

**Hon'ble Governor Prof. Jagdish Mukhi's address to the students  
of St. Joseph College, Kohima on Natural Resources, Skill  
Manpower and Development of North East on 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2019**

Namaskar,

It is a matter of great pleasure for me to be addressing the students of St. Joseph College, Kohima on Natural Resources, Skill Manpower and Development of North East. I consider it a good opportunity to be speaking in front of all the bright students who are the future leaders and who can bring about fundamental changes in the North East and the Nation as a whole.

I am happy to be visiting this beautiful campus set amid the lush greenery milieu of this beautiful and resourceful state. I consider this assembly as my interaction with the bright minds who can encourage actionable narratives for the development of North East. Our Northeast of India is endowed with huge untapped natural resources and is acknowledged as the treasure trove which can stimulate development of entire country in sync with the nature.

As you all know, Northeastern region of India comprising eight states has enormous natural resources. Since, development of northeaster region is very vital for the development of the entire country, our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji has unprecedented importance for the development of North East. Acknowledging the vast potential of the region, he has termed NE as the New Engine for the country's growth and has enunciated Act East Policy.

Development of North East has to be viewed not just from a domestic perspective – but also in the context of the neighbourhood of India. The development of the Northeast is tied with the development of India's neighbours that is countries of ASEAN. Friendly partner countries from other regions are too essential to our vision for Northeast which can contribute substantially for a comprehensive development of the Northeast, India and ASEAN as a whole.

The Northeast has an amazing social and cultural ecosystem. Few regions of the world have such a wealth of natural, cultural, ethnic and religious diversity mosaiced/blended into such a small area. This diversity is an inspiration for all of us. The Northeast is home to some of the oldest indigenous communities in the world. It is one of our spiritual homelands. Whether it is the traditions of the Devi Maa Kamakhya in Kamakhya or of Buddhism in Tawang, Krishna consciousness in Manipur, Christianity in Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya and elsewhere, they strengthen the thread of bonhomie that unites India with Southeast Asia.

Northeast India is full of hills, stream, and rivers. The region is an exotic location, and is known for cultural and festival opulence. The region is filled with greens, fresh air, blue sky, rich flora and fauna, and huge mineral deposits.

Northeast is blessed with large variety of natural resources and very rich bio-diversity. The region is home to wide variety of fauna including the famous one horned rhinoceros, the great hornbill,



mithun, yak and a wide variety of wild life including tigers. The region is a home to several numbers of National Parks and Wildlife sanctuaries. While recognizing this wealth as our fundamental strength, we have set our vision clear and that is to grow in economy with the growth of ecology. In this direction very recently we celebrated Vana Mahotsava from July 1 to 7 to increase our green coverage and enable the region to be front-runner and join the global efforts against climate change.

When I talk of natural resources, I will fail in my duty if I do not mention about tea, black rice, delicious banana, passion fruit, kiwi, pineapple and a wide variety of other fruits which increased unique selling proposition of the North East.

Prosperity is Northeast's natural destiny. Its geographical location makes it the obvious gateway to India, linking the vast economies of the Indian subcontinent and of today's ASEAN countries. This is the potential we have to tap. And this is the idea that must inspire you all because you will have to shoulder the responsibility of increasing the prosperity of region by being its brand ambassadors.

Government of India has adopted a multi-modal programme, across land, water and air to increase the connectivity of the region between India and its eastern and southeast Asian neighbours.

Friends, India is moving forward under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. He has enunciated Act East Policy which entails increased people to people, trade and

other relations with countries on India's east particularly ASEAN countries.

Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has put India's North East at the heart of Act East Policy. We have been inspired by his visionary leadership and have stepped up our efforts in increasing interaction with ASEAN and BBN countries with the support of our External Affairs Ministry. I am happy to tell you that Bhutan and Bangladesh have already opened their Consulate office in Guwahati and Singapore is in constant touch with us to open its Consulate in the city.

As all of you know Northeastern states are close to ASEAN nations. We have land borders with Myanmar, Bangladesh and Bhutan. Many of ASEAN capitals are within 2,000 kilometre flying distance from Guwahati which is comparable to flying distance of Guwahati to many Indian cities. We are keen to start flights between Guwahati and ASEAN capitals. Already flight services have taken off connecting Guwahati with Thimphu, Singapore and Dhaka. There is a motorable road link, the ASEAN trilateral highway connecting North East and ASEAN countries. Government of India is working to improve this land route.

Friends, for me, there is no greater joy than being with the young and the learned. At this juncture, I am reminded of a famous saying----- The eldest is respected in his house, the headman in his village. A king is respected in his country, but the learned everywhere. Dear friends you represent the crux of the learned human



resources of the country and the success of our region to a great extent depends on you. To channelize the large number of our youth to take up industry-relevant skill training Skill India programme was launched to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship. This programme, I am sure will help the youth to become creators of economic value and jobs. Skill India programme has been designed to address the high demand for skilled manpower in tourism and hospitality, retail and beauty and wellness sectors.

For Government of India development of the Northeast is an urgent and paramount importance. In the last few years, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura have been brought under the railway map. Road building in the region is busier than it has ever been. Border roads, national highways and state roads are all being built or improved. Incorporated in July 2014, the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation is working with a special focus on the Northeast.

Inland waterways, especially along the majestic Brahmaputra and Barak rivers, can save transport costs as well as facilitate connectivity. And finally, there is the push for air connectivity. The creation of infrastructure in smaller cities and airports under UDAN, along with more and more flights, is making the skies of the Northeast buzz with traffic.

With the emergence of Northeast Tourism Development Council and its partnerships between government and private sector

players, I am confident that Northeast will turn out to be a leading tourism destination of not just India but Asia as a whole.

When we talk of development of North East, Nagaland always occupies the nucleus of our development agenda. Nagaland is rich in natural resources but its real wealth lies in its young demographic profile. Our respective governments are trying in optimising its strengths and opportunities; its agricultural base and employment of the youth. Its strategic geographical location in the ambit of the Act East Policy of Government of India and the emerging possibilities of the State becoming an economic hub have also been captured. Government of India along with the State government is planning, executing and monitoring development schemes and projects with special emphasis on Nagaland. Our vision is to accelerate the pace of socio-economic development of Nagaland so that it may enjoy growth parity with the rest of the country.

We are working to stimulate economic development of the State based on three broad issues. First, to incentivise farmers to expand the scale of commercial production. Second, to create employment opportunities in the non-agricultural sectors to absorb the educated unemployed and third, to ensure that regionally balanced growth takes place.

Dear Friends, seeing the impressive degree of participation and involvement of you all, I am sure that the future of North East is very bright and the region will be a key partner in the growth momentum of the country.

In conclusion, I again emphasise that India cannot develop without the development of North East and without a resurgent relation between Northeast and ASEAN countries, Act East Policy cannot succeed. The opportunity is knocking at our door. Let us grab it.

Thank you,

**Jai Hind.**