Accelerating in their craft

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Although the process of locating oneself on the face of the earth has come a long way from the enlightened Greeks to AI-generated applications, the geographical logic and human dexterity remain the same. Map making, projections, and cartography not only serve navigation purposes but have wide ranging usage. The induction of geographic information systems (GIS) and remote sensing has become an important platform for the proper functioning of our digitised world. From analysing the physical terrain and social nature of the global world to aiding in political discourse and the important decision-making process, GIS and remote sensing play a pivotal role in providing real-world data. Unfortunately, there is a huge gap in the formal education on the essentialities and applicabilities of these systems in our corner of the country. To fill this gap in northeast India and create an awareness on the fundamental necessities of GIS education, Accelcraft, a premiere institute on GIS and remote sensing has been spearheading in delivering its motto. Started in 2011, the brainchild of Mr. Chandra Kishore Singha and Mrs. Mina Singha, the portmanteau 'Accelcraft' stands true to its meaning as it has been helping students to accelerate their skills on spatial technologies. With a vision to cater to GIS education with hands-on experience on software like ArcGIS, QGIS, ERDAS, and Google Earth, it has also successfully assisted the students in securing lucrative jobs both in the private and public sectors. The institute runs smoothly owing to the fluid cooperation between the husband-and-wife duo, where Mr. Chandra Kishore operates and manages the business and Mrs. Mina is the technical expert. Having graduated from the University of Allahabad in the discipline of geography in 2002, Mrs. Mina has a natural inclination and a strong command over the discipline. While she teaches with utmost passion, her interest for the subject is explicable from the moments she gets engrossed in the software trying to find solutions to every nitty gritty problem. For her, the subject is 'like an ocean'," vast and unending with enormous potential and treasures. Her knowledge on GIS and remote sensing technology and softwares has not only equipped her to teach but has also created an eagerness for her to learn more about it. Eliciting the possibilities of this technology as applicable in many fields, Mr. Chandra Kishore Singha elaborates on the multidisciplinary arc of it. The data derived from its application has an overarching realm from the agricultural field to the zoological departments, i.e., from A to Z. However, despite its vast potential, the lack of awareness has caused a lacuna in its development in north-east India. Because it is a relatively new field, initially, the faculty and staff of the institute had to visit colleges to create a momentum among students so that they understand its importance. Owing to University Grants Commissions (UGC) recognition of the subject, universities and colleges started to include the discipline in its curriculum, but adhered mostly to the theoretical side. For a better grasp of how satellite imageries work and analyses of a region on a temporal scale, practical comprehension is equally essential, which Accelcraft has been providing. It isn't easy to break the stigma of learning a discipline from a textbook, especially in a scenario where mugging up has always played a vital role in students' lives rather than deep understanding of a subject. Explaining how they have overcome these challenges and come a long way, Mr. Singha has been thriving in managing the IT, human resource, marketing, and public relations of the institute while also christening the name 'Accelcraft' with his intellect. Starting the institute with a meagre capital and facing a lot of personal hardships, Accelcraft today is successfully embarking on its 12-year journey. Its success is measurable by the graduates of more than five hundred students in their short span of existence. Most of their students are now employed in big names like NESAC, NRD, ARSAC and several multinational companies. Apart from serving its educational purpose, the institute has also helped in various government projects like the Assam delimitation project for the Election Department, Pradhan Mantri Road Project for PWD, micro watershed project for the Soil Department as well as overseas projects like for the Danish company COWI. As the brain behind the institute, Mr. Chandra Kishore Singha, fuels the institute, the tech, Mrs. Mina Singha, steers the wheel. Mr. Singha evokes GIS as 'the technology of the future', which indeed is the talisman in not just describing the future, but also illustrating the tabula rasa of the future. Here's hoping Accelcraft excels more in offering their services and endures every hurdle that comes their way.

Meghalaya gets electric trains for the first time

Mendipathar: N.F. Railway is progressing at full throttle for achieving the Indian Railways target of becoming Net Zero Carbon Emitter by 2030. In an endeavour for complete electrification, N.F. Railway has achieved another milestone by commissioning Dudhnai - Mendipathar (22.823 Track Kilometre) single line section and Abhayapuri - Pancharatna (34.59 Track Kilometre) double line section on 15th March, 2023. The Central Organization for Railway Electrification (CORE) has carried out the electrification works in these sections. Mendipathar is the only railway station in the north-eastern state of Meghalaya which is in operation since 2014 after being inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India. After commissioning of electric traction, trains hauled by electric locomotive will now be able to operate directly from Mendipathar in Meghalaya which will increase the average speed. More passenger & freight carrying trains will be able to operate through these sections with full sectional speeds. Punctuality will also increase in this section. Parcel & freight carrying trains hauled by electric locomotives from other states will be able to reach Meghalaya directly. Electrification will significantly improve the mobility of trains in Northeast India. In addition to the reduction in pollution due to the shift from fossil fuel to electricity, the efficiency of the Railway system in the region will also improve. This would facilitate seamless traffic and also save time of the trains moving to and from northeastern states apart from savings in precious foreign exchange. India has a vast railway network that covers a large part of the country. The Indian Railways is one of the largest rail networks in the world and operates both electric and diesel trains. The first electric train in India started running between Bombay (now Mumbai) and Kurla in 1925. Since then, the Indian Railways has gradually increased its fleet of electric trains, and today, a significant portion of the railway network is electrified. The electric trains in India are powered by overhead electric cables, and the locomotives use electric motors to propel the train. Electric trains are faster, more efficient, and produce fewer emissions than diesel trains, making them an environmentally friendly option. Some of the popular electric train services in India include the Rajdhani Express, Shatabdi Express, Duronto Express, and Garib Rath Express. These trains operate on long-distance routes and offer comfortable travel options for passengers. Overall, electric trains have played a significant role in the development of the Indian Railways, and the network is continuing to modernize and expand its fleet of electric trains.