



the MEGHALAYACHRONICLE

A Publication of the Directorate of Information & Public Relations, Meghalaya



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EDITOR'S NOTE

The recent visit of President Pratibha Patil to the State of Meghalaya was marked by milestone achievements for the State. The laying of the foundation stone of the GSWS Phase III and the inauguration of the Bali at Jengjal, Garo will go a long way in addressing the felt needs of the people as well as aid in accelerating the overall development of the State.

In order to improve its delivery services to the people, the Government has taken steps to look for innovative ways to reach out to its people and some of these initiatives are highlighted in this issue of the Meghalaya Chronicle.

I hope that this issue makes for interesting reading.

P. S. Dkhar
Director,
Information and Public Relations.

From the Desk of the

Commissioner & Secretary,
Information & Public Relations

This issue of the Meghalaya Chronicle while focusing on some of the happenings in and around the State, also pays its respects to two eminent citizens of the State who left for their heavenly abode. While one was a well respected name in the field of politics, the other was the face and voice of the traditional khasi music scene in the State who enthralled many with his lyrical prowess.

The demise of Mr. E. K. Mewlong and Mr. Skendrowell Syiemlieh have indeed left a great void. May their souls rest in peace.

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PRESIDENT PRATIBHA PATIL'S MAIDEN VISIT TO THE STATE MARKED BY LANDMARK ACHIEVEMENTS

The President of India, Smti. Pratibha Devisingh Patil, was warmly received by the Meghalaya Governor, Shri R S Mooshahary, Meghalaya Chief Minister, Shri. Donkumar Roy, Meghalaya Chief

LAYING OF FOUNDATION STONE OF
GREATER SHILLONG WATER SUPPLY PROJECT PHASE - III
BY HER EXCELLENCY Smti. PRATIBHA DEVISINGH PATIL
PRESIDENT OF INDIA
ON 22nd OCTOBER 2008
AT MAWPHLANG



Secretary, Shri Ranjan Chatterjee and other government officials at the helipad at Upper Shillong on October 22, 08 marking the beginning of her two days visit to the state of Meghalaya.

On the very same day the President laid the foundation stone of the Greater Shillong Water Supply (GSWS) Phase III at Mawphlang, East Khasi Hills District

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that the Greater Shillong Water Supply Phase III project which aims at modernizing the city's infrastructure will address the needs of the growing population of Shillong when completed. Pointing out the fast urban growth experienced in Shillong, she stressed that the sustainable urbanization can be obtained if growth is matched with augmentation of infrastructure facilities. She added that as a city develops, amenities should be made available to all parts of the city and the needs of its inhabitants including the weaker sections should be met and this is a challenge which the policy makers must invariably address.

Reiterating the need to implement time bound programmes for the upliftment of the weaker and disadvantaged sections of society, Smti. Patil informed that the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) is one such scheme which caters to the needs of the poor in cities and

improve the quality of their lives with the involvement of all stakeholders. Proper implementation of projects undertaken under this scheme like the third phase of the Shillong Water Supply, along with

their regular monitoring should be done to improve quality of life across all sections of society, she added.

Stating that one of the hallmarks of modern cities is the availability of a clean and reliable water supply system for its inhabitants, Smti. Patil cautioned citizens to use water judiciously as it is a precious resource and also added that rain water harvesting should be adopted extensively.

Meghalaya Chief Minister, Dr. Donkumar Roy, in his speech, informed that the Greater Shillong Water Supply Scheme (GSWS) Phase III has been sanctioned under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) and is of pivotal importance to Shillong city and the people of the area. This scheme is intended to augment the drinking water supply of Shillong and incorporates a distribution complement that will bring greater efficiencies in transmission and distribution, he added.

Referring to the GSWS Phase III, Dr. Roy informed that the scheme is not only an engineering feat, but incorporates several innovations in the form of technological measures to reduce transmission and distribution losses, and introduces a modern metering system that will ensure that user charges are borne by the actual users. Reiterating the Government's commitment to provide sanitation

facilities, not only in urban areas, but to extend the benefits of sanitation to the villages as well, he assured that the government will follow the time frame fixed by the Government of India for providing sanitation to all villages by 2012.

On October 23, 2008, President Pratibha Devisingh Patil inaugurated the Baljek airport at Jengjal, 33 km away from Tura, before a crowd of several thousand people. Two planes, four-seater Cessna and 20-seater Dornier aircraft, touched down at the airport to mark its inauguration. The airport has been constructed at a cost of Rs. 12.52 crore.

Terming the opening of the airport as "a big beginning" for Garo Hills, Smti. Patil said it would help development of the region and promote emotional and economic integration of the country.

The President, delivering the first few lines of her speech flawlessly in Garo, extended her greetings to the people and expressed her joy of being among them on that historic occasion. "The opening of the airport should encourage tourism which is an important engine for growth. I hope that the airport would contribute to the growth and prosperity of the State and its people," Smti. Patil said.

She said Garo Hills had immense potential for export of orchids and anthurium flowers that were in great demand in the country and abroad. According to the President, with the inauguration of the airport, perishable goods from the region would now reach destinations where they are in high demand.

Adding colour to the occasion, Garo dancers performed the Wangala dance before inauguration

This is the second airport in Meghalaya after the existing Umroi airport in Ri Bhoi District.

Speaking at the function, State Governor R S Mooshahary said the airport would open up more opportunities for investment in Garo Hills region.

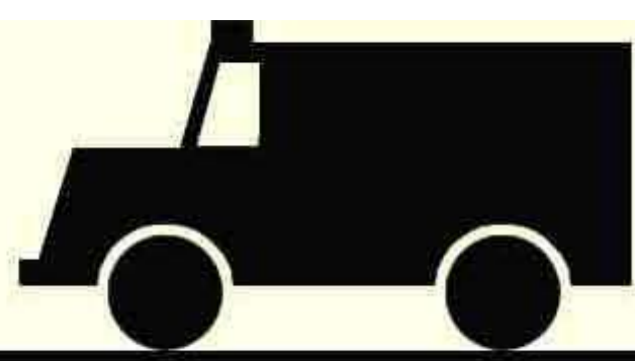
Earlier, hundreds of school children and people of Tura town lined the road in Tura to greet the President as she was headed for a civic reception at the Tura MP Stadium. She was presented with colourful mementos, including traditional Garo dress and wood-carvings of pitcher plants, at both Tura and Baljek airport as a token of appreciation for her visit to Garo Hills.

On the very same day, President Patil also participated in the centenary celebrations of Laban Bengalee Girls' Higher Secondary School, Shillong. Sharing her thoughts on the occasion, the President said that Meghalaya should strive for cent per cent literacy rate with special focus on women's education. Smti. Patil said though Meghalaya followed a matrilineal society, the literacy rate among women in the State was relatively lower when compared with that registered by their male counterparts. She pointed out that educated women could take better care of children and remove many of the evil practices and also problems like liquor consumption and drug abuse from the society.

Smti. Patil said skills of the students and youth of the country should be channelised in such a way that they developed balanced personalities with positive attitudes. Further, the President said students had an important role to play in showing a better path to humanity and addressing issues like climate change and environmental degradation.

**"Dream as if you'll live forever.
Live as if you'll die today."**

-James Dean



MOBILE MEDICAL UNITS RELEASED

Meghalaya Chief Minister, Dr. Donkumar Roy today released 21 Mobile Medical Units (MMU) for all the seven districts of the State, under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) at the premises of the Soso Tham Auditorium, Shillong. The function was also attended by Meghalaya Health Minister,

Dr. A. Pariong, Commissioner Secretary, Health Department, Mr. P K Naik, Director of Health Services, Dr. K H Lakiang besides senior officers and staff of the Health Department.

At the total cost Rs. 2,75,60,000/-, the main MMU is equipped with Honda generator, portable X-ray, portable ultrasound machine, portable ECG machine with carry bag, including doctor's chair, hand wash, filter etc, while the second vehicle has the features and fittings of a normal ambulance and the third is for the doctor, technicians and other supporting staff. Each MMU has also the provision of medicine, manpower training, POL and other consumable.

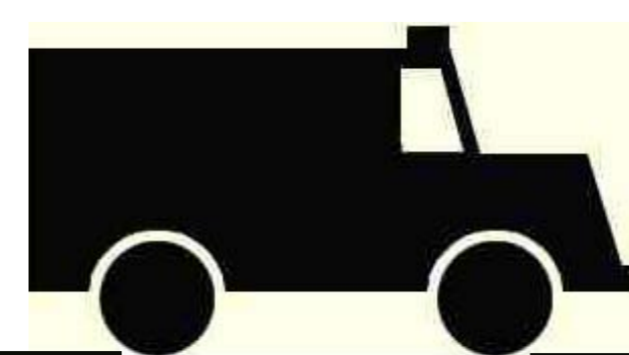
In his speech as the chief guest, Dr. Roy said that in its endeavour to improve the health status of its people, the Government is highly committed to ensure that basic health amenities reach the remotest parts of the State. He informed that these MMU will in fact help the District Health Administration to reach to the far off inaccessible places which are under-covered or are presently uncovered. He further stated that Meghalaya is putting in its best efforts in the implementation of the NRHM, adding that it is expected that various facilities which are channelized through the Health Mission would facilitate better amenities to the people in the rural areas, thereby improving their minimum health care, a benefit, which was not there in the past.

Lamenting over the fact that most of the patients in Civil Hospital has to undergo Scanning and X-Ray in private hospitals, Dr. Roy said that Civil Hospital being a Government Hospital should ensure that it is well equipped with various machine for the benefit of the general masses. He then urged upon the Department

to see that all the MMU is functional and the vehicle are well maintained. Dr. A. Pariong in his speech said that it is an eventful occasion to release the MMU which would provide equitable, affordable and quality healthcare that is accountable and responsive to the needs of the people. He further stated that the Reproductive and Child Health Programme is the main component of NRHM under which maternal and child health is taken care, adding that the programme

aims at bringing down the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Maternal Morality Rate and Total Fertility Rate and increase life expectancy. He also informed that the growth rate in Meghalaya has come down to 2.5% from 3.28% during 1981-91 while the IMR which is 53 is better than most of the States in the country.

Other speakers of the day were the Commissioner & Secretary, Health Department, Mr. P K Naik, who delivered the welcome address and the Director of Health Services, Dr. K H Lakiang who proposed the vote of thanks.

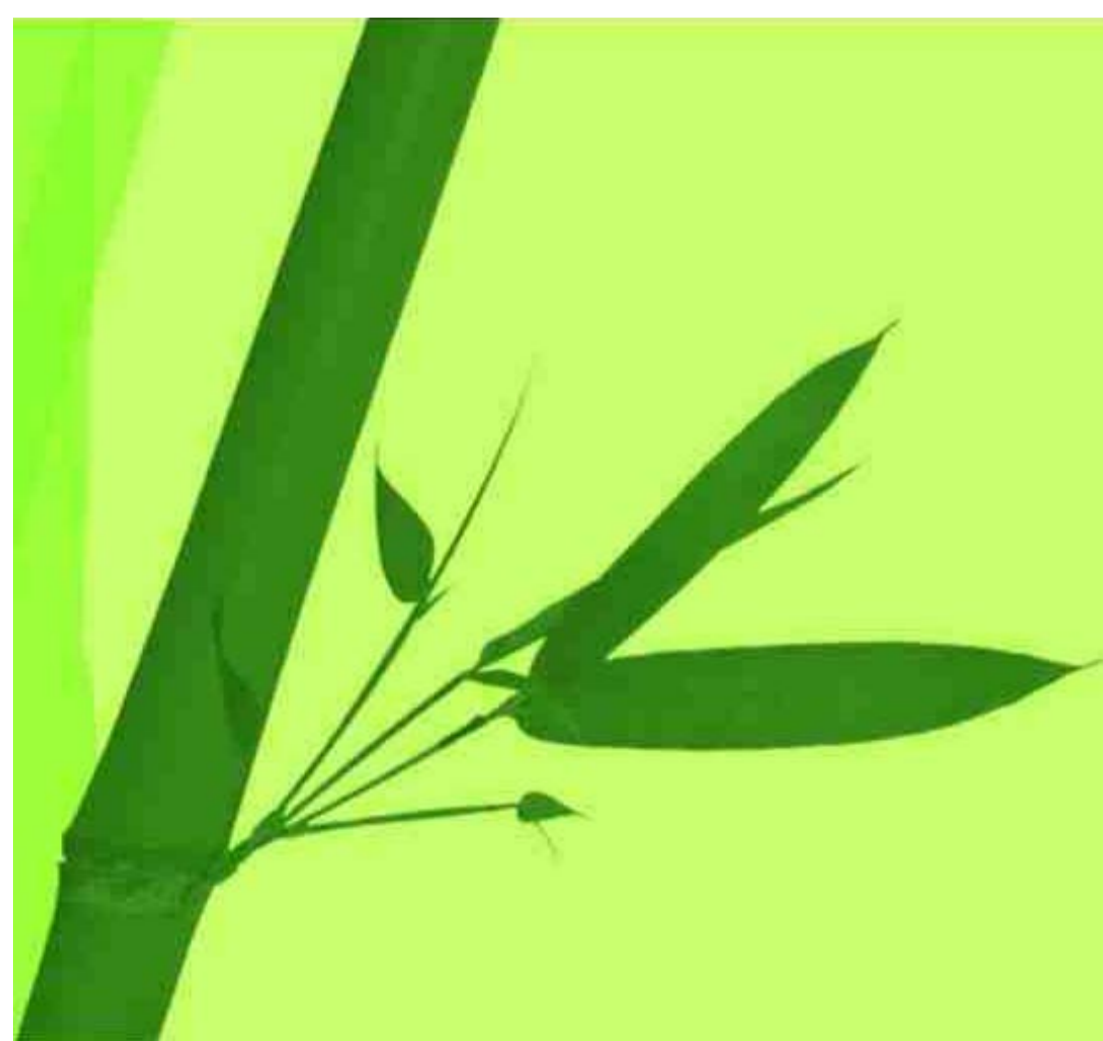


PROPAGATION & CULTIVATION OF BAMBOO IN MEGHALAYA



Meghalaya, which is located in bamboo rich North East India, is endowed with abundant bamboo resources. Natural occurrence of 37 bamboo species, 3 varieties and 11 forms, both clump forming and non-clump forming, belonging to 11 genera has been reported in the State. Area under bamboo which is estimated around 3,108 sq kms constitutes fourteen percent of the total geographical area of the State. The area under bamboo is estimated to contain 471 million equivalent sound culms having estimated weight of 2.6 million tonnes from which about 0.60 million tonnes can be sustainably harvested every year. Due to favourable climatic and edaphic conditions, per hectare yield estimated at 2.09 ton per year is almost four times the average per hectare yield for the country as a whole.

Sustainable harvesting, processing and value addition of vast bamboo resources available in the State can play significant role in economic upliftment of its rural residents. More than 65% of the bamboo resources of the State conform to the highest quality determined on the basis of the height, thickness, diameter and the straightness of culms. Less than 5% of the bamboo resource of State is of poor quality. The remaining 30% are of average or fair quality. The vast, diverse



and bamboo resources available in the State can facilitate establishment and operation of a variety of bamboo based primary and secondary processing industrial units, having large employment and

income generation potential in the economically and industrially backward State. In the absence of adequate market and forward linkages, till date it has however been possible for the State to harness only a small fraction of its abundant bamboo resources.

As in other North Eastern States, bamboo craft has been practised by the tribal residents of the State for centuries as their prime income source by transforming bamboo into a variety of products with functional and ornamental uses and in the process,

people belonging to lower end of socio-economic scale who have limited access to markets, raw materials, finance and technology and hence poor managerial, entrepreneurial and organizational skills. Highly scattered nature of the enterprise, disaggregated production structure and lack of institutionalized government support in the past did not allow the sector to realize even a small fraction of its true potential. Easy availability of cheaper substitutes like plastic and synthetic fibers etc., has further hampered growth of the bamboo sector.



Keeping in view the vast untapped potential of the bamboo sector to usher in ecologically prudent, environmentally sustainable inclusive growth in our backward hilly State, the Government of Meghalaya in Forests & Environment Department has initiated various measures for holistic development of the bamboo sector with financial assistance from Government of India and other funding agencies. Notable among them are National Bamboo Mission (NBM) funded by the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India; Management of Gregarious Flowering of Bamboo in North Eastern States funded by the Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India; Promotion of bamboo based enterprises on project-specific funding from the National Mission on Bamboo Applications (NMBA), Department of Science & Technology, Government of India; Survey and Assessment of bamboo resources and creation of

bamboosetum and bamboo planting stock production centres on funding from the North Eastern Council (NEC) and One time Additional Central Assistance (ACA) from Planning Commission for management of gregarious flowering of muli bamboo.

To facilitate effective and efficient utilization of the funds available under the above schemes and to create awareness among the masses in general and the policy makers in particular, about the vast potential of the bamboo sector, the department has initiated measures to prepare a series of training manuals covering various aspects of the bamboo sector. To be of a greater use to the general masses and lower level field functionaries of the implementing departments, these manuals are being prepared in the languages of Garo and Khasi, spoken and understood by majority of them.

Training manuals entitled "Cultivating Bamboo" and "Propagating Bamboo" covering various aspects of nursery and plantation techniques respectively for various bamboo species, both in Khasi and Garo were released by Meghalaya Chief Minister, Dr. Donkupar Roy and Chairman, State Planning Board, Mr. P A Sangma, on August 14, 2008 at Interpretation Centre, Lady Hydari Park, Shillong.

Bamboo Facts

- Strong as steel, nuclear tough, and striking beauty in both its natural and finished state, these qualities have given bamboo a longer and more varied role in human cultural evolution than any other plant on earth.
- The needle in Alexander Graham Bell's first phonograph was made of bamboo.
- In 1882, Thomas Edison used bamboo as filaments in the world's first light bulb manufacturing.
- A suspension bridge on the river in China is 250 yard long, 9 foot wide and rests entirely on bamboo cables fastened over the water. It doesn't have a single nail or piece of iron in it.
- Atypical bamboo has a tensile strength of 28,000 per square inch vs. 23,000 for steel. That makes it one of the strongest materials in the world when it comes to tension structure.
- Used in ladders, scaffolding or fencing, bamboo is twice as stable as oak, and harder than walnut and teak.

WHAT TO DO WHEN AN EARTH VAKE STRI ES

Most earthquakes related injuries and deaths result from collapsing walls, flying glass and falling objects caused by the ground shaking. To minimize the damage and loss to families, property and self when earthquake occur it is imperative to follow a few simple steps.

Before an earthquake:

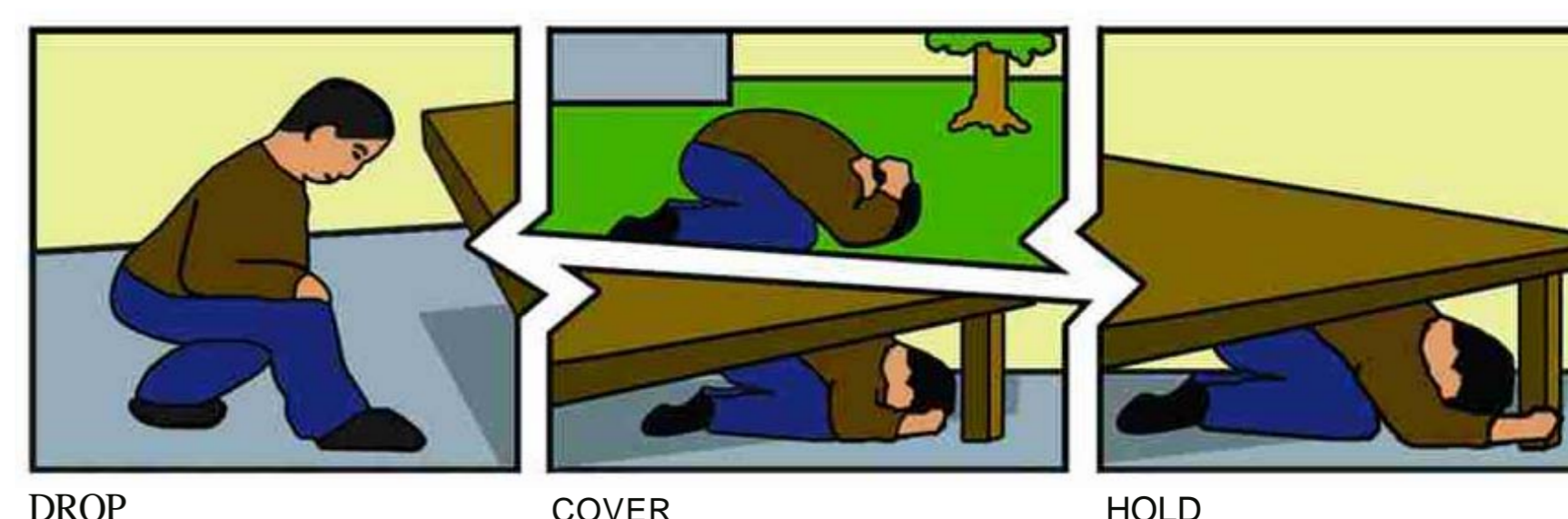
- Identify safe places very close to you at home, school or workplace such as under a sturdy table, or next to an interior wall. The safe place should be within a few steps or two meters to avoid injury from flying debris.
- Develop a household emergency plan and have emergency survival items so that you can cope on your own for at least three days. Also prepare a survival kit to be stored in your house/vehicle.
- Secure heavy items like bookcases to the wall or floor and place heavy items near the floor.
- Check that your chimney and hot water geyser, gas cylinders are secured.
- Check your household insurance for cover and amount.

During an earthquake:

- Move no more than a few steps to a safe place, drop cover and hold on.
- Do not attempt to run outside.
- If outside, move more than a few steps to a safe place drop, cover and hold.
- If in a lift, stop at the nearest floor and get out.
- If you are driving, pull over to the side of the road. Stay in the vehicle till the shake subsides.

After an Earthquake:

- Expect aftershocks and help those around you if you can.
- Report injuries or fires to the emergency services.



*Issued by - The Directorate of Civil Defence
& Home Guards, Meghalaya, Shillong.*



RED RIBBON CLUBS TO FOSTER GREATER AWARENESS ON HIV/AIDS

Red Ribbon Club (RRC) is a comprehensive promotional and preventive intervention to enhance voluntary blood donation as well as mainstream HIV and AIDS prevention, care and support.

The Meghalaya AIDS Control Society (MACS) under NACP -III, in collaboration with the National Service Scheme (NSS), Meghalaya, aims at promoting the formation of Red Ribbon Clubs (RRC) in colleges of the State, to cover young persons who are at greater risk to HIV in campuses as well as in community.

The programme will address the knowledge, attitude and behaviour of youth in the interrelated areas of both HIV/AIDS and sexuality, as demanded by their age, environment, and life style. Thus, RRC will serve as a complementary and comprehensive prevention intervention to support and reinforce similar youth led initiatives.

The main objectives of the RRC programme are to reduce new HIV infection among the youth by raising their risk perception through proper education on sex and sexuality and HIV/AIDS by imparting new skills on communication, self protection, negotiation, care and support and effective group interaction and to prepare the youth as peer education and agents of change by developing their skills on leadership and team building. The four key areas of RRC are vibrancy of youth, sex and sexuality, HIV/AIDS STI and peer education.

The Meghalaya AIDS Control Society, in collaboration with NSS formally launched the RCC Programme in the state of Meghalaya on 12th August 2008, which coincided with the "International Youth Day"

VANAMAHOTS AV 2008

The Meghalaya Chief Minister, Dr. Donkumar Roy attended the Vanamahotsav- 2008 or the grand festival of forests organised by the Department of Forest and Environment at S.O.S Children's village, Umiam on August 14, 2008. Meghalaya Chief Secretary Mr. R. Chatterjee presided over the function, while other Government officials who were present on the occasion includes Mr. V. S. Oberoi, Principal Secretary Forest, Shri V. K. Nautiyal, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Roy informed that the Vanamahotsav or the grand festival of forests was launched by the Government of India in the year 1950 to create an enthusiasm in the mind of the people for the preservation of forest and planting of more trees thereby creating consciousness among the people to preserve the environment.

Dr. Roy stated that forest plays an important role in environmental and economic sustainability and he therefore, appeal to all the citizens of the State to plant and nurture trees and lend a helping hand in conservation of forests and make Meghalaya a patch of beauty and shining outpost of India. He also hoped that through this effort, Meghalaya will continue to remain a green and clean State.

The Meghalaya Chief Minister Dr. Donkumar Roy and other dignitaries also paid tributes to the founder of the S.O.S Children's village, Dr. Hermann Gmeiner by lighting candles. Tree saplings were also planted at the premises of the S.O.S Children's village, Umiam.

NEWSREEL



Her Excellency the President of India Smti Pratibha Patil being presented a bouquet by the Meghalaya Chief Minister, Dr Donkumar Rayon her arrival at the ALG Helipad, Shillong on 22.10.2008



Her Excellency the President of India Smti Pratibha Devisingh Patil unveiling the plaque of the Greater Shillong Water Supply Project Phase III on 22.10.08 at Mawphlang



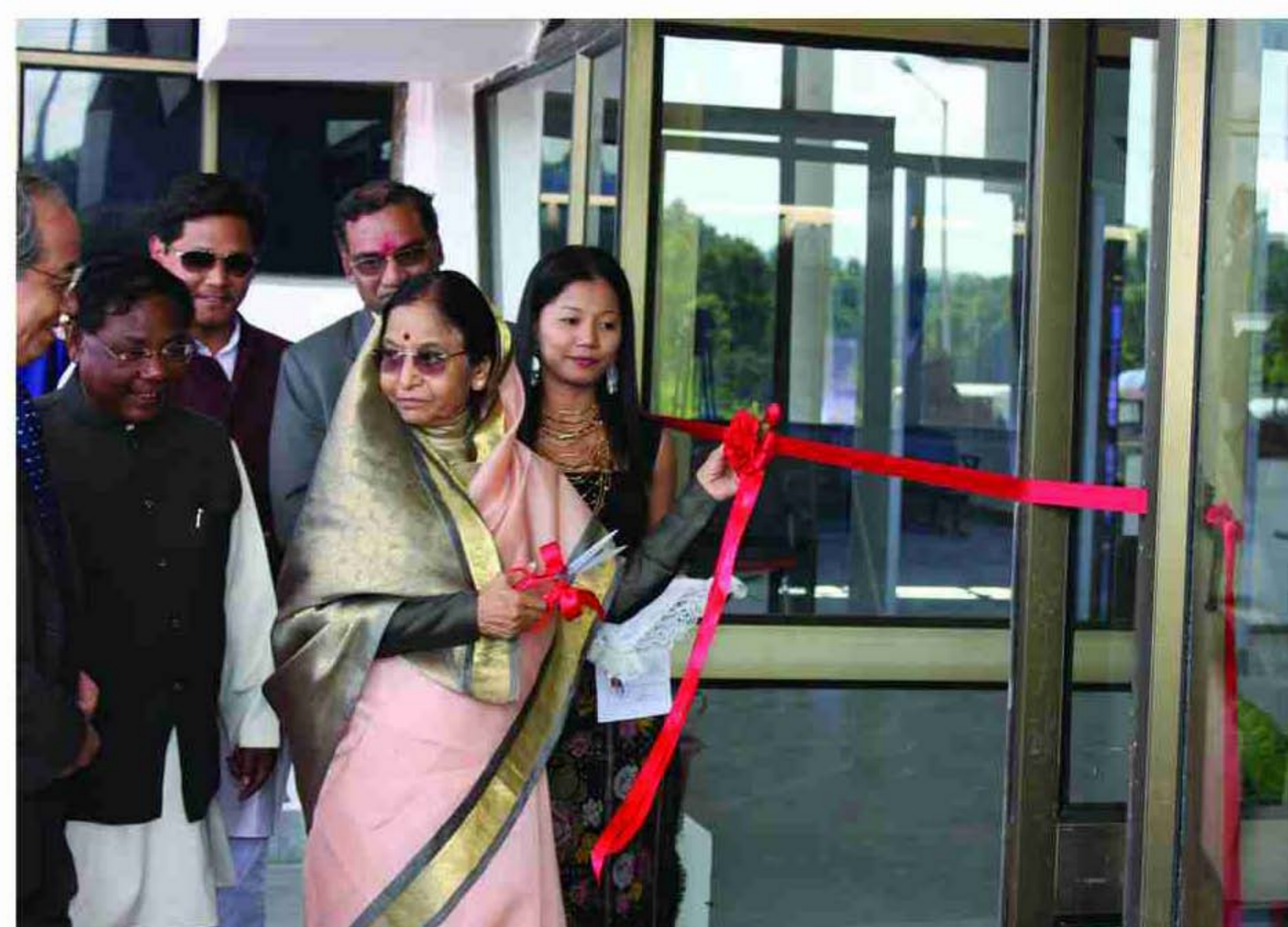
Her Excellency the President of India Smti Pratibha Devisingh Patil along with the cultural troupes during the inaugural function of GSWS Phase III at Mawphlang on 22.10.08



The President of India Smti Pratibha Devisingh Patil along with the State's Padmashree awardees at the Raj Bhavan



Her Excellency the President of India Smti Pratibha Devisingh Patil unveiling the plaque to commemorate her visit to the Laban Bengalee Girls' HS School on the occasion of the centenary celebration on 23.10.2008



Her Excellency the President of India Smti Pratibha Devisingh Patil cutting the ribbon during the inauguration of the Baljek Airport at Jengjal on 23.10.2008

NEWSREEL



Governor of Meghalaya, Mr. R. S. Mooshahary speaking to government officials at the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Jaintia Hills District during his visit to the District Headquarters on September 01, 2008.



Governor of Meghalaya, Mr. R. S. Mooshahary lighting the lamp during the inauguration of the two days orientation programme on Adoption sponsored by CARA, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, at the Sri Aurobindo Institute of Indian Culture, Shillong on September 28, 2008.



Meghalaya Minister of Horticulture, Dr. A. Pariong cutting the ribbon during the inauguration of the Indigenous Crop Festival held at the premises the State Central Library, Shillong on September 12, 2008



Meghalaya Tourism Minister, Mr. Conrad K Sangma inaugurating the Tourism - Regional Thematic Conference at Pinewood Hotel, Shillong on October 14, 2008.



Shri. K. M. Chandrasekhkar, Cabinet Secretary, Government of India inaugurating the Bio-Resource Development Centre in the presence of Meghalaya Chief Secretary Shri. R. Chatterjee on August 23, 08



Shri. K. M. Chandrasekhkar, Cabinet Secretary, Government of India releasing the "Information Handbook on General Election 2008 - Meghalaya Legislative Assembly" on the occasion of Civil Service Day at Pinewood Hotel, Shillong on August 22, 2008.

NEWSREEL



Meghalaya Parliamentary Secretary, Higher and Technical Education , Mrs. Ampareen Lyngdoh inaugurating the Central Hall of the Earle Holiday Home, Shillong on October 4, 2008.



Meghalaya Additional Chief Secretary, Mr. W. M. S. Pariat placing a wreath on the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the Main Secretariat building on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti on October 2, 2008.



Meghalaya Tourism Minister, Mr. Conrad K Sangma gracing the 5th Anniversary celebration of the Mattilang Amusement Park as the Chief Guest at Upper Shillong on October 16, 2008.



Meghalaya Chief Minister, Dr Donkumar Roy inaugurating the meeting of the State Planning Board amidst the presence of Deputy Chief Ministers, Mr. T. D. Shira and Mr. H. S. Lyngdoh and Chairman of the State Planning Board, Mr. Purno Sangma at Pinewood Hotel, Shillong on October 3, 2008.



Meghalaya Chief Minister, Dr. Donkumar Roy planting a tree at S.O.S Children's village, Umiam on the occasion of Vanamahotsav - 2008 or the grand festival of trees on August 14, 2008



The Chief Executive Officer, Emergency Management and Research Institute (EMRI), Mr. Venkat Changaulli and the Secretary, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Meghalaya, Mr. P. Naik exchange MoUs signed in the presence of the Minister of Health, Dr. A Parong on November 5, 2008.

NEWSREEL

Glimpses of Independence Day



NEWS-ROUND UP

GOVERNOR VISITS JAINTIA HILLS

"Create transparency for accountable delivery of services to the people," said the Meghalaya Governor, Mr. R. S. Mooshahary to government officials of Jaintia Hills District during his visit to the District Headquarters on September 01, 2008.

In a well attended meeting held at the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Jaintia Hills District which saw the attendance of MLAs, MDCs, Dalloi, representatives of localities of Jowai besides all Heads of offices of Jaintia Hills District, Mr. Mooshahary also called upon the government officials to work with a human face in their day to day dealings with the public so as to generate goodwill and also to be able to mitigate the problems faced by the public. Pointing out that Jaintia Hills is one of the richest districts in the State, he, however, lamented that the per capita income of the District does not reflect the economic reality of the people as a whole and therefore stressed that the government machinery has a vital role to play in uplifting the socio-economic condition of the poorer section of the society. Stating that the haphazard mining of coal is a cause of great concern, Mr. Mooshahary urged upon the people to adopt scientific ways of mining so as to make the land re-useable after the mining process is over.

Later in the day, the Governor had an interaction with MLAs, MDCs, Dallois, government officials, representatives of different localities of Jowai and after a patient hearing, promised that he will take up all the problems and bottlenecks faced by all concerned at appropriate levels and with appropriate authorities.

The Deputy Commissioner of Jaintia Hills District, Mr. Sanjay Goyal who presided over the function also delivered the welcome address and offered the vote of thanks.

MOCK DRILL CONDUCTED AT MOODYMMAI

In an attempt to create awareness and to keep the people informed of the eventualities that might arise due to natural calamities such as the sudden occurrence of an earthquake, a one day mock drill was conducted at Moodymmmai, Jowai on September 1, 2008. The programme was organized by the Disaster Risk Management Committee in collaboration with the District Administration.

In the programme, practical training facilities were given to the people on how to rescue victims who were trapped in debris, how to put out fire, how to provide emergency medical assistance to the injured and for those who were seriously injured, how they have to be shifted to hospitals or medical camps, etc. People were also taught to build relief camps and tents for the homeless besides, precautionary measures and other necessary instructions were also given to people to equip them how to tackle any situations post disaster occurrence.

Later in the day, Mr. M. P. Sajani, the Adviser to the Ministry

of Home Affairs, Government of India and the Head of the team which came all the way from Delhi to inspect; the mock drill held at Moodymmmai took a review meeting of the mock drill organized.

SPECIAL INTERACTIVE PROGRAMME AT NONGSTOIN

A one day Special Interactive Programme (SIP) on the theme Realizing Economic Stability Through People's Participation was organized by the Office of the District Public Relations Officer (DPRO) Nongstoin at Laitkseh village in August 27, wherein four Departments comprising of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary, Industries, District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Nongstoin and Social Welfare Department participated.

The Project Director DRDA, West Khasi Hills District, Shri. Nongsiej MCS was the chief guest at the inaugural function. The Interactive Programme was actively participated by around 250 people from ten villages of Laitkseh area.

The highlight of the Interactive Programme included speeches from the Officers of the concerned departments on various developmental schemes, short film show on farming and an interactive session. During the interactive session, participants actively sought clarifications on different development schemes of the departments.

Earlier, the meeting was presided over by the headman of Laitkseh village, Shri. K. Kharbani whereas the vote of thanks was proposed by the District Public Relations Officer, Nongstoin Shiro P. S. Lyngdoh.

INDIGENOUS CROP FESTIVAL 2008

Hundreds of indigenous tropical fruits and vegetables captured the imagination of visitors at the first ever Indigenous Crop Festival 2008 organized by the office of the District Horticulture Officer (D.H.O), East Khasi Hills, Shillong. The Festival was held on September 12, 2008 at the premises of the U Soso Tham Auditorium.

Held on the theme "Indigenous Crops Our Traditional Wealth and Future Prosperity", the Festival saw around 30 stalls setup for display of various Horticulture products ranging from the luscious Sohiong (black berry) to Sohmluh, Sohkhaho, Sohlashit, Sohlawren, Sohthri, Sonlyngshan, Sohpen, Sohlyngkait, Sohlang, Sohthri and vegetables like Jaut, Jhur Jali, Jhur Maw, Jhur snam among others. A variety of pickles, orchids, mushrooms, squash and wine were also exhibited.

Meghalaya Horticulture Minister, Dr. A. Pariong inaugurated the festival in the presence of the Meghalaya Chief Secretary, Mr. R. Chatterjee, who graced the occasion as the Guest of Honour, Principal Secretaries to the Government of Meghalaya,



Mr. B. P. O. Warjri and Mr. V. S. Oberoi besides other senior government officials and farmers.

Officials of the Horticulture Department expressed fear of loosing endangered species because of continuing deforestation in the State. They said many species of plants are endangered and awareness should be created among the people for cultivation and preservation of the endangered species.

Later, Dr. Pariong gave away prizes to the winners of the best exhibits at the festival.

MUGA GERM PLASM MAINTENANCE CENTRE TO BOOST SERICULTURE ACTIVITIES

Sericulture as an agro-industry occupies an important position in the socio-economic matrix of the rural population of Meghalaya. In the absence of textiles industry, sericulture and weaving plays a very crucial role in the production of silk fabrics and hand woven ethnic designs.

This sector was given a fillip with the laying of the foundation stone for Muga Germ Plasm Maintenance Centre at Damalgre, West Garo Hills on September 17, 2008 by Mrs. M Sathyavati, Member Secretary, Central Silk Board, Bangaluru, West Garo Hills. The Centre at Damalgre is going to be an active centre for organic evolution. The conducive climatic conditions for starting the centre will go a long way for conservation of wild elite silkworm stocks and their sustainable utilization in future breeding programmes.

Muga is unique and is found only in Assam and Meghalaya. Though expensive when compared to other silks the demand for this material is very high worldwide. The initiative taken by the Centre in setting up of maintenance centre in Damalgre is to preserve and conserve the moths which are rare and found only in Nokrek and Balpakram.

In order to boost cocoon and silk production and also uplift the socio-economic condition of silk farmers, the Central Silk Board has assured financial assistance to the farmers through the office of the Director of Sericulture and Weaving, Shillong.

fame in the city.

What is significant about the Shillong NIFT is that it has come up in a record time of two months. Here is a success story that needs to be told if only to encourage others to follow this extraordinary achievement.

It would surprise many that the repair, renovation and construction work for the NIFT which is housed on the old NEIGRIHMS complex and the hostel facilities near the 11M at Mayurbhanj Shillong were taken up by the MeSEB civil engineering wing. They slogged day and night often up to 2 am in the morning when the power shutdown occurred. That was how the work was fast tracked. Engineers involved in this spectacular achievement said, "When we get the right signals from the top, we deliver a straight job.

The problem is when the signals are conflicting." The mover and shaker behind this revolution is V. S. Oberoi, Principal Secretary, Agriculture, Tourism etc.

Addressing the students and faculty of the NIFT here on Monday Dr. Donkumar Roy said the institute would encourage traditional weavers to use new technology to come up with better finished products.

It is encouraging to know that the NIFT has already planned along these lines and will be conducting training for the local weavers at the grassroots level," Dr. Roy said.

"The inherent creative and innovative orientation of the people of the region can find expression through institutions such as the NIFT," Dr. Roy said, adding, "We would expect the NIFT Centre to take the lead in documentation of the craft heritage of the region and to incorporate this legacy in its academics programmes, so that the students can be made aware of these traditions".

The idea of a NIFT was mooted by P. A. Sangma in 1982 in his avatar as the Union Minister for textiles. Speaking at the function, Mr. Sangma revealed that the concept emerged out of a need to promote textile exports which has then stagnating due to lack of innovative styles and designs, downslide in textile.

NE's FIRST FASHION INSTITUTE TAKES OFF

The National Institute of Fashion technology (NIFT), Shillong is ready for action. Out of the four proposed campuses of the institute at Bhopal, Patna, Kannur and Shillong, the last is the only one that has got going. Currently there are two courses-fashion design and accessories design-with 30 students each. Union Minister for textiles Shanker Singh Vaghela who was scheduled to inaugurate the institute could not be present as his flight was cancelled. It was left upto the Chief Minister Dr Donkumar Roy to bless yet another institute of national



DURAMA TEA FACTORY INAUGURATED



The Chairman, State Planning Board, Mr. P A Sangma inaugurated the Durama Tea Factory at Rongram, West Garo Hills District, on September 04, 2008 amidst a large turnout of people from all walks of life.

In his inaugural address as the Chief Guest, Mr. PA Sangma said that the establishment of the factory will help the tea growers to get their actual price and help to make Garo Hills famous as one of the producers of food in the world. He also urged the growers to grow more tea in the district and make famous.

Ms. AK Sangma, MP Lok Sabha, said that tea plays an important role in the life of man and hoped that tea from Garo Hills, if processed well, would earn a place in the international markets, she added.

Mr. TA Sangma, MP Rajya Sabha, while addressing the gathering said that Durama Tea Factory is similar to Birla and Tata tea industry and in order to be famous like them the factory needs to maintain tea qualities and proper marketing in order to bring buyers from outside the region.

Rev. JR Sangma, President, WGHTFF, while delivering keynote address, said that although tea was introduced in Garo Hills in the early 80s and many marginal farmers began to grow green tea leaves, prices of tea leaves began to fall and the farmers were

compelled to sell their produce at throw-away prices to the local tea factory.

To make matters worse, growers did not have the means to market their leaves to neighbouring tea factories of Assam and gradually some of the growers began to abandon their plantations and resumed to Jhum Cultivation.

However, he informed that with the launching of the IFAD project in West Garo Hills, many project groups like NURMGs and SHGs started taking up tea nursery as income generation activity. With the encouragement from the IFAD project, the tea growers came together in 2006 and formed a Federation known as "West Garo Hills Tea Farmers Federation" (WGHTFF), where over 1020 households are taking active part in tea cultivation in the districts covering an area of 564 hectares. The Factory was set up on a plot of land measuring 0.66 (5½) bighas donated by Ginsing R. Marak near Rongram Market. The factory was test-run successfully on August 20, 2008 and has an installed capacity of processing 16,000 Kg of green tea leaves per day.

With the establishment of this factory, the farmers would get around Rs. 10 to Rs. 10.50 per Kg and the finished product is being marketed by the Federation under the brand name "Durama Tea".

Tea Facts ... other uses for tea

✓ Dried tea will absorb odors in the refrigerator.

✓ Use tea to clean windows and mirrors.

✓ Used scented teas as potpourri sachets; place around your house or in drawers.

✓ Use tea as a foot refresher by soaking your feet in tea.

✓ Use tea as a compress on swollen eyes.

✓ Soothe a sunburn with a tea soaked compress.

✓ Keep a tea bag in your first aid kit to soothe insect bites

✓ Sprinkle dry tea leaves over charcoal before grilling, this adds flavor to your food

✓ Light dried tea leaves as a mosquito repellent.

VICE PRESIDENT OF INDIA INAUGURATES THE 4TH N. E. BUSINESS SUMMIT AT GUWAHATI

Vice President of India Shri Md. Hamid Ansari inaugurated the 4th North East Business Summit at Sarusajai Indoor Stadium, Guwahati on September 15, 2008 in the presence of the DoNER Minister, Mr Mani Shankar Aiyar, Commerce Minister, Mr Jairam Ramesh and also the Chief Ministers of Manipur and Meghalaya, Mr. O. Ibobi Singh and Dr Donkumar Roy respectively among Ministers of other North Eastern States. The summit was also attended by delegates from many south Asian countries like Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Singapore and others.

Speaking at the inaugural function, the Vice President said that he is delighted to inaugurate the 4th North East Business Summit which aims at showcasing the investment potentials of the region. He said that the effort today is as much to overcome the physical and commercial isolation of this region, as it is to set aside its geo-political isolation and put it on the path of accelerated and inclusive growth.

He said that the North Eastern Region was among the prosperous regions of India at the time of independence and six decades later it lagged behind in different aspects of growth. He urged upon the businessmen participating in the

summit to take full advantage of the N-E Industrial Investment and Promotion Policy. The Government is committed to converting diplomatic initiatives into commercial opportunities for the overall development of the North-Eastern Region.

The Vice President said that the need of the day for the North East region is closer integration with the national economy and the economy of the neighbouring countries in the region. He said that the Vision document has noted that the region should play

The need of the day for the North East region is closer integration with the national economy and the economy of the neighbouring countries in the region.

"the arrow-head role... in the vanguard of the country's Look-East Policy". The Look East Policy was not just a foreign policy initiative. It was an amalgam of a strategic shift in our global perspective, an aspect of our economic reform process focused on enlargement of our external economic engagement accompanied by renewal of civilizational linkages with our neighbours in South East and East Asia.

The efforts of Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, DONER Minister, Mr Mani Shankar Aiyar and various Chief Ministers and Governors of the States of the Region have resulted in a plan of action and identification of sectors where private investments have immense opportunity. The Central and State governments are fully aware that good governance, adequate physical infrastructure and power supply, skilled manpower and peace and security are as important as concessions and incentives for attracting investments. The experience and example of Public Private Partnership in other parts of the country must be used for developing the infrastructure in this region.



Later in the plenary session, Meghalaya Chief Minister, Dr Donkumar Roy in his speech highlighted the potentials of the State of Meghalaya and the business opportunities available in Meghalaya in the field of Agriculture, Horticulture, Tourism, Education, Industries and other sectors. He informed the gathering that the State Government of Meghalaya has taken a number of steps to facilitate the establishment of industry and enable its smooth and uninterrupted functioning.

Dr Roy informed that the Government of Meghalaya intends to establish Meghalaya as the

'Fruit and Flower State of the Country and also Shillong as the Knowledge city. He also said that among the priorities of the State Government is power generation and is looking for investment in tapping the vast potential in the sector.

Dr Roy also expressed his gratitude to the Government of India for launching the North East Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy (NEIIPP) 2007 which includes a package of fiscal incentives and other concessions for the North East Region.

Concluding his speech, Dr Roy said that the State of Meghalaya welcome the National and International

investors to come and invest in Meghalaya and he also assured that the Government stands by its commitment to extend all possible assistance for the Investors.



ALUMINARY LAID TO REST

The traditional Khasi music scene was robbed of a bright luminary on October 21, 2008 with the sad demise of the Khasi music legend Skendrowell Syiemlieh popularly known as Bah Sken, who passed away after a protracted bout with cancer at his residence in Bynther near Mairang, West Khasi Hills. He was 63 and leaves behind his wife, six sons and five daughters.

The composer of many popular Khasi songs like *U Tirol Singh*, *Ah Moina*, *Lucy*, *Akor Khasi* and others, Bah Sken's music career spanned over 46 years with over 42 albums to his credit including gospel and modern Khasi songs. Bah Sken rendered his voice in the first Khasi feature film *Manik Raitong*, which won a national award. He had been a regular artist of AIR, Shillong since 1964. He was also conferred with the Meghalaya Award in 1991 in recognition to his outstanding contribution to Khasi music.

He was also a member of KHADC (1979 - 1984) from Nongspung - Sohiong constituency.

Hundreds of people, including prominent musicians, legislators and church leaders, paid their last tributes to Bah Sken, at the funeral service held at his residence on October 23, 2008. Among the prominent Khasi musicians who paid their last tributes to the departed music icon were Rana Kharkongor, Headingson Ryntathiang and Chesterfield Khongwir. As a mark of respect Khasi music shops remained closed on the day.

Bah Sken was buried at Bynther Presbyterian Church Cemetery.

The demise of Bah Sken has left an irreplaceable void in the music world and though he is no more, his compositions and songs will continue to live in the hearts of the people forever.



URBAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

With the creation of the state of Meghalaya in 1972, the Government adopted the Assam Town and Country Planning Act 1959, 1962 & 1963. A combined Directorate of Town & Country Planning and Housing was constituted to administer the Act and to carry out planning and development works in the State. In 1988, the Directorate was bifurcated and the Directorate of Town and Country Planning was created to manage all works pertaining to town and country planning, which was renamed as Directorate of Urban Development with effect from 18th August 1988, highlighting the focus of development in urban areas only. With the merging of the Directorate of Municipal Administration Cell and the Directorate of Urban Development, the Directorate of Urban Affairs was created on the 20th March 1990. The activities of the directorate is confined to the urban areas of the State having Municipalities and also those urban areas having Town Committees who have assume the responsibility of maintaining and managing the assets created.

In Jowai, the District Headquarters of Jaintia Hills, the Department's office was established in 1974 and since then the implementation of various schemes along with the planning related works (Master Plan, Land Use Maps etc) have been executed with sincerity and achieving targets within the stipulated period.

In the year 1993, the Office of the Associate Town Planner, Jaintia Hills Jowai was bifurcated into (i) The Office of the Urban Planner and (ii) The Office of the Executive Engineer Urban Affairs Jaintia Hills Jowai.

The schemes implemented under this office include Infrastructure Development and Environmental Improvement of Urban Slum. The aim and objective of the Infrastructure Development scheme is to provide and enhance the town with proper infrastructures like foot-paths, drains, shopping malls, Parking Lots, motorable roads, retaining walls, drinking wells, public toilets, garbage dumps etc. The Environmental Improvement of Urban Slum scheme aims at improving the living and hygienic condition of the slum dwellers in the Town.

Presently, there are 7 (seven) notified and 4 (four) identified slum localities in Jowai Town.

Selection of the schemes are based on the petitions from the localities of the town and the cost effectiveness of each scheme within the budgeted amount. The normal duration of the schemes is 1 (one) year except in some cases where continuous schemes are involved.

Major Achievements

The Office of the Executive Engineer Urban Affairs Jowai has been successfully implementing schemes approved and sanctioned by the Government of Meghalaya since its inception till date. The schemes undertaken have immensely benefited the people of Jowai Town in particular. These include construction of footpaths, communication, motorable roads, drains, Community Halls, retaining walls etc. In some cases, due to the successful implementation of the department's scheme new residential areas emerged. Although the schemes are small and low-profile, yet their impact on the over all development of Jowai Town is indisputable.

One of the innovative techniques adopted by the Jowai Office is the successful use of pre-cast and cast in-situ cement concrete channels in the drains' bed. Also using of cement tiles on motorable roads and foot-paths has significantly decreased the wear and tear of these public amenities,

Major Drawbacks

Acquiring appropriate land in the business center of Jowai Town has greatly hampered the Department's plan for construction of Parking Lots, Bus Terminus and Shopping Complex.

Paucity of fund is another stumbling block for speedy implementation of various schemes as per local requirement.

"The world hates change, yet it is the only thing that has brought progress."

- Charles Kettering

STATE MOURNS THE DEATH OF FORMER CHIEF MINISTER



E.K Mawlong (1946-2008)

The State mourned the death of veteran politician and former Chief Minister Evansius Kek Mawlong,

who following a long battle with illness breathed his last at the Civil Hospital, Shillong on October 18, 2008. He was 62. Late Mawlong leaves behind his wife Mrs. A. R. Lyngdoh, four sons and two daughters.

Looking back at his illustrious career, Mr. E K Mawlong, the son of Late S Thangkhiew and Late Y Mawlong was born at Mawmih village near Sohiong, East Khasi Hills on February 1, 1946. He graduated from the Gauhati University in Science Stream in 1969 and taught at St. Dominic Savio High School, Mawkhar from 1968 to June 1971. He also worked in the Accountant General's office as Upper Division Clerk from June to December 1971.

His political career started in 1972 when he was elected member of Khasi Hills District Council as an Independent. In 1975, he joined Congress and became president of Meghalaya Pradesh Youth Congress (MPYC). He was also member of Indian Youth Congress (IYC). Mawlong's dominance in State politics started in 1978 when he was elected to

the State Assembly as an Independent from Urnroi constituency.

He was re-elected to the House in the 1983 polls on HSPDP ticket. His winning spree on HSPDP ticket continued in both 1988 and 1993 elections.

He served as HSPDP president from 1996 to 1997 and became UDP president on September 11, 1997 when HSPDP, HPU and PDIC came together to form UDP. He held the post till May 9, 2003. He was elected as UDP legislator from Urnroi seat in the 1998 and 2008 elections. Mawlong was State Assembly Speaker from March 10, 1998 till March 7, 2000. He was also a Cabinet Minister in the B B Lyngdoh ministry during 1990-91. He served as Chairman of State Development Reforms Commission from 2004 till his death.

People from all walks of life came out in large numbers to pay their last respects to the departed leader at his Lumsophoh residence, Lower Mawprem on October 20, 2008. His body was later laid to rest at a simple funeral ceremony at Mawprem Catholic Church Cemetery. Chief Minister, Dr. Donkumar Roy, Deputy Chief Minister Hoping Stone Lyngdoh, Leader of the Opposition Dr. D D Lapang, Assembly Speaker Bindo M Lanong, Cabinet Ministers, senior Government officials and UDP leaders were among those who paid homage to Mawlong.





The Shillong Bench of the Gauhati High Court at Police Bazar, Shillong