1.

39 active cadres of the Aadivasi People's Liberation Army (APLA) on June 2 laid down their arms before the Assam Rifles and Bokajan Police Station in Assam on June 2, 2023.

As part of their unwavering commitment to mainstream misguided youth who have taken the path of insurgency, the Security Forces of Spear Corps, along with Assam Rifles under the aegis of Inspector General Assam Rifles (North) and Assam Police, have relentlessly worked towards encouraging the return of these individuals to a life of peace and prosperity.

Today's successful operation, codenamed Samarpan, witnessed the surrender of 31 weapons, including 3 AK series Rifles, 19 Pistols, 5 other rifles, 2 Grenades, and various live ammunition. This significant step marks a turning point in their lives as they choose the path of harmony and contribute to the well-being of their communities.

The Assam Rifles extends its heartfelt appreciation to the brave youth who made this courageous decision. They emphasize the importance for others who have strayed from the right path to follow suit and rejoin the mainstream, embracing a happier and more peaceful existence.

The families of the surrendered cadres expressed their deep gratitude to the Security Forces for facilitating the safe return of their loved ones.

2.

Residents of Assam will be hit by the price hike again as the Assam Power Distribution Company (APDCL) has decided to hike monthly tariff for electricity consumption in the state.

Reportedly, APDCL is planning to hike the tariff by 30 paise to 70 paise per unit of electricity consumed. For consumers under subsidised Jeevan Dhara scheme, the hike will be 30 paise per unit, while for other consumers the hike will be 70 paise. Earlier in January, APDCL hit the people in the New Year as it proposed to increase electricity rates by Re 1 per unit in the state. The proposal was sent to Electricity Regulatory Commission for its decision.

3.

With the enthusiastic support of the employees and students from many departments, the 135 Ecological Task Force launched the World Environment Month programme on the revered campus of Bodoland University on June 2.

In keeping with the year's theme of "Beat Plastic Pollution," around 50 students, including National Service Scheme volunteers, marched alongside the military to clear the university grounds of trashed plastic wrappers, drink bottles, and other plastic garbage.

The employees, students, and members of the 135 Ecological Task Force made a commitment to support the government's future Go Green efforts in full.

What are the Issues Associated with Plastic-Waste in India?

- **More Plastic Per Person:**
  - Like much of the world, India is struggling to dispose of its growing quantities of plastic waste given how ubiquitous it has become- **from our toothbrushes to debit cards. A little over 10,000 tonnes a day of plastic waste remains uncollected.**
- **Unsustainable Packaging:**

- India's packaging industry is the biggest consumer of plastics. A 2020 study on **packaging in India projects a loss of almost 133 billion dollars worth of plastic material value over the next decade due to unsustainable packaging.**
  - **Unsustainable packaging** involves **general packaging through single use plastic.**
- **Online Delivery:**
  - The popularity of online retail and food delivery apps, though restricted to big cities, is contributing to the rise in plastic waste.
  - India's **biggest online delivery startups Swiggy and Zomato are each reportedly delivering about 28 million orders a month.**
  - **E-commerce** companies too have come under fire for excess use of plastic packaging.

- **Upsets the Food Chain:**
  - Polluting **plastics can affect the world's tiniest organisms, such as plankton.** When these organisms become poisoned due to plastic ingestion, this **causes problems for the larger animals that depend on them for food.**
    - Larger items, such as plastic bags and straws, can choke and starve **marine life,** while smaller fragments (microplastics) can cause liver, reproductive, and gastrointestinal damage in animals and it can **directly impact the blue economy as well.**
- **Impact on Human Health:**
  - The **World Health Organisation** published shocking research in 2018 that exposed the **presence of microplastics in 90% of bottled water.**
    - **We absorb plastic through our clothes, 70% of which are synthetic and the worst fabric for the skin.**
    - We **even breathe plastic when due to poor waste management** by burning the trash in the open air.

- Plastic toxicity in humans can lead to hormonal disruption and adverse reproductive and birth outcomes.

How is India Addressing the concerns regarding Plastic-Waste?

- **National Dashboard on Elimination of Single Use Plastic and Plastic Waste Management:**
  - India launched a **nationwide awareness campaign on Single Use Plastics** on **World Environment Day** in June 2022.
  - A **mobile app for Single Use Plastics Grievance Redressal** was also launched to empower citizens to check sale/usage/manufacturing of SUP in their area and tackle the plastic menace.
- **Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2022:**
  - It **prohibits the manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of several single-use plastic items as of July 1, 2022.**
  - It has also mandated **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)** that incorporates circularity by making **manufacturers of products responsible for collecting and processing their products upon the end of the products' lifetime.**
- **India Plastics Pact:**
  - It is the **first of its kind in Asia.** The Plastics Pact is an ambitious and collaborative initiative to **bring stakeholders together to reduce, reuse and recycle plastics within the material's value chain.**
- **Mascot 'Prakriti':**
  - To spread awareness among masses about small changes that can be sustainably adopted in lifestyle for a better environment.
- **Project REPLAN:**

- **Project REPLAN (stands for REducing PLastic in Nature)** launched by **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** aims to reduce consumption of plastic bags by providing a more sustainable alternative.

What are the Effective Solutions to Plastic-Waste Management?

- **Identifying Hotspots:**
  - Identifying key **hotspots of Plastic leakage associated with production, consumption, and disposal of Plastic** can assist governments in developing effective policies that address the plastic problem directly.
- **Designing Alternatives:**
  - Identifying plastic items that can be replaced with non-plastic, recyclable, or biodegradable materials is the first step. Find alternatives to single-use plastics and reusable design goods by working with product designers.
    - Promoting the use of **Oxo-biodegradable plastics**, that are manufactured to be **broken down by ultra-violet radiation and heat, more quickly than regular plastics.**
- **Breaking Down Plastic Waste:**
  - Plastic has become so enmeshed in our ecosystem that **bacteria have evolved to digest it. ‘**
    - **Plastic-eating bacteria**, **discovered in Japan**, have been cultivated and modified to digest polyester plastics (food packaging and plastic bottles).
- **Recycling through Technologies and Innovation:**
  - **Waste is valuable and Waste is a resource, especially plastic**. Recycling, especially plastic recycling, sets a system in place which **creates a value chain for waste.**

- **Thiagarajar College of Engineering in Madurai has received a patent for manufacturing tiles and blocks from waste plastic.**
  - The manufactured tiles could withstand heavy loads and could be used a construction material.
- **Promoting a plastic-free workplace:**
  - All catering operations should be prohibited from using single-use plastics.
    - To encourage workers and clients to improve their habits, all single-use goods can be replaced with reusable items or more **sustainable single-use alternatives.**
- **Circular Economy for Plastic Management:**
  - Circular economy can reduce material use, redesigns materials to be less resource intensive, and recaptures “waste” as a resource to manufacture new materials and products.
    - **Circular economy** is not just applicable to the global currents of plastic and clothes, but can also **contribute significantly to the achievement of sustainable development goals.**
    - **Circular economy** can reduce material use, redesigns materials to be less resource intensive, and **recaptures “waste” as a resource to manufacture new materials and products.**
- **Multi-stakeholder collaboration:**
  - Government ministries at the **national and local levels must collaborate** in the **development, implementation and oversight of policies**, which includes **participation from industrial firms, non-governmental organisations and volunteer organisations.**

What are the Current Global Initiatives to Tackle

Plastic-Waste?

- **Resolution:**
  - In 2022, **124 countries, parties to the United Nations Environment Assembly, including India,** signed a resolution to draw up an agreement which will in the future make it legally binding for the signatories to **address the full life of plastics from production to disposal, to end plastic pollution.**
    - As of July 2019, **68 countries have plastic bag bans with varying degrees of enforcement.**
- **European Union:**
  - In July, 2021, the **Directive on Single-Use Plastics** took effect in the **European Union (EU).**
- **Closing the loop:**
  - **It is a** project of the **United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific** assists cities in developing more inventive policy solutions to tackle the problem.
- **The Global Tourism Plastics initiative:**
  - It aims to reduce plastic pollution from the tourism sector through a set of actionable commitments by 2025.
    - The Initiative will also **engage the value chain to promote 100% of plastic packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable** and commit to collaborate and invest in increasing the recycling and composting rate for plastics.

4.

In a move to mitigate climate change, Indian Army has planned to make Narengi Military Station in Assam's capital city Guwahati a completely renewable-based military station.

For this initiative, the Indian army has installed a green solar energy plant with a capacity of 1 MW (Mega Watt) at the military station to benefit the troops of the Indian army.

According to the army officials, they have planned to extend the solar energy plant upto 3 MW capacity.

The Indian army officials said that they have used Make in India solar panels in its first green solar energy plant.

Renewable energy sources are derived from water, wind or sun. Army is looking for a durable power supply in high altitudes to enhance the living conditions of its personnel.

They also installed a system of Real-Time Data Acquisition and Required Parameter Monitoring for analysis of Power Generation each day, incorporating weather parameter sensors like wind direction sensor, wind speed sensor, solar radiation sensor, humidity sensor, temperature sensor and barometer pressure sensor.

The present solar energy plant has delivered approximately 0.7 MW of power.

5.

In the wake of rising temperatures, the Nagaon district administration of Assam has issued an order and rescheduled the timing of classes of all educational institutions (government and private) from 7-30 am with immediate effect.

The order comes due to the continuous rise of the mercury, prevailing scorching heat, and in view of the health of the students.

The timings of LP Schools will start from 7:30 am to 12:15 pm, ME School timings are 7:30 to 12:45 pm and HS and HS Schools start from 7:30 am to 1:15 pm

What are the impacts of heat wave?

- Loss of human life
- Decreased work productivity
- Increased out of pocket health expenditure
- Agricultural crop losses
- Prone to heat-related illness such as Heart disease, Mental illness, Poor circulation and Sunburn

How to mitigate extreme heat wave events?

- **Increasing green cover** – Greening could help mitigate heat waves and urban forest should also need to be increased.
- **Wetlands** – The wetlands needs to expanded and restored.
- **Water bodies** – Restoring dead and decaying ponds/lakes should be given utmost importance.
- **Urban heat effect** – Reducing the Urban heat island effect by reducing the use of preamble materials in the civic infrastructure and residential construction.
- Enhancing natural landscapes in urban areas will also address the effect.
- **Urban building standards** – It should be upgraded to avoid usage of heat absorbent galvanized iron and metal roof sheets.
- **Cleaner cooking fuels** – Use of it will reduce indoor air pollution, which may also help reduce urban heat.

- **Natural vegetation** – Can be increased in the streets with the low ventilation.
- **Public transportation** – This can reduce the pollution and mitigate the extreme heat.
- **Landfill management** – A push for waste segregation, along with solid waste management at source can reduce the landfills fires which may contain methane.
- **Forecasting ability** – It should be widened to include the impacts of extreme heat in the food production.

6.

The State Government asked the Education Department to institute a high-level committee to inquire into the circumstances leading to an accident at Jalukbari that claimed the lives of seven AEC students recently.And the government would ask the AEC principal and the superintendent concerned with the hostel to go on leave until the inquiry is over.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma asked the Education Department to constitute a committee to look into the present system of election in colleges and universities and report regarding the need for reviewing the system in the wake of frequent clashes during the pre- and post-election period amongst the student community. Further, to prevent the recurrence of any incident that is potentially life-threatening to the student community, the Chief Minister also asked the Education Department to constitute another committee to strengthen discipline, rules, and regulations in hostels of educational institutions. The committee will also look into strict enforcement of in- and out-times of hostels, complete prohibition of alcohol, etc., in hostel campuses and hostels, and prohibition of extended stays at hostel borders. The committee will also recommend ways to promote healthy community life within the hostels.

7.

In the backdrop of clashes between the Kuki-Meitei communities in the northeastern state of Manipur, the Assam government has initiated a survey on the various denominations of the Christian churches in the state.

In a new directive to the officer-in-charge of various police stations, the state home department urgently sought information on the number of churches under their jurisdiction.

Under the Assam Darshan project, the state government extended financial assistance to 910 various religious shrines, including 458 temples, 186 *sattras*, 123 *namghars*, 47 mosques and 26 churches on February 22, 2020.

In 2019-20, the state government released Rs 91.50 crore under its Assam Darshan project. In 2020-21, the government released Rs 37.70 crore to 377 religious institutions.

Assam Darshan Yojana 2022

A new scheme has been launched by the government of Assam state in order to increase the Heritage and culture of historical and religious importance across the state. Under the scheme, a financial grant will be provided to improve the infrastructures of the religious institution in order to increase its beauty. The main objective of launching **Assam Darshan Yojana** is to provide the message of the spiritual and cultural identity of the state to foreign tourists. It will also help in providing the basic essential facilities for the visitors. A large amount of financial grant has been allocated to bring sparkle to all the identified religious places of Assam.

OBJECTIVE OF ASSAM DARSHAN YOJANA

Assam is always known for the beauty and glorious cultural heritage that it offers to the world. But sometimes due to lack of essential facilities, it creates a lot of problems for the visitors. And to overcome this situation, the Government of Assam state has launched a new scheme called **Assam Darshan Yojana.** This scheme will provide a financial grant in order to improve the basic infrastructure of the religious places that are identified under Assam. The main objective of launching this scheme is to prepare a master plan to improve the religious site of the state by keeping in mind the original look.

- **Darshan Yojana** will help in strengthening and the improving of infrastructure facilities with the help of financial assistance which will be provided by the government.
- With the help of Darshan Yojana, the highest stress should be put on the quality aesthetics and appearance of the new construction of religious institutes.
- The other main objective of launching this scheme is to provide the basic facilities in order to increase the number of visitors.

8.

Assam police in Dima Hasao destroyed a hemp farm in Lower Haflong and seized 6.8kg of the illegal substance on June 3.

Isn’t cannabis cultivation illegal in India?

- In 1985, India banned the cultivation of cannabis plant under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. But this Act allows state governments to allow controlled and regulated cultivation of hemp for obtaining its fibre and seed for industrial

or horticultural purposes.

- In 2018, Uttarakhand became the first state in the country to do so, allowing the cultivation of only those strains of cannabis plant which have a low concentration of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) — the primary psychoactive constituent of cannabis that produces a high sensation.
- Uttar Pradesh followed a similar policy, while Madhya Pradesh and Manipur are reportedly considering it as well.

1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs

- The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 is an international treaty to prohibit production and supply of specific (nominally narcotic) drugs and of drugs with similar effects except under licence for specific purposes, such as medical treatment and research.
- The Single Convention refers to drug addiction as “a serious evil for the individual [that] is fraught with social and economic danger to mankind”.

9.

The Pollution Control Board, Assam (PCBA) celebrated its 49th foundation day recently. The Board was established on June 2, 1975, by the Government of Assam under the provisions of Section 4 of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974.

State Pollution Control Board, Assam is an autonomous statutory organization constituted on 2nd June, 1975 under the provision of section 4 of the Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act 1974 with a view to protecting the environment and preventing and controlling the pollution of water and air in the State of Assam, occupying a prominent niche in progressive and industrial development of the country.

Function & Activities

The primary activities, functions and responsibilities are based on as per provisions of the Acts & Rules, and the Board has been performing following activities within the State of Assam :

1.Comprehensive programme on Water, Air, Land etc., Pollution Control and Execution thereon.

2.Advice and liaison with the State Government on any matter concerning environmental pollution.

3.Collection and dissemination of data and information on pollution and environmental problems and preparation of reports thereon.

4.Investigation and research relating to pollution and environmental problems.

5.Collaboration with the programmes of the Central Pollution Control Board, Ministry of Environment and Forests, State Government, NGOs and other organizations relating to pollution control and environment and organise Mass Education Programmes.

6.Issue of N.O.C. and Consent to industries and other development projects.

7.Inspections of sewage, trade effluent sites, industries, various industrial, plants and Sewage Treatment Plants.

8.Monitoring of industrial/trade effluents, water bodies, air and soil, and laboratory analysis thereon.

9.Laying down or modification of effluent and emission standards.

10.To evolve economical and reliable methods of treatment of sewage and effluent.

11.To establish or to recognize laboratories for performing functions under the Acts and Rules.

12.Assessment and collection of water cess.

13 Environmental education to public, students and others, and publication of mass-education materials.

14.Advise the State Government regarding location of industries, etc.

15.Enforcement of the provisions of the aforesaid rules and monitoring thereof.

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10.

To raise awareness and imbibe the spirit of participation and ownership with India's G20 Presidency, IIE is organising several Jan Bhagidari programmes across the state from June 1 to June 15, 2023.

To mark the occasion of Jan Bhagidari, IIE conducted a few activities like a financial literacy workshop, a tree plantation drive at Khowang Sonowal and Naharani at Dibrugarh, and a workshop on "New Age Entrepreneurship" at its premises on Day 1. More than 150 participants attended the programme. On Day 2, financial literacy and new age entrepreneurship workshops and tree plantation drives are being organised at Garpathar Dibrugarh, Dakuapara Kamrup Rural, and Khowang Kolowlowa Dibrugarh, respectively. The programmes are planned around the themes of the future of work, digital skills, new age entrepreneurship, blended learning, financial literacy, tech-based learning, skills relevant to the emerging world ecosystem, lifelong learning, etc. These initiatives will be in the form of skill workshops, skill quiz competitions, webinar series, industry immersion visits, debate competitions, skill hackathons, essay writing, tree plantation drives, etc., with a large participation of youth and women

About IIE

Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Guwahati an organization under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India, received the "Award of Excellence" for its exemplary work in the area of skill and entrepreneurship development in North Eastern Region (NER).

Jan Bhagidari as a Model of Effective Local Governance

Our country, India is famous for its extremely rich cultural heritage and astounding historical

facts. From the earliest civilizations to what we as a modern generation have achieved today is bewildering in nature. However the pinnacle of success that we have reached today wasn't easy to scale. It has much more to it, a long journey that has its roots in the past. Had it not been for the immensely well-thought of ideas and collective decisions, the efficient management that has seeped into the lowest tiers of the society today would not have been possible. "Jan Bhagidari" as the title of the essay reads is in simple terms the participation of people. When associated with local governance it refers to the participation of people in governance at the local level. The government of any country can stand on its feet only when the people of the nation consider themselves to be indispensable organs of it. Hence the involvement of people in governance at all levels is of utmost importance.

At the local level the term commonly used for describing the model of governance is – "Panchayati Raj ". The evolution of Panchayati Raj dates back to 1700 BC when the era of Rig Veda was flourishing. At that point of time almost every village had a self-governing body known as 'sabha'. With time passing by these sabhas came to be popularly known as 'Panchayat'. Panchayat means a group of five people. With the passage of time this institution has seen many ups and downs and endured them to become an important pillar of governance today.

The earliest evidence of self-governance can be traced back to ancient Greek civilization and colonial New England. Talking in particular about Athens where democracy had made its presence felt by 508 BC the citizens were chosen randomly to become government office bearers. This ensured that there was no concentration of power in the hands of the wealthy or the elite only. Also this encouraged the poor and downtrodden section of the society to engage in governance and not feel left out. To put it in a nutshell it was an ideal form of self-governance.

‘Jan Bhagidari’ is a way to provide every citizen with opportunities for the common man to have a say in the public decisions which can be politically, culturally, socially and economically driven. It is the decentralization of democracy wherein the lowest rungs of the political order participate in decision-making process.

During the colonial rule, the village panchayats started getting formed in India. Mahatma Gandhi has called this system as “Village Swaraj”. According to him each village should in itself be a republic, self-sustainable in nature and still connected to the larger society outside the village. He wanted to ensure maximum freedom of the people in the village so that they could take their own firm decisions. To enable the system to work more efficiently an act popularly known as The GOI Act, 1935 was implemented which gave power to the provinces to enact various legislations. A much bigger step taken to give more power to the Act was the introduction of Directive Principles of State Policy – also known as Article 40 in the Constitution.

The involvement of people in the local self-governance can be in numerous ways like:

- Casting votes in elections
- Discussing in any forum or platform about the development of the nation
- Being able to persuade someone to think about any major issue in a positive manner
- Communicating with elected representatives regarding various issues bothering the citizens
- Participate in meetings and discussions
- Support a cause that affects people positively
- Protest when one feels that something is not working properly or can potentially be harmful
- Contest elections

- Give service to the country in various forms

There is actually no end to forms of people's participation in local self-governance. The beauty of Panchayati Raj System lies in the fact it is made by the people for the welfare of people themselves. So the people are the best judges for their own good.

The act which paved the way for establishment of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in India is the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act which was passed in 1992 and came into effect on 24th April, 1993. This act authorised the state governments to act accordingly to formalize the Gram Panchayats. An addition of part IX was done to the Indian Constitution. The PRIs have a three-tier hierarchy and this concept was recommended by Balwant Rai Mehta committee in 1957 which eventually came into force. The three tiers of local government starting with the lowest level are:

1. Village Panchayat
2. Panchayat Samiti
3. Zila Parishad

To mark the importance of Local self-governance, April 24 marks the National Panchayati Raj Day every year. Jan Bhagidari has been able to increase cohesion and cooperation among the citizens. One specific attribute of PRIs is that whenever a decision is taken it is based on consensus, so everyone's participation is welcome in it. Jan Bhagidari in itself means everyone's participation so PRIs are literal embodiments of it.

A scheme called SVAMITVA which deals specifically with the ownership of land in the rural areas has been improving the efficacy of the local governance by leaps and bounds. It basically demonstrates how resources that are available around us can be put to use

properly. The automatization of the local self-government bodies through the means of e-Panchayats is yet another milestone in the history of PRIs which has made work easier for those in the villages.

Jan Bhagidari has come a long way and it has been a game changer totally. When at one time people would have to do things entirely on their own or run from pillar to post to get help, PRIs through Jan Bhagidari have worked to take measures to reach out to people on a broader scale. The ongoing pandemic which has taken a toll of so many lives and made situations harsher has been tackled efficiently through Jan Bhagidari. With 65% population of India residing in the villages, it is of utmost importance that necessary action be taken to deal with this catastrophe. Local self-governance has proved that any tough situation can be handled if everyone participates to solve the problems. Till the time one person’s problem can’t be understood fully or considered as another person’s own problem, no set of rules will be able to serve as a panacea. What is encouraging is that more people are participating in local governance which is a sign of positivity so it can be rightly said that Jan Bhagidari is indeed an important pillar of Local Self-Governance.