



सत्यमेव जयते

**SPEECH**  
**OF**  
**HIS EXCELLENCY**  
**LT GENERAL NIRBHAY SHARMA**  
**PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM (RETD)**  
**GOVERNOR**  
**OF**  
**ARUNACHAL PRADESH**  
**ON THE OCCASION OF**  
**64<sup>TH</sup> PLENARY OF**  
**NORTH EASTERN COUNCIL**  
**AT**  
**SCOPE AUDITORIUM, SCOPE COMPLEX**  
**7-LODHI ROAD, NEW DELHI**  
**ON**  
**09 & 10 APRIL, 2015**

I deem it my proud privilege to participate in this august gathering of the North Eastern Council. On behalf of people of the Frontier State, I extend heartiest greetings to all the participants and look forward to meaningful deliberations.

Convening of this plenary just after three months of the last meeting, reflects the seriousness of the Ministry of DoNER. We hope that under the Hon'ble Minister's dynamic leadership and guidance, the North Eastern region will touch new heights of development and prosperity. Hon'ble Chairman, people of Arunachal Pradesh have very high expectation from you and deeply appreciate the new approach, direction and momentum of the Union Government.

Adhering to the given time slot, I would like to emphasize on few vital points of my speech, which is laid on the table.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE / CENTRE OF DEVELOPMENT**

As I said in my last plenary, I would like to reiterate again that the North East region requires a systematic and balanced pace of development in each of its State. **Lack of Connectivity is the biggest hurdle to the development in the region and is holding up unlocking of the vast economic potential of the region. Although there is a common thread running through, we must appreciate that one size does not fit all.**

The region is geographically divided by River Brahmaputra into two halves, i.e. north and south. It is realized that epicentre of development is essentially concentrated in the southern part of the region. **For strategic reasons and to bring equitable growth and progress, we need to focus more on the region north of River Brahmaputra.** Trans-Brahmaputra connectivity and need based locating and shifting of certain administrative headquarters of the Central Government are therefore necessary. **It is more so for the sensitive state of Arunachal Pradesh.**

## **RAILWAYS**

**The people of my State are immensely grateful to Hon'ble Prime Minister for inaugurating the Itanagar-Delhi AC Express and Itanagar-Guwahati Intercity Express train service.** The rail service has given great impetus to communication and connectivity in and out of the State. Here I would like **to recommend expediting the work on other strategic lines to Tawang in the west and Pasighat in the east in Arunachal Pradesh.** One of the important projects of Indian Railways, the Bogibeel Bridge must also be monitored **to ensure that it meets the revised timeline of mid 2017.** Its completion will be a major factor in the socio-economic development of this region and shall also fill the strategic void in Trans-Brahmaputra movement.

## **ROADS TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS**

In my State, due to harsh climate and topography, connectivity to the region needs to be properly planned and strengthened. Our immediate requirement is expediting the construction and up-gradation of roads in Arunachal Pradesh involving 5,000 kms. To achieve it in a reasonable time frame, our capacities have to be enhanced many fold and processes and procedures streamlined. Multiplicity of construction agencies and their coordination including accountability need special attention. **Specially, BRO with all its experience in road construction in the mountains is best suited to concentrate on Himalayas states, with NHAI & other agencies working in other states.** Posting of an Addl. DG to oversee the projects is a positive step. The functionary is however yet to be given the necessary administrative and financial powers to be effective. Also, the location of the office is at Guwahati instead of Itanagar, which needs to be re-examined.

## **CIVIL AVIATION**

**Owing to its vastness and tough geographical terrain, Arunachal Pradesh is largely dependent on air services for its connectivity requirement.**

NEC funded Tezu Airport is being developed. The progress of Airport project has to be monitored to expedite the final phase for activating the airport.

The site for Greenfield Airport at Holongi has been finalized and it is required to expedite the development of this airport. I also want to reiterate that **until the time this project is commissioned, reliable air service from the fully developed Airport at Lilabari must be improved on highest priority.** The present schedule of Alliance Airline is unsuitable to link flights from New Delhi. Hence, I would like to suggest use of bigger aircraft with direct flight scheduled from Lilabari to Delhi and Delhi to Lilabari, alternately via Kolkata or Guwahati. Such a step will enhance connectivity immediately. It has already been taken up with the Ministry of Civil Aviation and needs immediate attention.

There are 8 (Eight) Advance Landing Grounds (ALGs) coming up in the border districts of State of Arunachal Pradesh. I call upon this forum to **advise the concerned agencies to expedite work in a time bound manner.** It is imperative that the infrastructure so created is utilized not only for Defence purpose and carriage of civil passengers and goods, but for ferrying construction materials for infrastructure development as well. It is suggested that **aircraft services be planned simultaneously to avoid any delay in starting the service.**

In addition two more **ALGs** are required at **Koloriang** in **Kurung Kumey District** and **Anini** in **Dibang Valley District**. **These ALGs need to be developed on priority for strategic reasons.**

### **INLAND WATERWAYS**

Inland waterways have always been the cheapest means of transportation. The northeast region has many large and small rivers providing facilities for water transport, especially in their plains sections. In Arunachal Pradesh the rivers Siang, Lohit, Subansiri, Burhi Dihing, Noa Dihing, and Tirap are used for navigation by small country boats in those stretches where there are no rapids. It is estimated that the region has 1800 kms of river routes that can be used by steamers and large country boats.

My State has four stretches of total length of 311 km of waterway. This sector needs to be explored and harnessed. We need to revive the use of waterways- **National Waterway 2 running along the Brahmaputra and announced in 1988 is yet to become operational. In fact, development of waterways has to be our national priority and requires more effort.**

## **TOURISM**

Tourism has a huge potential to generate employment and economic growth in my State and region. The natural landscape of Arunachal with powerful rivers, magnificent mountains, sprawling forests etc offers huge potential for river rafting, trekking, para-gliding etc. Also, Arunachal Pradesh has distinct and varied cultures among all its 26 major tribes and more than 100 sub-tribes. Their strong tradition of art, music, dance, handicrafts and distinct socio cultural practice are a big tourist draw. The challenge in this field however remains to create tourist hubs to showcase the unique nature's bounty, and address a niche brand of nature lover tourists. **Connectivity through air, land and waterways are however essential to achieve it. I wish that NEC facilitates in harnessing this potential.**

## **POWER**

**Arunachal Pradesh is going to be powerhouse of the country, provided its hydropower potential is harnessed.** In order to harness the mega Hydro-power potential of the State, the impasse due to environmental and social issues has to be resolved at the earliest.

River Carrying Capacity & Cumulative Impact Assessment Study of Siang Basin in Arunachal Pradesh for development of Hydropower Projects (HEPs) has been done by Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change and Government of India. As a result many projects on this river have to be dropped and a number of them will not be commercially viable. Similar studies are being conducted on the other major rivers of the State. **We need to take an overall view in this regard to expedite the development of feasible Hydro Power Projects to ensure comprehensive development of the region.** The Hydro Power scenario in the long run shall effect the socio economic conditions and industrial development of the State. **This is a HIGH PRIORITY area.**

### **ACT EAST POLICY**

Given that the external economic engagement will now play an increasingly crucial part in India's road to economic growth and development, it is clear that the **country's vision of becoming a developed economy by 2020 will depend to a large extent on the enhanced economic cooperation with its extended neighbourhood of South East Asian countries.**

India was slow to start off, but with recent initiative of the Union Government, as an integral part of its Act-East policy, there has been a thrust on regional trade arrangements and agreements, especially with its eastern neighbours.

We have to prepare ourselves to be contributors and main stakeholders of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji's 'Act East' and 'Made India' crusades. In that **North East has to be seen more than a transit route.** It has to be shaped as an economic powerhouse influencing South East Asia in general and countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar in particular. Here again, **connectivity and security are the main issues to realise the dream of prosperity in Ganga-Mekong region, which accounts for 25% of the world's population. North East of India and part of Myanmar is the weakest link on this axis. We will do well to remember that a chain is as strong as its weakest link.**

### **BORDER BLOCKS & TRADE**

**In my state, we have to make the border villages self-sustaining and self-reliant for more than one reason and a bold rehabilitation policy will have to be thought of.**

Due to our vulnerability in the border belt and the need to harness the socio-economic potential of Border Blocks, there is perhaps a need to have a Border Area Security and Development Authority, which coordinates effort and resources of the Centre and State.

**Arunachal Pradesh has a long international boundary with Bhutan, China and Myanmar.** The people of the State have trade relationship with the people across the border since ancient times. Some still persist in formal and informal forms in some border trade points, such as Pangsau Pass at Nampong in Indo-Myanmar Border and Bleting (Namtsering), Dongshengmang and Bongkhar at Indo-Bhutan Border. **These practices need to be institutionalized for socio-economic upliftment of local populous and State and Country as a whole.**

**Formal trading mechanism can be set up at Pangsau Pass in the eastern most part of my State connecting the State of Arunachal Pradesh with the other rich South East Asian nations and be a part of Kolkata-Kunming initiative.** NEC must take up this issue with the Ministry of External Affairs and find out modalities for providing access to the international neighbours in a regulated manner.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

Proper education, career guidance and entrepreneurship programmes on skill development and job-oriented education should be provided to the youth of the region. **NEC should have special focus on quality education through investment in teachers' training and evaluation.** We must use distance education infrastructure and latest scientific methods. The social, gender and regional gaps in education need special attention. We welcome announcement of setting up of Centre for Brahmaputra studies' at Guwahati and six agricultural colleges in the region. This step will definitely strengthen the educational hub of northeast region.

**Establishment of a Sainik School in the State will help in preparing our future, the youth and also facilitate many tribal youth into the armed forces, who in turn will be a force multiplier.** The State Government has taken up the case of establishment of Sainik School in the State with the Ministry of Defence. As a follow up to it, the site for setting up of the first Sainik School in the State has been finalised. It is expected that the issue of establishment of Sainik School in the State would be taken up expeditiously.

**Raising of three Ecological battalions of Territorial Army have also been proposed to ensure preservation of forest cover of my natural resource rich state.**

### **SKILL DEVELOPMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

**Arunachal Pradesh has made significant achievement in creating employment opportunities for the youth through skill development programmes.** However to augment the efforts it is required that the skill development need to be not only for getting jobs outside the State, but for also creating self employment opportunities within the State. The State is on the path of rapid development involving manifold activities in the field of construction, power, health and education.

**So skill set has to be created for making technicians, nursing, medical attendants, science teachers etc. It shall be a leap forward from the existing low value skill development initiatives involving security guard and beauty culture etc. to high value skill set creation.**

**Assistance from Central Government is required in establishing High value Skill Development Centres, ITI and Livelihood Mission Schools in the State.**

Short-term employable skill development training for regular school students in schools and for school dropouts in subjects like sciences, mathematics and English speaking will give added advantage in the employability.

**It is found that many a times youth have the required skill, enthusiasm and dedication, but are not able to mobilise capital and credit guarantors to start any enterprise.** The mechanism for providing credit must therefore be eased and the collateral free loan scheme be implemented properly and reviewed periodically. Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Entrepreneurs can play a pivotal role in this.

### **TELECOMMUNICATION**

**The coverage of telecommunication networks like AIR and DD needs to be enhanced urgently in the region. There is a void in the entire border belt calling for an immediate focus and enhancing their reach even beyond the border.** Many fold advantages will accrue from this. DD through DTH transmission can cover 100% population and 100% area of the State. It is important that for reaching every corner of the State, specially the border belt, the DTH sets be made available immediately to the border area, may be free of cost which may not involve funding more than 2-3 crore.

## **FINANCIAL INCLUSION**

**The State is progressing well on the far sighted programmes launched by the Union Government, including Jan Dhan Yojana.** This programme is welcomed by the people and taken up seriously by the State Government. However, to strengthen the effort, opening of more banks is required. It may be mentioned here that out of 214 administrative centres in the State involving District Headquarters to Circle Headquarters, only 66 administrative centres are covered by the Banks and rest of the Centres do not even have a single Bank branch. Centres where most of the transactions and interactions with the beneficiaries takes place must be covered as much as possible by the Banks, particularly, when connectivity is a big challenge in the State.

**The Post Office set up in the State is much more vast and spread out. It needs to be strengthened and utilised, may be as CSP (Customer Service Point) to augment the effort.**

**Tele Connectivity is quite poor and un-reliable in the thrust and remote areas of the State.** Hence, it poses serious challenge to the practical working of schemes through CSP. The efforts have to be made in this direction and agencies like BSNL etc. have to focus more.

It is necessary that all the State Govt. and Govt. of India beneficiary oriented schemes be linked to Bank accounts of the beneficiaries involving Aadhaar Number. This platform can then be used in direct transfer of benefits to the beneficiaries and shall eliminate pilferage.

**Financial inclusion initiatives must also address the issue of providing easy availability of credit, especially to the vulnerable progressive groups including women self help groups to enable generation of self employment on a sustainable basis.** More so, in a State like Arunachal Pradesh, where Government jobs have almost reached its saturation. The CD ratio (Credit to Deposit Ratio) in the State stands at around 20%. In some districts, it is as low as it is even 6% and has to be increased significantly. **In this regard, digital connectivity is most vital to address all dimension of both, development and security.**

### **STRENGTHENING NEC**

I would like to emphasise on the point made by the Hon'ble Minister of DoNER in the last meeting **to play the role of representative of State Governments with ministries of Government of India on following up the State projects.** This has to be institutionalised and taken forward effectively.

I am certain that all the esteemed members will agree that we must strengthen the **NEC to make it a 'Think Tank', on strategic planning for the North East.**

### **NITI AAYOG**

**In view of the huge infrastructure deficit and strategic urgency, a comprehensive Vision-2030 prospective plan is being formulated by my State Government in conjunction with the Niti Aayog.** The State Government is formulating this document by taking into account the vital security, developmental and financial imperatives. Measures to enhance capacity and adherence to time and cost lines will be vital in this endeavour. I am sanguine that the NEC will strengthen the effort of the State Government to bring prosperity in every corner of the Frontier State. Let us put in our best to achieve the overall goal of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas'.

As I conclude, once again I thank the Hon'ble Chairman for having given me this opportunity to put forth my views. On behalf of the people of Arunachal Pradesh, I extend an invitation to you to my beautiful and picturesque State.

I also thank the distinguished members of the Council and other dignitaries present here for giving me a patient hearing.

I shall be eagerly waiting for the proceedings of the meeting to be compiled, documented and sent to the State Governments at the earliest so that meaningful action can be initiated early. I also compliment the organizers of this meeting for the meticulous arrangements they have made for this important event.

I once again wish the organizers well, and the plenary, a grand success.

**Jai Hind.**