



# **REPUBLIC DAY ADDRESS**

By

**PROF. JAGDISH MUKHI**

Hon'ble Governor of Assam

**Guwahati, the 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2018**

## **Respected People of Assam,**

I extend my warm greetings and best wishes to each and every citizen of Assam and the Nation on the joyous occasion of the 69<sup>th</sup> Republic Day of the Country.

On this auspicious day, let us remember with gratitude and reverence, the Founding Fathers who bequeathed to us the Constitution of this great Republic, a Constitution which reflects the ideals and aspirations of the people and guarantees Sovereign, Socialist, Secular Democratic Republic for India.

Today let us remember and recall the numerous sacrifices made by our freedom fighters and valiant soldiers, who laid down their lives, first for the cause of winning us independence and then for preserving and strengthening this precious gift of freedom. On behalf of everyone present here, I express deepest gratitude and pay them homage with highest respects.

What our great nation is today, is because of its people of this country who are contributing, in their own unique way in the building of this great democracy. This day belongs to each one of us. While they engage in economic development, they are ably provided a secure environment by our armed forces, our

para-military forces, the State Police and our border-guards whom I salute in highest reverence today.

On this august occasion, I intend to share the vision and some important thoughts of the Government. The vision and the values, based on the principal of 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas' of our most respected Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modiji have been guiding force of my Government. With this vision in mind, our Government resolved to make Assam free from corruption, illegal migrants, terrorism and pollution and to strengthen the bond of brotherhood among the people living in Barak-Brahmaputra Valley, hills and plains of Assam.

My Government believes in people-centric development model for ensuring to all its citizen basic needs such as food, health, education, housing and employment. My Government also envisages that there should be increase in agricultural wealth, progress in industrial sector; provide ample employment opportunities to the youths, develop adequate infrastructural facilities so that every family earns enough for a peaceful living.

My Government is sincerely committed to implement the Assam Accord in its true spirit. While implementing the Assam Accord, we would take all steps to free the state from the illegal migrants while safeguarding the rights and interests of each and every Indian citizen residing in the State. To take this commitment to its logical conclusion, my Government has extended all assistance by deploying resources and manpower for the ongoing NRC updatation process. While updating NRC, my

Government has taken utmost precautions to ensure that the names of all Indians are included and at the same time no foreigner is allowed to include his or her name in the updated NRC.

The sealing of the Indo-Bangladesh border is one of the top priorities for making Assam free from illegal migrants from across the Bangladesh border. While Government of India is laying stress on complete sealing of Indo-Bangla border on a time bound manner, the Foreigners Tribunals in the State are detecting illegal infiltrators expeditiously.

Inspired by the strong measures adopted by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modiji for abolition of corruption, my Government has taken a policy of zero tolerance to corruption in public life. My Government has not tolerated corruption from any public servant. Irrespective of ranks, strictest of action are being taken against such government servants who are found indulging in corrupt practices. In order to curb corruption in the Government offices and also to bring more transparency into the system, my government has also taken several other initiatives such as making E-Tendering compulsory for Government contract, abolition of oral interviews in Grade III and IV recruitments, abolition of illegal check gates. In the process, transparency has also come back to the system and people now have a clear view about the Government functioning.

The financial resources of the State have shown significant improvement during last twenty months. Various fiscal



measures adopted by my Government have been yielding favourable results and there has been significant increase in revenue generation. I am happy to say that State Finance is now healthy and stable. It has been the endeavour of my Government to propel Assam as a progressive, liberal and forward-looking State bringing it in league with most advanced States of the country.

Earlier, people used to think that in Assam, industry can't grow because of the climate of fear. But now the environment has become so conducive that potential investors are showing keen interest in doing business here. Multilateral funding agencies and industrial houses are showing an increasing interest to funds various projects and programmes in the State.

Rich natural resources combined with talent of our youth gives our State the potential to play a key role in our development journey. Keeping this in view my Government intends to make Guwahati the gateway to South-east Asia and also play a bigger role as the new engine for India. Keeping this in view, my Government has set up a separate department, 'Act East Policy Affairs department'-for the first time in Assam.

Meanwhile, my Government is organizing the "Advantage Assam" Global Investors Summit on 3rd & 4th February, 2018 at Guwahati. The Summit will be inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India. The event shall showcase the opportunities offered by the state in terms of export-oriented manufacturing and services to growing economies countries. In order to attract

investors to the state, Road shows were organized at New York, San Francisco, Toronto, London, Tokyo, Seoul & Singapore, Hyderabad, Kolkata & Mumbai and Chennai. Besides an Ambassadors meet was organized at New Delhi to attract investors from ASEAN & other countries for investment in the state.

In this context I congratulate the State Government for maintaining a very sound law and order. This will be one of our main strengths in attracting investments and no stone shall be left unturned for ensuring peace and sound law and order system in the State.

The security scenario of the State has shown significant improvement. Discussion with all the 13 militant groups, who are under Suspension of Operation is progressing in a right direction. Meanwhile, my Government has been taking a multi-pronged approach to ensure a better and more responsive Police Public interface, strengthened criminal investigation machinery based upon modern technology and equipments. The Nagarik Committees have been formed in all Police Stations with representatives from cross sections of the society to make the police accountable and effective and public friendly. Under the MOITRI Schemes existing Thanas are being developed. During last one year, my Government has recruited 343 numbers of Sub Inspector of Police. On 12<sup>th</sup> January 2018 my Government has given appointment to 2,305 constables in Assam Police.

My Government is giving special emphasis on the development of rural Assam. With the mandate of eradicating poverty and to

create infrastructure that accelerate socio-economic growth in Rural Assam, my Government has been implementing various schemes for development of rural economic infrastructure and upliftment of quality of life of rural people. With this in view, Government has launched a 5-year mega-mission 'Mukhya Mantrir Somogra Gramya Unnayan Yojana' for bringing a revolutionary changes in the villages of the state by doubling the income of our farmers by 2022. As a part of this Yojana, Government is going to provide one tractor in each of the twenty six thousand revenue village at subsidized rates.

State Agriculture Department has taken up steps to provide Soil Health Cards to all farmers. In order to increase the production of pulses and oil seeds, the Government has taken up massive programme. Under Prime Minister Fasal Bima Yojana, more than 59 thousand farmers have availed crop insurance benefits during Kharif and Rabi seasons. Moreover, during the year 2.09 lakh Kishan Credit Cards have also been issued among farmers.

My Government has also given thrust on the livestock, Dairy and Fishery sector as these sectors are responsible for providing food and nutritional security to the people. Emphasis is being given to bring the latest technology and inputs to farmers to help them enhance production and productivity.

Handloom and Sericulture is not only a productive economic activity but also an inalienable part of our cultural heritage and way of life. Handloom weaving and Sericulture have been



providing gainful employment to a large section of our poor rural masses, especially women folk. Keeping this in view the weavers are being assistance by providing proper working environment, technical support and access to welfare facilities.

Under 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act' scheme 12.87 lakh households have been provided employment. Women participation has also increased to 40% during the current year. For bringing more transparency, 94% job cards has been verified to ensure that each job card are kept at the custody of the job card holders in field. Under Prime Minister's Awaas Yojana 2.59 lakh nos. of houses has been targeted for providing house to each deserving rural households during the current year. Under the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalaya Yojana, 18,515 rural youths are provided Skill Training in various fields paving ways for self-reliance through employment. 12,467 such trainees have successfully attained jobs in various organizations across the country. For the first time, my Government has also undertook steps for preparing Gaon Panchayat Development Plans under 'Amar Gaon Amar Achoni' on mission mode.

My Government has taken up 20 nos. of Major and Medium Irrigation projects out of which 15 nos. are completed. In Minor Irrigation sector, works of 3013 nos. of Minor Irrigation schemes taken up under different source of funding and so far 1617 nos. are completed.

My Government is committed to provide toilets to every household to make Assam an open defecation-free state. Under



Swachh Bharat Mission, more than 21 Lakh rural families have been provided with sanitary toilets. 3 Districts, 22 Blocks, 388 Gaon Panchayats covering 7586 villages are already declared as Open Defecation Free.

My Government gives high priority to the provision of safe drinking water for all. Till date, 2363 nos. of Arsenic affected habitations and 645 nos. Fluoride affected habitations are provided with safe drinking water supply facilities.

It gives me immense pleasure to highlight the rapid strides made by my Government in the Health sector. Due to proactive steps taken by my Government there is significant improvement of Infant Mortality Rate in the State. Through implementation of the 'Chief Minister's Free Diagnostics Programme', State Government has ensured availability of a number of diagnostic services namely, CT Scan, X-ray and laboratory services free of cost to all the citizens. Besides, my Government has launched a Health Assurance Scheme "Atal Amrit Abhiyan" on 25th December 2016 in the name of great beloved leader and former Prime Minister of India Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayeeji on the auspicious occasion his birthday. Under this scheme people suffering from cardiovascular diseases, Cancer, Kidney diseases, Neo natal diseases, Neurological conditions, and Burns are able to avail treatment through empanelled network of hospitals both inside and outside the State. Meanwhile, to provide better cancer care facilities to the needy patients one PET-CT Scan Machine, Linear Accelerator, Cyclotron has been installed at 200 bedded Cancer Hospital at Guwahati Medical College Hospital.

In order to provide comprehensive primary health care services along with diagnostics facilities, State Government has launched Mobile Medical Unit services in the state. Government of India has already sanctioned 130 Mobile Medical Units in the State out of which 80 are exclusively for Tea garden areas. So far, a total of 3.76 lakh patients have been treated in 10,214 camps organised by these Mobile Medical Units. With this initiative, the tea garden population, which were previously deprived of free drugs and Lab diagnostics have started availing the services in the labour lines at the door step of the tea garden workers.

I am happy to inform that apart from existing six medical colleges in the State, the Government of India has recently approved establishment of four new Medical Colleges at Diphu, Dhubri, Nagaon and North Lakimpur. In addition to this, State Government has also proposed to establish new medical colleges at Kokrajhar, Nalbari and Tinisukia. The process has also started for setting up two Dental Colleges at Dibrugarh and Silchar. Establishment of AIIMS in the state is also one of the important agendas of my Government. Process has also started for setting up two 50 bedded Ayurvedic hospital in Majuli and Dudhnoi. With the increase in number of Medical Colleges and other Health Education Institutions MBBS seats have now been increased to 726 from 391 and

In order to provide quality education to children, my Government has initiated a series of ambitious programmes. State Government has successfully implemented 'Gunotsav'

Programme covering all the schools of the State for the qualitative improvement in Elementary Education.

In order to reduce the pupil-teacher gap and to strengthen the schools, 13,023 regular Assistant Teachers and 6,473 contractual Assistant teachers were appointed in LP and UP Schools. Moreover, a total of 12,488 Assistant Teachers were also recruited by way of a special recruitment policy by creating a "State Pool head" during current financial year. During 2017, steps were also taken to appoint adequate nos of teaching and non-teaching staff in Government and Provincialized Secondary Schools. So far, 460 nos of Principals, 554 nos of Head Masters, 128 Nos of Assistant Head Masters, 494 Nos of Post Graduate Teachers, 577 Nos of Graduate Teachers, 131 nos of Junior Assistants and 132 Nos of Grade-IV staff have been appointed in Government and Provincialized Secondary Schools.

A total of 230 lakh free Textbook was provided to 49.47 lakh learners of elementary schools for the Academic Year 2018. At Secondary Level also 108 lakh nos of free textbooks were distributed amongst 7.66 lakh nos of students of Class-IX & X during the academic session 2017. A sum of Rs 41.68 Crore has already been sanctioned for smooth execution of the scheme during current year. Government have also decided to provide free textbooks to the students of Class-XI & XII in five core subjects from the financial year 2018-19. This year all text-books are made available to students just before starting of academic session.

On the other hand, with an objective to provide free education to the underprivileged and the poorer section of students, the



State Government took a decision to waive the admission fees and tuition fees for the students taking admission in both Higher Secondary schools and Colleges from last year. This year also, the admission fees, tuition fees etc for the students enrolled in Class-XI & XII will be waived.

Last year, Government of Assam also waived examination fees of students of the poorer section of the society and thereby 3.93 lakh students have been benefited. During current year, apart from exemption of examination fees, the centre fees for poor students appearing in High School and Higher Secondary examination will also be waived.

State Government has also decided to waive school affiliation fees by providing additional financial support to each school from the current financial year. For this purpose, a sum of Rs 9 crore as Administrative Grant has been provided to a total 3,669 nos of Government, Provincialized, Secondary and Model Schools of Assam.

With an objective of reducing the dropout rate of Girls students at Secondary level and to increase enrollment of Girls, my Government is providing free bicycles to school going Girls up to Class-X studying in Government and provincialized Schools. As a part of Government's commitment to the cause of women empowerment, scooty are being provided to 1000 girl students securing highest marks so that they can be the symbol of greater liberty, freedom and empowerment. Nine colleges exclusively for women in minority areas are also proposed. State



Government has also been providing Computers/ Laptops to the meritorious students under Anundoram Barooah Award Scheme. This year a total 15,850 nos of meritorious students securing Star marks have been provided Laptops under Anundoram Barooah Award scheme. Government of Assam has also introduced a new scheme "Dr. Banikanta Kakoti Computer Literacy Programme". Under this programme, necessary steps have been taken for engagement of one part-time ICT instructor in each of the 3052 nos of schools across the state for a period of 3 years.

With a view to ascertain standard teacher-pupil ratio, optimum services of the employees, saving administrative cost and other logistic support of the schools, Education Department have decided that the schools situated in same campus or in any nearby area shall be amalgamated/merged and all the schools shall be brought into one single administrative and academic unit under 'SikshaKhetra'- a scheme for amalgamation and merger of different schools. So far amalgamation of 1527 ME Schools, 599 LP Schools with 1643 Secondary Schools has been done.

Under the schme 'Tejasvi Navadhitamastu' meaning "may our knowledge become brilliant" an allocation of Rs.667 crore to 31 institutions of higher learning has been made for their development. During 2017, five colleges named after Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya and eleven new polytechnics have been started. During the year, one government engineering college has also been started in Barak Valley. In the coming year, three new universities namely, Bhattadev University, Madhabdev University and Rabindranath Tagore University will come up.

My Government has given topmost priority for improving the road communication network in the State. Steps are being taken to increase total length of National Highways from present 3900 km to 7000 km. Besides, East -West corridor, works of four laning of nearly 400 km of national highway from Numaligarh to Dibrugarh and Kaliabor to Gohpur are progressing satisfactorily. Similarly, construction of additional bridge near Koliabhomora Bridge is progressing. Detail Project Reports are under preparation for construction of four more bridges over Brahmaputra. In the meantime, feasibility study for construction of the 6-lane bridge over Brahmaputra between Narengi and Kuruwa has already been completed.

Since the beginning of Financial Year 2016-17, substantial funds have been sanctioned under the centrally funded PMGSY and Central Road Fund. Under PMGSY, work of total 7913 Km of road length have been sanctioned for a cost of Rs. 5872 Crore. Under Central Road Fund, total 333 Km of road work including 25 Nos of RCC Bridges have been sanctioned for a cost of Rs. 842 Crore.

Similarly, the World Bank funded 'Assam State Road Project' is in progress. Out of the 1028 Km of roadworks sanctioned including upgradation and rehabilitation of State Highways and Major District Roads, 373 Km of roadwork have been completed and the rest are in progress.

My Government has been making substantial progress for upgradation of power distribution infrastructure in the State. Steps

are also been taken to harness more power from various sources. Government is trying to increase its generation capacity by installing Replacement Power Project in Lakwa Thermal Power Station and Namrup Thermal Power Station. Installation and commissioning of Myntriyang Small Hydro Electric Project is under progress. The project will be completed in 2018. All household of rural and urban areas will be provided with electricity by December, 2018 under 'Saubhagya' scheme.

The Government of Assam is committed to realize the vision of our Hon'ble Primes Minister of making India the Skill Capital of the world. The Assam Skill Development Mission has taken a target of skilling 1.5 lakh youth every year. The mission has started functioning in full swing with Skill Development Centre having started in most districts. 249 Skill Centres have recently been opened and 300 more will be opened shortly. The MOU with the Government of Singapore for setting up of North East Skill Centre in partnership with ITES, Singapore was signed on 1st November, 2017. This Centre will start functioning by April, 2018. The Government is conscious of leveraging the existing ITIs for formal skilling and employment generation. The Government has started industries oriented skill programme in ITIs in collaboration with IOC, NRL, BRPL, Samsung etc. The Government shall start a special scheme for entrepreneurship development programme during the current year.

My Government is making all efforts for protection measures against floods and erosion. During last year, four major flood wave's devastated the State and there were 26 numbers of breaches to the embankment system. In order to restore the damage, ninety



six numbers of schemes under SDRF are recommended at a cost of Rs 232 crore. The Water Resource Department has also received approval for execution of 49 numbers of schemes under NABARD for a cost of Rs 199 crore and these schemes are in the process of execution. Meanwhile, State Government has embarked upon a project under the nomenclature 'Assam: Flood, Erosion and River Management Modernization Project' at a tentative cost of Rs. 1500.00 Crore.

My Government is committed to provide the people of the State a fast, safe and affordable public transportation system. New Buses have been provided for both rural and urban connectivity. Road Safety measures have been effectively implemented resulting in significant reduction in road accidents. Steps are also being taken to set up Driving Training Schools and Driving Testing Tracks in a number of districts. The Assam State Transport Corporation has also initiated major infrastructure development projects like the construction of Mini ISBT in Guwahati, development of Station Building at Majuli, construction of ISBT in Tezpur, and development of 46 bus-stations including extension of yard at various locations.

My Government has also taken a number of initiatives to boost river connectivity. In order to develop the infrastructure & institutional mechanism of the Water Transport Sector in the State to international standards, the "Assam Inland Water Transport Project" is being implemented with a World Bank funding of 150 Million US Dollars. Furthermore, the construction of 56 new floating terminals has also been initiated. My



Government had also successfully organised the first-ever "Namami Brahmaputra" and "Namami Barak" festivals in 2017 to celebrate the multi-faceted richness of the State, and with focus showcasing the rich potential of our river system.

My Government has given high priority to sustainable development of Science & Technology. Initiatives have been taken to promote science among the masses and establish new institutions of excellence in the state. Among the institutions of excellence coming up in the State are the Science City and the Biotech Park. One of the major achievement in the field of Bio Technology is the 'Biotechnology Policy for the State of Assam' which was approved by the State Cabinet.

We are trying our best for making the vision of Digital India a reality through our concerted efforts. I take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks to the tea garden workers for extending their cooperation after demonetisation. After demonetisation, around 7 lakh bank accounts have been opened for the tea garden workers to deposit their wages. As a mark of recognition to the role played by Tea Garden workers, the State Government has decided to deposit Rs. 2,500 in the bank accounts of those tea garden workers who are receiving their wages through banks and if they continue to receive their wages through banks accounts in future too, then Government will further deposit Rs. 2,500 in those bank accounts.

My Government is committed for the welfare of workers in various sectors. Minimum wages have been fixed for more

than 100 scheduled employments and at present that rate is almost equal to National Floor Level Minimum Wages. The Payment of Wages Act, 1936 has been amended for payment of wages to workers only by cheque or by crediting to their bank accounts. Implementation of the social security schemes for unorganized workers have already benefited a large number of workers and the State Government is in process of initiating online registration of beneficiaries. The Assam Building & Others Construction Workers' Welfare Board has covered its registered worker under Covered Aam Admi Bima Yojana. With active support and collaboration from various stake holders, Government has adopted various measures for protection of child Rights and eliminate Child Labour engagement in the State.

Through Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana steps have been taken to provide LPG connections to all poor households. In the meantime 6.10 lakh free LPG connections have been provided under the scheme. Food security has been provided to about 2.52 crore people of the state under Food Security Act.

The strong brotherhood and human bonds across more than 70 tribes is our valuable asset and our Government cherish the same. The colour and vibrancy of Assam lie in its ethnicity, custom of tribal and other communities. The strength of our society is required to be showcase and demonstrated to new generation in the state and also to the world. Keeping this in view, my Government will be coming up with a unique centre

called "Sahodar Samannay Kshetra" to display tribal icons, symbols of culture and traditions of various communities. For the upliftment of SC people, State Government has accorded approval for 7 projects for implementation of SC Model villages in the SC dominated area. Another innovative scheme has been proposed to develop 12 nos. of ST villages as Model villages to showcase the Tribal Culture. For specific development of various ethnic communities under the aegis of 6 (six) Autonomous Councils Rs. 233 crore has been allocated for the year 2017-18. My Government has also initiated a series of steps for overall socio-economic growth and sustainable development in the Hill Areas and BTC areas. State Government is also committed for the welfare of minorities. Several schemes are being implemented by my Government for the welfare of the minority communities.

The Government of Assam is committed to realize the vision of Hon'ble Chief Minister of making Guwahati the Sports Capital of the Country and Assam a Sports Hub. Towards this, Government of Assam has drafted an Integrated Sports Policy for overall development of Sports in the State and to bring about a systemic transformation in the entire sports ecosystem. This policy provides for a slew of incentives for the development and welfare of sports and players.

The Government shall start a Sports Academy in the name of Arjun Bhogeswar Baruah in various sports disciplines during this year and shall also facilitate the setting-up of Sports Academies by private partners in Olympic Sports



disciplines. Government of Assam has already initiated the process of setting-up of a State of the Art Multidisciplinary Sports Complex at Dibrugarh. Similar projects shall be commissioned in Lakhimpur and Kamrup. State Government has also decided to develop five hundred playfields in 219 Blocks of the State under "Chief Minister Samagra Gramya Unnayan Yojana". In the mean time, Government has successfully organized the FIFA U-17 World Cup, AIBA World Youth Women Boxing Championship and 63<sup>rd</sup> National School Games, 2017-18 at Guwahati recently.

Assam Government has embarked upon an ambitious plan to boost its tourism sector in the ensuing years. A new Tourism Policy was unveiled recently, which aims at creating a policy framework to move tourism into a major economic sector of Assam. Through implementation of this policy my Government wants to increase the inflow of tourists by 2 to 3 times in the next five years. Under Punya Dham Yatra 1100 Nos. of pilgrims in the age group of 55 to 75 years were taken to popular pilgrimage Destinations of India. The Ambubachi Mela at Kamakhya Dham was organized by Assam Tourism in association with other departments in a well disciplined manner. Under this livelihood linked scheme, 31 beneficiaries residing near the five National Parks and Majuli have been selected for homestay infrastructure development. Infrastructure development works in different tourist destinations under the schemes SWADESH DARSHAN, PRASAD are under different stages of execution. A Sustainable Eco-Tourism Project that seeks to provide livelihood and ensure



carbon free mobility is currently under implementation in Majuli and in Chandubi as pilot projects.

I take this opportunity to thank all the mediapersons - both print and visual for its role in generating awareness about state government's endeavours to make Assam free from corruption, pollution, insurgency and illegal migration. My government has taken up various welfare measures for the benefit of journalists and reiterated government's commitment to ensure security and dignified life for them. My Government has provided Rs 5 lakh each as ex gratia to the next of kin of 31 journalists who have either been killed and gone missing over the years in various violent incidents. Meanwhile, my Government has also announced a pension scheme for Journalist with a view to provide retirement benefits to journalists working for more than 20 years in Assam. In addition, my Government is also implementing Journalist Medical Welfare Scheme to provide one time financial assistance to accredited and recognized journalists of Assam for medical treatment.

I am glad to inform that the Urban Development Department has made rapid strides in transforming the lives of urban residents of Assam by implementing the flagship programmes namely , Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban , Atal Mission for Rejuvenation & Urban Transformation, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission by providing the requisite infrastructure facilities, housing needs, employment generation & cleanliness

of the surroundings of the urban residents. The State Government has set the target to declare all 97 Municipal Boards and Town Committees open defecation free Towns by March 2018 . Regarding Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation, the Government of India has released Rs. 73 Crores for 4 Towns/Cities namely , Dibrugarh, Nagaon, Silchar and Guwahati. Under the Mission- 'Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana', the Central Government has selected 97 towns of Assam within the mission period and released an amount of Rs.166 Crore for implementation of the mission. Under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-NULM, Assam, total 7829 Nos. of Self Help Groups have been developed and so far it has provided Revolving Fund to 1669 Nos. of SHGS. Under the Scheme, "City Infra Development Fund" 200 Crores each has been allotted for 6 cities namely, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Nagaon, Silchar, Jorhat & Tezpur and under Project Jyoti Schemes, Energy Efficient LED lights will be provided to all 97 Towns and Municipalities of Assam.

My Government has given special emphasis for development of the State Capital Region. Government has also signed an agreement with the Government of Singapore for planning the urban land scaps with the integration of parks, open spaces and green networks in the line of Singapore's Park Interconnect model. The initiatives taken under Guwahati Smart City Ltd have been making significant progress.

My Government has taken a number of steps for the promotion of the rich, vibrant and diverse culture and cultural heritage of Assam. Protection, preservation and development of

archaeological sites, monuments, Sattras will continue to receive high priority. Preservation, promotion and Protection, of cultural heritage of the indigenous tribes will also be taken up in right earnest. In the mean time, my Government has successfully organized the 1st Guwahati International Film Festival in 2017.

Global warming and climate change are serious causes of concern for all of us and need to be addressed with all the earnestness that they deserve. We have focused our efforts in this direction by protection and conservation of our forest cover and bio-diversity. My Government has taken several measures in safeguarding the ecological balance of the region through removal of illegal encroachment in forest area, strengthening forest protection infrastructure and amenities for the staff. Anti-poaching operations are also vigorously executed. Similarly strong punitive measures are being taken against deforestation and illegal felling of trees.

Under various schemes, State Government has carried out about 19,000 hectare plantation involving about 4 Crore Seedlings. The State Government has also created ten numbers of Social Forestry Parks.

My Government is committed towards protecting the land rights of indigenous people of Assam. A Committee has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Shri H. S. Brahma Former Chief Election Commissioner of India for suggesting measures including changes in the provisions of Acts, Rules, and Policy whereby the land rights of indigenous people of my State can



be protected. My Government in the meantime has rolled out the on-line Integrated Land Records Management System in 24 Districts and the process is on to cover the rest of the Districts soon.

For the welfare of employees of Assam Secretariat, staff bus has been introduced for their commuting to offices. State Government has also introduced a home loan scheme "APON GHAR" for the Assam Government employees under which home loans are being provided to the state govt employees at subsidized interest rates. State Government has also introduced an education loan scheme called "BIDYA LAKSHMI" Loan for Higher Education of the Children of regular State Government employees.

The Construction of Assam Bhawan at Chennai is completed and will be made functional soon. The work of construction of additional Assam Bhawan at Salt Lake, Kolkata and Assam House at New Delhi are expected to be completed soon.

I take this opportunity to compliment the Chief Minister, Shri Sarbananda Sonwalji and his team for having a very focussed approach and taking concrete and effective steps for the development of the State. I join the Hon'ble Chief Minister in his call for putting the state on the path of accelerated growth and development by each one of us as a part of TEAM ASSAM. Let us be a TEAM in the truest sense and work on the motto of "Service to the State before Self".

Let us rededicate ourselves towards nurturing, safeguarding and strengthening the ideals, values and systems enshrined in our Constitution. Let us all march from strength to strength, hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder towards, peace, progress and development in creating a stronger, peaceful, resilient and greater Assam and geater India.

Let us, on this day resolve to preserve and strengthen the unity and integrity of this great country and to work for the missions that will make Assam a place where all can lead a healthy life style and live with dignity, peace, prosperity and happiness.

**Jai Hind**

**Jai Ai Axom.**

2018

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