wednesday.
- Iran's Foreign Ministry confirmed the attack on the MV *Saviz*, suspected to have been carried out by Israel – though Tehran did not immediately blame its regional archenemy.
- The assault came as Iran and world powers sat down in Vienna for the first talks about the US potentially rejoining the tattered deal aimed at curbing Iran's nuclear programme, showing events outside the negotiations could derail those efforts.
- The ship's long presence in the region, repeatedly criticised by Saudi Arabia, has come as the West and United Nations experts say Iran has provided arms and support to Yemen's Houthi rebels in that country's years long war. Iran denies arming the Houthis, though components found in the rebels' weaponry link back to Tehran.
- Iran previously described the *Saviz* as aiding in "anti-piracy" efforts in the Red Sea and the Bab el-Mandeb strait, a crucial chokepoint in international shipping. A statement attributed to Foreign Ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh described the ship as a commercial vessel.
- "Fortunately, no casualties were reported ... and technical investigations are under way," Khatibzadeh said. "Our country will take all necessary measures through international authorities."
- In an earlier state TV statement, an anchor cited a *New York Times* story, which quoted an anonymous US official telling the newspaper that Israel informed America it carried out an attack on Tuesday morning on the vessel. Israeli officials declined to comment about the assault when reached by The Associated Press, as did the *Saviz*'s owner.
- Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz, while refusing to say if his country launched the attack, described Iran and its regional allies as a major threat.
- "Israel must continue to defend itself," Gantz told journalists. "Any place we find an operational challenge and necessity, we will continue to act." Iranian President Hassan Rouhani called the Vienna talks a "success" while speaking to his Cabinet on Wednesday.
- "Today, one united statement is being heard that all sides of the nuclear deal have concluded that there is no better solution than the deal," he said.
- Iran's semiofficial Tasnim news agency, believed to be close to the Guard, reported that a limpet mine planted on *Saviz*'s hull caused the blast.
- A limpet mine is a type of naval mine that is attached to the side of a ship, usually by a diver. It later explodes, and can significantly damage a vessel. Iran did not blame anyone for the attack and said Iranian officials likely would offer more information in the coming days. – AP

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9 years after groundwater law, govt yet to notify rules

- Even after nine years of enacting the Assam State Ground Water (Control & Regulation) Act that seeks to regulate and control the development and management of groundwater in the State, the government is yet to notify the rules under it.
- As a result, rampant and unregulated boring for extracting groundwater continued in the State, amid fears that the water table in many stretches of Guwahati, where high-rises have been mushrooming and public water supply is in pathetic state, might be depleting.
- At a recent official meeting, the State Chief Secretary expressed grave concern that the matter of regulating groundwater extraction and usage is yet to be streamlined. "It is, therefore, necessary to notify the rules under the Act at the earliest to regulate the extraction of groundwater in the city as well as in other districts," he noted.
- Sources said following the meeting, an inquiry was carried out in nine random high-rises of the city where groundwater is extracted. None of them had any permission from any agency to do so.
- Also, a drive was carried out by the transport department and 49 cases of violation by water tankers were detected in the last four weeks. Some of the vehicles have been seized and penalty imposed. Many of the mini vehicles did not have any permission to operate.
- It is learnt that neither the GMC nor PHE or any other agency like Assam Urban Water Supply and Sewerage Board issues any no objection certificate for extraction of groundwater for commercial purpose. The Central Ground Water Board has been issuing permission for extraction of groundwater only for infrastructure and industrial purpose.
- Sources said the process of framing the rules under the Assam State Ground Water Act was initiated in 2016. Several rounds of discussions were held with stakeholder departments. Draft rules were also prepared and circulated to the departments for their views. These very draft rules are likely to be placed before the next cabinet.
- Sources in the Central Ground Water Board said it is not easy to get an exact picture of the groundwater level in Guwahati, given the existing mechanism of monitoring and rocky underlayers below the Earth's surface. Currently, monitoring is done mostly in dug wells.
- "We are planning to install some piezometers in the city soon for better monitoring of the groundwater level," the sources said.

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EDITORIALS

New Indo-Bangla engagement

- Bangladesh celebrated the 50th year of the liberation war a few days ago. At the invitation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the golden jubilee function in Dhaka as a part of improving the existing cordial relationship between the countries.
- After gaining independence from Pakistani domination in 1971 with military assistance from India, the poor and overpopulated country was ravaged by famine and food shortages during the early years of birth.
- The birth of the nation was seen with scepticism by the western observers who felt that there is no way that the government can feed all its population ravaged by the civil war.
- The starving population had to depend upon aid from India and other countries. But today Bangladesh has built its own identity by rapid socio-economic development after 50 years of existence.
- A look at present Bangladesh presents a completely different picture than we normally tend to view from our perspective. Today the country is doing better than India and Pakistan on social and human development indicators for several years now.
- The country has successfully lifted more than 25 million people out of poverty.
- For this reason the World Bank calls it 'an inspiring story of reducing poverty'. In 1971, the established GDP of Bangladesh was merely \$8.8 billion but 50 years later it has grown to \$300 billion.
- In terms of per capita GDP, the country has recently edged past of India's \$1876.53 to a new high of \$1887.97. Kaushik Basu, a former World Bank Chief Economist, states that in 2015 India's per capita GDP was around 40% higher than that of Bangladesh. This upward march of the country should inspire the rest of the Northeast region to follow with constant interaction with the neighbours.
- Considerable progress has been achieved by Bangladesh in the health and sanitation sectors. The country has launched a family planning programme from the 1970s and 1980s by social mobilization through the NGOs which helped improve the health sector. Development economist Jean Dreze and Nobel laureate Amartya Sen in their book *An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradictions* (2013) stated that Bangladesh has been outshining its larger neighbour in its indicators such as infant mortality, child immunization, female literacy, access to improved sanitation, and total fertility rate. In 1971 the life expectancy of the average Bangladeshi was

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merely 46.5 years and has risen to 72 years in 2018. Female schooling and contraceptive adoption have steadied the population growth rate. Effective steps have been taken over population control.

- There is a decline in child mortality rate as well. Bangladesh has made outstanding progress on female economic participation (world ranking 18) when compared to better economies such as Japan (33), Malaysia (40) and India (54).
- Bangladesh has made impressive gains in reducing gender disparities in primary and secondary schooling, which happens to be one of the objective of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).
- These gains have taken place since the early 1990s. The national development partners or the NGOs are the flag-bearers of these revolutionary changes in the social indicators. NGOs are involved in virtually every development activity in the country – relief and rehabilitation, poverty alleviation, health, education, social and environmental protection, etc. NGOs like BRAC, LGED and Kumudini are doing remarkable work in this direction and India can learn a lot from their activities.
- The bilateral relationship between the two countries can help India in gaining access to the activities so that their best practices can be put to use in India as well.
- This impressive economic growth of the neighbours can accelerate regional economic integration particularly with Northeast India. This will help Northeast India to promote trade and commerce with the neighbours as a part of the Act East Policy. Delhi can usefully focus on the platform of the BBIN sub-regional forum comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal.
- The BBIN can move towards an economic integration for better multilateralism practised by China. India has not laid up any roadmap to expedite the Act East Policy to expedite trade and commerce with all the BBIN or ASEAN countries and has excluded itself from the RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Programme). India's indecisiveness has facilitated the expansion of China's economic clout in Bangladesh. This has provided China a greater access to all across ASEAN nations.
- Bangladesh being a landlocked country has requested India to provide roads across Northeast India to gain access to the markets in the ASEAN countries including Myanmar, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam.
- A proposal for direct connectivity between Guwahati and Chittagong is already under consideration by India. Recently, the Indian and Bangladeshi Prime Ministers virtually inaugurated the Moitri Setu across the river Feni that forms the boundary between India and Bangladesh on the Tripura border and is situated close to the Chittagong port. This will be a great opportunity for Northeast India to get access to the sea so as to have a direct access to the port of Chittagong.

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- A recent study conducted by the World Bank has projected exponential growth in trade and commerce between the two countries and suggested a free trade agreement with liberal connectivity. India should immediately take this opportunity that can help the Northeast region to prosper as a part of the Act East Policy.
- Today the garment industry is driving the economy of Bangladesh. There has been an increase in employment and income-earning opportunities for women since the 1990s due to dynamism of the rural non-farm sector and the phenomenal growth of the export-oriented garment industry. The garment industry itself employs more than two million workers, mostly women having some formal education. The Indian investors should invest in the country so that the textile industry of India can be revived.
- The rise of our prominent neighbour should be seen as an opportunity for us also. There is a need for constructive engagement to become a major development partner in the overall economic development of Bangladesh.



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