

DAILY **CURRENT** **AFFAIRS**



2 June 2024

MCQ from Yesterday topics

- Q. Mihir Kanti Choudhury committee is related to
 - A. Education.
 - B. Security
 - C. Disaster Management.
 - D. Economic Reform.

MCQ from 1st June 2024

Q. Vetiver Grass and Geo Tubes are related to

- A. Agriculture
- B. Forestry
- C. Flood Mitigation
- D. Oil Production

Mains Practice Q

- Q. What are the recent initiatives to address Land Restoration, Desertification and mitigate drought via resilience in India?

Disaster Preparedness GS3/Pre

NFR to conduct survey of disaster-prone hill section



File photo: Lumding-Silchar section

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, June 1: Maligaon-headquartered North-east Frontier Railway (NFR) on Saturday said that it would conduct a survey at critical locations of the Lumding-Silchar section that gets affected during the monsoon, leading to disruption of train services in vast areas of the Northeast.

The survey will be conducted during and after the monsoon, analysing critical locations in detail for the type

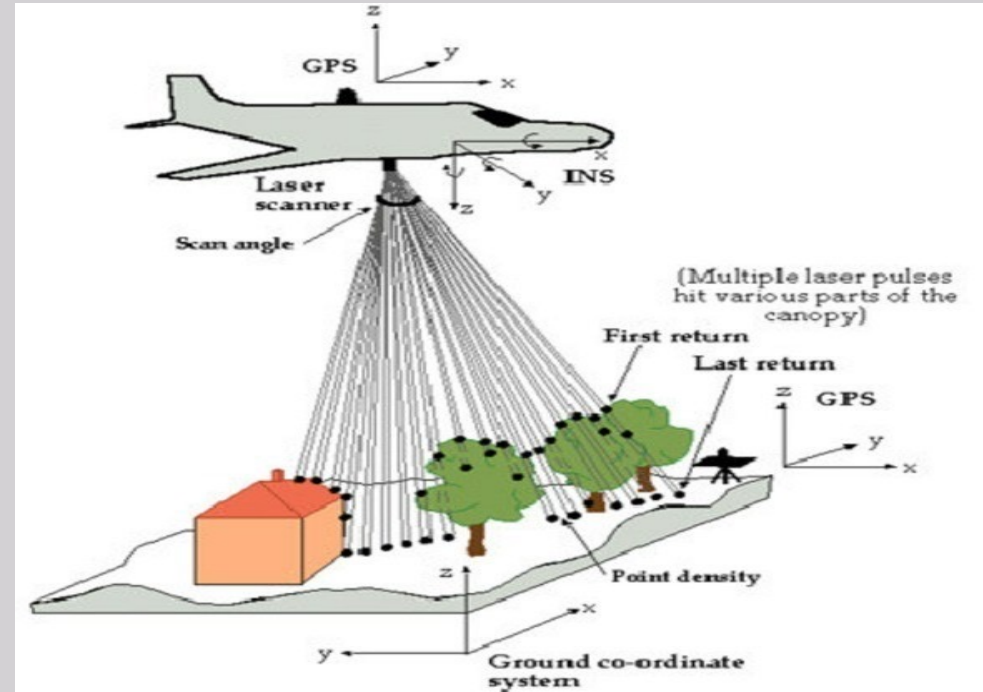
of soil strata, stability of slope, presence of natural or formed fault tending any movement of hill, water accumulation beneath the soil strata and formation of slip circle, an official statement said.

The survey will be done by using non-invasive sensors such as LiDAR (light detection and ranging) and optical photogrammetry, besides infrared mapping and ground penetrating radar, and airborne electromagnetic technology. The

output will then be analysed by artificial intelligence for better comparison of the data gathered, the statement said.

LiDAR technology is used to obtain highly detailed and precise elevation data. A LiDAR survey is conducted using airborne or terrestrial scanners to capture the topography of the project area, including the existing railway tracks, nearby terrain, and any relevant structures.

» SEE PAGE 6



- LiDAR, which stands for Light Detection and Ranging, is a remote sensing method that uses light in the form of a pulsed laser to measure ranges (variable distances) to the Earth.
- These light pulses—combined with other data recorded by the airborne system — generate precise, three-dimensional information about the shape of the Earth and its surface characteristics.
- There are three primary components of a LiDAR instrument — the scanner, laser and GPS receiver.
- Airplanes and helicopters are the most commonly used platforms for acquiring lidar data over broad areas.

Two types of lidar:

- Topographic lidar: It typically uses a near-infrared laser to map the land.
- Bathymetric lidar: It uses water-penetrating green light to also measure seafloor and riverbed elevations.

ICT Platform E-Samiksha : GS2/GS5/Prelims

State to replicate Centre's Pragati model for timely implementation of projects

RTPS Commission likely to function from this month

RITURAJ BORTHAKUR

GUWAHATI, June 1: Assam government will replicate the 'Pragati' model – an ICT platform existing in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) that reviews and monitors various projects – to address issues hindering projects and schemes and minimize the time taken to implement them.

On the directions of the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary Ravi Kota will chair three meetings every month – one with senior

most secretaries on the first Saturday, another with DCs on the third Saturday and the third with Central agencies and officials of the concerned departments to assess progress of various projects and schemes.

"We plan to do it an ICT-platform – E-Samiksha – like it is done by the Prime Minister's Office through the Pragati Portal. Agenda will be uploaded well ahead and decisions along with action taken based on previous decisions will be reflected online. This will ex-

pedite the projects as we will be able to address the local issues, if any, or negligence on the part of departments and agencies which have been plaguing the projects and schemes," Kota told *The Assam Tribune*.

In the first meeting with the DCs, the top three performing districts and bottom three were identified and information and ideas exchanged. "We are asking the poorly-performing districts to explain and discussing the challenges faced by them. If someone has done well,

we are asking how they achieved it," Kota said.

The move is expected to bring down inter-departmental communication gaps and ensure e-transparency and e-accountability.

State projects worth over Rs 50,000 crore and Central projects worth over Rs 70,000 crore are currently being implemented in the State.

The Chief Secretary also informed that the Assam State Commission for Right to Public Service is expected to begin functioning

from this month. The commission will have powers to recommend disciplinary action against designated officer who persistently fail to provide notified services.

"Some 600 services have already been brought under the Sewasetu portal. The commission will function from the old CM block at Janata Bhavan initially. It is now finalizing the place for hearings," the CS said.

Former DG of SSB Sujoy Lal Thousan has been appointed as the chairman of the commission.

Two posts, however, are yet to be filled up.

The government is also finalizing the services to be provided in the newly notified sub-districts.

"The idea is to bring service delivery nearer to the people. Almost all the services will be available in the sub-districts. The design of service delivery will be based on the sub-districts and a study is on in this regard. There could be infrastructure gaps in some notified sub-districts which will be bridged," the CS added.

Administrative reforms are a continuous process and the Government follow the maxim "Minimum Government - Maximum Governance. Government from time to time brings administrative reforms, to encourage greater efficiency, transparent and corruption free governance, accountability and reduce scope for discretion. Some of the major steps are as follows:

- Launch of "Mission Karmayogi"- National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB), a new national architecture for civil services capacity building has been launched. It is a comprehensive reform of the capacity building apparatus at individual, institutional and process levels for efficient public service delivery;
- e-Samiksha- A real time online system for monitoring and follow up action on the decisions taken by the Government at the Apex level in respect of implementation of important Government programmes / projects;
- e-Office- e-Office Mission Mode Project (MMP) has been strengthened for enabling Ministries/ Departments to switchover to paperless office and efficient decision making;
- Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)-The Government is undertaking CPGRAMS reforms in the top grievance receiving Ministries/ Departments by enabling questionnaire guided registration process and providing for automatic forwarding of grievances to field level functionaries thereby reducing the redress time;

Tobacco Issue

Tobacco scourge

If a nondescript village in Nagaland can show the way towards tobacco eradication, there is no reason why this welcome experience cannot be replicated elsewhere. Gariphema declared as 'Best Performing Tobacco free village' on World No Tobacco Day on Friday exemplifies the reach and success that a sustained grassroots movement can have. Significantly, the movement against tobacco in Nagaland has also embraced students, which is critical to long-term success against the scourge of tobacco consumption which, of late, is luring more and more young people, especially teenagers and even children, into its vicious trap. 'We all have a moral responsibility to protect our children' has been the underlying principle of the crusade against tobacco consumption in Nagaland. Indeed, when school children get sensitized on the hazards of tobacco consumption at an early age – together with engagement of people at all levels in the movement and enforcement of a strong tobacco control policy – a change for the better will always be a distinct possibility. The thrust accorded by the Nagaland Government on combating tobacco is evident from this year's theme 'Protecting children from tobacco industry interference.' To strike at the roots of tobacco addiction, we need to drive home the message that tobacco consumption in any form – whether smoking, sniffing, or chewing – is extremely harmful for the body, which can lead to various debilitating disorders including cancer, heart illnesses, respiratory diseases, etc.

In sharp contrast to the active involvement of the Nagaland Government and other stakeholders in the anti-tobacco campaign, in Assam our efforts stand reduced to shows for public consumption through routine observance of World No Tobacco Days without any sustained or meaningful follow-up. While there can be no denial of the huge health hazard in the form of growing tobacco addiction as corroborated by the scientifically-established link between chewing and smoking of tobacco and a host of fatal disorders, our governments have over the years been disinclined to crack the whip on tobacco companies, ostensibly for the role of tobacco in revenue generation. This, however, is a fallacious argument because the health and social cost caused by tobacco consumption far outweighs the revenue it generates. Given the grave health disorders linked to tobacco consumption and the benefits accruing from quitting, we need a sustained anti-tobacco campaign, more so because the authorities are reluctant to rub the tobacco companies the wrong way.

- Govt Schemes and initiatives for Tobacco Control in India:
- 1. **Cigarettes Act 1975-** '**Cigarette Smoking is Injurious to Health**' to be displayed on cigarette packs and advertisements. However, **it did not include non-cigarettes.**
- 2. **The Cigarettes** and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply, and Distribution) Act (COTPA) 2003- The act contains 33 sections governing the production, advertisement, distribution, and consumption of tobacco in India.
- 3. **WHO's framework** convention on Tobacco Control- India is one of the 168 signatories of the WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). It was launched in 2005. It aims to reduce tobacco usage worldwide by helping countries develop demand and supply reduction strategies.
- 4. **Food Safety and Standards Act 2006-** Government of India has issued regulations under the Food Safety and Standards Act 2006 which lay down that tobacco or nicotine cannot be used as ingredients in food products.
- 5. **Cable Television Networks Amendment Act of 2000-** It prohibited the transmission of advertisements on tobacco and liquor in India.
- 6. Prevention and Control **of Pollution Act of 1981-** The Act recognized smoking as an air pollutant.
- 7. The **Motor Vehicles Act 1988-** It made smoking illegal in public vehicle.
- 8. **National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP), 2008-** The objective of the programme was to control tobacco consumption and minimize tobacco consumption related deaths. The activities include- training and capacity building, information, education, and communication (IEC) activities; reporting survey and surveillance and tobacco cessation.
- 9. **Tobacco Cessation-** The program provides targeted support to help people overcome the personal challenge of maintaining efforts to quit tobacco use. Tobacco cessation clinics have been set up across the country as part of the program.
- 10. **Tobacco Taxation-** According to WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic 2017, cigarette taxes in India are amongst the highest in the world. Cigarettes are subjected to high and discriminatory rates of taxation, as compared to other tobacco products. As of 2014-15 Government collected 87% of its total tobacco revenue from legal cigarettes

Trust and Understanding: GS4: Ethics

In the intricate tapestry of human relationships, two threads stand out for their profound impact: trust and understanding. These concepts, often discussed in isolation, are in fact deeply interconnected, forming the warp and weft of our social fabric. The adages “trust is power” and “understanding is behaviour” encapsulate timeless wisdom that resonates across cultures and epochs, offering insights into the dynamics that shape our interactions, institutions, and individual lives.

Trust: The Currency of Power

Trust, in its essence, is a belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something. It is a psychological state that involves vulnerability, risk, and interdependence. When we trust, we willingly place ourselves in a position where another's actions can significantly affect us. This vulnerability might seem like weakness, but paradoxically, it is the wellspring of power. Consider the realm of leadership. A leader who is trusted wields far more influence than one who rules out of fear or coercion. Trust empowers leaders to inspire, motivate, and guide their followers towards a shared vision. In his seminal work, “The Speed of Trust,” Stephen M.R. Covey argues that trust is the one thing that changes everything in both personal and professional contexts. High-trust environments foster innovation, collaboration, and efficiency, while low-trust settings breed suspicion, micromanagement, and underperformance. The power of trust extends beyond leadership into every domain of human endeavor. In economics, trust is the invisible lubricant that allows markets to function. Without trust in currency, contracts, or institutions, economies would grind to a halt. In personal relationships, trust is the bedrock of intimacy and growth. Partners who trust each other can be

Trust and understanding: Twin pillars of human interaction

vulnerable, share their deepest fears and desires, and support each other through life's challenges. This trust creates a safe space for personal development, allowing individuals to evolve together. Conversely, when trust is broken through infidelity or deceit, the resulting betrayal can be emotionally shattering. The digital age has brought trust's power into sharp focus. In an era of fake news, deep fakes, and online scams, trust has become a precious commodity. Companies like Apple and Amazon have built empires not just on innovative products but also on cultivating user trust. Their brand power stems from consumers' belief that their personal data will be protected, their transactions will be secure, and their user experience will be seamless. Trust's power is not static; it's a dynamic force that can be earned, lost, and sometimes regained. Leaders, organisations, and individuals who understand this invest heavily in building and maintaining trust. They recognise that trust is not merely an emotional nicety but a strategic asset that confers tangible power.

Understanding: The Sculptor of Behaviour

If trust is the power source in human interactions, understanding is the mechanism that shapes how that power is used. The maxim “understanding is behaviour” suggests that our actions, reactions, and habits are largely determined by our comprehension of the world around us. At its core, understanding involves grasping the meaning, significance, or explanation of something. It's a cognitive process that goes beyond mere knowledge, requiring analysis, empathy, and often, a shift in perspective. When we truly understand a situation, a person,

or an idea, it fundamentally alters how we behave. Consider cross-cultural interactions. A Western businessperson entering the Japanese market might initially find the emphasis on ceremony and indirect communication frustrating. However, upon understanding that these practices reflect deeply held values of harmony, respect, and face-saving, their behaviour changes. They become more patient, attentive to non-verbal cues, and mindful of hierarchy. This adapted behaviour, born from understanding, often leads to successful partnerships. In the field of mental health, understanding is transformative. For centuries, conditions like

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depression and anxiety were stigmatized, with sufferers often blamed for their “weakness.” As science has illuminated the biological, psychological, and social factors underlying these conditions, societal understanding has grown. This shift in comprehension has reshaped behaviours: more people seek help without shame, employers offer mental health benefits, and legislators prioritize funding for research and treatment. The principle “understanding is behaviour” is particularly evident in education. When students genuinely understand a concept—be it in mathematics, history, or any field—it's reflected in how they engage with the subject. A student who memorizes historical dates without grasping their significance might perform adequately on tests but show little interest in history. In contrast, a student who understands how past events

shape current realities might passionately discuss history, seek out documentaries, or even pursue a career in the field. In personal growth, understanding oneself is the key to behavioural change. Many people struggle with patterns that undermine their goals—procrastination, impulsive spending, or toxic relationships. Through introspection, often aided by therapy or coaching, they come to understand the root causes: perhaps childhood experiences, unresolved traumas, or misaligned values. This self-understanding doesn't magically solve problems, but it does alter behavior. Someone who recognizes their

procrastination as a fear of failure might start setting smaller, achievable goals or seek out a supportive mentor. The interplay between understanding and behaviour is bidirectional. Just as understanding shapes actions, intentionally changing our behaviour can deepen our understanding. This is the basis of experiential learning and immersion techniques. A person might intellectually know that homelessness is a complex issue, but volunteering at a shelter for a month—changing their behaviour—brings a visceral understanding that often leads to long-term advocacy.

While powerful independently, trust and understanding become transformative when they converge. Trust without understanding can be blind, leading to misplaced faith or naivety. Understanding without trust can be clinical, fostering cynicism or manip-

ulation. Together, they create a virtuous cycle that elevates human interaction. In conflict resolution, this synergy is critical. Consider the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one of history's most intractable disputes. Despite countless negotiations, lasting peace remains elusive. Many analysts argue that a key obstacle is the scarcity of both trust and understanding between the parties. Years of violence have eroded trust, making each side sceptical of the other's intentions. Simultaneously, there's often a lack of deep understanding—not just of historical claims or political positions, but of the fears, hopes, and daily realities that shape each community's behavior. Initiatives that foster both trust and understanding have shown promise, even in such challenging contexts. Programmes that bring Israeli and Palestinian youths together for shared activities—from soccer games to music workshops—create spaces where trust can tentatively grow. As they interact, participants begin to understand each other not as abstract enemies but as individuals with similar dreams and struggles. While such programmes haven't solved the broader conflict, participants often report profound shifts in their perceptions and behaviours, becoming advocates for peace in their communities. The digital revolution, while testing trust, also offers unprecedented tools for fostering understanding. Social media, for all its pitfalls, allows us to glimpse into lives vastly different from our own.

Looking ahead, the interplay of trust and understanding will be crucial in navigating global challenges. Issues like climate change, pandemics, and technological disruptions demand coordinated, global responses.

Yet, in our polarised era, building the necessary consensus is daunting. Progress will hinge on rebuilding trust in institutions, experts, and each other—a task that requires genuinely understanding the fears and values that drive different groups' behaviors. Educational systems will play a pivotal role. Beyond academic skills, schools must cultivate emotional intelligence, cultural literacy, and ethical reasoning. These competencies equip future leaders to build trust across divides and to understand the complex, often conflicting, human factors behind global issues. Some forward-thinking curricula already emphasise these skills through case studies, role-playing exercises, and international exchanges.

In conclusion, “trust is power” and “understanding is behaviour” are more than pithy sayings; they are fundamental truths that illuminate the human condition. Trust, often seen as soft or intangible, is in fact a potent force that underpins leadership, economics, and personal bonds. Understanding, commonly viewed as a passive mental state, actively sculpts our actions, reactions, and habits. In our complex, interconnected world, neither concept can reach its full potential in isolation. Trust without understanding risks being misdirected or exploited. Understanding without trust can breed detachment or cynicism. The path forward, whether in boardrooms or on the global stage, lies in recognizing and nurturing this synergy. By investing in trust-building measures and seeking genuine understanding across our differences, we unlock a powerful alchemy. This combination doesn't just influence superficial actions; it reshapes behaviours at a fundamental level, steering us towards more cooperative, empathetic, and constructive ways of living together.

- Trust: Trust can be understood as our firm belief in an idea, a person or a thing.

To Become Trustworthy:

- One will always maintain integrity and honesty.
- Actions speak louder than words. One will always try to keep his commitments.
- Transparency is particularly important when there is a need to build trust. One of the biggest barriers to building trust is secrecy or dissembling.
- Being accountable is another important criterion to be trustworthy.

When a man assumes a public trust, he should consider himself as public property” – Thomas Jefferson

Sankardev GS1/GS5/Prelims 2024-25

Example from the article:

Recently, a survey was conducted in the U.K. to ascertain who is the greatest Briton. The major contestants were dramatist Shakespeare and Prime Minister Winston Churchill during the Second World War. Most of the non-Britons thought Shakespeare to be a natural choice. But surprisingly, the citizens of the United Kingdom overwhelmingly voted for the late Prime Minister Churchill.

IMAGINARY SANKARDEVA AND ASSAM AFTER 500 YEARS

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Evolution, or changes, are inevitable processes of nature. The ideals or ideologies of many prehistoric personalities are still relevant. These are the foundations of our thoughts. The philosophy of Socrates (470–399 BC) is a good example of it. Socrates heralded the new dawn in Europe with his verbal expression only, without any written form. Nowadays, after so many centuries, at least a few intellectuals discuss Socrates in any part of the world.

So the same matter will happen in terms of Saint Sankardeva as well. A nation is born or created from existing relics or resources in the long run. It isn't like the stroke of a pen. Sankardeva also enriched his thoughts and ideas by borrowing from predecessors like writer Madhab Kondoli, Hem Saraswati, Kavitratna Saraswati, Harivar Vipra, Rudra Kondoli, and others. All the people who acknowledge Sankardeva as the architect of Assam have to accept this phenomenon of nation-building. The term "father of a nation" is also partially relative. So again, a new Assamese race may be created based on the contributions of Sankardeva after five hundred or thousand years. Recently, a survey was conducted in the U.K. to ascertain who is the greatest Briton. The major contestants were dramatist Shakespeare and Prime Minister Winston Churchill during the Second World War. Most of the non-Britons thought Shakespeare to be a natural choice. But surprisingly, the citizens of the United Kingdom overwhelmingly voted for the late Prime Minister Churchill. This rare honour to Churchill is mere recognition of his unprecedented skillful protection of the U.K. from Nazi aggression in the Second World War. But both are from two fields and generations. Shakespeare from mediaeval Europe and Churchill from the recent twentieth century. This kind of difficult conundrum may occur in Assam between heroic military generals Lachit Borphukan and Chilarai, or between Koch

monarch Nara Narayan and Ahom monarch Sukapha. So it's a perennial process; cult figures will appear eras-wise ceaselessly. In the upcoming centuries, Sankardeva and other Assamese icons will be remembered as great ancient characters.

SANKARDEVA IN LONG FUTURE: Sankardeva is an Assamese cult of all times. His deeply rooted ideas germinated in different attire from the same seed. The time of Sankardeva has already passed, nearly five hundred years ago. The Assamese intelligentsia are still trying to propound their philosophy more and more properly. Sometimes it seems that the discourse on Sankardeva is just beginning. The ideas about the mass philosopher Sankardeva is generally inconclusive. The followers see them from their own perspective. Therefore, the inquisitive research will continue forever. Assamese polymath, the influence of Sankardeva will remain in all aspects of life as long as a community of this ethnicity lives on earth. The imaginary changes of Assam are tried to depict in all fields: social, economical, spiritual, cultural, language, communication, political, etc.

Socio-economics: Sankardeva tried to create a classless society with equal rights for everyone. This idea just sprouted during his lifetime. Later, his own Brahmin disciple, Damordeva, also refused to practice casteless equality. But with the passing of time and the flow of commodity products into society, equality and fraternity like the French Revolution gained ground.

How will it be after five hundred or a thousand years?

People, or even countries, are very interdependent in modern times. Essential consumer goods and working institutions like various offices are bridging the gap of inequality and casteism. The first community or cooperative service was started in Xatra by Sankardeva. Xatra was a very revenue-earning independent institution in mediaeval Assam. Xatra procures the day-to-

day necessities and even caters to the outside public. The co-operative society with moral welfare value will be the xatra of the twenty-sixth century in Assam.

SPIRITUAL: Spirituality is a belief or intangible outlook. It may be scientific, dogmatic, or liberal. The environment moulds human thought. But spirituality exists in spacecraft as well.

What will be the nature of spirituality in the twenty-sixth century?

Will it remain? Yes, of course. But maybe in a transformed mode.

Even the importance of God and goddesses will change with time. People may accept other gods across

hundred years that all Hindu rituals be followed. The religious taboos will be lifted radically.

Nowadays, also, many Sankari organisations or followers of Sankardeva are going closer towards Christianity for the sake of renouncing Brahmanical rites.

So, is there any possibility that the people newly converted to other existing or newly found religions will present Sankardeva as the main ideology of the proposed religion?

It's quite possible to see the present trend.

CULTURAL: Nearly two thousand years ago, Bharat Muni wrote in "Natyashaststra." He is considered as the father of Indian drama. He is the



religions. Lord Rama, whom the majority of Indians revere now, whose worship isn't very old in our tradition.

"The history of the divinization of Rama is far from clear. The main story must have existed in a form much like the present one around the beginning of the common era. By the time of the Gupta dynasty (the fourth to sixth centuries C.E.), Rama was evidently considered an incarnation of Vishnu, theoretically on a par with Krsna, but there's no evidence that at this time he was widely recognised. In fact, the Rama cult as an important feature of Indian religion appears to be quite late."

Page 80, The Origins and Development of Classical Hinduism, by A.L. Basham.

It's not necessary after five

first person to expound "Rasa" (flavour) in drama. Later, many Sanskrit dramatists were born from Bhasa, Kalidasa, and Bhavabhuti in the eighth century. Nothing much changed from the time of Bharat Muni (200 BC to 200 CE). Only infrastructure and stages are changed or developed. Some scenes, like marriage and fighting, are prohibited in Sanskrit drama. But Sankardeva has dramatised fighting or marriage scenes in Ankiya Bhaona. The mode of music, orchestra, and instruments will go through changes. Finally, musical assimilation will emerge in the intercontinental milieu of the twenty-sixth century.

LANGUAGE: The change of language is a very natural phenomenon. Now, we don't speak the spoken language of the Sankardeva or Ahom

eras. These are classified as old Assamese languages. Likewise, the present language will be treated as old or obsolete Assamese. Moreover, the number of the number of official Assamese speakers will be very low. So the Assamese Bhaona, or drama, will be performed in other rich or regionally existing languages in the name of Assam. The prospective languages will depend on our rulers to some extent.

POLITICAL: The political existence of a country is generally short-lived. The present political map of the strongest countries in the world—the U.K., Russia, China, Canada, or Australia—is less than four hundred and two hundred years old. So the political existence of Assam after five centuries is beyond prediction. It is also possible for it to emerge as a new entity or as part of another state. The demography will also be greatly changed. Moreover, Assam is situated outside of mainland India. This is the most important and volatile political fact about a country.

PROJECTED TRIBES OF ASSAM IN THE TWENTY-SIXTH CENTURY: Assamese history dates from the time of the Varman dynasty (350 AD). Assam was originally the land of the Austro-Asiatic and Tibeto-Burman people. The Aryan assimilation started in the time of tribal king Pushya Varman. Linguist Suniti Kumar Chatterjee terms him a Hinduized king of Indo-Mongolian origin. The many existing and immigrated tribes of Assam became part of the assimilation process. These are prominently Ahom, Koch, Bodo-Kachari, Mishing, Chutiya, Nath, and others. As immigration occurs from the poor to the rich countries, likewise, assimilation is inclined towards the developed communities. The Aryans being the most developed community in Brahmaputra and Barak valley, the assimilation is engineered under the Aryan umbrella.

When will this process stop? In the twenty-sixth or thirty-first century?

It's an unending process; it won't stop anyway.

Barring a few tribes of Assam like Bodo, Mishing, Karbi, and others, all other tribes like Ahom, Koch, and Chutiya have already lost their languages and scripts. It's very

difficult to sustain the identity of small tribes. The government reservation won't succeed satisfactorily. The urbanised elite class of the said communities is more susceptible to assimilation through marital relationships or socialization. So, undoubtedly, the communities will remain after five hundred or seven hundred years, but in more and more assimilated form with the passage of time. But ethnic identity and custom will be lost tremendously. Only the names of the tribes will remain for anthropological research or historical importance. This is the direct or indirect effect of aryanization, or Neo-Vaishnavism, initiated by Sankardeva.

COMMUNICATION: Nowadays, in the present era, mobile phones and aeroplanes have revolutionised communication. People will travel by supersonic air taxi and bullet-passenger submarine bus at affordable prices. As regards friendship and personal relationships, the political demarcation of countries won't matter. Probably, confederations of countries or world governments will appear in the true sense. Some communities that immigrated to different locations before many centuries will easily again maintain their relationship with their country of ancestors because of easy communication. The present two thousand-kilometre distance of aerial, land, or sea will be equivalent to one hundred kilometres in terms of time. Economic classification will always remain. Rocket taxis, space picnics, and space resorts will be prevalent for the elite classes. The price will be different, satellite-wise. A mobile or TV will be a small apparatus that will emit rays that can be enlarged on any wall-type object in reflective mode to provide a bigger screen.

GEOGRAPHY: Geography isn't a static science. It changes with time, the age of the earth, and natural calamities. So, geographical convenience or condition will play a major role in all the regions of the world, including Assam. As the political existence of a country is always transient, we expect our community to be alive in different social, religious, political, and geographical conditions.

(The author is a noted cultural enthusiast, Bhaona artiste, and writer.)

Tea Industry Crisis. Gs1/GS5

Major crisis staring at tea industry in Assam

R DUTTA CHOUDHURY

GUWAHATI, June 1: The tea industry in Assam is heading for a major crisis because of the ongoing tussle between the owners of small tea gardens and bought leaf factories. The bought leaf factories of Tinsukia and Dibrugarh districts have stopped buying tea leaves from the small tea gardens from June 1 and if the tussle is not brought under control soon, it may snowball into a major issue in the days to come.

The small tea growers produce almost 50 per cent of the total production of Assam and though the bought leaf factories of other districts are procuring tea leaves from small growers as of Saturday, no one knows what the situation would be in near future.

Tea industry sources told *The As-*



Bought leaf factories of Tinsukia and Dibrugarh districts stop buying tea leaves from small growers

sam Tribune that the issue started with the Food Safety and Standard Authority of India (FSSAI) taking strict action against the gardens using pesticides beyond the permissible limit and the tea that comes to the auction centre are randomly tested. The bought leaf factories are of the view that tea dust should be kept

out of the purview of the auction and they should be allowed to sell that privately. But the government is not ready to accept the demand.

The bought leaf factories are also claiming that some small tea growers have been using pesticides beyond the permissible limit, which the small growers have vehemently op-

posed. However, the possibility of a few black sheep among the small tea growers using pesticides beyond permissible limit cannot be ruled out. On the other hand, sources said that tea dust, which is mostly used in tea bags, constitute only around 20 per cent of the total tea produced in the State.

Sources said that big gardens are also buying tea leaves from the small growers but they properly check the leaf as no one is willing to take any chance.

Tea industry sources also pointed out that now the FSSAI is very strict in checking all the food items in the interest of public health and there is no reason why tea should be exempted. Moreover, the government should also ensure that the banned chemicals are not available in the markets, sources added.

According to the Tea (Marketing) Control (Amendment) Order, 2024, which came into force from April 1, 2024, 100 per cent of dust-grade tea manufactured in a calendar year in its manufacturing units located in the geographical area of the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand and West Bengal, is to be sold through public tea auctions.

- After more than 350 bought leaf factories across Assam downed their shutters from June 1, Saturday, protesting against the Central government's gazette notification mandating a 100% auction of dust tea grades, the Tea Board of India directed the tea planters of the state to procure higher quantities of green tea leaves from small tea grower.
- All Assam Small Tea Growers Association (AASTGA) supports the notification, believing it will bring transparency to the price-sharing system and ensure fair prices for green leaves from bought-leaf factories.

Issue:

1. In auctions, the minimum time is 3 to 4 weeks after production, and very often even longer, because 30% to 40% of teas in auctions remain unsold every week. If 100% dust grades are made compulsory to be sold through auction then there would be an increase in the printing time which may go up to 6 to 8 weeks and thereby it would cause a huge cash flow stress to the producers.
2. There is no facility in Guwahati Tea Auction Centre (GTAC) for 100 per cent auction of made tea. There is no sufficient buyer either. Many buyers think tea manufactured in bought-leaf factories is low-quality tea

Plastic Free Brahmaputra GS4

Unique mission to make Brahmaputra plastic-free

Four youths sail on plastic-bottle boat to cover 450 km course from Dibrugarh to Guwahati in 13 days



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

DIBRUGARH, June 1: A boat built out of discarded plastic bottles is on sail on the massive Brahmaputra.

The boat, which was flagged off from Bogibeel here, is expected to reach Guwahati after a journey of 13 days, covering approxi-

mately 450 km. The boat with four youths on board is on a mission to clean the mighty river of plastics.

The 'plastic boat' is the

brainchild of Dhiraj Bikash Gogoi, a river conservationist and tourism promoter. Gogoi has been involved in ferrying tourists by boat since

2019. The boat has been built out of some 3,300 plastic bottles collected from the banks of the Brahmaputra in the past three months. The boat is 28 feet long and 5 feet in breadth.

As per the plan, the four youths will collect plastics from the river, and from the banks during the day's journey and halt during the night. "I consider Brahmaputra as my home. Therefore, my desire is to see the river clean and free from all kinds of plastics. The journey is also aimed at creating awareness among the people for a pollution-free Brahmaputra," Gogoi told newsmen before starting his adventurous journey.

- The United Nations reports that the Meghna-Brahmaputra-Ganges basin alone sends an estimated 72,845 tons of plastic debris to the oceans annually—a staggering figure that underscores the importance of such grassroots initiatives.
- Their boat, built entirely from waste plastic water bottles, aims to raise awareness about the dangers of plastic pollution. The 450-km expedition, named "Plastic Free Brahmaputra," was flagged off today by Assam Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) Chairman Rituparna Baruah from the Bogibeel Ghat in Dibrugarh.
- The boat used for the expedition, measuring 28 feet long and 5 feet wide, was constructed using 3,300 plastic water bottles

Urbanization and Warming GS1/GS3

Cities warming due to effect of urbanisation, climate change

The rate of warming in cities is nearly twice that of the rest of the country, with local-scale urbanisation alone causing additional warming of about 60%

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Recently, for two consecutive days, Delhi reported daytime temperatures above 50 degrees C, the highest ever recorded in the city. There is a reason why cities are experiencing higher temperatures than non-urban and rural areas. The ongoing climate change and rapid urbanisation are now defining the Anthropocene, with the cities experiencing both thereby making the urban population vulnerable to the compounding impact. India's urban landscape (especially population) is projected to double by 2050, adding more than 450 million residents. This rise outnumbers the present total population of the United States and the European Union, signaling a huge historical shift. Given the breakneck urbanisation, our cities must be prepared for future challenges.

The altered thermodynamic, and aerodynamic properties of the cities tend to trap more heat, making cities warmer than their rural and suburban counterparts, a phenomenon well-known as the urban heat island (UHI) effect. In addition, climate change is causing a significant increase in record-breaking temperatures and frequent prolonged heat waves. Therefore, the overall warming in any city tends to be complex with both urbanisation and global warming playing a pivotal role. This alters the resultant micro-climate of the cities with an influence on heat, rainfall distribution and even air pollution



dispersion with implications for public health.

In a study published recently, we seek to separate the warming caused by local scale urbanisation and regional scale climate change in the context of 141 major cities in India and quantify their relative contributions. This kind of segregation is scientifically quite complex. One strategy is to determine the contributions of various factors to warming over time. These factors include information on concrete structures, roads, industries, parks, water bodies, residential activities, air conditioning, vehicular activities, and so on. Such detailed analysis requires enormous time, effort and

investment, even for just one city and has to be incorporated into models or combined with extremely high-resolution satellite images for further analysis. A much simpler approach was followed using high-resolution night-time land surface temperature from MODIS, a sensor aboard Aqua satellite in NASA's A-train constellation. Under the assumption that the observed changes in warming (2003 to 2020) over the rural areas are driven primarily by regional climate change, the warming over the urban built-up areas for each city was compared to its rural counterpart at every one sq. km area. Thus, after the removal of regional warming sig-

natures from the urban areas, the signal related to urbanisation was estimated for 141 major and minor cities providing first-time information on global warming-free urbanisation signatures.

Overall, the rate of warming in cities is near twice that of the rest of the country, with local-scale urbanisation alone causing additional warming of about 60%. While all cities showed an increase in night-time land surface temperature, with an average increase of 0.53 degree C per decade, a large divide among cities was seen. The tier-II cities in the eastern part of the country have stronger urbanisation-driven warm-

ing, surprisingly not seen even for the larger metros and mega cities. This may be indicating a window of opportunity.

India is aggressively acting to reduce emissions and shift to non-fossil fuel based energy sources as clearly stated in the updated nationally determined contribution (NDC) working towards climate justice. State level heat action plans and implementation of early warning and forecasting systems for heatwaves show India's commitment to saving lives by reducing heat related mortality.

Based on the predominant contribution to warming, the study emphasises that urban heat management must follow a differential approach for each city. Cities with a large urbanisation contribution may benefit from local scale interventions – use of sustainable materials like cool roofs and cool/permeable pavements, green infrastructures, creation of maintenance of lakes and parks, urban forests, and comprehensive emission reduction strategies. While other cities may require more regional scale efforts – national or regional level emission reduction, large-scale afforestation/plantation, rejuvenation of surrounding water bodies – for effective warming mitigation with both having implications for extreme urban rainfall, floods, air pollution, etc.

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- Urbanization has significantly impacted the climate in Indian cities, leading to nearly 60% more night-time warming compared to their surrounding non-urban areas.

Key Findings:

1. Top Affected Cities: Ahmedabad, Jaipur, and Rajkot showed the highest urban effect, followed by Delhi-NCR and Pune.

2. Temperature Increase: The mean urban effect across all studied cities was found to be 0.2 degrees Celsius per decade, contributing to a 37.73% increase in urban warming due to urbanization. Overall, night-time surface temperatures in these cities increased by about 0.53 degrees Celsius every decade.

3. Regional Differences: Cities in northwestern, northeastern, and southern regions experienced a more pronounced increase in night-time temperatures. However, the contribution of urbanization to night-time warming was highest in eastern and central Indian cities, which are undergoing rapid development and expansion.

4. Comparative Warming Rates: Cities are warming at almost double the rate of the entire country. While most of India warmed by 0.26 degrees Celsius on average every decade, urban areas showed a more significant increase.

Recommendations

1. Mitigation Efforts: There is a pressing need for diverse mitigation strategies to reduce ongoing urban warming effectively. Increasing green cover can help moderate day-time heat but is less effective at reducing night-time temperatures.

2. Urban Planning: With India projected to become the fastest-growing economy and expected to witness substantial urban growth, these findings can assist urban planners and policymakers in allocating resources more effectively and building sustainable cities.

RBI Gold reserve

Golden move

Gold is the most fascinating of metals, even more than other more costly metals like platinum. Thus, people prick up their ears at the very mention of gold, though they themselves might not have much of it, while the mention of platinum does not arouse a similar level of interest. It is no wonder, therefore, the piece of news, conveyed through the annual report of the Reserve Bank of India which was released last Thursday, that India has moved 100 metric tonnes of its gold stored in the UK to domestic storage in the financial year 2023-2024, has electrified the national media. Yet, the holding of gold reserves in another country, in India's case the Bank of England, and periodic enhancement or withdrawals of the amount, is a routine practice followed by most other countries. This is designed to send a signal as to the strength of the Indian economy and to keep the value of the rupee as stable as possible. It may be recalled that just a few decades ago, when economic liberalization had not taken place, India had faced foreign exchange issues, which proved to be a detriment to trade with other countries, something that current nations like Sri Lanka and Pakistan are confronting. In the 1990s, for instance, when foreign exchange reserves had depleted to a record low, India had taken to keeping 1 percent of gold reserves abroad.

This had been done to reassure the rest of the world that India had the capacity to honour its international financial commitments. Meanwhile, with the Indian economy taking a robust course, there was a substantial increase in both foreign exchange and gold holdings, with the country holding a reassuring 822 metric tonnes of gold. With the withdrawal of 100 tonnes of gold in the last financial year, a balance has been affected in the amount of the metal kept abroad and held at home, with the latter standing at around 408 metric tonnes. It may also be noted that gold is one commodity whose price goes up and rare down, thereby increasing the value of the amount of the metal held by our country. The RBI in the past had also used the increasing price of gold to bolster the national wealth – for example, in 2009, India had bought 200 tonnes of gold from the International Monetary Fund, after which it has been buying the precious commodity from the secondary market as part of its foreign exchange asset diversification efforts. The transfer of 100 tonnes is simultaneously a safety-seeking measure in the changing geopolitical scenario; it may be noted that after the Ukrainian invasion the USA had derecognized Russia's gold reserves which had been held in foreign countries.

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for the very first time has shifted approximately 100 tonnes of gold from the bank vaults of UK to its domestic vaults. As per the media reports, the bank took this move to save the storage costs of storing gold in a foreign bank.
- Since 1991, this is the first time India has transferred such a large amount of gold reserves overseas.

Reason:

- **Cost Saving Initiative:** By storing gold domestically, the RBI will not have to pay storage fees to international custodians like the Bank of England.
- **Expressing Confidence in the Indian Economy:** Gold is often seen as a safe haven for the economy by many countries, and recalling it back can be seen as an indication of RBI's increasing confidence in the Indian economy.
- **Possibility of Additional Gold Repatriation:** Pulling back gold from a foreign land can potentially mean the RBI's strategic approach to managing its foreign exchange reserves.
- **April 2024:** RBI bought 24 tonnes of gold and increases its gold reserves to 827.7 tonnes



Thank You !