

Speech of the Honourable Governor for North East Infrastructure Development Conclave 2020 to be held on February 18, 2020

Namaskar,

Respected Shri Sanjive Roy ji General Manager, Northeast Frontier Railway, Shri Sanjeev Jindal ji Regional Executive Director – North Eastern Region, Airports Authority of India, Shri Sunil K Tandon ji Chief General Manager – NE Circle, State Bank of India, Shri Pradeep Purohit ji, Chairman, CII North East Core Committee on Infrastructure, esteemed Captains of the Infrastructure fraternity present here and my dear media friends.

I am glad to be here in North East Infrastructure, Development Conclave 2020 which I hope will set an agenda for the development of Physical Connectivity and Integrated Urban development for North East. I would like to congratulate the organizer the Confederation of Indian Industry for organizing this North East Infrastructure Development Summit. This event is a brainstorming occasion for discussing the challenges in giving shape to vibrant infrastructure which determine the development of a region. It is good that this event brings different stakeholders like engineers, technologists, innovators, from across the region who are

involved in the development of infrastructure in the North Eastern Region.

Infrastructure, in all its forms, is a catalyst for development. Well planned and managed infrastructure enables established businesses to expand their production levels, while encouraging small businesses to enter the market. It also promotes trade and supports economic concentration.

Our Government is committed to promoting the development of the region and the country. We take the view that development is about people. Government of India is investing in infrastructure to eliminate service backlogs in areas like North East with emphasis on rural areas, in order to meet our people's basic needs.

Development of Infrastructure and Urbanization is our opportunity and priority. Our Government has rolled out two interlinked programmes – Smart Cities Mission and the AMRUT. Smart Cities Mission aims at building Smart Cities with state-of-the-art amenities. These Cities have started implementing various projects like Smart Command and Control Centre, Smart Roads, 17 Solar Rooftops, Intelligent Transport Systems, Smart Parks etc. To preserve and revitalize soul of the heritage

cities in India, National Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) has been taken up.

Today, India is moving forward under the visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. He has enunciated Act East Policy which entails increased people to people, trade and other relations with countries on India's east particularly ASEAN countries.

Assam and Northeast are close to ASEAN nations. We have land borders with Myanmar. Many of ASEAN capitals are within 2,000 kilometre flying distance from Guwahati which is comparable to flying distance of Guwahati to many Indian cities. We are keen to start flights between Guwahati and ASEAN capitals. The construction of a new terminal building at Guwahati airport is going on in full swing. There is a motorable road link, the ASEAN trilateral highway connecting North East and ASEAN. The Government of India is working to improve this land route.

Assam is the largest among 8 Northeastern States of India with a population of 33 million and area of 78 thousand square kilometers. It is blessed with large variety of natural resources and very rich bio-diversity.

Assam is nurtured by one of the greatest rivers of the world, the Brahmaputra. Our civilization has grown along the mighty river. The Barak is the other important river. Both rivers along with their many tributaries have a huge potential for river transport, tourism and industry. Both the rivers have been declared as National Waterway 2 and 16 respectively.

I am glad to share with you that Inland Waterways received a boost in the last five years. The Jal Vikas Marg on National Waterway-1 will be completed. Further, the 890 Km Dhubri-Sadiya connectivity will be done by 2022.

We have taken inspiration from the Prime Minister's Act East Policy and set up a separate Act East Policy Affairs Department. We propose to make Guwahati as India's gateway to ASEAN. We have notified the State Capital Region along with 160 KM industrial corridors along National Highways for development of industries. We propose to build a world class trade centre comprising of 65 storeyed twin towers. Bangladesh and Bhutan have set up their consulates in Guwahati. Few other countries will also set up their consulates in Guwahati.

Assam and North East are blessed with the abundance of tourist potentials. To give tourism a boost, our government has

decided to develop Sivasagar as an iconic site with on-site museum.

The Union Government gave its formal approval in January 2019 for enhancing NRL's capacity from existing 3 Million Metric Tonne Per Annum to 9 Million Metric Tonne Per Annum at a project cost exceeding Rs. 22,000 Crore. Moreover, the Centre is constructing a new bridge between the states of Assam and Meghalaya which is all set to be the longest river bridge in the country.

This four lane bridge over the Brahmaputra will shorten the distance between the cities of Dhubri and Phulbari by 203 kilometers. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways along with National Highways is preparing plans to iron out details of the project.

Well ladies and gentlemen, I have just referred to a few instances of government's intervention for infrastructural development in the region. However, I feel that this conclave where the learned stakeholders have assembled will discuss more on the challenges and give out the solutions and suggest measures for creating an exhaustive network of physical connectivity for integrated urban development in our region.

Nobody has even a miniscule of doubt that there is immense scope and opportunities for the private parties to join in the infrastructure project. The Govt. is emphasizing on implementing the projects in PPP mode. In the North East there is immense scope for investments. Through this CII platform, I urge the private players to come forward and work together with the Government for creating more urban infrastructure.

The region needs to look ahead towards strengthening its urban infrastructure. With a growing urban population and rising urban infrastructural needs, solutions like planning newer modes of transportation systems especially for congested areas, going vertical to accommodate the increasing population, enhance capacities of road, water supply, sewerage, solid waste disposal and focusing on infra development plans and schemes are imperative.

We all agree that there is a shortfall in infrastructure in North East India. This is both a challenge and a great opportunity. Improving transport connectivity and developing other infrastructure will have to be a priority to ensure economic mobility and market integration.

For us today, we should all remember that infrastructure is a vital component especially for a region like North east, which is aspiring to excel in growth and development. The role of infrastructure cannot be discounted as it contributes both directly and indirectly to the economy.

I am sure that this Summit will discuss all relevant issues and come up with practicable and definite outcomes. I wish the organizer and participants all the very best!

Thank you,

Jai Hind