

MEGHALAYA BUDGET 2017-18

Speaker Sir,

I rise to present the Budget for the year 2017-18.

Before I proceed, I wish to highlight some important aspects of the national economy and the State economy.

1. The year 2016-17 was marked by two major national policy developments. Firstly, the passage of the Constitutional amendment, paving the way for introduction of the transformational Goods and Services Tax (GST), the objective of which is creating a common Indian market, improve tax compliance and governance and boost investment and growth. Secondly, the demonetization of the two highest denomination notes in the country. However, this action which was sudden in nature, created panic amongst the people and with the required logistics not in place, it caused inconvenience to the common man in the country including our State.
2. Sir, the Central Government has merged the plan and non plan expenditure effective from the Union Budget of 2017-18 to enable it to provide appropriate budgetary framework having focus on the revenue and capital expenditure. Accordingly, I am presenting the Budget 2017-18 by merging the plan and non plan outlays. This will help the State Government to rationalize its budgetary allocations with a focus on the development expenditure and also synchronize the budgetary framework with that of the Union Government. While the merger is expected to simplify and ensure an effective budgeting system, the process further needs to be streamlined and fine tuned, especially in the context of the revenue and capital account.
3. The State's own resource has been adversely affected consequent to the implementation of the recommendations

of the Supreme Court Committee on Road safety to impose the ban on the sale of liquor near the National and State highways, and educational and religious institutions. With the continuing impact of the NGT ban on coal mining, the revenue base of the State has been reduced considerably.

4. During the year 2015 – 16, the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) at Current Market price was ₹ 26,745 crore, as per the quick estimates, which shows an increase of 9.58% over the previous year. The advance estimates indicate that the GSDP for 2016-17 is ₹ 29,566 crore, an increase of 10.55 % over 2015-16. The growth of the tertiary sector is registered at 11.93%, the secondary sector at 9.38% and the primary sector at 7.51% over the year 2015-16. The per capita income of the State at current price for the year 2016 – 17 stands at ₹ 88,497 as per the advance estimates as against ₹ 81,498 in the year 2015-16 showing an increase of about 8.26%.
5. Mr. Speaker Sir, I have shared the vision of the Government in the budget speeches over the years explaining our abiding commitment to inclusive growth and sustainable development, the special attention accorded for women, youth and under privileged as well as paving the way for poverty free Meghalaya, having safe and secure space for all the inhabitants of the State to pursue their well being. This is an appropriate occasion to take stock and assess to what extent we have been able to realize that vision.
6. Several initiatives have been taken up with a view to accelerating growth, providing ecologically sustainable livelihoods and inclusive development, reducing intra - State variations, improving connectivity, bridging infrastructure gaps, promoting human capital development and building

skills, tapping emerging opportunities in border trade and market access development etc. I am happy to inform this august House that on several counts, we have been able to make substantial progress as in case of investments in Major District Roads and State Highways, improvement of critical feeders, replacement of semi-timber bridges, internal village connectivity including construction of missing culverts, Black Topping of Rural Roads Schemes (BTRRS), lay bye markets, modernization of rural markets, opening of first ever railhead in Meghalaya, launching of the Meghalaya Health Insurance Scheme, construction of hostels for rural students, Mission Green, Integrated Water Resource Management, Women Economic Empowerment through Financial Inclusion, etc. Our prime focus, however, has been on creating an enabling eco-system for sustained growth and development of the State and towards this end, we have put in place necessary institutions and processes.

7. I will further elaborate on these initiatives in the course of the Budget Speech, which will establish that we have been true to our commitments and have been able to translate our vision into action to a great measure.

Law and Order

8. Sir, one of the commitments of this Government was to improve the internal security scenario and restore peace and stability in the State. It was our belief that investment made in peace and security was indeed an investment in development, because without peace there can be no development. It has been our own experience that disturbance anywhere can be a threat to peace everywhere. It had also emerged that the philosophy underpinning the various insurgency movements was the perceived belief that

certain regions or communities had suffered neglect and hence, lagged behind. This perception, howsoever unfounded, needed to be addressed. Therefore, a multi-pronged strategy was adopted. This included, inter-alia, strengthening of the traditional policing, intensive and sustained counter-insurgency operations, offer of negotiations with those outfits willing to have a dialogue, comprehensive counselling and rehabilitation package including provision of sustainable livelihood opportunities to cadres willing to return to the mainstream, mobilisation of public awareness and opinion against anti-social and anti-national elements, engagement of religious leaders, senior citizens and enlightened NGOs in persuading youth from the path of militancy, and also taking determined initiatives to promote all round development of the affected regions.

9. I am happy to inform this August House that, as a follow up of the announcement in my last Budget Speech, two new civil sub-divisions and three new police stations have been inaugurated during 2016-17, while the process of notifying the remaining two civil sub-divisions and fifteen more police stations is underway. The staffing strength of police stations and outposts was increased; the first batch of SF-10 battalion, that passed out in October 2016, have been pressed into anti-militancy operations; additional resources in terms of trained personnel, suitable weaponry, effective communication equipments etc. were provided; intelligence collection was strengthened; additional Central Paramilitary Forces were mobilised; a Cyber Crime police station to handle cyber related crimes has been set up; new developmental initiatives with involvement of local communities as stakeholders were undertaken; investments were made on improving the road infrastructure and highway patrols have been introduced in all the highways to

ensure safety and security. For an efficient and corruption-free police organization, strong emphasis is being given for continuous training to police personnel.

- 10.** I can speak with a sense of satisfaction today that this strategy has yielded very encouraging results. The overall security situation has improved considerably today. Many major militant outfits have come over ground in pursuance of the peace agreements reached with them. Many smaller outfits have been neutralised. A large number of cadres have surrendered. The incidents of violence, abduction and extortion have come down. The only major militant outfit, namely, GNLA is now on the run, with a considerably reduced cadre strength as a large number of them have deserted the outfit and joined the mainstream. But there is no room for complacency, as our past experience shows that such outfits have a tendency to resurface and mushroom overtime. Therefore, utmost vigil shall be maintained, sustained operations shall have to continue, while placing greater thrust on our developmental efforts.
- 11.** All measures are being put in place to deal with crime against women and children. Dedicated police officers will be entrusted to fast track the investigation into all crimes against women and children. Constitution of Directorate of Prosecution and Special Courts for expeditious trials and disposal of cases will result in creating a strong deterrence to perpetration of such crimes.
- 12.** As a step towards improving the overall administration of prisons and to ease the congestion in the jails, a new District Jail at Mawsyntai, Ri-Bhoi district was inaugurated on the 8th July, 2016. Nongstoin District Jail shall also commence

during 2017-18. Acquisition of land for district Jails in Ampati and Khliehriat is in final stage.

A development outlay of ₹ 42.20 crore is proposed for 2017-18.

Judiciary

- 13.** Mr. Speaker Sir, separation of Judiciary from the Executive has been already effected in the 7 Districts and the process of separation in the other four Districts viz., East Jaintia Hills, South West Khasi Hills, South Garo Hills and North Garo Hills is on the anvil. The separation is a positive step in the right direction as it will bring relief to litigants and justice will be brought nearer to the people of Meghalaya. In 2017-18, construction of all remaining Court buildings and residential quarters for the Judicial Officers will be started and all measures will be taken for their early completion.
- 14.** The State of Meghalaya now has its own Judicial Academy under the aegis of the Meghalaya High Court. It will help in imparting intensive training to Judicial Officers of the State as well as the Autonomous District Councils.
- 15.** The present legal system is perceived to be costly and time consuming. Due to long process of justice delivery system, search for a simple, quick, flexible and accessible dispute resolution system has resulted in the adoption of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism. The State Government, in consultation with the Hon'ble High Court, proposes to set up two ADR centres in the State. Land has been allotted for the ADR centre at New Shillong Township area and handed over to the Meghalaya State Legal Services Authority. Another ADR centre is proposed at Tura. In addition, there are two mediation centers in Meghalaya. One

centre is set up by the Meghalaya State Legal Services Authority at Shillong and another at Williamnagar, East Garo Hills. The Government plans to set up more mediation centers in the State in the near future.

A development outlay of ₹ 60 crore is proposed for 2017-18.

District Council Affairs

- 16.** The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India envisages the Autonomous District Councils to discharge their primary duties as custodians of customary laws, traditions and practices to safeguard the interest and rights of the indigenous population of the State. On several occasions, the State Government has taken up with the Government of India for extending financial support to the District Councils as there was no specific award from the 14th Finance Commission. The State Government will continue to support the District Councils in the form of grants-in-aid.

A development outlay of ₹ 1.05 crore is proposed for the year 2017-18.

Key Sectors of the Budget

- 17.** With the aim of bringing about transparency and probity in public service, which is the essence of good governance, the Government has enacted the Meghalaya Lokayukta Act, 2014 and has also notified the Meghalaya Public Servants (Furnishing of Information and Annual Returns of Assets and Liabilities and the Limits for Exemption of Assets in Filing Returns) Rules, 2016.
- 18.** Mr. Speaker Sir, during the last four years, the policies and initiatives of the Government have focussed on sustainable growth and development which is inclusive and have a

humane face in line with the genius and ethos of the people. The approach of the Government has been woven around the aspects of better infrastructure and multiple livelihoods, along with improved access to quality education and health. The underpinning thought process behind this approach has been the firm belief that 'people matter as does their quality of life'. It is under this overarching framework, that I propose to present this Budget, under five distinct sectors. These are:

- i. **Sustainable Development and Convergence:** focussing on bringing about a synergy in our investments, under the overall goal of providing option of minimum of 3 livelihoods to each family with thrust on creating an enabling ecosystem for entrepreneurship promotion, inclusive growth and sustainable development;
- ii. **Agriculture and Allied Sector:** highlighting the Government's commitment to ensure that the farming and allied sector remains remunerative to our farmers;
- iii. **Community Development:** presenting the efforts of the Government to provide adequate employment opportunities to our people both in rural and urban areas with special focus on women, youth and the underprivileged;
- iv. **Social Sector:** spelling out the strategy of the Government on investing in our human resources by providing adequate education and health facilities; and
- v. **Infrastructure Sector:** broadly outlining the prioritised approach of the Government in creating the basic infrastructure, which is essential to achieve the goals it has set for itself.

Sustainable Development and Convergence

19. Sir, with two-thirds of its population below the age of 30, the youth of Meghalaya are its greatest asset and also its greatest responsibility. The vast natural resources of the State represent a huge employment opportunity for young dynamic people, who, if properly guided, mentored and trained, can take Meghalaya on a higher growth trajectory. New opportunities with latest technological advances in the field of organics, food processing, agri-service centres and clinics, para-vets, eco-tourism, home-stay solutions, floriculture, weaving, dress making and educational centres of excellence are opening up. About 13,471 community partners, mostly youths, have been trained in organic farming under the Integrated Basin Development and Livelihood Promotion Programme, with an additional 52,505 entrepreneurs, mostly youths, trained in different sectors aimed at integrated value chain development in sectors such as livestock, sericulture, apiculture, aquaculture, handicrafts, tourism, film making, photography and documentation.
20. More than 1,000 young men and women have been trained on Ethics in Governance. A programme on Field Leadership Development Initiative for young leaders has been instituted in association with the Centre of Excellence for Change and the World Bank for capacity building of institutions and youths in the State.
21. There is visible impact of the various initiatives taken by the Government on multiple fronts such as in the road sector in terms of improved highways and village roads, where all weather roads became possible through convergence with MGNREGS; in the education sector in terms of better school

buildings and skill formation through the Supporting Human Capital Development initiative; multiple livelihood options through the Missions under IBDLP; in health care through better hospitals and the Meghalaya Health Insurance Scheme (MHIS); in better education through teachers' training, scholarships and residential schools in rural areas; in agriculture in terms of better market access through the Megha-LAMP initiative; in power through new transmission infrastructure especially the Agia-Nongalbibra line; a greener Meghalaya through forestry and spring-shed interventions; support to music and arts through institutes of excellence and hosting of events, and as a more caring society through wedding assistance for orphan girls and the Chief Minister's scheme for assistance to the physically challenged, infirm, widows and single mothers.

22. The Government has adopted a multi-pronged strategy with the aim of creating an enabling environment for generating employment in rural areas and promoting agro-entrepreneurship. We are now confident that transformation can happen because we are seeing it happening. We are consolidating our efforts and reaffirming what we have done, through additional interventions. I am, therefore, proposing the following:
- i. The Chief Minister's Black Topping of Rural Roads programme will cover about 164 km of roads providing concrete roads based on plastic cell technology. This would be in addition to 120 kms of rural roads taken up under Megha-LAMP.
 - ii. As a part of the 'clean and green initiative', pico-hydels and other new renewable technologies will be promoted to provide water and energy at a low cost and in an environmentally sustainable manner to our

- rural communities. In addition, Solar LED street lights will be provided in the villages.
- iii. A convergence programme involving MGNREGS would be taken up to provide piped water to rural households in the water stressed areas.
 - iv. Realizing the need for protecting the crucial life line of water sources that cater to the cities of Tura and Shillong, a special community mobilisation programme will be launched to engage all the stakeholders for protecting the entire catchment area.
 - v. Innovative methods of composting techniques, which were successfully introduced in the State, are proposed to be up-scaled to cover as many farmers across the State as possible. This will give a further fillip to the adoption of organic farming in the State as well as creating a new space for rural entrepreneurship.
 - vi. The Meghalaya Institute of Natural Resources, which is promoted under MBDA, has developed a very effective technology for spring-shed rejuvenation. These innovative interventions will rejuvenate and recharge the springs in various catchment areas, reverse the drying up of otherwise perennial streams and improve forest cover. The Government intends to use this technology and innovation to revive and strengthen all 7,000 spring-sheds in the State through the 'Springshed Rejuvenation Programme'. This will not only conserve our rich natural resources but also provide sustainable source of water to our people for domestic and agricultural purposes and at the same time address the problem of depleting underground water.
 - vii. In our endeavour towards sustainable development and for a Greener Meghalaya, the Government will promote involvement and partnership of communities

for strengthening the existing conservation activities and encourage agro forestry within the villages.

- viii. Meghalaya has 1,511 registered cooperative societies including Cooperative Banks and State level federations with a membership of about 1.79 lakh individuals. With the aim to alleviate the immense problems being faced by the people due to lack of banking services near their villages, seed capital will be provided to the Meghalaya Cooperative Apex Bank to enable the bank to promote Integrated Village Cooperative Societies (IVCSs) and Self Help Group (SHG) Federations as extended banking institutions. This will help in promoting entrepreneurship and rural employment.
- ix. The launch of the Apiculture Mission has made farmers, beekeepers and entrepreneurs aware of the immense commercial potentiality of Meghalaya honey due to its purity, taste and medicinal properties. Beekeepers trained under the Mission are reporting higher prices being offered to them by buyers both within and outside the state. Local entrepreneurs trained under the Mission are now bagging orders from major retailers such as Amazon. Other producers and processors are reporting increased demand for their honey and there is also an increase in the demand for trainings, equipment, beehives etc., from the beekeepers across the State. In this light, it is proposed to scale up the interventions under the Mission so as to cater to this demand and make bee keeping a viable entrepreneurial activity. This will ensure that Meghalaya honey carves out a niche for itself as a national brand that embodies quality and purity.

23. Sir, the State flagship programme, the Integrated Basin Development and Livelihood Promotion Programme (IBDLP), was initiated as part of our abiding commitment to development of a green economy. With a view to ensure further consolidation of this important programme of the Government, a special project, namely, 'Community based Agri-business Partnership' has been taken up to foster collaboration between communities, government institutions and other stakeholders to promote mutually beneficial business ventures. These will pave the way for sustainable economic activities by providing additional entrepreneurship options in rural areas.
24. To supplement these activities and initiatives, several projects have been formulated for funding from multiple sources including the funding under Externally Aided Projects (EAPs) in sectors like water resources, transport, governance, forestry and finance.

A development outlay of ₹ 450.20 crore is proposed during 2017-18 for these initiatives.

Agriculture and Allied Sectors

25. Agriculture, being the key to rural prosperity and food security, will continue to play a significant role in the economy of the State. The focus of the Government is on increasing the production and productivity of foodgrains through better cultivation techniques, capacity building and improving water and moisture availability. Latest technical know-how through various schemes such as State Rice Mission (SRM), National Food Security Mission (NFSM), National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) and other schemes has been put in place and efforts are on to bring fallow lands under other winter crops to augment the

incomes of the farmers. The sector has done the State proud by earning national recognition and the highest accolades as the Best Performing State in the form of the 'Krishi Karman Awards' for the last three consecutive years for its initiatives and excellent performance in food grains production in individual crops of rice, wheat, pulses and coarse cereals.

26. The 'Mission Organic' continues to focus on promoting organic farming, helping the farmers to tap the growing organic market. Continuous efforts are being made to popularize 'bio-fertilizers, compost making' and 'bio-control practices' for plant health management and these efforts are being scaled up through the establishment of village level community managed bio fertilizers and bio agent production units, in collaboration with IBDLP and MGNREGS. This would not only augment and support the organic mission of the State but could also serve as avenues for rural enterprises to flourish. The Mission was launched by incorporating various stakeholders from organic producers to consumers. Since 2013 – 14, the State has started organic certification programme for an area of 40,000 hectares and the third year of convergence programme under organic adaptation and certification is almost completed.
27. A Meghalaya Organic Mission Authority will be established with the objective of positioning Meghalaya as a major player in the national organic market. It will be done through a collaborative process, bringing together the various facets of an organic regime, involving all stakeholders and sectors. This will help in maintaining the organic traditions and strengths of the State and its people, opening up entrepreneurial and employment opportunities, projecting brand Meghalaya to the world, and putting in place a system

and process that will ensure sustainable livelihood for every single person along the value chain.

28. Meghalaya also produces excellent high altitude tea, which has been certified organic and has since been attracting buyers from across the country and the globe. It has also been observed that tourists coming to Meghalaya have been buying organic tea as souvenirs and gifts to take back home. To tap this latent market, the Government is putting in place a structured and organized set up to converge the organic tea sector with tourism and give the much needed fillip to both sectors. The aim is to enhance visitors' experience through tea garden stays and tours that would also include taking tourists through the organic tea processing.
29. The Government has introduced 'Ramie', a valuable semi-perennial crop, during the previous year. The crop can be grown in a fairly wide range of agro ecological conditions for its fibre and green portion as feed for livestock. The crop is also considered as a textile fibre crop of great potential. It has received good response from the farmers.
30. The Government has introduced organic plantation of Bamboo and Agar. It is anticipated that this intervention can be a game changer as far as challenging issues of climate change and a movement towards sustainable agriculture are concerned. Around 9 lakh Agar seedlings and equal number of bamboo plants have been distributed to the farmers. A mass awareness programme on 'Mass Plantation of Bamboo' was launched all over the State involving village communities, societies, Village Employment Councils and individuals.
31. The Government proposes to set up more Integrated Farmer's Markets at specified locations across the State to

help strengthen the agricultural marketing system. These markets will provide market infrastructure, storage facilities, farmers' information centre, post harvest and other support services.

- 32.** The Government has sanctioned many lay-by Markets with the objective of uplifting the livelihood opportunity of the rural masses, by providing the farmers residing closer to the highways, a market within the vicinity of the producing areas, and thereby, obtain better price for their produces with minimal spoilage during transportation.
- 33.** With the objective of promoting agro-entrepreneurship amongst the rural youth and to facilitate effective value chain mechanism for farm produce, the Government proposes to establish community collection-cum-storage houses, grading and packaging centers for the agro-horticulture products.
- 34.** To facilitate stronger and effective extension services and better outcomes, a participatory technology development approach would be put in place. This will facilitate adoption of better knowledge and technology involving farmers by providing in-house solutions for higher production on a sustainable basis. The Meghalaya Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortium (MgSFAC) will also be further strengthened.
- 35.** Under the Megha-LAMP, MBDA had initiated the establishment of 8 community managed seed banks to address the loss of agricultural diversity and to enhance access to quality seeds adapted to local conditions.
- 36.** With the aim to capitalize on the availability of raw materials such as cashew and black pepper, especially in the Garo

Hills, processing and manufacturing units would be encouraged in the State along with the creation of a supply and value chain from the production centres to the markets.

37. The post harvest supply chains would be redesigned so that farmers and production clusters can reach their products to the best paying markets with minimal wastage and losses. Dedicated “Mandis”, exclusively for the organic produce of our farmers, would be established in identified cities, to tap the growing niche organic market.

I propose a development outlay of ₹ 287.94 crore for Agriculture and Horticulture sector in 2017-18.

Animal Husbandry and Veterinary

38. The endeavour of the Government is to strengthen the animal husbandry sector in order to enhance production, productivity, employment and self-reliance of the poorer sections of the rural society particularly the youth. With this objective in mind, various initiatives are being implemented under the Livestock Mission.
39. In the field of pig rearing, the efforts of the Government would be directed to extend supply of quality pigs through artificial insemination along with infrastructural support for input supplies, services, disease control and marketing in all the villages covering all the development blocks in a phased manner. Artificial insemination presently being carried out in Upper Shillong will be extended in future to the Garo Hills and other places in the State.
40. Poultry keeping is a subsidiary occupation of a large section of the population both in the rural and urban areas. Steps will be taken to increase productivity of poultry by introducing improved breeds. A new Poultry Farm is being

set up in Phulbari. This farm is expected to encourage the farmers in rearing poultry layer and broiler birds at a reasonable price, thereby, increasing the production of eggs and meat to meet the demand in the State. The Government will give thrust to bridge the shortfall in terms of eggs and meat production by propagating the rearing of low input birds such as Kuroiler on a larger scale by establishing 2 Kuroiler chick rearing hubs in each block. These hubs will be manned mostly by the Women Self Help Groups and Societies after imparting training to them.

41. The Government will set up a State Dairy Development Authority to promote dairy development activities in the State and to tap the huge employment potential and entrepreneurship opportunities in the dairy sector.
42. Community managed fodder production units will be set up to encourage the cultivation of fodder crops to help farmers expand their dairy and fishery activities.
43. Under the Livestock Mission, a Meghalaya Piggery and Livestock Development Society (MPLDS) would be established to improve the State's capacity to meet the upcoming demand for piglets and backyard poultry in the State through convergence among the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary, the Community and Rural Development Departments and the livestock initiatives under the Megha-LAMP of MBDA. Goat farming would be promoted in the State. It will serve as an alternative livelihood option, especially in the mining affected areas of the State and in areas with large pastures.
44. Food safety has been a matter of concern for the Government. To address this concern, the Government will facilitate establishment of low cost abattoirs in rural

markets. Adequate measures would be put in place to set up a robust mechanism for screening of the animals being imported into the State. This will ensure that the State meets the required food safety norms.

A development outlay of ₹ 57.38 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18.

Fisheries

- 45.** An investment of ₹ 186 crore under the Meghalaya State Aquaculture Mission (MSAM) has resulted in the development of 20,338 individual fish ponds, 26 hatcheries, 49 sanctuaries and 3 feed mills in the last 4 years of its implementation.
- 46.** The production of fresh fishes has touched approximately 8,000 metric tonne. To facilitate the sale of fresh fishes, one hygienic fish market has been established. The Mahseer Hatchery will be commissioned during the breeding season of Mahseer. With the commissioning of this hatchery, Mahseer fish seeds will be propagated throughout the State.
- 47.** An additional amount of ₹ 5 crore will be invested for increasing fish and fish seed production. This will help in doubling the income of the farmers with inclusive participation of the economically weaker sections and to ensure environmental sustainability and bio-security. The aim of the Government is to transform the fishery sector as a modern industry with special focus on new technology and processes. This programme will be taken up under “Blue Revolution” Integrated Development and Management of Fisheries.
- 48.** The native freshwater fish diversity in our rivers is declining rapidly due to destruction of habitats through dams and

barrages, pollution, and exploitive fishing practices. A silver lining is the community managed fish sanctuaries like Amlayee Mahaseer Fish Sanctuary, Nongbareh, Songkal Wari, Rombagre, Deku Dobagre Fish Sanctuary. The Government is committed to preserving the aquatic biodiversity of the State and it will continue to extend full support to similar initiatives in fish sanctuaries.

A development outlay of ₹ 45.50 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18

Sericulture and Weaving

49. Sir, the Government is committed to address the problems faced by the sericulture farmers and handloom weavers. With just 15,000 sericulture farmers and 10,000 handloom weaver families in the year 1972 -73, the number of such families has tripled by 2015 -16.
50. Under the North Eastern Region Textile Promotion Schemes (NERTPS) for both sericulture and handloom sectors, funds to benefit 1,000 sericulture farmers under the Intensive Bivoltine Sericulture Development Project (IBSDP) and 2,300 sericulture farmers for Integrated Sericulture Development Project (ISDP), including 72 handloom clusters, have already been approved. Funds have also been approved for Block Level Clusters under the National Handloom Development Programme (NHDP).
51. The Government has also sanctioned funds to provide raw materials and new looms to more than 10,000 handloom weavers. Besides, the Government is organizing several promotional events to popularize the silk products both within the State and outside to open up marketing avenues. The Government also envisages the convergence with other

schemes to create infrastructure and to train the weavers in the border areas as a part of livelihood programmes.

52. Meghalaya is home to the eri silkworm and is known for its production of eri silk, which is also known as Ahimsa silk or non violent silk. It is also one of the only few States producing muga, which is a much valued and highly prized fabric. Focused investment will be made in advanced looms in order to increase the number of reeling and spinning units so that weavers are able to turn out volumes at a lower cost, which can actually make weaving worthwhile as a full time livelihood activity. Further, leveraging on the status of Meghalaya as a tourist destination, it is proposed to link the weaving villages and clusters with tourism through the creation of weaving hubs and spokes that will not only cater to the needs of weavers across the State but also offer visitors an experience of silk production. The scheme would focus on the fibre to fabric aspect of sericulture with creation of silk tours and silk home stays that would allow people partake of the experience and weaving of their own silk fabrics to take back as souvenirs. To this effect, a 'Silk Mission Society' is proposed to be established that will concentrate on building up the sericulture and weaving activities in the State, through collaborations with designers, private entrepreneurs, weavers, farmers and buyers.
53. Some of our young fashion designers have shown lot of promise and have made their presence felt in national and international arena. To encourage our local designers develop their brands, a Meghalaya Fashion Design Council will be set up. This council will act as a platform for promoting the local talent by linking them with the renowned fashion houses and designers.

A development outlay of ₹ 37.20 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18.

Water Resources

54. Sir, as on March 2016, the irrigation potential created in the State is about 75,243 hectares which is about 35% of the identified irrigation potential of about 2.18 lakh hectares. Efforts are being made to increase the irrigation coverage through minor irrigation projects, Jalkunds and water harvesting structures in order to have a positive impact on crop production and productivity which will result in improving the livelihood of the people. I am happy to inform this August House that the efforts to accelerate expansion of irrigation facilities in the State have started bearing fruits as we have been able to double the irrigation coverage in the last 5 years. These ongoing efforts will be further stepped up during 2017-18. While more irrigation projects are being proposed for funding under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayi Yojana (PMKSY), implementation of projects are also being taken up through the state schemes and NABARD loan. The anticipated achievement in irrigation during 2016-17 is 3,764 hectares, and the proposed target for 2017-18 is 6,400 hectares.
55. To promote participatory approach in management of the irrigation projects, Water Users' Association in 289 minor irrigation project area have been formed and registered. Impetus will be given to create more such associations and capacity building programmes will be put in place for the members of the Association.

A development outlay of ₹ 199.20 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18.

Forest and Environment

56. Sir, according to the India State of Forest Reports, forest cover in Meghalaya has shown an increase of 219 sq km or 21,900 hectares in the last ten years. Meghalaya has consistently maintained a forest cover of over 75%. This has been made possible by eliciting people's participation in protection and afforestation activities and creation of 41 Community Reserves for Wildlife and Bio-diversity conservation.
57. The pressure on Reserve Forests, Protected Areas and Community owned forests, which exists as isolated patches surrounded by human settlements has increased. Vulnerability of many such areas has been further compounded as they are located near the inter-state or international borders. To ensure protection of these forests, which are repositories of rich natural wealth, the Government will raise a Battalion of Forest Protection Force as done in some States.
58. Meghalaya's per capita emission is less than the national average in terms of its carbon footprints. The main credit for it goes to the sequestration from forests in the State. It can be further increased by improving stocking of open forests in the State, which is already being attempted. We aim to attain the 'Carbon Neutral' status with concerted efforts.

A development outlay of ₹ 48.01 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18.

Soil and Water Conservation

59. The Government is strengthening its developmental approach by ensuring the participation of all concerned stakeholders and focusing on activities for ensuring

sustainable economic development. At present, 84 projects under the Integrated Watershed Management Programmes (IWMP) are being implemented under this approach. The Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme with 42 projects will continue to be implemented in 2017-18 to encourage multi cropping activities and scientific conservation of water resources, with a focus on coordinated land development in river valleys.

60. Young people registered as Green and Social Volunteers have rallied around the "GRAMODAYA" or "Rise of the Village initiative", a statewide mega-football event that is the largest grassroots level football tournament with a total of 712 matches across 178 sub-watersheds in all the 11 districts. This initiative seeks to bring together people from all walks of life in rural Meghalaya on to a common platform to celebrate rural life and the spirit of oneness. This would be leveraged upon to bring about a collective action for better conservation of our natural resources.

A developmental outlay of ₹ 193.87 crore is proposed for this sector during 2017-18.

Community Development

Community and Rural Development

61. In rural sector, programmes for employment generation and creation of durable community assets will continue to be the prime focus and of top most priority of the Government. In order to take governance closer to the people and fulfil its objectives of equitable development, the State Government has already created 4 new C & RD Blocks viz. Damalgre, Demdema, Sohiong and Bhoirybong. Two more Blocks viz., Bajengdoba and Mawlai will be created during 2017-18.

62. Our State has been hailed as one of the best in the implementation of MGNREGS, especially in creation of sustainable and durable assets. During 2016-17, the annual target of 2 crore persondays will be surpassed and is expected to reach at least 2.7 crore persondays.
63. The presence of the Village Employment Councils (VECs) has provided a robust institution for an effective delivery mechanism at the village level. The Government will continue to invest in nurturing these unique community institutions by strengthening their leadership, planning and vision.
64. By leveraging MGNREGS, the State Govt. has launched a "Bottom 20' Programme during 2016-17. Under this programme, there is a special focus on constructing livestock sheds for 10% of the rural households to promote piggery, poultry and dairy in a big way. Further, for improving farm productivity and thrust on organic farming, farmers would also be provided with an innovative compost making technique through which they can make compost in 18 to 20 days.
65. The Government has taken a strong step in ensuring faster disbursement of funds to the bank accounts of our stakeholders through the electronic financial management system and Direct Benefit Transfer in MGNREGS, rural housing and livelihood programmes. It will be also extended to the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP).
66. The Government is committed to implement the Prime Minister Awas Yojana (PMAY). Every family that fulfils the eligibility criteria as per the Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) will be entitled to a support of ₹ 1.30 lakh for constructing their homes.

67. Self Help Groups (SHGs) have been mobilized under different programmes to promote savings, bank linkages, livelihoods and micro-enterprises. There are more than 10,000 SHGs formed under various programmes as on date and they require capacity building and revolving fund support. Currently the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) is being implemented only in 8 Blocks and supports only women SHGs. The Government now proposes to support the existing SHGs in all the Blocks under a new project titled "LIFE (Livelihood Interventions for Facilitating Entrepreneurship / Empowerment)". This project aims to impact over 10,000 SHGs across the State in 2017-18.
68. The National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) will be expanded to another 13 Blocks from the existing 8 Blocks for improving the livelihood activities of women.
69. The National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) will also be used to form Self Help Groups (SHGs) of women involved in sericulture and weaving to help them to invest in advanced looms. Each SHG would get ₹ 1.10 lakh as Community Investment Fund under NRLM that can be used to invest in furthering their activities. Three Blocks under NRLM with a focus on sericulture and weaving are being covered to bring convergence under this sector.

A development outlay of ₹ 1731.57 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18.

Housing

70. Under the "Chief Minister's Housing Assistance Programme", three bundles of roofing materials will be provided for the Economically Weaker Section and an assistance for dwelling houses will be provided to the Lower Income Group families.

A development outlay of ₹ 60 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18

Border Areas Development

71. Sir, the Government has always accorded high priority to development of the border areas of the State both, national and international. The Border Areas Development Programme (BADP) and the Inter State Border Areas Programme (ISBADP) have been implemented in a focused manner reflecting the priorities of the people for improving connectivity, livelihood, provide desired infrastructure, community facilities, playgrounds, market stalls and other such facilities.
72. The scholarship and stipends will continue to be provided to the students residing in the border villages along the International Border for post-matric level up to university level. 2,913 youths have been trained, out of which 2,118 have been given job placements in the livelihood sector under BADP. Up-gradation of traditional skills and crafts like weaving, cane and bamboo, wood carving and pottery have been encouraged.

A development outlay of ₹ 59.96 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18

Urban Development

73. Sir, meeting the aspirations and needs of urban development has always been a challenge to the Government and it has been able to address it to a great extent. Some of the important projects which have been completed during the current financial year include, construction of 456 housing units at Tura, 256 housing units at Nongmynsong, 48 housing units at Mawprem, re-

development of parking lot at Akhonggre, construction of ISBT at Tura, construction of bus depot at Mawblei and improvement of Sohra Town road.

- 74.** The major projects which are likely to be completed soon, are the Multi Purpose Utility Centre at Mawkhar, construction of additional 112 dwelling units at Nongmynsong, Solid Waste Management Project at Tura and Nongpoh, Short Term Scientific landfill Site Work at Marten, Shillong and Solid Waste Management Programme in the Greater Shillong Planning Area covering areas outside the Shillong Municipal jurisdiction.
- 75.** The major projects in which works are in good progress are Augmentation of Public Transport in Shillong, Construction of Ancillary Infrastructure (Depot) for 240 additional buses at Mawiong and Upper Shillong, Improvement of Road within Mairang Town and Nongpoh Town, Construction of RCC Bridge to connect Gangdrak Dare at Tura, Construction of Road from Shamshan Ghat to Reservegittim at Tura, Road Network Project in New Shillong Township and Construction of Parking Cum- Commercial facility near Inter District Bus Terminus at Akhonggre. In addition, some of the major projects proposed to be taken up are Septage Management System for Shillong, Project for re-development of junction improvement at Fire Brigade and Polo, Shillong, 'Shillong City Square' project, improvement of basic amenities in urban areas, Sewerage System for 2 sub-zones in Shillong, Solid Waste Management Programme in Tura, Jowai, Williamnagar, Baghmara & Resubelpara and Waste Water Management Programme in one catchment area of Tura.
- 76.** The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) and the "National Urban Livelihood Mission", which aim towards upliftment of

the quality of life of urban poor, will continue to be implemented in the State. Under 'Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation' (AMRUT), a plan has been prepared with thrust on water supply, sewerage and septage, drainage, urban transport, green space and park to cover the capital city of Shillong.

77. Under the Swachh Bharat Mission, 10 statutory towns have been selected and beneficiaries have been identified to take up work on construction of individual household toilets, community toilet as well as improvement of solid waste management in the towns. The Government has also initiated works on up-gradation of Shillong under the Smart Cities Mission of Government of India.
78. In order to downsize and streamline the administrative structure, various e-governance measures have been initiated, with focus on service delivery and public interface of local bodies. The Government has also framed Rules and schemes under the Meghalaya Street Vendor, (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014 and notified for public opinion and suggestion, and the same will be implemented soon.
79. The semi-urban areas are often neglected by various Central Government schemes. The Government, therefore, proposes to bring a special programme to meet the housing and sanitation needs to promote sustainable and most livable places around the cities and towns.
80. Urbanization has brought about the problems of traffic congestion in the cities especially Shillong and Tura. While the Shillong bye-pass has contributed a lot in mitigating the traffic woes of the city, the Government is further proposing to decongest Shillong by taking up construction of the

Western bye-pass which will traverse through lad Umsaw to lad Mawreng and Myllem. This will also ensure connectivity to the new tourist destinations. Similarly, Tura bye-pass will enable us to mitigate traffic congestion in Tura.

A development outlay of ₹ 267.07 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18

Social Sector

Health and Family Welfare

- 81.** With the goal to provide affordable, assured, reliable and accessible health care to all, the Government has been focusing on strengthening the health care system by upgrading the existing health care facilities including provision of more beds in the Government hospitals. We will endeavour to upgrade the existing Community Health Centres to Hospitals and set up new Primary Health Centers and Sub-Centres as per the norms.
- 82.** The Government had proposed to set up two medical colleges, with a view to bridge the shortage of doctors and health functionaries in the State. Setting up of the Medical College in PPP mode at Shillong will commence once the existing T.B Hospital is shifted to the new site at New Shillong Township. The land for another proposed Government Medical College at Tura has been donated by the people and the same will be taken up with the Government of India for funding support. The construction of the Cancer Wing in the Shillong Civil Hospital is in advanced stage and will benefit the cancer patients in the State.
- 83.** We have made steady improvements in the key health indicators in the State. Due to various interventions we have been able to bring down the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) from

59% in 2009 to 47% in 2013. The recent National Family Health Survey – 4 (NFHS-4) indicates that the IMR has come down to 30%. This is a result of the Government investing both in the community (through ASHA and ANM) and in the facility based components like Newborn Care Corner, Nutritional Rehabilitation Centres and Sick Newborn Care Units and focusing on Infant & Young Child Feeding under the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK). To reduce the Maternal Mortality significantly, a new initiative 'Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA)' has been launched in the State from July 2016. The Government has set the target to bring down the IMR and MMR below the national average by the year 2020 in conformity with Sustainable Development Goals.

- 84.** To promote cleanliness, hygiene and infection control practices in public health care facilities and to inculcate a behavior related to clean environment, the State Health Facilities are participating in the KAYAKALP competition and received Awards under the Scheme.
- 85.** The Regional Blood Bank at the Pasteur Institute plays a key role in giving support and in setting up of Blood Storage Centres in the State. During 2017–18, the Government will support the setting up of Blood Storage Centres at different hospitals in the State.
- 86.** Mr. Speaker Sir, the State Government has successfully implemented MHIS (I) and MHIS (II), which benefited 41,874 patients during the first phase and 78,916 patients during the second phase, both from urban and rural areas. Out-of-Pocket expenditure on medical treatment is a major concern for the State, and therefore, the Megha Health Insurance Scheme - III, will be implemented providing an enhanced

base cover of ₹ 2,80,000/-, which includes an enhanced coverage for cancer and critical care. The maximum coverage for critical illness cover for one time hospitalization in MHIS III has also been increased from ₹ 1,70,000/- to ₹ 2,50,000/-. Also, the inclusion of the Additional Senior Citizen Cover of ₹ 30,000/- per Senior Citizen (for RSBY category) would help in reducing the overall health expenditure of patients of all ages. These facilities are in addition to the free medicines already being provided by the Government and we propose to come up with a 'Free Drug Policy' soon to ensure uninterrupted provision of free medicines to all needy patients.

A development outlay of ₹ 420.93 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18.

Education

- 87.** Speaker Sir, an enlightened and educated society is the strength of a powerful nation. The fruits of freedom cannot be fully realized unless one is enlightened and educated.
- 88.** I would like to recall the quote of Nelson Mandela: **"Education is the most powerful weapon which we can use to change the world"**. Strong human resource is the means to economic, social and cultural development of a country. The Government is committed to build up educational institutions with potentiality for excellence through suitable interventions. Therefore, we plan to set up viable and robust institutions to meet the aspirations of the youth to ensure sustainable development of the State and the society.
- 89.** School dropouts, low percentage of pass in the SSLC and HSSLC examinations, lower number of students pursuing higher and professional courses of studies, problem of

employability of the youth need urgent attention of the Government and multi-pronged interventions. Focus of the Government has been to arrest the dropout rates and improve the enrollment rate. Many interventions have been initiated to make classroom teaching interesting under the SSA programme. To help students conquer the challenge of learning science and mathematics at an early age, the Government had initiated the Jodo-Gyan project, which would be rolled out to more districts in 2017-18. The mid day meal will also continue to be served at all primary and upper primary schools to encourage students to stay in school.

90. The “Supporting Human Capital Development project” has progressed well with infrastructural work progressing at rapid pace. The bidding process for teachers training, ICT classrooms and furniture has also been initiated. A total of 117 aided schools would benefit directly from the project.
91. A total of 20 RMSA schools have been set up till 2015-16 and this has now increased to 64 in the current year. Additional classrooms and subject teachers are being supported from the scheme and the new infrastructure would be made operational soon. This will ease the accommodation problems being faced by the schools and it is targeted to complete the permanent school buildings in 2017-18.
92. The infrastructure work of Residential Schools in the 20 Educationally Backward Blocks’ (EBBs) in Meghalaya is in progress. These schools are being established on the pattern of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV), to provide affordable quality education to the children of the economically weaker sections of the society living in rural areas of the State. In addition, the Government has initiated construction of three

rural hostels to accommodate students from far flung areas to pursue studies in Tura, Jowai and Nongstoin. Once functional, these will be assets to the students seeking accommodation in these towns. In addition, the work on setting up the infrastructure for the Pinemount International School will start soon. There has been a long standing demand for a major renovation of the hostel at Pinemount School, Shillong. This will also be taken up in right earnest.

93. The Government has also taken up the issue of renovating and improving the conditions of the existing Government Primary and Upper Primary schools under the SSA as well as under the convergence mode with other agencies.
94. To tackle quality issues in schools, the Government has undertaken an innovative exercise to develop the Meghalaya School Improvement Plan (MSIP) to address the felt needs of the schools. It provides a set of standards for evaluating each school as an institution and creating a culture of self-progress with accountability, so as to improve the learning outcome and to incentivize better performance.
95. To improve and ensure quality education, the Government has introduced Pre-Service teacher's training under DIET and supports trainees with a monthly stipend of ₹ 5,000/- per month. To enhance teacher's capability, a new B.Ed college in Jowai would be made functional soon and under the project "Supporting Human Capital Development in Meghalaya", the Basic Training Centre in Shillong would be converted into a Teachers Training Institution along with the up-gradation of the College of Teacher Education at Tura. The chronic issue of untrained teachers has been taken up by the Government in right earnest and about 7,822 out of 15,822 teachers have taken up training for the D.El.Ed

course. The Government is taking up the case of the remaining 8,000 teachers who would be trained under the new initiative with IGNOU.

- 96.** With the objective of encouraging our students to pursue higher and professional courses, a number of initiatives are embarked upon. We intend to invest by aggregating the State's own resources with all the sources of funds under schemes such as NLCPR, NEC and RUSA to create a strong human capital and address the employment challenges. In order to give impetus to availability of technical human resource in the State, the Government plans to set up 3 new Polytechnics in Ri-Bhoi, West Khasi Hills and South Garo Hills Districts and the process of DPR preparation has been initiated and land has been made available for the purpose. The Polytechnic at Williamnagar will start functioning soon. In addition, new colleges of science and commerce at Mawphlang in the East Khasi Hills District and at Mahendraganj in the South West Garo Hills District are in the final stage of consideration under the Non- Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR). With an objective of delinking the higher secondary section from the colleges, creation of new additional facilities has started in Tura Government College and Kiang Nangbah College.
- 97.** Under the Rashtriya Ucchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), all the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) accredited general colleges in the State that submitted the Infrastructure Development Plans (IDP) have been given funding to improve infrastructure and faculty improvement programmes. Sanction has been accorded for setting up the College of Architecture and Urban Planning in Tura and the Shillong Engineering College. With a view to improve technical education in the State, the Government plans to

commence operationalization of the Williamson Sangma Technical University from the next academic session from a temporary campus in Tura.

- 98.** Provincialized colleges at Baghmara, Sohra and Williamnagar have been identified for up-gradation and improvement, and an amount of ₹ 2.7 crore has already been released for the purpose. In addition, enhanced infrastructure for Sohra and Kiang Nangbah colleges will be provided through RUSA funding for which the DPR has been approved and work will start soon.
- 99.** Stipends for students pursuing professional studies and scholarship programmes for post-matric as well as pre-matric students would continue in 2017-18. A new scheme called “Chief Minister’s Attendance linked Assistance Scheme” for the students of higher secondary schools, colleges and universities will be initiated from the academic year 2017-18 to encourage the students to attend classes regularly and to reduce dropout rate in the higher education segment. An assistance of ₹ 5,000 will be provided for the students who regularly attend classes upto a minimum of 80% in an academic year.
- 100.** In view of the delay in release of scholarship for pre-matric and post-matric students by the concerned ministries of the Government of India, the State will set up a corpus fund of ₹ 15 crore to ensure timely distribution of scholarships to the students.
- 101.** To further our initiative of promoting science education, the Government will provide assistance for six assistant lecturers for science stream in each of the 15 community managed higher secondary schools under deficit financing scheme in the State.

- 102.** A new scheme of “Community Colleges” will be taken up wherein these institutions will be built up through extensive community engagement. Partnerships between such community colleges and reputed academic institutions will be encouraged so that quality education and adoption of best practices is nurtured.

A development outlay of ₹ 909.94 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18.

Sport and Youth Affairs

- 103.** Sir, in my last budget speech, I made a mention about our intention to bid for the National Games in 2022. I am happy to inform this August House that we have successfully submitted the bid documents to the Indian Olympic Association for securing the right to host the National Games in the year 2022, which will coincide with the Golden Jubilee celebrations of our Statehood. Adequate infrastructure facilities and human resource will be created for the Games, building on the momentum of the State’s successful co-hosting of the 12th South Asian Games in 2016.
- 104.** The Government is presently taking up several infrastructure projects ranging from stadiums to play-fields, etc across the State with support from NLCPR, NEC and State funds to provide sporting facilities to the community at large. Additional funds from other sources will be located and leveraged to enhance the pool available for creating critical sporting infrastructure. I am sure that these projects will be lasting legacies for future national and international sporting activities and for meeting requirements related to training and coaching with a view to ultimately build up sporting talent in the state.

- 105.** The International Football Stadium at Ampati, South West Garo Hills being currently constructed, is set to emerge as a premiere sporting infrastructure of the State.
- 106.** The revised guidelines for functioning of the District Sports Promotion Societies have been approved, and will serve as a catalyst for realizing the aspirations of young sportspersons of our State in different sports and youth activities.
- 107.** The Chief Minister's Career Guidance and Counseling Scheme imparts coaching through institutes of repute to identified youth to equip them to succeed in various entrance examinations for engineering, medicine, management and other disciplines including the premier services like Civil Services and Defence Services. This initiative is emerging as a pioneering scheme of the Government and is aiding many aspiring students with easy access to quality coaching within the State, free of cost.
- 108.** For youth empowerment, the Government also proposes to initiate a pan 'Meghalaya Career Readiness and Life Skills Programme' with a focus on soft skills and employability. Collectively, these programmes will contribute to the skilling of our youth and equip them to be at par and to compete with the best at the national level.
- 109.** The Youth for Green Campaign Movement aims at promoting a statewide focused individual and collective action for environment, cleanliness and hygiene. This initiative is expected to continuously trigger, energize and catalyze positive action amongst youth for environment and their surroundings. The Meghalaya Youth Exchange Programme 2016, held at Shillong, saw the active participation of youth from all over the State.

110. With a firm belief that sports opens up avenues for a career in professional sports, Mission Football will be rolled out. The objective of the Mission is to tap the inherent passion of the youth for football by creating a suitable ecosystem for producing and sustaining football talent in the State. I am sure that with this path breaking Mission, specifically dedicated to our youth, Meghalaya will emerge as a football powerhouse that will both inspire our youth and also show the way to the rest of the country, in so far as sports is concerned.

111. The Government recognizes the role of youth in their contribution to the development of the society. Therefore, to empower the youth to realize their full potential and equip them to face challenges and fulfil their duties as citizens, the Government is coming up with a Youth Policy. This policy will be a guiding framework for setting out priority areas and interventions in such identified areas.

A development outlay of ₹ 51.20 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18.

Tourism

112. Travel and tourism in the State can be a sustainable source of diverse employment and entrepreneurship for the youth and local communities, besides being a potential source of revenue for the State.

113. The rich biodiversity of the State along with our diverse cultural heritage and way of life provides opportunity for the State to conceptualize and promote diverse high-end products in eco-tourism, rural tourism and cultural tourism among others.

- 114.** The Government has embarked upon a number of initiatives in convergence with various line Departments such as Art and Culture, Forest and Environment, Sericulture & Weaving, Fisheries, Horticulture and Information and Public Relations, to promote multiple and exclusive products and destinations in partnership with the stakeholders.
- 115.** A number of district level and State Level events have been organized to create an enabling environment for promotion of tourism. Various national and international level events hosted and organized by the State Government has enabled the State to build up positive stories, which will go a long way in brand building and promoting the State as a most favoured destination.
- 116.** With the increase in the number of tourists, there arises a need for more accommodation. Keeping this in mind, the Government will take steps to create awareness amongst the people and encourage them to take advantage of The Meghalaya Tourism Development and Investment Promotion Scheme to set up homestays and resorts across the State. Government will take special measures to attract investments in creating high-end tourism products which will open up huge employment opportunities and generate alternate source of revenue.
- 117.** Publicity to promote the State as a tourism destination is being undertaken by engaging with Lonely Planet for publication of Pocket Meghalaya, a compact guide book detailing the culture, people and places to visit in Meghalaya.
- 118.** To enhance skills and build capacities of the local populace, 15 trainings programmes have been conducted during 2016-17 so far, in which 749 students were trained in different

hospitality trades like food and beverages services, housekeeping, food and beverages production, basic front office, grooming and life skills in hospitality.

- 119.** The Government is giving incentive to the local students to take up courses in hotel management at the Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) Shillong and Food and Crafts Institute (FCI), Tura by providing scholarships @ ₹ 16,000/- per year to pursue these studies. About 36 students will be availing this scholarship in 2016-17.

A development outlay of ₹ 51.19 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18.

Arts and Culture

- 120.** Sir, it has always been the endeavour of the Government to protect, preserve, popularize and promote the distinct, unique, rich and diverse cultural heritage of the State. Meghalaya, in 2016 became the first State in the country to start the 'Cherry Blossom Festival', which is widely celebrated in Japan and United States. The four-day festival provided an opportunity to showcase the unique beauty of the cherry blossoms as well as our traditional arts, culture and cuisine to the naturalists and tourists.
- 121.** The newly created "Centre of Excellence in Indian and Western Music" at Shillong and Tura, which is a pioneering initiative of youth engagement in music, will create the kind of eco-system that will provide maximum benefit to the talented youth of the State.
- 122.** Construction work of providing galleries, showcases and lighting in the new building of Capt. Williamson Sangma State Museum has started. The Government has also taken up the establishment of the "Centre of Indigenous Culture"

at Mawphlang and Tura and also the setting up of “Kiang Nangbah and Pa Togan Sangma Indigenous Knowledge and Cultural Centre”, at Jowai and Williamnagar respectively. The State Central Library is digitized, and it will be further modernized by leveraging upon new technology.

A development outlay of ₹ 41 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18

Labour and Employment

- 123.** Equipping youth with the skills required to capture the space of the job opportunities available in the country, is a strategy we propose to adopt. Such skilled workforce is also a reason to attract investments in the State. With this objective, the Government has initiated an ambitious programme of skilling about 45,000 youths in various skills under the “Supporting Human Capital Development” project. The innovative approach in this project has been in its design to focus on native sectors of skills. The first batch of about 7,000 youth is expected to start soon. Two Skill Parks, one in Shillong and other in Tura, are also proposed to be set up as dedicated permanent facilities where skill training can be imparted on a sustainable basis.
- 124.** The Government has also upgraded all the 10 ITIs in the State to cater to the changing needs of the training programmes and curriculum. Implementation of National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF), operationalization of Model Career with “State-of-the-Art equipment and infrastructure” at Shillong and Tura, up-gradation of Mechanic (Motor Vehicle) Section at ITI, Tura into ‘state-of-the-art’ Automobile/Diesel Section in collaboration with the industry partner, and setting-up of new ITIs at Amapti and Mawkyrwat are the important programmes proposed to be

taken up during 2017 –18. This will help our youth to prepare better to take advantage of the demands of the market in securing a gainful employment.

A development outlay of ₹ 26.61 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18.

Social Welfare

- 125.** The Government attaches great importance to the welfare of women, children and marginalized sections of the society. Under the Chief Minister's Social Assistance Scheme, financial assistance has been provided to 33,614 infirm, 21,095 widows/single mothers and 9,020 persons with disabilities.
- 126.** The Supplementary Nutrition Programme under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme, Integrated Child Development Services Scheme, Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls, Indira Matritva Sahyog Yojana Scheme will continue to be implemented.
- 127.** During 2016-17, scholarship was given to 1,698 students, uniform grant and book grant to 1,066 students as well as unemployment allowance to 149 physically challenged individuals. Government has also taken steps to make the websites of various Departments accessible to persons with disabilities and 23 websites so far have been made disabled-friendly. A total of 771 beneficiaries have benefitted under the Scheme of Assistance to Disabled Persons for fitting aids and appliances. An amount of ₹ 3.76 crore has been sanctioned as loans to 241 persons with disabilities under the National Handicapped Finance Development Corporation (NHFDC) Scheme till date.

- 128.** Sir, the Government is committed to the safety and security of women in our State. A One Stop Crisis Centre for Women has already been set up at Shillong to facilitate and support the women in distress due to domestic violence and other crimes. One more centre will be set up at Tura very soon. A women helpline '181' has been set up in Shillong and is likely to become functional within this month.
- 129.** Keeping in view the lack of proper accommodation for working women, construction of working women hostel at Tura and Shillong has been started, as also the construction of girls' hostel at Betasing, Resubelpara and Mawsynram.
- 130.** An Integrated Social Facilitation Centre at Lawmali, Shillong has been set up to provide a single window to facilitate activities for the youth, children and the community at large, in one building which is easily accessible by the community.
- 131.** The State Government is implementing The Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2016. A separate Government website for persons with disabilities has been launched for on-line application catering to the needs and requirements of disabled people. Barrier free environment to 50 government buildings have been finalized with the support of Government of India and another 100 buildings are likely to be approved soon.

A development outlay of ₹ 386.10 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18.

Water Supply and Sanitation

- 132.** The Government is making all efforts to provide adequate safe drinking water and sanitation facilities to all the inhabitants of the State. During the last 5 years, 1,616

habitations, 741 schools and 783 ICDS Centres in the rural areas have been provided with adequate safe water supply.

133. Works for implementation of the Greater Shillong Water Supply Project (Phase-III), Nongstoin Water Supply Scheme and augmentation of Tura Phase-I and II Water Supply Schemes are in good progress. Initiatives have also been taken for implementation of the New Shillong Water Supply Project and Greater Ampati Water Supply Scheme.
134. The Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) is being implemented in the State by District Water and Sanitation Missions (DWSMs). About 3,519 villages have been self declared as ODF (Open Defecation Fee) in the State while the Ri Bhoi District has been declared as ODF. Through concerted efforts of the Government, sanitation coverage in the State has been increased to 88.83% in 2016–17 from 52.22% in 2012–13. Our target would be to achieve Open Defecation Free (ODF) status in the remaining 10 Districts well within the national goal of 2nd October, 2019.

A development outlay of ₹ 350.80 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18.

Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs

135. The National Food Security Act (NFSA) is being implemented in the State since February 2016 with more than 21 lakh beneficiaries. In order to ensure that grievances of public are responded to without delay, District level Grievance Redressal Officers and Assistant Grievance Redressal Officers have been put in place. A toll free number has also been activated to receive and dispose-of complaints. As provided under NFSA, a State Food Commission has been constituted with a Chairman and five expert members, for

monitoring the implementation of the National Food Security Act in the State.

- 136.** Phase I of the end-to-end computerization of PDS data has been nearly completed and digitization of beneficiary data base and ration cards have been done. Details of FCI godowns, wholesalers, fair price shops for all the Districts and Subdivisions have also been digitized. Tenders have also been floated for providing PoS (Point of Sales) devices in Fair Price Shops in Phase II of the project.
- 137.** Proposals have been initiated to create infrastructure for the District level Forum for Consumer Disputes Redressal in the four newly created Districts. Steps have also been taken to upgrade and strengthen manpower in view of the additional requirement in the newly created Districts and Subdivisions.

A development outlay of ₹ 106.11 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18.

Infrastructure Sector

Road and Bridges

- 138.** Sir, development of road infrastructure and providing village connectivity in the State is one of the main thrust areas of the Government. During the current financial year, the Government has sanctioned 45 roads project under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF-XXII) with a cost of ₹ 110 crore for construction, improvement and conversion of Semi permanent timber bridges into RCC bridges in different parts of the State.
- 139.** Under Inter-State Connectivity, up-gradation to double lane of Garobadha – Mankachar Road of around 14.5 km has

been taken up at a cost of ₹ 67.68 crore during the current financial year.

- 140.** In the National Highway sector, the important ongoing projects such as construction of 2-lane Jowai Bye-Pass has just been completed. This will greatly relieve the traffic congestion in Jowai town. The 2-Laning work of Shillong-Nongstoin-Tura road is about 96% completed. Besides, improvement of NH-40 between Shillong and Dawki covering a length of 80 Km and construction of Dawki bridge, improvement of NH-62 between Assam/Meghalaya border to Dalu via Baghmara for a length of 161 Km and 2-laning from Tura to Dalu of NH -51 covering a length of 48 Km will be taken up under the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) funding.
- 141.** Under the World Bank funded PMGSY Rural Roads Project-II, the State has completed 71 road works covering 318 Km and connected 48 habitations. The work for another 290 roads covering length of about 1,113 kms including 36 long span bridges is in good progress. The cost of the project is estimated at ₹ 810.42 crore and it will cover 297 eligible habitations.
- 142.** The implementation of 4 Central Road Fund schemes, namely reconstruction of washed away RCC Bridge over Chidrang on Songsak-Mendipathar road, improvement including metalling and blacktopping of Moosachram – Sonaro-Lapangap Road via Chebnai, strengthening and widening of Bhoiryembong – Mawlasnai – Sabuda road into intermediate lane and improvement including construction of bridges on Pynursla-Myllat-Lyting Lyngdoh road are all in the initial stages of implementation and work is progressing well.

- 143.** Upgradation of Garobadha to Dalu Road is progressing well and about 54 % of the work is completed. Under the the State schemes during 2016-17, the Government has constructed 28 Km of new roads, 57 Km of Kutcha road have been blacktopped, and 555 Rm of RCC bridges have been constructed.
- 144.** The Government has initiated a new programme under a dedicated fund – the Special Plan Fund (SPF) for upgradation of State highways, major district roads and construction of critical roads and strategic roads across the State. A total of 208 number of schemes for an amount of ₹ 601.28 crore has been sanctioned under this programme to further improve our road network in coming years.

A development outlay of ₹ 712.80 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18.

Power

- 145.** The State Government has been implementing a number of schemes in the generation, transmission and distribution sector in order to improve the availability of power and services to the consumers in the State.
- 146.** The 2×20 MW New Umtru Hydro Electric Project (NUHEP) is set to be commissioned within 2017-18 with the first unit expected to go for trial run in the last week of March 2017. The other power projects under implementation are the 3×7.5 MW Ganol HEP in West Garo Hills and 1.5 MW Lakroh Small HEP in East Jaintia Hills. The Government is in the process of tying up funding for renovation, modernization and up-gradation of the 2 × 30 MW Umiam Stage -III Power Project. This will extend the life of the project, which was commissioned in 1979, by another 35 years. The

Government has also signed MOUs with the North Eastern Electric Power Corporation (NEEPCO) and other independent power producers to set up power projects to tap the power potential available in the State.

- 147.** With the ultimate aim of achieving 100% village and rural household electrification in the State in the near future, the Government is augmenting and strengthening the power distribution network in the rural areas with the implementation of projects under the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY). The villages will be electrified through grid and with solar stand-alone systems in remote and inaccessible areas. Letters of Award (LOA) have already been issued. The Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS), being implemented in the urban areas, will improve the services to consumers with the application of Information Technology and strengthening of the power network.
- 148.** Under the North Eastern Region Power System Improvement Project (NERPSIP), the transmission network in the State is being augmented and strengthened with the construction of new 220 KV lines from Byrnihat to Mawphlang and then to New Shillong Township in the East Khasi Hills with associated substations. New 132 KV substations with associated lines are also being constructed in Phulbari, West Garo Hills and Mynkre, East Jaintia Hills. The work is in good progress.
- 149.** The Meghalaya New and Renewable Energy Development Agency (MNREDA) is implementing projects to popularize renewable technologies such as solar, wind, biogas, biomass, etc. Under the solar component of the new and renewable energy, 1067 KW of solar power plants have been

installed in the State so far. The Government is setting up two Solar Parks of 10 MW each in the East Jaintia Hills and the West Jaintia Hills District. Detailed Project Reports are under preparation by the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI). The power plants will be installed by independent solar power producers to be selected by SECI. The Government is also examining proposals to install grid-connected rooftop solar power plants in private and Government buildings.

A development outlay of ₹ 131.40 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18.

Transport

- 150.** The State now figures on the rail map of the country with the commencement of the train service between Dudhnai-Mendipather-Guwahati in the North Garo Hills District and the work on the Tetalia-Byrnihat line has been taken up. Inter-State bus terminal in Tura is likely to be operationalized soon.
- 151.** Under the Regional Connectivity Scheme, an agreement has been signed with the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India, to encourage private airlines to operate civilian flights from Umroi Airport.
- 152.** Sir, the government is deeply concerned with the tragic road accidents in the recent past. Therefore to promote road safety, a Road Safety Corpus Fund of ₹ 1.00 crore has been created to promote road safety activities in the State. The Government is also in the process of notifying a road safety policy.

A development outlay of ₹ 17 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18.

Commerce and Industries

- 153.** Industrialization plays a key role in economic development of a State. Creation of employment opportunities, optimal use of resources, rise in capital formation, increase in per capita income etc., are some of the expected outcomes. It is with this objective in mind that the Government has rolled out the Meghalaya Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy. Besides large industries, the focus of the Government has been on the promotion and development of Micro, Small, Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector. It will help in generation of employment and impart training for skill development and motivate the youth to take up self employment venture.
- 154.** During 2016-17, about 219 MSME units have been established in the State with a total investment of ₹ 22.76 crore providing employment opportunities to 828 persons.
- 155.** Under Master Craftsman Training, 762 artisans would be trained in trades like Cane and Bamboo, Wood Crafts and other artistic works during 2016-17. Under the Scheme Training Inside and Outside, 899 unemployed youth would be trained during the current financial year.
- 156.** As far as the commerce sector is concerned, the foundation stone of the Integrated Check Post (ICP) at Tamabil, Dawki was laid on 24th January, 2017. The total area acquired for the Integrated Check Post (ICP) is about 22 acres and the project cost is ₹ 92.34 Crore. The project is scheduled to be completed by September, 2018.
- A development outlay of ₹ 27.91 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18.**

Mining and Geology

- 157.** Sir, with the aim to facilitate systematic, scientific, planned and optimum utilization of our mineral resources and at the same time keeping in view the protection of environment, land, health and safety of the people, the Government has notified the Meghalaya Minor Mineral Concession Rules, 2016 on 12th September, 2016. This will help in ensuring livelihood to the local mine owners.
- 158.** The Central laws relating to development and regulation of mines and minerals have given rise to certain issues which pose a challenge to the rights of our indigenous people over the natural resources unless a specific exemption is made in this regard. The State Government has submitted the Mining Guidelines to the Ministry of Coal and also to the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India. Similarly, the State Government has submitted the proposals for exemption under Para 12A(b) of the Sixth Schedule for exemption from the operations of the Coal Mines (Nationalization) Act, 1973 and also for certain amendments in the provisions of the Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation Act), 1957. The matters are under active consideration of the Government of India.
- 159.** Since large areas in Meghalaya fall under ecologically fragile zone, the State will adopt a mining plan conducive to the environment and mining operations shall be regulated under the provisions of the existing environmental and forest bio-diversity laws. The State will ensure that abandoned mines and degraded lands are reclaimed and restored so that it can be used for sustainable farming activities.

A development outlay of ₹ 3.69 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18.

Information Technology

- 160.** Mr. Speaker Sir, the Government is actively promoting ICT (Information and Communication Technology) related activities so as to realize its vision to effectively leverage ICT for the State's overall development. It focuses on IT dissemination and usage as a crucial engine of economic growth and as a tool for increasing productivity, effectiveness, speed and transparency in governance leading to improved quality of life for the common man, businesses and Governmental agencies.
- 161.** A scheme for providing Wi-Fi connectivity to different schools and colleges with higher secondary section has been implemented in the State. BSNL has been entrusted to carry out the project in these institutions and as on date 118 institutions with bandwidth upto 2Mbps have been covered.
- 162.** Under the Meritorious Awards scheme, the toppers of class-X and Class-XII from various Boards/Universities are felicitated every year by awarding of computer laptops.
- 163.** Under the Chief Minister's Digital Learning Aid scheme, about 50,000 Class XII students have been given Tablet PCs during 2013 and 2014. These Tablet PCs have been pre-loaded with educational content covering Class XI & XII MBOSE syllabus and interactive study materials and the same would be taken up again in 2017-18.
- 164.** Under e-District project, e-services and e-certificates have been launched in three (3) districts namely, East Khasi Hills District, Ri-Bhoi District and West Khasi Hills District. It provides end-to-end e-services to the citizen by delivering digitally signed e-certificates in digital mode to the citizen. In 2017-18, complete roll out in the whole State will be done.

- 165.** Under various training programs, more than 1,135 officials have been trained in e-governance and related modules. Moreover, under the B-ABLE (Basix Academy For Building Lifelong Employability Ltd), 1600 citizens were trained. The State is also conducting Basic IT skill training for employees till Block level in collaboration with NIELIT (National Institute for Electronics and Information Technology).
- 166.** The Government has executed an MoU with the National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT) for setting up their permanent center in New Shillong, in order to train manpower in various disciplines such as Electronics Design and Technology, Information Technology, Electronics Product Design and Development, Manufacturing (Electronics and Mechanical) Technology. An area of about 10 acres has been allotted to NIELIT for building up their campus. This will help the youths of the State especially the backward classes to avail the facilities. The Government has also handed over a plot of land in Tura to NIELIT for setting up the Tura Campus.
- 167.** Digital Classrooms with the state-of-the-art facilities have been created in some schools in Meghalaya with the objective to improve the education infrastructure and improve the quality of education. Besides this, computer hardware has been provided to a number of schools across the State to promote computer education to the schools be at par with the rest of the country.
- 168.** The Government has started a project with the aim of helping various Departments to access, process, and view spatial data pertaining to them, and to assist in the Decision Support System (DSS). At present, 5 Departments are connected to the centralized GIS and there is plan to connect remaining Departments in the second phase.

169. In pursuance of its commitment to connect the masses with the world, the Government envisages setting up Digital Villages, improve the internet connectivity throughout the State, create awareness on various ICT initiatives, improve the efficiency and delivery of services, the Government is implementing the Common Service Centers 2.0 and roll out of e-District projects across all the Districts in Meghalaya.

A development outlay of ₹ 61.95 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18.

Information and Public Relations

170. Sir, dissemination of information on various programmes and achievements of the Government up to the grass root level will be further strengthened by supplementing the existing Meghalaya Integrated Information System (MIIS) through mobile units.

171. The Government recognizes the important role, media and press plays in a vibrant democracy. It is proposed to constitute a Meghalaya Media Society to look into the welfare of the journalists. The Government also proposes a new scheme to provide accommodation facility for the Senior Accredited Journalists of the State.

A development outlay of ₹ 9.80 crore is proposed for this sector in 2017-18

Tax and Non Tax Revenue

172. Mr. Speaker Sir, as I have mentioned earlier, implementation of GST would be a major change in the indirect tax administration of the country. The State Government is moving in the right direction to ensure that this change is smooth. Though the implication of the roll out would be

known in the years to come, it is generally expected that the consumer States like Meghalaya are likely to benefit from GST implementation.

173. In 2016-17, the total revenue of the Government was estimated at ₹ 1,735 crore of which State's own tax revenue was estimated at ₹ 1,269 crore and State's own non-tax revenue at ₹ 466 crore.

174. For 2017-18, total revenue of the Government is projected at ₹ 2,072 crore, of which the State's own tax revenue is estimated at ₹ 1559 crore, and State's own non tax revenue at ₹ 513 crore.

Tax Proposals

175. In order to mobilize additional resources, I propose to:-

1. Revise excise duty in various segments of Beer, IMFL/Extra Neutral Alcohol (ENA) and different categories of IMFL products.
2. Revise the license fee for various categories of bonded warehouses.
3. Reduce export fee for IMFL products to give a boost to export of IMFL.
4. Revise the license fee for "OFF" retail licenses and various types of bar licenses.
5. Revise the fee for compounding and blending, reduction and bottling, distillery and brewery.
6. Revise upward the VAT on liquor.
7. Revise the late closing fees for hotels, restaurants and bars.
8. Increase the rate of tax across all slabs under the Meghalaya Passengers and Goods Tax Act.
9. Rationalize the tax structure on cigarettes and bidis.

Budget Estimates 2017-18

- 176.** Sir, for 2017-18, I have estimated the total receipts at ₹ 12,510 crore, of which the revenue receipts are estimated at ₹ 11,280 crore and capital receipts at ₹ 1,230 crore. Excluding borrowings, the total receipts are estimated to be ₹ 11,302 crore.
- 177.** On the expenditure side, I have estimated the total expenditure at ₹ 12,873 crore during 2017-18, of which revenue expenditure is estimated at ₹ 10,648 crore and capital expenditure at ₹ 2,225 crore. Excluding repayment of loans, the estimated total expenditure is ₹ 12,538 crore.
- 178.** Interest payment during 2017-18 is estimated at ₹ 589 crore and pension payment at ₹ 730 crore.
- 179.** I am, therefore, presenting the budget of 2017-18 with a fiscal deficit of ₹ 1,236 crore, which is around 3.8% of GSDP.

Conclusion

- 180.** Speaker Sir, I have outlined my budget proposals under the overarching theme of Sustainable Development and Convergence and building upon the groundwork and investments made in previous years. Our thrust would now be to implement these proposals in the right earnest to achieve the desired outcome and ensure sustainability of the momentum of growth.
- 181.** With these words, Mr. Speaker Sir, I commend the Budget to this August House.

Khublei

Mithela

Thank You