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NEWSLETTER

Vol. XIII. No. 4, April, 2011

MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

A Monthly Newsletter on the North Eastern Region of India

Also available on Internet at : <http://mha.nic.in>



Democracy is a form and method of government whereby revolutionary changes in the economic and social life of the people are brought about without bloodshed.

– Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

DEVELOPMENTS WITH REFERENCE TO NORTH EASTERN REGION

1. A meeting was held on 11th April, 2011 to review the security situation in Assam with officers of the Assam Government, Security Agencies and Army authorities.
2. A Central team consisting of Joint Secretary (BM), Joint Secretary (NE) and JS (Cabinet Secretariat)

visited Arunachal Pradesh to review the scheme undertaken under Border Area Development Programme and road constructed along Indo-china Border.

3. A Central Team visited Manipur from 26th-27th April, 2011 for interaction with Government of Manipur for decentralized governance in local bodies/ Autonomous Districts Councils.

4. A Ceasefire is in operation between Government of India and National socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang) [NSCN/K] since 28.4.2001. The validity of the ceasefire expired on 28.4.2011. The extension of ceasefire was reviewed and Government of India has decided to extend the ceasefire with NSCN/K for a further period of one year with effect from 29.4.2011.

5. The Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) signed on 17th December, 2004, amongst the Central Govt., Govt. of Tripura and National Liberation Front of Tripura (Nayanbasi) (NLFT/NB) provides for a Special Economic Development Package of Rs. 55 crores for capacity building and tribal development in Tripura. The package was approved by the Committee on Non-Plan Expenditure (CNE) on 28.3.2006 for implementation. The scheme was approved by the Union Home Minister and the Union Finance Minister. The scheme envisaged to:

- (a) bring the underground (UG) elements over ground and see that they join the main stream;

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- (b) help the tribals in capacity building to enable them to share the benefits of developments; and
- (c) take projects in tribal areas which will in turn lead to enrichment of the tribals.

Out of total agreed package amount of Rs. 55.00 crore, an amount of Rs. 50.00 crores has been released, in installments, by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Balance amount of Rs. 5.00 crore will be released during the current financial year i.e. 2011-12.

With the financial grant from Centre, the State Government undertook a number of activities intended for infrastructure development, economic development, educational & cultural infrastructure development and capacity building of the tribals in the State. Under the package, projects have been included for setting up/construction of residential schools, sports complex, development of composite

markets, organizing vocational trainings on different trades to youths, etc.

As per Press Reports, NLFT-NB peace accord signed by the State Government of Tripura and Central Government was reviewed recently in the meeting attended by Tribal Welfare Minister, DGP and Surrendered Rebel Leaders in Tripura. It was concluded that the peace accord has been fully implemented. Further, the State Government had provided additional facilities for 153 surrendered NLFT (NB) militants, who came over ground in December, 2004. The facilities include allotment of 1 hectare land to each surrendered cadres of the NLFT (NB). As per reports all cases except crime against women committed by the surrendered militants were withdrawn and Centre had released Rs. 50 crore for executing various schemes aiming to uplift the socio-economic conditions of the surrendered insurgents. Since, 1993, over 8075 militants of various outfits surrendered to the Tripura Government and are leading normal life.

PLANNING COMMISSION FINALISES 2011-12 PLAN FOR NORTHEASTERN STATES

The Annual Plan for Tripura, Mizoram and Sikkim for the year 2011-12 has been finalized.

(i) Annual Plan for the State for Mizoram:- The Annual Plan for Mizoram State for the year 2011-12 was finalized at a meeting between Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia and Mizoram Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla. The Annual Plan was finalized at Rs.1700 crore.

Complimenting the State on plan performance, Ahluwalia said that the Commission was in the process of finalizing the approach for the Twelfth Plan, and in this process would be shortly holding regional consultations with the State Governments. He said that a joint meeting with the North-Eastern States was expected where the commission would expect response from the state on ongoing social sector programmes as well as roadmap for the next Plan.

Mizoram has achieved significant progress in the sectors of road transport, power, education and health. About 94.4 per cent of the villages have been connected with approach roads and 61.19 per cent villages have been connected with all weather roads.

According to census 2001, the literacy level of 88.80 per cent has placed Mizoram next to Kerala. Though agriculture is the mainstay of economic activity, shifting cultivation with shortened land use cycle and lack of thrust in the potential horticulture sector has been a major factor in the slow pace of development of the state's economy.

Capital formation through generation of surplus in the production of goods and services for sustainable economic growth is weak. With the expansion of public administration and other services, the demand for various categories of workers has decreased.

Briefing the Commission on the development strategy, Chief Minister Thanhawla said that transparency and people participation was the basis of development strategy. Apart from elected leaders, prominent citizens, Church leaders and media representatives are being included in the Ethnic Committee formed at the state level to oversee performance of the state administration. He said that despite resource constraint technology mission introduced by the Centre had made significant contributions for promotion of horticulture and floriculture.

(ii) Annual Plan for the State of Sikkim:- The Annual Plan for Sikkim for the year 2011-12 was also finalized at a meeting between Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia and Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Chamling. The plan outlay was agreed at Rs.1400 crores. In his comments on the performance of the State, Ahluwalia said performance is quite satisfactory. He said continued focus on physical and social infrastructure development together with urbanization would catalyze tourism and other income generating activities. The State Governments should inform the Commission about their experience on the Central schemes aimed at making plan process more inclusive.

This would help the Commission in taking corrective measure while drafting the next plan. He appreciated the initiatives taken to make Sikkim first organic and green State in the country. Priorities in the sector need to work out accordingly. Chamling said the thrust of plan is upon the inclusion of the Common Minimum Programme of the UPA and inclusion of various Flagship Programmes, with particular emphasis on Human Development.

The State Government has adopted a policy decision to embark on a path of sustainable economic development and self reliance, and thrust of the Government is on promotion and development of ecologically and environmentally friendly tourism, horticulture and floriculture, with specific stress on production of low volume high value organic agricultural and horticultural produce, Hydro Power generation without environmental erosion, human resource development, health and rural development.

(iii) Annual Plan for Tripura:- For Tripura state, the plan outlay for the year was agreed at Rs.1950 crores. In his comments on the performance of Tripura, Planning Commission Dy. Chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia complimented the state government for empowering Panchayati Raj Institution, Anganwadi, and performance in ICDS. He said efforts should be to improve achievement in health and education

sectors.

Mr. Ahluwalia said investment friendly environment needs to be created to encourage private investment in the development of both physical and social infrastructure.

The Planning Commission is in the process of finalizing approach to the Twelfth Plan and would welcome suggestions from the state on the social sector programme initiated by the Centre to make these programmes more effective. He said sectors like energy and health would need added attention of both state and Central Government to meet the growth expectation for the Twelfth Plan.

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar briefed the Planning Commission about the new initiatives of his government aimed at improving resources and reducing on non-developmental expenditure. He said tax revenue have improved, salary expenditure has been controlled to improve physical health of the state. He said efforts are on to make best use of available natural resources. Skill development and vocational education is being given priority to the development strategy. Action Plan has been taken up for bringing 50 per cent of cultivable land. Skill development mission has been constituted and one ITI is proposed to be set up in each sub-division.

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT UNDER CIVIC ACTION PROGRAMME IN NORTH EAST BY CENTRAL ARMED POLICE FORCES



Activities carried out by BSF

(i) On 4th March, 2011, under Civic Action Programme, various items viz. Computer, TVs, Water Tank, Sewing machine and sports items have been distributed among villagers in area of responsibility of Malsuri & Tablabagh, Ex- 142 Bn BSF, Mizoram.

(ii) On 5th March, 2011, under Civic Action Programme TVs, Water Tank, Sewing machine and sports items have been distributed among villagers in area of responsibility of BOP, Khozaichuri & Tiparghat, Ex-142 Bn BSF, Mizoram.

(iii) An Inter Village Football competition was also organized by 83 Bn BSF at Village Gumaghat, Distt- West Khasi Hills, Meghalaya from 22 to 26th March, 2011. 8 teams of bordering villages participated in the event. Football kit including tracksuits and other sports items were distributed to all teams.

(iv) Under Civic Action Programme, on 26th March, 2011 itself various items viz. TVs, DTHs, Gen Sets, School furniture's, Stationery and other educational items to Village Gumaghat, Distt- Wes Khasi Hills, Meghalaya by BSF.

(v) On 26th March, 2011, a free medical camp was organized by BSF in Distt. West Khasi Hills, Meghalaya. Medicines worth Rs. 3 lakhs were distributed among 1200 patients of bordering villages Rajai, Mawphlan, Nalikka, Gumaghat, Kewri, Loskar, Chikenbari and Rangasora.

Activities carried out by Assam Rifles

- (i) **Distribution of Drinking Water.** As a noble cause and a helping hand to people of hill who are facing scarcity of water in the Ukhrul, Assam Rifles went a step ahead in distributing water tankers in nearby villages i.e. Shangshak Khullen and Shangshak Khunao in March, 2011. The Assam Rifles is also constructing water storage tanks in these remote areas. The work for the same is in full swing.
- (ii) **Maintenance of Road Under Self Help Project.** Assam Rifles has started maintaining of road to Shangshak Khunao village with the help of villagers under Self Help Project. The AR has promised the villagers of more such projects in future for improving infrastructure in the hinterland. The vigor and enthusiasm shown by civilian in participating with Assam Rifles is a sure sign of normalcy that this beautiful state has now embarked on.
- (iii) **Education Tour of Students to Delhi, Jaipur and Agra.** Earlier, an education tour (under AR MCA

Project FY 2010-11) with the aim of exposing underprivileged children especially from orphanages of Manipur to culture, heritage, history and economic development of India was organised by Assam Rifles. During the tour children witnessed the Republic Day Parade, Beating the Retreat ceremony and the PMs Rally organised by NCC Directorate. Children also visited historical monuments such as Red Fort, Qutab Minar, Lotus Temple, Rashtrapati Bhavan, Hawa Mahal of Jaipur, Taj Mahal and the Agra Fort. Meeting with Chief Minister of Delhi, Ms Shila Dikshit, Director General NCC and Cabinet Ministers of Rajasthan Government were also organised where the leaders had an opportunity to interact with the children which encouraged them to achieve great heights. The children also got an opportunity to travel by train, metro and the city mass transportation system. The 20 days tour which was organised on behalf of HQ IGAR (S) was taken up to give the children an exposure to rising India.



- (iv) **Distribution of Solar Street Lights to Tuijang Village.** Assam Rifles presented six Solar Street Lights to Tuijang village under "CIVIC ACTION PROJECT" in the remote village in Samtal Area, Chandel district on Indo- Myanmar border. These solar lights is a big step towards overall development and especially for the school children. Villagers expressed their deep gratitude to Assam Rifles for providing them with the Solar lights and also for various other developmental activities undertaken in the area.
- (v) **Water Supply Project at Tuikong Village.** In order to provide safe and Hygienic drinking water, Assam Rifles has constructed a Water Supply scheme under Civic Action Project" in Tuikong, one of the remotest village in the Chandel District, located in an extremely difficult terrain. Earlier the villagers had to fetch the water from the nearest water source, approximately one km away from the village. The villagers of Tuikong expressed their immense gratitude for providing basic amenities and help them join the main stream.
- (vi) **Donation of Power Tillers.** Assam Rifles donated Power Tillers to the villages of Shingda and Tuinem

on 17 Mar 11. The Power Tillers were distributed under Military Civic Action programme with a view of introducing modern technology in agriculture for the farmers of villages of Ukhrul District.

- (vii) **Distribution of School uniforms.** AR donated School Uniforms, Sports items, Stationery items, Library books, Generator sets, TV sets, Dish antenna and Computers to Eden Orphanage and Phungcham Orphanage of Ukhrul Distt on 15 Mar 2011. The items were distributed with a view to improve the standard of living of the children living in the orphanages.
- (viii) **Assam Rifles Constructs Water Supply Scheme at Hengkot Village.** In order to provide safe and Hygienic drinking water, Assam Rifles has constructed a Water Supply scheme under "Civic Action Project" in Hengkot and one water storage tank provided to Phaiphenkot village. Hengkot and Phaiphenkot are among the remotest and farthest villages in the Samtal Salient of Chandel District. Earlier the villagers had to fetch water, approximately three kms away from the villages.

- (ix) **Computer Presented To Government High School At Sita Village.** Assam Rifles presented the computer to the Government High School, Sita. This educative and supportive attitude of the Assam Rifles was appreciated by the children and villagers of the area with prayers of gratitude.
- (x) **Distribution of Solar Street Lights to Moldenom Village.** Assam Rifles presented 06 Solar Street Lights to Moldom village under “Civic Action Project” in

the presence of all the villages. Moldom is remote village in Samtal, Chandel distt. on Indo-Myanmar border. Due to its remoteness, basic infrastructure is almost nonexistent. These solar lights is a big step towards overall development and especially for the school children. Villagers have expressed their deep gratitude to Assam Rifles for providing them with the Solar lights and also for various other developmental activities undertaken in the area.

MANIPUR YOUTH TRAINED TO ACQUIRE SPECIAL SKILLS

Union Minister of State (I/C) for Youth Affairs and Sports Ajay Maken inaugurated Youth Employability Skill (YES) Project at Imphal by enrolling 100 youths for skill development. Under the project, skill related training would be given to the youths in the North-Eastern Region to boost their chances of finding jobs or starting their own enterprises. About 8000 youths would be covered under this scheme in the North East.



Thai Trade Delegation Visits Manipur:- Maanmar is seen as the confluence of India's Look East policy and Thailand's Look West policy and to further develop trilateral trade between the three countries, a 12-member Thai delegation were on visit of Manipur and Myanmar's border township Tamu from March 25 to 27.

The scheme has been launched keeping in view the Prime Minister's vision to create 500 million certified and skilled persons by the year, 2022 in the country. The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), which has been co-promoted by the Ministry of Finance to catalyze private sector involvement in skill development, would partner the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports for the YES venture.

The YES initiative would see training in employable skills being provided to unemployed youth in 59 districts of 8 North Eastern states. Market mapping and skill gap analysis is being undertaken in North East before launching of the project in other districts. The project focuses on youth who plan to seek jobs locally and also those who wish to migrate.

The opportunities of self employment are also addressed in the Training Modules. Linkages with financial institutions and industry partners are the hallmark of this unique initiative for providing sustained livelihood to the youth of the region. He also inaugurated the Board of Governors (BOG) meeting of the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan and announced setting up of 10,000 Mentor Youth Club throughout the country.

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP (IIE), GAUHATI- TRAINING TO SURRENDERED MILITANTS:

After facing immense hardships in the jungles, members of various militant outfits are now undergoing training at the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE) in Guwahati to become self-sufficient and economically independent.

Having spent many years fighting security forces, they have now realized the futility of insurgency and returned to mainstream society. They are being trained at the Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship under the program “Motivating Youth for Self Employment”. Well known trainers and successful entrepreneurs provide lessons on management, entrepreneurship and other aspects. “Through this program we are imparting them skills on business, management and trade. Various well-

known trainers are coming to train them,” said Achinta Baruah, faculty, IIE.

Surrendered militants said that they are happy about the way the government is helping them to become independent, “After laying down arms, I started my own agricultural work. With the help of government, I joined a Self Help Group through which I came to know about many schemes for the region. I am happy about the way the government is helping us become independent,” Bhaskar Bobola .

“We have learnt a lot of things here and many people from different fields are training us in different skills,” said Niyaz Hussain.

17 surrendered cadres of ULFA and 11 cadres of NDFB were given a seven day training at the prestigious Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship at Guwahati to hone their skills for starting life afresh and making them fit to earn by becoming self employed. The programme was titled “Motivating Youth for Self Employment” and as such urged

the surrenderees to use the skills they had developed so far to start their own enterprises without being dependent on anyone. Having faced immense hardships in jungles and being disillusioned with militancy, the former militants too are happy with these endeavors.

NORTH-EAST SPRING FESTIVAL: A CULTURAL EXTRAVAGANZA

The five-day long North East Spring Festival, recently organized in Dimapur city of Nagaland was a grand affair that showcased some of the best folk art forms of the culturally rich north eastern region of India.

Organized under the aegis of Northeast Zonal Cultural Centre Dimapur and Indian Council for Cultural

Relations, the grand fiesta saw artists from 14 different states of the country perform on the same stage to spread the message of love and harmony through music.

The main aim behind holding the festival was to promote the idea of national integration by bringing artists of different regions together. Som Kamei, Director, North East Zone Cultural Centres said: “The main aim of having this spring festival is to explore the cultural linkages that we share not only among the northeastern states but also between the rest of India and also in the Asian context especially in the Southeast Asian countries where we have deep cultural linkages.

“I should say that it is brilliant because it connects us with so many people not only locally but to other different states and not only that we can cross over the boundary and get connected with other parts of the country and it is really a good exposure and I should say that the NEZCC is doing a brilliant job,” Suzzane Lotha, a participant. A book fair and an ethnic cuisine fest were also organized during the fest. Local artisans also displayed handloom and handcraft products that were a huge draw among the visitors.



RBI Reaches Out to Ukhrul:- On the occasion of the platinum jubilee of Reserve bank of India in 2009-10, the Reserve Bank of India did some soul searching regarding its service to the people. The achievement were assessed and a policy mooted on how to bring about a change in the life of every Indian. The Governor of RBI decided to take steps to make RBI a more responsive public policy institute by organising Financial Outreach village Camps (FOVC) in several parts of the North Eastern states.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH CELEBRATES MOPIN FESTIVAL :

Arunachal Pradesh celebrated the joyous Mopin festival recently with traditional smearing of rice powder on each other’s faces, and a show of rich dances of the state. A festival of the Galo, Adi and Nyishi communities of the State, Mopin is celebrated in order to get rid of natural calamities and to pray for peace, good harvest, health, wealth and prosperity.

In this festival Mopin Ane, the Mother Goddess of welfare, peace and preserver of vegetation, is propitiated in a grand celebration for five days when women prepare traditional dishes called Tipak. They also take out a procession with their granary baskets behind them, singing and invoking the Goddess on the way to the dancing sites. The festival marks the beginning of the sowing season.



RONGALI BIHU

Rongali Bihu, Assam's most colorful festival, was celebrated all over the state with young and old, rich and poor all dancing, singing and playing traditional musical instruments in every nook and corner of the state. Celebrated in mid April, Rongali Bihu marks the advent of new seeding time, and heralds the Assamese new year. Traditionally celebrated for 7 days, this Bihu has three main days. The first day

is Goru Bihu when cows are given bath, decked up and worshipped. This year, Goru Bihu fell on the 14th of April. This ritual can best be seen in rural Assam. The next day, is the Manuh Bihu. The main Bihu day when much merriment takes place, Manuh Bihu fell on 15th of April this year. The last day is Gohain Bihu when Gods are prayed to for the welfare of society, peace, prosperity and good harvest.

READERS COLUMN

The NE monthly Newsletter is published in English, Assamese, Bengali and Manipuri and has circulation of 40,000 copies. Ministry of Home Affairs brings out the publication incorporating important information/developments concerning North Eastern States.

Ministry of Home Affairs, through the Newsletter, would request for inputs for the Newsletter from the State Governments, agencies, institutions and individuals highlighting the area specific issues, problems, special features including potential for tourism, environmental protection or special efforts/achievement in various fields. Views and write-ups from general public are also invited on specific issues/

problems and possible measures for resolution thereto related to North East.

Articles should be sent in a hard copy format accompanied by floppy/CD version along with photographs. Articles should be accompanied by an abstract of a maximum of 150-200 words. Readers are encouraged to send comments and suggestions (upto 300-400 words) on published articles. All letters should have the writer's full name and postal address. The selected articles will be incorporated in the monthly NE Newsletter in its subsequent editions with due editing and contribution will be welcomed and suitably rewarded.



Noted footballer Baichung Bhutia and the U-13 National champion, Assam Football team pose for photograph after they were felicitated at Nehru stadium in Guwahati on March 31.



Bodo dancer perform at the inaugural ceremony of 59th All India Police Hockey C'ship in Guwahti on March 12.



Children taking part in a Bihu Workshop at Shilpgram in Guwahati on March 21.



Union Minister Agatha Sangma at the regional consultation on responsible tourism organised at the initiative of Impulse NGO Network with Assam State partner Golbal Organisation for Life Development recently at Hotel Dynasty, Guwahati. A section of the delegates who attended the seminar. (Photos by Rajib das, Assam).

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