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Assam Current Affairs - January 2017

Assam govt comes up with e-Wallet

- i. The Assam** government will be shortly launching its indigenously-developed eWallet, **Tokapoisa.in**.
- ii. Aim:** To enable the people of the state for hassle-free online transactions in **local language**.
- iii.** The mobile application Tokapoisa.in has been developed by the Assam Electronics Development Corp. Ltd. Besides being an e-Wallet, it will be a **virtual payment terminal**.

Assam Ratifies Proposal to set up Bhutan's Consulate General Office in Guwahati

- i.** The Government of **Assam** led by Chief Minister **Sarbanand Sonowal**, on January 27, 2017 agreed to a proposal by the Royal Government of Bhutan for setting up of a Consulate General Office in Guwahati and also conveyed this decision to the Union Ministry of External Affairs.
- ii.** The proposal was ratified by the Assam government in a meeting held in Guwahati between top Assam government officials and a five-member delegation of the Royal Government of Bhutan.

Nitin Gadkari Announces to Develop 1,253 km road in Assam as National Highways

- i.** The Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways and Shipping, **Nitin Jairam Gadkari**, inaugurated a 3-lane Brahmaputra Bridge at Saraighat in Guwahati on January 29, 2017.
- ii.** As a part of the event, the Minister announced that the government would spend **Rs 15,000 crores** to develop **1,253 kilometres of roads** in Assam into **National Highways** over the next few years.

Three-Day Arogya Mitra Conference Begins in Silchar, Assam

- i.** **Assam State Governor Banwarilal Purohit** inaugurated the **Arogya Mitra conference** on January 21, 2017 at Silchar. The **three day conference** has been organised by the south Assam zone of the NGO, **Keshab Smarak Sanskriti Surabhi** at the campus of Veterinary College, Ghungoor.

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ii. Aarogya Mitra Seva Kendra have been set up in **701 places** to achieve the objective. The conference would see participation by over 1000 people from Barak Valley and adjoining areas.

Three-day long Brahmaputra Literary Festival Begins in Guwahati

i. The three-day long **Brahmaputra Literary festival** began in **Guwahati, Assam** on January 28, 2017. The festival has been by the State Government jointly with the **National Book Trust. ii.** The event was inaugurated by the Human Resource Development Minister **Prakash Javadekar** in presence of Assam Chief Minister Sarbanand Sonowal and others.

iii. The main focus of the festival is in the languages, literature, culture, society, politics, performance traditions, music, identity, media of the northeastern region of the country including national and international elements packages.

Two-day Assam Biotech Conclave 2017 Begins in Guwahati

i. The two-day **Assam Biotech Conclave 2017** began in **Guwahati, Assam** on **January 5, 2017** at a city hotel. The Conclave will have the closing ceremony on **January 6, 2017. ii.** Chief Minister of Assam, **SarbanandaSonowal** inaugurated the Conclave.

iii. The Conclave has been organized by the **Guwahati Biotech Park (GBP)**, in association with **Federation of Industry & Commerce of North Eastern Region (FINER)**, as an Industry partner.

Fourth Assam International Agri-Horti Show Begins in Assam

i. The **Fourth Assam International Agri-Horti Show** began in **Guwahati, Assam** on January 6, 2017. The Chief Minister of Assam, **SarbanandaSonowal** inaugurated the programme.

ii. The **Four-Day Show** would be attended by about **200 organisations** from **10 foreign countries**. Nearly **600 farmers** from Assam will be trained on doubling farmers' income, more crops per drop and agri-preneurship development. Business meet and discussions are also being organised by the Assam government.

Assam Launches 'Chief Minister's Award' For Performing Districts in Cashless Transaction

i. In a bid to promote digital transaction in **Assam**, the Chief Minister of Assam, **SarbanandaSonowal** on January 22, 2017 announced the launch of '**Chief Minister's Award**' while inaugurating the DigiDhanMela in the state.

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- ii. The Chief Minister's Award would be given to the **best performing district** of the state that adopts digital payment methods and also educate larger section of the society about the cashless transaction.
- iii. The winning district's Deputy Commissioner would be presented a prize of **Rs 50,000** at the end of financial year 2016-2017 after March 31, 2017.

Telangana and Assam Joins UDAY Scheme

- i. **Assam and Telangana** signed a pact with the **Power Minister, PiyushGoyal** to join the **UDAY scheme** on January 4, 2017 in New Delhi in a bid to improve the performance of state run power distribution companies (DISCOM).
- ii. Since the launch of the UDAY Scheme, the Power Ministry has signed Agreements with 18 states to join the Scheme.

Black rice gains popularity in Assam

- i. A variety of **Black rice or purple rice**, which is also known as world super food recently has gained popularity in **Assam**.
- ii. It was recently sown by the local farmers for the first time in **Barak Valley**.
- iii. It has the ability to help stop the development of **diabetes, cancer, heart disease and even weight gain**.

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Assam Current Affairs - February 2017

Assam Finance Minister Himanta BiswaSarma Presents Rs 2,350 crore Deficit Budget 2017-18

The Assam **Finance Minister Himanta BiswaSarma** presented the state Budget for the session 2017-18 on February 7, 2017 in the state assembly. The budget was based on the theme “**Resurgent Assam**”.

- As per the Minister the state Budget 2017-18 was **Rs. 2,349.79 crore deficit Budget**. The budget presented merged Plan and Non-Plan expenditures.
- The Government has redefined the role of Planning & Development Department. The department has been rechristened to the Department for Development and Transformation of Assam (DDTA).

Important Highlights of Assam Budget 2017-18

Revenue & Expenditure

The Budget Estimates of 2017-18, proposes to have a receipt of Rs 84,732.16 crore under consolidated fund of the state. Out of this, **Rs 70,719.61 crore** is on Revenue account and **Rs 14,012.55 crore** is under Capital account.

- Beside, adding the receipt of Rs 1,62,580.51 crore under Public account and Rs 100 crore under Contingency fund, the aggregate receipts amount to Rs 2,47,412.67 crore
- Similarly, the total expenditure proposed from the consolidated fund of the state is estimated at Rs 85,922.69 crore of which **Rs 68,319.45 crore is on Revenue account** and **Rs 17,603.24 crore is on Capital account**.
- While, taking into account the expenditure of Rs 1,61,757.17 crore under Public account and Rs 100 crore under Contingency fund, the aggregate expenditure for the year is estimated at Rs 2,47,779.86 crore.

Education Sector

The Assam government led by Sarbananda Sonowal, has proposed to bring appropriate legislation to ensure that students of the State must be taught one local language as inscribed in the 8th

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Schedule of the Constitution of India, by all schools including public, government, private up to Class 8.

- Highlighting the importance of Sanskrit language as one of the oldest language in the history, the government also proposed to make Sanskrit language compulsory in the schools where ever a Sanskrit teacher exists.
- The government also aims to fill vacant posts of Sanskrit teachers soon.

Reservation

- The budget has proposed to increase Other Backward Class (OBC) reservation in the higher educational institutions from **15 percent to 29 percent**.
- The Government proposed to provide two wheeler to top **1000 girl** students in 10+2 examinations in 2017.

Farmers

- Budget has proposed to introduce **zero interest crop** loans for farmers. They would get 100 percent interest subvention on agricultural loans up to Rs 1 lakh.
- Besides, the budget has proposed to provide **Rs. 3000** per inactive Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) as one time cash incentive to increase the flow of credit to farmers.
- The Minister informed that there are around **9.60 lakh KCCs**, out of which 80 percent are inactive.

Tea Garden Workers

- The budget has proposed to give **Rs 5000** to each tea garden worker in his or her bank account. Rs. 287 allocated for this.
- It also proposes to set up Pravasi Asomiya Department. Each pregnant woman of garden areas would be given a one-time payment of **Rs. 12000**.
- Besides, the budget has proposed to set up substantial healthcare facility and schools in tea garden areas.
- Government has proposed to spend 5 percent of the budget from all the departments on tea garden areas.
- It propose to introduce reservation of seats for tea garden students in all higher educational institutions

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- Around 670 students of the tea tribes who are pursuing engineering, medical or any other technical course would be provided assistance under Financial Assistance for Higher Studies.
- Government will also consider the revival plan of the gardens of Assam Tea Corporation.
- Fleet of 40 mobile medical units would be provided across 850 tea estates to meet healthcare needs of the plantation workers.

Other Allocation

- **Rs 100** crore to increase Muga silk production in Assam.
- To encourage Khadi, Minister has proposed an annual assistance of **Rs 1,000** to each employee to spent on two sets of Khadi or handloom apparel
- In order to help the film industry of the State, the budget proposed a subsidy of Rs 50 Lakh for reopening of closed cinema halls and Rs 25 Lakh for renovation of existing/functional cinema halls.
- A subsidy of 25% of the capital cost in case of establishment of new cinema halls will also be given.
- Under **Swami Vivekananda Assam Youth Empowerment Yojana (SVAYEM)**, 1 lakh youth would be given a financial support of Rs. 1 lakh for new business and Rs. 2 lakh for existing business.
- Proposed **Kanakalata Mahila Sabalakaran Yojana (KAMS)** with an allocation of Rs. 250 crore to promote 1 lakh women SHG and give each a support of Rs. 5 lakh.
- **Gene Bank for Indigenous Fish (GBIF)** have been designed for the conservation of 82 endangered variety of fishes
- **City Infrastructure Development Fund (CIDF)** of Rs. 1200 crore in 6 cities including Silchar, Tinsukia, Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Nagaon, and Tezpur.
- Housing loan at 5.05 percent to all government employees upto Rs. 15 lakh without collateral security.
- **Rs. 100 crore** to convert 1000 timber bridges into permanent RCC bridges.
- **Rs. 250 crore for Deen Dayal Divyang Sahajya Achari**. Under this Rs. 5000 would be given to each 4.5 lakh Divyang for their treatment.
- **Rs. 32 crore** allocated for Multilevel Care parking at Panbazar and Ganeshpuri

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- Rs. 15 crore Joint Venture with Railway Ministry to build Ropeway from Kamakhya Railway station to Kamakhya Temple
- Government to start Mega business Summit under the name Vivacious in October/November 2017 to attract investment.

Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal Launches Chief Minister Samagra Gramya Unnayan Yojana (CMSGUY) in Assam

Chief Minister of Assam, **Sarbananda Sonowal**, launched **Chief Minister Samagra Gramya Unnayan Yojana (CMSGUY)** in a function held at Sri Sri Madhavdev International Auditorium of Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra in **Guwahati** on February 5, 2017 with an aim to develop all the villages to Assam in the next five years.

Aim: The CMSGUY scheme aims to bring a **revolutionary change** in the state by **doubling the farm income by 2022** which also marks the 75 anniversary of India's Independence.

- The total financial outlay of the CMSGUY scheme is **Rs. 30,000 crore**. It will be implemented in phased manner in the villages of Assam till **2021-22**.

About the CMSGUY Project

For the proper implementation of the scheme a **Mega Mission Society** has been constituted under the chairmanship of Sarbananda Sonowal.

- As per the Situation Assessment Survey done during 2002-03 to 2012-13, the report estimated that the farm income in Assam was only 0.88 percent as against national average of 5.2 per cent.
- The CMSGUY scheme would be launched in a time bound manner. It would cover each village of the state for complete rural transformation through massive investment so as to enhance rural productivity.
- It would include focused interventions in direct economic activities, logistic support including market linkages, and community support.
- Under the 5-year scheme, five teams will be constituted in each block which will work as a base to implement different missions of the programme. These teams will prepare development plans for them to be implemented in each village.
- A village knowledge centre will also be set up in each village as a part of the scheme. Besides, MGNREGA play ground will be built in each village.

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- Out of the total outlay of Rs. 30,000 crore of the project, **Rs. 1.20 crore** has been planned as average investment to be made on each revenue village of the state.
- In the Union Budget 2017-18, an initial amount of **Rs. 500 crore** has already been provided by the Finance Minister to Assam Chief Minister.
- Assam Minister has proposed Rs 1000 crore as a Supplementary Demand and by the end of the financial year 2017 the CMSGUY will have Rs 1500 crore.

Assam to Raise a Wild Sanctuary to Grow Muga Cocoon

- i** .The state government of **Assam** has decided to set up a **Wild Sanctuary** to grow **Muga cocoon** in an effort to give more exposure to **Muga, Eri and Silk Products**.
- ii** .The programme have been launched under the **Assam Silk Outreach Mission** to promote products made of Muga, silk and Eri. **iii**. The government would plant about 25 lakh trees to get the Eri and Muga cocoons.

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Assam Current Affairs -March 2017

Assam Cabinet Declares Sanskrit as Compulsory Subject upto Class 8 i .In a cabinet meeting on February 28, 2017, the **Assam government** led by the Chief Minister **Sarbananda Sonowal** decided to make **Sanskrit** a compulsory language for students up to **class 8** in the state.

ii. Besides, the government also decided to **promote computer education** in the state. The government would also appoint teachers for the two subject.

Assam Government approves recommendation of 7th Pay Commission

i. The Assam state government lead by Sarbananda Sonowal has approved the recommendation of the Seventh Pay Commission and also decided to give the **six months'** arrear salary to its employees before the ensuing Bohag Bihu. ii. This new pay structure would be effective from **April 1, 2016**.

Assam Government Launches Initiatives to make Majuli India's First Carbon Neutral District & Biodiversity Heritage

i. Assam Chief Minister, **Sarbananda Sonowal** launched initiative to develop the **World's largest river island, Majuli** into country's first ever **Carbon Neutral district by 2020** as well as a **biodiversity heritage site** to preserve its rich heritage and legacy.

ii. The project titled '**Sustainable Action for Climate Resilient Development in Majuli (SACReD, Majuli)**' was launched on the occasion of the International Day of Forest on March 21, 2017 and has been initiated by the Assam's department of Environment and Forest.

iii .The project, SACReD, Majuli has been initiated to combat climate change and ensure reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

'Namami Brahmaputra' Festival Inaugurated by President Pranab Mukherjee in Assam

i. The President of India, **Shri Pranab Mukherjee** inaugurated the five-day **Namami Brahmaputra** River Festival in Assam on March 31, 2017. ii .The event was inaugurated by the President by lighting a ceremonial lamp at the Kachamari Ghat near Fancy Bazar in Guwahati.

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iii. The **Prime Minister of Bhutan, Tshering Tobgay** was the special guest at the event. **iv.** The five-day river festival will conclude on April 4, 2017 and will be organised across 21 districts of Assam.

BHEL commissions 250 mw plant in Assam

New Delhi based Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) has commissioned a **250 MW** coal-based thermal power unit at North East's largest coal based power plant **Bongaigaon Thermal Power Station** (TPS) in Assam on March 23, 2017

Justice Sharma sworn in as Upalokayukta of Assam

Former Judge of the Gauhati High Court **Chittaranjan Sharma** has sworn in as Assam's Upalokayukta by Governor **Banwarilal Purohit** on March 14, 2017

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Assam Current Affairs - April 2017

Assam Celebrates Rongali Bihu

According to Assamese Calendar Rongali Bihu celebrates on the month of April which usually falls on 13th and 14th of April. The first day known as Goru Bihu that is purely dedicated to cattle.

i. The Rongali Bihu marks the agricultural New Year and is celebrated as a festival of Prosperity.

ii. The **Kati Bihu** marks the completion of **sowing and transplanting of paddies**. iii.

The **Magh Bihu** marks the **end of harvesting period**.

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Assam Current Affairs - May 2017

Centre plans aerotropolis in Assam, seeks 2,000 acres

Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha has mentioned that Central Government is planning to build an aerotropolis in **Assam** and has sought 2,000 acres from the state government for the purpose.

- i. The proposed aerotropolis would bring huge benefits to the region in terms of civil aviation and air connectivity.
- ii. Mr. Sinha has requested the **Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal** to allot 2,000 acres land at an hour's journey away from **Guwahati city near Brahmaputra River**.

Cabinet approves setting up of new AIIMS in Kamrup, Assam

Union Cabinet has given its approval for establishment of new All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) at **Kamrup, Assam**. It will be set up under **Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY)** at the **cost of Rs.1123 crore**.

Setting up of AIIMS, Kamrup will take 48 months.

PM Modi inaugurates India's longest bridge Dhola-Sadiya Bridge in Assam

On May 26, 2017, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated **India's longest river bridge**, the **Dhola-Sadiya bridge**. This bridge has been named after late legendary singer **Bhupen Hazarika**. **Sadiya** was the birth place of Bhupen Hazarika.

- Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways and Shipping, **Nitin Gadkari**. Assam governor **Banwarilal Purohit** and Assam Chief Minister **Sarbanada Sonowal** accompanied PM Modi at the inauguration function.

Details about Dhola-Sadiya Bridge in Assam:

The bridge is a **three lane carriage way** which links **Assam to Arunachal Pradesh**.

- **15 km long** Dhola-Sadiya Bridge is longer than the Bandra-Worli Sea Link (5.6 km) in Mumbai.
- It has been built at a cost of about **Rs 2,056 crore** over **river Lohit**, a tributary of the Brahmaputra.

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- The bridge will reduce the distance from Rupai in Assam to Meka/Roing in Arunachal Pradesh by 165 km.

PM Modi lays foundation stone for two key projects AIIMS & ICAR in Assam On May 26, 2017, PM Modi laid the foundation stone for an **Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) at Gogamukh in Dhemaji district of Assam.**

- He also laid the foundation stone for an **All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)**, at Changsari in Kamrup district of **Assam** by pressing a remote from the Sarusajai Stadium in Guwahati. AIIMS in Kmarup will be constructed at a cost of **Rs 1,123 crore under 'Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana'**. It will be completed within the next four years.

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Assam Current Affairs - June 2017

India Signs Loan Agreement with the World Bank for USD 39.2 Million for the project "Assam Citizen Centric Service Delivery"

An agreement for **IBRD Credit of USD 39.2 Million from World Bank** for the project "**Assam Citizen Centric Service Delivery**" has been signed on 6th of June.

- i.** The programme **cost is 49-million dollar** out of which 39.2-million dollar will be financed by the Bank, and the remaining amount will be funded-out of State Budget. **ii.** The programme duration is five years.
- iii.** The main objective of the project is to **improve access in the delivery of selected public services in Assam.**

World Bank sanctions 44 million dollars for ASPIRe

World Bank's Board of Executive Directors has sanctioned a loan assistance of **44 million dollars** for the **Assam State Public Finance Institutional Reforms (ASPIRe) Project.**

- i.** ASPIRe project is based on three important components:
 - 1.Strengthening public finance institutional capacity
 - 2.Strengthening expenditure and revenue information systems
 - 3.On project management, monitoring and evaluation, and coordination.
- ii.** The project aims at **improving predictability and transparency in budget execution and efficiency in tax administration in Assam.**

India Signs Loan Agreement with the World Bank for USD 35 Million for "Assam State Public Financial Institutional Reforms Project"

India has signed a Loan Agreement with the **World Bank for USD 35 Million for Assam State Public Financial Institutional Reforms Project.**

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i. An agreement for IBRD Credit of USD 35 Million from World Bank for Assam State Public Financial Institutional Reforms Project was signed on 28th of June at New Delhi. **ii. The programme size is USD 44 million, of which USD 35 million will be financed by the Bank, and the remaining amount will be funded out of State Budget.** **iii.** The programme duration is **5 years.**

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Assam Current Affairs - July 2017

Five states, Puducherry to ink MoU with GeM

Five states and a union territory including Gujarat and Telangana would ink an **MoU with Government e-Market (GeM)** for smart procurement of goods and services.

- i.** As per the government the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will ensure timely payment by state departments to the vendors registered on the GeM portal.
- ii.** The other states that will ink the agreement are **Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh** and **union territory Puducherry**.

Assam to raise new force for rhino protection

The **Assam** government has raised a new **Special Rhino Protection Force (SRPF)** on 1st July, 2017.

- i.** It has been **raised for better protection of the one-horned rhinos in Assam**.
- ii.** The government has already started the process of recruitment for the proposed force, which will be deployed for better protection of the one horned rhinos in the state

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Assam Current Affairs - August 2017

Assam forest dept deploys excavators to evict illegal encroachers from Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary

Assam forest department deployed around **10000 security** and **State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) personnel, 20 elephants and 20 excavators to evict 1400 families** that have been **encroaching upon Amchang Wildlife Sanctuary** on the northeastern fringe of Guwahati.

The sanctuary is spread over 78.64 sq km.

Key Points:

- i. As a precautionary measure against possible protest by the encroachers, a huge contingent of police, forest and security forces personnel have also deployed at Batahghuli area of the sanctuary where the eviction process has started.
- ii. The Guwahati High Court on 2nd August had given the state government a month's time to clear the encroachers.
- iii. According to a survey by the forest department, **about 1,400 families had illegally settled in the protected area** following which the high court took up a PIL in 2013 over the encroachments inside the sanctuary.

Assam Government all set to distribute 13 lakh Soil Health cards among farmers The **state government of Assam** has decided to **distribute 13 lakh Soil Health Cards among farmers.**

Key Notes:

- i. Agriculture minister Atul Bora has mentioned that **214 soil test kits** are **operational for this purpose** and that the government would soon be announcing a State Agriculture policy.
- ii. The emphasis has been given to successfully implement PradhanMantriKrishiSichaiYojna in the state.
- iii. The govt. has **sanctioned 600 crore rupees for Prime Minister AwasYojna Urban scheme in Assam.**

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Centre declares entire Assam as "disturbed area" under AFSPA under another month The Centre has declared the entire **Assam as a "disturbed" area under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act**, the AFSPA **for three more months**.

Key Points:

- i.** The Home Ministry has said the entire Assam, besides bordering areas of Meghalaya, have been declared "disturbed" under the AFSPA for three months with effect from 3rd of May.
- ii.** There were **75 incidents of violence in Assam in 2016** in which 33 people, including four security personnel, were killed and 14 others were kidnapped.
- iii.** There were also nine violent incidents in the state in which four people, including two security personnel, were killed in 2017.

Assam's country liquor gets branded, to be flavoured

To prevent adulteration and revenue leakage, the **Assam government** has **decided** that country **liquor** would be **grain-based**, undergo **chemical tests** and be **branded** and make it **mandatory for the bottles to sport a hologram** as in the **case of IMFL**.

Key Points:

- i.** Four companies have applied for production and bottling license of country liquor two at Kamrup Metro district, one in Kamrup Rural district and one in Jorhat district.
- ii.** The factory at **Jorhat** has **registered the Rhino brand** for their product.

Assam Plans To Introduce Compassionate Family Pension Scheme

On August 20, 2017 Assam state government is introducing a new Scheme called, **Scheme for Compassionate Family Pension (CFP) at GAUHATI**. The scheme plans to offer the compassionate family pension instead of job offers to family members due to some practical difficulties.

- i.** A new scheme called 'Scheme for Compassionate Family Pension in lieu of Compassionate Appointment', which will be known as 'Compassionate Family Pension Scheme' or CFP Scheme.
- ii.** Current Policy couldn't satisfy the objectives completely and legal heir fails to get an appointment immediately due to lack of educational qualifications and sometimes non-availability of vacancies.
- iii.** The scheme will be applicable to those employees who died in harness on or after April 1, 2017, but the relevant office message related to the compassionate appointments will be applicable to those who died on or before March 31, 2017.

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The new scheme will be applicable to all employees of the state government, all others as **eligible under Assam Services (Pension) Rules, 1969**, all state government employees **under NPS category and All India Services officers borne on Assam cadre**.

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Assam Current Affairs –September 2017

Assam govt signs MoU with Google to increase digital literacy

Assam government has **signed** a **MoU** with **Google India Pvt. Ltd.** to **increase digital literacy** and take **Internet connectivity** to the **remotest part of the north-eastern state.**

Key Points:

i. Under this MoU the government would work to **provide Internet connections to 26,000 villages and 1,500 tea garden areas in Assam.**

ii. Information Technology Secretary Nitin Khare and Google India Country Head (Policy) Chetan Krishnaswami has signed the Memorandum of Understanding.

iii. The MoU will be used as a launch pad to achieve the state government's vision of women empowerment, skill development, and universal education.

Assam enacts Industrial Disputes (Assam Amendment) Bill 2017

On 7th September 2017, Assam passed the Industrial Disputes (Assam Amendment) Bill, 2017, regarding lay off of employees, in Guwahati.

Industrial Disputes Assam Amendment Bill, 2017:

i. The law enables employers to lay off up to 300 employees without prior permission from the government. **ii.** The employee count has been increased from 100 to 300.

iii. The law is said to increase the ease of doing business. As, employers are hesitant to recruit more number of employees because when the employee count increases more than 100, there would be problems during lay off.

Assam to provide skill training to 30,000 surrendered militants

On 11th September 2017, Assam government announced that it would provide skill development training to 30,000 surrendered militants.

About the skill development training:

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- i. Mission Director of Assam Skill Development, Mr.A.P.Tiwari said that the **skill development training would be given to 30,000 surrendered militants and jail inmates**, during an AIR (All India Radio) talk show.
- ii. He said that the Assam Skill Development Mission would provide skill training in 40 sectors.
- iii. The training would start by the end of September, 2017.

Assam government passes PRANAM Bill – Employees who dump parents will lose part salary

On 15th September ,2017, The Assam state Assembly passed **PRANAM(Parental Responsibility And Norms for Accountability and Monitoring)** bill that makes it mandatory for state government employees to take care of their parents and needy siblings or face a cut in their income.**Assam is the first state to approve such a legislation.** Finance Minister

HimantaBiswaSarma introduced the bill. The bill was backed by all the ruling and opposition MLAs

Highlights :-

- i. The Bill will ensure that all **government employees look after their dependents** including parents and divyangs(Persons with disability).
- ii. The parents or needy siblings who feel neglected can lodge complaints with the head of the department of the person who, **after hearing both sides, may deduct 10-15 percent** of the salary of the employee and give it to the parents for their survival.

Assam govt sets up DBT cell for implementation of Direct Benefit Transfer scheme

In **Assam**, the **state govt.** has **set up a Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)**

Cell for implementation of DBT across schemes in the Country. It helps in coordinating efforts at the State Level in taking the DBT initiative forward with immediate effect.

Key Points:

- i.The Cell will Coordinate with Central Ministries & circulate the directives to the respective Departments in States.
- ii.It will **closely monitor & evaluate the progress of various Departments on DBT related indicators.**
- iii.The cell will play a key role in finding possibilities of using various technologies in order to provide better service delivery in the state.

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Assam to upgrade employment exchanges to Modern Career Centres

Assam government will upgrade employment exchanges to Modern Career Centres announced on 6th of Sep. 2017

Key Points:

- i. A pilot project of two district employment exchanges in Guwahati and Jorhat will be upgraded as modern career centres.
- ii. **All modern facilities including counselling will be provided at the proposed career centres.**

NITI Aayog and Government of Assam organises workshop on health sector reforms in Guwahati; launches SATH

On 22nd September 2017, The Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Assam and NITI Aayog organised a health sector reforms workshop, in Guwahati.

Workshop on health sector reforms:

- i. **SATH- Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital Programme was launched in this occasion.**
- ii. This programme is a joint initiative of Government of Assam and NITI Aayog.
- iii. It would identify the health priorities of people in Assam and implement required solutions.
- iv. **NITIAayog selected has three states for this programme: Assam, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka.**

World's tallest bamboo 'MaaDurga' idol

On 26th September 2017, Artists constructed a 100 feet bamboo idol of Goddess Durga, world's tallest bamboo idol, in Guwahati, Assam.

World's tallest bamboo idol:

- i. The idol has been constructed for the Durga Puja festival that is observed from 26th to 30th September 2017.
- ii. **It aims to break the Guinness World Records for the tallest bamboo sculpture.**
- iii. **5,000 bamboo poles have been used to make the idol.**

Assam for first time extends AFSPA orders on its own.

On September 1, 2017, Assam Government has extended term of **Armed Forces Special Powers**

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Act (AFSPA), 1958 and declared entire state a Disturbed Area for six more months under section 3 of AFSPA act. This is for first time state government has extended AFSPA and Disturbed Area provision on its own. In the past, AFSPA provisions in state were always extended by the centre. A notification issued by the state home department said that while the law and order situation had continued to be a matter of concern due to violent incidents carried out by the underground groups, as many as 16 incidents involving these groups had taken place between May and July.

These incidents had resulted in deaths of two civilians, one security personnel and four militants. The whole state was in unrest.

President Ram Nath Kovind appoints Jagdish Mukhi new Governor of Assam

Jagdish Mukhi – He was previously the Governor of Andaman & Nicobar islands. He administered various departments in Delhi Government like Finance, Excise & Taxation and Higher Education.

He led the Opposition in Delhi Assembly.

Veteran journalist, Dainik Assam editor RM Bhagawati dies at 84

Radhika Mohan Bhagawati, veteran **Guwahati-based journalist and editor of Dainik Assam, oldest Assamese daily newspaper had passed away**. He was 84.

Key Points:

- i. He was born at Jamugurihat in Sonitpur district on January 19, 1933.
- ii. Bhagawati had **started his career as a journalist in 1958** as a sub-editor in the now defunct Assamese daily Natun Asamiya and later rose to be its editor.
- iii. Bhagawati was also chairman of Media Trust, successor to the Committee for Celebration of 150 Years of Journalism in Assam.

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India signs \$200 mn deal with World Bank for rural transformation in Assam On October 30, 2017, **Union Finance Ministry and World Bank signed a loan agreement worth \$200 million for the Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project.**

About Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project:

- i.** The \$200 million from **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** is for **16.5 yrs term** and has a grace period of seven years.
- ii.** This project will not only increase agriculture productivity and market access, but will also help Assam Govt. to facilitate agri-business investments.

Assam approved new IT policy

On October 17, 2017, **Assam State Government approved a new Information Technology (IT) Policy.**

More Details about Assam Govt's ne IT Policy:

- i.** Under the new IT policy, companies involved in **Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), companies engaged in software development and firms carrying out research will be provided financial support.**
- ii.** Call centres will receive one-time incentive of Rs. 1.20 lakh per employee, with minimum intake of 100 employees.
- iii.** Companies engaged in software development will receive one-time support of Rs 1.50 lakh per employee.

Assam govt rolls out new Tourism policy

On October 19, 2017, **Assam State Government rolled out 'Tourism Policy of Assam 2017'** with an aim to increase tourist inflow in the state by at least two to three times within next five years.

Details about 'Tourism Policy of Assam 2017':

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'Tourism Policy of Assam 2017' will be **effective from January 2018 to December 2022.** •

To channelize resources in making this policy a success story, **tourism sector in Assam has been accorded the 'Industry' status.**

- In the policy, **special emphasis has been laid on making the state a preferred destination of film making by offering a range of incentives to movie producers.**
- Hindi, English and foreign language cinema makers, who have produced a minimum of five feature films in Assam will be offered **cash grant of 25 per cent or Rs 1 crore, whichever is less,** of expenditure in Assam.

GoM set up under Assam FM Himanta Biswa Sarma to review composition scheme

On October 6, 2017, Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council, chaired by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley constituted a **group of ministers (GoM) to make the 'composition scheme' more attractive and also revisit GST rates on restaurants.**

About GoM to Review Composition Scheme:

- The GoM has been set up under **Assam Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma** and will submit its report within 2 weeks.
- Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Modi, Jammu and Kashmir Finance Minister Haseeb Drabu, Punjab Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal and Chhattisgarh Minister of Commercial Taxes Amar Agrawal are the other members of the GoM.**

ISRO to set up Research Centre in Guwahati

On 5th October 2017, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) announced the setting up of a research centre for startups, academicians, environmentalists and entrepreneurs, in Guwahati, Assam.

ISRO Research Centre in Guwahati:

- The decision of setting up ISRO research centre at Guwahati was taken at a meeting between Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and ISRO Chairman Dr.A.S.Kiran Kumar on 5th October 2017.
- This is the first time ISRO is setting up an exclusive research facility in Assam.** Assam government would provide land to the ISRO free of cost for the research centre

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Assam CM launches a new web portal "Assam Darpan" to provide data to people on government projects

On 27th October 2017, Assam Chief Minister **Sarbananda Sonowal** launched a web portal '**Assam Darpan**' where details of government schemes and projects would be available to the people.

Assam Darpan:

- i. The Assam Darpan platform has been **developed by** the **National Informatics Centre, Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology**, as a part of the Digital India Programme.
- ii. In the first phase, progress indicators of 15 government schemes have been made available in the web portal in English and Assamese.

CM Sarbananda Sonowal Lays foundation for Country's First ITI for Differently Abled in Dibrugarh

On October 3, 2017, **Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal** laid the foundation stone for the first ever Industrial Training Institute (ITI) exclusively for the Dibyangans (Differently Abled) at ITI Complex in **Dibrugarh**.

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Assam CM Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurates Namami Barak festival

On 18th November 2017, Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the Namami Barak festival at **Silchar, Assam**.

Namami Barak festival:

i. Sarbananda Sonowal said that, the Namami Barak is organised to revive humanistic values, to discover resources and possibilities of the land.

ii. Also a new **train** connecting **Silchar Dibrugarh – Trivandrum** was flagged off. Sonowal added that **Dibrugarh and Silchar** direct **air connectivity** has also started.

Assam to celebrate 'Lachit Divas' in different state capitals

On 24th November 2017, **Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal** said the Assam government would celebrate 'Lachit Divas' at various state capitals in India from next year.

Lachit Divas:

i. 'Lachit Divas' is celebrated to promote the ideals of Lachit Borphukan – the legendary general of Assam's history. Sarbananda Sonowal took part in the **Lachit Divas celebration** at the statue of Lachit Borphukan at Brahmaputra riverfront on **24th November 2017**.

Assam signs MoUs with Singapore for skilling state's youth

On 1st November 2017, Assam government signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Terms of Reference (ToR) with Singapore for skilling youth of the state.

Assam signs MoU with Singapore:

i. The **MoU and ToR for North East Skills Centre (NESC)** was signed between **Skill, Employment and Entrepreneurship Department, of Assam** and **ITE Education Service, Singapore**, in Guwahati, Assam. ii. A **MoU for Guwahati City Greening** was signed between the **Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority** and **Singapore Corporation Enterprise**.

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iii. The Assam government's project for beautification and improvement of quality of life of Guwahati is named '**Guwahati Open Space and Park Integrator (GOPI) Network**'.

Assam CM Sonowal launches 647 schemes for development of Majuli

On November 4, 2017, **Assam Chief Minister SarbanandaSonowal launched 647 schemes with a total financial outlay of Rs. 24.57 crore to boost Majuli's development.**

Details of 647 Schemes launched by Assam Government:

- i. Majuli is a river island in the Brahmaputra River, Assam. It is India's first island district and world's largest river island.
- ii. Out of the 647 schemes, **448 schemes are under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme** which entails an investment of Rs. 21.90 crore.

23rd GST Council Meet held in Guwahati, 28% Tax Only For 50 Items

23rd meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council headed by Union Finance Minister, ArunJaitley was held in Guwahati, Assam on November 10, 2017. Decisions taken during this meeting of GST council has brought in a comprehensive overhaul of GST rates. Besides return filing has been eased and more relief has been provided to small and medium enterprises **GST rate on 177 items has been reduced from 28% to 18%**. Now **only 50 items**, mostly demerit, sin and luxury goods **will attract 28% GST rate.**

Youth Women's World Championships 2017 held in Guwahati

On **19 – 26th November 2017**, Youth Women's World Championships 2017 is held in Guwahati, Assam.

Youth Women's World Championships 2017:

- i. The World Youth Women's Boxing Championship 2017 was **inaugurated** at Md. Toyabullah Hockey Stadium in Bhetapara by Assam chief minister **SarbanandaSonowal**.
- ii. It is **organised** by **AIBA** (International Boxing Association). Over 150 boxers from 38 countries are competing in the event, being held in India for the first time

Assam's legendary actor BijuPhukan passes away

On 22nd November 2017, **Assam's prominent film actor BijuPhukan passed away at a private hospital in Guwahati**, after suffering cardiac ailments.

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6th International Tourism Mart begins in Guwahati

6th International Tourism Mart (ITM) begun in **Guwahati, Assam** on December 5, 2017. 6th ITM will conclude on December 7, 2017.

i. This event has been **organised by Union Ministry of Tourism in association with the North Eastern States of India.** **ii.** 6th ITM was **inaugurated by Governor of Assam, Jagdish Mukhi** in presence of **Sarbananda Sonowal, Chief Minister of Assam** and other dignitaries.

iii. 6th ITM will not only focus on North Eastern India's tourism potential but will also put spotlight on India's "Act East Policy" and strengthening of ties with **Association of SouthEast Asian Nation (ASEAN)** countries.

NitinGadkari flags off Cargo Movement on Brahmaputra River in Assam

On December 29, 2017, **Union Shipping Minister, NitinGadkari** flagged off cargo movement **on the Pandu-Dhubri route (on National Waterway 2)** along the Brahmaputra River in Assam.

Assam CM launches Skill Development Training Centres across the state On December 28, 2017, **Assam Chief Minister, SarbanandaSonowal** launched skill development training centres across the state.

i. Mr.Sonowal launched the centres at a programme organized by Department of Skill, Employment and Entrepreneurship at SrimantaSankardevKalakshetra in Guwahati.

Assam gets Rs 1250 crore central fund for inland water transport

Central Government has sanctioned Rs 1250 crore for overall development of inland water transport of Assam.

i. Announcement in this regard was made by **Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and Shipping, NitinGadkari** at a meeting of the Brahmaputra Board and Water Resources Department at Kaziranga.

ii. Out of the total amount, Rs. 32 crore will be utilised for constructing 56 terminals and Rs 60 crore for Ro-Ro service.

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Vice President Naidu launches DeenDayalDivyangjanSahajya Scheme in Assam

On December 3, 2017, on the occasion of **International Day of Persons with Disabilities**, **Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu** launched **DeenDayalDivyangjanSahajya Scheme** in **Guwahati, Assam**.

i. Under this scheme, every differently abled person in Assam would be entitled to a **one-time grant of Rs 5000 for their treatment**.

Assam signs MoU with Isha Foundation to rejuvenate its rivers

On December 16, 2017, Assam State Government and **Isha Foundation** signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for rejuvenation and conservation of rivers.

- i.** Isha Foundation is **led by spiritual leader SadhguruJaggiVasudev**. He has initiated nationwide **'Rally for Rivers'** campaign for revitalising India's rivers.
- ii.** Assam is the sixth state to sign the MoU with Isha Foundation for rejuvenation and conservation of rivers.

Ankushita wins the 'Best Boxer' title in AIBA Women's Youth World Championship

Ankushita Boro 17-year-old girl from Assam won 'The Best Boxer title' in AIBA World Youth Women's Boxing Championship held in Guwahati.

i. Ankushita Boro won the **fifth gold** with her bout against Russia's Ekaterina Dynn timer in the 64kg final. **ii.** Four boxers from Haryana – Nitu in light flyweight (45-48 kg), Jyoti in flyweight (51 kg), Sakshi in bantamweight (54 kg) and Shashi Chopra in featherweight (57 kg) – won gold in the first four final bouts. Assam's Ankushita Boro added the fifth in welterweight (64 kg) category.