

Significance of Bogibeel Bridge in Assam

Why in news?

 $n\n$

Bogibeel, the longest rail-road bridge of India, was recently inaugurated by the Prime Minister.

 $n\n$

What is it?

 $n\n$

\n

• The Bogibeel Bridge, inside Assam, is 20 km from the border with Arunachal Pradesh.

\n

- It spans nearly five-km across the Brahmaputra river.
- It connects Dibrugarh on the Brahmaputra's south bank to Dhemaji on the north bank.

\n

• It will link Dibrugarh with North Lakhimpur district of Assam and parts of eastern Arunachal Pradesh.

\n

• It is the country's longest road-cum-rail bridge, and its fourth longest of any kind above water.

\n

 $n\n$

■ Why is it so significant?

 $n\n$

۱'n

- **Dibrugarh** Dibrugarh is seen to be reclaiming its lost glory 68 years after being ravaged by a devastating earthquake and the ensuing floods.
- It used to be a thriving centre of the plantation industry during the colonial times.

\n

- It remains a hub of higher education and medical treatment in the region.
- \bullet However, for decades, the only recourse for people to cross the Brahmaputra is a diesel propelled ferry. $\mbox{\sc h}$
- So commissioning the bridge has reduced the journey time across the river to less than five minutes.

 $n\n$

۱n

\n

- **North-East** The single biggest factor which has hampered the development of the Northeast region is the absence of robust connectivity.
- \bullet A maze of river systems across Arunachal Pradesh, with their confluence in Brahmaputra, has posed an enormous challenge. $\$
- \bullet The bridge has the potential to infuse economic dynamism in the region.
- It could provide opportunities for the expansion of tourism, industrial development and trade.
- $\begin{array}{l} \bullet \ \, \textbf{Infrastructure} \, \cdot \, \textbf{Bogibeel must be viewed alongside other infrastructure} \\ \, \text{developments in neighbouring Arunachal Pradesh.} \\ \, \textbf{\ \ \ } \\ \textbf{\ \ \ } \\ \textbf{\ \ \ } \\ \end{array}$
- The iconic Bhupen Hazarika bridge (Dhola-Sadiya Bridge) over the Lohit river was commissioned recently by the Prime Minister.
- \bullet A 7.5 km long bridge over the Dibang river was also dedicated to the nation recently.
- The Trans Arunachal Highway has seen considerable progress, especially in the eastern part of the state.
- An airport has been commissioned at Pasighat, barely two hours away from Dibrugarh.
- **Tourism** The region has now become more accessible to the rest of the world.
- \bullet This could give a fillip to tourism, given the region's abundant wildlife and ideal condition for river rafting and angling. \n
- But a roadmap of tourism development, promotion and branding needs to be

crafted, which is centred on the region's tribal ethos.

- Industries Dibrugarh lies at the heart of a crucial oil and gas axis in Assam, given its proximity to Digboi and Duliajan oilfields.
- Further east lie the Kharsang gas fields and Kumchai oilfields of Arunachal Pradesh.

۱n

- The district also has significant coal deposits. There are more than 200 tea factories as well in Dibrugarh.
- So the bridge has raised the prospects of industrial development and employment opportunities, especially in the mining and plantation sectors.
- **China** Bogibeel is the gateway to the historic Stilwell Road.
- The road connects Ledo in Assam to Kunming in China, passing through Myanmar's Kachin state, via Arunachal Pradesh.
- \bullet The 1,800 km long route was used for transporting arms to the Chinese by the Americans during World War II. $\ensuremath{\backslash} n$
- From a strategic standpoint, movement of troops has become a much quicker, efficient and reliable proposition.
- The road beyond Dibrugarh leads to the frontier parts of Arunachal Pradesh, with a fully functional advanced landing ground of Air Force at Walong, barely 100 km from the Chinese border.
- **Trade** The route could now well become the centrepiece of the ambitious Act East Policy. It could boost trade across the region.
- Infrastructure in Myanmar would need to be strengthened and the land customs station at Nampong in Arunachal Pradesh revived.
- Importantly, the advantage of connectivity must be accompanied by an imaginative blueprint of economic development.

 $n\n$

 $n\n$

Source: Indian Express

