

Assam and NE opening up new vistas of trade with ASEAN and BBN countries

Courtesy Ne Now Guwahati, July 9.

As part of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision on Act East, Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal is taking a number of path breaking initiatives to implement the Act East Policy. Last year, the Global Investors' Summit was organized by the State Government with the tagline, 'Assam - India's expressway to ASEAN'. Ministers from six ASEAN and BBN countries, with an exclusive session on integration of Assam and the Northeast, with ASEAN and BBN were the highlights of the Global Investors' Summit.

Following this, the State Government at the initiative of the chief minister took up the matter of formulating a special scheme on the patterns of UDAN for connecting Guwahati with country capitals of ASEAN and BBN.

The Civil Aviation Ministry responded favourably and along with the State Government, a new scheme named International UDAN was drafted.

The chief minister immediately announced a viability gap funding of Rs 100 crores for three years to make this dream a reality. Accordingly, Ministry of Civil Aviation and State Government decided to open six sectors namely, Guwahati-Dhaka, Guwahati-Bangkok, Guwahati-Kuala Lumpur, Guwahati-Kathmandu, Guwahati-Hanoi and Guwahati-Yangon.

The first flight to Dhaka has already taken off and the remaining flights are expected to take off this financial year. Historically, Assam has been a rich and prosperous region



with its resources namely, oil, tea, timber and coal. The British understood the business importance of these commodities and traded these to the outside world through the Stilwell Road, Tamu-Moreh-Mandalay Road, train route from Makum to Chittagong, the river route from Brahmaputra via ferries to Calcutta Port and Chittagong Port and the road routes from Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura to Bangladesh.

The chief minister has taken upon himself to restore all these trade routes and has taken up the matter with the concerned ministries of Shipping, Surface Transport and Railways to expedite the various projects like the Asian Trilateral Highway, the Kaladan Project, opening of the Chittagong Port to north-eastern India, dredging of the Brahmaputra and Barak rivers to make them navigable through the entire year and early completion of the Akhaura-Agartala missing railway link.

In this connection, the legislators and senior government officials, embarked upon a bus journey from Guwahati to Sylhet and from Imphal to Mandalay and Yangon, to understand the various issues, problems and opportunities which trade routes offer in these two countries, and also beyond these two countries with ASEAN.

The delegation from Assam had a fruitful discussion on how to resume trade.

The delegation had a discussion with senior functionaries of Government of Bangladesh and divisional and local administration of Sylhet. Further, a detailed meeting was held with Sylhet Chambers of Commerce. During the deliberation, issues relating to bilateral trade and investment between Assam and Bangladesh and issues relating to infrastructure, connectivity and tourism, both at the north-eastern India regional level and at the state level were

discussed. One of the highlights of the visit was to sensitize and appraise the delegation members on the status of the Government of India's funded connectivity initiative, i.e., progress of work in the India-Myanmar Friendship Highway and the stretch of the Trilateral Highway.

The team from Assam had a high level delegation meeting with the Government of Myanmar on exploring greater 'Economic Cooperation and Connectivity', where the Chief Minister of Mandalay Region Government, Dr Zaw Myint Maung along with his cabinet ministers were present.

In addition, the team also engaged in a meeting on 'Enhancing Bilateral Commercial Relations' with Vice President of Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry at Yangon.

To operationalize all the above schemes, Assam Government in conjunction with the

Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, is organizing a two-day 'India-Bangladesh Stakeholders' Meet' on July 19-20 in Guwahati.

Representatives from the Ministry of Shipping, Surface Transport, regulatory bodies like customs, port authorities and business bodies like freight forwarders and transporters will participate to discuss the finer details of commerce and resuming the actual physical movement of goods in these routes and to highlight the pending and administrative interventions required from both sides - India and Bangladesh.

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal and Minister of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh, Tipu Munshi; Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of Bangladesh, Dr A K Abdul Momen; Adviser to Prime Minister, Bangladesh, International Affairs, Gowher Rizvi, have consented to inaugurate the meeting. Besides, a high level 60 members' delegation of leaders and officials from Bangladesh and a similar contingent from various ministries of Government of India is expected to attend the two-day stakeholders' meet.

It is the firm conviction of the government, that the future growths of Assam and entire Northeast lies in its re-integration with this region, as both have a large amount of commonalities in terms of the DNA, food, social and cultural fabric.

The geo-strategic location of North-East and Assam should be leveraged in this region to catapult India's presence in the ASEAN and BBN regions.

Minister I. Jayantakumar Singh releases book titled "Meiteisingee Ethnography"



DIPR Imphal, July 9,

Art & Culture Minister I. Jayantakumar Singh released a book titled "Meiteisingee Ethnography" at a function held yesterday at Manipur State Museum, Imphal. Speaking as the Chief Guest he said that there is a need for a system based model which will change accordingly to the change in time.

Minister Jayantakumar maintained that we have our own traditions, beliefs, culture and social norms. It is the responsibility of each individual to protect and uphold the traditional laws passed down by our forefathers. He also stressed on the important role played by media in propagating awareness about age old cultural traditions and identity.

Stating that human behavior changes with the changing time, he said that it is important that the system correlates with the change in time and situation. The

society has become so complex and in such a situation, consciousness of human mind and body and its coordination is quite necessary, he added.

Mentioning about the book "Meiteisingee Ethnography", Minister Jayantakumar said that the book will definitely serve its purpose as it contains maximum basics of traditions and our ethno-heritage records. He also said that the book will benefit the young researchers and scholars who are working in the field.

The function was also attended by Chairman, Manipur Tourism development Corporation, Ltd. M.L.A. Dr. Sapan Ranjan Singh, President, Manipur Historical Society, Imphal, Prof. N. Joykumar Singh, Director, Mutua Museum, Keisampat, Mutua Bahadur, Prof. Nabakumar as president and guests of honour respectively. The function was organized by Sapan Hera Foundation, Tera Keitharl, Imphal

Cong meet begins in Bengaluru, rebel MLAs at secret location in Mumbai

Agency New Delhi July 9,

The rebel Karnataka Congress MLAs who were lodged in a luxury hotel in Mumbai following their resignation from the H D Kumaraswamy government, have now been shifted to an undisclosed location in the city even as the CLP meeting began in Bengaluru to tide over the crisis caused by the resignation. Earlier, there was a plan to shift the MLAs to Pune, which was later changed to Goa, but now they have been put up at an undisclosed location in Mumbai, ANI reports.

In a last ditch effort to save the government, HD Kumaraswamy and top coalition leaders scrambled to save the government with multiple meetings on Monday and announced that all 32 ministers had resigned in a bid to make room for some of the disgruntled leaders. But the strategy appeared to have floundered with several rebel leaders reiterating their commitment to quit the coalition. Last night, Congress leaders KC Venugopal, Dinesh Gundu Rao, Siddaramaiah, G Parameshwara, MB Patil, and Eshwara Khandare also held a meeting at an undisclosed location with legal advisers, ANI reports. Adding to the Congress-JDS

coalition' headache was the resignations of two independent MLAs - H Nagesh and R Shankar, who were a part of the government. This took the leaders by surprise because both had been inducted into the Cabinet in June to stabilise the government. Meanwhile, the BJP has demanded the resignation of HD Kumaraswamy, saying he has lost the confidence of the House. The party's state unit president BS Yeddyurappa claimed that the government has lost the majority in the Assembly and Kumaraswamy has no moral right to continue. All eyes are now on Speaker KR Ramesh Kumar, who returns to Bengaluru on Tuesday and has to take a call on 13 resignations - nine Congress and three JD(S) MLAs on Saturday, and rebel lawmaker Anand Singh who quit a week ago. The rebels had said they felt sidelined and wanted to back the BJP. If their resignations are accepted, the strength of the House falls from 224 (one additional member is nominated) to 211 and the majority mark becomes 106. The coalition will have 104 members (including the Speaker who cannot vote in a floor test, except to break a tie) while the BJP will have the support of 105, and the likely backing of two independents.

Floor test to President rule: How Karnataka crisis may play out

Agency New Delhi July 9,

After a spate of resignations by legislators of the ruling Congress-Janata Dal (Secular) government in Karnataka - 10 from Congress and three from JD(S) by Saturday; two more, including one Independent on Monday - the two parties are busy firefighting in order to save the 13-month-old government, with the entire cabinet resigning in order to accommodate the dissenting legislators.

On Monday, Karnataka minister R Shankar of regional outfit Karnataka Prajnyavantha Janatha Party (KPJP) resigned his post and also withdrew support to the beleaguered JDS-Congress government, stating that he would support the Bharatiya Janata Party. Small-scale industries minister H Nagesh, an Independent legislator, resigned and withdrew support as well, while Congress MLA R Roshan Baig told HT that he too intended to resign.

After the May 2018 elections to the 225-member assembly (one is nominated), the Congress had 78 MLAs, the JD(S) 37 and the BJP 105. The Congress-JD(S) also had the support of the nominated MLA, an MLA each from the Bahujan Samaj Party and the KPJP, and one Independent. In effect, the ruling coalition had 119 MLAs, in an assembly where the halfway mark was 113.

With the monsoon session of the assembly set to begin on Friday, here's a look at five possible scenarios facing the state government.

Speaker accepts the resignations

Assembly speaker KR Ramesh Kumar, who was not in his chamber when 12 MLAs submitted their resignations on Saturday, told reporters that he will take a call on Tuesday. Though acknowledgements have been issued to the MLAs, Kumar said that he would consult legal authorities before making a decision. If the resignations are accepted, the coalition's numbers will be down to 104 (not including Baig's intended resignation), and the Speaker will have to call on the government to prove its majority on the floor of the House.

Dissenting MLAs return

Senior leaders of the Congress-JD(S) are still confident that some disgruntled MLAs might return, now that all ministers have resigned to make way for a cabinet re-shuffle. "If a few return then the other rebels will find it hard not to do so," a senior Congress leader.

Anti-defection law is invoked

At a meeting in the residence of Deputy Chief Minister G Parameshwara, which was attended by senior leaders, including AICC general secretary K C Venugopal, Congress leaders decided to explore all legal options against the rebel MLAs, including the anti-defection law.

However, advocate BV Acharya said this will not stand, legally. "There are only two circumstances under which the anti-defection law applies. One, the MLAs should disobey a whip issued by the party, or, second, they should resign from their party."

In this case, since the Assembly is not in session, no whip has been issued and the MLAs have not given up membership of their respective parties. "There is no such thing as anti-party activity in the Schedule 10 of the Constitution," Acharya said.

President's Rule is imposed

The Governor can also put the state under President's Rule. However, the Supreme Court has previously held that the Governor must exhaust all options to ensure that an elected government is in power before taking such a decision.

Governor asks for a floor test

The Bharatiya Janata Party has appealed to the Governor to take action, as the coalition has lost a majority, pending the acceptance of the resignations. It is even considering parading its MLAs before the Governor's residence in a show of strength. In this scenario, a senior BJP leader said, the party was petitioning the Governor to call on the coalition to prove a majority.

According to Acharya, though the Governor had limited power, he could call on the chief minister to prove his majority on the floor of the House.

Assam Rifles conducts medical camp



IT News Imphal, July 9,

Keithelnambi Battalion of 9 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR (South) organised a free medical camp at Moidangpok Makha Leikai, I/West district on 08th July 2019. The medical camp commenced with an informative lecture on 'Birth Defects and Preventive Measures' by the Regimental Medical Officer (RMO) followed by an interactive session during which various queries raised by the attendees were clarified. The locals were also enlightened on basic healthcare including precautions against common viral diseases as well as importance of hygiene and sanitation for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. As part of the camp, a dedicated medical team under the Regimental

Medical Officer (RMO) provided medical assistance to the locals of the area. In addition to the medical checkup, consultation on various diseases and health related issues as well as free medicines were distributed to the needy patients. A mobile dental clinic was also established for carrying out dental checkup of the locals. A medical team under the dental officer from 12 Dental Unit Assam Rifles (DUAR) provided free dental treatment and medicines to the attendees. The medical camp witnessed the attendance of over 360 locals of nearby villages. The medical camp received an overwhelming response from the local populace. All the attendees conveyed their heartfelt gratitude to the Assam Rifles for facilitating the outreach of the medical facilities and requested for more such camps in the future as well.