

June 2, 2004

Press Release No.336/04

MEETING OF 12 FINANCE COMMISSION

Shillong June2, 2004:The members of the Twelfth Finance Commission led by its Chairman , Dr. C Rangarajan, today held a meeting with the State Government for interaction prior to finalizing its recommendation. The State Government was represented by Chief Minister, Dr. D D Lapang, Deputy Chief Minister, Dr Donkumar Roy, PHE Minister, Mr. Martle Mukhim, Revenue Minister, Mr. F A Khonglam and the Sports & Youth Affairs Minister, Mr. Paul Lyngdoh, besides senior officials of the State Government.

Speaking on the occasion , Dr Rangarajan said that it will be the endeavor of the present Commission to evolve suitable and acceptable procedures to assess the resources and the requirements of the Centre and the States, adding “ With the two channels of tax devolution and grants, it should be possible for the Finance Commission to achieve the goals of equity and efficiency through a proper mix.”

Stating that the economy of Meghalaya grew annually at an average rate of 7% in real terms during the Ninth Plan, which was higher than the country's economic growth of 5.5%, Dr Rangarajan said, “this is to be commended”.

Informing that the State's own tax revenues as a percentage of GSDP have grown from 2.9% in 1997-98 to 3.3 % in 2002-03, is encouraging, Dr Rangarajan however cautioned that, tax-GSDP ratio of the State in 2002-03 remained below the average tax-GSDP ratio of 3.9% for all special category States. Mr. Rangarajan also advised the State Government to pay attention to two inter-related areas viz. reducing fiscal deficit and bringing down the overall debt to sustainable levels, adding that the State could consider enacting legislation for containing the growth in debt, as has been done in some other States.

The Commission has been entrusted with the responsibility of recommending transfer of resources from the Centre to the States as part of the Constitutional mandate, within the overall framework of macro-economic stability.

Apart from evolving a general scheme of fiscal transfer , which will give due weight to the requirements of the States, the Commission will also take into account Meghalaya's specific concerns and problems.

The Commission will finalise the recommendations after completing discussion with all the State Governments.

A power point presentation of the State Government's submission to the 12th Finance Commission was also presented by the State Chief Secretary, Mr. P J Bazeley in course of the meeting.

It may be mentioned, that during the meeting, the State Government suggested that the vertical share in central taxes should be increased to 33.3 %. It also requested a provision to compensate the State of Meghalaya for possible loss of revenue due to the adoption of the 1971 population census in the scheme of horizontal devolution. The State Government has further requested the Commission for writing off a portion of outstanding debt , which does not yield any direct financial return to the State.

RI BHOI FOUNDATION DAY CELEBRATION

Shillong June2, 2004: The Ri Bhoi Foundation Day celebration, which started a month ago with the setting up of an Emporium at Nongpoh, followed by various programmes in different parts of the District will conclude with a day long programme on June 4, 2004. Meghalaya Chief Minister, Dr. D D Lapang will be the Chief Guest on the day.

The Deputy Commissioner of the District, Mr. W L Lyngdoh has invited the people and has requested them to be present at Pahamsyiem Stadium from 10:00 AM onwards in order to make the day a colourful and successful one.

PG DIPLOMA COURSE IN TOURISM MANAGEMENT

Shillong June2, 2004: The Director of Tourism, Meghalaya Shillong has informed that applications are invited for one year Diploma Course in Tourism Management Programme, Gwalior for the academic year 2004-2005.

Candidates must be graduates (Second class) in any discipline. The maximum age limit is 25 years as on July 1, 2004, and relaxable by 5 years for ST/SC/OBC candidates. He or she should have at least six (6) months experience in Travel, Tourism and Hospitality related organisations, and be an employee of the concerned North Eastern State Government Departments or undertaking in Tourism Sector.

Interested candidates may submit their applications in plain paper along with Biodata, 2 passport size photographs addressed to the Director of Tourism, Government of Meghalaya, on or before June 8, 2004.

For further information candidates may contact the office of the Director of Tourism, Government of Meghalaya, Lower Lachumiere, Shillong during office hours.