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Illegal logging inside Dehing Patkai exposes forest dept inaction

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GUWAHATI, May 5: Large-scale illegal logging inside Dehing Patkai National Park during the past fortnight has exposed the shocking laxity of the forest department in protecting the park's invaluable floral wealth.

Over 35 large trees that include the State tree *halong* besides *mekai* and *titasopa* were chopped down by miscreants using mechanized chainsaw at Hukanjuri area of the park bordering Arunachal Pradesh. Many trees were even transported to Arunachal Pradesh through improvised roads

built by the miscreants.

It was only after media reports that the forest department launched an operation and managed to arrest a few loggers, including one said to be a kingpin of a nefarious timber smuggling racket, on April 28.

When asked about the developments that has cast a shadow over long-term conservation prospects of the last remaining stretch of biodiversity-rich rainforests in Assam, a top forest official told *The Assam Tribune* that there had been some laxity in monitoring and patrolling but "we have swung into action and intensified patrolling and combing operations



– corroborated by the arrest of a major forest criminal."

He added that an action plan was being prepared to augment manpower and infrastructure in the national

park. "We are working on a plan but to have all the facilities and logistics in place together with manpower will take a couple of years more," he said.

"We have already increased the number of guards with arms and ammunition – including a home guard company – manning the forest. The Hukanjuri area falls in a very difficult terrain and is hard to access from the Assam side but we are trying to ease the constraints. We are building a watchtower and repairing some jungle roads," he said, adding that illegal coal mining inside the forest has been stopped.

Conservationists, however, are far from assuaged by this. Mridupaban Phukan, who has extensively documented the Dehing Patkai National Park, said that

some urgent interventions were needed – in the Hukanjuri area in particular and the entire newly-inducted larger Jeypore part in general.

"The timber mafia is having a field day inside the forests as is evidenced from the audacity with which they are operating freely inside the forests. The forest department must crack down hard on them and ensure effective round-the-clock vigilance to save the forest from further destruction," he said.

Phukan also suspected that a section of corrupt forest officials could have a nexus with the illegal loggers.

Dihing Patkai NP

- Dihing Patkai, in focus a year ago for illegal coal mining in the vicinity, encompasses the erstwhile Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary, the Jeypore Reserve Forest and the western block of the Upper Dihing Reserve Forest.
- The 234.26-sq. km Dihing Patkai straddling eastern Assam's Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts is a major elephant habitat and 310 species of butterflies have been recorded there.
- The park has 47 species each of reptiles and mammals, including the tiger and clouded leopard.

In the 17th century, Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb had a French physician named François Bernier.

The French were the last colonial power to enter into trade with India. It was only in the seventeenth century that they did so, decades after the English and the Dutch entered into India for commercial purposes.

Like all colonial powers of that time, the French came in as traders but had greater aspirations. The French East India Company was founded in 1664.

They started meddling in the internal politics of the subcontinent and played their cards to their advantage. Even though they had a few successes in the beginning and were able to establish trading posts, the English ultimately ended up as the supreme power in the Indian subcontinent.

17th Century

- Both nations have a centuries-old history of trade relations.
- France entered the Indian Sub-continent as a colonial power

1947

- France established diplomatic relations with the newly independent India
- An agreement between France and India in 1948 stipulated that the inhabitants of France's Indian possessions would choose their political future

1962

- A treaty of cession was signed and ratified by the French Parliament
- India and France exchanged the Instruments of ratification under which France ceded to India full sovereignty over the territories it held

1998

- The two countries entered into a **Strategic Partnership** which is emblematic of their convergence of views on a range of international issues apart from a close and growing bilateral relationship

2015

- A joint status report established the current state of the bilateral relationship and plans for the future
- Also, both leaders invited over 100 world leaders to join *InsPA* (International Agency for Solar Policy & Application) – a global initiative to promote low-carbon renewable solar energy technologies

Modi, Macron agree on expanding ties



PARIS, May 5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron held extensive discussions on a range of bilateral and pressing global issues, including the raging conflict in Ukraine, the situation in the Indo-Pacific and terrorism, as the two top leaders agreed on a blueprint to work together in making the India-France strategic partnership a force for global good.

Modi, who arrived here on a brief working visit from Denmark on the final leg of his three-nation European tour, held one-on-one and delegation-level talks with Macron at the Elysee Palace on Wednesday night in their first meeting after the French leader.

Modi and Macron held discussions on the entire range of bilateral issues, including cooperation in defence, space, blue economy, civil nuclear and people-to-

The two leaders agreed on a blueprint to work together in making the India-France strategic partnership a force for global good.

people ties, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a press release.

The two leaders also took stock of the regional and global security outlook and discussed ways to work together in making the **India-France Strategic Partnership** a force for the global good. The Prime Minister's visit to France displayed the strong friendship and goodwill not only between the two countries but also between the two leaders, the release said.

Prime Minister Modi invited President Macron to visit

India at the earliest opportunity, the MEA release said.

India and France are strong strategic partners and the two leaders are also good friends, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra told reporters here.

Macron's renewed mandate and the conversations between Prime Minister Modi and the French President allow the two countries to build on existing strengths and success of the **India-France strategic partnership** and also jot out a blueprint for its next phase, he said.

"The two leaders held wide-ranging discussions on all the key areas of bilateral engagement, including in defence, space, civil nuclear cooperation and people-to-people linkages. They also discussed regional and global issues including developments in Europe and the Indo-Pacific. India and France see each other as key partners in the Indo-Pacific," Kwatra said.

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The areas of defence cooperation, space cooperation and civil nuclear cooperation constitute the three principal pillars of our Strategic Partnership.

- Apart from these traditional fields of cooperation, India and France are increasingly engaged in new areas of cooperation like climate change, sustainable growth and development, the International Solar Alliance etc.

India and France support a multi-polar world order.

- France has continued to support India's claim for permanent membership of the Security Council and the reforms of the United Nations.
- France has provided consistent support to India's candidature for the membership of all the four Multilateral Export Control regimes, viz. Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) and the Australia Group (AG)

India and France have consistently condemned terrorism and have resolved to work together for the adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) in the UN

Of 'Lakhman Rekha' and the tussle



■ Pranjal Bhattacharyya

Hardly had twenty-four hours elapsed since the delivery of the speech by the Chief Justice of India NV Ramana at the joint conference of chief ministers and chief justices of high courts in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 28, asking all to be mindful about 'Lakhman Rekha' while discharging their duties, when the tussle started in Assam between the Legislature and the Judiciary. The 'Lakhman Rekha' is nothing but the Constitutional provision that expressly provides for a system of checks and balances in order to prevent the arbitrary or impetuous use of power by any one of the organs of the government i.e., Legislature, Executive and Judiciary of the State for their smooth functioning.

In the latest development, of Jignesh Mevani bail order issued by the Barpeta Session Court, the Gauhati High Court stayed the observation part of the Session Court with respect to the State Police without interfering in the order granting him the benefit of bail. The judgement of the High Court to put on hold a part of the observation of the Barpeta Session Court was not only thought-provoking but also caused many concerned citizens to ponder over two questions – if there was a

violation of the 'Lakhman Rekha' i.e. the "Doctrine of Separation of Powers" enshrined in the Constitutional provisions and whether the episode can be regarded either as a matter of judicial activism or judicial overreach. The judgement, together with the observation of the Session Court in giving relief to Jignesh Mevani was a prima facie incident of judicial activism, but immediately the stay order of the Gauhati High Court turned it into judicial overreach.

While granting the benefit of bail to Mevani, the Barpeta Session Court had followed the due process and made a further request to the Gauhati High Court to consider directing the Assam Police to reform itself; otherwise, the State would become a Police State. The Session Court in dealing with the application under Section 439 of the CrPC, had made certain observations as obiter dictum and the most notable part of the observation was, "the firing and killing of accused in police custody has become a routine phenomenon in the State". It can be construed from the observation that there was the failure of the higher judicial authority in taking action on the recent extrajudicial killings in the State. However, the High Court in its judgement

said that those observations of the Session Court had been made without any materials on record. In the recent killings of the alleged accused in police custody, the defence cited by the police was either an outcome of self-defence or there was an attempt on the part of the accused to run away from police custody. But it is worthwhile to know when the police personnel are entitled to use firearms in the above-cited cases of defence which could result in death of the alleged accused, since the law says that *ignorantia facti excusat but ignorantia juris non excusat*, (i.e. ignorance or mistake of fact is an excuse but ignorance of law is not an excuse). It implies, one must know the law of the land.

Self-defence is a universally accepted principle where a person may protect himself or herself from harm under appropriate circumstances. In our legal system also the right to private defence of person and property is given in IPC under sections 96 to 106. It is applicable not only to police personnel but to every individual. Self defence is defined as the right to prevent from imminent suffering force or violence through the use of sufficient counteracting force or violence. In other words, a person can only employ as much force as required to counter the threat, not

beyond that. The right to private defence under Section 96 is not absolute but is clearly qualified by Section 99. Section 100 specifies seven situations in the exercise of private defence of the body which may extend to the voluntary causing of death. Now, the question is, had there been any such incidents of self defence for which the police personnel were bound to use firearms, as a result of which the alleged accused were killed? There is an implicit provision under Section 46 of the CrPC where the police officer has a right to cause death of a person who is accused of an offence punishable with death or imprisonment for life.

The most remarkable fact is that the recent killings of the alleged accused were encouraged by the government as well as a section of common people. The reason behind it was most probably the slow process of the Judiciary in following up the trial procedure and handing punishment to the criminals. But, the duties of police are limited to the process of investigation of the crime in accordance with the principle of separation of powers. They are not supposed to take cognizance and deliver judgement. Our legal system is based on the maxim – "Let hundred guilty be acquitted, but one innocent should not be convicted". Moreover, the credi-

bility of our police is not beyond reasonable suspicion. In this regard, how is it possible to entrust the investigation, trial and handing of punishment to one agency, that is none other than the police, in the interest of getting an expeditious result?

Article 11 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says, "Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he had all the guarantees necessary for his defence". So, to prove an alleged accused guilty public trial is necessary at which he may get all guarantees required for his defence. The Judiciary is venerated by the people of India and is considered as the last resort for getting justice. Therefore, if a criminal is sentenced to death after completion of the due process of trial by the Judiciary, it is accepted without demur.

Hence, if it is presumed that our trial procedure is not sufficiently robust to deal with such crimes, it is the call of the hour to make appropriate legislation to combat such crimes which are regarded as insidious poison for the society. Everybody wants to extricate his society from crimes and criminals, but the maintenance of 'Lakhman Rekha' is a must to uphold democracy in the State.

Doctrine of separation of power signifies the division of different powers in between various organs of the State, Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. It minimises the arbitrary excess by the government since the sanctions of all three branches are required for the making, executing and administering laws. The Doctrine is a part of the basic structure of the constitution although not specifically mentioned. Each organ is dependent on the other organ which checks and balances it.

- The Article falls under the Directive principle of state policy.
- This Article explains about the obligation over the state to separate the judiciary from the executive.

"Vital Statistics of India Based on the Civil Registration System" is an **Annual Report**.

It is published on the basis of reports provided by the Chief Registrar of Births and Deaths of respective States/Union Territories.

Civil Registration System (CRS) is the process of continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal recording of births and deaths in the country.

The **Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969** provides for the compulsory registration of births and deaths.



45% people who died in 2020 didn't receive any medical care: Govt data

NEW DELHI, May 5: A whopping 45 per cent of the total 82 lakh people who died in India in 2020 did not get any medical attention at the time of death and just 1.3 per cent of the total registered fatalities during the year received medical care from a qualified professional, according to data prepared by the Registrar General of India (RGI).

However, the RGI's report 'Vital Statistics of India based on the Civil Registration System' for 2020 did not give the number of people who succumbed to COVID-19.

According to the Union Health Ministry data, in 2020, when COVID-19 was first reported in the

country, 1.48 lakh people lost their lives due to the pandemic, which is substantially lower than 2021 when 3.32 lakh people

dying in the absence of medical attention in 2019 was 34.5 per cent.

As many as 28 per cent of the total registered deaths

In 2020, 1.48 lakh people lost their lives due to the pandemic, which is substantially lower than 2021 when 3.32 lakh people died due to the disease

died due to the disease.

"About 1.3 per cent of the total registered deaths during 2020 have received medical attention from qualified allopathic professionals and practitioners of other system together and 45 per cent of the deceased did not receive any medical attention at the time of death," the RGI's report said.

The proportion of people

have occurred in institutions and is on a higher side than that of other places from where the deceased had received medical attention.

About 16.4 per cent of the registered deaths were reported under "medical attention other than institutions".

The RGI report said complete information on

medical attention received by the deceased at the time of death has been received from 34 States and UTs. Two States – Maharashtra and Sikkim – have submitted only partial data and therefore their numbers have not been used while consolidating the data.

Referring to the infant deaths, the report said the share of registered infant deaths in rural areas is only 23.4 per cent while that of urban area is 76.6 per cent during the year.

"Non-registration of infant deaths in rural area is a cause of concern which may be due to non-reporting of infant deaths to the registrars, especially in case of domiciliary events," it said. – PTI

The background of the slide features a glass jar with a metal clasp lid, labeled 'PENSION' in a handwritten style. To the right of the jar is a black and white alarm clock. The word 'SPARSH' is written in large, bold, blue capital letters, partially overlapping the jar's label.

PENSION SPARSH

- Recently, the Defence Ministry introduced a portal, **System for Pension Administration (Raksha) (SPARSH)**, to directly transfer pension to pensioners.
- It is an initiative of the **Ministry of Defence** which aims at providing a comprehensive **solution** to the **administration of pension** to the defence pensioners in line with the vision of the government of India of Digital India, Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) and “Minimal Government, Maximum Governance”.
- It is established with the objective of **empowering a Defence Pensioner with regard to his pension account**.
- It will **initially cater to the new retirees** on roll out and subsequently be **extended to cover the existing defence pensioners**.

Cannot share Aadhaar details for crime inquiry--UIDAI tells HC

- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) told the Delhi High Court that fingerprints found at a scene of crime cannot be matched against the Aadhaar database to identify a criminal.
 - **Section 29 of the Aadhar Act places restrictions on sharing information collected or created under the Act.**
- The UIDAI added that the biometrics information is only used for de-duplication of residents and to ensure uniqueness of Aadhaar number.
- The UIDAI also added that it does not have the technology to match fingerprints etc found at the scene of a crime with those available on its database.
- **UIDAI**
 - The Unique Identification Authority of India is a **statutory authority** established under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, following the provisions of the Aadhaar Act 2016.
 - The UIDAI is mandated to assign a 12-digit unique identification (UID) number (Aadhaar) to all the residents of India.



New J&K Assembly Constituencies

- The Jammu and Kashmir Delimitation Commission has announced the new boundaries, name and number of Assembly constituencies in the Union Territory of J&K.
- **What is Delimitation**
 - Delimitation is the act of redrawing or process of fixing limits or boundaries of an Assembly or Lok Sabha seat to represent changes in population over time.
- **Why Delimitation?**
 - To provide equal representation to equal segments of a population.
 - To follow the principle of “One Vote One Value”.
- **Constitutional Provisions**
 - Under **Article 82**, the Parliament enacts a Delimitation Act after every Census.
 - Under **Article 170**, States also get divided into territorial constituencies as per Delimitation Act after every Census.
- **The Delimitation Commission Act** was enacted in **1952**.
- The Delimitation Commission is **appointed by the President** of India and works in **collaboration** with the **Election Commission of India**.

Daily MCQ for APSC CCE

Which of the following Assamese film has been selected to be screened at the 18th Indian Film Festival Stuttgart

- A. Bridge
- B. Ronuwa
- C. Porichoy
- D. God on the Balcony

The Correct Answer is: D. God on the Balcony

This film by Award-winning filmmaker Biswajeet Bora was also screened at 24th Shanghai International film festival and 21st New York Indian Film Festival.



📌 Mock Interview

📌 Personal Guidance for Interview

👍 Coming Soon. Stay Tuned!



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