



MEGHALAYA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

ADDRESS

BY

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GOVERNOR OF MEGHALAYA

9th MARCH, 2015

Mr. Speaker and the Members of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly,

I am glad and honoured to address this August House for the first time since my assumption of office and I extend my warm greetings to all the distinguished Members.

2. The Meghalaya Legislative Assembly is reputed for its sense of decorum and dignity. I salute the founding Members of this august Assembly for setting such high standards of discourse and healthy traditions and conventions of conduct. I also commend the successive generations of legislators for not only abiding by those traditions but also enriching them. I urge upon all of you to carry this tradition forward in the days to come.

3. Our State is confronted by many challenges to internal security, peace and order. The Government is determined to overcome these challenges and thwart the attempts of misguided elements to cause disturbance and disorder. In this endeavour, a multi-pronged strategy has been adopted. With those groups which have entered into dialogue with the Government, peace settlements have been reached. For those inclined to have talks, the Government has designated interlocutors for negotiation. And for those elements that continue with their nefarious anti-national and criminal activities, the Government reiterates its firm resolve to tackle such activities with the full might of the State. The Government has invested heavily in upgrading the security infrastructure and a new battalion of specially trained and equipped commando force is also being raised. Despite various challenges, the law and order situation has, by and large, remained stable. All communities observed their festivals in an atmosphere of gaiety and amity and also participated with great enthusiasm in the celebrations of national days. On many occasions, people of Meghalaya have defied and even resisted the calls given by militant outfits for boycott and bandhs. On behalf of the Government, I would like to commend the people of Meghalaya for their abiding commitment to the values of peace and harmony.

4. After prolonged negotiations, a Memorandum of Settlement was signed with ANVC and ANVC (B) on the 24th September, 2014 at New Delhi. The two outfits have since been disbanded. Earnest efforts are now on to implement the terms of the Settlement. The Central Government had advised us to defer the elections to the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council so that the requisite amendment to the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution could be carried out during the budget session of the Parliament. This is reflective of the intent of the Central Government also to see the full and expeditious implementation of the accord. The State Government has been pursuing this regularly with the Central Government. In spite of the positive intent shown by the Government, certain outfits such as GNLA and HNLC continue to indulge in anti-national and criminal activities. HNLC continues to give calls for boycott on national days. However, the commitment of the Government to have a dialogue with the

militant outfits remains provided they give up their anti-national stance and abjure violence.

5. The situation on the inter-State border with Assam has remained largely peaceful. A robust system of interactions at regular intervals between the district level officials of the two States has been put in place to address occasional stray incidents. The efforts to find a lasting solution to this festering problem through negotiations will continue earnestly. The situation on the Indo-Bangladesh Border is peaceful and under close watch. The State Government has been urging upon the Central Government to ratify the Protocol signed with Bangladesh so that people on both sides are able to derive the potential socio-economic benefits that a well defined and settled border offers. Operationalisation of two border hats at Kalaichar and Balat has not only created new economic opportunities but has also strengthened social bonding among people along the border.

6. The Government has been working seriously on evolving comprehensive mechanisms to deal with the problem of infiltration and influx. Civil society organisations have been actively associated in this endeavour. A Committee has identified the locations to set up facilitation centres where the movement of visitors is sought to be verified. Another Committee headed by the Deputy Chief Minister has submitted its report recently, which will be considered by the Government on priority. In this regard, completion of the Indo-Bangladesh border fencing is also of crucial importance. The Government urges upon all the stakeholders to extend their cooperation and allow the fencing work to be undertaken in those portions where it has been stalled on account of objections from local quarters. Apart from preventing criminal activities such as theft, dacoity, abductions etc. from across the border, this project is also of immense national interest.

7. As a continuing measure of administrative reform in the State, the Government is committed to complete the separation of Executive and Judiciary in the remaining 5 (five) districts of South Garo Hills, South West Garo Hills, North Garo Hills, South West Khasi Hills and East Jaintia Hills.

8. The development priorities of the State require a well thought out marshalling of resources. These include Central Government transfers and schemes, externally aided projects and the State's own resources. The recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission will become available to the State as these have been accepted by the Government of India. The 14th Finance Commission has brought about a major change in the way Central funds will be transferred to States with greater flexibility to the States in budgeting for development and

administrative costs. This change, however, imposes greater responsibility on the State in terms of better planning and budgeting as well as greater prudence in expenditure. At the same time, the ban on mining of coal imposed by the National Green Tribunal has had an adverse impact on the State's own resources. There has been a substantial decline in the State's revenue. Government has taken steps to address this situation by improving efficiency in tax collections and plugging leakages. Budget making has become more challenging but the Government has taken proactive measures to ensure that the growth momentum does not flag and resources continue to be available for completing on-going projects as well as for taking up new initiatives. The State Government shall also continue to actively engage with the Government of India in restructuring various centrally sponsored schemes to ensure that the programmes are customised appropriately as per the needs of the State.

9. The cornerstone of the development strategy of the State Government is inclusive and sustainable growth. Government aims at lower incidence of poverty, broad-based and significant improvement in health outcomes, increased access to higher and quality education, skill development, better opportunities for wage employment and livelihoods and sustainable development based on ecological sustainability. Over the last few years, the State has restructured its investments with a clear focus on health, education, roads, irrigation and the social sectors. A major thrust has been given to promoting arts and culture in line with the ethos of the State and in creating opportunities for sports and youth related activities. The results are already visible. In the fisheries sector, for instance, the water area brought into fisheries has seen a threefold increase during the last three years as compared to the total water area brought into fisheries since the formation of the State. Similar achievements have been made in the irrigation sector, wherein the State has added as much irrigated area in the last 3 years as it had in the first 40 years of Statehood. Long pending projects have been completed and new projects have been taken up to fulfil critical connectivity needs. The State has now embarked upon branding Meghalaya as a destination for education, health and leisure.

10. The Integrated Basin Development and Livelihood Promotion Programme, (IBDLP) which encompasses establishment of small multi-purpose reservoirs, effective water resource management, extensive increase in irrigation and outreach for livelihood support, underpins the approach adopted by the State. Another notable initiative of the Government is the launch of Mission Green seeking sustainable development through judicious use of our natural resources, involvement of community, enhancement of green cover, adoption of green technologies and building up a sustainable green movement.

Statistics & Programme Monitoring and Evaluation

11. Planning of projects requires reliable and timely statistics along with robust mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. The State has continued its active participation in all nationwide surveys and census activities. Institutional arrangements are being put in place for effective monitoring of ongoing projects to ensure that delays in execution are minimised and corrective action taken at the earliest. In house capability for evaluation of completed projects is being systematically stepped up.

Finance

12. The project 'Supporting Human Capital Development in Meghalaya' is aimed at enhancing the employability of the youth through improvement in quality and delivery of secondary education and providing vocational skills for 60,000 students in various trades. The first phase of upgradation of the infrastructure of selected Government aided schools to national standards is in progress.

13. The scheme initiated by the State Government for economic empowerment of women through financial inclusion has been extended to all the four new districts. This scheme will allow access to credit and promote entrepreneurship. The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana' will supplement the State's effort in achieving the goal of inclusive growth. The Hon'ble Union Finance Minister acknowledged the need for converging the two schemes, and accordingly, the modality for convergence is being worked out.

14. An innovative biometric solution for Pensioners' verification initiated last year by the State Government is the Digital Life certificate for the pensioners who draw pension through the State Treasury. Now, pensioners are able to validate themselves directly in the Pension data base Server, using their PPO and biometrics. During 2015-16, the State proposes to computerize all financial transactions of Works departments, which shall also have interface with Treasuries for integration.

Excise, Registration, Taxation & Stamps

15. There has been substantial increase in revenue collection in the recent years. The Mission Mode Project for Computerization of Commercial Taxes has been successfully implemented in the State with e-Services such as e-Payment, e-Registration, e-Return, e-Waybill, e-'C' Form, e-Refund, e-Dealer Profile as major interventions. Other e-Services to be rolled out during the current year are e-'P' Form, e-D-Mat Waybills, e-TDS, amongst others. The Government has authorised the State Bank of India, Vijaya Bank, ICICI Bank and United Bank of India for acceptance of e-Payment of taxes.

Water Resources

16. Water is a vital resource for ensuring sustainable socio-economic upliftment of the people. The Water Mission, which is part of the IBDLP, is aimed at sustainable development and fair and equitable use of water resources. Thrust areas identified for special attention include creation of additional irrigation potential, enhanced water use efficiency, water quality management, rejuvenation of water bodies, improved governance, convergence of initiatives and integrated water resources management. To promote participatory irrigation management, Water User Associations in 275 irrigation projects have been formed and registered. The draft State Water Policy has been circulated for consultation and drafting of a comprehensive Water Act has been initiated.

Agriculture & Horticulture

17. The Government has launched the Mission Organic, through sustainable crop production practices, given the consumer anxiety for safe and healthy food and the growing concern over the detrimental effects of chemicals on soil health, environment and natural resources. The construction of small-scale irrigation structures continues to be a thrust area particularly in the light of sporadic monsoons subjecting the rice crop to cycles of drought-like and flood situations. The Krishi Vigyan Kendras, with the State Government as the host organization, have achieved commendable success in areas of inter-cropping systems, crop production technologies and disease control.

18. A new initiative of establishing 'all-in-one' Greenhouse unit comprising of a citrus scion bank and a root stock nursery is underway at Dewlieh Horti-hub to produce quality budded orange seedlings. The second international Indigenous Terra Madre (ITM) Festival will be held in the State during November 2015 as a global event that will, among other objectives, showcase the rich biological and cultural diversity of Meghalaya.

Soil & Water Conservation

19. Irrigation projects under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme and Rural Infrastructure Development Fund are being implemented for the benefit of rural areas. Projects for natural resource rejuvenation and livelihood improvement have also been taken up under Integrated Watershed Management Programme.

Fisheries

20. Under the Meghalaya State Aquaculture Mission, water area of 924 hectares has been covered while sanctions have been issued for further coverage of 868 hectares. 17,923 partners have entered the fisheries sector so far through the Mission. With the establishment of 12 Eco-hatcheries and 14 FRP hatcheries, the production capacity of fingerlings has received a major boost. Efforts have been

made to rehabilitate the indigenous Mahaseer in the State. As part of this exercise, 10,000 fingerlings of Golden Mahaseer were released last year in Nongmahir Reservoir. The Trout Farm at Cleve Colony has now been revived. Three State Aqua Fests were organized at Shillong and Tura, to provide a platform for the buyers and sellers as well as to showcase the achievements under the Mission. Awards for excellence in the fisheries sector were instituted to acknowledge and reward the extraordinary work done by the fish farmers. The Meghalaya State Fisheries Research & Training Institute has now become fully functional.

Animal Husbandry & Veterinary

21. The programmes of the Government lay special emphasis on augmenting production in meat, milk and egg to narrow the gap between demand and supply, and on providing health care to livestock and birds. Training programmes are regularly conducted for capacity building of all stakeholders. To strengthen health care infrastructure, 11 new dispensaries covering all the 11 districts, and two new poly clinics at Shillong and Tura are being set up. The State Livestock Mission under IBDLP is expected to pick up further momentum during the current year generating substantial livelihood opportunities for the people.

Forests & Environment

22. The Government is taking all necessary steps to conserve the existing forest wealth of the State, which is coming under increasing pressure from biotic and abiotic interference. In order to achieve this objective, apart from conserving the Government owned forests, forestry programmes with people's participation have been taken up in privately owned and community lands. To promote scientific forest management practices in the private and community owned forests that constitute a major share of the forest cover in the State, working schemes have been prepared using remote sensing technology with the assistance of NESAC. District Councils have been actively involved in this endeavour. The Government has declared 39 Community Reserves in the State for better interface with the people for protection of wildlife. A portion of Narpuh Reserve Forest has been notified as Narpuh Wildlife Sanctuary. The Government is also firmly committed to environmental protection. Towards this end, Green India Mission has been launched in the State to improve green cover and thereby, carbon sequestration. For better administration of environment protection laws, the Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board has been brought under the administrative control of the Forests & Environment department.

Sericulture & Weaving

23. Financial assistance is being provided to Eri farmers for rearing houses and Muga farmers for grainage halls under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana. Field research will be conducted in collaboration with the Directorate of Oilseeds Research, Hyderabad to find out the castor varieties that would be suitable as

host plants for eri silk worms as well as for oil production. The Government has sanctioned 21 handloom clusters in different parts of the State. Qualified technical manpower will be provided for each of these clusters. This will substantially improve the design and quality of fabric and fetch remunerative returns to the weavers.

Community & Rural Development

24. During 2014-15, 88.93 lakh mandays of employment were generated under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) upto January 2015. Through convergence of MGNREGA with the Blacktopping of Rural Roads Scheme, 201 Kms. of roads have been blacktopped and works are in progress in another 156 Kms. Under IAY, 7,110 new houses were constructed by January, 2015. The State Rural Infrastructure Development Initiative has been notified and two components, namely, the Bio-digester Scheme and the Block Rural Infrastructure Development Fund will be implemented during the current year. The Meghalaya State Rural Technology and Livelihood Promotion Centre will be established at Myrdon Nongbah village, land for which was donated by the villagers. The Government has approved creation of the Meghalaya Society for Social Audit and Transparency to ensure transparency in the implementation of the MGNREGA. The socio-economic caste Census has been completed and submitted to the Government of India for approval.

Cooperation

25. Earnest efforts are on towards making the cooperative movement stronger and more vibrant in the State. There are 1,410 Cooperative Societies with a membership of about 1.73 lakh individuals. The Societies are undertaking varied businesses such as credit mobilisation, food processing, handloom, handicraft, industrial, livestock, marketing of agricultural produce etc. The Primary Agriculture Credit Cooperative Societies (PACS) are being strengthened. These revitalized Cooperatives, in turn, are expected to infuse new energy into the agrarian economy, through adequate flow of credit to the needy grass root level farmers.

Border Areas Development

26. To supplement the developmental programmes of the State, special schemes are being implemented in the areas along the international border and the inter-state Border to improve connectivity, support livelihood and provide infrastructure. Scholarships and stipends are also given to the students residing in the border villages.

District Council Affairs

27. The State Government will continue to support the Autonomous District Councils to enable them to discharge their duties in safeguarding the traditional heritage, customs, practices, usages and economic security of the indigenous tribal people and to empower the traditional institutions in conformity with customs and tradition, in accordance with the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India. There is a need to institutionalise the role of traditional bodies in order to encourage their more effective participation in the governance at the grass root level and in the implementation of Government programmes and activities. Towards this end, consultation process involving political parties, people representatives, district councils, traditional institutions and civil society organisations has been initiated. As part of this exercise the first interaction session was organised on the 4th March, 2015, where very constructive suggestions emanated from various stakeholders.

Public Health Engineering

28. During the current year, works are going on to cover 181 slipped back habitations, 19 quality affected habitations, 564 schools and 585 anganwadi centres with adequate safe drinking water supply. Implementation of Greater Shillong Water Supply Project Phase-III is in progress. Augmentation work of Tura Phase I & II Water Supply Scheme is in progress. A proposal for implementing the New Shillong Water Supply Project has been initiated. The Swachh Bharat Mission was launched on 25.09.2014 in the State and efforts are on to achieve the objectives of the programme within 2019. Under the sanitation programme, 2,74,855 individual household latrines, 13,174 school toilets, 242 sanitary complexes and 2,035 anganwadi toilets have been constructed up to December 2014. In respect of urban sanitation, steps are being taken to implement sewerage projects in all the district headquarters. In the recent declaration of Awards for Nirmal Gram Puraskar 2013, the State was ranked second in the country.

Public Works Department

29. Government will continue to augment the roads and bridges infrastructure in the State. As on March, 2014, the total road length increased to 9,860 Kms including 1,112 Kms of National Highways. The implementation of projects under the new initiative of the State Government for upgradation of State Highways, Major District Roads, Urban Roads etc. is in good progress and the physical achievement till date is about 77%. Conversion of 13.20 Kms of Semi Permanent Timber (SPT) bridges under the 13th Finance Commission Award is progressing well. Under the State Plan, during 2014-15, 31 Kms of new roads and 71 Kms of kutchra roads have been blacktopped and 194 Rms of RCC bridges have been constructed. The National Highway works between Shillong-Nongstoin-Tura is progressing well barring a few stretches where land acquisition is still in progress.

Under Regular PMGSY, the completed road length is 526.40 Kms. The process of road connectivity will now be accelerated through PMGSY with the inception of World Bank funding under the Rural Roads Project II. Contracts for 276 road works out of 290 have been awarded and 6 road works connecting 8 eligible habitations under Tranche-1 have been completed.

Transport

30. The State now figures on the rail map of the country with the commencement of the train service between Dudhnai-Mendipathar in North Garo Hills and Guwahati from December 2014. Land acquisition for the railway line from Tetelia to Byrnihat has been completed and land has been handed over to the Northeast Frontier Railways. Under the scheme for Rural Transport connectivity, buses have been procured and district level committees headed by the Deputy Commissioner have been constituted to operationalise the bus services. West Garo Hills will kick start the project soon. Construction of Inter State Bus Terminus at Mawlai Mawiong has commenced. Air service between Umroi Airport and Kolkata has been made operational. The State Government seeks to encourage private airlines to operate flights from Umroi connecting other state capitals in the region. Tax exemption granted on aviation turbine fuel will act as an added incentive. Acquisition of additional land for upgradation of Baljek airport to accommodate medium size aircrafts such as ATR-72 has been completed.

Power

31. To reduce the demand-supply gap in the power sector, several schemes have been implemented for generation, transmission and distribution of power in the State. Though the State has a hydro potential of about 3000 mega watts, only about 10% of this potential has been tapped. 3 new hydro projects are being taken up, namely, New Umtru HEP (2x20 MW), Lakroh Small HEP (1.5 MW) and Ganol HEP (3x7.5 MW). The Government has also signed MOUs with private entities for development of hydro power projects. Ten sites have been identified for an installed capacity of 1,104 Mega Watts. With the commissioning of the 220 KV transmission line from Misa in Assam to Byrnihat, the State now possesses a transmission level of 220 KV also. The State has also taken up setting up of a 400/220 KV sub-station at Byrnihat for tapping power from the 400 KV Pallatana-Bongaigoan line. To improve and introduce reforms in the distribution sector, the second phase of the Accelerated Power Development & Reforms Programme is now under implementation. The Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana seeks to provide power for all and the achievement so far is 97.50%. This scheme is likely to be completed by March 2015. The State Government will also give adequate attention to the renewable energy sector.

Health & Family Welfare

32. Outreach services are extended to the people of the State through a network of 12 Hospitals, 28 CHCs, 110PHCs, 422 Health Sub-Centres & 12 Dispensaries besides frontline health workers. Setting up of Medical College on PPP mode at the site of Reid Provincial Chest Hospital, Shillong will commence as soon as the T.B. Hospital is shifted to Umsawli, New Shillong. MoU for design and DPR preparation for Tura Medical College was signed with M/s TCIL Ltd. in December 2014. Implementation of National Health Mission will be given more thrust with greater focus on the Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child health and Adolescent Services (RMNCH + A) Programme.

33. Focus on control of communicable and non-communicable diseases will be augmented. In respect of non-communicable diseases, steps will be taken under the national programmes such as Prevention & Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease & Stroke (NPCDCS), Blindness, Mental Health, Health Care for the elderly, Prevention & Control of Deafness, Tobacco Control Programme, Oral Health Programme and Palliative Care to achieve better results. Blood Bank at Jowai has been made functional last year. Till date, no case of Swine Flu (H1N1) is reported in the State. Awareness to the public about the outbreak of Swine Flu in the country has been made through print and electronic media. Drugs for the treatment of the disease are available with the State Government and have also been allowed to be sold through licensed chemists.

Education

34. The Government is fully conscious of the challenges in the Education sector. One of the biggest challenges is to enrol all the children in schools and to retain them. Through interventions under SSA, the problem of out of school children is being addressed and drop-out rate has come down drastically over the last five years. Midday Meal Scheme, which provides cooked meal to every child in Government and Government aided LP School, is another intervention for reducing drop out. Efforts have been made to improve the quality of education through training of untrained teachers, pre-service teacher training and use of innovative methods in teaching. The Diploma in Elementary Education Curriculum has been revised in light of the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education and will be implemented from 2015.

35. Efforts to improve physical infrastructure have also been made under which the State has identified 20 (twenty) Blocks where Residential Schools are being established on the pattern of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya. In order to provide cheap and affordable accommodation to rural students, Government has approved construction of 7 (seven) hostels in all the district headquarters. Asian Development Bank assistance has been availed for upgrading the infrastructure of the Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools. The Government has approved establishment

of two Engineering Colleges and Expression of Interest has been floated for setting up of three Pinemount International schools in the State. One of the major steps taken recently for improving administration of scholarship is the setting up of the on-line scholarship portal to facilitate online filing of application, its processing and direct transfer of fund to the beneficiaries. The department is also working on setting up the new ICT enabled Teachers Information Management system to ensure more effective cadre management of teachers. The department is actively participating in the Swachha Bharat campaign by taking up construction of girls and boys toilets in schools as well as renovation of dysfunctional toilets.

Sports & Youth Affairs

36. In order to promote excellence in sports and empowerment of youth, financial assistance for sports competitions is being extended. District Sports Promotion Societies have been launched to facilitate easy availability of funds at the grass root level for promotion of sports. The department is also facilitating participation of sportspersons in regional and national championships. In order to spot sports talent and to groom them, Chief Minister's under 12 years Football Tournament is being organized annually. For upgradation of the sports infrastructure, outdoor and indoor stadia, playfields and accommodation facilities for athletes have been taken up in right earnest. Mention may be made of the completed synthetic athletic track at J.N. S. Complex Shillong, and the ongoing up-gradation of Outdoor stadia at Tura, Ampati, Mawkyrwat and Jowai. Under the revamped scheme of Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan, proposals for 8 Block Center Model Sports Complexes have been submitted to the Government of India.

37. To enable the youth to take up right careers and also to equip them for competitive examinations, reputed Institutes of the country have been tied up for the Coaching Centers under the Chief Minister's Career Guidance and Counselling Scheme. To encourage participation of youth at the grass root level, youth clubs/associations/schools can avail assistance under the Chief Minister's Youth Development Scheme. To foster integration, Youth Exchange Programme is being organized at the state and national levels and the selected youth are sent for international exchange programmes.

Social Welfare

38. The Chief Minister's scheme for assistance to physically challenged, infirm and widows will continue along with the wedding assistance scheme to orphan girls of marriageable age. Welfare programmes for women, children, physically handicapped, juvenile delinquents, the aged and infirm have been implemented in all the 41 ICDS project centres. The Meghalaya State Commission for Women and the Meghalaya State Commission for Protection of Child Rights have been set up. A

State Resource Centre for Women has been established. Financial assistance is given to voluntary organizations for medical treatment of the destitute aged persons. Assistance is also given to NGOs working for the welfare of women and children. Assistance is also provided to voluntary organizations for anti-drug campaign. Construction of Working Women Hostel at Shillong and Tura and Koch Boys Hostel, Tribal Girls Hostel and Hajong Boys Hostel at Tura has been approved.

Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs

39. The State Government continues to implement the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) which provides food security to the BPL families. In addition, under the Annapurna scheme, rice is distributed free of cost to indigent old age persons not covered under the National Old Age Pension scheme at the scale of 10 Kgs per head per month. A project for end-to-end computerization of PDS is under implementation, which will improve the efficiency of TPDS and also help in better monitoring and prevention of diversion of essential commodities. The State has taken preparatory steps for implementation of the National Food Security Act in line with the guidelines issued by the Central Government. The list of beneficiaries under this Act will be finalised soon based on the socio-economic and caste census that was completed recently. Government has also procured sugar and is distributing it to beneficiaries in 1 (one) Kg poly packs with the Government PDS logo, to ensure hygienic packing and also to prevent diversion of PDS sugar by unscrupulous elements.

Urban Affairs

40. Special emphasis has been given to reduce traffic congestion in the urban areas through the Infrastructure for City Transport scheme. Widening of road and junction improvement at Laitumkhrah Point, Shillong has been completed. Major projects likely to be completed during 2014-15 are Storm Water Drainage at Shillong, augmentation of Water Supply in Shillong Phase-III, Construction of 456 dwelling units at Tura, Solid Waste Management at Tura and Nongpoh and a short term Scientific Landfill at Marten. The major projects taken up during 2014-15 were construction of ancillary infrastructure (Depot) for buses and purchase of 240 additional buses under JNNURM. The major projects in progress are re-development of parking lot at Akhonggre; improvement of roads within Mairang, Sohra and Nongpoh Town; construction of Inter-State bus terminus at Tura; shopping infrastructure for migrating rural vendors-cum-parking infrastructure at Nazing Bazar; and construction of R.C.C. bridge to connect Gangdrak Dare at Tura. The Government is actively pursuing the proposal for inclusion of New Shillong Township under the Smart Cities programme of the Government of India.

Labour

41. Skill development is a major focus of the Government. To generate awareness of various skill development programmes, the Meghalaya Skill Fest 2014 was held at Tura, Shillong, Jowai and Williamnagar, where 13,000 youth were registered. To provide better training and employment opportunities to the youth under the Skill Development Initiative Scheme, 27 Placement linked Vocational Training Providers from outside the State were registered. The upgraded Mechanic (Motor Vehicle) Section at ITI, Shillong as a 'state-of-the-art' facility has been made operational recently in collaboration with Tata Motors Ltd. Central Government has released funds for 1 (one) new ITI at Ampati. Central Government has also approved the setting up of a Model Career Centre at Shillong.

Mining & Geology

42. Administration of mines and minerals is critical as many families in the State depend on mining, particularly coal mining, as their basic source of livelihood. The State Government had notified the Meghalaya Mines and Minerals Policy, 2012 to facilitate systematic, scientific and planned utilization of mineral resources and to bring coal mining within the fold of a regulatory regime. The State Government has constituted a Committee to frame administrative guidelines, rules and appropriate procedures for implementation of the Policy. To meet the requirement of mining on scientific basis duly addressing environmental concerns, safety and health factors, the State Government will come forward with an appropriate mining scheme. On the request of the State Government, the Ministry of Coal has constituted an Expert Group led by the Central Mine Planning & Design Institute Limited to prepare broad guidelines for the mining of coal in the State and the Directorate General of Mines Safety to prepare guidelines on health, occupational safety and related issues. The Meghalaya Mineral Development Corporation will be strengthened to provide guidance and technical assistance to miners to prepare Mining Plan including mine closure plan. The State Government will facilitate reclamation of abandoned mines and also take steps for restoration of acidic water bodies.

43. In response to the request of the State Government, the Government of India has also constituted a Committee of Group of Officers under the chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary with the Chief Secretary, Government of Meghalaya, as one of the members to work out a harmonious solution. In pursuance of the recommendations of the Group of Officers, the State Government proposes to submit a proposal to the Government of India for suitable exemptions under Para 12A(b) of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India after due consultation with all the stakeholders.

Commerce & Industries

44. The focus of the Government has been on building a skilled work force which will provide the State a competitive edge in attracting new industrial investments. Along with this, greater thrust has been given on providing ready to move in facilities for prospective entrepreneurs. To promote enterprises in the State, 191 industrial units have been set up under PMEGP creating employment for 662 persons. 12 Food Processing units have been sanctioned under the National Mission on Food Processing. The youth are being sponsored for skill development training courses in various vocational institutions within and outside the State. Under Master Craftsman Scheme, 437 rural artisans were trained in trades such as cane and bamboo, woodcraft and other artistic works. The Apiculture Mission was launched in October, 2014 and is expected to play an important role in poverty reduction, employment generation and livelihood promotion. Under the ASIDE Scheme, infrastructure development of EPIP, Export Integrated Craft Complex and construction of certain roads and bridges have been taken up. Recently, the setting up of 4 new Border Haats along the Indo-Bangladesh border has been approved.

Tourism

45. Meghalaya has a wide variety of tourism choices which suit different categories of tourists. The emphasis of the Government has been to promote various destinations and festivals of the State, build capacities and skills of the local people in hospitality and augment tourist accommodation facilities. Under the Meghalaya Tourism Development and Investment Promotion Scheme, assistance is provided to entrepreneurs for creation of Homestays and Resorts. Capacity building and skill development is being undertaken in collaboration with the Institute of Hotel Management, Food Craft Institute, ILFS education, Be- ABLE etc. To market the tourism products, publicity campaigns in print and electronic media are undertaken regularly. As part of our marketing efforts, the International Tourism Mart 2014 (ITM) was hosted in Shillong with 49 international delegates from 21 countries and 9 states of the country. This Mart gave an opportunity to the tourism stakeholders of the State to sell their products to both the foreign and domestic partners.

Housing

46. In Meghalaya, though the number of shelterless people is low, two third of the houses, especially in the rural areas, are of temporary nature which need to be upgraded with durable building materials. The Government now proposes to implement a new Housing Scheme called 'Meghalaya Housing Scheme' to replace the Rural Housing Scheme. Under this Scheme, houses will be constructed by the department for EWS families. The department is also constructing L.I.G. and M.I.G. rental houses under the Rental Housing Scheme in the district headquarters for providing accommodation to Government employees.

Arts & Culture

47. Government continues to take steps for preservation, conservation, documentation, research, promotion, development and augmentation of the rich cultural heritage of the State. Work on the Shillong International Centre for Performing Arts and Culture has been initiated. Steps are being taken to set up the Centre of Knowledge for Indigenous Arts at Betasing, Creation of Indigenous Centre at Tura and Mawphlang and Amphitheatres at Shillong, Jowai and Tura.

Information Technology

48. The Government has been aggressively pursuing its plan towards reducing the digital divide and creating opportunities for employment, entrepreneurship and wealth generation. Under the Digital Literacy scheme, basic IT Training is being provided at block and village levels using the facilities of Common Service Centres through partnership with the Basix Academy for Lifelong Employ ability. Selection of a System Integrator for implementing the Geographical Information System project in the State is at an advanced stage. The State Data Centre has been ISO-20000 certified for IT Service management standards and ISO-27001 certified for Information Security Management. Further, efforts are progressing towards Cloud-enablement and Disaster Recovery of the Data Centre and the same is expected to be in place during 2015-16. A project is being implemented to provide free Wi-Fi connectivity to all Higher Secondary schools in the State so that students can access contents available in the net under the guidance of their teachers and an agreement with BSNL has already been signed to this effect. The National Optical Fibre Network project is also being implemented, which is one of the core pillars of the Digital India Programme.

Legal Metrology

49. The Government is committed to ensure that consumers are getting the correct weight and measure and the correct price when buying commodities in the State. To achieve this, construction of Secondary Standards Laboratory at Tura and 4 Working Standards Laboratories in the new districts of Khliehriat, Mawkyrwat, Resubelpara and Ampati has been taken up. Mobile Test Kit for checking the accuracy of weighbridges has been successfully implemented. The department is working on the calibration of Water Flow Meter, Taxi Meter, Clinical Thermometer, Blood Pressure Meter and Electricity Meter. Audio spots on the radio to reach out to the public, especially in the remote areas, to promote awareness has also been attempted.

General Administration

50. The new Meghalaya House at Russel Street, Kolkata was inaugurated on the 12th January, 2015. Efforts are also being made to set up a Meghalaya House at Bangalore and Government of Karnataka has been requested for allotment of land.

Steps have also been taken for creation of appropriate infrastructure in the district headquarters of the four newly created districts to accommodate officers and staff. Integrated office complexes have been taken up in these districts. In Shillong, work is in progress for creating 40 additional units of accommodation for officers and staff. The Government will also endeavour to provide safe and **secure** integrated residential complexes for administrative and police staff at different locations of the State.

Personnel

51. Meghalaya Administrative Training Institute (MATI) is collaborating with reputed Training Institutions in the country to organize training programmes for government employees on effective, efficient, transparent and accountable governance. The Institute has also introduced many new training programmes and for better coverage, training has been decentralized to the block level. The Institute was identified by the Government of India to participate in developing a Strategic Action Plan for enhancing knowledge and skills of Government functionaries necessary for effective delivery of public services. The Strategic Action Plan has been submitted to the Government of India for which funding is expected in 2015-16.

Information & Public Relations

52. The Meghalaya Integrated Information System continues to disseminate Government information for the benefit of the people. Further, the department continues to project and promote a positive image of the State at the national and international level by taking part in the India International Trade Fair (IITF) in which the State was awarded the Gold Medal in 2014 for the best display in the North East category. Indian Panorama Film Festival was organised in March 2014, in which prominent personalities took part. Workshops were also conducted during the Festival to promote film making and seminar was held to promote Meghalaya as a film destination.

Revenue & Disaster Management

53. Survey and preparation of maps of A.khing lands in Garo Hills was taken up in consultation with the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council. Awareness campaigns were organized for the Sirdars, Headman, Nokmas and elders of the villages to highlight the benefits of having proper records of land.

54. Meghalaya is prone to earthquakes of high magnitude as it falls under seismic Zone V. To mainstream the earthquake Risk Management, regular capacity development programmes are being conducted in the state. One major capacity development exercise was the conduct of a Mega Mock Exercise simulating the 1897 Shillong Earthquake Scenario at Shillong and Tura. All stake holders including NGOs and local communities participated with enthusiasm in the Mega

Exercise. Refresher training of Civil Defence & Home Guards personnel, training of Civil Engineers & Architects on Rapid Visual Screening Techniques, training of village volunteers and Workshop on Hospital Safety, Mass Casualty Management and Hospital Disaster Management Planning were also conducted. These capacity building efforts helped the State, particularly the village communities, to respond to the recent flash floods of September 2014 which was well appreciated. One company of the State Disaster Response Force drawn from the Civil Defence & Home Guards trained by NDRF was constituted for the task of disaster management.

Civil Defence & Home Guards

55. Home Guards and Civil Defence plays a pro-active role in assisting the civil administration in law and order duties and during natural calamities. Training on disaster management has been imparted to 8088 Civil Defence volunteers and 250 Home Guards volunteers and students in 2014. Further, 22 personnel were deputed for specialized training in Civil Defence courses at National Civil Defence College, Nagpur and Combined Central Training Institute, Bangalore.

Election

56. The General Elections to the 16th Lok Sabha, 2014 was conducted successfully in the State on the 9th April, 2014. The elections in the State were peaceful due to effective maintenance of law and order. The voter turnout was 68.84%.

Prisons

57. Prisons play a vital role in the field of criminal justice where emphasis is laid on the reformation of offenders through various programme in collaboration with other departments and NGOs. A major thrust during the current year is to operationalize the Nongpoh Jail to ease congestion of Shillong Jail and to speed up movement of UTPs for administration of justice. Schemes for improving the security in existing Jails will also be implemented.

Printing & Stationery

58. Modernization of the Government Press at Shillong, Tura and Jowai is being taken up in a phased manner. The fully automatic numbering machine installed in the Government Press at Shillong is fully operational and the foil embossing and printing machine at Headquarter Press is likely to be operational shortly.

Hon'ble Members, I have provided a brief overview of the plans, programmes and achievements of the State Government. I am confident that the Hon'ble

Members of this August House will reflect and fruitfully discuss all pertinent matters for the growth and development of the State and the betterment and welfare of all its citizens.

**JAIHIND
KHUBLEI
MITELA
THANK YOU**