

A natural anti-corrosion agent

Turbinaria ornata extract proved most effective. Seaweed can now help protect the steel body of ships from corrosive bacteria. Researchers from Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirapalli, have reported that seaweed extracts can kill fouling agents like barnacles and biofilm-forming bacteria. With the International Maritime Organization (IMO), London, completely banning the use of chemicals as anti-fouling agents, there is an urgent need to develop environment-friendly paints that serve the purpose. As seaweed is known to be rich in compounds such as lipopeptides and amides, the researchers examined their potential as anti-corrosion agents.

Ten different varieties of seaweed were collected from different locations in the southeast coast of India. Their bioactive compounds were extracted using different solvents and tested against barnacles and biofilm-forming bacteria. The extract from the seaweed *Turbinaria ornata* proved to be an effective anti-corrosion agent on mild steel – the metal used for building ships and other marine structures.

The extract showed high anti-microbial activity against eight different biofilm-forming bacteria collected from the base of ships. At a concentration of just 25 g/l, the extract showed nearly 100% inhibition of bacterial growth on mild steel. The 10-Octadecaonic acid present in the seaweed was found to inhibit corrosion. The results were recently published in *Scientific Reports*.

When tested against barnacle larva, 400 microgram/mL of the extract caused about 100% mortality in 12 hours. "After a biofilm is formed on the hull of the ship, a solution known as pickling solution is now being used to remove it. But this solution leaches out some of the metal as well. Our new extract was able to remove the biofilm alone without harming

the metal,” explains Muthukumar Krishnan, post-doctoral fellow at NIT Tiruchirapalli and first author of the paper.

“There is a huge economic loss due to biofouling. It adds to the drag force of the ship, thus increasing fuel consumption. The current anti-fouling agents are rich in chemicals and highly toxic to the environment. Our new extract is completely natural and thus eco-friendly,” explains Dr Arthur James from the Department of Marine Science at the University and corresponding author of the paper.

“Further tests need to be carried out to optimise the formulation so that it can be mixed with paints and used on ships and other marine structures.”

Source: xaam.in

Basant Rath : Inspirational IPS Officer

“Saavdhaan bachay! Helmet pehan lay nahin tou Basant Rath pakad lega” (Beware child! Put on your helmet. Otherwise Basant Rath will catch you) are the new words of fear that parents in Jammu repeat again and again to their children, both boys and girls.

Sweeping the streets with the fresh wave of fear is the 45-year-old IPS officer, Basant Kumar Rath, the new IGP Traffic, J&K.

No stranger to the controversies, Basant within the first fortnight after his promotion to the rank of IGP and his posting as traffic chief of the state is all over the social networking sites. His messages are aimed at everyone, ranging from politicians, officers, and violators, in his words to all

“politically well-connected individuals”.
His placement has evoked both, applauses and brickbats.



IPS officer Basant Rath

But as the complaints galore over the style of his functioning, state police chief Dr S P Vaid on February 22, shot a warning letter to Basant ‘against violation of the service conduct rules, operating without uniform, hurling abuses, and manhandling commuters.’

“A number of videos, posts, and pictures are being circulated on social media, in which you are seen moving in civvies on the roads, doing strange activities unwarranted of a police officer. Other videos uploaded by some commuters allege manhandling, using of abusive language and damage to their property like cell phones, helmets, spectacles and vehicles,” read letter.

As reported, it is said, ADG CID, Abdul Gani Mir, has complained that some of the posts floated by the officer seemed to attract criticism for being obscene and derogatory.

He has quoted Rath's tweets like this:

'Friends, some cops are immune to the threat of transfer. I'm one of them. My beautiful middle finger to the power-drunk middlemen. Yesh'

There is support for him as well. State's principal secretary finance Navin Kumar Chodhary wrote on his Facebook, "I vehemently support what and how Basant is dealing with. I just caution him through he can do even better without giving an opportunity to detractors."

"Cyclones often hit Orissa. J&K has been hit by an Oriyan cyclone called Basant Rath.

Jammu's former IGP Danesh Rana praised him warmly on Facebook, "Cyclones often hit Orissa. J&K has been hit by an Oriyan cyclone called Basant Rath. Cyclones uproot trees, Basant is planting seeds of traffic management and discipline and fear of the law. I have handled traffic as SSP and DIG but could not bring a revolution. (Doff my hat to Basant Rath). Kudos. Love you tiger."



IGP Basant Rath on road

With working of Basant, IAS officer and Managing Director J&K

State Power Development Corporation Shah Faesal is equally impressed. He posted on Facebook on February 19, "It's Monday morning but Amphala Chowk (Jammu) is traffic free. Basant Rath works!"

In response to DGP's letter, Basant is quoted to have said by *The Telegraph*, "Forget about the letter. I won't discuss the colour of my favourite brand of chocolate with the media at this time."

Present in the virtual world for 21 hours a day, except from 8 am to 11 am, Basant, his colleagues say, "is not like us." Every message he posts on Facebook or Twitter, there is a huge response. While some say he is Farki (senseless), while others call him 'a spoilt brat' and '*police wala goonda*' or '*vardi waala goonda*'. But ordinary commuters who face difficulties in moving around are happy to have him on the forefront.

Holding a position of IGP, Basant with his uncompromising attitude towards traffic violations is seen as unusual stuff in the department.

"I saw electricity for the first time when I was 11, touched a phone at 19 and started speaking English at 22. It has been a consistent struggle. We did not have enough to eat, but the hardship and sacrifice of MY mother made ME what I am today,"

A resident of Uttarsahi, a small hamlet in Pipili Tehsil in Puri District of Odisha, Basant comes from a poor family of farmer and priest, Hrushikesh. He credits is the mother of what he has achieved in life.

"I saw electricity for the first time when I was 11, touched a phone at 19 and started speaking English at 22. It has been a consistent struggle. We did not have enough to eat, but the hardship and sacrifice of MY mother made ME what I am today," he is quoted to have said.

Post-graduate in Sociology from Bhubaneswar, he spent six years in pursuing Ph.D. in the same subject from JNU at New Delhi but left it mid-way to join IPS in the year 2000.

As given the J&K Cadre, Basant from day one had his own way. The major crisis of his career was in 2011 as SSP when Omar Abdullah led coalition government attached him for allegedly badmouthing politicians while questioning Nagar Singh alias

Nago in connection with the murder of Amandeep Singh, the son of former National Conference legislator Depinder Kour. Amandeep was shot allegedly by Jitendra Singh, Nago's son. The video which became evidence against him was shot in 2009 when he was SSP Jammu.

Tough on the street, Basant is a poet by heart and an environmentalist to the core. In December 2009, he as SSP along with his team of few cops dug up a drain to bring water to villagers in Jammu.

Please give me three months. Mere twelve weeks. Just ninety days. I'll make things happen. We'll make things happen. I want Jammu and Srinagar to be India's two best cities in terms of traffic management,"

Basant had the option to join bureaucracy, he preferred police and also rejected options to go on central deputations. Moved by the situation in the valley, he has written many poems. While fighting militancy in the valley, he has articulated the intrinsic tragedy of Kashmir in his verses, probably the only cop who has used poetry to cement the bond with the people.

Though his job puts him on one side of the divide, he has not only narrated the ordeal of his stay in the state since the inception of the armed struggle but many decades before that as for him the Line of Control (LoC) is a "Caesarian baby born six grenade decades ago". In his poetry, the sociology expert has talked about issues ranging from massacres to the discovery of unmarked graves in 2011.

One can love him or hate him for his style, Basant is not scared of the controversies. Posting messages round the clock, he does not wear his uniform often.

Complaints and complainants don't give me wrinkles. I do what I do.

His behavior is evoking a mixed response. He has won many hearts, but there is strong criticism of his attitude, as well.

He shrugs away the criticism saying "complaints and complainants don't give me wrinkles. I do what I do."

Urging people to give him just ninety days, he seeks cooperation from the general masses. "Jammu, I'm not here to

be popular. I have a reputation to protect and a lack of reputation to preserve. Please give me three months. Mere twelve weeks. Just ninety days. I'll make things happen. We'll make things happen. I want Jammu and Srinagar to be India's two best cities in terms of traffic management," he said. Basanth is not favourite to most of his colleagues and members of political parties. "My Dear Senior who thinks I'm all gas on FaceBook and Twitter and no guts. Please ask your PSOs to drive their bikes without wearing helmets. I'll ruin their day. And yours. I don't think I love you."

A sitting Congress Lawmaker Usman Majeed alleged that Basant was acting like a goon. He also raised questions about the IPS officer's posts on Facebook that he termed as 'indecent' and 'insensitive' as he has compared "helmets with condoms."

With naming anybody Basant responded, ""I'm human and I'm in a hurry. I expect myself to commit mistakes. And I expect myself to learn my lessons as well. I promise I'll improve Jammu's traffic situation. And myself."

After having some verbal duel with political party members, Basant took on to twitter and wrote "Dear politically well-connected interest groups, my name is Basant. I do what I do," he said,

Not coming under the influence, he recently seized a car of an army official, who happens to be the son and son-in-law of two senior IPS officers in J&K. Both Rath and army official filed FIRs against each other at the police station.

He registered the second FIR in less than fortnight against the house owner for blocking the road during a family function.

Passionate about Kashmir, he has already written a poem 'Own Me Srinagar', which captures his dilemma,

'Own me, Srinagar.'

I pray every evening.

Do I own her?

She must be guessing.

He attributes a poet him to the beauty and pain of the valley. "Kashmir's extreme beauty and the extreme pain moved me to poetry. Besides, it gave me a figurative freedom to express things that I cannot do in prose."

He because of his some controversial articles and poems on Kashmir, has already been on the tracker and even the

intelligence agencies wanted the government not to post him on important assignments.

This was revealed by Ministry of Home Affairs in a letter dated August 29, 2017, where they had called for action against him for alleged violation of the service conduct rules on account of his “objectionable columns and articles published in The Wire and The Indian Express.”

An ardent fan of Pakistani music, Basant listens to Nusrat Fateh Ali, Showkat Ali, Ghulam Ali, Farida Khanam, Tina Sani and Munni Begum and says his religion is “Do good to the people.”

Having his own stand on various issues like Taj Mahal, Irom Sharmila’s political decision, Valentine’s vandalism, his alma matter JNU, political affiliations of police, reforms in policing, flaws in contemporary bureaucracy, failure of justice system, criminal in justices of police, biryani policing, he in March 2016 wrote a letter to Arnob Goswami, a TV news anchor known for his bashing in the name of ‘nationalism’, where he said to him “Nationalism Is Not A Marketing Tool and trust me I am not anti-national.”



IGP Basant Rath (Image: Internet)

Asking Arnob a question, he writes, “Name a place where an

Indian prime minister goes to address a public rally and says that his government will do everything possible “insaniyat ke days mein” to wipe people’s tears. Atal Bihari Vajpayee said that to the masses in Srinagar. This phrase has changed the political discourse of our times. People are suffering in Kashmir, Arnab. They are suffering in the Northeast. Does the very act of highlighting the issues of J&K and the Northeast make the students and their leaders’ anti-national?”

Not much into social circles, Basant, people who know him say what matters to him is an only duty. “For him, utmost integrity towards his duty is preferable to any other personal and social concerns,” said one of his colleague.

Writing about the issue of Ram Temple and role of a specific police officer, Basant writes in The Wire that “A Police Officer’s Allegiance Must Be to the Constitution and Not to a Temple.”

“Gill, as a police leader working under the checks and balances of India’s constitutional democracy, was a disaster.”

For K.P.S Gill. One of the dreaded IPS officers who broke back of militancy in Punjab, Basant has his own perspective. “Gill, as a police leader working under the checks and balances of India’s constitutional democracy, was a disaster. He romanticised the ‘break the rules’ kind of freedom and broke down institutions and processes as if they were his enemy’s bones,” he writes.

A cop in uniform has a different version of why Kashmir is witnessing the killings.

In his poem, he writes that “Kashmir was a vast lake called Satisar inhabited by the demon Jalodbhav. The lake was drained off by Anantnag in order to capture and kill the demon. The Valley that emerged was named by Anantnag as Kashayap-mira after his father Kashyap, a great rishi.”

“But I think that Jalodbhav didn’t die. This is why Kashmir continues to suffer. We need to make a fresh effort to kill the demon for the Valley to be in peace,” he believes.

The valley is all set to receive the wave of Basant, but like Jammu, will it be same for him in Kashmir?

8th century linear drawing of fish found

Ruins of two temples unearthed near Pondugula in Guntur
An eighth century AD linear drawing depicting a fish chiselled on a sheetrock, was found at Srinivasapuram, a hamlet near Pondugula village in Dachepalli mandal of Guntur district on Saturday.



The vintage artefact was found during the explorations taken up by The Centre for Culture of Vijayawada and Amaravati (CCVA) under the scheme Preserve Heritage for Posterity.

Senior archaeologist Siva Nagi Reddy and his team discovered the centuries-old fish drawing on their way to the Jalapeswara temple at the village, eight km away from Piduguralla town.

“After a close examination, we found that the fish drawing,

measuring 90×10 cm, belonged to the 8th century AD basing on an inscription found on a pillar of the Jalapeswara temple, built during the Eastern Chalukyan times (same century),” he said.

Buddhist site

Mr. Reddy also noticed ruins of two temples nearby, which, he said, needed immediate conservation. “Archaeological Survey of India should protect the fish sculpture and the ruined temples for posterity by clearing the debris and erecting signage with its historical significance,” he said.

He observed that the limestone pillars of a local Buddhist Vihara dating back to the 3rd century AD (Ikshwaku period) were used as the foundation for the Jalapeswara temple, which brought out the fact that Pondugula village was originally a Buddhist site.

Mr. Reddy, a trained sculptor, felt that the sculptors engaged in the construction of the Jalapeswara temple might have drawn a figure of a fish after which it was chiselled out as a pastime.

Source: xaam.in

Ancient necropolis, replete with statues and sarcophagi, discovered in Egypt

Found near the Nile Valley city of Minya, south of Cairo, the site is said to date back to the Pharaonic Late Period and the

Ptolemaic era.

Egypt's Antiquities Ministry has announced the discovery of an ancient necropolis near the Nile Valley city of Minya, south of Cairo.

The Ministry said on Saturday that the large cemetery is located north of Tuna al-Gabal area, a vast archaeological site on the edge of the western desert. It includes several burial shafts and hosts more than 1,000 statues and some 40 sarcophagi as well as other artefacts.

'Beginning of a new discovery'

Antiquities Minister Khaled al-Anani said the necropolis is host to members of different families and is believed to date back to the Pharaonic Late Period and the Ptolemaic era.

"We will need at least five years to work on the necropolis," he said. "This is only the beginning of a new discovery."

Excavation work in the area started late 2017.

Source: xaam.in

The next innovation: on Blockchain

Blockchain could enable substantial economic transformation in India

Blockchain could be the least elucidated among the disruptive technologies rapidly transforming the world around us. It is widely known that some of the most valuable companies of our times, such as Uber and Airbnb, are effective aggregators of resources, including cars and apartments. They are using the Internet to reach out, and match the supply and demand in a global market.

Although the architecture of the blockchain is far more complex than these aggregators, the underlying principle is not that different. It can be described as a way for people to share the extra space and computational power in their computers to create a global super-computer that is accessible to everyone. The blockchain lets people who are part of this super-computer perform functions such as verification of transactions and contracts, and the updating and maintenance of these records in the form of trustworthy ledgers, tasks that are normally reserved for established intermediary organisations such as banks and legal firms, and be rewarded for it. This core feature of the blockchain creates a space for trusted transactions in the digital space that have never been possible before.

The cryptocurrency Bitcoin is the first successful application of this technology. Even though there are mixed standpoints regarding the credibility, scalability and practicality of digital currencies, the core technology behind them, blockchain, undoubtedly has tremendous value. Annual global economic output is over \$90 trillion, with almost 3% of the amount going to various financial toll collectors such as banks, and credit card platforms.

Blockchain technology could drastically cut down, or even eliminate, these transaction charges by replacing the intermediaries, thereby creating hundreds of billions, or even trillions, of yearly savings. This is a significant amount that could be used for other economically and socially productive purposes.

Potential for banking

Understanding this cost-saving potential, several international banks and state-owned banks in Russia, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have started working on blockchain-powered financial solutions. The Indian government and Finance Ministry's lackadaisical approach towards this technology could make our banks less competitive in the long run, when

compared to their international counterparts.

Blockchain applications could be further extended to sectors such as insurance, law, real estate and digital art, and could be used to further strengthen our national institutions, including the judiciary and the Election Commission. Critical citizen information like land records, census data, birth and death records, business licenses, criminal records, intellectual property registry, electoral rolls could all be maintained as blockchain-powered, tamper-proof public ledgers, and be verified, or updated in real time, with utmost security, thereby generating inconceivable improvements in efficiency, transparency and time savings.

The potential of blockchain to bring about substantial economic transformation is the mirror image of the way the Internet revolutionised commerce, media and advertising in the previous decade. India should effectively channel its technical human capital surplus to position itself as one of the pioneers during this upcoming wave of innovation.

Anil K. Antony is the Executive Director of Cyber India, and the Vice President of Navoathan Foundation

Source: xaam.in

What 's credit crunch in Economics?

Also known as a credit squeeze, this refers to an economic situation where banks and other financial institutions become extremely reluctant to provide loans to businesses. This could be the result of banks suffering huge losses on their

portfolio, which makes them adopt a cautious approach to protect their equity. It could also happen when banks begin to doubt the repayment capability of their customers amidst a general gloom in the overall economy. As bank credit is a major source of money creation in most economies, a credit crunch can also cause a general fall in prices across the economy like after the global financial crisis of 2008.

Source: xaam.in

Financial Action Task Force to put Pakistan on grey list for terror financing

China withdrew its objection to the nomination, allowing consensus to go through, sources said.

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) on Friday decided to put Pakistan on the grey list, submitting it to intense scrutiny on terror financing.

(The FATF is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 by the ministers of its member jurisdictions. Its objectives are to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system).

China withdrew its objection to the nomination, allowing consensus to go through, sources said.

Earlier this week, Pakistan claimed victory in the ongoing FATF meeting, as a preliminary discussion in the International Co-operation Review Group (ICRG) failed to build a consensus on putting it again on the watch list.

Claim "premature"

However, U.S. and Indian officials had called the claim "premature" and said a final decision was still to come.

On Wednesday morning, Pakistan Foreign Minister Khawaja M. Asif, who was in Moscow at the time, tweeted that Pakistan had won a reprieve of three months in which to convince the international body not to put it on a "grey list" of countries where terror financing and black money laundering needed scrutiny.

Pakistan was on the FATF watch list from 2012 to 2015, then only on issues of money laundering.

"Our efforts paid [off]," Mr. Asif wrote, adding that the committee had proposed a three-month pause with another report to be considered in June.

According to reports in Pakistan newspapers, countries including China, Turkey and Saudi Arabia had not backed the resolution in the ICRG, which was originally supported by the U.S., Germany, the United Kingdom and France.

The case against Pakistan outlined the government's inaction against outfits like U.N.-banned terror groups Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jamaat-ud-Dawa and its affiliate, the Falah-i-Insaaniyat Foundation.

Source: xaam.in

SC against disclosure of IAS

prelims marks

The Supreme Court has held that details of marks – raw and scaled – scored in the Civil Services Exam cannot be “mechanically” disclosed under Right to Information.

A Bench of Justices A.K. Goel and U.U. Lalit observed that the need for transparency and accountability championed by the Right to Information Act should be balanced by the requirement of confidentiality of sensitive information.

The decision came on an appeal filed by the Union Public Service Commission against a Delhi High Court order to divulge the marks on the basis of a petition filed by unsuccessful candidates of the Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination, 2010 (CSP).

The petitioners had sought the disclosure of marks (raw and scaled) awarded to them in the CSP 2010. They wanted information on cut-off marks for each subject, scaling methodology, model answers and the results of all candidates.

“Weighing the need for transparency and accountability and requirement of optimum use of fiscal resources and confidentiality of sensitive information, we are of the view that information sought with regard to marks in Civil Services Exam cannot be directed to be furnished mechanically.”

Source: xaam.in

How a recent archaeological

discovery throws light on the history of Tamil script

A team of amateur archaeologists discovered an oil press belonging to 10th century C.E. near Andipatti with a Tamil script. It is one of the earliest Tamil inscriptions to be found in this region.

When R. Udhayakumar a research scholar of Government Arts College, Melur got a call from Tamil teacher Balamurugan from Andipatti about an age-old stone structure that resembles a grinder, he did not take it seriously. But when he along with his friend C. Pandeewaran, who is also a research scholar from Madurai Kamaraj University, visited the spot he came to know that it was not a grinder but a 'chekku' (oil press, used to extract oil).



“When I went there I could locate the oil press neatly carved on the rocky bed of a wild brook, which now runs dry,” says Udhayakumar. “The place is very near to the revenue department

office in Andipatti and many villagers say that they had seen water flowing through when there was flood some years ago," he says.

The team took estampage of the inscription and it was brought to C. Santhalingam, secretary, Pandyanadu Centre for Historical Research, to decipher. "Based on the inscription, the oil press belongs to 10th century CE. It is written in Tamil script and says that the oil press was installed by one Kudiyaan Thevan for common purpose. Also, the inscription throws light on the village and its geographical location. The place is inscribed as 'Thenmutta Naatu Kannimangalam'. Probably, there should have been many Kannimangalams and this one is located in Thenmutta Naadu, a geographical unit Kings followed in those periods. Places in and around Andipatti region were called as Thenmutta Naadu and there are references," says Santhalingam.

Though discovering an oil press is nothing new in these parts as the team identified similar one in Chitharevu near Periyakulam six months ago. What made the discovery significant is the Tamil script on it. Earlier ones had Vattezhuthu script. "King Raja Raja Chola I ruled Pandya Kingdom during 10th century CE and he introduced Tamil script here as he was quite adept in it. Also, he did not know to read Vattezhuthu. Hence, he recorded all his documents in Tamil script and encouraged the people to learn the same. The king had even translated Vattezhuthu script to Tamil script evident from the Kutralanathar Temple inscriptions in Courtallam. Comparatively, Tamil script was easy to learn than Vattezhuthu and public patronage grew that saw the decline of Vattezhuthu. Gradually, Tamil script gained prominence," he says.

Tamil script was widely practiced and popularised by Pallavas who had inscribed on the door jambs of sanctum sanctorum of temples in Thanjavur. "In fact, it was Pallavas who helped Cholas learn the script. Most of the inscriptions after Chola

rule in Pandya kingdom are in Tamil script,”

Early inscriptions found in Pandya Kingdom are in Tamil Brahmi and Vattezhuthu scripts. Even in Irukkandurai, a medieval period port city in Radhapuram Taluk in Tirunelveli, which was discovered by Santhalingam and his team last year, there are 25 inscriptions. Of them, only three belonged to early Pandyas and they are in Vattezhuthu whereas the rest are in Tamil script and they talk about the prowess of Rajendra Chola I.

The oil press found in Andipatti goes into history as the symbol of transition from Vattezhuthu to Tamil script.

Source: xaam.in

CENTRE SETS UP EXCLUSIVE NITI FORUM FOR NORTHEAST REGION

THE NEW

- The Union Government has issued an order for setting up the ‘NITI Forum for North-East to identify various constraints on the way accelerated, inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the North East Region (NER) of the country.

KEY-DETAILS OF NITI FORUM

- **Composition:** The new forum will have representatives from key central ministries and the state government of the region.
 - It will be co-chaired by the Vice-Chairman of NITI Ayog and Minister of State (I/C), Ministry of Development of Northeastern Region (DoNER). The forum will have its Secretariat in the Ministry of DoNER.
 - Chief Secretaries of Northeastern states of Sikkim, Tripura Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram will also be members of the

forum.

- **Working:** The form will work to address the problems faced by the region in areas of inclusive and sustainable growth and to recommend suitable interventions for addressing identified problems. It will also review the development status in the North-East region.
- **Focus:** The exclusive forum will look at various proposals both at the central and the state levels and prepare plans for the speedy development of the north-eastern region.
- The body may devise its own procedure to conduct it's business/meetings/fields visits or constitution of Sub-Groups etc.

The National Institution for Transforming India also called NITI Aayog was formed through a resolution of the Union Cabinet on January 1, 2015. NITI Aayog is the premier policy 'Think Tank' of the Government of India providing both directional and policy inputs. While designing strategic and long-term policies and programmes for the Government of India NITI Aayog also provides relevant technical advice to the Centre and States.

RECENT IMPROVEMENTS MADE IN NORTH-EAST:

In the last few years, the central government has taken major initiatives for the development of northeast region over the past four years.

- Amendment to Indian Forest Act of 1927: The British Raj's 'Indian Forest Act of 1927' under which permit was required to cut bamboo for commercial use was amended and now the requirement is required to obtain for cutting of bamboo on non-forest land for commercial use thus, providing opportunities for employment to landless farmers.
- 100% Funding for the project: Recently, the government has decided to fully fund various central projects being undertaken in the region, instead of the existing practice of centre-state sharing in the ratio of 90:10.
- Bharatmala Pariyojna: Under the project, 5,301 kilometres in the region has been approved for improvement. Out of this, 3,246 kilometres of road is marked for the development of economic corridor in the northeast.
- The bidding process for the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway has also begun.
- In Railway sector, gauge conversion is now completed and the operational medium gauge sections have been converted to broad gauge. Agartala-Akhaura (Bangladesh) rail link is at tendering stage.
- The construction of the New Greenfield Airport at Pakyog (Gangtok, Sikkim) has been completed and now the license is awaited from DGCA.
- Development of Barak river is taken up in two phases for shipping and navigation purposes.

CONCLUSION:

- Over the past few years, the region has been given the utmost attention, which it deserved. It was showed not only physical but also psychological outreach by the government to the people of north-east. Given its location, the North-East Region assumes the role of bridging the space between mainland India and other Southeast Asian nations. Now, the new improvement in the region will address the problems faced in the way of sustainable development and will work on the development proposals and their speedy implementation thus, transforming the region by rescuing it from the clutches of insurgency and sub-nationalism, and place it in the broader network of power, capital and markets.

Source: xaam.in