



The Shri Sankardeva Nethralaya in Guwahati.

NEC was transferred to the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare in 2007. The Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi Regional Institute of Mental Health (LGBRIMH), Tezpur, Assam, is again an NEC institution. It may be mentioned that the NEC, with the Central Government's approval, had earlier taken over the Lokopriya Gopinath Bordoloi Institute of Mental Health (LGBIMH) from the Government of Assam and re-designated it as a regional institute — namely the Lokopriya Gopinath Bordoloi Regional Institute of Mental Health (LGBRIMH) with the objective of setting up better facilities

**MANY INSTITUTES HAVE COME UP IN RECENT YEARS AND HELPED THE PEOPLE WHO WANT TO TRAIN THEMSELVES IN HEALTH SERVICES. THE COUNCIL HAS ALREADY UPGRADED SEVERAL HOSPITALS AND EXISTING FACILITIES**



(Above and below) The SAN-KER health facility in Shillong



**TODAY THE HEALTH MAP  
OF THE NORTH EAST HAS  
CHANGED COMPLETELY;  
IT IS DOTTED WITH SEVERAL  
HOSPITALS AND RESEARCH  
FACILITIES**



The State Medical Library at the Civil Hospital in Aizwal, Mizoram.

for investigation, diagnosis and treatment of the mentally-ill patients of the NER and to develop it into a proper training and teaching institute.

Similarly, Dr B Barooah Cancer Institute (BBCI), Guwahati, which is a flagship cancer institute, was under the NEC. The Institute was setup in 1974 at Guwahati, Assam, as a private hospital by a voluntary organisation for treating cancer patients. It is the first and the only institute of its type in the entire NER. In 1986, the Assam Government took over the institute with all its assets and liabilities.

The Assam Government entered into a tripartite agreement with the NEC and the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Government of India, in November 1989 for a revitalisation plan with the objective of mobilising resources for developing the institute. The NEC and other agencies (Government of Assam and DAE) supported BBCI, Guwahati, under various Revitalisation Plan Phases (RPP I-IV). As per the EFC meeting on February 18, 2014, the recurring cost was recommended for approval in the Phase-IV duration or till taking over of the institute by the Department of Atomic Energy. ■



Sports gets the pride of place through the entire NE Region. Football is the most followed sport. Here, young players get ready to kick the ball.

## HRD&E

### HARNESSING HUMAN RESOURCES

Human Resources Development and Employment (HRD&E) is one of the important sectors in the NEC Secretariat. This sector deals with education, sports, social welfare, skill development and training. In addition to planning, it plays a catalytic role in infrastructure development and promotional activities in all the NE States in education, sports, social welfare and employment. It works for augmenting human resource capabilities in the region, which requires building skills among people so that they themselves can become an agent of change and development. The major initiatives of the sector include gap funding for infrastructure development in education, sports and social sector; promotion of science and mathematics for improvement of quality education in the region and support for sports and youth promotion activities for productive engagement of youth and to wean them away from social unrest.

The NER Vision 2020 has aptly identified that “in any people-centric vision of NER, education and the building of skills and knowledge will be the cornerstone. This is the only capital that people without land and financial capital can acquire to enhance their income streams and improve their living conditions. In the development process, education is vital to growth across all sectors”. With a view to bridging the infrastructure bottlenecks in the educational sector, sports and related areas, the HRD&E sector has launched several schemes, including infrastructure development of educational institutes in the NER, financial support to the region’s students, development of sports and youth activities, development and promotion of education and social sector.



## EDUCATION AS THE MAIN DRIVER

HRD&E also plays a key role in several sectors. Education is the main driver of Human Resources Development. It primarily shapes the future of our nation and is in need of quality investment to realise the aspirations of its over 1.25 billion people. India spends about 4.13 per cent of its GDP on education which, though higher than most South Asian countries (Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka), is lower than what other BRICS nations spend on education as a percentage of their GDP. The Ministry of Human Resource Development of the Government of India has included planned

development, including expanding access and improving quality of educational institutions throughout the nation as one of its objectives for the education sector. States are encouraged to avail of Government facilities, schemes and projects for development of the education sector in the NER.

As far as the North East is concerned, according to the 2011 census, the literacy rate, except for Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, in the NE States is higher than the national average (74.04 per cent), with Mizoram topping the list at 91.33 per cent. The rate of



The BBC Convention Centre in Kohima, Nagaland.

literacy is not a problem here; hence, the drive should be more on adequate and quality secondary and higher education. However, a study conducted by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Ficci) in 2015 revealed that while many quality institutions for higher education have come up in the region, primary and secondary education are still areas requiring improvement in terms of quality and outreach. In this regard, the NE State Governments can also refer to the ASER-2016 report published by Pratham for assessing the standard of primary education and the gaps therein.

As per the report, basic reading and mathematics skills have shown improvement across the country but the States need to build up on this momentum. Clear and achievable learning goals for different stages need to be defined. Another nagging problem is provincialisation of schools started by people at the grassroots and standardisation of teachers' salary for maintaining quality of education at the primary stage. Moreover, to bring uniformity and improvement in primary education, tele-education through satellite facilities in remote areas could also be considered.



Teachers taking utmost care of Differently Abled children at Spastic Children care complex at Bawngkawn, Aizwal, Mizoram.

In the area of college education, too, while the number of colleges has grown significantly over the years, several of them suffer from lack of qualified and trained teachers, inadequate infrastructure and poorly equipped laboratories. Besides, there is general lack of connect with job requirements. Keeping in mind the gaps in the education sector, the NEC seeks to priorities investments in the development of human resources.

The Central Government, in order to achieve its vision of 'Skilled India', has tasked the Ministry of Skill Development with coordination of all skill development efforts across the country, removal of disconnect between demand and supply of skilled manpower, building the vocational and technical training framework, skill upgradation, building of new skills and innovative thinking not only for existing jobs but also for those that are to be created.

As there are a number of sports awards and schemes by the Union Government as well as the corporate sector (public as well as private) for the promotion of sports in the country, the States are encouraged to avail these facilities to the fullest extent. The NEC is also focused on the development of sports infrastructure, which is still lacking in the NER.



The Cancer affected Children Care, Deepsikha Foundation in Guwahati, Assam.

The NEC has undertaken several projects for tapping the human resources potential in the region. It undertook the construction of Comprehensive Spastic Children Care Complex at Bawngkawn, Aizawl. The project was approved and funded which entails 90 per cent cost share by the NEC and 10 per cent by the State Government. The total project cost is ₹774.17 lakh, of which the NEC disbursed ₹696.75 lakh. The NEC also constructed a women's hostel for the students of the NER at Bangalore University. The project was



(Above, Right and Below) The Margaret Shishak School of Music at Patkai Christian College, Chumukedima in Nagaland.

inaugurated by Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March, 2019. In Nagaland the NEC funded the Margaret Shiksha School of Music Building at Patkai Christian College and disbursed ₹448.99 lakh. NEC also funded the Construction of Home for Cancer affected children's by Deepshikha Foundation, Guwahati. The main purpose of this project is to provide proper care and aiding to the poor and needy children's in the treatment process at very nominal cost.

The NEC constructed a Multipurpose Sports Complex at Aizawl. The project was approved at a cost of ₹1,016.88 lakh in June 2016 and implemented by the Mizoram State Sports Council. The project is complete and the implementing department has submitted all the relevant documents. Similarly, the NEC funded a multipurpose indoor hall at Sihphir, Mizoram, was constructed. The project was approved in September 2016 for ₹1,277.79 lakh and implemented by the Mizoram State Sports Council. NEC .

### **ENCOURAGEMENT TO MERITORIOUS STUDENTS**

Similarly NEC also started Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Award for Excellence for toppers from the North East. It has been instituted from 2022 which would go a long way in encouraging the youth to perform better in schools. The awards consist of a certificate and a cash award of Rs. One lakh only. In the 70th Plenary held at



Science Block at Kamrang Govt. Degree College at Namchi, South Sikkim.

Guwahati on October 2022, North East toppers from CBSE and ISC in three streams were awarded.

Besides, awards for promotion and inspiring students to perform better, the NEC also has an elaborate scholarship program for meritorious students. NEC Merit Scholarship for different courses-degree, post-graduate, Diploma, Mphil-Phd, is provided to 1600 students of North East through the National Scholarship Portal from FY 2020-21 onwards.

## BIG BOOST TO THE SPORTS

To encourage the youth and instill a sense of purpose in the energetic sports persons of the North East, the NEC Chairman's Sports Awards for Excellence in International & National Sports Meets by Sportsperson of North East was started by the NEC. The main objective of the scheme is to promote sports in the North East of India by recognising and felicitating the achievements of sportspersons of the North East on winning laurels for the country in national and international sports meets. The award is given to sportsperson who achieves 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in recognised international and national sports event.

Since the introduction of the award, 207 numbers of sportsperson from the NE Region has been provided cash awards for winning medals in the Olympics, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games and National Games.

## SUCCOR FOR THE DOWNTRODDEN

The NEC has been providing financial assistance in the form of sponsorship at the Assam Rifles Public School (ARPS), as per a MoU with Assam Rifles Shillong for students from class VI onwards from below poverty line family. At present the NEC provides financial assistance of ₹1,37,550/- (Rupees one Lakh Thirty Seven Thousand Five Hundred Fifty) only per student.

The NEC has been sponsoring students from NE region belonging to BPL families as Boarders & Scholars since 2011. As per MoU



(Above & below) The Multipurpose Indoor Hall, Sihphir, Mizoram.

dated 20th January, 2021 between NEC and Assam Rifles Welfare Education Society, NEC shall provide financial assistance of ₹70,000 per students per annum for 102 Boarders from Class VI to XII and ₹6,000 per student per annum for 800 day scholars from Class I to X for the BLP candidates having annual income of ₹60,000 per annum studying in various Assam Rifles Schools located in NE States. The selection of the candidates will be as per merit of Entrance Test and Group Discussion (GD) etc conducted by Assam Rifles.

The NEC is committed for the development of deprived and marginalised sections of the society. As per the Union Cabinet decision in its meeting held on 29th January, 2020, it has been decided that 30 percent of NEC budget/allocation will be devoted for focused development area; deprived/neglected sections of society and emerging priority sectors and related issues. Accordingly the sector has taken up projects under Community





The Multipurpose Sports Complex, YMA Field, Vaivakwan, Aizwal, Mizoram.

Development Programme and Backward Community in the North Eastern Region as per a survey done by the Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change Development (OKDISCD). There are a number of deprived sections in unfortunate situations which are often small ethnic groups in the NER like Chakmas, Brus, Tarao, KoirengRongmei, Nepali, Santhal, Rabha, Hajong, Maos, Halam, Orang, Limboo, Ollo, Lisu Yobin, Zeme, Paite, Hmar, Khasi-Jaintia, Garo, Mara, Singpho and Mishing Communities etc,. Sector has under-taken a number of projects for these deprived communities

Artificial turf at Hnahthial, Mizoram.



for uplift of their livelihood activities, development of areas, housing and upgradation of school education.

### **PRESERVING THE LINGUISTIC HERITAGE**

Though the North East is culturally very rich and diverse, many of its languages are dying a slow death. They indeed need support to flourish in the changing environment. Out of 117 languages considered as endangered by the Ministry of HRD under its Scheme for Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages (SPPEL) in current phase, 43 of them or 39 percent are from North East. For revival and development of Endangered Language/Scripts of North East Region Sector has taken up some project under the Scheme of 30 percent NEC budget allocation. The proposals were identified by the State Government and further sanction from the NEC. The documentation and revitalisation of the endangered languages of NER were also undertaken. The projects sanction by NEC include Sikkim's Endangered Language Documentation Project (SELDP). ■



The Kopili Dam hydro power station in Khandong, Assam.



## IFC&WM

### THE ELIXIR OF LIFE

There are many things that are important for life. Water is one of them. We need water to drink, to cook with and, most importantly, to live a normal life. Without it, we would not be able to survive.

Water is necessary for the existence of life as we know it. Water is also essential for the growth and development of organisms as well as their survival in harsh environments. Water helps us digest food, maintain and regulate body temperature and eliminate waste and toxic products produced by our bodies. In addition, water helps maintain healthy skin by keeping its tone and texture smooth and soft.

The NER is endowed with an enormous water resources potential that accounts for about 33 per cent of the country's total water wealth and about 40 per cent of its total hydropower potential, though the region represents only 7.9 per cent of the total Indian landmass. The per capita and per hectare availability of water in this region are the highest in India.

However, the NE States are facing increasing water scarcity by the day. The region is acutely prone to multiple natural hazards like earthquakes, flood, erosion and landslides due to its peculiar geophysical setting vis-à-vis eastern Himalayas, further accentuated by unsustainable and wrongful human activities. The region is



(Above and right) Majuli, the first island district in India, covers an area of approximately 352 sq. km.

equally unique and diverse in its natural ecological endowments and socio-cultural milieu. The Brahmaputra, Barak and their tributaries create mayhem almost every year with their ravaging floods and massive erosion.

### **THE NORTH EAST PARADOX**

The NER Vision 2020 observes that “33 per cent water resources potential of our country is located in the NER”. The region is not only located in the highest rainfall zone in the world, but the presence of the largest river basin in the world here, the Brahmaputra basin, has made it a region rich in water resources potential. The Brahmaputra basin has a total catchment area of 5,80,000 sq km, including in China and India. Within the region, it has a total catchment area of 1,74,413 sq km with an average water resource potential of 5,37,240 MCM. In addition, the Barak basin, with its catchment area of

41,723 sq km, has an average water resource of 48,360 MCM and this basin is also located within the NER. Perhaps the NER Vision 2020 document has taken note of this but the exploitation of these vast natural resources is hardly 10 per cent of the total resources.

The topography, flood plains, wetlands and the vast agricultural land that spread across these two basins have given the region immense economic potential. If these resources are judiciously exploited, the region can become a powerhouse and food basket of the country.

Hence, an integrated approach is required for planning processes to ensure various economic water utilities such as power generation, flood mitigation programmes with irrigation facilities, drinking water supply, agriculture and allied activities, preservation of biodiversity and environment, increasing the groundwater potential.



**IFC&WM SECTOR PROVIDES ASSISTANCE IN IMPLEMENTING WATER SUPPLY, WATERSHED MANAGEMENT, SURVEY & INVESTIGATION OF HYDRO ELECTRIC PROJECTS, MINOR IRRIGATION AND ANTI EROSION PROJECTS. AROUND 4.50 LAKH PEOPLE BENEFITTING THROUGH THE DRINKING WATER SUPPLY SCHEMES IN VARIOUS NE STATES.**

**ON POWER GENERATION, NEC HAS CONTRIBUTED 694.50 MW WHICH INCLUDES 630 MW ON LARGE TO MEDIUM HYDRO POWER PROJECTS AND 64.50 MW ON THERMAL AND TRANSMITTED ABOUT 10660 CKT. KM AT DIFFERENT VOLTAGE LEVELS.**

**BLOOMINGSTAR WAHLANG**  
Adviser (IFC&WM) and Incharge EE (Power)

Accordingly, IFC&WM has been supporting these schemes in the NER: Implementation of anti-erosion/flood control, river management and water-related schemes; implementation of all types of minor/micro irrigation schemes; and, implementation of watershed management schemes.

### **EVERY DROP COUNTS!**

The NEC has been supporting various States in the region by providing financial assistance to create infrastructure for drinking water supply, irrigation, anti-erosion and flood management structures, watershed management programmes, besides survey and investigation of hydropower and water resource projects.

Up to FY 2019-20, cultivable and homestead land area measuring about 85211.50 hectare could be protected in different NER States through

anti-erosion projects. Over 2,04,300 people have benefited through the drinking water supply schemes and 2503 hectare of irrigation potential was created through the water supply and irrigation schemes implemented in various NE States. The survey and investigation projects for Meghalaya were also supported for creation of 925 MW of hydro power potential. During FY 2019-20, 15 projects were completed, of which five were of drinking water supply, one each of irrigation watershed management and survey investigation and seven of anti-erosion and flood management. During FY 2020-21, 26 projects were completed, of which five were of water supply, one each of rainwater harvesting, drainage and survey and amp; investigation, three of irrigation and 15 of anti-erosion and flood management. During FY 2021-22, 10 projects were completed, of which four were related to drinking water supply, one was of irrigation, two of survey and investigation and three of anti-erosion and flood management. ■



The Don Bosco Community Information Centre Museum in Shillong, Meghalaya.



## INFORMATION & PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Information & Public Relations (IPR) Department is a vital component of any organisation that aims to project the overall entity in positive light, mould favourable public opinion and, above all, disseminate relevant information to those looking for it while, at the same time, entice others who may be looking for something similar to experience its offerings or services. In the case of the NEC, the importance of the IPR Department increases manifold since it has to be different from the individual information and public relations departments of the respective State Governments, besides proactively promotion the entire NER as a composite unit for business investments, travel, tourism, hospitality and adventure aficionados.

Thoretically, any IPR Department is the interface between the Government/agency/organisation and the media, playing a pivotal role in keeping the general public abreast of day-to-day events and developments, activities, policies, programmes, initiatives and achievements of the parent organisation. Its main aim is to inform the public, prospective customers, investors, partners, employees and other stakeholders, and ultimately persuade them to maintain a positive or favourable view about the organisation, its leadership, products or political decisions. Public relations help our complex, pluralistic society to reach decisions and function more effectively by contributing to mutual understanding among groups and institutions. The department also serves to bring private and public policies into harmony.



Sketches of Tribals at Don Bosco Community Information Centre Museum in Shillong, Meghalaya.

**THE NEC'S IPR SECTOR DEALS WITH VARIOUS PUBLIC RELATIONS-RELATED ACTIVITIES LIKE ORGANISING PRESS MEETS, ISSUING MEDIA RELEASES, PUBLISHING NEWSLETTERS, ARTICLES, COFFEE TABLE BOOKS, BESIDES UNDERTAKING PROJECTS FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE CULTURE OF THE NORTH EASTERN REGION**



(Above and right) Archeological Museum and Monument in Malinithan, Arunachal Pradesh.

The IPR Department supervises and assesses public attitudes, and maintains mutual relations and understanding between an organisation and members of the public. It improves channels of communication and institutes newer, innovative ways of setting up a two-way flow of information and understanding.

Aristotle said, “Man is a social animal”, and in the growing society the concept of inter-dependence has emerged. A person might be self-sufficient, but he has to depend on others for the satisfaction of their needs. This inter-dependence of people in business, Government and private organisations has spawned a new function of management, which is known as “Public Relations”.

The definition of Public Relations as per Edward Burneys, the ‘father of PR’, is: “It is a planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain mutual understanding between an organisation and public.” If we are to take a common man’s perspective on how he



**THE IPR SECTOR WORKS FOR PRESERVATION AND PROMOTION OF HERITAGE AND CULTURE IN ALL THE NORTH EASTERN STATES, BESIDES INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTIVITIES. IT ALSO HELPS IN BUILDING THE OVERALL IMAGE OF THE NEC**

**AJAY PARASHAR**  
Director (Information and Public Relations)

perceives Public Relations, it would be that a PR person is basically a link between an organisation with the world outside. A PR official not only helps in maintaining a cordial relation with the rest of the world with the organisation s/he works for, but rather builds the overall image of the organisation.

Just like the other organisations, the NEC also started the Information and Public Relations sector in the 1980s. One of the initial directors of the IPR sector was DP Chakravorty at the time of NEC's inception in 1972; then gradually in the 80s, the IPR sector was established more firmly and strengthened.

The NEC's IPR sector deals with various Public Relations-related activities like organising press meets, issuing press releases, publishing newsletters, articles, Coffee Table Books, besides undertaking projects for the promotion of the culture of the NER. Under the promotion of the North Eastern culture in the rest of the country

and abroad, the IPR sector has undertaken some iconic projects across the North East:

- Indigenous Habitat, a critical Research and Development Project: The project was implemented by the Government of Mizoram. It was sanctioned on March 29, 2017, at an estimated cost of ₹68.95 lakh under preservation and promotion of arts and culture. Under this project, a Coffee Table Book was to be published by Jugal Kishore Choudhury Memorial Trust and the concept was that of Ronojoy Sen and Shymal Dutta. The book was released by the Hon'ble Vice-President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu, during his visit to the North Eastern Council on October 4, 2021, and the completion certificate was received on January 28, 2022, by the Government of Mizoram.
- Protection, preservation and infrastructure development of archaeological museum and monument, Malinithan, Arunachal Pradesh: The project was sanctioned in 2013 at an estimated cost of ₹495 lakh and, under preservation and promotion of



The Archaeological Park at Ita Fort in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.



The Capt. Williamson Sangma State museum in Shillong, Meghalaya.

arts and culture, was implemented by the Department of Research, Government of Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar. The project was completed and closed on September 24, 2021.

- Preservation of archaeological park at Itafort, Arunchal Pradesh: This project was sanctioned on December 6, 2010, at an estimated cost of ₹3.70 crore and implemented by the Directorate of Research Department, Government of Arunachal Pradesh. The project was declared closed on March 31, 2021.
- Providing showcase/galleries, lighting etc in the new building of Williamson Sangma State Museum, Shillong, Meghalaya: This project was sanctioned in 2015 at an



Extension and modernization of galleries of JN State museum in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.

estimated cost of ₹617.55 lakh and was to be implemented by the Directorate of Art and Culture, Government of Meghalaya. The cost of NEC's share was limited to ₹5,55,79,500 which was 90 per cent of the total cost, while the State share was 10 per cent which came up to ₹61,75,500. The first instalment of ₹220 lakh was released in 2015 and the second instalment for ₹100 lakh was released in 2018, and as per the revised release of ₹235.795 lakh towards payment of the third and final instalment.

- Extension and modernisation of galleries of JN State Museum, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh: The project was sanctioned on April 25, 2012, at an estimated cost of ₹495 lakh and 90 per cent share of the cost was borne by the NEC, which came up to

₹445.50 crore and the 10 per cent State share was ₹49.50 lakh. The NEC's share was released in four instalments between 2012 and 2016 and the matching State share was also released. The project was declared closed on December 9, 2019.

- Don Bosco Community Information Centre, Museum, Mawlai: The project was sanctioned in 2012 with an estimated cost of ₹339 lakh and implemented by the Directorate of Art and Cultural, Government of Meghalaya, Shillong. The 90 per cent of the total cost was to be borne by NEC while the remaining 10 per cent was to be borne by the State, which came to ₹13 lakh. The implementing agency was the Director of Arts & Culture, Meghalaya. The NEC'S share was released in three instalments. ■



The Kameng Hydro Power Station, Arunachal Pradesh.



## POWER

### POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

The need for electricity in the North East is growing at a rapid pace. The region has great potential for harnessing hydropower and biomass resources, but any development must be done with due regard for environmental concerns. The use of renewable energy sources offers many advantages over conventional sources such as coal-fired power plants, oil-based fuels and natural gas plants.

Hydroelectricity is the most widely used form of renewable energy in most parts of the world, including in India. This makes hydroelectricity one of the largest sources of renewable energy in the country. Electricity is an important part of our lives today but many people do not realise how much it impacts their lives positively or negatively. In this region, there are many remote tribal hamlets where electricity is unavailable even for cooking and lighting. There are also many villages without access to electricity at all.

Electricity can help improve the quality of life by providing clean cooking facilities, refrigeration for food storage and transport, lighting at night, power tools in households etc. The region has huge potential for hydroelectric power generation, yet only about one percent of its potential is being realised. The main reason for this is that there are no proper regulations or guidelines governing hydroelectric projects in the North East. It means that large projects are often built without any consideration for ecological and social impacts on local communities. In addition, there are few incentives for small-scale hydroelectricity projects which could help meet the demand for electricity in the region. However, these resources are not fully exploited due to lack of infrastructure and lack of investment in the power sector by the Government or the private sector.



(Above and right) Baramura Gas based Thermal Power Project in Tripura.

### **NEEPCO: A MINI-RATNA PSU**

The North Eastern Electric Power Corporation, (NEEPCO), was designed and commissioned by the NEC way back in the 1970s to plan, investigate, design, construct, generate, operate and maintain power stations in the NER and since then it has earned a special place in power generation. It was later handed over by the NEC to the Government of India and now functions as a PSU. It has been a trusted power generation company in the NER and beyond since 1976, working closely with the Ministry of Power and the North Eastern States to act in their best interest in tapping the NER's enormous power potential.

### **THE GREAT POWER POTENTIAL**

The power-starved NER is blessed with huge hydro potential. The region also has abundant resources of coal, oil and gas for thermal power generation. The region has the hydel potential of about 62,604 MW, which is almost 40 per cent of the nation's total hydro potential but of this only 2,167 MW has been harnessed. The total installed capacity of the power generating stations in the NER connected to the regional grid was 4770.6 MW in March 2021, of which 855 MW, 2167 MW, 1738.6 MW and 10MW are contributed by thermal, hydel, gas turbine and solar stations, respectively. Against the total installed capacity in the NER both in hydel and thermal,



the NEC has contributed 630 MW in large hydro power projects and 64.50MW in thermal projects, respectively. The projects taken up under the NEC funding have successfully been completed and operational at the total cost of ₹2,733.59 crore, of which the NEC had contributed ₹1,773.97 crore.

The power transmission system in the NER is weak and needs strengthening for efficient distribution of power within the region. Further, the development of the transmission lines needs to be planned with the upcoming power generations so that the share of respective NE States from the Central pool can be transmitted to the load centres/utilities. Provision for matching transmission and

distribution system is of utmost importance to establish strong intra-regional links, improvement/strengthening of existing power system of State-specific nature, proper reactive power management, reducing of T&D losses, AT&C losses, load dispatch and communication facilities, etc.

The NEC has taken up a large number of system improvement projects like construction of transmission, sub-transmission and distribution lines, substations and upgrading of the existing substations. The Council, since inception, has contributed about 10662.21 Ckt Km at different voltage levels with 1821.40 Mega-Volt-Ampere (MVA) capacity addition to the region. The NEC has



The Doyang Hydro Electric Project, Nagaland.



(Above and right) The Kopili Hydro Electric Project, Assam.

played a major role in developing infrastructure in the region. It has greatly helped in evacuation of power from generating stations for efficient distribution within the region with matching transmission system and also to a large extent reducing the AT&C losses.

The NEC has also taken the initiative for supporting proposals for providing gap funding to renewable resources of energy schemes which include micro/mini hydel projects, solar hybrid and wind energy projects. Under this scheme, quite a number of such projects have been taken up by the NEC for the benefit of un-electrified rural populations by providing minimum need of electricity for their everyday requirement through renewable resources of energy. Total contribution by the NEC in the small/mini hydelpjects so far is 2.7MW. Besides, several solar power projects are in various stages of implementation.

#### **The completed generation projects are:**

The Baramura Gas-Based Thermal Power Project (Unit-II, 21 MW), Tripura: The Baramura Gas-Based Thermal Power Project (21 MW) in Tripura was sanctioned in October 2000 under NEC funding at an estimated cost of ₹96.74 crore and was completed on schedule and inaugurated in November 2002 by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Tripura, at a cost of ₹95.36 crore.

The Baramura Gas Based Thermal Power Project (Unit- IV, 21 MW), Tripura: The project was approved in August 2007 under NEC funding at a total estimated cost of ₹80 crore (including IDC of ₹1.20 crore) and was completed on schedule in September 2010.

The Kopili Hydro Electric Project (150 MW), Meghalaya-Assam border: The original assessed cost was ₹56.77 crore in 1975, which



was in 1991 revised to ₹243.82 crore. Besides, the Khangdong HE Plant (2x25MW) Unit I & II were completed in 1984.

The Kopili HE Plant's (2x50 MW) Unit I & II in 1988: This is the first power project to be funded by the NEC. This project, situated on the Assam- Meghalaya border, was executed by NEEPCO. The 2X25MW Khandong Power House was commissioned in 1984 and the 2X50 MW Kopili Power House was commissioned in 1988 at a total cost of ₹243.82 crore.

The Doyang Hydro Electric Project (75 MW), Nagaland: The original cost was estimated at ₹128.61 crore in 1985 and the revised cost in 2001 was ₹758.70 crore. The Doyang Hydro Electric Project, with a total installed capacity of 75 MW, is situated in Wokha district of Nagaland, and was executed by NEEPCO at

the total estimated cost of ₹758.70 crore. The project commenced commercial operation in July 2000 and was dedicated to the nation on March 2, 2002, by the Hon'ble Union Minister of Power.

The Ranganadi Hydro Electric Project in Lower Subansiri, Arunachal Pradesh: The Ranganadi project in Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh, with a total capacity of 405 MW, executed by NEEPCO at the estimated cost of ₹1455.45 crore, is the first mega power project undertaken in the North East. The project encountered many challenges, especially because of the fragile geological conditions of the young Himalayan ranges. It comprises a 68-metre-high concrete dam and a tunnel more than 10 km long and almost six metres in diameter. Two units of this project were synchronised in January 2002 and the third unit in March 2002. ■



**NORTH EASTERN  
SPACE APPLICATIONS CENTRE**  
Umiam, Meghalaya



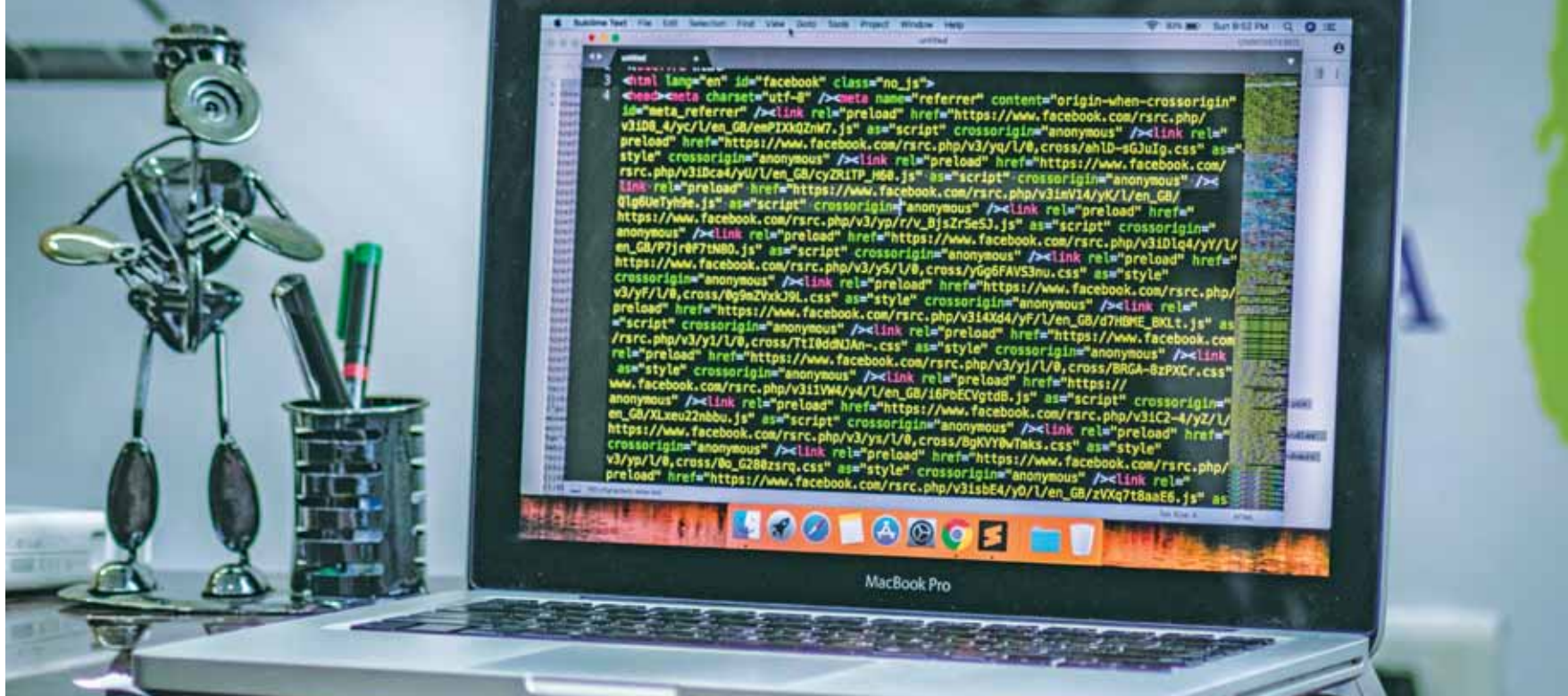
## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (S&T)

### THE SCIENTIFIC TEMPER

The role of science and technology in development is vital. It has been the major concern of many Governments and organisations. The World Bank estimates that about two-thirds of all development aid goes towards improving infrastructure, education and health services. Research shows that these investments can have a significant impact on poverty reduction, but they also require more attention to be given to the potential of science, technology and innovation to help achieve development goals.

The North East has made significant progress in the past few decades in developing its economy based on science and technology. It has become one of the most industrialised regions in India. However, this achievement could not be made possible without good infrastructure and human resources along with a good policy framework that supports private sector investments in research and development (R&D) activities as well as innovation-based enterprises such as private limited companies or joint ventures between PSUs.

The NER, with its undulating hills, luxuriant green fields, abundant forest cover and large number of rivers and lakes, supports a population spread across many remote areas. It is endowed with abundant natural sources, rich biodiversity and cultural heritage. However, these inaccessible areas and difficult terrain prove to be detrimental to planning and developmental activity in the NER. It is also proven that with support from space-based services; these hindrances can be overcome to a large extent. Thus the systematic uses of geo-informatics in different thematic applications in NER are essential for the utilisation of the technology for the benefit of society at large.



## SCIENCE IN DEVELOPMENT

Realising the importance and urgency of socio-economic development of the NER, the Department of Space jointly with the NEC envisioned and established a state-of-the-art infrastructure for space technology utilisation in the form of North Eastern Space Applications Centre (NESAC) at Umiam, Shillong, in 2000. It was established with a one-time grant in aid funding of ₹20 crore from the NEC.

The need for a body to plan, coordinate and implement absorption of space technology inputs in natural resource management planning, human resource development, infrastructure development planning, interactive training and development communication in the NER was strongly felt. A joint task team was set up by NEC/DOS to work out a comprehensive plan for application of remote sensing and satellite communications in the region to fulfil this need.

The team worked out a proposal for establishing NESAC and the NEC identified Shillong as the location for setting up the centre. The Government of India approved the establishment of the centre in May 1999. The main aim of establishing the centre was to develop a high-technology infrastructure that would enable the North East

States to adopt space technology inputs into their developmental activities. The Centre will be able to provide support to the NER by undertaking specific projects, utilising space technology inputs — both from remote sensing and satellite communications. The Centre promotes space science research activities in the region and network with academic institutions.

The centre enables the NER in establishing high-quality remote sensing and GIS facility — which will be able to establish a remote sensing-based natural resources information system to assist developmental/natural resources management activities in the region. It's a state-of-the-art Remote Sensing and Geographical Information System (RS&GIS) facility with advanced computing systems for image analysis and to organise spatial database. This facility utilises space/aerial images and generates action plans for implementation/ developmental activities.

There is a satellite communications applications facility, which will be a central hub for undertaking developmental communications training and education activities in the region. The facility includes an earth station and software development facilities and a satellite communication network segment. This is besides the remote-sensing

activities and conducting specific natural resources management projects of relevance as well as serving as a regional archive for remote sensing data for the region.

The other activities include providing support for interpretation and analysis of remote sensing data; establishing a Geographical Information System (GIS)-based spatial information system to assist developmental activities in the region, serving as a nodal agency for human resources development in the field of remote sensing and GIS for the region, undertaking, aiding and coordinating research in the field of remote sensing and GIS.

Then there are the satellite communications applications activities, space science research activities, environmental impact analysis studies; natural resources information system; urban and regional planning.

### NESAC COMES OF AGE

The North Eastern Space Applications Centre (NESAC) was established as a joint initiative of the Department of Space (DOS) and the NEC and came into being in September 2000. It was set up to augment the developmental process in the region by providing advanced space technology support. Many activities in space applications have been undertaken through NESAC and many more activities will be implemented in the days to come.

### IMPETUS TO DATA COLLECTION

The role of NESAC includes providing operational remote sensing-based inputs in the management of natural resources and infrastructure in the region, providing satellite communication-based applications in education, health and disaster management support, establishing a space and atmospheric science research hub with various academic institutions of the NER, providing capacity building and training programmes. It is needless to say that the establishment of NESAC is a significant contribution of the NEC towards developing the NER with the help of modern technology. Utilising space-based inputs generates copious amounts of spatial and temporal data which, if



**THE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY SECTOR HELPS DEVELOP THE NER BY INTERVENTION IN ALL AREAS FOR THE GROWTH OF THE ECONOMY AND PROMOTION OF S&T AND ITS APPLICATIONS, INCLUDING RURAL TECHNOLOGIES, ECO-PRESERVATION, REMOTE-SENSING APPLICATIONS, DISASTER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES AND IT APPLICATIONS ETC**

**TANUNG JAMOH**  
Director (Science and Technology)

utilised appropriately, can change the face of development in the NER via effective macro-and micro-planning.

This is further aided by the use of UAVs that have been provided to all SRSACs with the support of the NEC. Furthermore, such data can be obtained without any time lag and changes happening in the fields of topography, climate, agronomic pattern, etc can be tracked without any loss of time. This presents opportunities in the field of disaster risk reduction, for which there is a dedicated North Eastern Region node for Disaster Risk Reduction (NERDRR) established at NESAC. The centre is actively supported by a core team of 33 scientists/engineers with expertise in diversified fields of technology and applied science. It also effectively utilises the services of 14 research scientists and an equal number of research fellows, who are primarily involved in ongoing application projects of the centre. ■



Bishnupur-Nungba road in Manipur.



## TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION (T&C)

### CONNECTING LIVES!

Roads are arteries of a region. No development can occur at a place which lacks a decent road network. Roads are not only vital for commercial activity but also for connecting people. Commuting freely is essential for integration of a region with the rest of the country and even intra-region integration. Human interaction is indeed impossible without roads and this was realised by the NEC in very early stages. Connectivity through roads or telecom is essential for any region which is located in the hills with tough weather conditions. As an enabler for infrastructure, the NEC took it upon itself to construct and maintain all-weather roads. In keeping with its philosophy of making connections for development, the NEC has built/upgraded about 11,400 km of roads, mainly in the hilly regions of the North East States. Most of these roads have been constructed under NEC/NERSDS scheme. The road projects have contributed to the socio-economic development of the region.

The Transport and Communication (T&C) sector is one of the major sectors in the NEC. In the road and bridge segment under the sector, 35 road projects were taken up during the 10th Five-Year Plan and have since been completed. In Sikkim, 21 road projects were taken up during the 10th Plan and have since been completed. During the 11th Five-Year Plan, 25 road projects were accorded in-principle approval by the Planning Commission. One of these projects was later excluded from the list since the road was declared



(Above and below) Smooth road winds its way through the picturesque Meghalaya



A bridge across the Brahmaputra river, Assam

a National Highway. Thus, the total number of roads became 24, with a total length of 1538.30 km at an estimated cost of ₹2,345.26 crore. All these projects have been completed.

### **NERSDS: BUILDING THE ROAD NETWORK**

The North East Road Sector Development Scheme (NERSDS), a Central sector scheme for development of roads in the NE, was conceived by the Ministry of DoNER during 2014-15 in pursuance to the budget announcement by the Hon'ble Finance Minister. There are several inter-State roads and most of them have been constructed by the NEC and BRO, which were not developed any further by most of the States due to various factors. These roads were primarily of strategic importance. These inter-State roads were not properly maintained due to various reasons and were thus nicknamed 'Orphan Roads'.

Under NERSDS, the roads are identified for improvement if these happen to be inter-State roads previously built by the NEC and other agencies which are of vital connectivity for one State, but of little importance for another State and hence



The newly constructed ISBT at Shillong.



**THE NORTH EASTERN COUNCIL IS THE NODAL AGENCY FOR THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTH EASTERN REGION. THE T&C SECTOR HAS SUPPORTED, AND CONTINUES TO SUPPORT, VARIOUS INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS INVOLVING ROADS, BRIDGES, ISBTS AND ISTTS, BESIDES HELPING IMPROVE AIR CONNECTIVITY OF THE REGION**

**M. KALITA**  
Director (T&C)



Engineers check the quality during a road - testing drive.

remained neglected, but with available formation width of roads. Besides, NERSDS takes up road projects in socio-politically neglected pocket of the NER and also roads required from security or strategic viewpoint not covered in other programmes. A few roads which are necessary from the viewpoint of market access for agriculture produce and roads of economic importance on gap-filling approach are also taken up NERSDS.

With Cabinet approval, the scheme was extended for the entire duration of the 14th Finance Commission by the Government with an outlay of ₹1,000 crore after appraisal of the scheme by the EFC. An interim extension for the continuance of the scheme at 2020-21 for an outlay of ₹340 crore was accorded by the competent authority. Further, an outlay of ₹407 crore was approved for FY 2021-22. By the end of March 2022, 29 projects worth ₹1,969.60 crore were sanctioned under the



(Above and below) The Agartala - Akhaura Rail Link, Tripura.

scheme, of which five projects worth ₹308.25 crore were completed. The committed liability for the ongoing projects including projects being sanctioned is approximately ₹748.8 crore at March end, 2022.

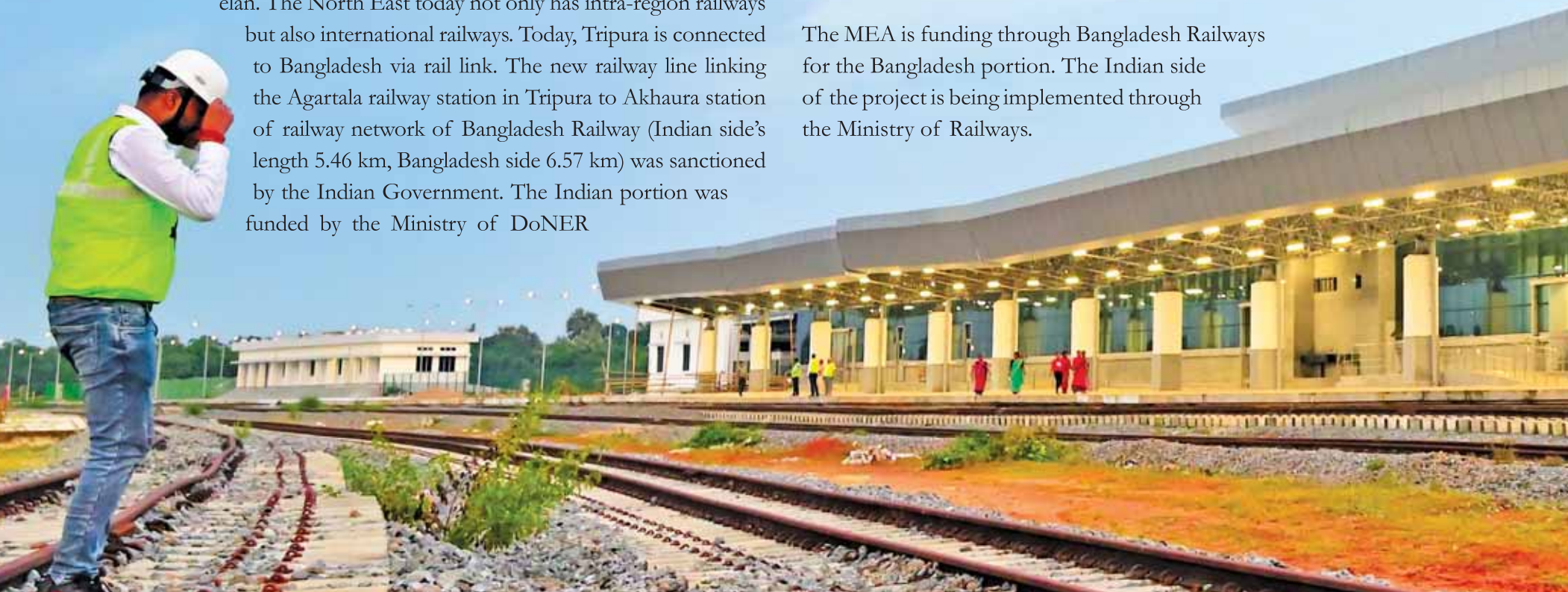
### **RAILWAYS BECOMES A REALITY**

The need for a rail link in the North East was felt as early as at the time of Independence as it has both civil as well as military connotations. But due to the huge investments and engineering challenges, the project remained confined to the files. But now it has moved, and with élan. The North East today not only has intra-region railways but also international railways. Today, Tripura is connected to Bangladesh via rail link. The new railway line linking the Agartala railway station in Tripura to Akhaura station of railway network of Bangladesh Railway (Indian side's length 5.46 km, Bangladesh side 6.57 km) was sanctioned by the Indian Government. The Indian portion was funded by the Ministry of DoNER

and the Bangladesh portion by the Ministry of External affairs. The total cost of the project was ₹972.52 crore.

The Indian side of the project consists of a viaduct of around 3.14 km and a trans-shipment yard on the Indo-Bangladesh border near Nischintpur ( Agartala). Additional immigration checks shall be provided at Gangasagar and Nischintpur for the movement of passengers. There is the provision of an approach road on either side of the viaduct to facilitate movement of cargo/passengers between the Nischintpur station and NH-44. The Bangladesh side's work includes laying of dual gauge rail line.

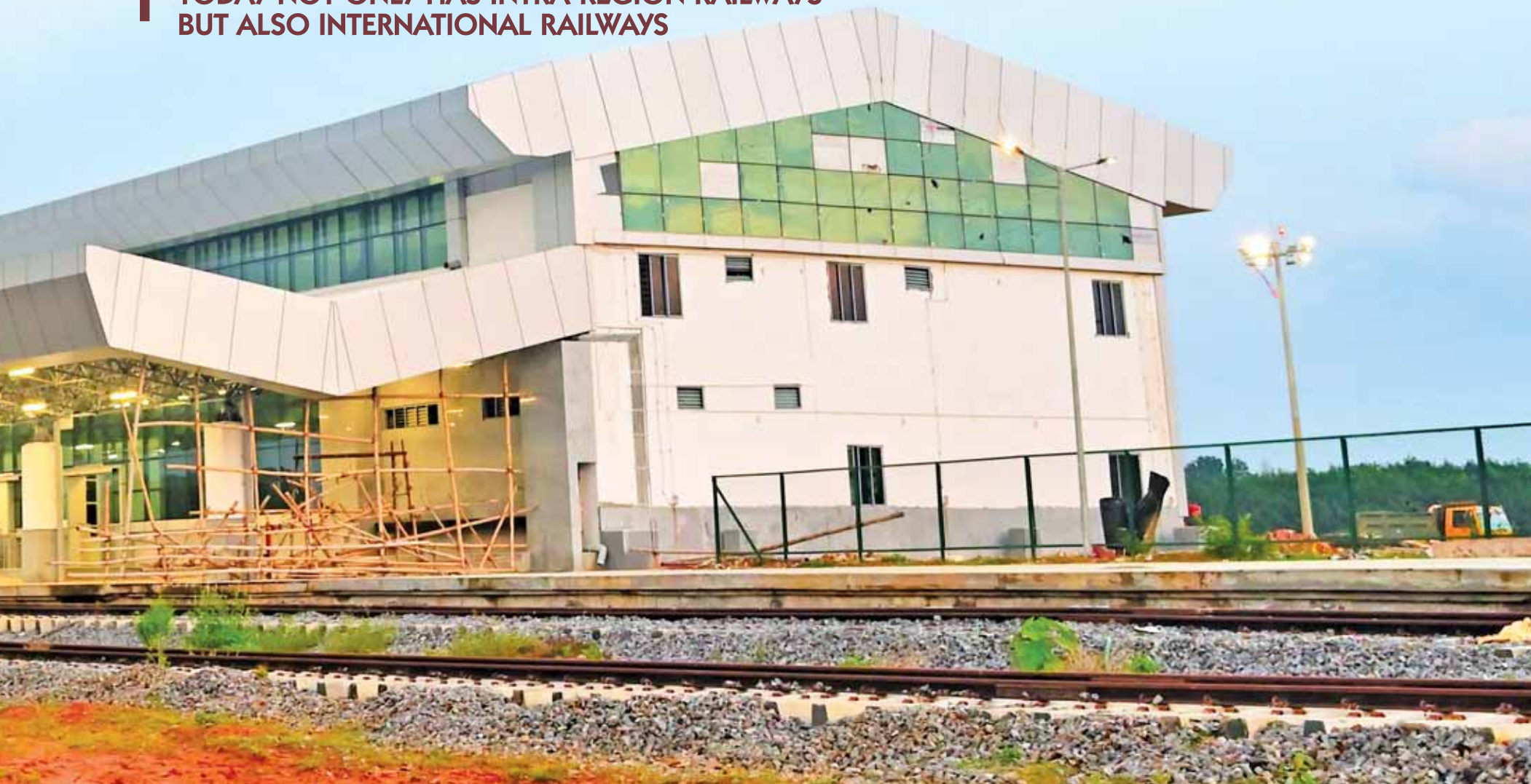
The MEA is funding through Bangladesh Railways for the Bangladesh portion. The Indian side of the project is being implemented through the Ministry of Railways.





NEC Secretary K Moses Chalai and Adviser (T&C) Navin Kumar inspecting the ongoing progress of the Agartala - Akhaura Rail Link, Tripura.

**THE NEED FOR A RAIL LINK IN THE NER WAS FELT SINCE INDEPENDENCE AS IT HAS BOTH CIVIL AND MILITARY CONNOTATIONS. THE NORTH EAST TODAY NOT ONLY HAS INTRA-REGION RAILWAYS BUT ALSO INTERNATIONAL RAILWAYS**



IRCON, CPSE of Railways, is the executing agency for the Indian side and also the project management consultant for Bangladesh Railways. Once operational, it will cut travel time of the rail journey from Kolkata to Agartala (via Guwahati) of 38 hours and 1,500 km to 15 hours and 500 km. The Maitree Express is already running between Kolkata and Dhaka, and it can be extended up to Agartala. Given its importance for bilateral connectivity, its completion as per the agreed timeline is important.

In Phase-II, the Agartala railway station's connectivity to the trans-shipment yard at Nischintpur through an elevated viaduct is almost complete. It would indeed be a big achievement for the North East and a major boon for the region's trade and commerce.

### **INTERSTATE BUS TERMINUS**

Also, the NEC has taken up 11 projects relating to ISBTs and six of inter-State truck terminus (ISTTs) in the region. These ISBTs are at Jorhat, Silchar, Guwahati in Assam; Kohima, Mokokchung, Dimapur in Nagaland; Aizawl in Mizoram, Imphal in Manipur, Shillong in Meghalaya and two ISBTs in Tripura at Chandrapur and Krishnanagar (an international bus terminus at Agartala). Also, ISTTs were set up at Silchar, Guwahati in Assam, Dimapur, Kohima in Nagaland, Sekmai (Imphal) in Manipur and Jirania in Tripura. All these projects have been completed, except those in Jirania and Kohima. During the 9th Five-Year Plan, 77 weak timber bridges

of the region were taken up for conversion into RCC/permanent bridges and all these bridges have since been completed.

### **CONNECTING FLIGHTS**

One of the longstanding demands of the locals has been to connect the North East with the rest of the country through regular flights and having airports at major centres of the region. It was not easy as big investment and feasibility of flights had to be assessed.

However, the NEC took it upon its shoulders to provide air connectivity to the region. And we can now say that it has by and large succeeded in its endeavour. Till the end of the 11th Five-Year Plan, the NEC provided ₹307 crore to the AAI for development/upgradation of the infrastructure of all operational airports of the region based on an MoU signed with them. The funding pattern for these works was 60:40 (60 per cent by the NEC and 40 per cent by the AAI).

During the 12th Five-Year Plan, the improvement of existing infrastructure at five airports (Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Imphal and Barapani) was taken up at an estimated cost of ₹197.92 crore on 60:40 basis. The works are for construction of three hangars and apron at the LGBI Airport, Guwahati, extension of runway to 7,500 feet and isolation bay, taxiway at Dibrugarh airport, construction of hangar at Dibrugarh airport, extension of apron and link taxiway at





(Above) Construction of New Air Traffic Control Tower, Tezu Airport, Arunachal Pradesh; (Below) Shillong Airport, Meghalaya

Jorhat airport, construction of boundary wall surrounding the newly acquired land at Imphal airport, construction of hangar at Imphal airport and safety and security infrastructure at Barapani airport. Out of these, the works at Guwahati, Jorhat and the works of boundary wall at Imphal airport have been completed and the progress of other works is more than 50 per cent. Further, the Tezu airport in Arunachal Pradesh was sanctioned at an estimated cost of ₹79 crore and most of the works there have been completed, except the terminal building-technical block.

Due to the topography and terrain of the region, most of the places here are yet to be connected by all-weather roads and all the State capitals are not yet connected by the railway network. The scenario was a lot more different, say, two decades earlier. However, there were number of operational airports in the region. Taking advantage of this, efforts were made to provide air connectivity to all the operational airports of the region during the 10th Five-Year Plan. An MoU was signed with Alliance Air providing air connectivity to all the airports of the region from Guwahati/Kolkata.

A sum of ₹175 crore was provided as viability gap funding for this purpose till 2007 end. After that, the scheme was extended till 2011 on an annual basis. However, the scheme was revived in July 2013 for providing VGF to some of the select routes and the basis of VGF was changed to cost minus revenue formula and it continued till March end of 2017. The total fund released to Alliance Air till the time was ₹466.88 crore. Finally, the scheme was transferred to the Ministry of Civil Aviation so as to subsume it with the newly-launched scheme of UDAN in 2016.

The construction of the North Eastern Council Convention Centre at Sector-13, Dwarka, New Delhi, was sanctioned in November 2020 for ₹116.38 crore. The total expenditure up to March 2022 was ₹6.37 crore. ■

Shillong Airport.





Shillong International Centre for Performing Arts & Culture.



## CHAPTER TEN

# MDoNER: WHERE MANDATE AND COMMITMENT CONVERGE

The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region has been a game changer in pursuing overall development of the North East, guiding the region to accomplish several milestones and contribute enormously to national growth

**W**ith an august aim to bolster overall development of the North Eastern Region (NER) -- Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura -- and to further galvanise the Centre-NER partnership to give a fillip to greater collective growth and prosperity, the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) took birth in 2001 and thrived into a full-fledged Ministry in 2004.



**LOK RANJAN**  
Secretary, Ministry of DoNER

**MINISTRY OF DoNER IS A BRIDGE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTH EAST REGION. WE ENGAGE WITH CENTRAL GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES, AGENCIES & OTHER STAKEHOLDERS; TO FACILITATE OPTIMAL DEPLOYMENT OF EXPERTISE, BUDGETARY RESOURCES & IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERSHIPS FOR STATES OF THE REGION**



The only Ministry with a territorial jurisdiction and functions to coordinate developmental efforts in North East Region, MDoNER is responsible for planning, execution and monitoring developmental projects in North East Region to address special regional needs. It coordinates with specific Ministries and departments responsible for implementation of programmes or facilitating a development initiative.

The Central Government, through MDoNER, provides financial assistance for physical infrastructure projects relating to water supply, power, connectivity and those promoting tourism. The Government infuses sufficient funds to spur the digital connectivity and health-care in the region, with special focus on social infrastructure. The MDoNER sanctions projects to all eight North East States to fill up infrastructural gaps in the region.

Before 2014, train connectivity existed only up to Guwahati; now it is extended to Tripura, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. To further boost transport connectivity, hundreds of tunnels are being constructed in the region alongside efforts to improve air connectivity. Union Minister Shri Reddy in September 2021 spoke to



The then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee with Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio in Kohima on October 2003.



G Kishan Reddy, Minister of DoNER & Vice Chairman of NEC, chairs the meeting along with BL Verma, Minister of State MDoNER & Member of NEC, and Lok Ranjan, Secretary, MDoNER.

Civil Aviation Minister to expedite a Greenfield airport at Holongi (Itanagar) and enable all-weather operability at Pakyong Airport in Sikkim. The fast tracking and completion were meant to realise the Prime Minister's 'Act East' Policy. Moreover, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, MDoNER has endeavoured to ensure lasting peace in the region.

Interestingly, 90 per cent of the projects are funded by Central Government, and the remaining 10 per cent by the State concerned. It was decided in October 1996 that Central Ministries and departments, unless specifically exempted, will set apart 10 per cent of their Plan Gross Budgetary Support for the NER. This was to ensure availability of adequate capital to ensure filling of backlog and gaps with respect to access to amenities and infrastructure. In 1997-98, it was seen that the actual expenditure of Ministries and departments was below the mandated 10 per cent, the Central Government then decided to create a "Central Resource Pool". The unutilised money would accrue to this pool at

the end of each financial year. To strengthen monitoring of the 10 per cent Gross Budgetary Support expenditure in the NER, the Ministry of Finance accounts all expenditures undertaken in the region state, scheme and Ministry-wise in Central Public Financial Management System.

The financial assistance for a variety of projects, including infrastructure projects like construction of roads, improving air connectivity, etc, is provided by North Eastern Council (NEC), a statutory Regional Planning Body under the administrative control of the MDoNER.

The coordinating role of MDoNER emanates from monitoring development projects for socio-economic development of North Eastern Region. The Ministry coordinates with various Central Ministries and Departments in respect of the development and welfare programmes implemented by them across NER.



**ANSHUMAN DEY**  
Joint Secretary, Ministry of DoNER

**PROGRAMMES OF MINISTRY  
OF DONER TAKEN UP  
THROUGH NEC OVER THE  
YEARS HAVE PLAYED A  
KEY ROLE IN BRINGING  
PEACE AND PROSPERITY  
TO THE NORTH EAST BY  
PLACING MAXIMUM FOCUS  
ON DEVELOPMENT IN  
COORDINATION WITH LINE  
MINISTRIES**

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Manipur Chief Minister, N Biren Singh launches Water Supply project at Tamenglong, Manipur, in January 2021.



Flyover road in the state's capital town of Agartala, Tripura.

The MDoNER currently has six Inter-Ministerial Committees (IMCs) on Roads, Air Connectivity, Health and Nutrition, Medicinal Aromatic Plants, Livelihood in North East Region and Piggery Value Chain Development. The Ministry's associate organisations include North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation Ltd (NEHHDC) and the North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Ltd (NERAMAC). North Eastern Development Finance Corporation (NEDFi), registered as a non-banking financial institution with the RBI, provides financial assistance to small, medium and large enterprises to catalyse industrial growth in the region. The Ministry provides interest free loans from NEDFi for promoting entrepreneurship.

It was decided in year 2015 that each North Eastern State would be visited by a Union Minister on a fortnight basis. The Ministry coordinates and anchors these visits by nominating Union Ministers by rotation on a monthly basis.



**UMESH KUMAR**  
Director, Ministry of DoNER

**CREDIT FOR THE MASSIVE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE IN THE NORTH EAST GOES TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS BEEN MAKING RELENTLESS EFFORTS TO REALIZE THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF NER**



Aerial view of Government Aizawl college, Mizoram.

The Ministers are required to submit a report following interaction with local communities, reviewing projects, schemes of the Government, and assessing requirements for strengthening infrastructure. They are also expected to resolve pending issues relevant to the State Government they have visited. This was halted briefly in March 2020 owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, and was resumed in July 2021.

In addition to the routine interactions, the MDoNER also convenes sectoral review meetings with key Ministries such as Railways, Road Transport & Highways, Civil Aviation, Power, Environment, Tourism, etc, for effective implementation of schemes and time-





Administrative Ministry, MDoNER is an active and consultative partner for NEC.



Rupsi Airport, Assam.

bound completion of major infrastructure projects in the NER. The Ministry of DoNER is represented in Inter-Ministerial Groups of major Ministries such as MoRTH, Railways, MSME, Home, etc, and is also consulted at policy formation and project implementation stage.

The concerted efforts of the Government via MDoNER and in coordination with the States have yielded good results on the SDG Index, based on social, human, economic, infrastructural and environmental dimensions of development. At present, East Sikkim leads the rankings with a score of 75.87 in the category of “Front Runner”. ■



SIKKIM

ARUNACHAL  
PRADESH

ASSAM

NAGALAND

MEGHALAYA

MANIPUR

TRIPURA

MIZORAM



# MARCHING TOGETHER

## ICONIC INSTITUTIONS WITH NEC

RIMS | RIPANS | RIPSAT | NERCRMS | NECBDC | NEPA  
NERIWALM | NEHHDC | NERAMEC | NEDFI



The imposing entrance to the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences complex at Imphal.

## RIMS: ADDRESSING NER'S HEALTH ISSUES, ONE AT A TIME

This premier institute caters to the needs of the North Eastern Region by imparting quality medical education. It also aims at bridging the gap in health manpower. A 300-bed general hospital, inaugurated in 1968, is still in use as the main hospital block and was established as a joint venture of all the North Eastern States

**T**he Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Imphal, is situated at Lamphelpat in Manipur. The institute has a total area of 300 acres and is located around eight km from Imphal Airport and 1.5 km away from Imphal city.

The institute came into existence after tireless efforts of a few visionaries and was tenderly nurtured by great protagonists of the time. A 300-bed general hospital was inaugurated by then Union Home Minister YB Chavan in October 1968. It is still being used as the main hospital block. On May 22, 1972, the foundation stone of the first-ever medical college on the soil of Manipur, by the name of Manipur Medical College, was laid by then Manipur Governor BK Nehru.

The Medical College was established as a joint venture of the North Eastern States. On September 14, 1972, the name of the college was changed to Regional Medical College, Imphal. The college was later renamed as North Eastern Regional Medical college under the management of the North Eastern Regional Medical College Society. From August 1976, it was run under the aegis of the Ministry of Home, Government of India, and was the only medical college run by that Ministry. Nearly 19 years later, the college was again renamed as Regional Institute of Medical Sciences and its management was taken over by the NEC on April 1, 1995. After exactly 12 years, on



The 1,074-bed teaching hospital is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and teaching facilities.

the historic day of April 1, 2007, the institute was transferred to the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India.

It is an institution of regional importance catering to the needs of the North Eastern Region in the field of medical education by providing undergraduate and postgraduate courses, bringing together at one place educational facilities for training personnel in all the important branches of medical specialty. The College of Nursing started functioning in December 2009 with an intake capacity of 50 students for the B Sc (Nursing) course. The Dental College started in September 2012 for the BDS course with an annual intake of 50 students. The objective of this premier institute is to impart quality medical education and ameliorate the health condition of the composite population of the seven States of North Eastern Region (excluding Assam).

RIMS is a 1,074-bed teaching hospital, equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and teaching facilities having an intake capacity of 100 undergraduate seats, 145 postgraduate degree and six postgraduate diploma seats. The hospital normally provides services to more than 2.4 lakh outdoor patients and admits over 31,000 patients in a year. It has MEDLINE access from the

WHO, a tele-medicine centre, regional medical library as well as an advanced hospital information and management system. The institute is affiliated to the Manipur University, Imphal, and fulfills all the prescribed norms of the Medical Council of India.

The state-of-the-art computer facility's primary mandate is to provide, manage and ensure the satisfactory operation of joint computer and software facilities for students and departments that require these facilities; provide technical assistance to various users; ensure the monitoring of the computer network at the institute; and the coordination of inter-connections and the management of overall computer facilities for the entire institute.

The computer centre's internet and intranet unit takes care of maintenance of its proxy Mail and HTTP server for RIMS, upgradation of internet services, development of the websites and the content creation and management of the latest information of the departments at its website. The centre looks after the development of software and its maintenance for all the computational needs of the establishment, recruitment, audit, accounts and other administrative units of the RIMS.



When former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had envisioned upgrading five medical institutions to the level of AIIMS, RIMS was among the top five; (centre) the main building of the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences.

The Patient Care System, which is a gigantic task, has been undertaken on a massive scale of designing and implementation of a single system to cater to the needs of all the centres and RIMS hospital (including inpatients and outpatients, depending on their need of laboratory services and management information services). For conducting these tasks satisfactorily, the computer centre makes use of a wide range of facilities.

RIMS visualises a centralised computing facility, campus-wide networking and information technology as a means to enriching the educational experience and invigorating emerging areas of scholarly research and education. The campus-wide fibre optic network commissioned in 2005 has been completed. The centre also provides various advanced and special purpose software such as Oracle 9i, Tally, MATLAB and SPSS, besides providing computer and network facilities to various festivals, events and seminars held at the institute's lecture theatre and at other departments and centres.

### DENTAL COLLEGE

The Dental College, Regional Institute of Medical Sciences, Imphal, was established in 2011. This college is under the establishment and administration of RIMS, Imphal, which is an autonomous institute

under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India. It aims to deliver the best quality education in dentistry courses. With clinical-intensive programmes, the specialist staff provides high-quality teaching with a personal approach. The college is affiliated to the Manipur University, Canchipur, Imphal, and recognised by the Dental Council of India.

The College of Nursing was started in December 2009 with an intake capacity of 50 students for the B Sc (Nursing) course. The postgraduate course in Immunohaematology & Blood Transfusion Medicine and M Ch courses in Urology and Plastic Surgery have also been started. The number of scientific papers published, research works performed and teachers attending conferences has increased remarkably. The Dental College, which started functioning in September 2012 for the BDS course, has an annual intake of 50 students with 50 per cent all-India quota for postgraduate admissions.

### THE WAY TO GO...

RIMS is one of the top medical institutions in the entire North East Region. It was ranked 38th in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) of the Ministry of Human Resource Development in 2020 and awarded a Certificate of Appreciation in January 2020 by the State for exemplary performance under AB-PMJAY.



**RIMS IS ONE OF THE TOP MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE ENTIRE NER. IT WAS RANKED 38TH IN THE NATIONAL INSTITUTIONAL RANKING FRAMEWORK OF THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN 2020 AND WAS AWARDED A CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION IN JANUARY 2020 BY THE STATE FOR EXEMPLARY PERFORMANCE UNDER AB-PMJAY**

Many of the institute's products are manning important positions in premier medical institutions in the North East and across the country, of which the teaching faculty has a number of super-specialists. The RIMS has also introduced Bachelor Degree courses in BASLP, MLT and MRIT. Several facilities have been successfully expanded and modern equipment including high-end ultrasonography machines, high-end endoscopy system with endosonography, oxygen generators, ICU beds, Central RT PCR and extraction set and TrueNat have been procured. A new Tesla MRI machine was also installed during the pandemic and a Liquid Oxygen Plant with 10 KL capacity and two PSA Oxygen Plants of 1000 LPM capacity have been installed in the hospital under the PM Cares Fund.

As RIMS celebrates its golden jubilee, there is a strong need for upscaling the institute to the level of AIIMS. The institute has come a long way since its establishment in May 1972 but now the time has come to make it a world-class institute so that the North East people get best medical treatment within their region.

Former Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan had praised RIMS for its capability to open various new departments including sports medicine, which is hardly found in India, a sign of constant development here. On top of this, among the 500 plus medical institutes of India, RIMS is usually listed among top 30 best institutes. In fact, when former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had aimed to upgrade five medical institutions of India to the level of the AIIMS, RIMS was among the five. ■

# RIPANS: NURSING PARAMEDICAL CARE TO PINK OF HEALTH

Affiliated to Mizoram University, the establishment of the Regional Institute of Paramedical & Nursing Sciences is considered a milestone in the development of the State, which hitherto lacked medically trained staff and practically no training facilities

To overcome the need for providing basic paramedical facilities in the health care sector of the North Eastern Region, the Regional Institute of Paramedical & Nursing Sciences (RIPANS) was approved by the North Eastern Council in 1992-93 with the approval of the Government of India. All the allotted seats in the institute's disciplines are distributed as per the quota fixed for the beneficiary States. RIPANS was established in 1996 at a cost of ₹2,315.39 lakh during the 9th Five-Year Plan. Since the inception, a Medical Laboratory Technology certificate course was started at the institute.

RIPANS is located at Zemabawk on the slope of a hill donated by the Mizoram Government. Affiliated to the Mizoram University, the site is surrounded by National Highway 54 on the southeast and a hospital and health departmental store on the northwest. It is located on the city's outskirts, about 10 km from the capital city of Aizawl. The scenic beauty of the campus is quite attractive as compared to other similar institutes. The site offers wide scope for development in terms of infrastructure and the dedicated services of employees (both teaching and non-teaching) have created an environment of real education. The scenic beauty of the city can



be admired and appreciated from the campus. The nearest airport is Lengpui. The city bus of Aizawl regularly services Zemabawk, where RIPANS is located.

Formerly, it was named the Regional Paramedical & Nursing Training Institute (RP&NTI), which was rechristened the Regional Institute of Paramedical and Nursing (RIPAN). Later, the word 'Sciences' was added to the name.

The Bachelor of Science (Nursing) Degree programme was first introduced here in 1996 to become the first nursing college in the State of Mizoram. The course prepares students to contribute to the development of nursing science through clinical and theory classes, which is based on scientific principles. During the course of B Sc (Nursing) at RIPANS, students are exposed to a variety of teaching methods, all of which are designed to meet the requirement of Indian Nursing Council (INC), and to ensure that the students acquire



RIPANS training paramedical & nursing study in its State-of-the-art facility.

sound skills and knowledge. The behaviour objectives constitute the components of scholarship, practice, cooperation, collaboration, professionalisation and leadership. The B Sc (Nursing) programme is a four-year programme and the students are expected to have clinical experience both in hospitals and community settings. In this course, lectures are designed in such a way as to provide students with the fundamental knowledge of the course. Each class is held in the afternoon after clinical exposure in hospitals.

The teachers also provide clinical experiences, which provide the students with an opportunity to apply her or his knowledge and develop appropriate practical skills. These experiences are provided in batches of four-five students who practice nursing skills under the supervision of clinical instructors. During clinical experience, the students are expected to undertake case studies and case presentation on select patients and give them nursing care under the guidance of teachers. This helps develop their skills and offers a platform to participate fully in the learning process. Similarly, the institute provides a course on Medical Laboratory Technology (MLT).

After the Central Government took over this institute, the words 'North Eastern Council' were added. The first batches were admitted in April-May 1996. Now the institute is helping prepare paramedical manpower for the whole country in general and the North East Region in particular.

Department Of Pharmacy (Bachelor): The course was introduced in 2004. The Master in Pharmacy course with subject specialisation in Pharmaceutics, Pharmacology, Pharmaceutical Chemistry and

Pharmacognosy was introduced in September 2014. The Department of Pharmacy is approved and recognised by the Pharmacy Council of India (PCI) and the All India Council For Technical Education (AICTE) and affiliated to Mizoram University. Classrooms and laboratories are equipped with modern infrastructure and equipment. A research laboratory with sophisticated machines is available for research and project works.

The Diploma in Ophthalmic Technology Course at RIPANS was introduced with the first batch of students in 1996 under the guidance of Dr Lalsangluaia Sailo (MBBS, MS), who was then the Head of Department of Ophthalmology at Civil Hospital, Aizawl. The course was restructured and modified as the Diploma in Optometry and has now been upgraded to a degree course as B Sc (Optometry & Ophthalmic Techniques) since the 2011 session and accorded provisional affiliation by the Mizoram University. Examinations are now conducted by the Mizoram University. Objective Optometry & Ophthalmic Techniques is a healthcare profession that is autonomous. Optometrists are primary healthcare practitioners of the eye and visual system who provide comprehensive eye and vision care, which includes refraction and dispensing, detection/diagnosis and co-management of diseases in the eye and the rehabilitation of conditions of the visual system.

The establishment of RIPANS in Mizoram was a milestone in the development of the State, which lacked medically trained staff and there were virtually no medical training facilities. The success of the institute has paved the way for more RIPANS-like medical training facilities in the State. ■

# RIPSAT: TREATING MEDICAL RESEARCH DUTIFULLY

The Regional Institute of Pharmaceutical Science & Technology in Agartala has helped fill a major void in the availability of trained doctors and other paramedical staff in the North Eastern Region

**H**igher education, especially in the field of medical research, was a major concern in the North East. The lack of trained doctors and medical staff led people to go as far away as Kolkata to get treatment. This was one of the prime concerns for the North East Council, which was dedicated to the cause of comprehensive development of the North East and welfare of its people. To fill this void, the Regional Institute of Pharmaceutical Science & Technology (RIPSAT) was mooted.

RIPSAT is situated in Agartala, Tripura. Established in 1979, RIPSAT is a private college accredited to the AICTE. It offers two courses in pharmacy and the popular degrees offered here include B Pharma. Besides boasting of a robust teaching pedagogy, RIPSAT is a leader in research and innovation. Focus is given to activities beyond academics at RIPSAT, which is evident from its infrastructure, extracurricular activities and national & international collaborations. The placement at RIPSAT is varied, with recruitment options both in corporate and public sectors as well as entrepreneurship.

The Regional Pharmacy Institute (RPI) was established at Agartala in 1979 with financial assistance from the NEC to provide a



diploma course in Pharmacy (D Pharma) throughout the North Eastern States with an intake of 60 students. Subsequently, the institute was upgraded into Bachelor in Pharmacy (B Pharma) course in addition to D Pharma course with the renaming of RPI as the RIPSAT in November 1997 with an intake capacity of 30 students. The participating States are Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. Thereafter, the Pharmacy Council of India approved the intake capacity of B Pharma course from 30 to 60 seats. The B Pharma (Practice) course was also introduced subsequently to upgrade the knowledge of working pharmacists in different health sectors of Tripura.

The Government of Tripura introduced 20 seats from the academic session 2020-21 in the B Pharma course under the endowment quota in which candidates of any State with eligibility conditions as per the Pharmacy Council of India can apply for admission. There are three seats for the diploma course from Arunachal Pradesh, two from Nagaland, 15 each from Manipur and Mizoram and 25 from Tripura. Similarly, for the degree course, the State-wise seat quota is Arunachal Pradesh (5), Assam (5), Manipur (5), Meghalaya (4), Mizoram (7) and Tripura (17). Besides, 26 seat have been allotted under the endowment quota.



The RIPSAT's mission is to educate and train students in the basic and advanced knowledge of pharmaceutical sciences and to contribute to improvement of health of the society through quality educational programmes. The institute takes pride in setting very high standards for education in order to arm the students with the entire arsenal required to be successful leaders in their area of interest. It also encourages a lot of cultural and sports events at the institute, besides providing students with a conducive environment to nurture and inspire them to be achievers in life.

### The Agartala campus

The site, adjacent to the Agartala Government Medical College and about eight km away from the Agartala airport, offers wide scope for development in terms of infrastructure and the dedicated services of employees (teaching and non-teaching) have created an environment of real education. At RIPSAT, the students are endowed with all convenient amenities that make their life 'easy' in college hours, alongside making learning more interesting. Some of the facilities include well-ventilated classrooms, recreational areas and separate hostel facilities for boys and girls, indoor and outdoor games, stocked library, seamless internet/ WiFi connectivity and medical facilities, among other things. More than anything else, the environment on the campus is conducive for learning and interacting with the best minds in the field. It gives the students hands-on training and ample

opportunities to undertake practical training, which is the foremost condition for any medical college. No wonder that students from across the country throng the campus to study medicine in one of the best medical colleges in the country.

The Pharmacy Council of India has approved 40 seats in the B Pharma (Practice) course. Both the Diploma and Degree in Pharmacy are approved by the Pharmacy Council of India, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and affiliated to the Tripura Board of Pharmacy Education (TBPE) and Tripura University, respectively.

The North Eastern Council's mission is to advance RIPSAT through programmes that enhance student experience, promote student-alumni interaction, establish a spirit of loyalty to the institute and cultivate relationships among students: past, present and future. The institute helps foster a sense of community while instilling in its students a lifelong commitment to their alma mater.

The RIPSAT Alumni Association was established in 2018 to strengthen relations between the institute and its alumni. This platform is being used to strategise and implement initiatives that promote long-term growth of the institution, opportunities for networking and career advancement, increased alumni and community involvement and financial stability. ■

# EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES EMPOWERS THE ENTIRE NATION

The constitution of the North East Council as the nerve centre and its agencies such as **NERCRMS**, earlier known as the North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project (NERCORMP), have brought about a number of qualitative changes in the lives of the local population, especially of women

**T**here are a plethora of policies and programmes that aim to change lives but very few deliver on the ground and make a sustainable change in the lives of people. NERCORMP is one such initiative that stands out as it has not only changed the way people live but brought about a change in their mindset. It has been a programme with few parallels in the country, which has worked wonders for gender parity, sustainability and creating a just and democratic ecosystem that cares about the environment. Churachandpur and Chandel districts in Manipur, as well as Tirap and Changlang District in Arunachal Pradesh, can be seen as one of the shining examples of New India, an India which is different from the run-of-the-mill descriptions that one comes across in articles about the subcontinent. Gone are the days of dilapidated roads and rickety vehicles, mainly comprising bullock carts and rusty trucks transporting men and materials through roads full of potholes.

Earlier, the traditional tribal families struggled to make both ends meet; it was a hand-to-mouth existence for millions of households across the NER. It was a paradox as the entire region was endowed with everything one could ask for: Beautiful landscape, lush green



Farmers enjoy the fruits of their labour.

forests, mountains, placid rivers and scenic valleys filled with exotic fruits and herbal plants. But something was lacking that the policymakers of yore failed to address. Not anymore! Organisations constituted by the Government with stakeholders spread across strata have revolutionised the North East States.

The North East, once an area that had earned a bad name for itself because of secessionism, is now a changed world. The successful implementation of development projects in the insurgency-affected areas without any disturbance whatsoever from the outlaws was made possible by the proactive participation of the community members. The developmental interventions of NERCRMS also helped bring together the people of different tribes on a common platform through cluster meetings. Before NERCORMP launched such initiatives, they couldn't have thought of even looking at one another as anything but enemies; now they all sit together and jointly thrash out solutions to their common challenges.

Initiatives launched by the Central Government with the constitution of the North East Council as the nerve centre and agencies such as North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Society (NERCRMS), earlier known as the North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project (NERCORMP), have made big changes in people's lives. The women here represent the NER's future. Perseverance and industrious efforts have elevated their lives to higher orbits of social and economic hierarchy. They need not go out in search of jobs to keep the kitchen fire burning. People come to them



for bakery and other food items they manufacture in their own kitchens. The best thing to have happened to them, courtesy NERCRMS, is that society has successfully inculcated the idea of women's participation in decision-making at various levels (household and village levels), which was almost missing in the region before NERCORMP entered the picture.

Earlier, their burden was heavy and they had no choice but to work as hard as they could to keep their families going. The only source of income was selling agricultural products. But gone are those days of uncertainty. A new spirit is discernible in the entire North East. Institutions like NERCRMS have ushered in an era of prosperity and happiness.

A case in point: Augustina Awungshi Shimray, a 34-year-old farmer in Poi Village, Ukhrul, Manipur, is one of the first-time growers to have proved that low-chilling apple cultivation is a commercially viable means of livelihood. Earlier, she worked with Gordon Max in New Delhi at a managerial position but she chose to return to her native place. Funded by the NEC, she was trained at the Institute of Himalayan Bio-resource Technology (CSIR-IHBT), Himachal Pradesh, after which she received apple saplings.

The NERCORMP is an initiative to extend livelihood support to farmers through a pilot project for apple cultivation. Two years after plantation, the yield may practically change the way people feel about this fruit. Today, it has become a theme of conversation among younger citizens. Successful cultivation of such fruits may provide the much-needed impetus to boost the local economy. In the past, many attempts were made to cultivate apple but these resulted in failures.

Disheartened, many local farmers gave up on apple farming, assuming that the district's climate was not conducive for apples.

Delighted at the harvest this year, Augustina gushed: "After plantation in April 2019, I got my first harvest this year. Around 160 kg of apples have been plucked and part of the harvest has been sold at ₹200/kg. I'm willing to impart to friends and relatives the techniques of growing low-chilling varieties which are successful in our land and climatic conditions."

Appreciating her efforts, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Manipur, N Biren Singh, rewarded her with ₹1 lakh. "In a place like Manipur, the knowledge about diversification into profitable crops can play a significant role in transforming the poppy affected areas as well," the Chief Minister said.

Yet another success story towards becoming an entrepreneur via the Self-Help Group (SHG) wave is of St Alam Anal (42) of Thungcheng village in Chandel district of Manipur. The village was covered by NERCORMP since December 2014 and she is a member of the Teralon SHG. Living with her husband, four children and mother-in-law, it was very difficult for her to manage the household from their small income. To help her husband and to become financially independent, she decided to start food processing. NERCORMP sent her for a 15-day training to Imphal, Manipur, in March 2017.

There's been no looking back for her since then. Alam Anal took a ₹2,000 loan from her SHG at 2 per cent interest and invested it in fresh



A woman sells red chilies in the local market.



fruits, which she used to make candies at home and sell these at local shops under the brand name, 'Charmz'. She already earns a profit of ₹7,000-15,000 and has invested part of it in expanding her business and buying work-related equipment. As the demand for her candies grows, she plans to employ some SHG members to help her out.

Alam Anal said, "I am so happy to have started this business. I always wanted to do it but didn't know the details. After my training, I have gained knowledge on FSSAI registration and packaging information. I am grateful to NERCORMP for giving me this opportunity." Basically, NERCORMP was a game changer when it came to making the lives of the people better and providing them support to stand on their feet. The primary goal was to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable groups sustainably through improved management of resource base so as to contribute to the preservation and restoration of the environment.

The project stands on five pillars namely, 'Strengthening the capacity of local communities and participating agencies; Facilitating livelihood development activities; Developing social sector development activities and infrastructure development; Managing natural resources and biodiversity conservation, and Managing projects'.

NERCORMP Phase-I started its operation in 1999 and completed its first phase in September 2008 with a total cost of ₹136.80 crore. The project covered 860 villages and 39,161 households and formed 1012 Natural Resource Management Groups (NaRM-Gs) and 3168 SHGs across Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao districts in Assam, Ukhrul, and Senapati districts in Manipur and West Khasi Hills and West Garo Hills districts in Meghalaya.

Upbeat with the results of phase I, phase II was launched in July 2010 for a period of six years and operated in the adjoining villages of the first phase of NERCORMP villages. The project covered 460 villages, benefitted 20,826 households, and formed 494

Women Shopping Complex, Urkhal, Manipur.





Natural Resource Management Groups (NaRM-Gs, implementing institution that is in charge of planning at the village level) and 1600 SHGs. The project cost of NERCORMP phase-II was ₹200 crore. The project was completed on March 31, 2017, and was awarded globally the best Project Completion Report by IFAD for 2017.

The biggest success of NERCORMP was yet to come. It all happened when phase III was launched in January 2014 and started operating in Changlang, Tirap and Longding districts in Arunachal Pradesh and Churachandpur and Chandel districts in Manipur. The total cost of NERCORMP phase-III was ₹540 crore. Under NERCORMP phase-III, the project worked in 30 blocks, covering 58,789 households across 1,212 villages, formed 1383 NaRM-Gs and 3494 SHGs. This phase of the project was completed by March 31, 2020. Due to the fact that NERCORMP gave such encouraging results, it was extended further for another year in four districts of two North East State, viz; Changlang and Tirap districts in Arunachal Pradesh, Churachandpur and Chandel districts in Manipur. The project benefited 58,789 households of NERCORMP-III, who had shown achievement by upscaling production of agriculture crops, horticultural crops and non-farm produce.

In a similar line, 50 FPOs were formed. The extension of NERCORMP project for one year involved a financial implication of ₹50 crore under the budget of the North Eastern Council. Through

the revolving fund provided through SHG, the NERCORMP project could disburse different grants to take up activities like kitchen gardening, poultry farming; plantation of horticulture crops, and also constructed of a low-cost toilet. Women started selling vegetables and fruits as well as handloom products which enhanced their income as well as savings. Now every household could give good education to their children and also improve their families' living standards. The NERCORMP project also facilitated different pieces of training and workshops for capacity building of the communities. The interactions and meetings with different people within and outside the district greatly increased the NER potential.

The changing face of the North East was facilitated by agencies like NERCORMS launched by the Centre for the sustainable development of the region. One need not elaborate about the activities as entrepreneurs and investors are welcomed to the North East by the NEC, a one-stop solution provider. All these units are interconnected and operate like a well-oiled machine without any confusion, misfiring or aberration. There is a natural rhythm in the functioning of these establishments as explained by Air Marshal (Retired) Anjan Kumar Gogoi, Member, North East Council, who interacts with the Chief Ministers of the States concerned to monitor the operations and progress of schemes.

K Moses Chalai, an IAS officer who is the incumbent Secretary of the NEC and has worked as a Managing Director of NERCORMP earlier, knows the region and its problems like the back of his hand. "Our objective is to make North East India a trendsetter in sustainable and holistic development," says Mr Chalai. Reminding one of the midfield players of a football team, Chalai is the brain that plans, proposes, and drives the development initiatives. His daily interaction with people from the region has helped him to learn the strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced by North East India. "Having understood the possibilities and limitations of the region, we can focus our efforts on areas that respond favourably. We are into capacity building in a major way, skilling the people and modernising the traditional handicrafts and strengthening the artisans," he adds. ■

# NECBDC: CHANGING LIVES THROUGH BAMBOO, THE BEST FRIEND OF NER

The natural affinity of the North Eastern citizens for cane, bamboo and allied products has received a major boost with the guidance and a leg up by the NECBDC.

**T**he proverb on bamboo, ‘The first year it sleeps, and the second year it creeps, the third year it leaps.’ This could well be the metaphor for the North East. Bamboo is flexible, bending with the wind but never breaking, capable of adapting to any circumstance. Is that not also true about the people of the North East? It is. Indeed, the resilience of the North East people is comparable to that of a bamboo. Bamboo grows quite fast in comparison to other plants and, once planted, can continue to grow for many years. It is also used for making traditional gear for dances and festivals as well as for religious ceremonies.

Bamboo is a very important part of the lives of many communities in the North East Region. It plays an important role in their culture and traditions. Growing naturally in the North East, it can be used for many purposes, from food and shelter to many high-end industrial applications. Increasingly, new uses for cane and bamboo are being researched and put to use on a large scale.

With the help of NECBDC, the NEC is trying to promote bamboo furniture as an alternative to wood furniture because it



lasts longer than wood furniture and can be easily maintained without any costly charges. The NECBDC has also been supporting the community members who are cultivating bamboo through various programmes such as seedling distribution, training, and technical support on scientific management of bamboo plantations so that people can create quality products.

The support provided by NECBDC has helped people do their business more efficiently and successfully than earlier. The training sessions have helped bamboo and cane growers and furniture makers gain valuable knowledge on how to grow bamboo properly. This comes in handy later when they launch their own business of growing bamboo shoots either for sale or for renting out to other people of the region after harvesting these from the cane and bamboo plantations.





(Left and Above) Artisans being trained in bamboo products making.

The bamboo business is a big part of the lives of the people of the North East. It has been part of their culture for ages. But now, with support from the NECBDC and its partners, the cane and bamboo industry is increasingly becoming more popular in the region. The cost of bamboo has increased over the years, but it is still affordable for most people living in the North East Region.

The bamboo industry also contributes to employment opportunities for the youth of the region who are keen to learn more about this trade. Many families have started cultivating bamboo with their children as an occupation or as a source of income. Bamboo is a highly sustainable and renewable resource. It is an important part of the culture and livelihoods of the people of the North East. Bamboo provides a variety of benefits to the people who grow it, use it and make things with it.

The people of North East India have been growing bamboo for many generations as part of their daily lives. They use bamboo for everything: from building homes to making furniture, toys, and other products. Because bamboo grows rather fast, it can be planted in areas where other crops cannot be grown because the

latter take longer to grow or are too expensive in terms of the land area required per plant.

The NEC has been supporting bamboo's domestic production and its commercial use since it was founded in 1972. NECBDC, the bamboo arm of NEC, has helped create a growing demand for bamboo products both domestically and internationally by providing information on how these products can be produced at home so that local entrepreneurs can start their own businesses.

Bamboo is a highly sustainable and renewable resource that can be used for a variety of products. It has been used for centuries in Asia and is still widely used today. The bamboo industry has great potential to contribute to the economy of the North East. Bamboo is considered one of the most important resources of the region, with more than 80 species found here.

Bamboo has long been known as the Chinese symbol for strength, due to its fast growth and resilience. Man's relationship with bamboo goes back thousands of years. Bamboo has been a tool, a portion of food, and a building material. People have used it to make weapons and even musical instruments.



Training in Bamboo artifacts.



Bamboo Jewelry.



Over the course of this long and colourful history, bamboo and humanity have exchanged many lessons and secrets. Bamboo has inspired us with its utility, elegance and resilience. We have honored bamboo with art and music, and especially with words. When it comes to the people of the North East, it comes naturally to them as their best friend.

### **BENEFITS OF THE BAMBOO INDUSTRY**

Bamboo is a highly sustainable resource that can be harvested every year, which means that it can be farmed as a continuous crop without causing any environmental damage. Bamboo also requires minimal water compared to other crops, such as wheat or rice, so it doesn't compete with crop cultivation for farmland or water resources.

It's an ideal source of income for poor farmers who live in remote areas or abandoned villages where other jobs are scarce or non-existent. These are people who would otherwise not be able to afford even the basic necessities such as food and clothing if there were no other means of income available to them. It also provides employment opportunities to women by helping them earn money at home through traditional bamboo crafts.

### **THE NATIONAL BAMBOO MISSION**

Taking a huge step towards empowering the local communities, Hon'ble Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar virtually inaugurated bamboo clusters in Assam, Nagaland and Tripura, among other States. Lauding the success of the National Bamboo Mission, he said that the country was now gearing up to increase the export of bamboo products and that the NER had a huge potential in this respect.

The Union Agriculture Minister said that Hon'ble Prime Minister has always strived to ensure that local industries are protected and make progress so that local artisans can find a source of livelihood for themselves. The Government's goal in the bamboo sector is being achieved with the concerted efforts of all stakeholders. Keeping in consideration the importance of bamboo, the Indian Forest Act, 1927, was amended to remove bamboo for the category of trees. As a result, now anyone can undertake cultivation and business in bamboo and its products. The import policy has also been modified to ensure progress of the bamboo industry. The use of bamboo has been an ancient tradition in India and it is now being supported with modern technology. Youth are also being given training so that they are able to work in the bamboo industry.



Women being trained in pickle making.



Team NECBDC.

Calling upon the States to take forward the objectives of the Bamboo Mission, he reminded them of the Hon'ble Prime Minister's call for an Atmanirbhar Bharat through an app called Atmanirbhar Krishi. The support being given by the Mission to the local artisans through locally grown bamboo species will also actualise the goal of 'Vocal for Local'. This will help increase the income of farmers and, at the same time, reduce their dependency on the import of some raw materials. With the wealth of bamboo in India and its status as a growing industry, India should aim to establish itself in global markets for both engineered and handcrafted products.

The restructured National Bamboo Mission was launched in 2018-19 for a holistic development of the complete value chain of the sector. The Mission is being implemented in a hub (industry) and spoke model, with the main goal of connecting farmers to the markets so as to enable the farmer producers to get a ready market for the bamboo grown by them and to increase the supply of appropriate raw materials for the domestic industry. The Mission was launched as a natural corollary to the historic amendment to the Indian Forest Act in 2017, removing bamboo from the definition of trees; hence the bamboo grown outside forests no longer needs felling and transit permissions.

The bamboo ecosystem has been energised with 23 States being assisted by the Mission, including all the eight States of the North East. Ten most important species which are required by the industry have been identified and quality planting material is being made available to the farmers for plantations. Assam has already engaged FPOs for raising plantations. New FPOs will also be formed under the recently approved scheme of DACFW for the formation of 10,000 FPOs in five years. Further to primary processing, CFCs are being set up close to the plantations which will enable the cost of transportation of whole bamboo to be reduced, increase local entrepreneurship and move to zero-waste approach. These will be engaged in raising nurseries and plantations and product development such as furniture, agarbatti, venetian blinds, chopsticks, toothbrush, lifestyle products, jewellery, bottles, yoga mat, charcoal, among other products. Together with industrial products, the National Bamboo Mission also endeavours to upgrade the skills of traditional bamboo craftsmen as per requirement of contemporary markets with tie up with enterprises and premier institutes so that our cultural heritage is continued. The Sector Skill Councils established under the National Skill Development Agency will also impart skills and recognition of prior learning to traditional artisans. This will also encourage the youth to carry forward the family tradition. ■

# NEPA: ACADEMY PAR EXCELLENCE

Set up in 1978 to train police personnel of all the North Eastern Region's States, besides the Railway Protection Force officers of the North East Frontier Railway, Central Industrial Security Force and Customs, the academy liaises with a number of high-profile training institutes across the nation and other professional agencies

**T**he North Eastern Police Academy (NEPA) near Shillong, Meghalaya, has emerged as a centre of excellence in training police personnel of the entire North Eastern Region. The academy was set up in 1978 as one of the projects of the North Eastern Council (NEC) to train police personnel of all the States of the region, besides the Railway Protection Force officers of the North East Frontier Railway, Central Industrial Security Force and Customs. NEPA trains around 450 police officers of various ranks every year.

It has links with the country's high-profile training institutes like the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy, Hyderabad, the Administrative Staff College of India and the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi. The Academy also liaises with other professional agencies like the National Security Guard, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, Narcotics Control Bureau, National Crime Records Bureau, National Institute of Criminology and Forensic Sciences and the Army. In view of its significant role as a training institute in the North East, the Centre is considering to upgrade it as an institute of excellence in the field of counter-insurgency.

The National Committee on Police Training, headed by Dr MS



Gore, in 1972 stressed the need for establishing a single Regional Police Training Institute to cater to the requirements of the NE States since each of these was small and economically backward. A committee constituted for this purpose discussed the issue at the NEC Secretariat in September 1976 and, the following year, the Ministry of Home Affairs conveyed administrative approval to set up the training college as one of the NEC projects. The institute came into existence on July 21, 1978, with the posting of a DIG designated as Commandant (since re-designated as Director) and was on May 6, 1980, renamed as North Eastern Police Academy.



NORTH EASTERN POLICE ACADEMY  
WELCOMES YOU TO  
PASSING OUT PARADE

**AFTER THE HOME SECRETARY EMPHASISED THE NEED TO CONVERT NEPA INTO A STATE-OF-THE-ART INSTITUTION WHILE RETAINING ITS REGIONAL CHARACTER, THE ACADEMY PROPOSES TO UPGRADE THE TRAINING INFRASTRUCTURE/FACILITIES AND INTRODUCE SEVERAL TRAINING COURSES**

It was decided in 2006 to transfer NEPA to the Home Ministry from MDoNER and the handover was finally effected in April 2007. Initially, it had the limited objective of training the personnel in two basic courses and three refresher courses. Later, NEPA began to cater to the police training needs every year in various courses, which includes Basic Training (induction) course for Deputy SP, SI and Constables, besides certain specialised courses. The academy is looked upon as the nodal agency for all purposes of police training in the North Eastern States.

NEPA has since upgraded its facilities and now offers training to all its students on its own campus. The academy boasts of a beautiful, sprawling campus, and it has its own training centre offering training facilities like shooting range, gymnasium facilities etc. The academy also provides accommodation to the officers and staff members who are posted here for their training purposes.

After the Home Secretary emphasised the need to convert NEPA into a state-of-the-art institution while retaining its regional character, the academy proposes to upgrade the training infrastructure/facilities and introduce several training courses relevant to problems currently being faced by the North Eastern States.



Cadets undergo training at NEPA.





DEEPAK KUMAR (IPS)  
Director

**THE ENORMOUS CHALLENGE THAT WE UNDERTAKE DAILY IS TO GROOM AND SHAPE THE NEWLY RECRUITED DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENTS OF POLICE AND SUB-INSPECTORS OF EIGHT NORTH EASTERN STATES WITH SINCERITY AND DILIGENCE**



The one-year basic training course for the directly recruited police officers of the rank of Sub-Inspector and Deputy Superintendent of Police of the North Eastern States has been designed to bring these officers in close contact with officers of other departments like the judiciary, armed forces, CAPF, prison department, Customs and Excise, among others.

NEPA Director Deepak Kumar calls the academy “one of the best police training academies in India”. The academy’s staff helps groom and shape the newly recruited police officers and, in the prolonged journey of policing, such intense training is an integral part of policing. NEPA believes in fostering the spirit of professionalism and inculcating the right values with a true sense of humility and service in everyone who dons the uniform.

“Every member of the academy contributes to the discharge of its duties in a befitting manner. I sincerely hope that we maintain the highest standards of integrity and duty by making the trainees the best police officers of the nation. I am sure that the entire team of NEPA will continue to upgrade the training as per the emerging requirements,” the NEPA Director adds. ■

# NERIWALM: MAKING THE MOST OF WATER, LAND MANAGEMENT

Though blessed with an abundance of land and water resources, it's imperative for the North Eastern Region to implement effective policies to sustainably manage these natural assets, which **NERIWALM** does

**T**he North Eastern Region has been blessed with rich natural resources and diverse cultures. It has also suffered from poor governance and mismanagement of its natural resources over the years. In order to address this challenge, it is important to look at how water and land can be conserved and put to best use.

The NER is facing a water crisis due to reduced rainfall, increasing salinity and sea level rise. These factors have led to rapid population growth, urbanisation and industrialisation leading to severe water scarcity. In order to ensure food security, nutrition and livelihood within the region, the importance of sustainable land and water management cannot be ignored. Land and water are two important resources that can be conserved to serve the needs of future generations. Land is used for farming and other purposes, while water is used for drinking, irrigation and other activities. The importance of conservation cannot be understated. In order to conserve land and water resources, it is essential that we implement effective policies to sustainably manage these resources.

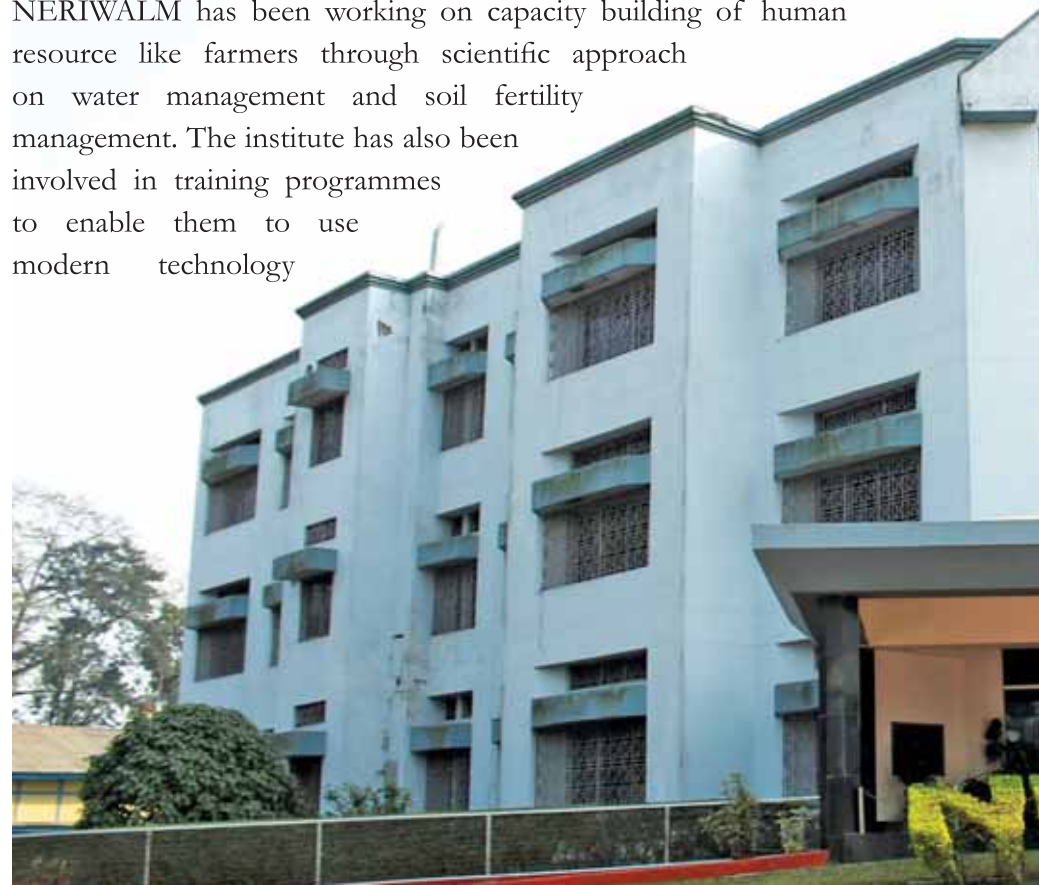
The North East Regional Institute of Water and Land Management (NERIWALM) is a State-level institution under the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, the Government of India.

The NERIWALM mission is to empower human resources on agricultural water management through capacity-building, targeting food security of the region by improving productivity through technology-driven agriculture, horticulture, fish cultivation on the face of shrinking/fragmented land holdings, ailing soil health, diminishing water resources and increased human population ensuring and effective utilisation of water through scientific water management systems for agriculture, ensuring both production and environment sustainability. The institute will be focusing on capacity building through training and workshops for farmers on effective water management practices that help produce more food for consumption as well as generate additional income from commercial farming activities.

The institute also aims at enhancing participatory approach among farmers by providing them basic information on scientific methods of farming, including soil health management practices that can improve yields while improving soil health simultaneously.

## LAND & WATER CONSERVATION

In a bid to address the challenges faced by the farmers in the region, NERIWALM has been working on capacity building of human resource like farmers through scientific approach on water management and soil fertility management. The institute has also been involved in training programmes to enable them to use modern technology



for conservation of land and water resources. The main objective of the institute is to provide capacity building, undertake research and provide technical services to the departments in order to improve agricultural production and socio-economic status of the North Eastern people. The institute caters to the requirements of all the eight NER States.

To fill the gender gap, the institute also organises programmes, especially for the region's women. It also conducts field researches in farmers' fields as well as on its research farm. The institute also provides technical backup services by undertaking projects, experiments and offers consultancy services in water resource management, irrigation management, agricultural and horticultural development, soil and water conservation and sociological parameters. NERIWALM also envisages fulfilling the goals of National Water Mission through various activities.

### **CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES**

Capacity-building activity is considered to be a long-term, continuing process, in which all stakeholders like Ministries, local authorities, non-governmental organisations and water user groups, professional associations, academics and others participate.

Capacity building encompasses human resource development

which is an essential part of development. It involves process that focuses on enhancing the skills, knowledge and the social capabilities available to individuals and the social system in order to achieve growth, equalise opportunities, reduce poverty and enhance people's livelihood.

It is based on the concept that education and training lie at the heart of development efforts and that without human resource development, most development interventions will be ineffective. Training is a means for overall enhancement of performance in terms of knowledge and skills of an individual. NERIWALM has proved its existence as a regional centre of training in water and land management in the NER. It has been conducting short and medium-term training programmes on different aspects and issues of water and land management relevant for the region. NERIWALM is taking necessary action not only to expand its activities to the national and international level but also undertaking long-term courses in the form of academic courses on water resources management.

### **ON-CAMPUS AND OFF-CAMPUS TRAINING**

Programmes are organised on its campus at Dolabari, Tezpur (Assam), utilising well-equipped infrastructural facilities like classrooms, laboratories, conference rooms, library and research farm. The faculty members and other technical staff of NERIWALM also go across the NER States to conduct off-campus programmes utilising infrastructural facilities of the State departments, KVKs and universities.

### **SPONSORED PROGRAMMES**

NERIWALM tries to obtain sponsorship for organising training programmes from other Ministries, departments and the North Eastern Council. The students of B Tech and M Tech are given 'In-Plant Training' of biweekly, one-week and one-month duration as a part of project works/internship to fulfil their degree courses. Similarly, hands-on training for analysis of environmental parameters is also imparted in the form of self-financed training along with basic computer course at a nominal registration fee. ■



# NEHHDC: WEAVING THE FABRIC OF THE NORTH EAST

Though creating beautiful pieces of handicraft and handloom weaving have been an intrinsic part of life in the North East, especially for women, these sectors have received a major leg up in the form of NEHHDC.

*Weavers, weaving at break of day,  
Why do you weave a garment so gay?  
Blue as the wing of a balcyon wild,  
We weave the robes of a new-born child.  
Weavers, weaving at fall of night,  
Why do you weave a garment so bright?  
Like the plumes of a peacock, purple and green,  
We weave the marriage veils of a queen.*

—Sarojini Naidu

This short and beautiful poem was written by Sarojini Naidu in 1905 and remains iconic as it beautifully sums up the weaves of India, which is its title, too. It could well have been written in and about the North East where the craft and loom traditions go back centuries. The handicraft and handloom products of the North East are preferred by connoisseurs for their quality, durability and affordability. These robust and colourful products are available without an unreasonably expensive price tag, which makes these very popular in marketplaces.

The importance of handicraft and handloom products has been increasing by the day due to their affordability and high level of comfort that they provide to the wearer. There are also a wide range of designs that can be used for various purposes such as furnishing

houses/offices or bedding sets etc. The demand for these type of clothes is increasing rapidly nowadays because many people prefer these over other kinds, like synthetic fabrics or the cotton ones.

## HANDLOOM: THE STORY OF FIVE WOMEN

The handloom weavers of Assam have a few stories to tell. A North Eastern success story, which has empowered women and minimised migration. Weaving their way to prosperity, these weavers have become a major industry in the North East. And the organisation that stands solidly by them is the North Eastern Handicrafts and Handloom Development Corporation (NEHHDC). It is a household name across the North East and the connect the region's women weavers have with it is unparalleled.

One should experience this unique story through the eyes of five women who have got it made despite all odds. They, however, have a true friend in NEHHDC which gave them succour when it was required the most and didn't let them lose hope. This group of five unmarried women has broken the myth that women are dependent on others, especially the menfolk. Karishma Rabha, Maloti Rabha, Mridula Rabha, Minoti Rabha and Bhasani Rabha challenged the society and successfully broke the glass ceiling. Today, they are confident independent entrepreneurs by themselves, weaving their success in a male-dominated world.

## HANDLOOM IS HERE TO STAY!

Handloom weaving is the mainstay of North Eastern India. It is an ancient industry in which all the regions contributed to its development, but it was largely neglected and taken for granted because of its low productivity. The handloom industry is an integral part of the economy not only because it provides employment to lakhs of people but also because it contributes significantly to the national economy by way of exports and production for export purposes.

The North East Council helps the region's handloom weavers by promoting in the market the local artisans' handloom products. Handloom weaving is one of the mainstays of North East India's economy, as well as other crafts such as cane and bamboo. The Council has been supporting handloom weavers of the region in a



Secretary NEC, Planning Advisor & Financial Advisor visit at NEHDC mobile Van.



Team NEHDC.

number of ways. Under the leadership of its Chairman, the Council has taken an initiative to promote and market handloom products of the North East by promoting indigenous designs and creating awareness about the immense potential that the sector has.

### THE WEAVERS' STORY

One of the oldest handloom weaving communities in India is from the North East. The people here belong to various tribes who have been weaving carpets, blankets, skirts and clothing items for centuries. Their traditional way of life has been threatened by the pace of modernisation but they continue to practise their craft though this art requires patience and precision.

It is indeed interesting to know about these weavers -- how they came into existence; what's their historical background; how they weave their rags using different techniques depending on a soft, medium or hard finish.

### A NORTH EASTERN SUCCESS STORY

The NER is among the few regions in India where handicrafts and handloom-weaving industries continue to thrive. The focus here should also be on Assam, which has a textile production history going back to ancient times.

### WEAVING THEIR WAY TO PROSPERITY

The region's handicrafts and handloom industries employ more than half a million people. The weavers are mostly women and work in rural areas, creating artefacts and weaving traditional cloths on looms that they have built themselves. Weaving is a way of life; it has been part of the lives of locals here since time immemorial, with many families having been weavers since they were born into them (or even earlier).



Brigadier RAJIV KUMAR SINGH (Retd), Managing Director

**THE NEHDC'S MAIN MANDATE IS TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE THE HANDICRAFTS AND HANDLOOMS OF ALL THE NER STATES. OUR FOCUS IS ON CAPACITY BUILDING OF ARTISANS AND WEAVERS, INCLUDING THEIR TRAINING, UPSKILLING, RESKILLING AND RPL (RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING)**

### THE WEAVER'S STORY

The women who create handicrafts or weave are the backbone of the North East industry, especially in the rural areas. They are the weavers, designers and marketers who make their products from raw material to finished fabric. Women earn more than men in every country where handlooms have been used for centuries: India has the highest wage gap between the genders at 32 per cent, followed by Bangladesh (30 per cent) and Pakistan (28 per cent). In fact, a study stated that female weavers earned up to five times more than their male counterparts during this period — a trend that continues today!

### HANDICRAFTS AND HANDLOOMS: THE PRIDE

Handicrafts and handloom weavers are a major industry: they have empowered women and minimised migration. Handlooms are handwoven fabrics used for clothing, bedding or carpets. It was the practice of cloth weaving by hand that led to the development of a strong tradition of craftsmanship among the region's inhabitants. ■

# NERAMAC: MAKING THE LIVES OF N-E AGRI-HORTI FARMERS BLOOM

Launched in 1982, NERAMAC had at one stage reached such a moribund state that it was virtually condemned. However, it fought its way back into relevance with sagacity and tenacity and lent a helping hand to the NER's agriculturists and horticulturists

The North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Ltd (NERAMAC) has a story which, though old, is interesting. Launched in 1982, it faced its own trials and tribulations. At one stage, the so-called “expert physicians” sentenced the Corporation to the life-support system of the Licence Permit Raj — the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR), the euthanasia ward for the sick and brain dead business units in the country. The units recommended to the BIFR in due course used to die a natural death and there never was any survivor to tell the world about its experiences about the rendezvous with ‘death’. But NERAMAC was no ordinary entity. It had the DNA of the North East: To fight and fight and never to succumb! Understandably, about its first two decades of existence, NERAMAC had an unimpressive story to share.

It was unsuccessful in generating net profit during any financial year. In 1996, it was declared a sick PSU and referred to the BIFR. The revival package approved in 1999 involved a fund infusion of ₹10.36 crore from the Government of India. After the revival package, NERAMAC's operations were intensified and it started generating sufficient revenue.



A significant achievement of NERAMAC has been its success in making some of the agri-horti products from the North East the *numero uno* commodities in their respective fields through the country. Thanks to its marketing initiatives, products like Queen Pineapple of Tripura, ginger of Karbi Anglong and Meghalaya, large cardamom of Sikkim, black pepper of Meghalaya, King Chilli (Bhut Jolokia) of Assam, Black Rice of Manipur, kiwi of Arunachal Pradesh and dragon fruit (BTR area of Assam) command a premium in the national market. The prosperity earned by the farming community in the region is a major proof of this achievement.

The agro-climatic condition of the North Eastern Region is favourable for production of good quality agri-horti produces like pineapple, jackfruit, orange, lemon, chilli, ginger and exotic fruits like kiwi, passion fruit and dragon fruit. The last three varieties are not cultivated in an organised manner in any other part of India except the North Eastern Region. Considering the vast potential offered by the region's high-yield potential, the Central Government thought it fit to form an engine to power the region to harness the full potential of the soil and local human resources. The industrious nature of the local farmers was seen as the main raw material by the policy planners and thus was born NERAMAC in 1982.

Since its formation, NERAMAC has been engaged in the mandated activities and other allied activities. Till 2011, NERAMAC was mainly involved in food processing, marketing of agri-horticultural products, Government supplies and participation in various events.



Cmde RAJIV ASHOK (Retd.),  
Managing Director

**A SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT HAS BEEN ITS SUCCESS IN MAKING SOME OF THE AGRI-HORTI PRODUCTS THE NUMEROUS COMMODITIES IN THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS. IT'S ALSO BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN GETTING GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (GI) TAGS FOR SOME OF THE AGRI-HORTI PRODUCTS**

The processing of agri-horti products was carried out through its own processing plants located at Byrnihat (Meghalaya), Nalkata (Tripura) and Agartala (Tripura).

After 2011, along with its conventional business operations, NERAMAC intervened in different sectors like marketing of exotic fruits such as kiwi, dragon fruit, passion fruit, Geographical Indication (GI) registration of ethnic agri-horti produces of the North Eastern Region, agri-input supplies to farmers on behalf of the State Governments, auction/e-auction of agri-horti produces, marketing and branding of products of the region's smaller entrepreneurs and capacity building of farmers and small entrepreneurs.

On this subject, there's been some good news in the recent past, with the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approving a revival package worth ₹77.45 crore (₹17 crore towards fund-based support and ₹60.45 crore towards non-fund based support) for NERAMAC. Besides ensuring remunerative prices to the NER farmers for their produce, the move will provide employment to about 33,000 people. The revival package will help NERAMAC implement various innovative plans, viz; better farming facilities, and training to farmers in clusters, organic seeds and fertilisers.

In recent history, NERAMAC has been appointed the implementing agency of the 'Bamboo Plantation Project' of Bamboo Development Agency and allocated 600 hectares in Golaghat and Nagaon (Assam). Another 300 hectares are being planted with bamboo saplings. The rest of the nation will look towards the NER as it emerges as the bamboo hub, a raw material which is an essential ingredient in many finished products as well as handicrafts products. The Cheraw or 'Bamboo Dance' in Mizoram, one of the oldest cultural forms in the region dating back to the first century, will get a new lease of life. It is expected to benefit thousands of families engaged in bamboo cultivation. A series of products, ranging from household items to artistic creations, can be carved out of bamboo. It is a win-win situation for all the stakeholders involved.

In another positive development, NERAMAC has been successfully verified and affiliated as a partner of the Entrepreneurship Sector Skill Council (ESSC), Government of India, under SVBPYUUY (Sardar Balabh Bhai Patel Yuva Udamyi Unmukhi Yojana) for implementation of Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDPs) targeting 3,240 trainees over three years covering the entire NER. ■



## NEDFi FUNDS YOUNG DREAMS

The North Eastern Development Finance Corporation is bringing about a radical change across the region as it promotes itself as a 'developmental financial institution', meaning that it focuses on the uplift of socially vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in the backward and remote regions.

**T**he resurgence of the North East is in full swing; and the latest rage among the locals is the North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd (NEDFi). There is no shortage of financial institutions in India (both public and private sector) set up with the objective of financing Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and artisans engaged in self-employment, but all these suffer from many shortcomings. There is no dearth of grievances of MSMEs and artisans against these units over a number of issues.

But the Guwahati-based NEDFi, which functions as a developmental finance institution, caters to all the eight NE States and stands out from other similar organisations. The Corporation has scored an ace of ushering in a phase of synergy by actively tying up with the North Eastern Council. Acting as a Union Government representative and

a Central Nodal Agency, its mandate now includes implementing all of NEC-approved schemes and projects. The other important works of the Corporation include implementing Central Government's developmental schemes, besides taking care of the industrial subsidy management and administering these subsidies.

The professionals managing NEDFi mean business and their style is a combination of humane approach peppered with competitive aggressiveness in helping entrepreneurs set up units and nurture these. All that the entrepreneurs have to do is to drop in at the NEDFi office or its portal. It is like a shopping mall where entrepreneurs get the best advice about the products which could be marketed by NEDFi.

PVSLN Murty, Chairman and Managing Director, NEDFi, was the Chief General Manager and chief strategy officer of the nation's largest public sector bank, the State Bank of India, and has four decades of experience in turning the fortunes of many entrepreneurial units. But he knew that the NER is distinct from the rest of the country and needs a different approach.

### CHAMPIONING THE CASE OF SMALL ENTREPRENEURS

The loan products are structured mainly towards developing the MSME segment. For development of the MSME sector, the Corporation has taken the initiative to identify and nurture local entrepreneurs and provide finances on easy terms for setting up viable industrial projects. Under NEDFi's schemes like NOSSE, NEEDS, WEDS, EDS, HDS, SPBL and ASTIDS, the entrepreneurs can avail loans at concessional interest rates.



Team NEDFi.

Mr Murty has succeeded in ushering in a phase of synergy by actively tying up with the North Eastern Council. This has resulted in the agencies entrusted with the task of developing and re-energising the region, identifying the dos and don'ts that would help prospective investors and entrepreneurs to units producing goods that could be sold to the rest of the country as well as abroad at competitive prices.

The Corporation has a list of 30 sectors ranging from agriculture to plant tissue culture, in which entrepreneurs can reap a rich harvest. NEDFi considers human resources and skills as the major capital while it is in a position to chip in with finance. This is a sign of the venture funds waiting for the entrepreneurs to arrive with ideas and plans.

The Corporation is flush with funds. "NEDFi has the resources. All that the investors/entrepreneurs should possess is the skill and smartness to launch micro, mini and small units. Never be under the impression that funds are difficult to get. If you have an idea, come to us. We will support you, whether it is micro or mini or small enterprises. NEDFi has a presence with 20 branches across the NER and there are no districts where the corporation is unrepresented. We are tapping local potential for the global market," says the NEDFi CMD.

The Corporation's initiatives include schemes to assist micro entrepreneurs, artisans, tea growers, self-employed professionals and doctors; a new scheme to meet the working capital requirement of micro entrepreneurs; and, an MoU with Federation of Industries of North Eastern Region (FINER).

The Corporation's flagship initiatives for rural development include a micro finance scheme to assist the grassroots borrowers; and, the



PVSIN Murty  
Chairman & Managing Director

**NEDFi HAS THE RESOURCES. ALL THAT THE INVESTORS/ ENTREPRENEURS SHOULD POSSESS IS THE SKILL AND SMARTNESS TO LAUNCH MICRO, MINI AND SMALL UNITS. NEVER BE UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT FUNDS ARE DIFFICULT TO COME BY. NOT ANYMORE. IF YOU HAVE A GREAT IDEA, COME TO US**

region's Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) for on-lending to low-income individuals for various income generating activities in farm and non-farm sectors. NEDFi provides marketing support to the NER's artisans through exhibition participation in its showrooms at Guwahati and Khetri Assam, Aizawl in Mizoram, IEMML, Greater Noida and Mahabalipuram.

The North East Venture Fund (NEVF) with a corpus of ₹100 crore has supported 53 innovative startups. These startups are working in the field of IT, Food Processing, Hospitality, Healthcare, Biotechnology.

At last, the North East has found a true rhythm and life has turned harmonious. The eight musical notes of western classical music, one of the favourite pastimes, are in full flow in the region. Don't you want to feel it? ■



The traditional cheraw bamboo dance in Vengthlang Champhai at Mizoram | Photo-Vanlalinghaka.



## NEC IS FUTURE READY!

Having established itself firmly as an entity of substance for NER's development, the North Eastern Council has its work cut out for the journey ahead. With its focus firmly set on IT and ITES sectors, the Council is future ready to reorient and upgrade itself

**W**hile addressing its 65th Plenary held in Shillong in May 2016, the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, had advised laying stress on following points with regard to the relevance of North Eastern Council (NEC) in the decades ahead: To meet growing aspirations of people, the Council should consider to reorient and upgrade; it may like to consider developing itself as a state-of-the-art Resource Centre for the NER with necessary resources, knowledge and skills; NEC should enable the member States/implementing agencies to better plan and execute projects; It should promote research and innovation, provide strategic policy vision; NEC should develop



**THE BEHEMOTH AND THE TITANS WHO MAKE IT: THE NORTH EASTERN COUNCIL IS A JUDICIOUS MIX OF EXPERIENCE, YOUTHFUL ENERGY AND DEMOGRAPHY AMONG OFFICIALS & STAFF MEMBERS. ITS COMPOSITION IS SUCH THAT THEY ALL COMPLEMENT ONE ANOTHER**

# EASTERN COUNCIL SECRETARIAT SHILLONG



**THE NEC HAS ACHIEVED TREMENDOUS SUCCESS IN ESTABLISHING SEVERAL ICONIC INSTITUTES, COMPLETION OF MANY SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS, INTERVENTIONS INCLUDING HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY AND LIVELIHOOD PROJECTS IN THE NE STATES**



'NEC's effort is to make the region the cynosure of the world.'

Air Marshal (Retd.) **ANJAN KUMAR GOGOI**  
PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Member, NEC)

*The North East Council is working like a well-oiled machine to elevate the eight States to their past days of pristine glory. The States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur Tripura, Meghalaya and Sikkim have myriad culture, customs, traditions and handicrafts to offer to the outside world. The effort of the NEC is to tap these hitherto unexplored terrains and make the region the cynosure of the entire world.*

*Though not much could be done during the last two years because of the pandemic, the post-Covid scenario has turned out to be a boon for North East India. Reverse migration has happened as most of those who had left the State to work elsewhere have come back. The youth who had left the region in search of greener pastures have come back either skilled or semi-skilled and we are harnessing their potential. An exclusive institute for training the youth in entrepreneurship has been set up with the participation of the corporate world. Bamboo plantations will add up to cash crops from the region. There are also plans to plant tissue culture to increase the bamboo output manifold. The North Eastern States have a lot to offer to India as well as the world in the form of handicrafts and handlooms. The various kinds of textiles weaved in the region have a niche market and this is being exploited in full. The North Eastern handicrafts have their own unique position in global markets and they are being marketed aggressively.*

*Infrastructure has been given a major push by the NEC. The focus is to make all the eight States interconnected by roads, but the main focus is on the intra North East region. The mission is to provide road connectivity to all the districts in the States. One of the innovative ideas that have caught up with global standards is the North East Space Applications Centre (NESAC), an initiative by the Department of Science and the NEC. Natural disasters and inclement weather, a daily event in the region have been relegated to the background thanks to this work of cooperation. The NESAC is providing an operational remote sensing and geographic information system-aided natural resource information base to support activities on development/management of natural resources and infrastructure planning in the region. ■*

expertise by itself or by associating with other agencies and help from States and Central Ministries; North Eastern Council should also consider focusing on issues in the emerging areas of livelihood, entrepreneurship, venture funds, startups and skill development. All this will help the Council in generating more jobs and creating new opportunities, he suggested.

It is more than a happy coincidence that the NEC has always been following the Prime Minister's Vision in letter and spirit. The basic philosophy of North Eastern Council is to work for uplifting people of North East and for regional development so that it is on a par with the rest of the country, something which is the crux and at the heart of the Prime Minister's advice for NEC. What the Prime Minister said is what NEC has been practicing all these years, -- transform the economy which will help in generating jobs for millions of youth from the region.

However, no matter how good a system is, it needs a revamp after some time to meet the ever-changing needs of time. The NEC is no exception. It has achieved tremendous success in establishing a number of iconic institutions, completion of many significant infrastructural projects, community interventions including very successful livelihood projects in North East Region. The NEC has practically become a pillar of support in the development of the region. However, as suggested by the Prime Minister in 2016, NEC needs to look to adapt to the ever-changing global and domestic environment and focus towards achieving a transformation in North East Region. It must do some course correction to be even more relevant and efficient in its approach.

The NEC has set out to take the Prime Minister's advice and directives in right earnest and accomplish its work with even more vigour. To do this, it must be focused on research and development





‘We want to make the North East our own Amazon and Google’

**K MOSES CHALAI**  
**Secretary, North Eastern Council**

***K MOSES CHALAI**, the incumbent Secretary of the **North Eastern Council (NEC)**, has an ace up his sleeve. The Council’s target is to be the trendsetter by a loud margin in the areas of development and innovation. Several other similar organisations and agencies might of course be undertaking a lot of initiatives but the Council plans to do “innovative things in a different manner” which would elevate it to be a trendsetter in its own right in the fields of development and innovation.*

*Despite losing two years to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Secretary puts up a brave face, terming it “a universal problem”, and says he wanted to achieve a lot more in the technological sector (IT, ITES). As for the path ahead, the NEC would rather not play safe to stay relevant and simply do more than, and better, what all other similar agencies are doing, and venture out in a big way and set up benchmarks of its own developmental agenda.*

*The Council has been doing extremely well in the established sectors, viz; infrastructure and institutions, but there’s a need for intervention in emerging priority areas such as tech, 4.0 industry et al, besides acting as a catalyst for capacity building of the member States. A case in point here, for example, would be taking up digital tourism to give one single platform to all the member States for showcasing their scenic treasures and places of attraction, as has been the demand of global*

*tour operators. But obviously, Nagaland can't do it for Arunachal Pradesh, or vice-versa; this is where the NEC can step in with help.*

*Also, there were concerns about the States not being very good with DPR formulations or project implementations; there were certain gaps, so maybe the NEC can step into that sphere with a helping hand while continuing to do the good things it currently does. Similarly, there are certain communities that have not benefited as envisaged by the Government's developmental schemes, maybe because of their small numbers or absolutely remote locations, which need to be helped out. There are also plans afoot to bring in global domain experts into the NER and use their services for enhancing the quality of life and livelihood in the region.*

*Taking a cue from what the Chairman, NEC, has said about communities in the region which missed the bus of development, Chalai is on a mission of integrating the not-so-lucky sections to the mainstream. Sincere efforts are being carried out to bring the communities who have not been part of the development process to the main stage. Capacity building is another area under focus. The assistance and guidance of global experts is being proactively sought in capacity building of institutions and individuals.*

*The NEC has been given the much-needed push in the form of a regional mandate. Each of the eight States in the NER has a strong forte and "we want to build up on that". Arunachal Pradesh has certain advantages which the neighbouring States may not have and vice-versa. The Council's Secretary wants to build up on that strength and make the North East the region's "own Amazon and Google", providing services where these are needed from its own*

*bouquet of States. The mission is to promote regional as well as national resource centers in the region. Those in need of services could come to the NEC and "they shall get more effective guidance than what is given by even Google", says the Secretary.*

*Meanwhile, an inventory of endangered flora, fauna and wild animals is being prepared. Tourism, the money-spinner for the North East and its mainstay, is getting a booster dose with these initiatives. The two years the country lost because of the Covid-19 pandemic were a major setback. The lockdown clipped the wings of agencies working for the development of the region but, on the bright side, they could also learn a slew of new things, like technological self-improvement, patience and teamwork from a distance.*

*A trip through the region gives the traveller confidence and energy. Yes, the North East is surely India's happening place. The day is not far off when all roads would lead to Aizawl, Itanagar, Shillong, or even the lesser frequented places, in search of innovation, intelligence and inspiration. The North East is booming, developing and progressing.*

*NEC in its lifetime has in a timely manner stepped in successfully to meet critical gaps and needs of its constituent States. Along the way, it has achieved a great deal on the ground and gained remarkable experience. The net result is NEC has over the years gained unparalleled enviable capital in the NER in the form of considerable goodwill, trust and affections. It has become a brand name that continues to be appreciated. As it completes 50 years, NEC has now effectively re-positioned itself to meet the challenges ahead and contribute its part to bring the NER at par with the rest of the country. ■*



Workers dry out turmeric before turning it into the famous Lakadong brand.



**“ADMINISTRATION CATERS TO MEET  
THE CHALLENGING DEMAND FOR  
PROFESSIONAL & EXPERIENCED  
MANPOWER SERVICES BOTH FROM THE  
GOVT & OPEN MARKET IN TUNE WITH  
CHANGES OF TIME”**

**L. BEIMOPHA, IRS**  
Deputy Secretary, Administration

in core areas like agriculture, food, tourism, infrastructure, and a host of other available opportunities. Besides, it must keep its thrust on other promising areas of livelihood, entrepreneurship, venture funds, startups and future skill development which will also help in generating jobs.

Secondly, as per Union Cabinet's decision taken in its meeting held on January 29, 2020, it has been decided that 30 per cent of NEC's budget/allocation will be devoted for focused development of deprived areas; deprived/ neglected sections of society and emerging priority sectors and related issues in North East States. This has been reflected in the revised NEC guidelines and will guide the planning process in the Council going forward.



The NEC creme de la creme at the NEC Secretariat complex.

Finally, the NER Vision 2020, adopted at the Plenary Session held at Agartala on 13th May, 2008 provided an overarching framework for the development of the North East region. It focused upon bringing the NER at par with other regions of the country. Some of the initiatives proposed in the Vision 2020 document which still are very much relevant and can be pursued even today are:

### **EMPOWERING PEOPLE THROUGH MAXIMISING SELF-GOVERNANCE**

Despite having a high literacy rate in the NER the problem of unemployment exists. The NER has a large amount of youth and the number of literate population is also very high. The knowledge

of English language is also high amongst the people. Thus, there is urgent need of providing employment opportunities to the people in NER.

### **CREATING A HOSPITABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR INVESTMENT**

There is a need for distribution and marketing infrastructure such as a cold storage chain along major arterial highways, investment in efficient irrigation systems, improved water, rail and air connectivity to other parts of the country and increased electricity production. States such as Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Meghalaya have huge potential in hydropower generation.



The Vantawng falls in Mizoram | Photo: Devid Lalchanchhuaha.

### **CAPACITY BUILDING OF PEOPLE**

Capacity building leads to enhancing the existing skills of the people and it also helps people in developing new skills. NER has already granted approval to a number of capacity building institutes in the field of bamboo industry, health care industry, biology and microbiology industry, etc. There is a need for capacity building institutes to enhance and strengthen the skills of the people with respect to IT and agriculture sector. This can be done by partnering with various institutes in the country so, they can come over and provide appropriate industry specific skill training

### **PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP**

In NER the infrastructure with respect to education, transport, telecommunication and power is not adequate. PPP can help in enhancing the infrastructure in the NER. It can help in the construction of infrastructure, Education City, Biotech Park, Knowledge Park, setting up of ITIs and Polytechnics, etc. It can also help in technical and vocational education, research and development, science and technology promotion, business research, building of intellectual human capital, etc.

### **CREATING DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

There is an urgent need in NER to create and increase the development opportunities throughout the NER. The NER lacks adequate education, transport, power and infrastructure. The tourism and agriculture industry have potential of offering immense development opportunities to the region. However, there is a need for initial investment in these industries to enhance the infrastructure so that the industries could operate on the desired path i.e., creating ample number of development opportunities. The education infrastructure in NER is not adequate; there is a need for more colleges and universities

### **HARNESSING THE RESOURCES**

There is ample number of resources available in NER. There is a need for collaborative efforts from the Public and Private sector to extract the resources available. This will lead to efficient deployment of resources available in the NER. The resources available should be used in fully efficient and effective manner

### **THE NORTH EAST RESOURCE CENTRE**

All these pointers are important for NEC as it gears up for the future. One major step in this regard, which also is in line with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's advice during the 65th Plenary, is the establishment of the North East Resource Centre (NERCEN) in December 2021 along with six Centers of Excellence to focus on the following activities:

### **TECHNOLOGY ACCELERATION**

As per the NER vision 2020, focus is laid upon making the North East Region an innovation hub. The nurturing of innovation in the north east region will not only help in promoting entrepreneurship but in job creation as well. It will help in opening up avenues with respect to opportunities necessary for the growth of the businesses in NER.

### **SKILL AND COMPETENCY**

A best-in-class institution for training talented youth from across the North-Eastern Region in Future Skills would be developed as. It would enable the youth to develop in-demand technical skills required in a rapidly transforming world of work.

### **RESEARCH AND MONITORING**

NEC to have a proper and systemic unit which is responsible for carrying out the processes falling under research and monitoring. The processes will involve partnering with various partners, which



A worker spins a yarn at the NECBDC complex, near Guwahati.



Locals fish in the pristine waters at Dawki river in Meghalaya.

will provide solutions for problems in various sectors, pooling in resources, finding investment opportunities etc. enable a systemic approach to critically assess the positive and negative effects of proposed and existing regulations and non-regulatory alternatives. As employed in OECD countries this systematic framework can underpin the capacity of governments and would ensure that regulations are efficient and effective in a changing and complex environment in the northeast.

### PROJECT PREPARATION

There is a need of building capacity for project preparation in the NER. The project preparation is one of the earliest stages in the life of the project. The project preparation could include doing feasibility study, trend study, preparing high end Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) including accessing Externally aided Projects (EAP) fund and other areas of technology:



**A VISION WITHOUT A CONCRETE PLAN IS  
AKIN TO A WISH. IF WE FAIL TO  
PLAN PROPERLY, THEN, INEVITABLY,  
WE ARE PLANNING TO FAIL**

**SATYEN LAMA, IES**  
Director, Planning

**Like several others, tourist takes a selfie at one of the many scenic points on the Shillong - Dawki stretch.**



Team NEC celebrates Hindi pakhwara at Secretariat on September 2022.

## DATA & ANALYTICS

This is for establishing a data center for all the NE states. The first step is to collect all the data required and put the appropriate systems in place to do this comprehensively and make it an iterative process. Once datasets are available with regular periodicity, on regular parameters and data integrity is also established, one can begin using this data for analysis and taking measures accordingly. This will be able to provide 360-degree insights into how government schemes and policies are performing. It will also help in coordinating with the Government Departments and entities as well as undertake a few critical projects that are likely to be useful to more than one department. Lastly, it will also help to conceive, implement and monitor various e-Governance projects in the state in order to achieve the goal of the State Government to take technology to every citizen.





(Above and right) The NEC Secretary, K Moses Chalai, interacts with the Secretariat staff and with young students at the Secretariat library.

## DOCUMENTATION AND INFORMATION

The Regional Documentation and Information Centre (RDIC) of the North Eastern Council was established in 1974. RDIC has built up a stock of more than 62,353 books, 5000 reports, Plan Documents etc. and subscribes to 133 journals, both national and international on various subjects. The Centre will be further equipped with tools for procuring and archiving data of the NER and accessing world-wide information for use by various stakeholders of North East Region.

Although a lot of NEC's resources will now be channelised towards capacity building, monitoring, brainstorming and other activities becoming of a premier think-tank in the Region, given its set up and framework, the NEC will not be a carbon copy of

NITI AAYOG which has a strong overarching mandate. Often, it is mandatory for the Central Ministries and Departments to consult the NITI AAYOG and the NITI AAYOG's advice is binding on them. It also can enforce policies. In the present setup and given the current situation, NEC works and functions in a different paradigm. The existing work of North Eastern Council and the areas identified under NERCEN will go hand-in-hand as both of these are quite important for NEC's and the region's successful evolution. The North East Council should continue to provide existing benefits to all member States via project funding and policy direction as it will also help the new entity to make use of the Council's goodwill created over the years and provide new development opportunities through NERCEN. ■



An aerial view of Ramrei Eco tourism park at Manipur.



SIKKIM



ASSAM



ARUNACHAL PRADESH



MEGHALAYA



# EIGHT SISTERS



NAGALAND



TRIPURA



MIZORAM



MANIPUR