

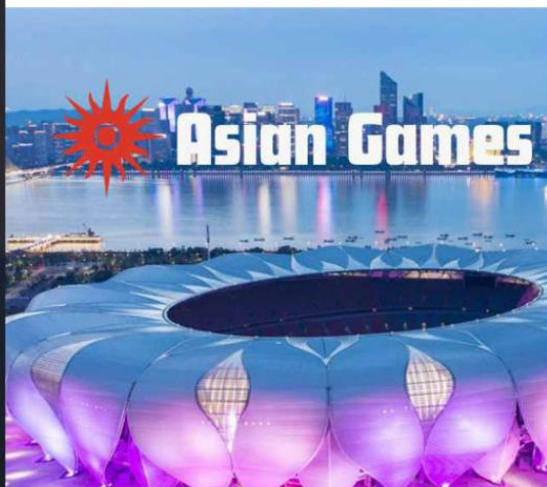


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# Assam

Current Affairs : Sep 2023



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## 1. Assam Cabinet Creates 4 New Districts, 81 Sub-Districts After Delimitation

In a significant move aimed at enhancing decentralization of governance and improving the convergence of line departments, the Assam cabinet has taken a bold step by creating four new districts that were previously abolished last year in December. With the addition of these new districts, Assam's total district count will reach 35.

The decision comes in line with the ongoing delimitation process that has been initiated after the Election Commission's (EC) decision to redefine Assembly and Parliamentary constituencies in Assam as per Section 8A of the RP Act, 1950. The newly formed districts are Hojai, Biswanath, Tamulpur, and Bajali.

## 2. International vultures awareness day held

It's safe to say that vultures in general and turkey vultures, in particular, have a pretty bad reputation. These scavengers are usually depicted hovering over some helpless cowboy lost in an arid desert, licking their beaks in cruel anticipation. Because of this, people in many cultures believe that vultures are disgusting, filthy, disease-carrying birds.

Sadly, this stereotype has some negative consequences in the real world and has brought about some struggles for these important birds, many of which can actually be quite beautiful! In order to correct it, various conservation groups have made the first Saturday in September Vulture Awareness Day, also called International Vulture Awareness Day.

History of International Vulture Awareness Day

International Vulture Awareness Day, which aims to raise awareness of all species of vultures, began in 2009 through collaboration between the Birds of Prey program in South Africa and the Hawk Conservatory Trust in the United Kingdom. Because of the strength of these two programs, the day quickly spread around the world.



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Zoos and wildlife organizations from the United States and Canada to India, Uganda, Serbia, Australia, Tunisia and elsewhere host events where members of the public can learn more about vultures and sometimes even get up close to see and experience them!

The first Saturday in September has been set aside as a day to consider the ecological importance of a bird of prey that is otherwise mostly dismissed with a shudder. With some species under severe threat of extinction, International Vulture Awareness Day aims to educate and turn around the ideas of a reluctant public in the critical role of this creature, to the well-being of the environment.

With vultures traditionally being perceived as representing death and decay, conservationists involved in preserving their numbers have faced an uphill battle in fund-raising efforts and in making theirs a more sympathetic cause. Hopefully, the joint effort of South Africa's Birds of Prey Programme and England's Hawk Conservancy Trust in establishing a day of vulture awareness will change public attitudes with the help of International Vulture Awareness Day

### **3. Abhiruchi sports day celebrated in Assam**

Assam is celebrating Abhiruchi Sports Day on September 3 every year for the last 38 years – saluting the Arjuna awardee sprinter Bhogeswar Baruah.

It was in 1966 when Bhogeswar Baruah won the gold medal in the 800m race in Bangkok Asian Games. It was a milestone for the entire Northeast and for Assam, it was a red-letter day. He became the first-ever Assamese to win a gold medal in any international event.

And in the same year, Bhogeswar Baruah was honoured with the Arjuna award, becoming the first from the entire Northeast region to get the award.

It was a massive moment for sports lovers of the state.

Celebrating Bhogeswar Baruah's birthday as Abhiruchi Sports Day

India had its first National Sports Day in 2012. But, Assam's state sports day, started by the then popular (and only Assamese) sports magazine 'Abhiruchi' and thus known as Abhiruchi Sports Day or Abhiruchi Krira Divas, has been an annual affair on September 3 since 1984.



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Here's the backstory.

“Bhogeswar Baruah was found to be working as a driver with ONGC after retirement from the army. ‘Abhiruchi’ editor Balendra Mohan Chakraborty did a cover story on it, and that edition of ‘Abhiruchi’ became a bestseller, creating immense sympathy for the soft-spoken athlete. ONGC immediately promoted Baruah to officer rank thanks to the public uproar,” recalled national award-winning filmmaker Utpal Borpujari.

“But Chakraborty, also the owner of Brahmaputra Printers, decided to take it to another level. He mobilised the Assam Sports Journalists’ Association members and with the support of leading sports and other journalists (including Subodh Malla Barua, Pabitra Gogoi, Samudra Gupta Kashyap, photographer the late Dipak Bezbaruah and many others) took the decision to celebrate Baruah’s birthday, September 3, as Abhiruchi Krira Divas.”

The rest, as they say, is history.

The first Abhiruchi Sports Day programme was simple: mass jogging led by Bhogeswar Baruah with the participation of school and college students and citizens in general, in Guwahati, and a felicitation programme for prominent sportspersons in the presence of Baruah.

The huge public support for the initiative saw Abhiruchi Sports Day soon spread state-wide and the central programme at Guwahati witnessed participation of guests like Milkha Singh, PT Usha, Shiney Wilson, Kapil Dev, Kamlesh Mehta, Manohar Aich and so on, apart from local stars like Monalisa Baruah, Taibun Nisha and Harakanta Borgohain among others.

“Then onwards, it has been an annual affair on September 3,” Borpujari added.

#### **4. Assam-based surgical oncologist Dr. R Ravi Kannan wins Ramon Magsaysay Award 2023**

The Assam-based surgical oncologist Dr. R Ravi Kannan has won Ramon Magsaysay Award 2023. He won the award for revolutionising the treatment of cancer in Assam through his people-centered and pro-poor programmes, the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation said. Dr. Kannan worked at the Cancer Institute in Chennai before he moved to Silchar in 2007 to join the Cachar Cancer Hospital.



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The Magsaysay Award, established in 1957, seeks to reward individuals for integrity in governance, courageous service to the people, and pragmatic idealism in democratic societies. It is often referred to as the Nobel Prize of Asia.

#### **5. With 'Gaganyaan' in the works, ISRO and NASA aim to send Indian astronaut to ISS in 2024**

With the successful launch of the Chandrayaan-3 moon mission and solar probe mission Aditya-L1, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has set its sights on a human spaceflight programme —sending an Indian astronaut to the International Space Station (ISS) by next year.

This was revealed during the recently concluded bilateral meeting between US President Joe Biden and Narendra Modi, where both sides announced their plan to develop a strategic framework for human space flight by year-end as New Delhi aims to send an Indian astronaut to the ISS in 2024.

In a joint statement released after the bilateral talks, President Biden congratulated Prime Minister Modi and the scientists and engineers of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Chandrayaan-3's historic landing at the south polar region of the Moon, as well as the successful launch of India's first solar mission, Aditya L1.

#### **6. Megh Mandal Sansthan celebrates Raja Ravi Varma Chitrakar Samman Samaroh – Chitranjali 2023 Felicitated 15 Eminent Artists**

Megh Mandal Sansthan organised the 6th edition of Chitranjali 2023, their intellectual property (IP) Chitranjali dedicated to celebrating the remarkable contributions of Raja Ravi Varma, the first modern Indian artist, in the realm of art and culture.

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Chitranjali, which is a unique platform to pay homage to one of the most accomplished painters and artists in Indian history, also honours contemporary artists from diverse backgrounds. This year, 15 artists from India were felicitated by Megh Mandal Sansthan for their significant



contributions to the art and culture in the presence of 600 plus attendees at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre.

Name of the awardees – Dilip Tamuly, Harsh Vardhan Sharma, Shyam Sharma, Kalyan prasad Joshi, Kanaiyalal Fakirchand Patel (Kanu Patel), Manisha Jha, M. Akram Khan, Krishnapriya, Aradhana Tandon, Anuradha Thakur, Nawal Kishore, Seema Bhalla, Sangeeta Singh, Prashant K. Sarkar, Vigyan Vrat.

### **7. Assam Teacher Kumud Kalita Receives National Teachers' Award 2023**

In a momentous celebration of Teachers' Day, Kumud Kalita, a dedicated educator hailing from Assam, is set to be bestowed with the prestigious 'National Awards to Teachers' in a ceremony to be held in New Delhi. This distinguished accolade, to be presented by the President of India, Droupadi Murmu, serves as a testament to Kalita's unwavering commitment to the field of education. Kalita, whose teaching prowess shines at Pathshala Senior Secondary School, joins the ranks of 75 exceptional teachers across the nation who are being recognized with the National Teachers' Award for the year 2023.

### **8. Bodo language film 'Gorai Phakhri' to be premiered at Vancouver festival**

Rajni Basumatary, a filmmaker and actor is proud of her latest work – Gorai Phakhri or Wild Swan, a Bodo language film. The film deals with patriarchy that is prevalent in society. Now, she gets a boost as Wild Swan has been selected to be premiered at the 42nd edition of the Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF). "Patriarchy is so deeply rooted in the culture that women themselves toe the line. The film is produced by Jani Viswanath, and co-produced by Rajni Basumatary under the banner of Manna Films. This year, 'Wild Swan' is the only Indian feature film at the VIFF.

### **9. Manipur: Loktak authority to develop Champu Khangpok as heritage floating village**

Manipur's Loktak Development Authority is working to develop Champu Khangpok floating village as an iconic heritage village with the support of the state and central governments. The village, located on Loktak Lake, is made up of floating huts and is home to around 330 residents. The authorities plan to improve sanitation, establish healthcare facilities, and clean the lake. The village was also recently granted electoral status, and a government primary



school will be set up. The promotion of Champu Khangpok as a heritage village was included in the Bharatiya Janata Party's election manifesto in 2022.

The village, made up of floating huts called Khangpok, is located on the oval-shaped Loktak, which is the largest freshwater lake in Northeast India. A wetland under Ramsar convention, located about 45km south of Imphal, it has around 330 hut dwellers, including 312 electorates, whose main occupation is fishing.

### **10. Amrit Brikshya Andolan ends with the plantation of one crore saplings of commercial trees**

The statewide Amrit Brikshya Andolan successfully concluded with the plantation of one crore saplings of commercial trees in the state. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma launched the plantation drive by planting a sapling of the Ashoka tree on the Janata Bhawan premises. Speaking to the media, the Chief Minister said, "We will plant one crore saplings in the state and set a new world record. Next year, our target will be to plant eight crore seedlings: three crore in non-forested areas and five crore in forest areas. And our target in 2025 will be planting 10 crore: five crore each in non-forested and forested areas."

On the drive, the Chief Minister said that the Amrit Brikshya Andolan would increase the forest cover in the state, besides boosting the local economy as mostly commercial trees would be sown during the drive." On the survival of the saplings, he expressed his hope that around 80 percent of the planted saplings would survive, as the saplings planted on private land would get care from households and the Forest Department would take care of the saplings planted on community land.

### **11. PM Vishwakarma Scheme: Benefits and Eligibility**

The Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Kaushal Samman Yojana (PM Vishwakarma Scheme) is a new Central Sector Scheme launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of Vishwakarma Jayanti. The scheme aims to strengthen and nurture the Guru-Shishya parampara or family-based practice of traditional skills by artisans and craftspeople working with their hands and tools.





## Benefits of the Vishwakarma Yojana

**Training and Skill Enhancement:** Under the PM Vishwakarma Scheme, traditional artisans will receive an invaluable opportunity to enhance their skills through a comprehensive 6-day training program. This training is tailored to the specific needs of carpenters, tailors, basket weavers, barbers, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, potters, confectioners, cobblers, and others, empowering them with advanced techniques and knowledge.

**Financial Support:** The PM Vishwakarma scheme goes beyond training by offering substantial financial assistance ranging from Rs 10,000 to Rs 10 lakh. This monetary aid enables beneficiaries to kickstart their endeavors and expand their businesses, resulting in improved livelihoods.

**Employment Opportunities:** The PM Vishwakarma Scheme is a catalyst for creating employment avenues. It aims to generate employment for approximately 15,000 individuals annually, fostering economic growth and stability.

**Online Application Process:** Aspiring beneficiaries can easily access the scheme by applying online. This user-friendly approach simplifies the application process and ensures that deserving candidates can readily avail themselves of the scheme's benefits.

**Full Cost Coverage:** The state government takes on the responsibility of covering the entire cost of various training programs under the Vishwakarma Scheme. This ensures that artisans can receive high-quality training without any financial burden.

## 12. Biswanath Ghat in Assam selected as Best Tourism Village of India 2023

Biswanath Ghat has been selected as the Best Tourism Village of India 2023 by the Ministry of Tourism, from amongst 791 applications from 31 States and UTs

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The state of Assam offers hills to wetlands to reserve forests, food, culture, rural landscape, flora and fauna to get an immersive travel experience for for tourists and film makers. The tea gardens and the natural lush green golf courses are some of the other major attractions.



As the growth in the tourism sector is vital for socio-economic development, the Assam cabinet last year approved the proposal to grant industrial status to the tourism sector.

Assam has been taking a slew of initiatives to promote tourism such as organising road shows in metropolitan cities and taking part in marts and fairs in the country and abroad.

### **13. Assam Govt signs Rs 3114 cr MoU with private enterprises for Mega Industrial Parks in state**

Assam Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with six private sector industrial enterprises for setting up mega industrial parks totalling an investment of Rs 3,114 crore across the state.

Addressing the ceremonial signing of the MoU, CM Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "signing of agreements that would entail investments of as much as Rs 3,000 crore indicates Assam moving forward towards becoming one of the most industrialised states in the country."

Stating that agreements for investments amounting to several thousand crores inked earlier in the year with the private sector are at various stages of implementation, Chief Minister Sarma said, "Another batch of industrial investment proposals amounting to around Rs 10,000 crore are currently being studied by the empowered committee set up by the Government of Assam to expedite the investment ecosystem in the state."

A land lease agreement was also signed between the Assam Tourism Development Corporation (ATDC) and Jenipro Hotels Pvt Ltd for setting up of a 5-star category hotel with an investment of Rs 100 crore at Hatighuli Bagisa Gaon near Kaziranga National Park.

### **14. Career planning project inaugurated between SITA and K C Das Commerce College**

State Innovation and Transformation Aayog (SITA) Vice-Chairman Ramen Deka inaugurated the SITA-sponsored project 'Workshop on creating awareness on career planning and development' at an official programme held at K.C. Das Commerce College, Guwahati, which will be implemented by K.C. Das Commerce College, Guwahati, and Needemy L.L. P., Bengaluru. Vice-Chairman Ramen Deka handed over the first installment of funds for the project to the principal of the college, amounting to Rs 8 lakh. The estimated cost of the project is Rs 20 lakh.



The objective of the project is to create awareness among students about career planning and development through workshops and relevant interventions. Speaking on the occasion, Vice-Chairman Ramen Deka elaborated that this workshop will be helpful to the youth by helping them discover their strengths, develop skills, and walk the right career path, thereby making them job-ready, growth-oriented, and thus contributing to the economy. He also said that parents should not pressure their children too much but instead should give their children the freedom to choose their subject of interest.

### **15. Validity of Sec 6A of Citizenship Act**

Section 6A of the Citizenship Act 1955 is a special provision on the citizenship of persons covered by the Assam Accord. Under this section, people who entered India between January 1, 1966, and March 25, 1971, and have been living in Assam, will be allowed to register themselves as citizens. Section 6 A of the Citizenship Act, was inserted as an amendment to establish March 24, 1971 as the cut-off date for entry into the state.

#### **What is the Section 6A about?**

It states that while those who came to Assam on or after January 1, 1966 but before March 25, 1971 from Bangladesh shall be detected as “illegal immigrants” or “foreigners”. These people would have to register themselves according to rules made by the Central Government. Till a period of 10 years from the date they were detected as foreigners, they would have the same rights and obligations as citizens except being included in electoral rolls for any assembly/parliamentary constituency. At the end of the ten-year period, they were to be deemed citizens. The final NRC in Assam which was published in 2019 was conducted with this cut-off date of 24 March 1971.

### **16. Assam CM inaugurates infra projects at Batadrava Thaan**

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma inaugurated a number of infrastructural projects at Batadrava Thaan on the occasion of the 575th birth anniversary of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev. Foundation stones for the projects included a Satriya Sora, a conference hall, the Damodar Ata Tourist Guest House and the office complex. The project cost a total of Rs 22 crore. Chief Minister Sarma also formally launched the year-long celebration of the 575th birth anniversary celebration of Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev. Speaking at the event, Chief



Minister Sarma, paying rich tributes to neo-Vaishnavite saint Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev on his 575th birth anniversary, said the Assam government has been relentlessly working for the development of the revered Batadrava Thaan and the projects inaugurated manifest that very tireless commitment of the current dispensation in the state. The Chief Minister added that in days to come, steps will be taken to beautify the two ponds in the Thaan premises, build parking spaces for visitors' vehicles and washrooms-toilets for the convenience of the devotees, among others. Chief Minister Sarma said soon a law would be enacted to prevent the sale and purchase of land within the eight-kilometer range of Batadrava Thaan premises to non-indigenous communities.

"The District Commissioner has been instructed not to give his assent to the sale-purchase of land to and by people belonging to non-indigenous communities till the Act is brought in and implemented," Sarma added. Chief Minister Sarma stated that the progress on the developmental activities that were initiated outside the Batadrava Thaan premises was going in full swing and that to date, around 81 per cent of those works have been completed. While the first phase's project cost was estimated at Rs 50 crore, a total of Rs 114 crore shall be spent in the second phase of development activities, he added. Chief Minister Sarma further added that in addition to the beatification process of Batadrava Thaan, the Assam government has decided to work on the beautification of another 21 sites directly related to Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardev.

### **17. Hima Das provisionally suspended by NADA for three where about failures in 12 months**

Star India sprinter Hima Das has been provisionally suspended by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) for three where about failures in 12 months, according to sources. The 23-year-old Assam runner has not been named in the Hangzhou Asian Games team due to an injury she had sustained earlier this year. "Yes, she has committed three where about failures in one year period and so she has been provisionally suspended by the NADA," an Indian team official told PTI on conditions of anonymity. Hima, who has already left the national camp, faces a maximum two-year ban, which can be reduced to a minimum of one year depending on the degree of her fault.



## 18. Asian Games 2023: Amlan Borgohain Enters Semifinals of Men's 200m Race

Last year, sprinter Amlan Borgohain was hailed as India's fastest man alive with national records registered in both 100m and 200m sprint races.

His timings in the men's 200m sprint this year have been 21.20, 20.78, 20.85, 20.83, 20.66, 21.25, 20.96, 21.37, 21.28, 20.71, 21.00, 20.57, 20.55, 21.08, 21.03, 20.98 seconds, respectively.

In fact, he failed to qualify for the Asian Games after the timing of 20.71s in the men's 200m at the Inter State Athletics Championships, failing to meet the cut-off point set by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) (the cut-off time was 20.61s.)

Initially, after the race, he broke down in front of the cameras before getting up and wiping his tears away. He turned around his bib number to show 'Mom' written on it for his mother, who is undergoing dialysis.

Amlan said his coaching team helped him get him back to his best. Two months later, he went to Chengdu for the World University Games and posted improved timings of 20.57s and 20.55s in the semifinals and the finals.

The AFI then made a U-turn in adding his name to the Asian Games athletics squad after he breached the cut-off mark, becoming only the first Indian male to qualify for the Asian Games in sprint events (100m or 200m) since 2010.

However, the last time on the list – 20.98s – came in the final of the Asian Games at the Hangzhou Olympic Stadium, which meant he could only finish sixth.

The timing was below his national record of 20.52s he had achieved in April last year. If he had run a similar time, he would have been India's first Asiad gold medallist in 200m in 46 years.

Among India's medal-filled (22 and counting) campaign in track and field, where it is set to better its best haul since the inaugural edition, Amlan's sixth place will likely be long forgotten.



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But putting the result in context, the sixth place result was India's best finish in men's sprint events at the Asiad this millennium.

Suresh Sathya finished sixth in the 2010 Asian Games but was disqualified after World Athletics confirmed he had tested positive for doping.

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