

Government of Tripura
Directorate of Information & Cultural Affairs

S-3260

Agartala, 23rd January, 2021

Speech of Hon'ble Chief Minister at the 69th Plenary of NEC

1. Hon'ble Chairman, North-Eastern Council (NEC), Shri Amit Shah ji;
Hon'ble Vice Chairman, NEC, Dr. Jitendra Singh ji;
Hon'ble Governors and Chief Ministers of North Eastern States;
Other Distinguished Members of the Council;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

2. I consider it as a great honour to be present amidst you all here in the 69th NEC Meeting as a representative of the 37 lakh people of the state of Tripura.

2.1 Since the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji has assumed office, he has accorded special focus and directions towards holistic development of North Eastern States. To put this in perspective, during his tenure, Hon'ble Prime Minister has visited North Eastern Region more than 30 times. The policy attention towards the region across various dimensions of development including economy, infrastructure, employment, industry, and culture has seen tremendous progress.

2.2 I welcome Union Home Minister, Shri Amit Shah ji, the Chairman of the NEC. I am more than confident that under his able guidance every effort would be made to bring the North Eastern States at par with developed regions of the country

2.3 I am extremely thankful to the Union Minister of State (I/C), Ministry of Development of North-Eastern Region (DONER), Dr. Jitendra Singh ji who has been a guiding light for the development of North-East. As the Vice Chairman of the Council, his valuable support is always available for the holistic growth of the region.

2.4 I would like to thank the Hon'ble Prime Minister for his dynamic role for issuing the broad guidelines at regular intervals in containing the COVID-19 Pandemic. I would like share before this august gathering that Tripura had battled the COVID-19 Pandemic admirably due to which the positivity rate is a mere 0.32% and the recovery rate is 99% at present. As a result of the lessons learnt from the Pandemic, the people of the State have become much more conscious about cleanliness and sensitive to the welfare of elderly people. This has not only reduced the COVID-19 death rate but also the normal death rate of the State. Vaccination has also started in the State with 56,000 vaccines received in the first slot. The State Government is in the process of procuring a Sequencing Machine to identify the new UK variant of COVID.

3. During the last two and a half years, the State Government of Tripura has undertaken several path breaking initiatives and is in the process of launching more schemes to bring about a sea change in the socio-economic scenario of the State. The State Government is steadily marching ahead to become a Model State in the coming days. I feel proud that there is a paradigm shift and transformation in the Government with transparency in the administration, improvement in work culture, timely completion of work, quality of work, job avenues created, rise in self employment and inducing swanirbharta among the youth. I would like to share before you a few of the major initiatives taken up by the State Government:

3.1 The Per Capita Income of the State which was Rs. 1,00,444/- in 2017-18 has risen to Rs. 1,23,630/- in 2019-20 i.e. by 23% indicating marked improvement of living standard and well-being of people of Tripura.

3.2 A new scheme, namely '*Mukhyamantri Swanirbhar Parivar Yojana*', is being launched shortly in the State to improve livelihood and induce self sufficiency among the rural people through income generation under primary sector activities by distributing inputs in the areas like agriculture, horticulture, fisheries and animal husbandry. Every eligible family will be assisted to take up cultivation of fruits, vegetable, poultry, fish culture, animal rearing, flower growing, etc. This scheme is expected to benefit around six lakh rural families.

3.3 '*Mukhyamantri Swanirbhar Yojana (MSY)*' has been launched in the State for the speedy recovery of the businesses of Urban Shopkeepers who had significant impact on their businesses due to COVID-19 pandemic. The scheme aims to benefit Urban Shopkeepers/Traders/Street Vendors by providing Trade Licence, Insurance Coverage, Loans from SC/ST/OBC/Minority Development Corporation of the state. The programme is being implemented in 20 ULBs of the State in Camp mode and as of now, 230 Camps have been conducted with the involvement of Line Departments, Insurance Companies towards the benefit of Urban Shopkeepers/Traders and Street Vendors.

3.4 For bringing crop diversification in the existing rice-based cropping system, more remunerative crops like hybrid maize and black gram have been taken up with post-harvest processing and value addition support for increasing farmers' income. Farmers will get a return of Rs.1.88 in case of black gram and Rs.2.19 in case of maize with a investment of Rs.1.00 whereas in case of rice farmers get a return of Rs.1.45 with investment of Rs.1.00. Further, 21,000 hectare area has been taken up under organic cultivation. For the first time in the State, 50,000 landless bargadars (share croppers and tenant farmers) are availing special loans from NABARD under '*Chief Minister Bargadar (landless) Yojana*'. So far, loans have been disbursed to 20,377 landless bargadars. The State Government has laid due emphasis on better value addition and further income generation from naturally available resources like bamboo, tea, rubber and horticultural products in line with the policy of the Government to double farmers' income by 2022. 65529 hectare of agricultural land has been targeted for irrigation coverage under '*Chief Minister's Assured Irrigation Programme*' by 2024-25.

3.5 As part of Government's efforts made for comprehensive welfare of the farmers of the State, the State Government started procurement of Paddy at Minimum Support Price (MSP) for the first time in the State during 2018-19 and since then a total of 48,716 MT Paddy has been procured cumulatively so far from 27,735 farmers of the State who got benefitted with payment of total Rs. 86.65 crores directly to their accounts.

3.6 The State Government has brought 299 hectare of land under exotic flower cultivation with a view to increase returns from Rs.6.20 crore at present to Rs.61.00 crore in next two years. Ten Mushroom Spawn Production Units are being established across the State with 100% financial assistance. Special initiatives have been taken to bring 25 hectare of land under Dragon Fruit cultivation and 97 hectare of land under black pepper in the State. As of now, total 5590 MT of Pineapple has been exported to other states and abroad bringing a return of Rs.7.77 crore. Solar based cooling chambers have been set up in 3 Districts of the State by the National Institute of Solar Energy, Haryana for supporting pineapple marketing. New scheme has been introduced for cultivation of pineapple in 505 hectare of land through chemical staggering process to ensure continuous production of pineapple throughout the year.

3.7 Tripura is the second largest rubber producing state in India as per area under cultivation and quantity of produce. Smoke houses are being taken up by the State Government in order to improve the quality of rubber sheets produced in the State which will fetch better return for growers. Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association (ATMA) shall be investing Rs.1100 crore for cultivation of rubber on 2 lakh hectare of land as interest subvention (subsidy @ Rs.50,000/- per hectare) during the initial seven years.

3.8 Fish production has increased by 7000 MT during 2019-20 and it is expected to increase by another 23000 MT by the end of 2022-23 to reach a production level of 1,03,325 MT. 600 fishery units using Biofloc technology and 1500 units using cage culture have been taken up for enhanced fish production. Joint Forest Management Committee (JFMC) has been encouraged to have a choice of fish farming in water bodies under forest land.1000 hectare of such water area will be utilized for scientific fish farming involving JFMC in forest areas.

3.9 Scheme for introduction of sex sorted semen for Artificial Insemination for production of female calves (96% probability) has been taken up through "*Mukhyamantri Unnat Gudhan Prakalpa*". 76000 cows have been targeted for sex sorted artificial insemination in 2020-21 in 5 (five) districts of the State. Overall 3.2 lakh doses will be given over a period of 3 years. Slaughter Houses will be constructed at Pecharthal Block to pave the way for hygienic production, packing and export of pig meat (pork).

3.10 During last two & half year, total 13,845.33 hectare has been brought under plantation for maintaining ecological balance and aforestation. Total 1,006.30 KM has been brought under tree plantation for roadside beautification and 912.50 KM tree plantation in river bank has also been covered. Bamboo plantation of total 645.00 hectare has been created. State Government has decided to provide Record of Rights for Forest Right Patta Land and its Demarcation.

3.11 For the first time in the State, Muli Bamboo Cookies were launched in September, 2020 as a packaged product. The Bamboo & Cane Development Institute (BCDI), Agartala is organizing training programme for entrepreneurs in this area. State Government has developed two innovative products namely Bamboo brooms and Bamboo bottles during the financial year 2020-21 which is being marketed by Bamboo and Cane Development Institute (BCDI) under the assistance of *Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram (PMVDVK)*. 1000 Bamboo artisans are trained in production of these items. This has been appreciated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India in his "Mann Ki Baat" programme during July, 2020. Agar (*Aquilaria Malaccensis*) is the State Tree of Tripura which produces the valuable substance Agar. State Government has made an elaborate plan for marketing this product harvested from estimated 51 lakh Agar Trees of the State which is expected to generate income of Rs.2000 crore in next 2-3 years. For overall development of Agarbatti sector, the scheme namely, "Mukhyamantri Agarbatti Aatmanirbhar Mission" has been formulated. One Agarbatti manufacturing cluster has been set up at Kumarghat Industrial Estate and 6 mechanized Agarbatti stick making units have also started functioning in the State.

3.12 State Government had launched a new scheme called Atal Jaldhara Mission in December, 2018 under which Functional Household Tap Connection (FHTC) with free water connection charge shall be provided to all households in the State by 15th August 2022. Till 2017-18, coverage of FHTC was only 1% of the State's population which has now remarkably increased to 22% in 2019-20.

3.13 The endeavor of the State Government is to convert Tripura into a preferred destination for industrial and trade activities. The trade volume has increased from Rs.390.68 crore in 2017-18 to Rs.675 crore in 2019-20 and the export from Tripura has increased remarkably from Rs.6.46 crore in 2017-18 to Rs.30.34 crore in 2019-20. A Special Economic Zone (SEZ) is being set up at Sabroom for boosting export and import. The Foundation Stone of SEZ was laid on 11th September 2020. The bridge over River Feni (Maitri Setu) is nearing completion to support port connectivity with Chittagong. An Integrated Check Post (ICP) is proposed to be set up at Sabroom after completion of the Feni Bridge. Agartala – Akhaura Rail Link is under construction which is expected to be completed by March, 2021 with a Rail Yard at Nischintapur on this Rail Link where an Integrated Check Post (ICP) is proposed. Establishment of rail connectivity between Feni (Bangladesh) and Belonia (India) has been taken up with Ministry of External Affairs and the Railway Ministry. With the inauguration of floating jetty on 5th September, 2020, Srimantapur Terminal near Sonamura has been included in the map of Inland Water Transport (IWT). A contemporary New Integrated Terminal Building (NITB) with modern state of art facilities at M. B. B. Airport is on the verge of completion.

3.14 Nine National Highway projects for construction of 262.00 km roads and 2 bridges in Tripura having cost of Rs. 3190.00 crore has been inaugurated recently by the Hon'ble Union Minister, Road Transport & Highways etc., Government of India in September, 2020. Moreover, it has been assured by the Hon'ble Minister that 4 big projects would be taken up in the State of Tripura with an unprecedented investment of Rs.7530.00 crore.

3.15 Tripura has tremendous tourism potential as the State is rich in natural beauty and has several significant religious tourist spots. The number of tourist in Tripura has increased by 11.06% from 5, 29,815 in 2018-19 to 5, 86,135 in 2019-20. With a view to promote tourism in the State, Tripura Tourism Policy 2020-25 was introduced in February 2020. The policy provides a suitable system for promoting Public Private Partnerships (PPP) in Tripura. The State Government has sent a proposal to Asian Development Bank amounting Rs.500 crore to develop the tourism infrastructure in the State.

3.16 Various measures have been taken to preserve and promote the indigenous people of the State. The Tribal Welfare Department has been renamed as 'Janjati Kalyan Department'. Recently the State Cabinet had also decided in favour of renaming the TTAADC as 'The Tipra Territorial Council' and submitted a proposal to the Central Government in this regard.

3.17 In line with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's '*Vocal for Local Campaign*', the State Government is paying emphasis on the production and marketing of indigenous handloom and handicrafts products Steps have been taken for branding the traditional "RISHA" under India Handloom Brand (IHB) and providing uniform to Anganwadi and Asha Workers.

3.18 Tripura has successfully implemented *Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM)* social security scheme of unorganized workers and National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self Employed. The State is holding the 1st position in both the schemes in the North East.

3.19 For the first time in the State, funding of Rs. 4594.58 crore has been secured from World Bank, ADB and other agencies for infrastructure development in the Power Sector to ensure reliable and quality power supply to all consumers in the State.

3.20 The State of Tripura has been acclaimed as 1st best performing state in the category of North-Eastern States in India and second best performing state in overall country under *Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)*. It is indeed a matter of great satisfaction that all ULBs of Tripura

have already been declared and certified Open Defecation Free (ODF). Tripura is one of the six states in the Country and only State in the North East to have been awarded the Light House project which entails building of 1000 economical, sustainable, durable and high quality flats in multi-storied buildings for economically weaker sections/Low income group. Township Projects for ownership flats under TUDA and Tripura Housing & Construction Board (THCB) have been taken up at several locations in Agartala covering 1500 flats.

3.21 The State Police has achieved commendable success in the last two years with the support and cooperation from the people of the State. CCTV coverage in the State is now 8.8 CCTV cameras per lakh population at present. The law and order situation has improved notably and is well under control which is evident from the fact that murder, rape, motor accidents and other grave crimes have reduced by 20.8%, 15.4%, 28.8% and 22.0% in 2020 as compared to 2019.

3.22 Many new schemes and reforms in the education sector have been started in the State to improve the quality of education. Some of major initiatives are: (i) A new scholarship scheme 'Lakshya' has been introduced for young aspirants of IAS examination in the State, (ii) Centralized online admission system for all 22 General Degree Colleges have been started, (iii) "Bachhar Bachao Examination", under which students who fail upto two subjects can sit for examination again within two months time has been introduced, (iv) 62 Bengali Medium Schools have been converted into English Medium, (v) 20 Government and Government aided Schools have switched over to CBSE from TBSE, (vi) Spoken English classes for 120 hours per child for better fluency in Spoken English, (vii) Vocational Education subject has been introduced for the first time in 80 Government Schools of the State, (viii) 'Super 30' has been launched which provides coaching facilities to the Top 30 (thirty) Madhyamik passed out students of TBSE for appearing in JEE/NEET Entrance Examination, (ix) Chief Ministers' Annual State Award for Academic Excellence to meritorious students of Madhyamik & H.S. (+ 2 stage) Examinations conducted by Tripura Board of Secondary Education(TBSE).

4. NEC Issues:

4.1 Priority list of 10 projects of the State with estimated cost of Rs. 119.02 crore for the financial year 2020-21 was sent to NEC in the month of June, 2020. NEC has recommended 3 projects with estimated cost of Rs.32.72 crore. NEC may recommend the remaining 7 projects with estimated cost of Rs.86.30 crore in the financial year 2020-21.

4.2 Presently, 60% of the NEC budget is distributed among the 8 NE states and the remaining 40% Budget is set aside for Central component for Central Ministries and agencies for taking up regional projects. Instead, it may be well thought of whether 90% NEC Budget may be distributed to the NE states and the remaining 10% may be retained by NEC for taking up such regional projects which are necessary for the region and the projects for the State be finalised by a committee headed by state's Chief Secretary like that of MoDoNER system of sanctioning projects. This will expedite sanction as well as speed of NEC projects implementation in the state. State Government may be given freedom to increase or decrease project cost as per their requirement and also make component-wise changes in the projects.

4.3 In the 66th Plenary of the North Eastern Council, the normative allocation of NEC Budget among NE states was approved and it was decided that 12% of allocation would be made to Tripura as per a formula based on various development indices like the geographical condition, population and human index, etc.. However, based on the releases made during the last 5 years (2016-17 to 2020-21), it has been observed that the share of Tripura over these years has been

only 5.71%. It is indeed an area of concern for our State. It is requested to adhere for providing 12% share to Tripura.

4.4 NEC may make necessary arrangements for organising training programmes on Capacity Building/Skill Development of officials of the development Departments and other Stakeholders of NE States in order to equip the officials for preparation of quality DPRs and proper implementation of projects/programmes. The training programmes may be held in each of the 8 NE States at least once in a year so that maximum number of participants from the states can participate in the training programmes.

4.5 As per the NEC General Guidelines-2020, thirty percent 30% NEC budget (Rs. 205.89 crore) allocation has been kept aside by NEC during Financial Year 2020-21 for new projects under the existing 'Schemes of North Eastern Council' as Central Sector Project for focused development of deprived areas; deprived/neglected sections of society and emerging priority sectors in the North Eastern States. Three proposals, namely (i) Community Development Programme for Santhal Community (Rs.3.05 crore), (ii) Establishment of Hindi Section at library of M. B. B. University (Rs.0.10 crore) and (iii) Promotion of Hindi in 5 Degree Colleges (Rs.0.50 crore) have been sent to NEC. These projects may be sanctioned expeditiously. During release of fund to the implementing agencies of the Central Sector Projects, State Government may also be informed.

4.6 NEC has proposed 19 Roads for 298.55 Km length with approximate cost of Rs. 1194.20 crore under North East Road Sector Development Scheme (NERSDS) during 2020-2025. The projects may be sanctioned.

5. Government of India Issues:

5.1 The 2nd meeting of NITI Forum for North East held on 4th December 2018 had recommended five key sectors viz., (i) Tourism, (ii) Tea, (iii) Bamboo, (iv) Dairy and (v) Pisciculture for achieving the objectives of the Forum. As follow up, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog has chaired a meeting on 23rd November 2020 to deliberate on the possibilities for reducing the compliance burden, which will help to improve the business and investment environment in the state. He also emphasized for working out and formulating Five Years Action Plan on the aforesaid sectors and the State Government to send project proposals to the relevant Ministries of the Central Government. Five Year Action Plan on the aforesaid identified sectors have been sent to the concerned Ministries of Government of India. The State Government has sent a comprehensive project proposal '*Rashtriya Gokul Mission*' under Dairy Sector for Rs.86.49 crore for next five years (2020-21 to 2024-25) covering all the major components of RGM as per guidelines of Government of India.

5.2 The preliminary survey for alternative railway connectivity from Dharmanagar to Belonia via Agartala and Sonamura has been completed by Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR). Process for preparing a report for the alternative railway link from Pecharthal to Belonia has begun and the report would be submitted to the NFR authority at Maligoan in Guwahati shortly. Final Location Survey (FLS) for the alternative railway link would be taken up by NFR after getting approval of the Railway Board.

5.3 The State Government has prepared a Booklet on "Tripura a Model State Road Map for Development and sent it to NITI Aayog. NITI Aayog has sent this Booklet with their comments for allocating funds under 10% GBS of Non-exempted Ministries/ Department to NE States to the concerned Ministries. This may be expedited.

5.4 Tripura faces fund constraints in implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and schemes under Central Assistance to State Plan (CASP), with 90:10 funding pattern, due to the state's inability to meet the 10% state share. Consequently, many programmes under CSS do not get implemented, resulting in not only the State losing out, but also the Central Ministries not being able to spend the required 10% of their budgets for the NE Region. In this context, NEC funding for schemes/projects of NE States may be provided 100% grant.

5.5 In Externally Aided Projects, NE states are to contribute 20% of project cost against 80% loan. Thereafter, in the loan component also the share of state is 90:10. The states' 20% contribution in the project cost i.e. counter-part funding may be reviewed as the NE states have limited financial capabilities. The process of sanction of Externally Aided Projects is very cumbersome for NE states and more stringent than other states. Apart from approval from line ministries, NITI Aayog, Department of Economic Affairs, as is the case for other states, approvals from DONER, MHA and MEA are also required which make the process more time consuming and difficult. These additional clearances may be done away with.

5.6 For development of road infrastructure, the State needs Externally Aided Projects (EAP) on Road Sector. Department of Economic Affairs, Government of India is not accepting any new EAP projects till all pending projects are exhausted from the pipeline. It is requested to consider new EAP projects especially in the Road Sector.

5.7 Most of NE states are revenue deficit. The Finance Commission recommends revenue gap grant in addition to normal devolution. It has been seen that there is additional gap in shortfall in normal devolution to the tune of Rs.2636.00 crore in share of central taxes in 2020-21 because of short collection of GST, etc. The Centre should consider compensating through additional revenue gap grant to revenue deficient states.

I am confident that the deliberations and the decisions of this NEC meeting would go a long way in ensuring the comprehensive development of North East India.

Jai Hind.
