

BUDGET SPEECH : 2022-23
Finance Department
Government of Meghalaya

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

With your permission, I rise to present the Budget for the financial year 2022-23.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.** Sir, this year we mark the 50th year of Statehood- a very special year for our beautiful State and all Meghalayans. We are celebrating the momentous journey of the State and its 38 lakh people through the year. Despite the disruption of the last two years caused by the COVID pandemic, the State has achieved significant progress on all fronts with support from the Government of India and all local stakeholders. I am glad to say that the COVID vaccination status in the State has reached 71 percent and all economic and social activity is slowly returning to normalcy.
- 1.2.** The MDA government has successfully completed four years. Yesterday, we celebrated this occasion in the midst of all the stakeholders including our farmers, youth, women, community leaders and entrepreneurs. My government has made every effort in the last four years to put the State on a higher growth path and to improve the well-being of each and every citizen.
- 1.3.** Speaker Sir, within a short period of four years, we have put in place the infrastructure and governance systems that will ensure growth for decades. We are constructing 26 major roads at a cost of about ₹ 2,500 crore. Additionally, every effort is being made to connect all the rural habitations. On average, in the current financial year, we have built about 2 Km of rural roads every day. We have increased the number of households with piped water supply from 5,000 to over 2.1 lakh in a span of just two years.

- 1.4. We have created livelihood opportunities and launched cash benefit programs under which we are transferring ₹ 5,000 to all the agricultural households. Our mission mode projects in the agri and livestock sector are directly benefiting about 50,000 farmers.
- 1.5. We have undertaken initiatives to empower women which includes the expansion of the SHG program to cover over 3 lakh households. We are now among the top three states in terms of immunisation coverage for children.
- 1.6. Sir, the law and order situation has been largely peaceful during the current financial year. I am happy to inform this august House that the HNLC has indicated their willingness for unconditional talks within the ambit of the Indian Constitution. This is a welcome development and we have written to the Ministry of Home Affairs to take the process forward.
- 1.7. My Government is committed to resolving the long pending inter-state border issues with Assam. I have had several rounds of discussion in the last six months with the Chief Minister of Assam. We have already signed an MoU to resolve 6 out of the 12 areas of difference. We expect to finalise the agreement soon.
- 1.8. Continuing our emphasis on governance reforms, I have made some fundamental changes in the budgeting system. The plan and non-plan dichotomy in the formulation of the budget estimates has been done away with. This is in line with the Government of India's budgetary practices and enables efficient budgeting. Further, for the first time in the history of the State, I am presenting a Gender budget, a Youth budget and a Sustainable Development Goals budget.
- 1.9. Speaker Sir, at the beginning of this decade I had laid down the vision for Meghalaya to be amongst the top 10 states by 2030. In the last two budget speeches I have reiterated this vision and laid down the framework for achieving it. I am pleased to say that we are on the stated path. In the first part of my speech I will focus on the State finances and then move to various sectoral interventions.

2. STATE FINANCES

- 2.1. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused economic disruptions on a large scale. However, with the increased government spending and other measures, the economy is on a recovery path. The State's GSDP for the current financial year is pegged at ₹ 37,494 crore. Given the positive outlook for the economy, the GSDP estimate for 2022-23 stands at ₹ 41,010 crore.
- 2.2. For the current financial year, the State government received ₹ 5,851 crore as share of central taxes against the original estimates of ₹ 5,105 crore. Under the Special Capital Assistance Program, the Union Finance Ministry has also sanctioned ₹ 300 crore for taking up various capital projects. These additional funds are a welcome relief to the State Government and I would like to express my gratitude to the Hon'ble Prime Minister and the Hon'ble Union Finance Minister.
- 2.3. For 2022-23, the State's share of central taxes is estimated at ₹ 6,264 crore. The State will also be receiving ₹ 1,033 crore as revenue deficit grant, ₹ 76 crore as grants for disaster management, ₹ 140 crore for the Autonomous District Councils, ₹ 69 crore for Urban Local Bodies and ₹ 59 crore as grants for the health sector. The total transfers from the Government of India excluding the scheme related transfers are estimated at ₹ 7,641 crore.
- 2.4. The Government of India has increased the size of 'Special Capital Assistance' pool from ₹ 15,000 crore to ₹ 1 lakh crore. Out of this, ₹ 614 crore has been allocated to Meghalaya for taking up various capital works in 2022-23.
- 2.5. The own-tax revenue of the State for the current financial year, including GST compensation, is expected to touch ₹ 2,213 crore. This includes an anticipated excise revenue of ₹ 300 crore. Over the last four years, this government has been making concerted efforts to increase the State's revenue base and these efforts are yielding results. For the year 2022-23, I am estimating the overall tax revenues to be ₹ 2,625 crore, out of which excise revenue is estimated at ₹ 350 crore.

- 2.6. The non-tax revenue collection during the current financial year is expected to touch ₹ 541 crore. For 2022-23, the government is taking steps to auction a large proportion of the 32 lakh metric tons of the extracted coal. I also expect to generate significant additional revenue through the initiation of scientific mining in the State. The Ministry of Coal has already given approvals for prospecting operations for 17 applicants. Given this, I am estimating the non-tax revenue from the mining sector to be ₹ 500 crore and the overall non-tax revenue to be ₹ 731 crore.
- 2.7. For the current financial year, the overall central transfers and State's own resources are estimated at ₹ 10,189 crore. The State's financial performance on various centrally sponsored schemes and the externally aided projects has been robust. Given this, I expect the State's overall expenditure for the current financial year to touch an all-time high of ₹ 15,600 crore. This is a 13 percent increase over the expenditure of the previous financial year and a 58 percent increase over the expenditure in 2017-18 when my government came to power.
- 2.8. For 2022-23, I am projecting an overall expenditure of ₹ 18,881 crore. Out of this, ₹ 14,448 crore will come from State resources and the rest will be leveraged from central resources. The revenue expenditure is estimated at ₹ 15,376 crore and the capital expenditure is estimated at ₹ 3,505 crore. I am very pleased to announce that the projected capital expenditure is the highest in the history of the State and will propel the infrastructure growth in line with the thrust given by the Government of India.
- 2.9. I will now move on to the second part of my speech deliberating on various sectoral interventions.

3. **INFRASTRUCTURE FOR CREATING THE MEGHALAYAN DECADE**

- 3.1. The North eastern region in general and Meghalaya in particular have a huge infrastructure deficit. My government has been focusing on bridging this deficit over the last four years. This budget will continue to

give a strong thrust to infrastructure growth by prioritising roads, water supply, power, transport and social infrastructure.

Connecting Meghalaya

- 3.2. My government has spent almost ₹ 1,300 crore over the last four years for building rural roads. We are also spending about ₹ 2,500 crore for building 26 major roads all over the State. These include the Mairang-Rani Godown-Azra road, the Rongram-Phulbari hill road, the Dawki-Bholaganj road and the Pasyih-Garampani road. Most of these roads will be completed and dedicated to the people of the State by December 2022.
- 3.3. Construction and expansion of additional critical roads with an investment of ₹ 800 crore will be initiated in 2022-23. These include the Jowai-Nartiang-Kdiap-Khanduli road, the Chokpot-Sibbari road, the Mawphlang-Mawsynram road, the Ummulong-Tyrshang-Bamkamar Road, the Anogre-Raksamgre road, the Umlyngka-Lawmei road and the Rongrenggre-Simsanggre-Nengkra road.
- 3.4. To take up these new roads and to complete the ongoing projects, I am allocating an amount of ₹ 1,770 crore for the year 2022-23 for the roads sector, out of which ₹ 519 crore is for PMGSY, ₹ 220 crore specifically for the rural roads and the remaining will be for the various State road projects.

Water for all

- 3.5. The 'Jal Jeevan Mission' has been an emphatic success in our State. We have been able to provide tapped water connection to over 2.1 lakh households in just two years. The State Government will be spending about ₹ 2,000 crore during 2022-23 on the scheme and I am positive that by March, 2023, we will be able to provide tapped water connection to another 3 lakh households.
- 3.6. My government is making every effort to complete long- pending water supply schemes such as the Greater Shillong, Nongstoin, Raliang, Rymbai

and Ampati. The construction of the gravity-main of the Tura water supply scheme and the Greater Sohra water supply scheme have been completed. The construction of the Baghmara water supply scheme is nearing completion.

- 3.7.** For 2022-23, construction and augmentation of the water supply schemes at Tura, Shangpung, Mawkyrwat, Umlyngka and Pynursla will be taken up at a total cost of ₹ 150 crore. We are also pursuing with the Government of India for sanctioning funds for the Williamnagar water supply scheme.

Mobility for the future

- 3.8.** I am very pleased to inform this august House that the Umroi airport is fully operational and is handling over 10,000 passengers and 250 aircrafts on a monthly basis. We currently have direct connectivity to eight different cities, and we plan to add flights to more cities during 2022-23.

- 3.9.** Helicopter services would be an efficient mode of travel, especially for the tourists. In 2022-23, these services will be made operational on new routes to Williamnagar, Dawki and Sohra.

- 3.10.** I am allocating ₹ 101 crore for the transport sector in 2022-23.

Reliable and affordable power

- 3.11.** My government has been working methodically over the past four years to reform the power sector. The first step in this direction was clearing the long pending dues of ₹ 1,345 crore to the various power generating and distribution units. The power generation capacity of the State is also being augmented. The 22.5 MW Ganol hydro-electric project being built at a cost of ₹ 508 crore is nearing completion.

- 3.12.** The 'Meghalaya Power Distribution Sector Improvement Project' for strengthening the distribution network is progressing very well. It is being implemented at a total cost of ₹ 1,225 crore.

3.13. I am allocating ₹ 467 crore for the power sector in 2022-23.

Digital Connectivity for a Digital Meghalaya

3.14. The government has initiated the program to install 875 base transceiver stations to extend the 4G network to 1,164 villages in the State that do not have mobile connectivity. In addition, 11 base transceiver stations are to be installed on NH 44 and NH 62 to improve the mobile coverage along the National Highways. With these initiatives, I am positive that internet and mobile connectivity will be made available to all the villages in Meghalaya.

3.15. We are also working on an initiative to improve the bandwidth connectivity in Meghalaya. This includes getting a direct 100 GBpE internet connection from Sylhet in Bangladesh. Once operational, this will go a long way in revolutionising the services sector in the State.

Infrastructure for health and education

3.16. My government is investing about ₹ 350 crore with assistance from the World Bank to improve the overall health infrastructure in the State. As part of the project, all the 659 health centres will be upgraded within the next five years. For the year 2022-23, I am allocating an amount of ₹ 60 crore for the 'Meghalaya Health Systems Strengthening Project'. I am also allocating ₹ 1,617 crore for the entire Health sector, an increase of 28 percent over the allocation in the current financial year.

3.17. Continuing with our focus on education, the process for constructing 39 'Eklavya Model Residential Schools' has started. 208 primary and secondary school buildings are being built with a cost of ₹ 109 crore and shall be completed by December 2022. For 2022-23, another 111 schools will be constructed with an estimated cost of ₹ 100 crore. Projects for having higher education institutes in every district are close to completion.

- 3.18.** My Government has already operationalized nine Peoples' colleges across the State. The second phase of the selection and operationalization of additional people's colleges will be done during 2022-23.

Infrastructure for excellence

- 3.19.** The construction of the 'Shillong International Centre for Performing Arts and Culture' - SICPAC - shall be completed by June 2022. It is being built at an estimated cost of ₹ 151 crore.
- 3.20.** The comprehensive upgradation of the J.N. Stadium in Shillong at a cost of ₹ 40 crore and the construction of the new P.A. Sangma Integrated Sports Complex in Tura at a cost of ₹ 128 crore shall be completed by December 2022.
- 3.21.** The construction of the state-of-the-art indoor stadium at the J.N. Sports complex with facilities including 12 badminton courts, an indoor shooting range, a jogging track and an amphitheatre shall also commence in 2022-23 with a total project cost of ₹ 97 crore.
- 3.22.** The works for the 'Tribal Research Centre' being built in Babadam, West Garo Hills is progressing well. The project cost is about ₹ 42 crore and it will become a 'Centre of Excellence' for the North eastern region.

Infrastructure for governance

- 3.23.** The new assembly building being constructed at Mawdiangdiang at a cost of ₹ 216 crore shall be ready in the coming months. The next session will be held in the new assembly. This is a matter of great pride for each one of us and I compliment the Hon'ble speaker for his efforts in making this a reality. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 100 crore for the completion of the project in 2022-23.
- 3.24.** To take administration closer to the people, mini secretariat complexes shall be built at Tura and Jowai with a cost of ₹ 45 crore. Further, an

amount of ₹ 150 crore shall also be spent for the creation of administrative infrastructure at all the district headquarters.

- 3.25.** Demands for the creation of new administrative units have been made on various occasions. The State government is examining these demands and will take a final decision on the locations of the new civil sub-divisions, blocks, PWD divisions and sub-divisions in this golden jubilee year. Further, the upgradation and new construction of block infrastructure shall be taken up at 40 blocks in 2022-23 at a cost of ₹ 120 crore.
- 3.26.** Law and order is essential for development and economic growth. I am earmarking ₹ 100 crore for the upgradation of the police and law and order infrastructure for 2022-23.

Infrastructure for jobs

- 3.27.** Several of the government's key infrastructure initiatives have already created jobs for the youth of the State. Ongoing and new projects will generate employment for thousands of youths over the next few years.
- 3.28.** The Shillong Technology Park, built at a cost of ₹ 62 crore was inaugurated recently and has created 1,500 jobs directly. The demand for office spaces has already exceeded its capacity. I am very happy to announce that the government will be taking up the second phase of the technology park in 2022-23. When completed it will create about 4,500 jobs over the next few years. I am allocating ₹ 120 crore for the IT sector in 2022-23, an increase of 31 percent over the allocation in the current financial year.
- 3.29.** Tourism is another sector that has the potential to generate employment on a large scale. Accordingly, two major ecotourism projects are being implemented at a cost of ₹ 1,450 crore. Under these projects, tourism infrastructure will be built at around 50 different locations over the next five years.
- 3.30.** As part of these projects, hospitality complexes including high-value accommodation units shall be built at Sohra, East Khasi Hills, Nokrek,

West Garo Hills, Mawlyndep, Ri Bhoi, Siju, South Garo Hills, Nongkhnum, West Khasi Hills, Thadlaskein, West Jaintia Hills, and Dalmagre, South West Garo Hills.

- 3.31. As promised in the last budget, we have launched the program for construction of homestays. Under this innovative program, individuals are being provided a subsidy of upto 70 percent for constructing homestays costing upto ₹ 10 lakh. We are covering 100 homestays in the current financial year and will be targeting 1,000 homestays for 2022-23. For this important intervention, I am allocating an amount of ₹ 10 crore.
- 3.32. In addition to accommodation units, transportation is key for the tourism sector. For this purpose, we will be launching a new program to induct 200 luxury tourist vehicles. A 50 percent subsidy will be provided to entrepreneurs who will be owning and operating these vehicles.
- 3.33. We will also launch electric buses and e-buggies at the major tourist attractions to enhance the ease of movement of tourists and to promote low-impact tourism.
- 3.34. I am doubling the allocation for the tourism sector to ₹ 173 crore for 2022-23, compared to the current financial year.

Infrastructure for urban rejuvenation

- 3.35. The allocation for the Shillong Smart City project has been increased from ₹ 700 crore to ₹ 1,000 crore. It is being funded on a 50:50 basis by the Government of India and the State government. In addition to the smart city projects, the State Government has also initiated the construction of a business, cultural and tourism centre at Khyndai Lad, Shillong at a cost of ₹ 216 crore. Further, the Government has recently procured 807 acres of land at Mawpdang, East Khasi Hills with a vision to construct a new planned administrative city and other economic infrastructure.
- 3.36. The process of obtaining clearances for the 'Shillong Peak Ropeway' are at an advanced stage and I expect the construction to commence during 2022-23. The project will be implemented at a cost of ₹ 116 crore.

- 3.37. To reduce traffic congestion in Shillong, we will soon be introducing a pool school bus system with a fleet size of around 100 mini-buses. A fleet of electric buses for public transport in Shillong city will also be introduced. I am budgeting ₹ 20 crore for improving the mobility in Shillong.
- 3.38. Sir, the 'Tura - Smart Town' project has already been initiated. Under this initiative, the upgradation of internal roads in the Tura town and the beautification of junctions are underway. During 2022-23, works will start for the construction for the state-of-the-art 'Integrated Hospitality and Convention Centre' costing ₹ 52 crore. Projects related to the beautification of additional junctions, installation of street lights, and solid waste management will be taken up in 2022-23 at a cost of ₹ 20 crore. I am also allocating an additional ₹ 10 crore for the Jowai smart town project.

4. **FARMER LED AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION**

- 4.1. In a State where 80 percent of the citizens reside in rural areas and depend on agri and allied activities for their livelihood, farmers have to be at the core of the development paradigm. Accordingly, the overall well-being of the farmers has been our priority.

Collectivization for growth

- 4.2. We have successfully completed one year of the implementation of the flagship FOCUS program. Under the program, the government is providing a support of ₹ 5,000 to each and every farming household for undertaking agri related activities. About 82,000 farmers have already benefited from the program. For 2022-23, we want to cover all the 4.5 lakh farming households in the State. I am allocating ₹ 150 crore for 2022-23 to achieve this target. I feel proud to inform this august House that this is the single largest allocation to any program ever in the history of the State.

Mission mode programs

- 4.3. Under the Lakadong Mission, the production of turmeric has increased from 6,500 metric tons to 12,800 metric tons over the last three years. Fifteen processing units are being set up across the Laskein and Thadlaskein blocks in West Jaintia Hills. During 2022-23, an additional area of 500 hectares will be brought under lakadong cultivation and a curcumin extraction unit will also be set up. I am earmarking ₹ 10 crore for these initiatives for 2022-23.
- 4.4. The 'Integrated Bee Development Centre' is being constructed at a cost of ₹ 10 crore at Sambrak, North Garo Hills and will be inaugurated soon. I am allocating ₹ 10 crore for the honey mission for 2022-23.
- 4.5. The other missions of the government, the mushroom mission and the aroma mission are progressing well. I am allocating ₹ 5 crore for each of these missions.
- 4.6. The government recognizes that ginger is a very important crop in the State. Currently, around 10,000 hectares are being covered under ginger and the annual production stands at 66,000 metric tons. There is huge potential to increase the income of the farmers through developing the ginger value chain. Accordingly, I am allocating ₹ 10 crore for 2022-23 for the launch of a new 'Ginger Mission'.
- 4.7. The climatic conditions in the State are also extremely suitable for spices such as cinnamon, large and small cardamom, nutmeg and cloves. To leverage on the same, we will be launching the 'Spice Mission' with an investment of ₹ 10 crore during 2022-23.
- 4.8. Apart from spices, there is an immense potential for the cultivation of herbs such as rosemary, basil, oregano, parsley and thyme in Meghalaya. We will be taking up the cultivation of all these herbs to cover an area of 100 hectares during 2022-23. I am earmarking an amount of ₹ 10 crore towards this.

- 4.9.** Another high value crop that can be grown in temperate regions like ours is buckwheat. The trials that we conducted in Smit, Umtong and other villages of East Khasi Hills district have been successful. We will be scaling up to an area of 1,000 hectares in 2022-23. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 5 crore for this initiative.
- 4.10.** Under the Piggery mission, support has been provided to 900 individuals for pig breeding and 2,600 individuals for pig fattening. An amount of ₹ 35 crore has been disbursed to 195 piggery cooperatives under the mission. Under the milk mission, 588 new cattle have been inducted. For 2022-23, I am allocating ₹ 52 crore for the Piggery and the Milk missions.
- 4.11.** In addition to piggery and cattle, other livestock that have huge potential in our State are poultry and goatery. The government will initiate the poultry and the goatery missions with support from the ‘National Cooperative Development Corporation’ during 2022-23 with an investment of ₹ 200 crore.
- 4.12.** In the textiles sector, a ‘Centre of Excellence’ is being set up at the Shillong sericulture farm and other departmental infrastructure is being upgraded to benefit the sericulture farmers and weavers. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 63 crore for the textiles sector.

Cooperatives

- 4.13.** Over the last three years, 320 Integrated Village Cooperative Societies with a combined membership of about 55,000 farmers have been formed. These cooperatives have mobilized savings of about ₹ 18 crore. The government is also providing zero interest working capital loans and grants to these institutions. With these, the farmers are being empowered to replace the middle-men and undertake marketing of agricultural produce. To continue with this movement, an amount of ₹ 20 crore shall be spent in 2022-23.

Agri-logistics and marketing

- 4.14. The construction of 30 'Farmer-owned-Farmer-operated' markets with an investment of ₹ 20 crore is underway. Given the strong demand for such markets, I am announcing the building of 20 more markets at a cost of ₹ 10 crore for the year 2022-23.
- 4.15. The State already has a robust agri-logistics system in the form of 1917 iTEAMS. To further strengthen this, we will launch a new scheme for providing 200 vehicles to individual entrepreneurs, collectives and cooperatives at 50 percent subsidy for transporting raw materials and produce.

Digital agriculture

- 4.16. My government is also launching a comprehensive program to interface technology with farming under the 'Digital Agriculture' program. The program will map the cropping activity of about 1.2 lakh farmers, gather data on their farming practices and provide interventions to improve production and productivity.
- 4.17. I am allocating ₹ 916 crore for the Agri and allied sectors in 2022-23, marking an increase of 29 percent over the current financial year's allocation.

5. MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH - BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION

The health and economic empowerment of our mothers has been a fundamental priority for this government. The interventions of the last four years are showing results through improvements in institutional deliveries and child immunization rates.

Maternal health

- 5.1. Under the MOTHER program, the government is carefully monitoring the health condition of all the pregnant women in the State with specific focus on high-risk mothers. Thanks to this initiative, the institutional

deliveries have gone up by 13 percent during the last three years.

- 5.2. To further strengthen these interventions, I have launched the 'Chief Minister's Safe Motherhood Scheme'. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 25 crore for the implementation of this scheme in 2022-23.

Healthy children

- 5.3. The foundation for healthy adult life is laid in the early days and years of childhood. Under the Early Childhood Development Mission, steps are being taken for children to get the best care and nutrition in the first 1,000 days of their life. Further, due to the continued efforts of my government, the immunization coverage among children has gone up from 44 percent to 91 percent over the past three years.
- 5.4. The 'Poshan Abhiyaan' is being implemented to reduce the instances of stunting, undernutrition, underweight amongst children and anaemia among the women.

From well-being to self-reliance

- 5.5. This government has formed about 28,000 'Self Help Groups' and mobilised women from about 3.2 lakh households. This is a five-fold jump since 2018. We have disbursed about ₹ 211 crore to these SHGs and the 'Village Organisations' over the last four years. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 115 crore for this program for 2022-23.
- 5.6. Combining all the investments being proposed for women for 2022-23, the size of the gender budget comes to ₹ 2,495 crore. This constitutes about 13 percent of the total budget size and is 20 percent higher than the allocations for the current financial year.

6. LIVELIHOODS FOR ALL

The State has performed well in the implementation of the various poverty alleviation programs over the last four years. This has significantly improved livelihoods and created employment opportunities in the rural areas.

Rural employment

- 6.1. MGNREGS has had a huge impact on the income levels of the rural households. The expenditure on the program has gone up from ₹ 913 crore in 2018-19 to ₹ 1,400 crore in the current financial year. This translates to an income transfer of about ₹ 14,000 to each rural household in the State. The expenditure on this program for 2022-23 is likely to be more than ₹ 1,500 crore.

Financial Inclusion - bank linkage

- 6.2. Access to banking services is very important for rural livelihoods. The government's policy of providing zero interest loans under various mission mode projects is benefiting almost 10,000 farmers. The full interest subvention being provided on KCC loans has benefitted 26,000 farmers.
- 6.3. For taking banking services to the last mile, the government has successfully implemented the 'Business Correspondent' model. In the current financial year, around 350 new business correspondents have been deployed and equipped with interoperable micro-ATMs. This model will be expanded in 2022-23 to cover all the unbanked villages.
- 6.4. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 10 crore for providing interest subvention and strengthening financial inclusion.
- 6.5. The government has also started providing interest free capital and working capital loans through the 'Livelihood Improvement Finance Company of Meghalaya' - LIFCOM. In the current financial year, loans of about ₹ 5 crore have been disbursed enabling several farmers' cooperatives to aggregate produce like ginger, pepper and turmeric. I am allocating ₹ 10 crore to expand this initiative in 2022-23.

7. YOUTH, EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Meghalaya is a young State with 8.5 lakh people in the 15-24 age group. Providing opportunities for these youth to find employment and to achieve excellence is the government's priority.

Youth engagement

- 7.1. The 'Meghalaya Youth Policy' has been approved in the current financial year. A program for the engagement and training in soft skills of 10,000 youth has been launched. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 10 crore towards this program.
- 7.2. Skills form the core of employability and we have been taking up various skill development initiatives. I have launched a new all-comprehensive skilling program called the 'Skills Meghalaya'. Under this program, one lakh youth will be trained in various skills for both wage and self-employment in the local economy over the next five years. I am allocating ₹ 10 crore for the 'Skills Meghalaya' program for 2022-23 to cover 10,000 youth.

Job seekers to job creators

- 7.3. PRIME - the government's flagship program, is already in its third year of implementation. So far, it has benefited about 1,250 entrepreneurs. 96 entrepreneurs have received zero interest loans and another 117 entrepreneurs have received startup grants under the PRIME program. Four PRIME hubs are already functional and I am allocating an amount of ₹ 25 crore to set up 15 more PRIME hubs in 2022-23.
- 7.4. In addition to the PRIME hubs, a state-of-the-art 'Incubation and Youth Centre' is also being constructed at Tura at a cost of ₹ 23 crore. The 'Chief Minister's Youth Centres', which will be vibrant centres for the engagement of the youth will also be setup in 10 locations in 2022-23.

Sports for excellence

- 7.5. My government is creating sports infrastructure at an unprecedented rate. In addition to the iconic infrastructure being created in Shillong and Tura, 150 grassroots sporting infrastructure have been taken up over the last two years at a cost of ₹ 45 crore. I am allocating ₹ 40 crore for the completion of several of these projects in 2022-23.
- 7.6. With the easing of the pandemic, the Government will be restarting the 'Mission football' and activating the grassroots centres across the State. A program for talent identification at the grassroots using state-of-the-art testing methods will be launched in collaboration with the 'Meghalaya State Olympic Association'.
- 7.7. The 'Meghalaya Games' will be organised in May 2022 making it a biennial event. Further, as part of the golden jubilee celebrations, the State will also host the 'North East Olympics'.
- 7.8. I am allocating ₹ 208 crore for Sports and Youth Affairs in 2022-23, an increase of 13 percent over the allocation during the current financial year.

Promoting cultural and creative industries

- 7.9. Creative pursuits are a way of life in Meghalaya and my government wants to create an ecosystem for employment generation in the creative industries.
- 7.10. We will launch a new program for organising round the year calendared music events. This will create employment for our musicians, attract tourists and truly make Meghalaya the 'Music Capital' of India.
- 7.11. For the year 2022-23, a series of festivals including the Cherry Blossom festival, the Shillong literary festival, the Me.gong festival, and a Meghalaya film festival will be organised. These events will be platforms for the youth of the State to showcase their talent and to engage with national and global talents. I am allocating ₹ 20 crore for the organising

of these events and promotion of music and other creative arts.

7.12. Another high-potential creative industry for Meghalaya is film making. This sector can both generate employment for the youth and revenue for the State. The government will formulate a 'Film Policy' to lay out a framework for better production and screening of local films and attract film-makers to the State. I am allocating ₹ 5 crore specifically for various activities related to the promotion of the films and the film industry in the State.

7.13. Aggregating all the investments being proposed for youth in 2022-23, the size of the youth budget comes to ₹ 1,363 crore. This constitutes about 7 percent of the total budget size.

8. BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND FOCUSING ON SUSTAINABILITY

My government has placed a very high emphasis on promoting sustainable development including protection and conservation of soil, water and forest resources. Resilience to climate change is particularly relevant given our fragile ecosystem.

Externally aided projects for sustainability

8.1. The government is implementing the IFAD funded 'Meghalaya - Livelihood and Access to Markets Project', the World Bank funded 'Community led Landscape Management Project', and the JICA funded 'Community-based Forest Management and Livelihood Improvement in Meghalaya'. I am allocating ₹ 227 crore towards implementation of these projects in 2022-23.

Water conservation at scale

8.2. To address the challenges of water shortages and for creating water-based livelihoods in the rural areas, we are undertaking a new project to build about 2,500 'Small and Multi-purpose Reservoirs' across the State. This project will be implemented with funding support from the Asian

Development Bank at an estimated cost of ₹ 720 crore over a five year period.

Payments for Ecosystem Services

- 8.3.** The water supply to Shillong and Tura depends on the health of the catchments in Umiew and Ganol rivers respectively. To specifically protect these vulnerable catchments we will be implementing a new project called the 'Protection of Vulnerable Catchment Areas In Meghalaya' in partnership with the German funding agency KfW. The project will cover 106 villages and ₹ 344 crore will be invested. As part of this project, my government will launch the 'Payment for Ecosystem Services' model, which entails providing cash support to communities to preserve and protect existing forests. This is the first of its kind of initiative in the north eastern region.

Eco-restoration and tourism development at Sohra

- 8.4.** Sohra is one of Meghalaya's globally recognized brands. The Hon'ble Union Home Minister has taken special interest in eco-restoration and afforestation of the Sohra plateau. The State Government recently got the approval for a comprehensive project for the eco-restoration and tourism development at Sohra and adjoining areas at a cost of ₹ 1,125 crore over a five-year period. The implementation of the project will begin in 2022-23.

9. CARING GOVERNMENT - SOCIAL SECURITY AND WELFARE

One of the hallmarks of good governance is the provision of welfare to citizens in distress and the disadvantaged sections of the society.

Response to the COVID pandemic

- 9.1.** In the wake of the second wave of the COVID pandemic, the government had redoubled its welfare efforts. The State government has provided ex-gratia of ₹ 50,000 to the next of kin of those who lost their lives due to COVID during the current financial year. This is in addition to the

₹ 50,000 ex-gratia being provided under the State Disaster Response Fund. Support was provided to the community quarantine centres, provision kits were provided to the home-quarantined and medical-kits were delivered to all the patients. This was supplemented by regular home visits by the health workers to check on the patients.

Chief Minister's Social Assistance Program

- 9.2. About 1.77 lakh senior citizens, single mothers and differently abled individuals are being supported with cash transfers. The government is spending about ₹ 105 crore on this initiative every year. The Government is also targeting to provide identity cards to all persons with disabilities.

Health insurance for all

- 9.3. The 'Megha Health Insurance Scheme' now covers about 4.5 lakh households. The coverage under MHIS- IV is more than double the coverage under the previous version of the insurance scheme. I am allocating ₹ 103 crore towards this important program for 2022-23.

10. IMPROVED GOVERNANCE

My government has made significant progress over the last four years in making the governance systems more responsive and people-centric. Incorporation of technology in governance is also one of the high priority areas.

Achieving Sustainable Development Goals

- 10.1. To emphasise the centrality of SDGs, this year the SDG budget has been formulated which lays out the allocations made for the achievement of the various SDGs. Out of a total expenditure estimate of ₹ 18,881 crore, ₹ 9,182 crore will be spent for the improvement of the various SDG indicators. This is an increase of about 19 percent over the current financial year.

Digital government

- 10.2.** The government recently launched an e-proposal system under which all the proposals in the government will be processed digitally. The e-billing system under which all the bills and financial transactions of the government will be digitised is also being implemented. To provide the physical infrastructure for the implementation for these systems, I am allocating ₹ 10 crore for 2022-23.

Service delivery to the rural areas

- 10.3.** My government has been leveraging technology for better delivery of Government-to-Citizens services. The 1,200 entrepreneur-run 'Common Service Centres' of the State are already providing several critical services in the rural areas. The government is in advanced discussions with the World Bank for the launching of a new ₹ 750 crore project for improving governance and service delivery over the next five years. This project will focus on delivering government services and setting up 'Grievance Redressal Mechanisms' in every village of the State through the creation of a cadre of village facilitators. We are also implementing the 'State Capability Enhancement Project' to improve the effectiveness of the government machinery.

Locality beautification through community engagement

- 10.4.** Another new initiative which has been very successful is the 'Meghalaya Locality Beautification and Enhancement Competition' that is being implemented in the towns of Shillong, Tura and Jowai. Under the program, grants are being provided to communities to take up various beautification works in their localities as per their preference. This initiative has achieved multiple objectives including creation of employment for artists, engagement of communities and beautification of our towns. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 5 crore for this very special initiative.

11. BUDGET ESTIMATES : 2022-23

- 11.1. Sir, for 2022-23, I have estimated the total receipts at ₹ 18,700 crore, of which the revenue receipts are estimated at ₹ 16,035 crore and capital receipts at ₹ 2,665 crore. Excluding borrowings of ₹ 2,632 crore, the total receipts are estimated to be ₹ 16,068 crore.
- 11.2. On the expenditure side, I have estimated the total expenditure at ₹ 18,881 crore, of which the revenue expenditure is estimated at ₹ 15,376 crore and capital expenditure at ₹ 3,505 crore. Excluding repayment of loans of ₹ 964 crore, the estimated total expenditure is ₹ 17,917 crore.
- 11.3. Interest payments for 2022-23 is estimated at ₹ 1,110 crore and pension payments at ₹ 1,469 crore.
- 11.4. I am, therefore, presenting the budget of 2022-23 with a fiscal deficit of ₹ 1,849 crore, which is around 4.5 percent of the GSDP.

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1. Speaker sir, I would like to place on record my gratitude to you and all the members of this august House for the support that has been extended to my government over the last four years. I would also like to thank the people of the State for placing their faith in my government. We have worked relentlessly to ensure that our promises translate into reality.
- 12.2. My Government is determined to propel Meghalaya into the league of top 10 states in India by the end of the decade. A solid foundation for this has been laid over the last four years and this budget creates the pathways for achieving this ambitious mission. Leading the State on this momentous journey has been an enriching and humbling experience. I am confident that this government will get more opportunities to serve the people of the State for years to come.

Mr. Speaker Sir, with these words, I commend the Budget to this august House.

Khublei Mitela Jai Hind