



MEGHALAYA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

ADDRESS

BY
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GOVERNOR OF MEGHALAYA

4th MARCH, 2016

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

1. I am indeed 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. I am immensely happy to learn that the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly has an admirable tradition of maintaining high degree of decorum and dignity in the conduct of its proceedings. I urge upon all of you to carry this tradition forward and maintain the legacy of this august House.
3. Ever since my government was given the opportunity and mandate to serve the people of this State, it has made all out efforts to fulfil its promises. Many new initiatives and programmes were embarked upon after it assumed office and these are making a significant impact on the socio-economic development of the State. I shall be giving an account of the policies and programmes of my government and also of how these will be carried forward to their fructification during its remaining tenure which will set a new benchmark for development and prosperity. I am sure that through our collective efforts, our State would be able to make rapid strides towards empowering its people in realising their dreams.
4. **Home & Political**
Peace and tranquillity are pre-requisites for development of the State. My Government has adopted a comprehensive strategy to address the root causes of militancy and insurgent activities so as to achieve lasting peace for the growth and prosperity of the State. Despite certain concerns and challenges, the overall internal security and law & order situation in the State has been firmly dealt with by the State security agencies with the support of the Government of India. Festivals in the State were observed in an atmosphere of gaiety and amity. More significantly, citizens have participated in the celebration of national days with great enthusiasm. Noticeably, people of Meghalaya have defied and even resisted the calls given by militant outfits for boycott and bandh. I would like to commend the people of Meghalaya for their abiding commitment to the values of peace and harmony.
5. In our pursuit for durable peace and harmony in the State, peace settlements have been reached with groups who have entered the dialogue process and steps are being taken

in right earnest for their rehabilitation. The Government reiterates its commitment to initiate negotiations with groups who are inclined towards peace dialogue, provided they abjure the path of violence and unlawful activities. However, it must also be remembered that my Government is equally firm in its resolve to tackle anti-national elements and their activities with the full might of the State. The Government will continue to invest appropriately in the upgradation of security infrastructure and to this end a new battalion of specially trained and equipped commando force has been raised and is presently undergoing training.

6. The intensive and sustained counter insurgency operations carried out by the security forces against the insurgent outfits have been effective and are yielding positive results. While discharging their duty towards their motherland, 8 (eight) brave security personnel sacrificed their lives and 16 (sixteen) were injured. 21 (twenty one) civilians also lost their lives in the violence perpetrated by the insurgent groups while 30 (thirty) civilians were injured. I request the Hon'ble Members of the House to join me in saluting the men in uniform who made the supreme sacrifice in the call of duty and to the civilians who fell victim to the violence unleashed by the militants and other anti-national elements.

7. My Government is committed to ensure a harmonious and secure environment for the people of the State, by providing effective support to the State Police through augmentation of manpower and technological up-gradation. The Safe and Secure City Project currently being implemented in Shillong and Tura has brought in the required deterrence leading to improvement in the security scenario in the project areas. The project will be expanded to cover the remaining district headquarters and some important Highways in the State.

8. Notwithstanding a few sporadic incidents, the situation on the inter-State border has remained, by and large, peaceful. A joint Committee with representatives from all the Political Parties has been constituted to carry forward the dialogue with their counterparts in Assam, in order to build up a political consensus on the matter at both ends.

9. The situation on the international border with Bangladesh has improved significantly, in pursuance of the initiatives taken by the Governments on both sides. The Protocol signed by the two Prime Ministers to settle all the issues relating to the international border has since been ratified by the Parliament, and the process of delineating the boundary on the ground is underway now. Meghalaya will retain about 241 acres of land, and Bangladesh will get to retain about 41 acres of land. These efforts have already begun to yield results in terms of exchange of visits by delegations, introduction of bus services and more frequent interactions at the Government level as well as the trade and industry association levels. All this should pave the way for much closer and stronger trade and economic relations between the two countries. Meghalaya should be able to take full advantage of these developments given its geographical proximity. It will be the endeavour of my government to convert the border of conflict and confrontation into a border of goodwill, cooperation and mutual prosperity.
10. My Government is committed to have a more effective monitoring system at the entry points into the State to address the problem of illegal infiltration. In pursuance of this, an exercise was undertaken and 41 locations were identified where Facilitation Centres will be set up, which among other functions, will keep a watch on illegal infiltration. Another important measure to check infiltration is the construction of fence along the Indo-Bangladesh boundary. The Government reiterates its appeal to 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.

Law

11. As a continuing measure for administrative reform in the State, efforts will persist for creating requisite infrastructure in all the District Judiciary establishments.

Planning

12. My Government's focus is on addressing the critical gaps and disparities that exist across all sectors with a special thrust on infrastructure, social sector and sustainable opportunities. We have adopted a holistic approach to improve public health and education services, ensure last mile connectivity, develop infrastructure and promote inclusive growth in an ecologically sustainable manner. Partnerships have been promoted to facilitate development of complete eco-system for rapid and sustained growth of economy and entrepreneurship. The paradigm shift put in the development arena emphasizes universal access to skills delivery services and entrepreneurship development services as well as integrated management of ecosystems and livelihoods.

13. My Government is also committed towards creating inclusive and sustainable livelihood opportunities in the State to ensure that by the time we celebrate the golden jubilee of our Statehood, opportunities have been created for everyone to pursue creative engagement with the development process leading to their comprehensive well-being.

Statistics & Programme Implementation & Evaluation

14. The State Government attaches a great deal of importance to the monitoring and evaluation of various schemes and projects. This is to ensure that the schemes are more effectively implemented and development percolates down to the masses. Results Framework for tracking progress of various initiatives has been evolved and the Result Framework Documents (RFDs) have been prepared for some of the important Departments.

Finance

15. Efforts aimed at promoting financial inclusion in the State are being accelerated and will be substantially up-scaled under the Meghalaya Livelihoods and Access to Markets Project. The Women Economic Empowerment through Financial Inclusion & Entrepreneurship Scheme will continue with its primary objective of empowering women and promoting entrepreneurship. More than 39,000 women entrepreneurs have benefitted from this scheme and are availing loan amount to the tune Rs. 85 crore through various Banks.
16. The focus of the Government is on entrepreneurship development so that people are equipped with the required skill and knowledge needed for starting an enterprise. With the setting up of the Meghalaya Institute of Entrepreneurship (MIE), the Government has been able to reach out to about 30,000 entrepreneurs across the State so far through various interventions.
17. More than 2.43 lakh bank accounts have been opened so far under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY). Under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), which aims to fund the unfunded, loans have been sanctioned to 16,213 beneficiaries so far. To supplement these efforts, the State has taken an innovative approach to create awareness and ensure higher enrolment in these schemes by involving the Enterprise Facilitation Centres (EFCs).

18. It may be noted that despite the NGT ban on coal mining since 2014-15, we have been able to manage our finances favourably. This is attributed to the various fiscal consolidation measures taken under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act and also the economy measures followed by the State.

Excise Registration Taxation & Stamps

19. Government has taken a number of measures to augment the revenues by way of increasing the rate of tax on certain items and levy of cess on clinker under the Meghalaya Clinker Cess Act, 2015. The taxation setup has been further strengthened by introduction of more e-Services.
20. Excise revenue in the form of various duties and fees still remains one of the main sources of revenue. Affixation of high security holograms on IMFL/Beer/Wine bottles has helped in prevention of infiltration of spurious liquor and in curbing evasion of excise duty.
21. These measures will help the State in reducing the revenue losses post the NGT ban on coal mining and its spill over effects.

Water Resources

22. Our State receives very high rainfall during monsoon but has an extended dry spell during winter which causes acute water shortages in certain regions. Keeping this in view, the implementation of water harvesting schemes has received priority attention of my government. This initiative is likely to get up-scaled substantially in the coming year with the help of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) supported Jalkund programme
23. Multi-purpose Reservoirs are also being promoted as these have multiple benefits to the people engaged in agriculture, pisciculture and allied activities. Integrated water resources management has continued to receive priority attention of the government and under this initiative, climate change adaptation through spring shed development, capacity building, training and awareness programmes, monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment are being promoted.

Agriculture & Horticulture

24. My Government is actively promoting organic farming for sustainable use of natural resources which has positioned Meghalaya as a major player in the national organic market. The State has started organic certification programme, for which an area of

40,000 hectares has been identified and the first year of conversion programme under organic adoption and certification has been almost completed. The Government has introduced newly released varieties and quality seeds of rice including high yielding varieties. Some other important interventions include supply of pump-sets and construction of water harvesting structures and check-dams to increase Boro paddy cultivation. Seed testing laboratories have been set up in Shillong, Jowai and Tura and it is proposed to set up this facility in another 4 (four) Districts in the near future. To impart need based training, an Integrated Agriculture Training Centre has been recently commissioned.

25. To enhance the income and livelihood opportunities for the rural communities, a scheme on organic plantation of bamboo and agar has been launched. Bamboo and agar plantations will be encouraged on cluster basis. A pilot project of 150 hectares under tea plantation has been organically certified. An organic mini tea factory has also been set up at Umsning. The products from this factory have been branded and marketed as MEG TEA with NPOP (National Programme for Organic Production) and USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) standards.

Soil & Water Conservation

26. Initiatives for promoting natural resource rejuvenation and ecosystem based livelihoods that were introduced in recent years are being upscaled.

Fisheries

27. There has been a substantial increase in the production of fish in the State. Marketing of harvested fish will be given due importance with the support of the National Fisheries Development Board. Further support in terms of technology transfer for post harvest value addition and processing will be provided. Many schemes have been taken up through convergence for increased production and supply of fish.

Animal Husbandry & Veterinary

28. The programmes of the Government in this sector place emphasis on increasing the production of milk, meat and egg and providing health care to livestock and birds. Up-gradation of the poultry farm at Phulbari and the demonstration farms at Kyrdemkulai and Rongkhon are some interventions in this regard. Moreover, the poultry farm at Nongpiur has been strengthened by providing low input Kuroiler birds which will be supplied to the farmers for rearing as backyard poultry. Training programmes are

regularly conducted for capacity building of all stakeholders. Under the National Livestock Mission, 4,000 farmers have been trained in animal husbandry. To upgrade the stock of pigs in the State, high quality germ plasm of pigs will be imported.

Forests & Environment

29. My Government is fully committed to ensure environmental security amidst increasing biotic pressure on the forests and other natural resources. Firm steps to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change are also being taken. The Green India Mission and the National Afforestation Programme are being implemented with the participation of local communities with a view to increase the forest cover and to improve the quality of degraded forests, while also improving the livelihood options of the rural population. Tissue culture laboratories and hi-tech nurseries equipped with modern facilities have been established to provide high quality planting material of indigenous plant species. To promote green technologies, 26 (twenty six) energy efficient eco-friendly crematoria have been installed in various parts of the State. The number of community owned Wildlife Community Reserves has increased to 40 (forty). This will enhance the existing Government managed network of National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries. Two Eco-Sensitive Zones have been proposed around the Nokrek National Park and Narpuh Wildlife Sanctuary for minimizing the biotic pressure in the vicinity of the protected areas. Studies are also being carried out to characterize biodiversity and to estimate the growing stock in the sacred groves for protection of the State's rich biodiversity. Suitable areas with rich and unique biodiversity are also being declared as Biodiversity Heritage Sites (BHS). A new GIS laboratory has been established to strengthen measurement, reporting and verification for climate change programmes. A State Zoo is also on the anvil to attract tourists and nature lovers in the State.

Sericulture and Weaving

30. To enhance production of fabric and ensure promotion of traditional design, the department will continue to take up schemes benefitting sericulture farmers and weavers. For area expansion of host plants and maintenance of existing food plants, assistance to farmers is being extended under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) scheme. Apparel and Garment making Centre under the aegis of North East Region Textile Promotion Scheme (NERTPS) for promoting entrepreneurship in apparel and garmenting sector is being operationalized.

Community & Rural Development

31. During 2015-16, till December 2015, 89 lakh mandays of rural employment were generated by implementing the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The State Rural Employment Society (SRES) has been set up to exclusively oversee the implementation of this programme. A State Corpus Fund has been created for better administration of the programme and smooth flow of funds to the districts. Under Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), 869 new houses were constructed till December 2015. The Government will continue to implement various social security schemes such as Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme, Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme, Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme and National Family Benefit Scheme and other State schemes such as Special Rural Works Programme (SRWP), Construction of Rural Roads Programme (CRRP) and Chief Minister's Special Rural Development Fund (CMSRDF). The National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) is being implemented by the Meghalaya State Rural Livelihoods Society (MSRLS). NRLM activities have been taken up in 4 Blocks in the first phase.

Cooperation

32. My Government is striving to make the cooperative movement an effective instrument of transforming the rural economy by promoting integrated village cooperative societies in coordination with IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development) funded Meghalaya Livelihood and Access to Market Project for credit services, market access and entrepreneurship development and by strengthening the institutional support for overall capacity building of the cooperatives sector.

33. Border Areas Development

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

District Council Affairs

34. My Government will continue to support and work in close coordination with the Autonomous District Councils to enable them to discharge their duties in safeguarding the traditional heritage, customs, practices and usages of the indigenous tribal people and to empower the traditional institutions in conformity with their customs and tradition

and in accordance with the provisions of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

Public Health Engineering

35. My Government continues to take measures to provide safe drinking water and sanitation facilities to all inhabitants of the State. During 20 14-15, 266 slipped-back habitations, 19 quality affected habitations, 387 schools and 99 ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) centres were covered with safe drinking water supply. Works on the Greater Shillong Water Supply Project (Phase-III) and the Tura Phase-I & II Water Supply Scheme are going on. Steps have also been initiated for implementing the New Shillong Water Supply Project and the Greater Ampati Water Supply Scheme
36. The District Water & Sanitation Missions are making good progress in implementing rural sanitation works and Swachh Bharat Mission in the rural areas of the State, where 76% coverage has been achieved so far. Various business houses are being involved in the implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission in the State. The incentive for construction of individual household latrines has now been extended to the above the poverty line (APL) families in the Scheduled Tribes dominated areas, and to the landless labourers and woman headed households, which will result in coverage of majority of the households in the rural areas. In order to have comprehensive sanitation and make all villages clean and green, the important issue of solid and liquid waste management in villages is also being addressed. Another new initiative of my Government is the plan for implementing sewerage projects in all the district headquarters in the State.

Public Works Department

37. My Government has been attaching very high priority to the development of road infrastructure and provision of village connectivity in the State. Towards this objective, the Government is availing funds from all possible sources to supplement the State resources. Under State Programmes, during 2015-16, 22 km of new roads and 180 Rm of RCC bridges have been constructed and 63 km of Kutchha road have been blacktopped. During 2014-2015, 36 schemes for improvement of critical feeder roads and missing gaps and 16 schemes for upgradation of state highways and major district roads were sanctioned by the Government of India and these are under implementation.
38. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana has been implemented in the State from 200 onwards. 8 (eight) phases of work have been sanctioned so far amounting to Rs. 1078 crore covering a length of 1747 km and targeting to connect 483 PMGSY-eligible

habitations. Till date, 218 habitations have been connected and a road length of 687 km completed. For the year 2015-16, construction of 90 Km of new roads and conversion of 340 Km of Kutcha road into all weather roads are targeted. The Garobadha to Dalu (NH-Si) Road which has a length of 93.40 km sanctioned by the Ministry of DONER is progressing well.

39. Construction of bungalow for the Chief Justice of Meghalaya High Court and Judges Guest House at Shillong have been completed. Construction of Deputy Commissioner's office complexes at Ampati, Resubelpara, Khliehriat and Mawkyrwat is making good progress. Works of new Polytechnic at Williamnagar is in progress. Construction of Residential Schools in 20 blocks of Meghalaya is also in progress. Works for school buildings under Asian Development Bank funded Project which includes 82 (eighty two) schools over two phases has been taken up.

Transport

40. The Government is focused on upgrading the Baljek Airport, and for extension of the runway, an additional land of 58 acres has been acquired. A Project Management Consultant (PMC) is proposed to be appointed to explore the possibilities of operating the airport on Public Private Partnership mode.
41. For the expansion of Umroi airport, all encumbrances within the acquired land have been cleared. Construction of boundary wall as well as the alternative road to the nearby villages has been started. The Defence authorities have also handed over the required land to the Airport Authority of India. This will pave the way for expansion and up-gradation of the airport to facilitate the operation of larger aircrafts under all weather conditions.
42. The work on the construction of railway line from Tetelia to Byrnihat is in progress. For extension of the railway line from Byrnihat to Shillong, survey has been nearly completed except the last five kilometre stretch. A proposal for land acquisition for the first 18 km stretch has been submitted by the Railways and is under process. This has the potential the transforming the whole economy of the region.
43. Construction of the Inter State Bus Terminus at Mawlai Mawiong in the East Khasi Hills district has commenced. This will have the capacity to accommodate 150 buses, besides sufficient parking space for other vehicles.

Power

44. Meghalaya is one of the few States which have signed the “24 X 7 - Power For All” State Specific Document with the Ministry of Power. The State is gearing up to augment its transmission network for power evacuation from various potential sites. To augment the power availability, the Government has signed MOUs with NEEPCO (North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd.) and other independent power producers to set up 1,100 MW coal based thermal power plants. With the implementation of Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Viduyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY), which has now been merged with Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY), the State is set to achieve 100 percent village and rural household electrification.

45. The focus under the new and renewable energy component has been on the off-grid and solar thermal applications. During 2015- 16, solar power plants are being installed in government buildings and rooftops with the potential of generating 315 Kw of power. A 10 Kw capacity wind-solar hybrid plant has been taken up at the Tura Government College. Besides, 362 solar LED street lighting systems have been installed successfully in 18 villages in the State.

Health & Family Welfare

46. Priority is being given to the promotion of health care by strengthening and consolidating the existing health delivery systems through the network of hospitals, community health centres, primary health centres, sub-centres and dispensaries. My government is committed to provide effective preventive, promotive, curative and other allied health care services.

47. The Phase II of the Megha Health Insurance Scheme (MHIS II) has been initiated by the State Government. This is designed in convergence mode with the Centre’s existing health insurance scheme, namely the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), with an enhanced coverage of upto Rs. 2,00,000/- to all the families of the State, excluding State and Central Government Employees. Under the scheme, beneficiaries are entitled to a comprehensive spectrum of health services subject to certain limits.

48. The National Health Mission (NHM) strengthens and supports the health care activities in the rural and urban areas in terms of Reproductive-Maternal-Neonatal-Child and

Adolescent Health (RMNCH+A), and communicable and non-communicable diseases to achieve universal access to equitable, affordable and quality health care services. The Ganesh Das Hospital and the District Maternity & Child Hospital, Tura have received awards for excellence in cleanliness, safety and service delivery from the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India.

Education

49. Shillong is an established educational hub and it is the endeavour of the government to further augment its reputation by putting additional thrust in quality education. Central institutes operating in the State have gained reputation as centres of excellence and the department is offering all assistance to ensure that they are at par with the best in the country.
50. To ensure better teaching in schools, steps have been taken to improve quality in education by introducing pre-service teacher training and also training for all the untrained teachers. Untrained teachers are being trained to improve their pedagogy skills and to create better learning experience for the students. The interventions under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and the mid-day meal programme continue to further boost universalization of elementary and secondary education and ensure more enrolment. The State is in the process of establishing Model Schools and facilities for Girls Hostels in the 9 (nine) Educationally Backward Blocks (EBB). Rural hostels and residential schools in rural areas is a priority area to ensure that rural students get quality education.
51. Under the ADB funded "Supporting Human Capital Development in Meghalaya" project, 117 govt-aided secondary and higher secondary schools of Meghalaya will be upgraded in terms of infrastructure, teaching and learning methods and teachers training to improve access and ensure quality inputs to the students.
52. Saakshar Bharat Programme is being implemented in West Garo and South Garo Hills districts with the main objective to help illiterate adults in the age group of 15+ to become literate with preference being given to women. The Swaach Bharat programme to provide proper toilets and sanitation facilities to the students is also implemented in the state.
53. The State has received approval under the Rashtriya Uchchar Siksha Abhiyan (RUSA)

to set up one engineering college in Shillong and an Architecture and Urban Planning College in Tura recently. More polytechnics are being constructed for improving the technical education sector in the State.

Sports & Youth Affairs

54. Hosting the landmark multi-disciplinary, multi-national sports extravaganza — the 12th South Asian Games during February, 2016 at Shillong was indeed a feather in the cap of my Government. Over 800 athletes and officials from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and India participated in the event. The conduct of the games has contributed in generating goodwill and also in creating a positive image of the State and its people. The successful hosting of this first ever momentous international sporting event in the State has galvanized the overall sporting scenario while also contributing substantially to infrastructural development and enriching the capabilities of both the officials and sports personnel of the State for hosting such mega sporting events in future. Building on the positive momentum achieved, my Government will further upscale investment in the domain of sports to achieve higher visibility and meaningful outcomes.
55. Focussed programmes under the District Sports Promotion Societies have been initiated at the district level on a decentralized mode to catalyse, tap and meet the aspirations of aspiring young sports persons, with a view to giving them the skill sets and the confidence to compete at both, national and international level competitions.
56. Under the Chief Minister's Career Guidance and Counselling Scheme, coaching is being imparted to youth by reputed institutes for entrance examinations in professional disciplines comprising engineering, medicine, and management, besides equipping them for entry into the country's premier civil services. The State Level Youth Exchange Programme for all the districts continues to be held, with the aim of providing the youth with effective platforms for building up leadership qualities and skills while also nurturing a sense of inclusiveness and integration.

Social Welfare

57. To improve nutrition and health standards and address the problem of drops-out in schools, the Government is implementing the Integrated Child Development Services and the revised Integrated Child Protection Scheme. A special platform for Persons with

Disabilities (PwDs) has been made accessible through the State Government's website. Under the Chief Minister's Social Assistance Scheme, 8,477 PwDs, 33,614 infirm and 21,095 widows have been benefitted. In order to lessen the burden of single mothers in the society, existing guidelines of the Chief Minister's Social Assistance Scheme were amended to include them under this scheme and a special drive for enrolment has been carried out in district and block headquarters. Wedding assistance scheme for orphan girls still continues. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme of the Government of India has been implemented as a pilot project in Ri Bhoi District with 100% funding by Government of India. A One Stop Crisis Centre for women named Sakhi, a new scheme for rehabilitation of victims of violence against women is being taken up at the Ganesh Das Hospital Complex, Shillong.

Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs

58. Government is committed to implement the National Food Security Programme in the State. Necessary steps are being taken accordingly which gives benefit to about 78% of the rural population and 51% of the urban population in the State. The allocation of foodgrain for the state under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) has been received during February, 2016. The beneficiaries under NFSA have been identified from the SECC (Socio Economic & Caste Census) that was carried out in the State. All the mechanisms for the implementation of NFSA with greater transparency have been put in place. As per provision of the Act, the State Food Consumer Commission is being set up. The AAY and Annapurna schemes will continue to be implemented.

Urban Affairs

59. Urban Management is an important sector in the overall governance of my Government. Tackling migration to the urban areas is a challenge which needs the full commitment of the Government. With a view to develop our cities, Shillong has been shortlisted for consideration in fast track mode under the Smart Cities Mission of Government of India. Under the newly launched Programme, Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), financial assistance has been approved for development of a Sewerage and Septage Management System for Shillong. For aesthetic beautification of the city of Shillong, the redevelopment of Polo market has been initiated. The government is conducting due diligence on developing the remaining area through Public Private Partnership and the process of tendering will start soon.
60. Under the Scheme of Swachh Bharat Mission, the Centre has provided assistance for

solid waste management, individual household latrine and community toilets. These works are being implemented by the respective urban local bodies all over the State. Under the ADB scheme, the works for solid waste management in Shillong is under progress.

61. An important endeavour of my Government is to ensure that proper housing units are provided to the poor in the urban areas and we have made adequate efforts on this front. Recently, new units have been inaugurated in Nongmynsong and Mawprem area in Shillong. The dwelling units in Tura are also in the process of completion. Under the 10 % lumpsum grant, bus terminals, vendor markets, and parking lots are being constructed. Urban road linkages are also being taken up under this scheme.
62. To ensure balanced and proper urban management a number of statutory measures have also been initiated by the department to meet the aspirations of street vendors who eke out their living selling wares and apartment owners who are now being assured of proper management and regulation of apartments in the State.

Labour

63. All the Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in the State are being upgraded under World Bank and Asian Development Bank funded projects as well as Central Sector schemes. New trades are being introduced in the ITIs to provide for both, the skills in which the State is deficient as well as the skills that have demand at the national level. In addition, over 14,000 youth have been covered under market driven short-term skill development courses leading to placement as well as self employment.
64. The Government is fully committed to the welfare of labour. Towards this end, the Minimum Wages were revised on the basis of the variable Dearness Allowance for all categories of workers effective from April, 2015. Labour Cess collected is being utilised for implementation of social security benefits for construction workers. With the appointment of Labour Inspectors in all the Blocks, enforcement of labour laws in the State has been considerably improved.

Mining & Geology

65. Our State is endowed with huge deposits of numerous valuable minerals namely; coal, limestone, uranium, granite, kaolin, clay and glass sand. During 2015-16, the Department proposes to take up 7(seven) mineral investigation programmes for

exploration of limestone, coal and quartz in the State and 3 (three) programmes on geo-environmental studies, one each in the districts of East Jaintia Hills, West Khasi Hills and East Garo Hills.

66. The State Government has framed the guidelines on coal mining and has submitted the same to the National Green Tribunal and the Ministry of Coal, Government of India so that mining activities can be taken up in line with the orders of the Tribunal to protect forests, environment, water sources and water bodies and the health and safety of workers. The State Government is committed to protect the rights of our indigenous people over natural resources for which a proposal has been submitted to the Government of India for exemption from the operations of Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act, 1973 and Coal Bearing Areas (Acquisition & Development) Act, 1957 under Para 12A (b) of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India so that these Acts do not apply to the Autonomous Districts in the State. Further, pursuant to the Resolution adopted by this Legislative Assembly for amendment of the relevant provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957, consultations are being held with the concerned Ministries of the Government of India for consideration of the proposal to invoke Para 12A (b) of the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India in this regard.

Commerce & Industries

67. The focus of the State Government is on various activities for developing Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) and imparting skill development to generate employment and motivate youth to take up self-employment ventures. Currently, there are 212 registered MSME units and these provide employment to 626 people. Steps are also being taken to strengthen infrastructure for boosting exports. For the construction of Integrated Check Post (ICP) at Tamabil-Dawki, land has been acquired and handed over to Central Government authorities and additional land is also in the process of being acquired. To revive the age old traditions of trade and commerce, the Border Haats at Kalaichar and Balat had earlier been made functional and now four more Border Haats, at Bholaganj, Nalikata, Sibbari, and Ryingku are in the process of being developed.
68. As a part of the skill development activities, the Zardozi craft and manufacturing of Meghalaya specific souvenirs/ mementos was launched during October 2015, which will provide training to 1200 women and youth on Zardozi craft and to 480 youth for making of Meghalaya specific souvenirs and mementos. Under the Apiculture Mission, bee boxes and bee keeping accessories and training have been provided to 2000 bee

keepers for enhancing production of honey.

Tourism

69. Nature has gifted Meghalaya with a diverse range of tourism products appropriate to attract tourists of all categories. The Government has made earnest efforts to develop destinations and tourists spots, encourage adventure tourism activities in association with local societies and create wayside facilities to draw tourists to visit the State. Over the years, with these developments, there has been a growth of tourist arrivals in the State making it one of the most popular destinations. Government will continue with its endeavour to enhance the employability of the youth in the hospitality sector through its skill development training in partnership with Food Craft Institute, Tura and Institute of Hotel Management, Shillong. Government will pursue its strategy to generate livelihood for the community through setting up of home stays under the Meghalaya Tourism Development and Investment Promotion Scheme. During 2016-2017, more focus will be laid on promotional activities both in print and electronic media to market the distinctive attractions of the State.

Housing

70. Even though the number of shelterless people in the State is low, only 37% of rural households live in dwelling units with two rooms. To provide housing, the Government has decided to construct houses instead of providing C.G.I sheets as done in previous years. The Government is proposing to implement a new Scheme called the 'Meghalaya Affordable Housing Scheme' to replace the Rural Housing Scheme. Under this scheme, houses will be constructed for the economically weaker families. Besides this, the Department is also constructing LIG and MIG rental houses in the districts for providing accommodation to Government employees.

Arts & Culture

71. My Government is undertaking various schemes, besides sponsoring and holding a number of major events in its efforts to preserve and develop the culture and heritage of the State and to promote cultural and artistic pursuits, particularly for the youth. Active role has been taken in organizing events such as 'Songs and Dances of the North East' in Delhi, Cultural Panorama at Marngar, CALM Festival in Shillong and Indigenous Terra Madre in Shillong. Publications entitled 'Shifting through the clouds', documentation works on 'Ka Khoh Deng of Shella' and 'The Costumes of Meghalaya - Khasi, Jaintia

and Garo' have been published. The Intensive Art and Culture Development Programme (IACDP), the Development of Traditional Folk Music (DTFM), the Production of Folk Literature (POFL), the Literary Award (LA) and Living Heritage Scheme (LHS) continue to be implemented

72. Work is progressing on the construction of 'Shillong International Centre for Performing Arts and Culture' at Mawkasiang. The Amphitheatre in Shillong is almost completed and works in Jowai are at an advanced stage. In Tura also, similar works have been initiated. 'Centre of Knowledge for Indigenous Arts' at Betasing and the 'Sein Jaintia Indigenous Culture-cum Multipurpose Centre' Projects at Iewduh have been initiated for encouraging local talent. Institutes of Music and Fine Arts are being set up in 15 centres in the State. Process of preparation of District Gazetteers is also making steady progress.

Information Technology

73. The Government is putting thrust to make information technology a platform for growth in the State to improve governance and administration. With the implementation of all the core projects under the National e- governance plan (NeGP), the department is now laying thrust and focus on services. The State Government has successfully launched e-governance services to get digitally signed Scheduled Caste & Scheduled Tribe certificate, Certificate for Recruitment into Armed/Paramilitary/Police Force, Resident Certificate and Income Certificates in East Khasi Hills and this will be replicated in all the districts soon.
74. One of the important milestones during the year was the launch of smart classrooms across secondary and higher secondary Schools in the State. A separate project was also implemented to provide free Wi-Fi connectivity to all higher secondary schools so that students can access contents available in the net under the guidance of their teachers. To enhance learning experience, tablets with content have been distributed to students in higher secondary section. The Department has commissioned a disaster recovery plan for the State Data Centre. Detailed Project Report (DPR) for Technology Park is being finalised. The project of National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) is in progress to ensure connectivity up to the village level. Focus on capacity building and training across all levels will continue.

Legal Metrology

75. Under the Scheme “Strengthening of Legal Metrology Infrastructure in the States and UTs” launched by the Centre, the Working Standards Laboratories were constructed in almost all the districts. In order to generate additional revenue, revision of verification and stamping fees and other fees has been initiated. For promoting consumer awareness, workshops will be conducted for educating the consumers of their rights.

GAD

76. Steps are being taken to strengthen the infrastructure in the headquarters of the newly created districts, with the construction of permanent office building complex and construction of composite residential building complex in every district headquarter. Works are going on in Ampati, Resubelpara and Khliehriat with good progress. Construction of the Governor’s Guest House in Tura is also progressing well and nearing completion.
77. Both the State and Central Government have been contributing towards Sainik Welfare by implementing specific schemes for the welfare of Ex-servicemen (veterans), widows and their dependants. In addition to the existing district level office in Shillong, recently the office of Zila Sainik Welfare Board at Tura has been sanctioned, for taking care of the Ex-Servicemen in the Garo Hills region.

Revenue & Disaster Management

78. Construction of new pillars in certain stretches were taken up along the Indo-Bangladesh border which is expected to be completed very soon. Awareness campaign in different villages as well as field programmes have been chalked out for cadastral survey of the villages for the field season 2015-2016. Sensitization Programme for 1500 school students of Shillong on earthquake safety was organized in July 2015. State Disaster Management Authority had also organised the Global Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction Programme. Books on gender mainstreaming in disaster management, Do’s and Don’ts for various hazards in the State were also published and released. Equipments and vehicles related to Disaster Management were distributed to all the districts.

Personnel

79. One of the priority areas for the Government is training and capacity building across all levels of government functionaries. This has assumed greater importance in view of diversified government functions, convergence needs and the imperative to improve systematic performance and outcomes. Most importantly, the aspiration of the people and their expectations for efficient public service delivery has increased. The Meghalaya Administrative Training Institute (MATI) is the focal institution to provide support in carrying out training and coordinated capacity building for government employees. During 2015-2016, MATI has conducted 120 (one hundred and twenty) training programmes throughout the State on generic and domain specific topics.

Information & Public Relations

80. The Meghalaya Integrated Information System (MIIS) is the medium for reaching out to the masses which is being continued successfully for the dissemination of Government activities, policies and programmes. Through schemes like special interactive programmes, government advertisements to newspapers, publication of magazines and journals and issue of press releases of departmental activities, the Department plays a pivotal role in projecting government schemes and policies leading to better understanding and participation in governance and also bringing about greater transparency and accountability.

Civil Defence & Home Guards

81. Basic training has been imparted to Home Guards & Civil Defence volunteers. One company SDRF, comprising of 135 Home Guards personnel has been trained by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and is being deployed in Shillong, Tura and Jowai. Home Guards volunteers have been deployed in Law & Order duties apart from the Border Wing who are on permanent deployment with State Police. The Department has also embarked on expansion in the hitherto uncovered districts of Ri-Bhoi, West Khasi Hills and East Garo Hills. The presence of the force will enable the respective district administrations to improve their preparedness in disaster management.

Election

82. Awareness programme under Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) are being continued. Several activities were taken such as motivating the eligible voters to enrol and to cast their vote for "Larger participation for a stronger

democracy". There has been remarkable increase in the number of voters due to intensive campaign under SVEEP Programme. The National Electoral Rolls Purification and Authentication Programme (NERPAP) has been launched in the State from March 2015 under the direction of the Election Commission of India. The objective is to maintain error free Electoral Roll.

Prisons

83. Modernization and strengthening of prisons in the State has engaged the attention of the Government in view of increased congestion of under-trials and convicts. New jails at Khliehriat and Ampati have been sanctioned, and Nongpoh jail is expected to become functional soon. The department has also taken several steps to enhance the security of prisons in the State and to provide opportunities for the jail inmates to make them productive after their release.

Printing & Stationery

84. Efforts are being made to procure more printing machineries and equipments to enable the Government Presses to meet the increasing demand. Hon'ble Members, I have endeavoured to highlight the various initiatives, 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 issues for the growth and development of the State and the betterment and welfare of all its citizens.

K h u b l e i

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