



सत्यमेव जयते

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA

MEGHALAYA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

ADDRESS

BY

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GOVERNOR OF MEGHALAYA

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Hon'ble Speaker and Members of the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly

My sincere greetings and congratulations to all the members of the newly elected 11th Meghalaya Legislative Assembly. I sincerely hope that your term in office as MLAs will be fulfilling and successful and that you will dedicate yourselves to the service of the people of our beautiful State.

Hon'ble Members, I am proud to say that the Meghalaya Legislative Assembly is known for maintaining the highest decorum in the conduct of the proceedings. I urge all the Members to carry forward this laudable tradition and continue to uphold the dignity of this August House.

It is our constitutional mandate to make collective efforts and strive towards socio-economic development and progress in all spheres. Accordingly, the Government is making concerted efforts to improve the standard of living of the people of the State through better governance.

The Government is particularly focused on enhancing the service delivery in health and education sectors and making larger investments in physical infrastructure such as roads, bridges, power and drinking water supply.

Another critical focus is on improving rural livelihoods and promoting enterprises through mission mode interventions in the sectors of Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries and Animal Husbandry.

Having outlined these key priorities, I will now enumerate the policies, programmes and initiatives implemented by the different departments of the State Government.

Home & Political

1. The safety of citizens, peace and security are necessary for the development of the State. The overall law and order in the State was peaceful during the previous year. Various festivals including National Day celebrations passed off peacefully. The State Government has constituted a Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the Mukroh incident and is committed to ensure justice for the victims and their families. To ensure protection of our citizens in the border areas, seven border outposts have been notified.
2. In a historic development, HNLC has indicated their willingness for unconditional talks within the ambit of the Indian Constitution. The peace talks have started, and the State Government is committed to ensure that the talks are concluded at the earliest. We are also thankful to the Government of India for their support.
3. One of the significant developments of the government has been to move towards a permanent resolution to the long-standing boundary dispute between Meghalaya and Assam. After several meetings, both the states agreed to first take up six of the 12 areas of difference i.e., Tarabari, Gizang, Hahim, Boklapara, Khanapara-Pillangkata and Ratacherra. The regional committees headed by cabinet ministers from both the states have made field visits, held public hearings and discussions with all stakeholders for these six areas. Based on the reports of the three regional committees, a MoU was signed between the states of Meghalaya and Assam in presence of the Hon'ble Union Home Minister. I am also happy to inform this August House that the State Government is committed to resolve the remaining six areas of difference. This is imperative to ensure that our citizens in the bordering areas are not denied access to peace and development.
4. Apart from maintaining law and order, the Meghalaya Police has focussed on improving the investigation of cases. This has led to an upward increase of charge sheets at 39.76% in 2022 as compared

to 32.2% in 2021. The Meghalaya Police has made great strides and is working on a war footing against drugs. The overall seizures have gone up considerably with contraband worth Rs. 71 crores and cash amount of Rs. 60 Lakh being recovered since 2022.

5. The State Government is committed towards strengthening the Police and creating supporting infrastructure. In the past few years the State Government has notified five new Fire and Emergency Service Stations, nine police outposts and five new Police Stations.

Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare

6. More than 70% of the State's population is directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture and allied sectors. Taking cognizance of this, the government has initiated multiple programs and schemes to add value across the supply chain from farm to fork.
7. The State's flagship program for supporting farmers and other producers called FOCUS is being implemented successfully. The program aims at collectivization of farmers into Producer Groups and Cooperatives. A group corpus support of Rs. 5,000 per group member is provided for undertaking production related activities.
8. FOCUS+ program has been conceptualized to provide an untied grant of Rs. 5,000 to individual bank accounts. Till date, more than 3 lakh households have benefited with a support of over Rs. 200 crores through FOCUS and FOCUS+. The government endeavors to expand the reach of the program to all the 8 lakh urban and rural households within the next 5 years.
9. My government has implemented several product specific mission mode projects in the primary sector. These include missions for Lakadong turmeric, ginger, spices, aromatic plants, mushroom, and other horticulture products. Government has been able to support more than one lakh farmers through various mission mode projects in the last 2 years.

Animal Husbandry & Veterinary

10. Livestock production has always been an integral part of rural livelihoods in the State. My government has launched twin missions - Piggery Mission and Milk Mission to make the State self-sufficient in pork and milk production. These two missions aim at transformation of the rural economy by leveraging the setup of cooperative societies. A total of 413 cooperative societies have availed support amounting to around Rs. 80 crores to set up pig breeding units and fattening units under Piggery Mission. Under the PROGRESS program, 74,000 piglets were distributed to the poor farmers, to promote piggery and create alternate rural livelihoods.

Fisheries

11. The Government has laid emphasis on developing fisheries to diversify the livelihood opportunities and reduce the reliance on traditional agri and allied activities.
12. Through the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) and Meghalaya State Aquaculture Mission, the fish production in the state has been improving significantly over the past five years. Production for 2022-23 is expected to be above 18,000 MT, which is an improvement over the production of 12,000 MT in 2017-18. Further to safeguard the fish farmers, a group accidental insurance scheme has been launched in 2022 under the PMMSY.

Cooperation

13. Most of the aforementioned agri-allied activities are generally managed and run by the cooperatives, thanks to the strength of the rural communities. There are 2,569 registered cooperative societies who are involved in multiple activities ranging from farming to tourism.

14. Around 330 Integrated Village Cooperative Societies have been promoted under the Meghalaya Livelihood Promotion and Access to Markets Project. These cooperatives will provide basic financial services like thrift and lending to their members. The State Government envisions that the cooperatives will become centers of economic activity and can eventually evolve into full-fledged MSMEs.

Textiles

15. The people of Meghalaya have been coexisting with nature since ages. This has been reflected in the silk extraction process of the Ryndia Silk, popularly known as Ahimsa Silk. Meghalaya's handloom sector reflects the cultural ethos and rich heritage of the people of the State particularly in Eri and Muga Culture. The Integrated Textiles Tourism Complex at Nongpoh is at an advanced stage of completion. The project will promote textiles based tourism, skill upgradation, design diversification and market linkages.
16. My government is implementing various ongoing State Plan Schemes for the welfare of weavers. Design Innovation Resource Centre at the Eri Silk Village, Umden-Diwon, is being developed to showcase the history and design development of Ryndia.

Community & Rural Development

17. My government has recently notified nine new C&RD blocks in the state, taking the number to 55. This will improve the delivery of the services and bring administration closer to the people.
18. Meghalaya is one of the best performing states in the implementation of MGNREGA. The expenditure under MGNREGA in this financial year is expected to be above Rs. 1,100 crores. The wage expenditure has been doubled by improving the number of person days generated and assets created, over the past five years.

Special focus has also been given towards management of natural resources and water conservation. Under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, construction of over 17,355 pucca houses and over 12,235 toilets have been taken up in the last financial year, in convergence with MGNREGA.

19. Women empowerment through formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs) under National Rural Livelihood Mission has been the focus of the government. The State now has over 43,000 SHGs benefiting over 4 lakh households. This is a seven-fold jump in the number of SHGs from 5,800 in 2018. The skilling and marketing of the products has also been taken up with Megha MOVE – an initiative to onboard all SHG products on e-commerce websites like Amazon and Flipkart.

Social Welfare

20. My government has enhanced the pension benefit to vulnerable sections by 50% from Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 9,000 annually, under the CM-CARES program. 65,771 senior citizens, 36,222 single mothers and 14,227 infirm citizens are benefitting through the CM-CARES scheme. The support has also been extended to the beneficiaries of the Centrally sponsored National Social Assistance Program.
21. Anganwadi helpers and workers are frontline workers at the village level for the effective implementation of various initiatives. In recognition of their dedication and services, the government has doubled the honorarium paid to them. 4,630 Anganwadi Workers, 1266 Mini Anganwadi Workers and 4,630 Anganwadi Helpers are provided additional honorarium of Rs. 3,000, Rs. 1,500 and Rs. 1,000 per month respectively as the State Government incentive in addition to the Government of India's honorarium.
22. My government has taken the initiative to address the grave problem of malnutrition affecting children, with the launch of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Mission in May 2022.

The mission aims to transform all the Anganwadi Centres in the state into ECD Centres, which will provide nutrition and science-based cognitive development practices. It provides coverage to 1,500 villages that had been left out of the Government of India's Integrated Child Development Scheme.

23. Drug menace is a serious issue affecting the society. My government has drafted the Anti-drug Mission, aimed at making Meghalaya, a drug free state. The Drug Reduction, Elimination and Action Mission (DREAM), to achieve awareness and prevention of substance abuse is also being conceptualised.

Health and Family Welfare

24. In the past five years, the State has made tremendous progress towards achieving universal health coverage and improving access to quality health care services. The Meghalaya State Health Policy 2021 has been introduced to enhance the essential public health care services and focus on positive health. To ensure the well being of people at the grassroots 109 health facilities are being renovated and 19 are being newly constructed. Apart from these, over 6,254 Village Health Councils were formed, which will formalize the role of communities in addressing health issues.
25. The MOTHER program was launched to track, and monitor pregnant mothers to tackle the challenge of high Maternal Mortality and Infant Mortality Rates. Over 2.2 Lakh mothers have been supported since its inception. Further, transit homes and transit vehicles have been operationalised to improve institutional delivery. The government has launched the drone medicine delivery system to deliver medicines to the remotest locations of the state on time. The technology is able to deliver medicines in 30 minutes instead of 3 hours through traditional methods.

26. The State has been implementing the Megha Health Insurance Scheme successfully in order to reduce out-of-pocket expenses for medical treatment. The scheme now provides insurance coverage upto Rs. 5,30,000/- per family. The successful implementation of the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana and Megha Health Insurance Scheme enabled the State to be awarded as the Best Performing state under these schemes.
27. High cancer cases in the State, especially tobacco related cancer, is a cause of concern. The Cancer Wing of Civil Hospital Shillong was inaugurated in December, 2022. It has separate wards for male and female with 50 and 25 beds respectively and also provides day care facilities. It will provide radiation therapy and support for those affected by the disease. The government will ensure that screening facilities are also set up in Tura, for early detection of cancer.

Food & Civil Supplies

28. Five districts -West Jaintia Hills, East Jaintia Hills, East Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills and Ri-Bhoi, have been selected for the distribution of fortified rice, to reduce the levels of anemia and micronutrient deficiencies.
29. As per the MoU signed with United Nations World Food Programme, a Price Monitoring Cell Dashboard to track the prices of essential commodities has been launched.

Education

30. My government has taken measures to comprehensively improve the educational infrastructure at the grass-root. Infrastructure upgradation of about 1,885 schools have been taken up on priority.
31. The government has also enhanced the salary of Ad-hoc teachers by upto 50%, benefitting about 10,000 teachers. This will have

additional financial implication of Rs. 81 crores annually. The salary payments of the 12,500 Samagra Sikshya Abhiyan teachers are in the process of being streamlined. Under the PM POSHAN scheme, the salary of more than 18,000 cooks and helpers has been doubled.

32. The government also has taken up the responsibility of taking higher education to the doorsteps of the rural population by setting up 21 Peoples' Colleges. To support students pursuing higher education, post-matric scholarships amounting to Rs. 171 crores have been disbursed this year.
33. The administrative and academic building of the Capt. Williamson Sangma Technical University and the Shillong Government College of Engineering were inaugurated recently. Civil works for the Model Degree College at Patharkhmah have been completed. The College of Architecture and Urban Planning in Tura and Model Degree Colleges at Rongjeng are nearing completion. Construction of the College of Science & Commerce at Mawphlang and Mahendraganj are making steady progress.

Sports & Youth Affairs

34. Meghalaya is a demographically young state, with almost 70% of the population under the age of 30 years. The Meghalaya Youth Policy, 2021 aims to create opportunities to make the youth realize their true potential and contribute to nation building.
35. My government has initiated several programs for youth development. ASPIRE Program was launched to provide skill-based training, which would nurture critical thinking, soft skills, life skills, and communication skills. More than 23,000 youth have been trained under the program.
36. There is a need to motivate and empower the youth to be job creators rather than job seekers. To achieve this, the government

has been implementing, over the last three years, a holistic entrepreneurship program called PRIME. More than 4,000 entrepreneurs have been provided support through the program. Meghalaya has now been recognised as one of the best startup ecosystems in the country.

37. My government has been working diligently to upgrade the sports infrastructure. The football stadium at the PA Sangma Sports Complex at Tura was recently inaugurated. Construction of the Wahiajer Multi Sports Complex at Wahiajer and upgradation of J.N. Stadium at Shillong are making steady progress. Once completed these infrastructure will allow the State to host national and international sports events. Further, more than 300 grassroots infrastructure are being built to promote grassroot sporting culture in the State.
38. The 2nd North East Olympic Games was successfully organized in November 2022. Over 3,000 athletes participated in the Games across 18 sporting disciplines. Further, Meghalaya Games were revived after a gap of 16 years. Schemes to support athletes like Cash Award Scheme and Scholarship Scheme are being implemented.
39. With a vision to produce Olympians, the STAR program for early talent identification and nurturing has been launched. More than 4,600 youth have been screened according to international standards. The outstanding performance of the State's men's football team at the recently concluded Santosh Trophy is highly encouraging.

CM Secretariat

40. YESS Meghalaya program has been launched for supporting the organizations to take up activities for youth development. The program was launched in July 2022 and 1,270 youth groups have been supported with a total expenditure of Rs. 4 crores.

41. Under the Chief Minister's Special Development Fund (CMSDF), an amount of Rs. 15 Crore has been sanctioned in the year 2022-23, for 135 proposals received from the NGOs and MLAs.

Labour

42. The Government has accorded special focus to the upliftment of the labour force through capacity building and welfare interventions. Adequate steps have been taken for up-gradation and improvement of government ITIs. Under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, 50,000 youth are expected to be trained in the next three years. New age and advanced courses like AI, robotics, mechatronics, drone technology and others are being included, with opportunities for international placement.
43. The Skills Meghalaya program was launched to augment various facets of skill development, livelihood generation and entrepreneurship targeting 1.2 lakh youth in the next 5 years. Under the Employment Exchange Mission Mode Project, employment exchanges are being converted to model career centres. The Union Ministry of Labour has sanctioned four Model Career Centres at Shillong, Tura, Nongstoin and Ampati.
44. Under the Meghalaya Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare' Board, 91,608 building and construction workers have been registered. They are given various benefits as per entitlement including disability pension, funeral assistance, medical assistance, death benefit and educational scholarships. Under the eSHRAM portal created by the Union Ministry of Labour & Employment, a free accidental insurance is being provided to workers from the unorganized sector.

Forest & Environment

45. Meghalaya is blessed with rich biodiversity and people have been deeply connected to nature since ages. Forest cover in Meghalaya

accounts for 76% of the total area, which is much above the national average of 24.6%. The government is committed to conserving this rich environment for sustainable development.

46. The State Government has initiated the Payment for Ecosystem Services program, also known as Green Meghalaya, through which the communities are rewarded for preserving & protecting the existing forests. Communities are given a grant of upto Rs. 15,000 per hectare under the program. It is targeted to protect and augment 2 lakh hectares of forest cover.
47. For better conservation of wildlife and biodiversity, the current Zoo at Lady Hydari Park will be relocated to Umtrew, Ri-Bhoi. Construction of the new zoo, covering an area of 72.74 hectares, is progressing well and will be operationalized soon.
48. The Government is working on a comprehensive action plan to tackle climate change – ‘State Action Plan on Climate Change 2.0’, which will help identify the key problems and provide corresponding action plans to mitigate them. To promote conservation efforts, Natural Resource Management Committees at the village level have been strengthened. A 10,000 strong cadre of village community facilitators has also been created.

Water Resources

49. The gross area under irrigation in the state is 76,330 hectares, by the end of 2021-22. The government aims to improve the irrigation potential of the state, multifold in the upcoming years. An additional area of 20,544 hectares is being covered through 129 ongoing minor irrigation projects, under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana.
50. The Department is also implementing the National Hydrology Project for data acquisition, monitoring and decision support system for the water resources in the State. This will promote water security through integrated planning and monitoring of water resources.

Soil & Water Conservation

51. The Soil & Water Conservation Department is undertaking several programmes for ensuring integrated soil and water management and improving livelihoods. Under the mass afforestation program, 25 lakh saplings have been planted covering an area of 2,261 hectares in 2022-23.
52. Through the Meghalaya State Watershed and Wasteland Development Agency, the State is implementing the Climate Adaptive Community Based Water Harvesting Project, with the assistance of the Asian Development Bank. The project will be implemented at an estimated project cost of Rs. 734 Crore over the next 5 years.

Public Health Engineering

53. Providing drinking water to rural households has been a top priority of the Government. When the Jal Jeevan Mission was launched in 2019 by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, the State had only 4,550 functional household tap connections. In less than four years, this has increased to more than 2.9 lakh households. Further 1,422 villages now have 100% household tap connections. Meghalaya is now the second-best improved state in providing water connectivity.
54. Other major water supply schemes like the Greater Shillong Water Supply Scheme Phase III, Nongstoin Urban Water Supply Scheme and Ampati Water Supply Scheme are at various stages of completion. The Baghmara Water Supply Scheme was completed and inaugurated. The Williamnagar Water Supply Scheme has been initiated.

Urban Development

55. The government has formulated and implemented various schemes and programmes, to improve the quality of living of the citizens in urban centers.

56. Under the Smart City program, several projects are being implemented in Shillong city. The reconstruction of the Laitumkhrah Market, Polo Commercial Complex, Smart Roads, Integrated Control and Command Centre, and Automatic Car Parking facility at Motphran are progressing well.
57. The government has taken a multi-pronged approach to decongest Shillong city. 30 buses have been procured and a shared school bus system is being introduced at a cost of Rs. 10 Crores. It is estimated that approximately 450 cars shall be removed from the street by this system during peak hours resulting in saving considerable time and cost. The Government has also prioritized increasing the road network capacity including the creation of several new roads to decongest Shillong.
58. The Government has acquired about 807 acres of land in Mawpdang-Mawkhanu to expand the New Shillong Township. This will ease the burden on the existing city center and also help in urbanization in a sustainable manner.
59. Creation of infrastructure for waste management is an important priority. The construction of the Fecal Sludge & Septage Treatment Plant at Jowai and the Solid Waste Management Plant at Khliehriat is in progress. Land acquisition for landfill site at Tura has been completed and land acquisition for landfills for Shillong, Jowai and Williamnagar is under process.

Housing

60. My government has initiated several programs to improve housing in the State. Through the Chief Minister's Housing Assistance Programme, three bundles of roofing materials are being provided to Economically Weaker Section beneficiaries. An amount of Rs. 163 crores has been sanctioned in 2022-23 for this program.

Transport

61. My government has taken up several measures to improve connectivity. Shillong Airport at Umroi has been made fully functional. Currently the airport is catering to about 10,000 passengers with 250 flights every month, connecting 9 cities. SpiceJet Airlines now operates direct flights to New Delhi and more cities will be added soon. The Baljek Airport will also be operationalised by upgrading the existing infrastructure.

Tourism

62. Government recently approved the Tourism Policy, 2023 which aims to position Meghalaya as a preferred tourism destination. The policy aims to harness the tourism potential of the State for driving growth, generating employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for individuals and communities. The policy is based on five core guiding principles of sustainable and responsible tourism, employment generation and entrepreneurship, community participation, technology, and synergy with other schemes.
63. It is also a matter of pride that the Government could operationalise two 5 star hotels - Vivanta, Meghalaya and Courtyard by Marriott in 2022-23. In new and emerging circuits like Thadlaskein in West Jaintia Hills and Sakaladuma in the Nokrek area of West Garo Hills, the State Government is constructing resorts and hospitality complexes. These initiatives are in line with the government's goal to make Meghalaya a truly high value tourist destination.
64. Tourist spots are being developed across the state to provide employment opportunities for the people. The Homestay scheme launched in convergence with PMEGP provides a subsidy of 70%. It is targeted to build 5,000 homestays in the next five years. The scheme has generated great demand and till date, 235 entrepreneurs from across the state have availed the scheme.

65. To augment the gap in quality transport vehicles, the Prime Tourism Vehicle Scheme was initiated. Through this scheme, local entrepreneurs are provided a 50% subsidy on the on-road cost of luxury vehicles. 50 local entrepreneurs have been selected in the first phase.
66. Meghalaya, with a rich cultural heritage, is popularly known as the Rock Capital of India. To carry forward this legacy, Meghalaya Grassroots Music Program has been initiated to give a platform to emerging musical artists to showcase their talent. So far over 700 musical shows have been hosted across the State, directly benefiting more than 500 artists.

Information Technology & Communications

67. The information technology enabled services sector has been growing exponentially in the past few decades and is projected to expand further. The Shillong Tech Park Phase-I was inaugurated and dedicated to the people of Meghalaya in February, 2022. The Tech Park will support Incubation centers in collaboration with industry, academia and government stakeholders and has provided employment for about 1500 people both directly and indirectly.
68. Banking on this success, construction of Phase II of Shillong Tech Park has been initiated. On completion, this project will provide direct employment to more than 3,000 people and indirect employment to another 10,000 youth.
69. Providing mobile connectivity in rural areas is a priority. Through Universal Service Obligation Fund, a project for covering all uncovered villages is being implemented. Efforts are also on to improve broadband connectivity across the state.

Power

70. Reliable power supply is an essential requirement for driving growth. Reforms are being implemented in generation,

transmission and distribution sectors. The first phase of Ganol Mini Hydro Electric project, was inaugurated and commissioned in January 2023. With this the State has a total installed capacity of 363.70 MW generating about 1,100 MU of energy annually.

71. Works to strengthen and modernize the power distribution network and reduce technical and commercial losses are in progress. To diversify the energy mix, the government is exploring the development of Solar Power. The Meghalaya New and Renewable Energy Development Agency has undertaken various schemes to promote solar energy including installation of 1500 solar street lights, 50 biogas plants and 200 solar pumps under the PM-KUSUM Scheme, which are in different stages of implementation.

Public Works Department

72. Roads are the backbone of the economy and good quality all weather roads are critical for the all-round development of the State. The total road length of all categories of roads is about 10,577 Kms.
73. The government is taking up road projects under various programmes. Under the World Bank funded Meghalaya Integrated Transport Project, critical roads like Shillong-Diengpasoh road and Laitlyngkot-Pomlakrai-Laitkor road are completed.
74. Under PMGSY, a network of above 2,200 km of rural roads has been built in the last five years. Critical road projects that are being undertaken for improved connectivity are making good progress. These include the Mairang-Rani Godown-Azra Road, the Rongram-Phulbari Hill Road and the Balat-Shella Road.

Civil Defence and Home Guards

75. The Fire service personnel have displayed exemplary performance in the field of firefighting and rescue operations. Similarly, Home

Guards & Civil Defence volunteers have been assisting the police in the maintenance of law and order, traffic duties and emergency situations. In the last financial year, 330 Civil Defence Volunteers and 65 Home Guards Volunteers were imparted training.

Revenue & Disaster Management

76. The State Disaster Response Force has been at the forefront of Disaster Management in the state. The force and the District Administration have done commendable job in responding to the unprecedented floods and calamities that occurred in June 2022. The government mobilized Rs.240 Crore for repair and restoration of damaged roads, bridges and community infrastructure with assistance from the World Bank.

Prisons and Correctional Services

77. The government is focussing on providing correctional services that aim to reform offenders through various programmes in collaboration with NGOs. The E-prisons project is being implemented to ensure better management of prisons. Land has been identified at New Shillong Township for construction of a central prison.

Parliamentary Affairs

78. Hon'ble Members, I am happy to inform you all that the construction of the new Assembly Building in Mawdiangdiang in New Shillong has now resumed and is making steady progress. Our endeavor is to make the new building functional soon.
79. The Meghalaya Legislative Assembly is one of the first assemblies in the country to launch the e-Vidhan mission mode project in its Autumn session of 2022. This project funded by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs aims to digitize the assembly records and make the functioning of the legislature paperless.

Law

80. The Law Department has been working tirelessly for effective and timely justice delivery. Separation of Judiciary from the Executive have been completed in all the districts including sub-divisions. Seven district courts and three sub-divisional courts are already functioning from permanent court buildings. Building of infrastructure in the State is under process which includes construction of court buildings and residential quarters for Judicial Officers.
81. In order to fasten justice delivery, the Government is focusing on implementing e-Courts and digitization of records. To improve the quality of legal education, the National Law University of Meghalaya has been established. The Vice Chancellor has been appointed and it is expected that the first batch of students will join in this academic year.

District Council Affairs

82. My Government endeavors to enable the Autonomous District Councils to effectively discharge their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding the traditional heritage and customary practices. During 2022-23, an amount of Rs. 40.5 crores was sanctioned by the Government of India to the three district councils, based on the recommendation of the Fifteenth Finance Commission.

Border Areas Development

83. The state prioritizes the development of the areas along the inter-state and international border. For the year 2022-23, an amount Rs. 6.45 Crore from the Central share and Rs. 71.67 lakhs from the State share has been sanctioned under Border Areas Development Programme.

General Administration

84. The General Administration Department is working towards augmenting various infrastructure at the district and state level. Construction of new circuit house at Baghmara, construction of Annex Building of Jowai Circuit House, construction of Governor's Guest House at Tura, construction of Civil Sub-Division office & Circuit House of Pynursla Civil Sub-Division are few of the works that are ongoing and will be completed soon.
85. The construction of a Sainik Rest House in Shillong to benefit Ex-Servicemen, Widows and Dependents is making good progress.

Personnel and Administrative Reforms

86. Time bound delivery of public services is the right of every citizen. Under the Meghalaya Right to Public Services Act, 2020, the Meghalaya State Public Services Delivery Commission was set up. Ninety-one services across various departments and offices have been notified for time bound service delivery. Out of these eighty services have been made available online through an integrated portal.

Planning, Investment Promotion and Sustainable Development

87. The Planning Department has been renamed as the Planning, Investment Promotion and Sustainable Development Department. This department plays an important role in mobilizing financial resources from the Central Government ministries such as the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region and Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The Department is also the nodal department for the implementation of externally aided projects, funded by agencies like the World Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Asian Development Bank and New Development Bank.
88. Over the past five years, the State Government has been able to achieve a four fold increase in mobilization of funding under external aided projects to the tune of Rs. 10,000 crores.

89. Some of the flagship external projects are the Meghalaya Livelihoods and Access to Markets Project, aimed at improving the supply chain of agriculture, horticulture and forest produce. The Meghalaya Community-based Forest Management and Livelihood Improvement project is aimed at conserving natural resources.
90. The Meghalaya Community-Led Landscape Management Project, Meghalaya Integrated Transport Project, Meghalaya Power Distribution Sector Improvement Project and Meghalaya Eco-Tourism Infrastructure Development Project are being undertaken to improve the environment, transport, power and tourism sectors respectively.
91. The government is committed to achieving the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030. In the SDG India Index 3.0, the State has seen an improvement from the 25th position to the 22nd position overall in the ranking of states.

Finance

92. Aimed at delivering banking services to the last mile, the government has successfully executed the business correspondent model. Through this, about 600 new business correspondents have been deployed, in addition to the 1,100 existing business correspondents, who are successfully providing banking services even in remote villages.
93. The government has digitized the process of issuing approvals and sanctions to all the government projects by launching the e-Proposal System. This has improved the efficiency in government functioning manifold. The initiative has received the coveted United Nations World Summit on Information Society Award for implementation of technology in governance.

Commerce & Industry

94. My government is working tirelessly for the promotion of trade and commerce to boost the state economy and generate local

employment. Currently, there are eight functional Land Customs Stations and five functional Border Haats. Three new Border Haats are under construction and sixteen more are proposed to the Government of India.

95. The government has initiated the setting up of the Mega Food Park, at Mendipathar, North Garo Hills at a cost of Rs.65.89 Crore. This will provide modern infrastructure facilities for food processing and generate employment in the region.

Excise, Registration, Taxation & Stamps

96. I am happy to state that the Taxation Department has made significant progress in collecting revenue for the State. By the end of December, 2022 Rs. 1,078.25 crore and Rs. 429.84 crores have been collected under GST and Non-GST components, for 2022-23. The departments of Excise, Registration and Stamps are also making efforts to increase the revenue collection.

Mining & Geology

97. My government has taken steps to start scientific mining. Prospecting licenses have been allotted to 17 applicants out of which 4 have obtained the approval of the Ministry of Coal for the geological report for preparation of the mining plan. It is expected that the mining leases will be granted soon.

Legal Metrology

98. The Legal Metrology Department in Meghalaya implements and enforces the provisions of the Legal Metrology Act & Rules. In order to modernize and strengthen their infrastructure, Government of India has sanctioned Grants-in-Aid for construction of Secondary Standard Laboratory at Tura and Working Standard Laboratory at Ampati and Resubelpara. Civil construction work relating to the Research & Development Centre along with the Working Standard Laboratory is also in progress at Nongpoh.

Arts and Culture

99. The government has taken many initiatives for preservation, conservation, promotion, development and augmentation of the rich cultural heritage of the State. The Shillong International Centre for Performing Arts & Culture was inaugurated in November 2022. The Arts & Culture Centre cum Tribal Museum at Chidegre, West Garo Hills was inaugurated in January 2023. The construction of the Tribal Research Institute at Babadam in West Garo Hills District is in progress and will be completed soon. The Meghalaya International Film Festival was held recently to promote filmmaking and film tourism.

Information and Public Relations

100. To mark the Statehood Day celebrations, an impressive programme was organized by the government at the U Soso Tham Auditorium, Shillong on the 21st January, 2023. While focusing on the history of the Statehood Day, the programme included a photo exhibition and flower show.
101. The Government has approved the Advertisement Policy, 2023 to replace the age old policy of 1988. The policy aims to include the digital media platforms for government advertisements. For effective and durable dissemination of information to the public, twelve LED panels and 360 hoardings have been installed across the State.

Printing & Stationery

102. The government has initiated the modernisation and upgradation of the Government Press by installing high speed digital printers, variable data printers and heavy duty lamination machines. In conformity with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, the Government Braille Press has successfully printed Braille Textbooks for visually impaired students.

Election

103. The Election Department has successfully conducted free and fair polls for the recently concluded assembly election. The overall voting percentage for the State was 86.69%. I would like to thank the citizens for coming out in large numbers to exercise their franchise.

Conclusion

Hon'ble Members, now I have come to the conclusion of my speech. I have highlighted various initiatives and interventions, programmes and achievements of the State Government and I hope that these will be diligently deliberated upon by the Hon'ble Members of this August House.

Jai Hind

Khublei

Mitela