

CM lays foundation stone for Damalgre C&RD Block at Rerapara



Chief Minister Dr. Mukul Sangma has stated that all the six new C&RD blocks would start functioning from April 1 this year. He made the announcement while addressing the gathering as Chief Guest during the foundation stone laying ceremony for the new Damalgre Community & Rural Development Block at Rerapara in South West Garo Hills on January 20.

The function was also attended by Sports & Youth Affairs Minister Shri. Zenith Sangma and C&RD Minister Shri. Sniawbhalang Dhar as Guests of Honour besides Parliamentary Secretaries Shri. Limison Sangma, Shri. Noverfield Marak and Shri. Brigady N. Marak.

It may be mentioned that the Chief Minister in his Budget speech in the last Assembly Session had announced creation of four new Blocks in the State, namely, Mawlai in East Khasi Hills, Bhoirymbong in Ri Bhoi district, Demdema in West Garo Hills and Rerapara, in South West Garo Hills. Subsequently, on public demand, the Government decided to create two additional blocks – namely, Bajengdoba in North Garo Hills and Sohiong in East Khasi Hills.

There are 39 existing blocks in the State. Damalgre C&RD Block will be the 40th and the 149 villages which were earlier under Betasing, Rongram and Selsella blocks will now be covered under the new Block. The Nokma of Rerapara A'king has donated the land for the new Block Headquarter.

During his address, the Chief Minister said that the creation of these new blocks was a fulfilment of the promises made to the people by the Government in the true spirit of democracy. He also stated that the Government in its new approach to development has been working hard to ensure that every citizen of the state is part of the development process. "We want to create a sense of hope among the people as we carry forward our commitment to create new developmental avenues in every nook and corner of the state", he added.

On the delay in setting up of the Tura Medical College, the foundation for which was laid at Balalgre in 2013, the Chief Minister said the fact that the land at Balalgre falls beyond 10 km from Tura Civil Hospital has posed a series of hurdles to the Government, which is now looking for a new area which would be notified soon. Although the Centre had approved setting up of medical colleges in Tura

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Review meeting with Agri-Horti officials held in Tura



Chief Minister Dr. Mukul Sangma, reviewed the implementation of various schemes and programmes in the Department of Agriculture and Horticulture in all the Districts of Garo Hills in the presence of West Garo Hills Deputy Commissioner Shri. Pravin Bakshi on January 17. The Chief Minister stated that such reviews are necessary since various programmes initiated by the Government need to be completed within the stipulated time frame.

A review of the Mission Organic in the Districts revealed that most of the Districts have completed the first phase of internal certification for three years including distribution of materials, training programmes and formation of cluster groups among farmers. The area covered under Mission Organic is around 23,000 hectares in the Districts of Garo Hills as per the report given by District Agriculture and Horticulture officers.

On organic certification of the products, the Chief Minister cautioned the officers on selection of land for organic farming as there is a possibility of the presence of harmful chemicals and toxic wastes that flow down the rivers from urban centres during monsoons, the same getting deposited on the river banks particularly in the lower region and basin areas and asked them not to mix products from basin areas as problems may arise during certification. He also directed the officers to take up aggressive campaigns in this regard by informing the farmers about different measures to make physical protection of their farmlands from all types of contamination.

Stressing on the importance of organizing and attending business conclaves, Dr. Sangma stated that such forums are necessary to create a link between farmers and potential buyers of the region in a simple but professional way. He

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and Shillong during the tenure of Union Health Minister Shri. Gulam Nabi Azad, the new guidelines have posed a problem in going ahead with the project. The Chief Minister further informed that the land at Balalgre would now be used for setting up of the Captain Williamson Sangma Technical University and College of Architecture and Urban Planning, which he said would be one of the finest colleges in the Northeast. He also appealed to the public to be generous in providing land to the Government so that development and welfare activities could be taken up. The Chief Minister also reminded all gathered of their responsibility to partner with the Government in the developmental process rather than creating differences and hampering the momentum of growth. He also reiterated the commitment of the Government

for creation of more Sub-Divisions, police stations, setting up of medical and engineering colleges thereby creating more job opportunities to the youth.

Local MLA and Sports & Youth Affairs Minister Shri. Zenith Sangma in his address hailed the decision of the Government to create new blocks which would bring administration closer to the people.

C&RD Minister Shri. Sniawbhalang Dhar highlighted on the importance of C&RD Department and the important role it plays in the development of rural areas.

On the occasion, one of the members of the Block Demand Steering Committee also handed over a memorandum to the Chief Minister.

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also suggested registering farmers' organizations for comprehensive data collection which will facilitate easy access to detailed information about farmers, their crops and production, thereby giving advisories to them as and when necessary.

The idea of farmers getting more remunerative returns through Mission Organic must be seen not only from the price perspective but also from the input perspective since every input that the farmer makes and every

cost invested will determine the quantum of production, he added. Dr. Sangma also appealed to the officers to convince the farmers and work in coordination with them to enable them to change their mindset by shifting to organic farming, and to implement Mission Organic on a mission mode.

On the status of floriculture in the region, he asked the Department to look at the viability in terms of demand and supply as well as in terms of suitability.

Meghalaya celebrates 45th Statehood Day with pomp and grandeur



Meghalaya, the Abode of the Clouds, celebrated its 45th Statehood Day on January 21 with a variety of events held throughout the State.

Chief Minister Dr. Mukul Sangma joined the people of Ampati in a grand celebration held at Ampati Students Field, Ampati, South West Garo Hills District.

Greeting the people on the occasion, the Chief Minister expressed his deep sense of appreciation and gratitude to the leaders of the past, who out of love and compassion for the people, struggled relentlessly through non-violent movement which culminated in the creation of this beautiful Hill State without a single drop of blood being shed. "It is this story of peaceful movement that the people of this generation must connect with and this story must be spread to others across the world" he said.

Dr. Sangma was however pained to see youths who are "disconnected with the past" resorting to all forms of violence piggy-riding on the name of the community, adding that all issues and grievances can always be resolved within the framework of the Constitution. Stating the Meghalaya is a pluralistic society where one cannot live in isolation, the Chief Minister said that today if there are various communities co-existing mutually with the three major tribes of the State it is because the forefathers knew the art of peaceful co-existence.

He also felt that there was "a complete disconnect with the great story of our State among the youths today" which is why the State Government since the past two years decided that the Statehood Day should be celebrated in every District in a befitting manner, he added.

The Chief Minister also reiterated that the people of the State with very less population were so privileged to have 60 MLAs that the electorate can have the indulgence of getting connected directly with their elected representatives and urged upon the electorates to take advantage of this privilege for overall good of their respective areas. He also spoke of the new approach that the Government is adopting, one in which developmental initiatives are done in an inclusive and sustainable manner.

Showing his appreciation to the people for their continued support and cooperation

as true partners with the Government in carrying forward all its developmental initiatives, the Chief Minister called upon all to delink themselves from selfish motives and work together for the larger interest of all.

Later, the Chief Minister called upon the people to promote the true values of freedom and democracy, and work hand in hand to build a united and peaceful state capable of ensuring growth and prosperity to all.

The day-long celebration began with "Meghalaya Day Run" flagged off by South West Garo Hills Deputy Commissioner and the celebrations of the day included also, events like food festival, display of stalls by various Departments and floral arrangement. The celebration also witnessed colourful cultural dances and songs presented by school children and various cultural groups.

During the official function, the Chief Minister distributed solar lanterns to class IX and class X students of the district under the Meghalaya New & Renewable Energy Development Agency (MNREDA). He also kicked off the semi final match of the Gramoday Football Tournament under Gramoday Initiative of MBDA which was played between Ampati GS Circle and Monabari GS Circle under Betasing C&RD Block.

A Peace Concert was held in the evening at Ampati Students' Field in which rock band from Shillong, "Colours", an all-girl band "Haystack Ladies" and other local bands kept the audience on their toes with their foot-tapping numbers. Government buildings and establishments were also illuminated to mark the occasion.

In Shillong, the celebration commenced with the official state function and awards ceremony held at U Soso Tham Auditorium. Deputy Chief Minister, Prof. R. C. Laloo graced the celebration as Chief Guest, while Information and Public Relations Minister, Dr. M. Ampareen Lyngdoh was the Guest of Honour. Health Minister, Smti. Roshan Warjri, Chairman MIDC, Shri. A. L. Hek, Chief Secretary, Shri. K. S. Kropha and a host of state officials and dignitaries were also present at the programme.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. R. C. Laloo said that the auspicious day was a



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time to reminisce the peaceful people's movement, where in spite of numerous challenges, the united efforts of visionary leaders and the un-quenching thirst of the people for the recognition of the old age traditions and values, ensured that the people have a State of their own. "45 years on, the Government is in right earnest and with vigour, pursuing the same goals of pushing Meghalaya to the pinnacles of progress, prosperity, peace and all round development," he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the Government is sincerely committed to ensure that Meghalaya is destined for progress, prosperity and self-sufficiency. He called upon the citizens of the State to never lose sight of the responsibility and to make collective efforts to live up to respective duties, conscious of the golden future that beckons all, while being firmly rooted in the glorious past.

While complimenting all the Meghalaya Day Excellence Awardees whose commitment for the cause of the State has been recognized by the State Government, the Deputy Chief Minister hoped that this recognition will encourage them and inspire others too, to give their best in discharging duties and fulfilling responsibilities in their respective capacities and capabilities.

Dr. M. Ampareen Lyngdoh, in her speech, said that as citizens, we are all indebted to the far sighted vision, courage and valour of many of the stalwarts and ardent supporters of the hill state movement, who fought a winning fight through peaceful and dignified means. She further said that as a state, Meghalaya has gone through many ups and downs, all of which have been crucial to its growth and development. While underlining the different welfare schemes initiated by the Government to ensure that every citizen gets access to basic amenities, the Minister said that the government machineries will continuously endeavour to improve and better the service delivery. She called upon the citizens to renew their pledge to work together to ensure that Meghalaya soars high on all fronts and indexes as we march forward, towards the 'Golden Jubilee' celebrations in 2022 and beyond.

During the programme, recipients of the prestigious Meghalaya Day Awards were also announced wherein the U Tirot Sing Syiem Award for Arts and Culture went to Sumar Sing Sawian, while the Pa Togan Sangma Award for Social Services was bestowed on Leander K Marak. Dolyne Kharbhih, who became only the second woman from Meghalaya to scale Mount Everest, was conferred with the U Kiang Nangbah Award for Sports.

As part of the celebration, Kayakalp Awards were also being given to 2 District Hospitals and 4 CHCs of the State in acknowledgement of the outstanding health related services and discharge of duties. The Awards went to Civil Hospital, Tura and Civil Hospital, Williamnagar, Chokpot CHC, Bhoirymbong CHC, Laskein CHC and Khliehriat CHC.

To ensure easy access to various services, e-district services and 5 Mobile Apps were also launched by the Chief Guest.

On the occasion, the Chief Guest also distributed the Meghalaya Day Excellence Awards-2016 to 15 recipients drawn from different Departments of the Government.

Others who spoke on the occasion were Chief Secretary, Shri K. S. Krophia, Smti Theilin Phanbuh, Chairperson, MSCW and Additional Chief Secretary, Shri P. W. Ingty. A message from the Chief Minister was also read out by the Director, I&PR, Smti. M. N. Nampui during the programme.

As part of the celebration in the city, the widely acclaimed Pipe Band of the oldest paramilitary force in the nation and Friends of the Hill People – Assam Rifles – rendered a wide selection of classics and favourites at the scenic Wards Lake, a women's football exhibition match between Royal Wahingdoh FC and Combined XI was played at the FIFA turf (3rd Ground) at Polo Ground conducted by the Department of Sports and Youth Affairs and the celebrations culminated with a musical extravaganza at Polo parking lot.

At Tura, a variety of cultural songs, dances, prayers coupled with award ceremonies were organized to mark the occasion in a colourful programme held in the District Auditorium wherein Shri. Zenith M. Sangma, Minister for Sports & Youth Affairs graced the occasion as Chief Guest.

People from all walks of life comprising of senior citizens, retired bureaucrats, students and people from various religious backgrounds attended the function which was organized by the District Administration.

Congratulating the people of the State on the occasion, Shri. Zenith Sangma, described the event as 'historic' as the state is on the threshold of reaching half a century and recalled the tireless and selfless services of forefathers like Capt.

W. A. Sangma, Shri. J. J. M. Nichols Roy, Shri. B. B. Lyngdoh and others who were instrumental in achieving the State of our own without shedding even a drop of blood. Looking back, he said in these past 45 years, the state has made much progress in terms of development. Outlining the vision and road map for future developments, he said in addition to the existing ones, more Community Development Block Offices will be opened to bring administration and development right to the doorsteps of the people.

Informing the people about the State's bagging the prestige of hosting the National Games in 2022, he pointed out that preparations for the same has started in right earnest as land has been identified in the stretches between Shillong and Jowai, and Rongram and Tura respectively for development of facilities and necessary infrastructures for hosting the same in a grand manner. The Minister also informed that District Sports Committees have been formed with adequate budget allocation to improve and promote sports in a big way. Shri. Sangma also



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made a fervent appeal to all the misguided youths to give up their anti social activities while also stating that one cannot achieve one's agenda by resorting to killing, kidnapping and extortions.

Another highlight of the day was the presentation of 'Appreciation Award' to Shri. Biswajit Nandi for his outstanding contribution towards Bengali Literature, Prose & Poetry. The award carried a citation and a cash prize of Rs. 10,000/-. One other notable feature of the event was the presentation of 'Posthumous Award for Lifetime Achievement' to Smti. Fridina K. Marak for her outstanding contributions towards the welfare and upliftment of Garo Society through her various social and educational works. Awards were also distributed to the recipients of Late Yamuna Naik Award for meritorious students of 2016 in Class X Exams, a merit cum scholarship award instituted by Shri. P. Naik former Chief Electoral Officer in memory of his mother. Besides a citation, the award carried a cash prize of Rs.7,000/- each. Taking opportunity of this solemn occasion, a beautiful and aptly designed logo for celebration of 150 years of Tura town was also unveiled by the Chief Guest. The yearlong observation will culminate on 1st December this year with some mega events.

At Jowai the celebration was held at the District Library Auditorium, Mynthong, Jowai in which the Parliamentary Secretary, Government of Meghalaya Shri R. Syngkon, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and Shri. A. Laloo, Retired Inspector of Schools as the Guest of Honour.

As part of the celebration a scheme 'Walang' (Worthy approach to livelihood access Network for all genders), a Piggery Model Project was launched, which is a convergence scheme by Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Department, West Jaintia Hills District and MGNREGA, Laskein C& RD Block. Work orders were also distributed to the 52 beneficiaries during the function.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri R. Syngkon invited every individual to be responsible citizens and work hand in hand with Government for the development of the State and the District in particular. He also invited those in Government service to render their service whole heartedly towards uplifting and attending to the needs of the people especially those coming from the rural areas.

Earlier Dr. C. Shylla, Deputy Director, AH & Vety, Department, Meghalaya gave a brief introduction on the project launched with an objective towards sustaining the livelihood of the people in the District.

At Nongpoh, the programme was graced by the Deputy Commissioner, Ri Bhoi District Shri C.P. Gotmare as chief guest.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri. Gotmare said that Meghalaya is marching ahead in all spheres and has accomplished many milestone achievements. Stating that while celebrating the attainment of 45 years of statehood, it was also imperative that we introspect the past and also, the road ahead for the State

Other highlights of the day included folk song and cultural dance performed by the youth of Seng Samla Pahammardoloi, Awakening Endeavours Society Nongthymmai Kyrdem and students of St. St.Paul's H/S Nongpoh.

The programme ended with the presentation of Aganwadi Award to the three Aganwadi workers. Prizes were also distributed to the winners and Runner's up of Basketball Match for men.

At Amlarem, the 45th Meghalaya Statehood Day was organised by the Sub-Divisional Office (Civil), Amlarem with the programme being held at Enowel Hall. The function was attended by Kum. I. Laloo, SDO (C), Amlarem, Government officers and staff from the different sub-divisional offices, heads of educational institutions, students, village leaders, elders and people from Amlarem.

Foundation Stone of Integrated Check Post, Dawki laid



Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Shri Kiren Rijiju laid the foundation stone of the Integrated Check Post (ICP) on January 24 at Dawki, West Jaintia Hills District, Meghalaya in the presence of Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha, Shri Vincent H. Pala, Meghalaya Home Minister Shri H. D. R. Lyngdoh and other dignitaries.

The Integrated Check Post (ICP) is being developed by the Land Ports Authority of India and would be spread over an area of 22 acres. The ICP will provide world class facilities for bilateral trade as well as for movement of passengers across the border and will generate employment opportunities and provide a major fillip to the economy of the State and the region. The work is scheduled to be completed by August, 2018.

Addressing the gathering, the Union Minister stressed on the need for opening up of the borders for trade and commerce in order to bring in prosperity and economic development in the region. Although the North-Eastern region is geographically isolated from the rest of India, it shares more than 95% of its borders with other neighbouring countries and 'we should leverage this position to our advantage by maintaining a cordial relationship with our 'Neighbours' and fostering bilateral economic ties with them', he added.

Others who spoke on the occasion were Shillong Lok Sabha MP, Shri Vincent H. Pala, High Commissioner of India in Bangladesh, Shri H. V. Shringla, Meghalaya Home Minister, Shri H. D. R. Lyngdoh and senior officials from the Land Ports Authority of India.

Laptops distributed to meritorious students



The Information Technology Department, Meghalaya, handed over laptops to meritorious students who excelled in the Class X and Class XII Examinations 2016 of MBOSE, ICSE, ISC and Class XII Examination of the CBSE at Yojana Bhavan, Shillong on January 20. The felicitation ceremony was graced by the IT Minister, Dr. M. Ampareen Lyngdoh as Chief Guest and Commissioner & Secretary, IT, Shri. D. P. Wahlang as Guest of Honor.

Dr. M. Ampareen Lyngdoh in her speech said that it is a proud moment for parents to see their children excel in their academic pursuit of merit and at the same time She feels proud that the Government acknowledges the efforts and hard work of the young minds in facing the challenges of this competitive world. She also added that this small gesture by the Government is just the tip of the iceberg for students in pursuing their desired careers.

In her congratulatory note, the Minister encouraged the students to continue to strive for excellence and pursue their goals with the same dedication and commitment so that they can contribute towards the state and the nation as a whole in the years to come. "Keep the spark, take the right path and choose the right career", she added.

Giving his words of advice, Shri. D. P. Wahlang said that the laptop is a tool to advance in their studies and called upon the awardees to put it to excellent use. He also expressed his happiness over the increasing number of students receiving the award from far away and rural areas. Shri. Wahlang also informed that the Government will be awarding class X toppers of CBSE from next year since the CBSE will have a class X board examination from this year.