

**SPEECH OF THE HON'BLE GOVERNOR FOR
13TH NORTH EAST BUSINESS SUMMIT TO BE
HELD IN NEW DELHI ON 17TH JANUARY 2019**

NAMASKAR...

Distinguished dignitaries on and off the dais, esteemed members of the Indian Chambers of Commerce, industrialists, prospective investors, entrepreneurs, my dear media friends, ladies and gentlemen.

It gives me immense pleasure to be amongst you today for this all important conclave: The 13th North East Business Summit. At the very outset, I take the pleasure to commend the path-breaking vision of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji. It is because of his initiative, the decades old Look East Policy has been transformed into Act East Policy. India's Act East Policy has envisioned to open up India's diplomatic, trade and commerce and business relations with the ASEAN Countries through North East. It is our Prime Minister who has given new meaning and dimension to NE which is New Engine of Growth.

Assam and Northeast are close to ASEAN nations. 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. New flight services between Guwahati and ASEAN capitals have already taken off. The construction of a new terminal building at Guwahati airport is going on in full swing. There is a motorable road link, the ASEAN trilateral highway connecting North East and ASEAN. The Government of India is working to improve this land route in full earnest.

Assam which is the largest among 8 Northeastern States of India is blessed with variety of natural resources and very rich bio-diversity. Assam is nurtured by one of the greatest rivers of the world, Brahmaputra. Our civilization has grown along the mighty river. The Barak is the other important river. Both rivers along with their many tributaries have a huge potential for river transport, tourism and industry. We hope to get access to the Bay of Bengal through Chittagong port in Bangladesh in near future.

Assam has very fertile land, abundant rainfall and produces significant quantity of fruits like banana, orange,

pineapple and spices like ginger and turmeric. Assam has a tremendous potential for agro processing industry.

Assam Tea is famous throughout the world. Assam has around 850 tea gardens and 1,30,000 small tea growers. Assam is amongst the largest tea producing region globally and contributes to over 50 per cent of India's total tea production. The Guwahati Tea Auction Centre is among the largest CTC tea auction centres of the world. The government has secured a Geographical Indication (GI) for the tea produced in the state. As a result 'Assam Tea' is known as 'Assam Orthodox Tea'.

The Petroleum industry in India started at Digboi in Assam and we have today four refineries and significant petroleum as well as natural gas reserves. The Upper Assam and Assam-Arakan Basin in Northeast India is an important oil-producing region and contains more than 18 per cent of the country's hydrocarbon resource. Assam has over 1.6 billion tonnes of crude oil and 158.57 billion cubic meters of natural gas reserves.

Assam has a huge untapped potential for agro and food processing industries. The total production of horticulture crops in 2016-17 stood at 570.87 lakh metric tonnes (MT). Assam encompasses one of India's 14 biodiversity hotspots. Pineapple, banana, cauliflower, broccoli and rose are among high yielding varieties of horticulture crops in Assam, besides the state is also a rich house of several traditional fruits like Carambola, Leteku, Thekera etc.

Assam also houses over 300 types of medicinal herbs and plants, with the Brahmaputra valley alone having more than 150 varieties of herbs and plants of commercial value. North East has the highest concentration of bamboo, which accounts for around 60 per cent of the total bamboo of the country. Assam has ample scope for bamboo-based industries such as paper manufacturing. The Government of Assam seeks to promote bamboo as a substitute for wood and make it the timber of the 21st century. Assam has rich forests covering nearly a third of its land area.

Owing to its advantageous location, Assam is popularly termed as gateway to the Northeast and also to the ASEAN nations. Complemented with rich cultural heritage, Assam is

tipped as a tourist hot spot in the region. In order to boost the state's tourism and hospitality sector, the State government has brought out a draft Tourism Policy 2016. Assam offers six diverse tourist circuits, besides several opportunities in niche tourism activities, such as wildlife and ecotourism, spiritual tourism, adventure tourism, wellness and medical tourism, festival and cultural tourism.

Assam Government has enacted the Assam Ease of Doing Business Act 2016, which establishes the state's single window investment clearance / facilitation system – Assam Bureau of Investment Promotion – for overall supervision and administration for speedy processing of application and issuance of various clearances by competent authorities. Also the government proposed to increase several relaxations for setting up of medium and large units in the State.

Assam has over 20 million people in the working age group heralding a new era for youth led development. The State has a large pool of skilled workforce, adept in IT, English language and communication skills.

We have taken inspiration from the Prime Minister's Act East Policy and set up a separate Act East Policy Affairs Department.

Ladies and Gentlemen, since this is a business Summit, I feel it is pertinent to showcase different potentials available in Assam in particular and North East in general before this august gathering. In view of these potentials, I invite all of you present here and those who could not be here because of their pre-occupied engagements, please come to Assam start your businesses here. Government of Assam will help you in every possible way in your ventures. In the end once again, I thank the organiser for holding this all important event and inviting me to present the possibilities of Assam and North East before you.

What has been initiated by our Prime Minister has to be led to its logical conclusion. Our business fraternity in synergy with the State governments has to work hand in hand to turn our dreams in to reality.

Namaskar..

Jai Hind.