

Hon'ble Governor's speech for the inauguration of North East Festival on 7th January 2021 at Radisson Blu Guwahati

Namaskar,

Respected Industries & Commerce minister Chandramohan Patowary ji, Chief Organiser of North East Festival, Shyamkanu Mahanta ji, senior Govt officials and members of the media. I am happy to be here in the ninth edition of North East Festival. I am happy to see the entire North East's spectacular culture which is on display here. From Warrior dance of Nagaland, Lion dance of Arunachal, Rhythms of Manipur, Wangala dance of Meghalaya, Hojagiri of Tripura up to the famous Sattriya and Bihu. Spectacular culture, fashion, Cuisines of North East, Crafts, agro horti, tourism potential are all showcased for a global audience through online campaign.

I consider it to be my privilege to be with you at the North East Festival. I thank the organiser for organising the festival. It is said, nature has bestowed its beauty on North East. Every part of North East is endowed with heavenly beauty. I consider this festival as the powerful podium to let everybody know about North East India and showcase Assam and North Eastern states as a land of immense opportunities.

I am also happy to know that series of discussions on investments, start ups, tourism development, river connectivity, agri market linkages have been organized. However, what is heartening is all these discussions and initiatives have taken place in sync with Make in North East, Start Up North East initiatives

and as a part of the noble vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for a vibrant North East India. The programme will encourage entrepreneurship and job creation for the region and will also help in understanding the region. I have visited North East Festival earlier in New Delhi few years ago. I have seen there large crowds, spectacular showcase of the North East which has helped in creating awareness about this beautiful part of India. Over the years North East Festival got extensive coverage in National media which has helped in creating a positive perception about the region.

Govt. of India under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, North East India is taking giant strides towards development. Connectivity has improved leaps and bounds, security situation in the region has improved dramatically and the region is poised for great development processes. Tourism will be a key driver of North East as the region is blessed with enormous tourism resources in terms of snow capped mountains, wildlife, cultural diversity and pollution free environment.

I am happy to see North East Festival is focusing on tourism through networking of tour operators. Cuisines of North East are very popular and can be real source of tourism. Weavers and artisans of the region have great talent in terms of quality and designs and North East Festival has been rightly focusing on promoting the designers and weavers of the region. Agriculture is the backbone of the North East and the process of marketing linkage to Agri products is very essential for the farmers. Govt of India is focusing extensively on creating back end infrastructure and marketing support to agri and food processing products of the region.

The north-eastern region have been blessed with abundant flora and fauna, and pristine lakes, hills, and mountains which make them attractive destinations for tourism. The rich heritage of this region is full of beautiful surprises and revelations.

We have to guard against the danger of rampant urbanisation and thoughtless development as this can put the ecology of the region at risk. Development has to be carefully calibrated with ecology to ensure maximising the beauty of the region. Otherwise, the resultant environmental degradation will impoverish not just the entire region but the whole country. The need of the hour is to choose the best practices and the best models of development, but instead of implementing them wholesale, it is necessary to customise them as per the requirements of the local community to raise their standards of living. This alone will ensure that the north eastern region stand shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the country for achieving sustainable development goals.

Realizing the potential of North East our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji addresses the eight states of North Eastern Region as Asta Laxmi or the new engine for growth. Modi ji has also vowed to transform North East into an organic hub of the country considering the region's vast and untapped natural resources. Moreover, the geographical proximity of North East with other South East Asian Nations has made the North East a spontaneous choice of transit route for trade and commerce with ASEAN countries with Guwahati being tipped to be its gateway.

Moreover, the entire country has much to learn and imbibe from the cultures of the north east in terms of civilised behaviour, ancient practices, and modern outlook. The region is enriched with beautiful tribes who have been living here since ancient times.

Though the COVID 19 pandemic has had its effect on entire globe with North East is not an exception, I am hopeful that this Covid wave will end soon and North East will become the most attractive destination for investment and tourism in the coming days. I am happy to see that various Govt organisations are coming forward including North East Zone Cultural Centre to promote culture and potential of North East through this Festival. I am happy to be here to encourage this initiative and I am sure North East Festival in coming days will become a major event to take North East globally.

Once again I thank the organiser for having organised the Festival and giving all of us an opportunity to connect and celebrate the essence of North East. This festival is a wonderful opportunity to discuss these important issues that affect the whole of nation. I congratulate the organizers on bringing together great minds to deliberate and discuss a diverse range of topics related to the North East. This brings the region together in a way that is laudable. I wish the organizing team all the best and hope that the festival shall contribute towards the sustainable development of this Region and our country.

Thank you all.

Jai Hind

