

August 5, 2004

Press Release No. 498/04

**T. R. BAALU MEETS PWD MINISTERS OF NORTH EASTERN STATES IN SHILLONG**

**ROAD DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS OF NEARLY 2,000 KM TO BE TAKEN UP IN NORTH EAST  
COSTING RS.6,500 CRORE**

**Shillong: August 4, 2004:** The Union Minister of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways, Shri. T. R. Baalu today reviewed the status and implementation of National Highway's improvement projects of North Eastern States with their respective Ministers-in charge, Ministry and BRO officials and approved fresh proposals worth Rs.6,500 crore for fast track development of nearly 2,000 km of National Highways and other roads in the North East, here. This expenditure does not include the projects already approved under the Golden Quadrilateral and the North-South and East West Corridor of National Highways Development Project (NHDP).

At the outset, the State Ministers expressed gratitude for the initiative taken by Mr. Baalu to get a first hand experience of the condition of National Highways in North East, especially in view of the recent damage due to monsoons. The Ministers recalled the earlier sincere endeavors of Shri. Baalu for speedy implementation of development projects in North East when he was Union Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas and later as Union Minister of Environment and Forest.

On the request of Shri. Zoram Thanga, Chief Minister, Mizoram who specially came for the Meeting, Shri. Baalu agreed to take up development of Lunglei-Damagiri Road (near Bangladesh Border) in Mizoram, Shri Baalu also considered the proposal of Mizoram Government regarding re-alignment of NH 44-A from Km 51 to Km 111 for approval by the Ministry.

Regarding Sikkim, Shri. Baalu said that in order to improve the connectivity to the State capital, the 96 km long Sevoke to Gangtok road (NH 31A) would be 4-laned. Shri Baalu also gave in-principle approval to widening of Gangtok to Nathula (Indo-China border) road of 56 Km length and construction of a new 17 Km long alternative highway from Meli to Rangpo in Sikkim.

For Tripura, Shri Baalu agreed to 2 laning of Longai-Manu Section (95Km) and Agartala -Sabrum Section (130Km) of NH 44. The Minister also approved a new 2 lane steel bridge at junction of Agartala Bypass with NH 44.

In the case of Manipur, it was decided that the 108 Km long Maram to Paren Road (Manipur to Nagaland) would be 2 laned under Scheme of Inter-State Connectivity. In view of the slow utilization of road development funds by Manipur Government, Shri. Baalu directed that Direct Payment Procedure (DPP) be made applicable on Ordinary Repair/Flood Damage Repair proposals in Manipur. It was also decided to provide medians on NH 39 and NH 150 in the State for increased safety. Shri. Baalu also directed that a team of senior officials, geologists and experts from IIT, Guwahati be deputed to Ficomai wherein the NH along with the nearby dwelling units of the village has recently sunk by 50 metres. After receipt of the technical report, the Minister assured that adequate steps would be taken for repair.

For Arunachal Pradesh, Shri. Baalu announced that steps would be taken for expeditious development of Banderdeva-Itanagar-Gohpur Section of NH 52 A by the Border Roads Organisation. It was also decided that a separate Meeting would be convened for ascertaining the cause of 15 years' delay in completion of Siang bridge at Pasi Ghat.

The Minister announced that in Nagaland, the 4 laning of 81 km Dimapur to Kohima Section of NH 39 (inc. 15 Km long Kohima bypass) would soon be taken up. Improvement of single lane road from Pfutsero to Zhamai (18 Km) and from Athibung to Khelmf (55 KM) was also approved under Scheme of Inter State Connectivity.

Regarding Meghalaya, Shri. Baalu approved development of 201 km long Nongstoin-Rongjeng-Tura road with funds from the Central Road Fund(CRF). The Minister announced that the 50 km long Shillong bypass would be developed for adequate connectivity between NH 40 and NH 44. 4-laning of 62 Km long Jorabat to Barapani (outskirts of Shillong) Section of NH 40 was also approved.

During Shri. Baalu's Meeting with the Chief Minister of Assam held yesterday, it was decided that the 315 km long Nogaon-Dibrugarh Section of NH 39 would be taken up for 4-laning of BOT basis under the Pradhan Mantri Bharat Jodo Pariyojana at the cost of about Rs. 1, 000 crore. The Minister also decided to take up upgradation (from single lane and intermediate lane) to 2-lane of all National highways passing through Assam. This would constitute 290 Km being maintained by BRO and 215 km maintained by the State PWD.

Talking to media persons after the meeting, Shri. Baalu said that development of road infrastructure in the North-East is Union Government's priority. He said that the proposals considered for approval today would be implemented at the earliest under the ongoing Pradhan Mantri Bharat Jodo Pariyojana (on BOT basis) or CRF. The Detailed Project Report preparation of these projects shall commence shortly, he said. He also highlighted the Central Government's endeavor to create an enabling environment for more and more private investment in the infrastructure sector in general and road sector in particular.

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#### **AUGUST 15 DECLARED DRY DAY**

**Shillong, August 5, 2004:** The Deputy Commissioner, East Khasi Hills, Shillong, has declared 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2004 as Dry Day throughout the entire District of East Khasi Hills, Shillong, being the celebration of "Independence Day".

All liquor shops, IMFL shops, bars, hotels, clubs, CS shops, CS Bar, outstill shops shall remain closed on this day.

**Press Release No. 500/04**

#### **ILLICIT LIQUOR SEIZED**

**Shillong, August 5, 2004:** The Deputy Commissioner (Excise), East Khasi Hills, Shillong has informed that as per raids carried out by the Excise Staff of the District as on July 2004, out of 112 cases detected, 143.350 litres of Illicit Liquor and 10.675 litres of IMFL was seized. 95 persons were arrested in this connection.

**BLOCK LEVEL SCIENCE & ENVIRONMENTAL FAIR INAUGURATED**

**Shillong, August 5, 2004:** Meghalaya Minister for Taxation etc, Mr. J D Rymbai today formally inaugurated a two day Block Level Science and Environmental Fair, 2004 at the premises of St. Paul's Secondary School, Nongpoh.

Speaking at the inaugural function, Mr. Rymbai urged upon the students and people to make proper use of what Science and Technology has offered to them. Reminding the people about the rich herbal resources of Ri Bhoi District, Mr. Rymbai also urged upon the people to take care of the environment so that these plants could be converted into economic products through scientific inventions.

Mr. R D West, Member Secretary, SCSTE in his brief speech deliberated about the importance of Science and Technology in day to day life and informed that SCSTE department is working hard to popularize Science and Technology development in the State.

It may be mentioned that the Fair is being organized by the Umling C&RD Block and sponsored by the SCSTE, Shillong and the District Planning Officer, Nongpoh as a part for the celebration of Year of Scientific Awareness, 2004. The programme started with an environmental march in which students from various Schools of the district took part with banners and posters bearing variety of slogans on Science and Technology and Environment which was flagged off by the Deputy Commissioner, Ri Bhoi District, Mr. W L Lyngdoh.

The other highlights of the day were the demonstration of science behind magic by SCSTE, painting, essay and quiz competition.

**Dr. LAPANG MET SONIA GANDHI**

**Shillong, August 5, 2004:** Meghalaya Chief Minister, Dr D D Lapang today met Mrs Sonia Gandhi, Chairman, UPA and President, AICC in her residence at New Delhi and expressed his gratefulness to her for having visited Phulbari recently, which has enabled the people of Garo Hills to meet her and apprised her of their problems due to the devastation caused by the recent flood in Meghalaya.

Dr Lapang also apprised Mrs Gandhi that the memorandum for the projected flood damage in the State is being submitted to the Government of India for consideration.

Dr Lapang also informed Mrs Sonia Gandhi that the North Eastern Indira Gandhi Institute of Health and Medical Sciences (NEIGRIHMS), the foundation stone of which was laid by (L) Rajiv Gandhi is in its final stages of completion and its inauguration would be organised soon. He also apprised her of the political scenario in the State.

The Chief Minister also met the Union Defence Minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee and apprised him of the various matters concerning the cantonment lands in Shillong and also submitted a letter to him regarding the allotment of a plot of land by the cantonment authority in Shillong to the State Government for the construction of Jhalupara Out Post.

Meanwhile, Dr Lapang also requested Mr Mukherjee to reconstitute the High Power Committee which was constituted by (L) Rajiv Gandhi to sort out matter connected with the defence lands in the State of Meghalaya.