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Prime Minister addresses 65th NEC Plenary meeting



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the 65th Plenary Session of the North Eastern Council (NEC) in the presence of the Union Minister of State for DoNER and NEC Chairman Dr. Jitendra Singh at the State Convention Centre, here, on his maiden visit to the State on May 27.

The two day Plenary Session was attended among others by the Governors of North Eastern States V. Shanmuganathan, P. B. Acharya, Lt. Gen. Nirbhay Sharma, Shrinivas Dadasaheb Patil, Jyoti Prasad Rajkhowa and Tathagata Roy and Chief Ministers Dr. Mukul Sangma, Sarbananda Sonowal, O. Ibobi Singh, Kalikho Pul, Pawan Chamling, Lal Thanhawla and T. R. Zeliang and members C.K. Das and Prof. Gangmumei Kamei.

Expressing his happiness to be a part of the NEC Plenary, the Prime Minister hoped that the deliberations in the meeting would help to speed up development in the region. While acknowledging the contributions of the Council to the growth of the North East Region, he also said the NEC needs to introspect and assess the extent to which it had been able to achieve its objectives, to re-orient and upgrade itself as a state of the art resource centre for NE states enabling the states and implementing agencies to properly plan and execute projects and promote research and provide strategic policy vision for the region.

Modi also suggested that NEC could look at developing a specialized domain expertise either by itself or through an agency model to assist states and central ministries in their development planning and problem solving needs. This, he said, would enable imbibing of good governance and best practices in the region. He also said it could consider focusing on issues of livelihood, entrepreneurship, venture funds, start-ups and skill development for generating jobs.

Stating that his government has been focusing on development of North East region through its pro-active "Act East Policy", he said that the Centre



was focusing on reducing the isolation of the region by improving all round connectivity through road, rail, telecom, power and waterways sectors. He said more than Rs.30,000 crore have been earmarked for the North East region and stressed the need to ensure that the money is spent well for the development of the region. The Prime Minister also said that taking advantage of North East as the gateway to South East Asia, "we are opening up both road and rail routes to our neighbouring countries" for economic development of the region.

Acknowledging the tremendous scope for adventure tourism in the region, the Prime Minister stated that if developed and promoted well, it can emerge as the biggest employer in the region. He said that the NE states should try to make best use of thematic circuit for the North East region identified by the Union Ministry of Tourism to develop tourist circuits and added that the region could look into combining a few popular destinations of



the neighbouring countries with their tourism circuits to further attract tourists.

The Prime Minister also acknowledged the potential of the youth of the region and their language skills and said that the Government has approved North East BPO promotion scheme in the Digital India programme for creation of employment opportunities. He urged upon the NE states to get these BPOs operationalized in their respective states to promote growth and provide jobs to the youth. He also said that NEC could play an important role in development of organic farming in the region. "The North East can become the organic food basket for the country", he added

Stating that there is a large rural population in NE region, Modi informed of the Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Mission initiated by the Government to bring in economic, social and basic development of the rural areas in a cluster model and said that NE states should endeavour to make use of this mission for the development of the rural areas.

Earlier, the Governors and Chief Ministers of the NE states also made their presentations before the Prime Minister and sought for more funds for the NEC to be able to live up to the expectations of

the people of the region.

After the culmination of the 65th Plenary Meeting of the NEC, all roads led to Polo Ground, Shillong to witness the historic moment where Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a mammoth public gathering and spelled out his Government's initiatives and schemes to bring about sustainable development in the region.

On the occasion, the Prime Minister also flagged off the Bhairabi (Mizoram)-Silchar (Assam) Passenger Train, Jiribam (Manipur)-Silchar (Assam) Passenger Train and Kamakhya-Katra Express (Weekly). The Prime Minister also laid the base for the construction of the International Multi Sports Stadium at Ampati, south West Garo Hills and also dedicated to the people of the nation the DOPPLER Weather Radar at Sohra, the wettest place on earth. With the Radar in operation, the Prime Minister was optimistic that natural calamities caused by rainfall and landslides could be reduced to a great extent.

Prior to his departure from ALG, Upper Shillong on the 28th May 2016, the Prime Minister visited two of the more prominent Tourist Spots of the state, namely, the Mattilang Amusement Park and the Heritage Village, Mawphlang.

UALA cadres bid farewell to arms

Signaling an era of peace and hope in the Garo Hills, 66 cadres of United Achik Liberation Army (UALA) bade farewell to arms at a historic disbanding ceremony of the former militant organization in the presence of the Chief Minister Dr. Mukul Sangma, Home Minister Roshan Warjri, the interlocutors and hosts of dignitaries at SMELC Building, Tura on June 9.

It may be mentioned that UALA, formed in 2012, had responded to the overtures of State Government and, had signed a peace agreement with the Government on December 18, 2015 after a series of dialogues in the past one-and-a half year. General Secretary, Garo Baptist Convention, Rev. Janang R. Sangma, Pastor, Hawakhana Church, Rev. F. D. Sangma and Rev. Fr. Januarius S. Sangma were non-official interlocutors, while MBOSE Chairman and Commissioner & Secretary, Education, E. P. Kharbhih was the facilitator from Government side.

The Chief Minister, in his address on the occasion, lauded the bold decision of the organization saying that the programme would generate a lot of hope and should be taken as an opportunity to send a positive message to the others who are still in the jungle. Reiterating that discrimination was the cause of frustration and loss of hope among the youth resulting in militancy, he called for collective and concerted efforts of all concerned to complete turnaround in the system.

The Chief Minister urged upon the cadres of the disbanded outfit never to lose hope and assured them that the Government would continue giving them handholding and guiding support.

Home Minister Smti. Roshan Warjri in her address expressed her gratitude to all those who made it possible to bring UALA cadres back to the mainstream and called for continued support and counseling as they start their lives anew. "What lay behind you is not important, but the important thing is what is within you and what lies ahead of you" she told the homecoming cadres and congratulated them on their new journey towards social, economic, moral and spiritual upliftment. She also emphasized on the dignity of labour and called for their participation in working together for peace and development in the State.

Former HNLC Chairman, who is now Legislator of Mawhati constituency, Shri. Julius K. Dorphan briefly shared his past experiences, the peace he felt after coming overground and spoke words of encouragement to the cadres of disbanded organization.

Chairman of the disbanded organization, Shri. Novembirth Marak highlighted the background of the organization, the objective for which it was formed and the decision taken by them to come and join the mainstream. He expressed his gratitude to the State Government-led by Dr. Mukul Sangma and the interlocutors for



Sharing the concern of the UALA Chairman Novembirth Marak over negative remarks from certain quarters on Government's rehabilitation package for militant outfits who give up arms, the Chief Minister replied to the skeptics saying the Government was moving ahead with complete clarity to achieve the shared objective of bringing lasting peace in the region. He said the approach of the Government of providing such should be adopted across the State as well as other states of North East as the problem of insurgency is a shared problem of the states in the region.

facilitating their return to the mainstream.

On the occasion, the Bishop of Tura, Rt. Rev. Andrew R. Marak spoke to the cadres on the theme "Return Home" and Rev. Janang R. Sangma deliberated on the theme "Unity for Abiding Peace", while Rev. G.B.R. Marak and Rev. Fr. Januarius S. Sangma invoked the blessing of God on the occasion through their prayers of intercession and benediction. The disbanding ceremony was chaired by Deputy Commissioner, Prabin Bakshi.

Meghalaya receives Krishi Karman Award for 2nd consecutive year



Meghalaya, along with eight other states received the Krishi Karman Award 2014-15 for the second consecutive year for best performing state in food grain production instituted by the Union Ministry of Agriculture under National Food Security Mission.

This is the second consecutive year that the State has been conferred with this award. Last year the State has also received the Krishi Karman Award for 2013-2014.

Meghalaya Chief Minister Dr. Mukul Sangma along with the State officials from Agriculture department received the award, which carries a sum of Rs. 5 crore, from Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the presence of Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Radha Mohan Singh and Union Ministers of State for Agriculture Mohanbhai Kalyanjibhai Kundariya and Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Balyan during the inaugural function of Krishi Unnati Mela which was held at Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Pusa, New Delhi from March 19 to 21, 2016.

While Meghalaya, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Haryana and Rajasthan received the Krishi Karman Award for food crop production, Chhattisgarh was awarded for production of pulses, Tamil Nadu for coarse cereals and West Bengal for oilseeds.

The award was also given to individual progressive farmers and two farmers from Meghalaya who received the award were Willipson A. Sangma from West Garo Hills and Angela Shangoi

from West Khasi Hills.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address called upon all stakeholders, including farmers, States and the Union Government to resolve to double farmers' income by 2022. He described the Krishi Unnati Mela as a platform that could rewrite India's destiny. He said India's future had to be built on the growth of agriculture, and the prosperity of its farmers and its villages.

The Prime Minister explained how the reduction of input costs was the first element towards raising farm incomes. He said that the Soil Health Card scheme, and the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana are important steps towards reducing input costs. On the occasion the Prime Minister also launched "Kisan Suvidha" – a mobile application for farmers which will provide information to farmers on subjects such as weather, market prices, seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and agriculture machinery.

Besides conferences and seminars, an exhibition stalls were put up by various institutions and agriculture entrepreneurs during the three day Mela. The delegation from Meghalaya included the Director, Agriculture & Mission Director (NFSM) Dorothy Syiemiong, Deputy Director & SNO (NFSM) Sankynti Tarianang, Assistant Director, Agriculture (Agro) Canning S. Shabong and ADO, Shillong Sengban W.Momin, besides the two award recipients.



Awareness Programme on Swachh Bharat Mission Held



“Let us make the national agenda of Swachh Bharat as our personal agenda” said Meghalaya Governor, Shri V. Shanmuganathan in his address at the Awareness Programme on Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) held at Krissimai Syiemsad Stadium, Smit on May 19. The programme was organized by the Public Health Engineering Department.

The Governor while lauding the achievement of Mawlynngong village, the cleanest village in Asia, said that it is an example of collective responsibility of the community in maintaining cleanliness and preserving the environment. The Governor urged the student community in particular to imbibe the habit of cleanliness and to bring about an improvement in the general quality of life by promoting cleanliness, hygiene and eliminating open defecation.

Earlier, the Governor handed over the certificates to the winners of the Inter School speech, drawing, painting and essay competitions.

Later, the Governor also administered the Cleanliness Pledge.

Others who spoke on the occasion were Shri Ardent M. Basaiawmoit, MLA, Nongkrem Constituency, Shri D.P. Wahlang, Commissioner and Secretary, PHE, Shri M. R. Synrem, Secretary, Tourism and Shri Kynsai Manik Syiem, Sordar Smit village.

Other highlights of the day included presentation of song by St. Francis Secondary School, Smit and Sur Bathiang, Laitdiengsai and traditional dance by local artist of Smit village.

The programme was also attended by Shri M. S. Rao, Principal Secretary, C&RD, Smti R. V. Suchiang, Principal Secretary, Tourism, Smti R. C. Sohkhlet, Director, Tourism, Shri S. K. Sunn, Chief Engineer, PHE, BDOs of Myllem, Mawkynew and Mawryngkneng C&RD Block and students from different school under Myllem and Mawkynew C&RD Block.

CM meets Union Home Minister



Chief Minister Dr. Mukul Sangma met Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh during his maiden visit to the city at Assam Rifles Headquarters at Laitkor on March 21 evening and sought the latter's attention to certain issues concerning the State.

The Chief Minister, accompanied by State Home Minister Roshan Warjri, submitted a memorandum to the Union Home Minister seeking his intervention on issues like Inter-State boundary dispute with Assam, insurgency in Garo Hills region and strengthening of police set up, sanctioning of additional IR battalions, requirement of additional forces for implementing NGT order, creation of SF-10 and setting up of residential schools in the border areas. Reiterating the nature of problems faced by the State, the Union Home Minister was requested to intervene on these matters on priority in the interest of the people of the State.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister apprised the Union Home Minister that, in view of the NGT order and for effective implementation of the same, though the State Police has been making best efforts to prevent illegal mining and illegal transportation of coal, violations are still taking place due to lack of adequate forces.

Although the State Government had requested the Ministry of Home Affairs to provide additional 15 companies of CAPF to effectively enforce the ban, the same has not been provided yet.

On the Assam-Meghalaya Inter-State boundary differences, it was informed to the Union Home Minister that as bilateral efforts have failed to bring about a mutually acceptable solution, the Meghalaya State Legislative Assembly had passed a unanimous Resolution urging upon the Centre to constitute a Boundary Commission to define the inter-state boundary between Assam and Meghalaya, having regard to the Constitutional provisions, relevant notifications and maps as well as historical, ethnic and linguistic linkages. The Chief Minister reiterated the request to constitute the Boundary Commission and evolve an institutionalized mechanism to resolve the vexed boundary problem between the two states, adding that the Union Government may consider this seriously considering the sensitivities involved.

In order to contain the menace of insurgency in Garo Hills region, the Union Home Minister was reminded of a proposal for upgradation of police establishment

and infrastructure submitted to the Special Secretary (IS), Union Ministry of Home Affairs in 2012 and that the Ministry had sought an undertaking from the State Government to the effect that the recurring expenditure would be borne by the State from its own resources after the completion of the scheme. The State Government had already conveyed the undertaking to the Ministry in 2013 and the Chief Minister had also been writing to the Union Home Minister on the matter, he was told and requested that the same may be considered and approved on priority.

The Union Home Minister was also reminded about the proposal submitted to the Ministry for extending a one-time assistance for creation of a specialized commando force SF-10. Informing that the first phase of recruitment process has been completed, the State urged upon the Ministry to consider the proposal on a priority basis so that the unit can be made operational without delay.

Later, the Chief Minister along with Home Minister Roshan Warjri gave company to the Union Home Minister in attending the cultural programme organized by Assam Rifles as part of its Raising Day.

Chief Minister attends joint conference of CMs, CJs in New Delhi



Meghalaya Chief Minister Dr. Mukul Sangma attended the Joint Conference of the Chief Ministers of the states and Chief Justices of High Courts at VigyanBhawan in New Delhi on April 24. The Conference was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the presence of Chief Justice of India, Justice T. S. Thakur and Union Law and Justice Minister, D.V.SadanandaGowda.

The Joint Conference was an occasion for the Executive and the Judiciary to reaffirm their commitment to support a speedy, efficient and quality justice delivery in the country and to discuss steps to overcome the various challenges facing the justice system, facilitate access to speedy resolution of commercial disputes, to making the justice system user friendly and affordable to all and improve the quality of legal aid services in the country.

The inaugural function was followed by the working session which was chaired the Chief Justice of India, for which 11 agenda were circulated in advance as basis for discussions. These included progress on implantation of resolutions passed during the Conference of Chief Ministers and Chief Justices held on April 5, 2015, steps required to be taken for reduction of arrears and ensuring speedy trial, reforms in Court procedures and processes, Judicial reforms, strengthening of Legal Aid Services, progress made in development of the infrastructure of Subordinate Courts, Strengthening the Juvenile System, Constitution and working of the Authorities and establishment and condition of various homes referred to in the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection

of Children) Act, 2000, Utilization of Grant sanctioned by 14th Finance Commission under different heads- a strategy, review of the quality legal education programmes in the states: trends and challenges, establishment of Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts.

During the discussion on Computerization and Digitization of High Courts., Dr. Mukul Sangma stated that the 13th Finance Commission was considerate in providing the financial support for this programme, which is however not part of the recommendation of the 14th Finance Commission. He said the issue has been taken up with the GOI that for the states of North East it is difficult to ensure the continuation of work because of its limited resources as this sector does not confine to the payment of salaries but also involves the up gradation of the whole system.

The Joint Conference also passed resolutions on some of the common agenda items.

Earlier in his inaugural address the Prime Minister underlined the high level of trust the common man has in the judiciary. He expressed concern over the large number of cases pending in various courts across the country and hoped that the Government and the Judiciary would work together to find solutions to these issues. Modi also spoke of the efforts being made by the Government to remove archaic laws from the statute books.

Chief Minister attends FICCI (FLO) Annual Meeting



Chief Minister, Dr Mukul M Sangma attended the 32nd Annual Session of FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO) at New Delhi on April 8. The meeting was also attended by Union Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Rajiv Pratap Rudy.

Gracing the meeting as the Chief Guest, Dr Mukul Sangma said that organizations such as the FICCI (FLO) provides a platform for policy makers to further expand the possibilities of networking and integrate various policies that bring transformative changes especially in the lives of women. Stating that empowerment of women must start from home as children usually draw inspiration from the mother, he stressed on the need to sensitize women to participate effectively in the programmes of the government.

The Chief Minister also added that promoting woman entrepreneurship is crucial in the fight against poverty and felt for the need to have access to financial resources, a legal framework

of non-discriminatory regime and a woman friendly economic system for women entrepreneurs. "Women entrepreneurs when successful act as a change maker in their families and society and inspire others to become self-reliant."

FICCI (FLO) is the women wing of Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI). An all India forum for women, FLO has headquarters in New Delhi and 13 chapters set-up across India, representing over 3900 women entrepreneurs and professionals.

With over 32 years of experience, FLO has been promoting entrepreneurship and professional excellence in women through various workshops, seminars, conferences, talks, training and capacity building programmes with the objective to encourage and facilitate inclusion of women's talents, skills, experience and energies across all sectors and levels of economic activity.



Chief Minister attends Global Bamboo Summit at Indore



Chief Minister, Dr Mukul M Sangma attended Global Bamboo Summit at Indore on that is being held from 8th to 10th April 2016. The event was jointly organized by Indian Federation of Green Energy (IFGE), New Delhi and National Agro Forestry and Bamboo Mission (NABM), New Delhi.

Addressing the Summit on the April 9 as the Chief Guest during the session “Bamboo in North East Region”, Dr Mukul M Sangma said that North East accounts for nearly 66 per cent of the total bamboo growing stock and 28 per cent of the bamboo bearing areas of the country. He said bamboo plantation must be remunerative that will ensure its sustainability. He also felt that there is need to ensure that there is a convergence of thoughts of all the North Eastern states to overcome the issues related to bamboo growing.

The Chief Minister also recommended the need of a joint meeting of the government and the North Eastern States in this regard to be facilitated by DoNER and to have a separate summit for bamboo growers of the region as North East is the largest bamboo growing region in the country. He added that government must incentivise the micro entrepreneurs engaged in bamboo sector and hoped that through continuous efforts the full potential of bamboo sector will be tapped thus making it the driving force to the economy, paving the way for a bamboo based, eco-friendly and green economy.

The focal theme of the summit is “Bamboo for Sustainable Development” with the primary objective of soliciting global cooperation in bamboo sector for making bamboo as an agent for poverty alleviation and climate change. Issues of appropriate variety of bamboo, availability, up gradation of skills in manufacturing niche products, marketing and harnessing its business potential were discussed during the three days’ summit from participants across the globe. The summit also provided an excellent opportunity to learn from Global practices and help in business development by way of networking.

Also present at the session was Forest Minister, Madhya Pradesh, Dr Gauri Shankar Shejwar and Joint Secretary, DoNER, A M Singh. Earlier, the Chief Minister also visited various stalls set up at the venue where artists and entrepreneurs from across the country displayed their traditional and innovative products made out of bamboo.

CM lays foundation stone for Tura school building under ADB project



Meghalaya Chief Minister Dr. Mukul Sangma laid the foundation stone for construction of new school building for Hawakhana Higher Secondary School, Tura under the Asian Development Bank (ADB) - funded project - "Supporting Human Capital Development in Meghalaya" on May 31.

It may be mentioned that the project is the first of its kind in the country which focuses on improvement of secondary education and skill development. Under the project, scores of government-aided secondary and higher secondary schools in the State are being upgraded with the kind of infrastructure to improve the overall learning environment for the students.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, the Chief Minister expressed happiness on being able to bring such first ever social sector project for the State to address the critical gaps in the education sector but said that he was upset because the project was moving very slowly and urged upon the implementing agencies to ensure speedy completion of the project. "We need to pull up our socks and ensure fructification of the objectives that we have set for our children", he said and called for collective responsibility and endeavour with sense of ownership from all concerned to take the

project forward.

While congratulating those students who came out in flying colours despite limitations in the recently declared SSLC and HSSLC results, Dr. Sangma, however, was pained to see some schools, particularly in the rural areas, drew blank in the results. He said that the huge gap in pass percentage was an offshoot of disparities between rural and urban schools. He also questioned the kind of challenge that the State would face if all 50,000-odd students who appeared for SSLC exams this year were to pass the examination, due to lack of infrastructure and institutions for higher studies.

Recalling the fact that Education department earlier used to be just "a salary giving department" without any developmental projects, the Chief Minister highlighted a number of schemes taken up by the State and Government over the years. "But even after all these years we are still struggling to ensure that children get the right ambience in their place of study. We talk of smart classrooms and computers – but what is the use of them when you do not have the required infrastructure – the buildings and proper classrooms?" he asked. Therefore "Supporting Human Capital Development in Meghalaya"

project has been taken up by the State Government with the funding from ADB to address these kind of challenges and critical gaps in education, he added, saying the programme, which is exclusive to the state of Meghalaya, is set to be replicated in some African nations.

The Chief Minister also called upon the institutions in the State to act as a platform of information for the students about opportunities available before them so that they are not dependent on "white collared" jobs but can take up other spaces of jobs available. He also suggested to the district administration to start Promotion of Skill Training Programme at the district level to empower the youth with career and job opportunities.

Dr. Sangma also highlighted the objective of the programme which will upgrade teaching and learning in government-aided secondary and higher secondary schools, improve technical and vocational education and training, and raise awareness about the importance of education.

It may be mentioned that Hawakhana School was established in 1968 and has been catering to the students from various parts of Garo Hills.

CM inaugurates suspension bridge near Betasing



Chief Minister Dr. Mukul Sangma inaugurated the newly constructed suspension bridge over Dilni River connecting Banduraja and nearby villages with Betasing C&RD block headquarters in South West Garo Hills on April 16.

The construction of this bridge under Special Infrastructure Development Fund (SIDF) 2012-13 by Border Area Development, has fulfilled the long cherished dream of the people of around seven villages across the river, including Banduraja and Arenggre, who had to undergo a lot of hardship being cut off from all activity during monsoons when the water levels of the river rose, while the school going children of these villages had to miss their classes for days together. Besides the pedestrians, the bridge can also be used for commuting by two-wheelers.

Dedicating the bridge to the people of the area in the presence of Chairperson, Meghalaya Resources & Employment Generation Council, Dikkanchi D. Shira, local MDC, Nripendro Koch, district officials, local leaders and the villagers, the Chief Minister congratulated the people and the officials of the department on the completion of the bridge, saying the Department of Border Areas Development have recently been entrusted with greater responsibility to serve the needs of the people in the border areas and that it was doing justice to the given responsibility.

He said that all economic activities along the international border with Bangladesh had ceased to exist when the border was closed after Independence and the people living in the border areas had to suffer untold miseries due to backwardness and poverty. Understanding such disparities, the State Government has laid

more focus on border area development programmes including those areas along the inter-state border with Assam, he added. The Chief Minister placed on record his gratitude to the then Union Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, now the President of India, for allocating Special Finance Minister's Package of Rs 60 crore to support such border area development programmes across the State.

The Chief Minister also criticised the present Government at the Centre for failing to understand the mandate of the Constitution, which provides equal opportunity for all states to grow and catch up with the rest. In the past successive governments at the Centre had accorded special attention for the growth and development of the North East Region with its complex problems. However, the present Government has not accorded the status of Special Category States to the North East, which is not in favour of the region, he said, adding that today the State was getting its share from the Centre based on the tax we pay and that the Centre is not doing any favour to the State.

“There is a need to look at the disparities and create equal opportunities for the people of the region to grow and catch up with the rest of the country” he added.

Earlier, the Assistant Director, Border Areas Development, Tura, E.G.R. Marak, in her welcome and introductory note, informed the gathering that the Chief Minister had sanctioned 14 bridges for border areas under SIDF, out of which three are yet to be completed. She also highlighted on the number of projects taken up under Inter-State Border Areas Development Programme.

CM calls for patenting of State's bamboo innovation & technology

Chief Minister Dr. Mukul Sangma has expressed a sense of satisfaction and joy on seeing the innovative bamboo and cane products on display by the craftspeople at the Shken.in Bamboo & Cane Products Exhibition and 33rd District level Industrial Exhibition which was held at the State Central Library premises on April 15 and 16.

It may be mentioned that the department of Commerce & Industries in partnership with the Department of Design, IIT, Guwahati has come up with the project for innovative cane and bamboo products with upgraded designs and technology using the brand name Shken.in. Shken is a local Khasi word for bamboo. The Chief Minister said that the next immediate step for the department and IIT, Guwahati must be to patent this innovation and technology, which is integrated to this whole exercise of partnership.

Inaugurating the exhibition in the presence of Minister for GAD, Transport, etc H.D.R Lyngdoh, Urban Affairs Minister M. Ampareen Lyngdoh, Parliamentary Secretary, Dr. Celestine Lyngdoh, Chief Secretary K. S. Krophah, other State officials and officials of the department, besides the master crafts persons from various parts of the State, the Chief Minister said that this exhibition was unlike other exhibitions that

has been held all these years, adding that the wonderful products put up by the crafts persons was an outcome of a wonderful partnership model of leveraging upon the skills of the master craftspeople by taking advantage of the resources available in our own backyards – the bamboo and cane, often referred to as “green gold” or “wonder grass”.

Stating the magnitude of people's involvement with bamboo which is a part and parcel of tribal way of life, he emphasized how with partnership one can integrate the knowledge of science, innovation, creativity and give shape to much more superior and wonderful products that can generate so much of interest. He imagined the wonders that can happen when they are passed on to the potential partners who would like to link their livelihood with the outcome of such exercise.

He congratulated the department of Commerce & Industries and the team of IIT, Guwahati under the leadership of Prof. Ravi Mokashi Punekar for the wonderful partnership and underscored the importance of building partnerships that can open up further opportunities of entrepreneurship to the people and at the same time can be instrumental in creating

something exclusive - which is completely connected with the State and its people by leveraging upon these available resources.

Stating that there is no end to exploring more and more scope of innovation on bamboo, he said, “Let the people across the globe look at our high-end bamboo products, let them become the first choice of many people and we will target the high-end clientele”.

As the two-day exhibition included the technical session on diversification of bamboo & cane products, the Chief Minister also said this kind of session should be extended to involve students drawn from various institutions and recommended the department to have such session, one in Tura and another in Shillong, exclusively for the young students. He also recommended that the skill component of ADB-funded human capital development programme be integrated with this programme. He suggested that this can also be extended to the youth who are giving up armed struggle and trying to come back to living to the mainstream.

Principal Secretary, Commerce & Industries, P. W. Ingty and Director, Commerce and Industries, Mrs. M. B. Roy were among others who also spoke briefly on the occasion.



CM inaugurates Williamnagar Bridge over Simsang river Foundations for road project & ADB-funded school building unveiled



The much awaited bridge over Simsang river located at Williamnagar town finally saw the light of day when the bridge was inaugurated with much fanfare by Chief Minister Dr. Mukul Sangma in the presence of PWD Minister Sniawbhalang Dhar and Social Welfare Minister and local MLA Debora Marak on April 4.

The bridge spans a total of 203.29 metres, making it the longest bridge in Meghalaya to be constructed by the State PWD, which was initially sanctioned at Rs. 1.4365 crore on March 25, 1986. The construction process dragged on for 30 years due to several reasons. However, despite many hurdles and inclement weather during the working season, the bridge was finally completed in March this year.

The construction of the bridge is significant as it is the only connecting link for several villages across the Simsang river. The bridge is also a connecting link from Williamnagar to Chokpot in South Garo Hills. It is in this connection that a foundation stone for a new road project from Williamnagar to Chokpot via Cherangre was also laid by the Chief Minister on the occasion.

Simultaneously, the Chief Minister also unveiled the foundation for ADB sponsored building of Green Yard Secondary School, under "Supporting Human Capital Development in Meghalaya" project.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, the Chief Minister while recalling the "unpleasant" past history of the bridge and the untold hardships that the people on the other side of river had to face, expressed his happiness to share the joy of the people of the area. He lauded the team of engineers from the Department for their "out of the box" approach to ensure the completion of the bridge. With the completion of this bridge, it was now time to move ahead with the new road projects, including the one from Williamnagar to Chokpot. He also appealed to the people in the area to extend their full support and cooperation to the construction workers so that they are able to complete the project on time.

He also recalled how in the year 2002 the State Government had

to take steps to regularize the settlement of encroachers in the Government lands in Williamnagar and said that it was found "this bridge was the reason" for the encroachment.

"Now that this bridge is completed there is going to be reverse encroachment", he said, indicating that the township would expand to the other side of the Simsang river.

Highlighting on the number of programmes being initiated by the State Government for promoting sustainable livelihood among the people, including Bamboo, Agar and Ramie Plantations, the Chief Minister stressed on the importance of connectivity with all-weather roads for the success of these programmes. He also urged appealed to the people to be generous in donating lands for construction of roads so that there would be no unnecessary delay in completing road projects in the process of acquisition of lands.

The Chief Minister also expressed his concern and questioned as to why the area remained the "hotbed of militancy", despite the Government's efforts to stop militancy and repeated calls to the militants to come for dialogue. He also appealed to the people to come together as community and extend their support to the Government in bringing them back to the mainstream.

Later, the Chief Minister also visited Greenyard Secondary School to inspect the site for construction of new building funded by ADB.

PWD Minister S. Dhar, who attended as a guest of honour along with Social Welfare Minister Debora Marak, in his brief address expressed his gratitude to the Chief Minister for his tremendous support in ensuring the completion of the project and said that completion of the bridge would enhance business and other social activities in the region.

Local MLA and Social Welfare Minister Debora Marak, Parliamentary Secretary i/c PWD (Roads) Cherak W. Momin, Chief Secretary K. S. Kropha, Chief Engineer, PWD (Roads) L. Passah and ACE, PWD(R) M. R. Sangma were among others who also spoke on the occasion.

State Govt hands over bid documents for Nat'l Games 2022 to MSOA



The State Government has handed over the bid documents to the Meghalaya State Olympic Association (MSOA) to begin the bidding process for hosting the National Games 2022 at a brief function held on June 21 at the State Convention Centre.

The function to drum up all support and efforts to bid for the Games was attended by Chief Minister Dr. Mukul Sangma as the chief guest in the presence of the Leader of Opposition Dr. Donkumar Roy, Deputy Chief Minister Rowell Lyngdoh, Sports & Youth Affairs Minister Zenith Sangma, former Union Minister of State and MP, Vincent Pala, Parliamentary Secretaries, KHADC MDCs, members of MSOA, senior officials, sports associations and heads of institutions, besides the officials of Sports & Youth Affairs department.

Besides the bid documents, the Chief Minister on behalf of the State Government also handed over a cheque of Rs. 50 lakh and letters of support from both the State Government and Leader of Opposition were given to the MSOA for placing the bid.

In his address, the Chief Minister said that the meeting was to carry forward the mission of the State to host the National Games 2022 as it would be a befitting tribute to the State and the people to mark the 50th year of Statehood and appealed to all the people of the State to come together to achieve the shared objective with utmost seriousness and a sense of ownership. Conceding that there would be challenges on the way, the foremost being to mop up resources within the next five years, he however expressed his optimism that if it is accepted by all as collective endeavour the State would be able to equip itself with all the wherewithal needed to host the event, adding that a number of measures would be required to be taken by the State Government to mop up required resources.

Stating that there was no time to be complacent, the Chief

Minister said there are a lot of activities to be done by sports associations and stressed the need to have an apex committee to bring in convergence from all line departments and also a much more inclusive team drawn from all political parties to achieve the mission. Observing that there would be huge requirement for infrastructure building not only hosting 32 Olympic and 8 non-Olympic disciplines but also for hospitality sector, Dr. Sangma said that there were also many local potential investors in the State who could be roped in for creating the infrastructure. Every infrastructure created would be used to move further and open up diverse opportunities for the people of the State, he added.

The Chief Minister also stressed the need for out of the box approach to design the Games Village in such a way to create a product to benefit the people of the State by structuring the investment appropriately.

Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Donkumar Roy while expressing his support for the bid, stressed the need to go forward with the involvement of all the people of the State with due seriousness and transparency in the process. He also stressed the need to ensure that the sportspersons of the State are able to participate in the Games and win medals.

Earlier, Sports & Youth Affairs Minister Zenith Sangma in his welcome and introductory note, said that tremendous experience and credibility earned by the State in hosting the South Asian Games, 2016 had led to the bold decision of the State Government to bid for the National Games 2016, while the MSOA Working President John F. Kharshiing, in a power-point presentation, highlighted the way forward for the bidding process and the need for sports policy for hosting the Games.

So far, only two states in North East have hosted the National Games – Manipur in 1999 and Assam in 2007.

Foundation stone for construction of DIPR office building laid



The Meghalaya Minister incharge Information and Public Relations Department (IPR), Shri. A L Hek laid the foundation stone for the construction of the office building of the Directorate of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) at Lower Lachauchiere, Shillong on June 22. Also present on the momentous occasion were the Chairman, Meghalaya Government Construction Corporation Ltd (MGCC), Shri. R V Lyngdoh, MLA, Commissioner & Secretary, IPR, Smti. M H K Marak, Director of IPR, Shri. H M Shangpliang, Deputy Regional Passport Officer, Passport Seva Kendra, Shri. M S Sangma, Managing Director, MGCC, Shri. S Nongkynrih, officers and staff of IPR and media persons.

The construction work for the DIPR office has been entrusted to the MGCC at the total cost of Rs. 9,41,78,000/-. The building is expected to be completed by March 2018. Besides the office of DIPR, the building will also accommodate the Meghalaya Integrated Information System (MiiS), office of the Commandant Civil Task Force, Passport Seva Kendra, Shillong Press Club and Meghalaya Editors and Publishers Association (MEPA).

In his inaugural speech, the Minister said that the long cherished dream of having IPR's own building has come into reality due to the vision and leadership of the present and past Directors, officers and the Department as a whole. As a mouthpiece of the

Government, the Minister urged upon the officers and staff of the department to render their services to the maximum to ensure people's participation in the successful implementation of different developmental Programmes and schemes. He also expressed hope that the office will open up a space for commitment and dedication and for providing quality service to the people of the State.

The Minister also called upon the MGCC and the contractor to speed up the construction work to ensure that the building completes within the stipulated time to avoid time and cost overrun.

Shri. R V Lyngdoh, in his speech, said that the IPR is the most important organisation in the State which serves as a link between people and the Government. Dissemination of information about important scheme and policies of the Government need to reach out to every nook and corner of the State and it is the responsibility of the department to ensure that not one individual is left uninformed, said Shri. Lyngdoh. Therefore, he felt that I&PR Department should be considered as a major department and called upon the officers and staff to work with vigour and determination for the benefit of the people of the State.

One Stop Crisis Centre inaugurated

The One Stop Crisis Centre for the rehabilitation of survivors of violence against women was inaugurated on June 20 at Ganesh Das Hospital, OPD Building, Shillong by Social Welfare Minister, Smti Deborah C. Marak.

The Centre will be operated by the North East Network (NEN) in collaboration with the Social Welfare Department and will cater to comprehensive medical care, counselling and emotional support, legal and court activities, provision of temporary shelter and medical reporting for women victims of domestic violence, sexual assault etc.

Social Welfare Minister, Smti Deborah C. Marak while highlighting that Meghalaya has been witnessing an alarming rise in crime against women and children said that it is a matter of concern which needs to be taken seriously. She also said that the Centre will not only extend emotional and psychological support to women who are victims of crimes and domestic violence but will also cater as a Centre for the overall development of women and child.

Others who spoke at the programme include Additional Chief Secretary, I/c Social Welfare, Shri H. Marwein, Commissioner & Secretary, Social Welfare, Shri T. Dkhar, Director, Social Welfare, Shri H. M. Shangpliang and Chairperson, NEN, Smti D. Syiem. The programme was also attended by Chairperson, MSCW, Smti T. Phanbuh and Chairperson, MSCPCR, Smti M. Kharkongor among others.



Transport Minister inaugurates Motorable bridge and Water Supply Scheme

“Road connectivity is the backbone of economic development” said Minister of Transport, etc., and Local MLA Shri H.D.R. Lyngdoh while inaugurating the motorable bridge at Wahlyngia village under Mawphlang C&RD Block on 24th March, 2016.

The R.C.C. motorable bridge with a span of 10.00m will connect Laitnongrem village to Mawkneng - Nongspung Road was constructed at a total cost of Rs. 60 lakhs sanctioned under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) XX.

Earlier, Shri H.D.R. Lyngdoh inaugurated the Laitnongrem Water Supply Scheme at Wahlyngia. The water supply scheme which will cater the Wahlyngia and Laitnongrem villages was implemented at a total cost of Rs. 66.77 lakh.

Shri Lyngdoh in his address at a function held at Wahlyngia village said that the Government is committed to improve the road communication and connect the un-connected villages of rural areas to the main road.

He expressed hope that the Wahlyngia motorable bridge will ease the people residing in the areas to a great extent and also create opportunities for better marketing of goods produce in the areas which would go a long way in uplifting the economic status of the people especially the farmers of the areas.

Shri Lyngdoh also reiterated that development is a continuous process and it is the responsibility of each and everyone to extend their hands of cooperation with the developmental departments for the all round development of the areas.





Meghalaya Governor V. Shanmuganathan releasing the NEC 65th Plenary Meeting Commemorative Stamp at Raj Bhawan on June 3, 2016.



Shri. Rowell Lyngdoh, Deputy Chief Minister of Meghalaya giving away the prize to the winner of the Environment Run Competition held on the occasion of World Environment Day on June 10, 2016.



Shri Prestone Tynsong, Minister of Forest & Environment releasing two books published by the State Forest and Environment Department and Meghalaya Biodiversity Board (MBB) on the occasion of International Biodiversity Day 2016, observed on June 15, 2016 at U Soso Tham Auditorium, Shillong.



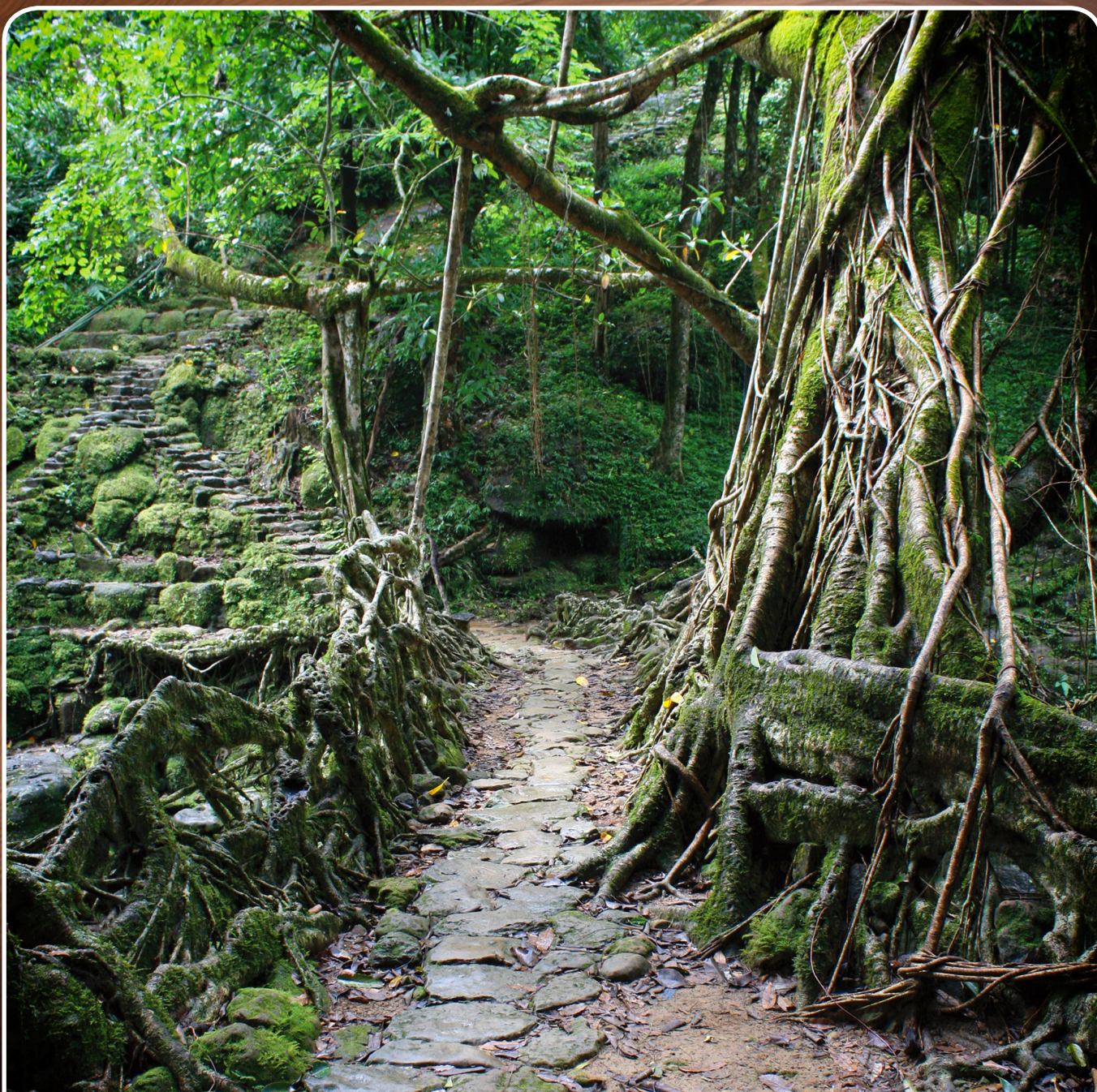
Shri. A. L. Hek, Meghalaya Minister of Information and Public Relations, felicitating Shri. Pradip Kurbah, Director of "Onaatah, of the Earth", winner of the Rajat Kamal Award for Best Khasi Feature Film at the 63rd National Film Award 2016, at Galleria Anjalee Cinema Hall, Shillong on May 13, 2016.



Meghalaya Sericulture and Weaving Minister Zenith Sangma inaugurating the Common Facility Centre cum Handloom Production Unit at Zikzak C and R D Block on April 15, 2016.



Meghalaya Deputy Chief Minister, Dr. R. C Laloo along with Cabinet colleagues and government officials taking the Pledge to mark the countrywide observation of Anti-Terrorism Day at the Main Secretariat premises on May 20, 2016.



Meghalaya
finds place in
Top 20
world tourist
destinations

Meghalaya has found a place in the world tourism map as one of the 20 best tourist destinations in the world and has been ranked sixth best destination by Skyscanner - a global search engine for tours and travels.

This was informed by the Chief Minister Dr. Mukul Sangma while briefing the press persons after the Cabinet meeting on April 13, 2016, who expressed his optimism about the State's potential to grow as one of the best tourist destination in the world.

As per Skyscanner's list of top twenty tourist destinations, Ukraine's Tunnel of Love has been ranked number one followed by Switzerland's Aescher Hotel, Iceland's Thingvallavatn Lake, Provence in France and the Great Blue Hole in Belize. Meghalaya's Living Root Bridge at Mawlynnong comes sixth on the list.