

'Assam Has Already Missed the Bus, Deportation of Immigrants No Longer an Option'

Agency
Guwahati, July 5,

Talking about the anti-foreigner agitation of the 1980s in Assam wouldn't be complete without a mention of Hiranya Kumar Bhattacharyya, an Indian Police Service officer of the 1958 batch. It was Bhattacharyya, posted as the DIG of the Assam Border Police in the late 1970s, who came up with thousands of names in the state's voters' list, particularly in the Mangaldoi constituency, identifying them as "illegal immigrants from Bangladesh". This act is often looked in Assam as to have given a fillip to the movement building up against 'foreigners', finally leading to the signing of the Assam Accord between the All Assam Students Union (AASU) and the Indian government in 1985.

In an interview, former DIG of the Assam Border Police Hiranya Kumar Bhattacharyya discusses the past and present of the 'illegal immigrants' issue – from the Assam Accord to the National Register of Citizens (Amendment) Bill – and offers a solution with a global context.

In 1981, over the course of the six-year-old students' agitation, he was taken into preventive detention under the National Security Act (NSA) on the charges of fomenting a rebellion in Assam police in support of the agitation before finally losing his job. Bhattacharyya contested his dismissal and won the case in

1996 after a long court battle. By then he had crossed the retirement age and couldn't get his job back. The court reinstated his status as a retired IPS officer with all benefits. One of his many books, *Betrayal of North East: the Arrested Voice*, published in English in 2015, is a testimony of that personal struggle.

DFO, Thoubal Celebrated 69th Van Mahotsava at Khongjom War Memorial Complex

IT News
Imphal, July 5,

Forest Department, Thoubal Division, planted saplings at Khongjom War Memorial Complex on Wednesday as a part of the 69th Van Mahotsava week celebration. District Forest Officer, Thoubal, in association with Clubs, Students' and locals, planted saplings at the Khongjom War Memorial Road site. Taking part in the observance the MLA of Wangjing Tentha AC P. Brojen said the widespread tree plantation campaign being taken up all over Manipur is part of an effort to reverse the effect of adverse climatic changes and deforestation. The voluntary participation of the public are committed to planting trees and protecting the environment is an omen that after some



years our place will be covered in greeneries again. Arung Bajpal IFS Chief Conservator Forest, Deputy Conservator Forest

Rk. Amarjit IFS, Deputy Commissioner Thoubal, Haobam Rosita IAS, ADM Thoubal, L. Radhakanta Superintendent of Police

Thoubal Goutam and Forest Department, Thoubal division staff also participated in the plantation programme.

Govt. to raise Rs. 1 trillion from market for funding education infrastructure

From Agency
New Delhi, July 5,
By-Prashant K. Nanda

Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas as well as new medical colleges and central universities established after 2014 will get grants to service the Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) loans. **New Delhi:** The Union cabinet on Wednesday allowed the human resource development (HRD) ministry to raise Rs.1 trillion from the market for funding education research and infrastructure. The funds will be raised from a clutch of sources, including education bonds, commercial borrowings and corporate houses. The money shall be given as loans to government-controlled higher educational institutions, including medical colleges, as well as central government-run school chains such as Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) and Navodaya Vidyalayas (NVs) as the Union government explores innovative ways to fund education to reduce the burden on the exchequer.

The funds will be raised through the Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA), a recently minted non-banking financial company under the HRD ministry. The cabinet committee on economic affairs on Wednesday capital base to Rs.10,000 crore from the current approved enhancing HEFA's Rs.3,300 crore. *Mint* first reported the proposed plan on 3 June. "The cabinet committee on economic affairs...approved the proposal for expanding the scope of Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) by enhancing its capital base to Rs.10,000 crore and tasking it to mobilize Rs.10,000 crore," law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said after the cabinet meeting. The Rs.10,000 crore capital base includes present and subsequent contribution from Canara Bank, a joint venture partner of the HRD ministry for establishing and running HEFA. HRD minister Prakash Javadekar termed the decision a "landmark" development that will work as a "huge push for research and

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academic infrastructure with social equity". This move will reduce the budgetary pressure on the exchequer at a time when the government is facing a funds crunch, said an HRD ministry official who asked not to be named. The ministry may effectively save the few thousand crores of rupees it is giving on grant for infrastructure development and bring in fiscal accountability among institutions, as most of these loans will be paid back by institutions, said the official. Technical institutes like Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and National Institutes of Technology (NITs) that are more than 10 years old will repay the whole loan from their internal earnings, while technical schools started

between 2008 and 2014 will repay 25% and rest will be paid from government grants, according to the cabinet decision. Central universities established before 2014 will have to repay 10% of the loan they take from internal resources and will receive a grant for the remaining part of the principal. KVs and NVs as well as new medical colleges and central universities established after 2014 will get grants to service HEFA loans. So far, funding proposals worth Rs. 2,016 crore from some of the older IITs have been approved by HEFA and nearly Rs. 9,000 crore more of loan proposals are in the pipeline for development of education infrastructure and research capabilities at various IITs, NITs and other technical schools.

JFA expresses concern over threats to scribes

By Our Correspondent
Guwahati, July 5,

Journalists' Forum Assam (JFA) is deeply concerned on learning about the intimidation to journalists who had assisted in the reporting of an investigative story on the Hambantota port that was published by the New York Times (on 26 June 2018). This blatant act of direct

intimidation to two Lankan journalists is indeed worrisome as it is tantamount to gagging the free press in Sri Lanka, said a statement issued by JFA president Rupam Barua and secretary Nava Thakuria. The forum appeals to all journalist associations and journalist protection bodies around the world to condemn such actions by politicians/parliamentarians and call

upon the Sri Lankan government in Colombo to ensure security for scribes. "We stand in solidarity with all Sri Lankan journalists and also with other correspondents from foreign media working in the island nation and demand adequate protection to the media persons," concluded the statement.

PCI's 3-member team hold meeting with representatives of editor, journalist associations in Srinagar

Agency,
Jammu, July 5,

The Press Council of India's three member team held series of meetings with the

representatives of editor and journalist associations in Srinagar today. The meetings aimed to have first hand account of the working of media and the challenges and problems confronting the media in the State.

The PCI team held detailed deliberations with the representatives of Kashmir Editors Guild (KEG), Kashmir Press Club, Jammu & Kashmir Editors Forum (JKEF), Jammu and Kashmir Press Association (JKPA), J&K Media Association, J&K Journalistic Union and other similar bodies. The media associations urged PCI for proactive role in addressing the issues and challenges faced by the newspapers and journalists in Kashmir. The PCI team is on the J&K's on the instructions of Chairman PCI Justice C K Prasad in view of the concerns in the wake of assassination of senior journalist and editor Syed Shujaat Bukhari by unidentified gunmen in Srinagar's Press Enclave on June 14.

Imphal Times daily strated 4 page publication since May 2, 2018 this year.

RBI urges public not to get lured by fictitious offers, lottery winnings

Agency
New Delhi, July 5,

Reserve Bank has once again warned members of the public to remain about the activities of unscrupulous elements. In a press release issued in Mumbai, RBI has urged the public not to get lured by fictitious offers, lottery winnings or remittance of cheap funds in foreign currency.

The apex bank reiterated that it does not hold any account for individuals and neither send any SMS, letter or email for intimating award of lottery funds, etc. RBI has said that its only official and genuine website is (<https://www.rbi.org.in/> or <https://rbi.org.in/>) and members of public should not get misled by fake websites with similar addresses beginning with 'Reserve Bank', 'RBI', etc., along with fake logos. RBI has requested public members not to respond to such SMS or emails and immediately report such cases to cybercrime authorities.

Contd. from Page 2

Operation Lebensraum

Some sections in the RSS claim that it was due to their ground work that the initial agitation against *Bohiragoto* or outsiders in Assam turned towards the 'foreigners', meaning Bangladeshis. Do you agree? Absolute rubbish. In 1974, the charter of demands put together by the agitation leaders did have one demand which said there should be a stop to uncontrolled flow of outsiders into Assam even from mainstream India. But when I detected 47,658 illegal Bangladeshis in Mangaldoi itself, things took a turn towards Bangladeshis or foreigners. RSS can't claim it as their work. They were there only to widen their base by making use of the agitation. As they say, failure is an orphan but success has many claimants.

Some top BJP leaders of the time were active during the Assam agitation. Who all would you name among those who frequently visited the state? There was A.B. Vajpayee, L.K. Advani, Jaswant Singh, Murlu Manohar Joshi. They only attended public meetings in Guwahati and took advantage of the situation to organise their party in the state. Why I say this is also because when they came to power, they did nothing. My whole contention was, you can't deport, I understand. But why can't you detect (infiltrators) and take preventive measures to stop illegal migration? I will give you an example here. As the winter falls, down the Brahmaputra, beyond Dhubri, the river divides itself into ten-15 streams, forming riverine islands or what is locally called

char. Mostly, infiltration from across the border takes place during that time. They typically hide in the char areas. I told Advani (he was the Union Home minister then), what prevents you from issuing an executive order that all boats navigating the Brahmaputra must be registered? That boats found without a registration number would be confiscated? **There is also a growing demand for constitutional safeguards to the families of those whose names appeared in the 1951 Census. Do you want to respond to it?** My reply or solution to the Citizenship Bill would be, prior to bringing it, the government should give constitutional safeguards to the indigenous people of Assam and the entire Northeast. It should be on land rights besides political,

economic and administrative safeguards, and reservations in government jobs. The encroachments on government land should be cleared. If there would have been constitutional safeguards already, there would probably have been not such a hue and cry about the Bill as we are seeing now. The biggest issue about the people here has been that they have no control over their resources; that is the main issue (for the continuous unrest). **Some would like to say that the agitation against the Citizenship Bill will also help AGP gain lost ground. The coming panchayat elections could be an indicator, but being someone who watches the shifts in Assam politics and the public mood closely, do you agree?** Well, the AGP was on a downhill path. Before reaching a nadir, it

worked out the alliance with the BJP in 2016 and managed to swim through the assembly elections and became part of the present government. Personally, I don't think the AGP can take very firm stand on the Bill as the leaders are more after personal gains. The party was born in 1985. In the last 33 years, it failed to induct new cadre, create a second line of leadership only because those who are there want to monopolise it. Having said this, I do agree that the AGP would benefit from the ongoing agitation against the Bill. It is also because the public mood in Assam is not very pro-BJP anymore. Apart from the opposition to the Bill, rising prices of food items and fuel is not in going in favour of the BJP. But the situation is still fluid.