

CURRENT AFFAIRS

17th August 2022

THE FRAGILITY OF THE NORTHEAST'S INTEGRATION

SYLLABUS: GS PAPER-I (REGIONALISM)

CONTEXT: The integration of Northeast India into mainstream Indian life has been on the national agenda from the very start of India's journey as an independent nation.

HOW THE INTEGRATION OF NORTHEAST INDIA INTO MAINSTREAM INDIAN LIFE HAS BEEN ON THE NATIONAL AGENDA FROM INDEPENDENCE?

Sixth Schedule:

- It deals with the provisions for the **administration of tribal areas in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram**, in accordance with **Article 244 of the Indian Constitution**.
- This schedule mandated for the formation of **Autonomous District Councils wherein tribal customary laws were given legitimacy**.

State Reorganization:

- Nagaland became a state in the year 1963. It was formed by merging the **Naga Hill district with the adjacent Mon and Tuen sang subdivision of the North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA)**.
- **Tripura and Manipur**, which were made the **Part-C States** after the merger with India in 1949, were also upgraded to States in 1972.
- It was followed by Meghalaya becoming a State. On the other hand, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram were made Union Territories.
- In the year 1984, both Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram were upgraded to statehood.

Inclusion by Accommodation:

- India gained confidence and shed its insecurities regarding balkanization after its traumatic Partition experience, leading to moderation in its outlook towards national identity and nationalism.
- There was an emphasis upon accommodating people, rather than requiring the latter to leave their streams to join the mainstream.
- For instance, **North East Council (NEC)** was amended to make it an infrastructure planning body including State Chief Ministers from an advisory body that comprised of State Governors as members. The state of Sikkim was brought into its ambit.
- Similarly, the **Department of North-East Region (DoNER)** was created by the Union Government in 2001 and was upgraded to a full-fledged Ministry in 2004.
- Likewise, **India's Look East Policy** was born in 1991 with the stated objective of linking the Northeast with the vibrant economies of South East Asia.
- In 2010, a **protected area regime** that had **restricted visits to Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram** by foreigners was relaxed.
- A **judicial commission** was constituted in the year 2004 to **recommend a way to repeal or else "humanize" AFSPA**.

WHY NORTHEAST REMAINED ALIEN EVEN AFTER 75 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE?

Historical Reasons:

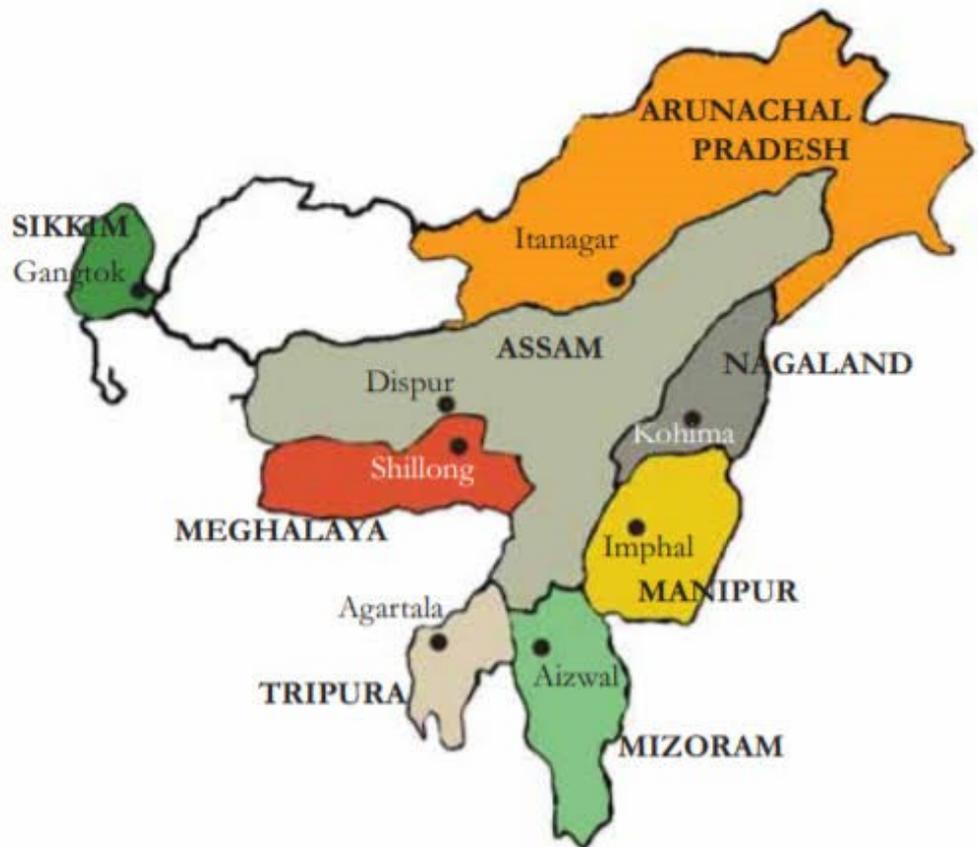
- The British India Foreign Secretary Olaf Caroe coined the term “**Mongolian Fringe**” regarding the North-east region and suggested to leave this region from a Crown Colony.
- In the views of the **Governor of Assam, Robert Reid 1937**, “the people here, neither racially, historically, culturally, nor linguistically, had any affinity with the rest of India.”
- These ‘excluded’ and ‘partially excluded’ areas as mentioned by Reid were supposed to be a combination of **hill regions of the Northeast and Upper Burma** (presently Myanmar).

Northeast people did not consider themselves as the part of Mainland India:

- The Naga Hills refused the Sixth Schedule as they wanted nothing less than sovereignty. This resulted in a powerful insurgency in the region.

The promulgation of Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act in 1958:

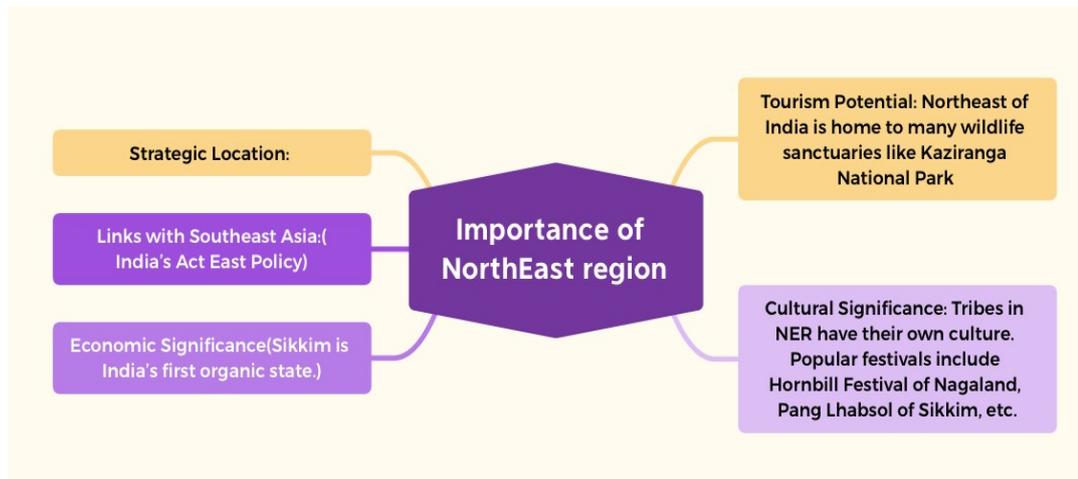
- In the wake of Naga Insurgency, the AFSPA Act was enforced thus, giving sweeping powers to the armed forces.
- A separate Nagaland State was created in 1963.
- The people of the Northeast are fearful of the threat of cultural and population deluge from mainstream India.



ABOUT NORTHEAST INDIA

- North-East India, fondly called the **land of seven sisters**, represents both a geographic and political administrative division of the country. The states of **Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura** comes under its fold.
- The North-eastern Indian States have been blessed with a wide range of **physiographic and ecoclimatic conditions**. They are the geographical ‘gateway’ for much of India’s **endemic flora and fauna**.
- North-East is home to **3.8% of the national population** and occupies about **8% of India’s total geographical area**.
- It is connected to the mainland India through **Siliguri corridor**, a narrow strip of land in **West Bengal**, popularly known as “**chicken’s neck**.”

SIGNIFICANCE OF NORTH-EAST FOR INDIA



GLOBAL EMPLOYMENT TRENDS FOR YOUTH 2022

SYLLABUS: GS PAPER-III (EMPLOYMENT, GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT, INCLUSIVE GROWTH)

CONTEXT: A report titled “Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022: Investing in transforming futures for young people” was released by the International Labor Organization (ILO).

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT

- As per the report, **unemployment rate among youth aged 15-24 has reached to 15.6% across the world.** It is three times of the unemployment rate among adult.
- Young women exhibited a much **lower Employment-to-Population ratio (EPR)** in comparison to young men who are 1.5 times more likely than young women to be employed.
- The Covid-19 Pandemic has **worsened the numerous labor market challenges facing those aged between 15 and 24 years**, who have experienced a much higher percentage loss in employment than adults since early 2020.
- The recovery in youth unemployment has been projected to diverge between **low- and middle-income countries on the one hand and high-income countries on the other.**
- High income countries are the only ones **expected to achieve youth unemployment rates close to those of 2019** by the end of 2022.
- Meanwhile, in the other country income groups, the **rates are projected to remain more than 1% above their pre-crisis values.**
- Young people were **well-placed to benefit from the expansion of the so-called green and blue economies**, centered around the environment and sustainable ocean resources, respectively.
- Achieving universal broadband coverage by 2030 may lead to a **net increase in employment of 24 million new jobs worldwide**, of which 6.4 million would be taken by young people.

INDIA SPECIFIC FINDINGS

- The youth employment participation rate declined by **0.9 % over the first nine months of 2021 relative to its value in 2020**, while it increased by 2 % for adults over the same period.
- Indian young women experienced **larger relative employment losses** than young men in 2021 and 2022.

- School closures lasted 18 months and among the 24-crore school-going children, only 8% of such children in rural areas and **23% in urban areas had adequate access to online education.**
- School closures not only prevented new learning, but also led to the phenomenon of **“learning regression,” that is, children forgetting what they had learned earlier.**
- In India, 92% of children on average lost at least one foundational ability in language and 82% lost at least one foundational ability in mathematics.
- The study found out that teachers in **non-state schools are often paid significantly less** than those in state schools.
- Domestic work is **a highly informal sector in India**, and wages are extremely low and young women and girls are vulnerable to abuse.

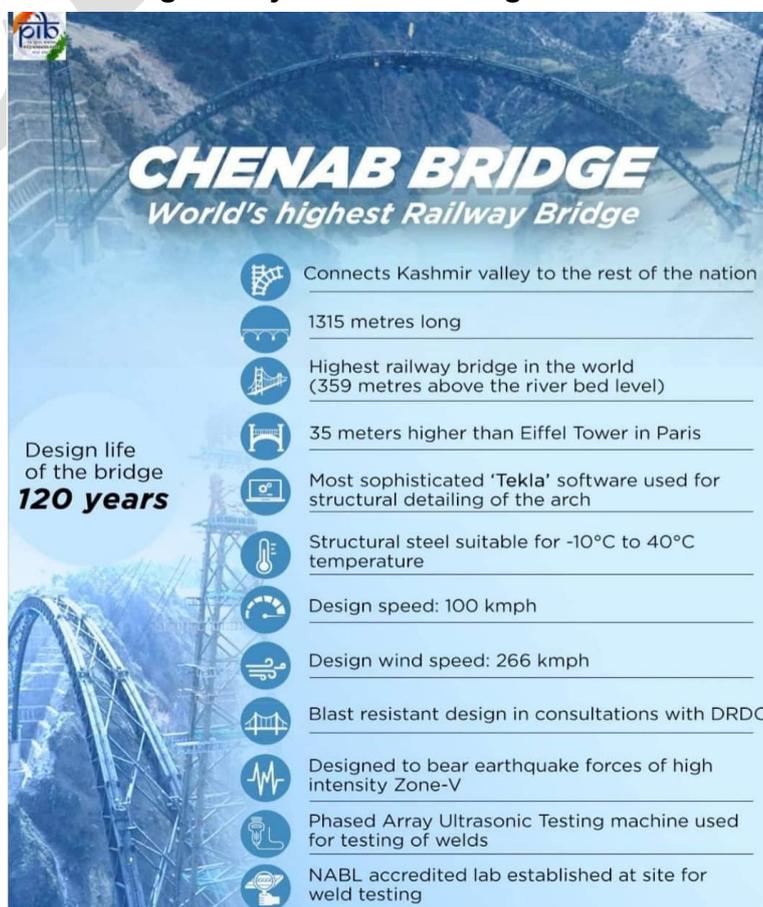
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Investment in various sectors must be accompanied by the promotion of decent working conditions for all young workers.
- The fundamental rights and protections (including freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining, equal pay for work of equal value, and freedom from violence and harassment at work) of the young workers should be ensured.
- Young people should not only be provided with well-functioning labor markets with decent job opportunities for those already participating in the labor market, but also with quality education and training opportunities for those yet to enter it.

PRELIMS FACTS

WORLD'S HIGHEST RAILWAY BRIDGE

- Coinciding with Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the **‘golden joint’ connecting two ends of the overarch deck of the world’s highest railway bridge over Chenab River** was inaugurated in **Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir.**
- Constructed at a cost of Rs. 1,250 crore, **the 1.3-km-long bridge** is located 359 meters above the Chenab riverbed and it is 30 meters higher than Eiffel Tower in Paris.
- It will provide **all-weather rail connectivity to Kashmir.**
- The highest single-arch railway bridge in the world is a unique example in modern engineering, **constructed by Mumbai-based infrastructure major Afcons** and it is part of the **ambitious Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link (USBRL) project** carried out by Northern Railways.

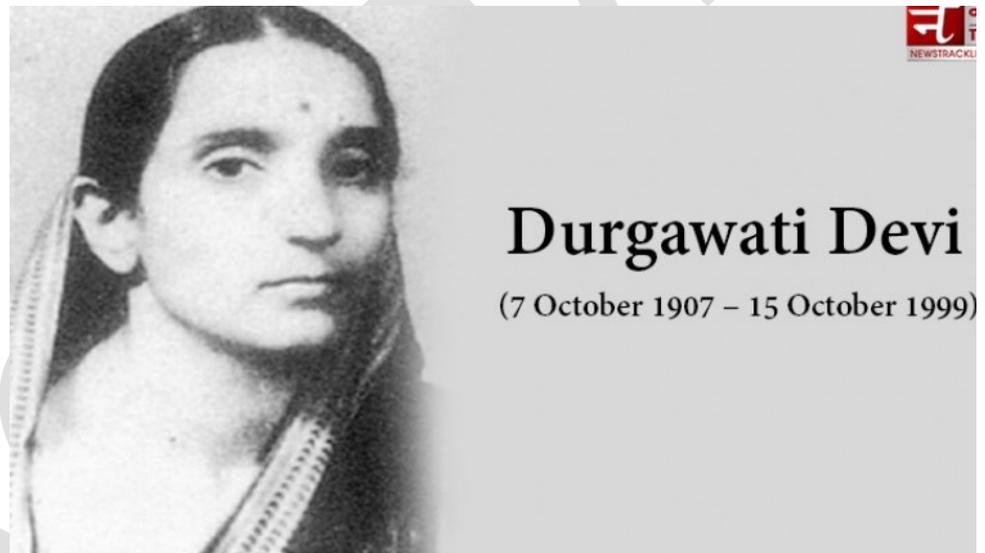


NATURE INDEX

- The Nature Index provides a database of **high-quality research output in natural as well as physical sciences at the institutional, national, and regional level of institutions from different countries.**
- This index is compiled by **Nature Portfolio**, part of an academic publishing company called Springer Nature.
- The index records contributions to research articles, published across 82 high-quality natural science journals. These journals are selected by an independent group of researchers.
- As per the index, **University of Hyderabad has secured first position among Indian Universities** while it has been placed at **16th position among all institutions in academic sector.**

DURGAWATI DEVI

- Durgawati Devi or Durga Bhabhi, also known as the '**The Agni of India**', is remembered to this day as a threat to the British police.
- Born in October 1907, Devi was born in a well-to-do family of the modern-day district of **Kushambi near Prayag raj in UP.** She was married to Shri Bhagwati Charan Vohra of Lahore at the age of 11. Vohra belonged to a well-off family as well.
- Devi passed away on October 15, 1999, in Ghaziabad at the age of 92.
- She had tremendous influence on revolutionaries such as **Bhagat Singh, Ashafaqullah and Chandra Shekhar Azad.**
- Durgawati Devi was an **active member of the Nau jawan Bharat Sabha**, and she assisted in the escape of Bhagat Singh from Lahore after the Saunders killing (1928).
- Devi took it upon herself to assassinate Punjab's governor Malcolm Hailey following the arrest of some of the Indian revolutionaries. Devi was, however, arrested after the failed attempt. Later upon release, she once again attempted to assassinate him but was again arrested and imprisoned for three years.



NAWROZ FESTIVAL

- Nowruz, or the Parsi New Year, is a **religious festival commemorating the first day of Farvardin** i.e., the **first month of the Iranian solar/Zoroastrianism calendar.**
- Various ethnolinguistic communities across the world celebrate this day which occurs each year around **March at the Spring Equinox.**
- This festival arrives 200 days later in India. It is **celebrated in the month of August as the Parsis here follow the Shahenshahi calendar** which does not consider leap years.

- It was included in the **UNESCO's Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** in 2016.

NAGORNO-KARABAKH

- The breakaway region of **Nagorno-Karabakh in the South Caucasus** has been at the centre of three wars and multiple clashes **between Azerbaijan and Armenia**.
- It comprises of modern-day **Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia**.
- It is a **landlocked, mountainous, and forested region that falls within the boundaries of Azerbaijan**.
- Referred to as **Artsakh in Armenian**, this region **hosts an ethnic Armenian population with an Azeri minority**.
- The years of clashes followed between Azerbaijan forces and Armenian separatists ended in 1994 when **Russia brokered a ceasefire** (by this time ethnic Armenians had taken control of the region).
- While the area remains in Azerbaijan, it is today governed by separatist Armenians who have declared it a republic called the **“Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast.”**

