

“What helps you persevere is your resilience and commitment.” Roy T. Bennett

INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL

**HEAVY DISCHARGE OF WATERS FROM CHINA
THREATENS ARUNACHAL**

The Yarlung Zangbo (Tsangpo) was swelling with observed discharge of 9,020 cumec due to heavy rainfall in Tibet.

This discharge from China, the highest in 50 years, is threatening to submerge at least 12 villages along the river Siang in Arunachal Pradesh.

Hydrological experts said the unusually high discharge indicates sudden release of water from man-made barriers or a natural dam.

Natural barriers are formed due to landslips caused by major earthquakes in the Tibetan region of China.

Local authority has issued an advisory, warning the people of the 12 villages to be on alert because of the sudden surge in the water level in Pasighat Dist.

Many in India talked about sudden collapse of the earthen dam in the future leading to moderate to big flood downstream in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.

But there was no serious follow-up action.

Way Forward:

The situation is grim, and the government needs to come up with effective anti-erosion measures.

The Central Water Commission needs to closely monitor the level and quality of Siang's water.

There is a lot of concern at the international, national and local levels about the geologically and strategically important Siang that impacts Bangladesh too.

**INDIAN NAVAL SHIP SAHYADRI REACHES DARWIN,
AUSTRALIA FOR EXERCISE KAKADU 2018**

After having been deployed to the South China Sea and the Pacific Ocean for over four months, which included representing Indian Navy in multinational exercises MALABAR 18

at Guam and RIMPAC 18 at Hawaii, INS Sahyadri entered the Port of Darwin, Australia to participate in Exercise KAKADU 2018

Indian Navy's participation in KAKADU 18 provides an excellent opportunity to engage with regional partners and undertake multinational maritime activities ranging from constabulary operations to high-end maritime warfare in a combined environment

It is aimed at enhancing interoperability and development of common understanding of procedures for maritime operations

Exercise KAKADU, which started in 1993, is the premier multilateral regional maritime engagement exercise hosted by the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and supported by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)

The exercise is held biennially in Darwin and the Northern Australian Exercise Areas (NAXA)

Exercise KAKADU derives its name from Kakadu National Park, which is a protected area in the northern territory of Australia, 171 km south-east of Darwin.

LAUNCH OF NATIONAL MISSION ON GEM

National Mission on Government e Marketplace (GeM) will be launched on 5th September 2018 to accelerate the adoption and use of GeM by major central Ministries, State Governments and their agencies.

The aim of the National Mission is to promote inclusiveness, transparency and efficiency in public procurement and achieve cashless, contactless and paperless transaction.

This will increase overall efficiency and lead to cost saving on government expenditure in procurement.

The Government e Marketplace (GeM) platform provides online, end to end solution for procurement of commonly used goods and services for all Central Government Departments and State Governments, Public Sector Units and affiliated bodies.

While all States and Union Territories are buying through GeM, 25 States and UTs have already signed a MoU to make procurement through GeM mandatory.

LAW COMMISSION CALLS FOR RE-THINK ON SEDITION CLAUSE

Dissent and criticism of the government are essential ingredients of a robust public debate in a vibrant democracy, said the Law Commission of India.

The Commission published a consultation paper recommending that it is time to re-think or even repeal the provision of sedition (Section 124A) from the Indian Penal Code.

The Commission has also posed the query that if contempt of court invites penal action, should “contempt of government” also attract punishment.

The Commission asked whether it would be “worthwhile” to rename Section 124A and find a suitable substitute for the term sedition.

Right to Free Speech:

The Commission seeks to consider that right to free speech and expression is an essential ingredient of democracy.

The Commission said an expression of frustration over the state of affairs cannot be treated as sedition.

It recommended that India should not retain the British era clause to oppress Indians, whereas Britishers have themselves abolished the law in their country.

It said every restriction on free speech and expression must be carefully scrutinized to avoid unwarranted restrictions.

The consultation paper was published a day after the Supreme Court lashed out at the forces while hearing a petition challenging the pan-India crackdown and arrests of five activists.

For merely expressing a thought that is not in consonance with the policy of the government of the day, a person should not be charged under the Section.

If the country is not open to positive criticism, there lies little difference between the pre- and post-Independence eras.

Right to criticize one’s own history and the right to offend are rights protected under free speech.

Way Forward

In a democracy, singing from the same songbook is not a benchmark of patriotism.

People should be at liberty to show their affection towards their country in their own way.

While it is essential to protect national integrity, it should not be misused as a tool to curb free speech, the Commission said in its consultation paper.

NEW RANKING BASED ON INNOVATION

The Centre announced another annual ranking of higher educational institutions, based on how they fare in terms of innovation.

The new ranking – named Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) – will be formally launched on October 15, the birth anniversary of former President APJ Abdul Kalam.

ARIIA:

Ministry of HRD announced the new ranking, which will work parallel to the overall ranking of institutions captured by the annual National Institutional Ranking Framework.

ARIIA – named after Atal Bihari Vajpayee – will focus on:

- budget expenses and revenues generated;
- facilitating access to advance centres;
- ideas of entrepreneurship;
- innovation ecosystems supported through teaching and learning and
- innovative solutions to improve governance of the institution.