1.

Assam-based senior primatologist Dr Dilip Chetry recently attended the first meeting of the Global Gibbon Network (GGN) in Haikou, Hainan, China, an important international conference dedicated to the conservation of threatened Gibbons.

Dr Chetry, who leads the Primate Research and Conservation Division in Aaranyak, one of India's prominent conservation organizations, attended the event as a keynote speaker. He gave an account of the conservation status of the Hoolock gibbon in India especially in Northeast India before a group of scientists and primatologists from around Asia attending the conference.

The Hainan Institute of National Parks and Eco Foundation Global organised the event from July 7-9 focused on the conservation aspects of these apes and included a wide range of discussions about challenges, opportunities, and successes.

GGN was found with a vision to safeguard and conserve a key element of Asia's unique natural heritage- the singing Gibbon and their habitats, by promoting participatory conservation policies, legislations and actions. Research-driven conservation non-profit Aaranyak is one of the founding partner organisations of the GGN with 15 partners from seven countries.

Gibbons, the smallest and fastest of all the apes, live in tropical and sub-tropical forests in Southeast Asia. Like all apes, they are extremely intelligent, with distinct personalities and strong family bonds. Unfortunately, the current conservation status of gibbon species is alarming — all 20 species are at a high risk of extinction. Since 1900, gibbon distribution and populations have declined dramatically, with only small populations in tropical rainforests

Hoolock gibbons are found only in the seven-sister states of Northeast India, making them a unique primate species. The IUCN Redlist categorizes the Western Hoolock gibbon as Endangered, while the Eastern Hoolock gibbon is listed as Vulnerable. Under the Indian (Wildlife) Protection Act 1972, western and eastern hoolock gibbons are listed on Schedule 1.

2.

The Assam government, led by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, is preparing to introduce a bill to ban polygamy in the state. The proposed legislation is expected to be tabled in the upcoming monsoon session of the Assam Assembly, as announced by CM Sarma on July 13. If not possible in the monsoon session, the bill will be introduced in the January (winter) session

anti-polygamy bill is a crucial part of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) discourse. While the implementation of the UCC falls under the jurisdiction of the Parliament, states can independently make decisions on specific aspects with the President's assent. The aim of the proposed bill is to immediately prohibit the practice of polygamy in Assam.

3.

When French President Emmanuel Macron will host Prime Minister Narendra Modi for dinner at the iconic Louvre museum in Paris during the latter's two-day visit to the country, Assamese aerospace engineer Priyanka Das Rajkakati will be among the 250 invited guests. The invited guests for the dinner, to be held in Modi's honour on July 14, France's National Day also known as Bastille Day, will be treated to a special viewing of a number of iconic works. The Indian prime minister is the Guest of Honour on Bastille Day this year.

Though born to Assamese parents, Priyanka has spent most of her growing up days in Delhi.

Her father Manoj Kumar Das, who earlier held top positions in North Eastern Development Finance Corporation and North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation, hails from Dhemaji. Mother Ajanta Baruah Das is a doctor.

Priyanka, who currently lives in Paris, is an Alumni Ambassador of the France Alumni programme. She has earlier won several recognitions such as Forbes India 30 under 30, the Karman Fellowship and India Today's Next 100 Innovators. Apart from her achievements in aerospace engineering, she is also an accomplished artist. One of her demonstrative art-tech projects, Bhedadipika, spent a year on board the International Space Station in 2022, as part of the Moon Gallery project. In 2019, she was selected for a global initiative that conducts leadership expeditions for women in science to Antarctica.

An alumnus of St. Stephen's College (Delhi), Ecole Polytechnique (Paris) and ISAE-Supaéro (Toulouse), she defines her work as an intersection of art, science and society. In fact, she aspires to explore how traditional artistic and cultural practices from across the world could contribute towards sustainable space exploration.

Following her first entrepreneurial experience as co-founder of the Franco-German space startup, The Exploration Company, she is now experimenting with a novel venture, an art-tech studio, Atelier Arth.

Bringing her Assamese indigenous touch to her founding art-tech studio, Atelier Arth's logo has been inspired by the Assamese letter for the sound "a": □, according to Priyanka Rajkakati.

It aims to develop interdisciplinary methodologies that would bridge the communication and trust gap between cutting-edge space technologies and society, especially in the context of

rural or developing communities.

She also plans to run outreach campaigns in her home state Assam, to create awareness about how space technologies can be used to better everyday life

The pilot project for the studio, RiVeins, is a concept for a community-based flood resilience system that infuses existing flood early warning technologies with local cultural narratives.

She also has an upcoming voyage to Antarctica with the Homeward Bound women-in-STEMM initiative.

4.

The Central government has given its approval on July 12 for the appointment of Justices Ujjal Bhuyan and SV Bhatti as judges of the Supreme Court. The development was confirmed by Minister of State for Law and Justice, Arjun Ram Meghwal

In exercise of the powers conferred by the Constitution of India, the Hon’ble President, after consultation with the Hon’ble Chief Justice of India, is pleased to appoint the following 02 Chief Justices of High Courts as Judges of the Supreme Court of India – Justice Ujjal Bhuyan; Justice SV Bhatti.

The recommendation for their elevation to the Supreme Court was made by the Supreme Court Collegium on July 5, and the government has now cleared their appointments.

Justice Ujjal Bhuyan is currently serving as the Chief Justice of the Telangana High Court. His parent High Court is the Gauhati High Court. Justice Bhuyan was appointed as a judge of the

Gauhati High Court on October 17, 2011. He holds the position of senior-most judge in his parent High Court and has been serving as Chief Justice of the Telangana High Court since June 28, 2022.

Justice SV Bhatti, on the other hand, is currently the Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court. He was initially appointed as a judge of the High Court of Andhra Pradesh on April 12, 2013, and is the senior-most judge in his parent High Court. He was later transferred to the Kerala High Court in March 2019 and has been serving as Chief Justice there since June 1, 2023.

The Collegium resolution noted the absence of representation from the Andhra Pradesh High Court in the Supreme Court since August 2022. Currently, the Supreme Court is functioning with a strength of 30 judges, while the sanctioned strength is 34. With the appointment of Justices Ujjal Bhuyan and SV Bhatti, the strength of the apex court will rise to 32 judges.

5.

Assam’s very own Chayan Dutta has been entrusted with the critical responsibility of leading the launch control operations for Chandrayaan-3, India’s upcoming lunar mission. Chandrayaan-3 is equipped with enhanced fuel capacity, robust safety measures, and a larger landing site, adopting a “failure-based design” approach to ensure a successful moon landing, even in the face of unforeseen challenges.

Chayan Dutta, an accomplished alumnus of the Department of Electronics & Communication Engineering at Tezpur University, currently serves as a Scientist/Engineer-G at UR Rao Satellite Centre, Department of Space. Additionally, he holds the esteemed position of Deputy Project Director, leading the “On Board Command Telemetry, Data Handling & Storage System, Lander, Chandrayaan-3” project. The Command and Data Handling

subsystem, considered the spacecraft's "brains," is responsible for controlling all its functions.

Chandrayaan-3 is poised for lift-off at 2:35 pm on July 14, marking a pivotal moment in India's space exploration endeavors. This mission serves as a follow-up to the Chandrayaan-2 mission, which encountered a crash landing in September 2019 due to a software glitch. Learning from past experiences, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman S Somanath recently revealed that Chandrayaan-3 takes a different design approach. Rather than focusing solely on success, the mission is designed with a "failure-based design" philosophy, addressing potential failure points and implementing measures to protect the spacecraft and ensure a triumphant lunar landing.

6.

The Assam Cabinet has given its nod to increase the reservation quota for Other Backward Class (OBC) communities in State Universities and Colleges. Assam Education Minister Ranoj Pegu announced that the reservation quota for OBCs will be raised from the existing 15 per cent to 27 per cent.

This provision caters to the interests of six communities, namely Tai Ahom, Chutia, Moran, Matak, Koch Rajbangshi, and Tea Tribes, by allocating a distinct share of the reservation to each community.

7.

the Assam Cabinet has greenlit the implementation of the 'Sugam to Durgam' scheme. Education Minister Ranoj Pegu shed light on the initiative, stating, "Given our challenging

terrain, the Chief Secretary has been entrusted with the task of designing a program that makes it mandatory for every state government employee to serve in designated ‘Durgam areas’ (difficult areas) for a period of 3-5 years during their service tenure.”

8.

In a bid to provide better nutrition to students, the Assam Cabinet decided to provide three weekly per child in the Mid-Day meal to eligible children of schools in tea garden areas under PM POSHAN.

”Eggs being a good source of high-quality protein will boost physical growth while countering other adverse effects of malnutrition related to cognitive development.
This will have a positive impact on increasing the attendance and retention of the children in schools and decreasing the dropout rate,”

9.

the roads will be phased into Priority 1, Priority 2, and Priority 3 lists for 5-year short-term, 10-year medium term° and 20-year long-term periods.

”The proposed plan will bring down road user costs through efficient transportation and stimulate economic growth for the state, generating employment for 13 lakh person months from road works over next 20 years,”

Assam government has given its nod for Assam Road Network Master Plan (RNMP), 2023 for long-term connectivity requirements which will generate employment for 13 lakh people.

The RNMP is prepared with a 20-year period dovetailed into Multimodal transport plans, for meeting future travel demands, prioritizing 18,421 km of roads for development of higher order road network comprising 5,120 km of State Highways, 8,638 km of Major District Roads and 4,673 km of National Highway

10.

In order to enhance administrative efficiency, the Cabinet gave its for amendment of Assam Secretariat Service Rules, 2019, and Assam Subordinate Service Rules, 1963 in view of the re-designation of Senior Administrative Assistant as Assistant Section Officer and Superintendent as Section Officer of Assam Secretariat Service.

”This is in line with the ongoing reforms being implemented in subordinate services and in line with that of the Central Secretariat,”