

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi after assuming office has brought the central government of New Delhi to the doorstep of the North East: Chief Minister**

Chief Minister Prof. (Dr.) Manik Saha has sought all-out cooperation of the Central Government and the North Eastern Region in implementing a set of developmental projects related to the interest of the state. The 70<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting of the North Eastern Council was held on October 8-9 at Assam Administrative College, Guwahati. Union Home Minister and Chairman of North Eastern Council Amit Shah presided over the plenary meeting. Ministry of DoNER, G Kishan Reddy along with other members of the Council were also present in the meeting. Governors and Chief Ministers of North Eastern states were also present in this meeting. In the press conference at Secretariat yesterday, Chief Minister Prof. Dr. Manik Saha briefed the reporters on the issues discussed in the two-day 70<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting of the North Eastern Zonal Council. Chief Secretary J.K Sinha, DGP Amitabh Ranjan, Planning Department Secretary, Apurba Roy were present in the press conference. Chief Minister informed that different issues related to the North Eastern region such as SDG, District Indicator Framework for North East, potential of tourism industry in the North Eastern region, investment in private sector (PPP), 5G services, launch of digital school, development of entrepreneurship etc. were discussed in the meeting.

On the second day of the meeting, Chief Minister Prof. (Dr.) Manik Saha drew the attention of the Union Home Minister, Minister-in-Charge of DoNER and other members of the North Eastern Council and Government of India for speedy resolution of the overall outstanding issues related to the development of the North Eastern region including priority issues related to the interest of the state. In the press conference, Chief Minister said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has brought the central government of New Delhi to the doorstep of the North Eastern region after assuming office. Prime Minister's selfless commitment to peace and development of the North Eastern region for the last 8 years has resulted in unprecedented development of the region. Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Biswas and Sabka Prayaas are taking shape in North Eastern states. Chief Minister said that the overall economic development of the state is the main priority of the state government. During the last four and a half years, the state government has taken several ground breaking steps, which have resulted in a drastic change in the socio-economic condition of the state.

In the press conference, Chief Minister said that the two-day long 70<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting of the North Eastern Council mentioned the initiatives of the state government aimed at financial development and employment through tourism. Chief Minister informed that at present 5 lakh domestic and foreign tourists are visiting the state every year. Tripura Tourism Policy-2020-25 has been launched. The aim of the state government is to provide international quality infrastructure and services to the tourists. For this purpose, he expressed his opinion in the meeting that the favourable support of the central government will stimulate this effort of the government. Chief Minister said that the Central Government has planned to set up AIIMS in every state of the country under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana. The state has also identified a site for setting up an AIIMS-style hospital. He demanded in the NEC meeting to start this work quickly. Chief Minister requested the Central Government to consider formation of an Agarwood Board in the state with headquarters at Agartala just like Tea Board, Coffee Board, Rubber Board and Spices Board. Chief Minister also emphasized on the use of e-market platform for marketing of tea produced in the state.

Chief Minister informed that the issue of taking necessary steps to export Tripura tea to Bangladesh was brought to the notice of the central government in the two-day 70<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting of the North Eastern Council. Tripura is the second largest producer of natural rubber in the country. In his speech, Chief Minister asked the Central Government to request the Rubber Board to provide special incentives to rubber producers and to construct modern smoke houses. Chief Minister mentioned that there is a need to remove different port restrictions on the export of rubber products to Bangladesh.

In the press conference, Chief Minister Prof. (Dr.) Manik Saha informed that the issue of setting up a major land port on the border of North Eastern states was again raised from India's side in the meeting. Chief Minister also referred to the request to the Bangladesh Government to complete all the facilities on their part to effectively open the Maitri Bridge over the Feni River to connect Tripura with Chottogram Port. The issue of requesting the Bangladesh government to give no objection for the construction of the Integrated Development Complex at Muhurighat and Manughat was also raised in the meeting. Allowing all goods to be transported to the final destination has been a long-standing demand of traders in India and Bangladesh. So Chief Minister mentioned this matter in the meeting for consideration. The state government has decided to start air services between Chottagram and Agartala. And for this, the state government will bear an expenditure of 15 crore rupees as viable gap funding.

Chief Minister said that there are many famous athletes in swimming and gymnastics in the state and many promising athletes are emerging. The proposal of the state government to declare the gymnasium hall of Netaji Subhas Regional Training Centre in Agartala as National Gymnastics Academy is under consideration by the Central Government. Chief Minister mentioned in the meeting that players of the state and the country will benefit if it is converted soon. Chief Minister mentioned that a proposal has been sent to the Central Government to fund the construction of a national standard swimming pool. Gas Authority of India Limited is taking the main responsibility in the state for supplying gas through pipelines to the city. But supply of natural gas to industry and commerce sector in the state is not possible without the approval of the Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. Therefore, Chief Minister demanded in the meeting for the consideration of the Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas regarding the supply of additional gas to industry and commerce sector. Chief Minister also demanded the extension of parcel van service to Kumarghat railway station to facilitate the transportation of Incense stick.

Different initiatives have been taken for the socio-economic development of the people. The Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India has sent a proposal to the World Bank for implementation of an Externally Aided Project worth 1300 crore rupees. Therefore, Chief Minister claimed that this matter must be expedited. Chief Minister highlighted that under the Suvarna Jayanti Tripura Nirman scheme, different capital investment projects in education, health, environment, women's self-empowerment and infrastructure development were announced in the state government's budget projects worth Rs.200 crore. Congratulating the North Eastern Council on its golden jubilee, Chief Minister hoped that the North Eastern Council would act as a one-stop solution centre as the North Eastern Niti Aayog. The first day meeting of the Plenary was attended by Ministry of DoNER, Minister of State, Secretaries, Secretary of North Eastern Council, Chief Secretaries of different States and officials of different Ministries and Departments of the Central and State Government.

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