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Expedite work on long pending projects and ensure maximum utilisation of funds: Shri Rajnath Singh’s message to North-Eastern states

Security situation has drastically improved in the North-East: Union Home Minister

HM chairs the 67th Plenary Session of the North Eastern Council in Shillong

New Delhi: July 9, 2018

The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh has asked the North-Eastern states to expedite work on long pending projects of the North Eastern Council (NEC) and ensure maximum utilisation of funds. Addressing the 67th Plenary Session of the NEC in Shillong today, he said NEC and the eight North-Eastern States would have to ensure that all the ongoing projects were completed in a time bound manner.

HM urged the states for effective implementation of the recently approved financial package of Rs 4,500 crore by the Centre and directed them to focus on specific areas and better convergence of the govt. sponsored schemes.

Underlining the importance of civil society participation in developmental process, the Home Minister advocated social audit of the projects and use of modern technology to effectively monitor project implementation. “In the North Eastern Region, civil society is very powerful medium to be engaged in all our development efforts. The participation of the civil society is crucial. They should be the partners in socio-economic change. One such partnership can be through social audit”, said Shri Rajnath Singh, in his first address to NEC after the Union Cabinet’s recent approval of a proposal making the Union Home Minister the Chairman of NEC.

“Social audit not only provides information on how funds are spent but most crucially it enables people’s participation in the planning of developmental activities and also enables mid-course correction as projects and schemes roll on,” he added.

He expressed happiness that through the use of remote sensing and satellite imagery, NEC had partnered with the North Eastern Space Application Centre (NESAC) and developed a ‘Projects Monitoring’ portal and a mobile application where stakeholders can monitor progress of capital works funded by the NEC.

Regarding the security scenario in the North Eastern states, the Home Minister said the Government was giving special attention to improving the internal security. “Private investment and the economic activity would not flourish in the absence of peace and normalcy. During four years of NDA government the security situation has drastically improved. When compared to the

90s, the insurgency related incidents have declined 85 percent. There is 96 percent reduction in civilian and security forces casualties,” he said.

HM further said, “Today, Tripura and Mizoram are completely free from insurgency and there is tremendous improvement in other North Eastern States as well. Due to this marked improvement in security situation the AFSPA has been completely lifted from Meghalaya and its coverage area has been reduced in Arunachal Pradesh”.

Underlining the need for a critical analysis and revision of strategy for development in the North-Eastern Region (NER), HM called for drawing a short-term, medium-term and long-term roadmap.

Shri Rajnath Singh said there have been a number of reports and vision documents on how to develop North-Eastern Region. He emphasized on the need of taking stock of progress made in implementing recommendations contained in them and taking expeditious steps further.

The Union Home Minister said the Government had set up the NITI Forum for the North East in order to provide a platform to identify various constraints on the way of accelerated, inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the region.

The first round of the discussion of the Forum was held on the 10th April. The suggestions of this Forum have been made available to all the departments concerned for examination and consideration. He has given 31 October, 2018 as a timeline for decision on suggestions made by the Forum.

The Union Home Minister also urged the NER State governments to create conducive environment for investment so that entrepreneurs take this opportunity to set up industrial units and generate the much needed employment in the region.

Stating that the Ministry of DONER had recently launched the North East Venture Capital Fund through the North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Limited (NEDFi) with a corpus of Rs.100 Cr, he exhorted the entrepreneurs of the region to access funds to take up economic activities in the field of tourism, waste management, medical healthcare, handloom and handicrafts and agro products etc.

“The Union Cabinet, in March 2018, approved the North East Industrial Development Scheme (NEIDS), 2017 with an outlay of Rs.3,000 Cr up to March, 2020. Government will provide necessary allocations for the scheme after assessment before March, 2020,” he said. He expressed hope that the scheme would promote industrialization in the NER to boost employment and income generation.

The Union Home Minister lauded the NEC for leveraging its community-based project, North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project (NERCORMP), to design sustainable livelihoods interventions and for improving the life of a lot of rural households in the NER.

“Strong Community base is the strength of this Region. NERCORMP can serve as a Centre of Excellence for Livelihoods. It can coordinate with various Ministries of the Central Government and engage with State Governments, District Administrations and non-government bodies for improving grassroots planning in the backward areas of the region and for facilitating exchange of ideas and dissemination of the best practices of various livelihood programs for wider application,” he said.

“After creation of North Eastern Council under NEC Act, 1971, the States of NER were deleted from the purview of Eastern Zonal Council. I suggest that NEC may be used as a forum to discuss and resolve Inter-State and Centre-State issues effectively as the other Zonal Councils are doing,” said Shri Singh.

In view of the peculiar geographical terrain of the NER and fragmented farmland holdings, the Union Home Minister called for “high-value low-volume” produce for export and “out-of-the-box” solutions to doubling farmers’ income by 2022. He also said that the NEC could become a spring board for regional integration and prosperity with South East Asia towards realizing the objectives of the Government’s Act East Policy.

Admiring the people of the North East for their bravery, their strong sense of pride in themselves and their unique culture Shri Rajnath Singh said the people from all walks of life from the Region had made and were making remarkable contributions to build a modern India.

The two-day 67th Plenary of the NEC is being attended by the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel/ DoPT, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh, who is also the Vice-Chairman of the NEC, besides Governors and Chief Ministers and senior officers of the eight North-Eastern states and Union Ministry of DoNER.

BB/PK/SS