

Hon'ble Speaker,

With your permission, I rise to present the Budget for the Financial Year 2021-22.

INTRODUCTION

1. Sir, the year 2020 will be remembered for the COVID-19 pandemic and the unprecedented economic and social disruption that it caused on a global scale. India has managed to deal with the pandemic in a far more effective way than many developed regions of the world. Our fatality rates are on the lower side and we rolled out a massive vaccination program. I salute and congratulate our Hon'ble PM for providing strong leadership during these challenging times. I also salute all the frontline health workers and every citizen of this country for showing courage, compassion and resilience.
2. Sir, it makes me proud to declare that Meghalaya has been one of the best performing States in terms of COVID management. Amongst Indian States, we always had one of the lowest number of cases. We put in place a number of relief measures to support different sections of the society that were adversely impacted by the pandemic and the lockdowns. Despite the tough financial situation, we spent substantial resources in protecting health and providing relief. We set up over 3,800 number of additional beds in hospitals and Corona Care Centres, conducted a total of 3.8 lakh tests, set up testing capacities in all the districts of the State in record time, provided relief to over 2 lakh labourers and workers in the unorganized sector, provided

provision kits to over 29,000 Households and brought back about 6,000 of our stranded citizens home at Government expenditure.

3. Our efforts in managing COVID-19 were appreciated by national and international agencies, including the World Health Organization. I want to compliment all the Hon'ble members for supporting the Government by donating 10% of their annual salary to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund and coordinating the relief efforts in their constituencies. I want to specially thank the Hon'ble Speaker for providing leadership and for organizing four coordination meetings that led to collaborative decision making on critical issues. My gratitude and appreciation also goes to the health workers, other frontline staff like sanitation and police personnel, district administrations, our community leaders including the dorbars and the nokmas, the various non-governmental organizations, the media fraternity, friends from the arts community and all others who supported the Government in dealing with the pandemic.
4. The economic impact of the pandemic has been immense. Indian economy experienced the biggest annual contraction since 1952 and the country's Gross Domestic Product is expected to shrink by about 7.7 percent in the current financial year. The Union Government increased its own spending and allowed the States to go beyond the fiscal deficit targets set by the FRBM Act. My Government took various measures to increase public spending. The implementation of externally aided projects and centrally sponsored programs was fast tracked, in addition to launching new State sponsored programs and projects.

5. I am happy to inform the House that the overall expenditure for the current financial year is expected to touch an all time high. Several growth-boosting new projects have been launched. Critical road connectivity projects worth ₹ 1,315 crore have already been taken up. About ₹ 1,950 crore of PMGSY road projects are being constructed. Major Water supply schemes at Cherrapunjee, Tura and Baghmara are being implemented. Iconic building projects like the State Assembly building at New Shillong, PA Sangma Integrated Sports Complex at Tura and the Indoor and Outdoor Stadia at JN Sports Complex in Shillong are underway. Critical projects that have been left abandoned for want of funds by the previous Governments have been revived. These include the Nongstoin Water Supply Scheme, the Greater Shillong water supply scheme and the construction of model schools. The systemic problems in the power sector are being resolved through investments in both the generation and distribution sectors. Comprehensive revamp of the health and education infrastructure has started. This year alone, work on renovation of 208 number of schools and 152 number of health facilities has been initiated. We recently launched the Chief Minister's Mobilization Support for Producers program under which support to the tune of ₹ 5,000 is being provided to farming households of the State. An amount of ₹ 16 crore is being disbursed under the program.
6. All these development initiatives can only thrive in a situation of overall peace, safety and security. I am pleased to inform you that the law and order situation in the State has been peaceful during the year 2020.

7. Continuing on our efforts at implementing the ILP, a memorandum was submitted to the Union Home Minister during his visit to Shillong for the NEC Plenary. We are following up with the Government of India on this very important issue.
8. My Government has also taken effective steps to implement the Meghalaya Residents Safety and Security Act, 2016. Facilitation Centres have been notified and set up at Umling and Umroi Airport in Ribhoi District and the Mendipathar Railway Station in North Garo Hills District. We are committed to ensure that Facilitation Centres at other important locations on the inter-state boundary are also set-up at the earliest.
9. I want to remind this august House that in 2022, we will be celebrating the 75th anniversary of Indian Independence and the 50th anniversary of Meghalaya's Statehood. A series of programs will be organized in the runup to 21st January 2022.
10. Speaker Sir, this Government has a clear vision and program for development. Despite the challenging year, we laid the foundations for the State's economy to grow in the coming years and for Meghalaya to become one of the top ten States in the country by the end of this decade. In my last budget speech, I presented the vision for the new decade- a decade where the State realises its full potential through sustainable deployment of its human, environmental, social and cultural resources; a decade where Meghalaya leads the way in innovation and governance; and a decade where the State emerges as a knowledge economy and caring society. The budget for 2021-22 provides the detailed framework and

the allocation of resources to achieve the vision. In the first part of my speech, I will focus on State Finances and then move to the various sectoral interventions.

STATE FINANCES

11. For the year 2020-21, the amount of tax transfers from the Union Government has been reduced dramatically, owing to the economic impact of the pandemic. The budget estimates were ₹ 5,999 crore, while the revised estimates were ₹ 4,207 crore, a shortfall of ₹ 1,792 crore. Despite this severe shortfall, the Government has prudently managed the State finances and has ensured availability of resources to all critical sectors.
12. The projections for the devolution of taxes for 2021-22 is, however, encouraging. The Fifteenth Finance Commission submitted its final report to the Government of India covering the five-year award period 2021-26. The Commission has recommended a total amount of ₹ 39,012 crore for the State. This includes the share of central taxes of ₹ 32,403 crore, the revenue gap grant of ₹ 3,137 crore, the grants to Autonomous District Councils of ₹ 711 crore, health grants of ₹ 311 crore and disaster management grants of ₹ 403 crore. I would like to place on record my gratitude to Shri N.K. Singh, Chairman of the Commission who has been very considerate to the specific challenges faced by the North Eastern and Hilly States.
13. Meghalaya's share in the divisible pool of taxes has increased from 0.645 % in the Fourteenth Finance Commission to 0.767 % for the period 2021-26. This increase is a result of consistent efforts of the

Government over the last two years through engaging with the Finance Commission and presenting the need for increased resources. For 2021-22, the share of central taxes is estimated at ₹ 5,105 crore and the revenue gap grant is at ₹ 1,279 crore.

14. In addition to central transfers, the State has been taking steps to increase its own tax and non-tax revenue. For the current financial year, the own tax revenue of the State, including GST compensation, is expected to touch ₹ 2,213 crore, a 11 percent increase over the financial year 2019-20. The excise revenue for 2020-21 is expected to touch an all time high of ₹ 350 crore, an increase of 27 percent over last year. Measures like handing over the collection of taxes under the Meghalaya Passenger and Goods Taxation Tax Act to the Transport Department and introduction of the Meghalaya Settlement of Arrears Act, 2020, licensing of manufacturing and sale of homemade wines, allowing of home delivery of liquor and introduction of e-Stamping have helped in increasing the tax revenue despite the unfavourable economic situation.
15. The lockdowns and the restrictions on movement have dramatically reduced the non-tax revenue collection. The non-tax revenue collection for this year is expected to be about ₹ 374 crore, a 29 percent reduction from last year.
16. The prospects for non-tax revenue collection for the year 2021-22 are, however, optimistic. The NGT committee had approved the auction of 2 lakh metric tons out of the 32 lakh metric tons of extracted coal. I am happy to announce that the e-auction process of extracted coal by Coal India Limited has begun. In the first auction, about 54,000

metric tons of coal from East Jaintia Hills and about 9,000 metric tons from South Garo Hills are put up for e-auction. When fully auctioned, the extracted coal will generate a revenue of about ₹ 350 crore. We expect to generate a significant part of this revenue in 2021-22.

17. Given all this, I am confident that the revenue collection of the State would improve significantly in the next financial year. For 2021-22, I have estimated ₹ 2,579 crore and ₹ 694 crore for tax and non-tax revenue collection respectively.
18. The increase in tax devolution and the revenue enhancing measures, would help in mobilizing the much needed resources to meet our development expenditure pegged at ₹ 3,300 crore.
19. Sir, I will now move on to the second part of the speech, deliberating on the various priority sectors and programs of the Government.

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

20. A healthy and educated population forms the basis for development of any society. Human Capital Development has been a strong focus of this Government. We also realize that investments in Human Capital Development have to start very early. Accordingly, the Government is launching an Early Childhood Education Mission to focus on the early development of every child in the age group of 0-8 years. Every child in the State will be provided access to high quality education and care that includes language, cognitive, socio-personal, emotional, creative and aesthetic appreciation. I am allocating ₹ 20 crore for the implementation of the Early Childhood Development Mission in 2021-22.

21. Early childhood growth and education is immediately connected with maternal health. Accordingly, several health-related interventions are being undertaken including the MOTHER program, which was launched to track the health of all the pregnant women and to promote institutional deliveries in the State. Despite COVID, the percentage of institutional deliveries improved in nine out of the eleven districts. It gives me immense pleasure to inform you that the immunization percentage for the period between April to September in 2020 stood at 92% compared to 76% last year. We are ranked among the top 3 States in terms of immunization coverage. Antenatal registrations have also improved by 10% this year in comparison to the same period of the previous year. With all these interventions, I am optimistic that we will reduce the Infant Mortality Rate and the Maternal Mortality Rates in the coming years.
22. Upgrading the health infrastructure will continue to be a big priority area. Improving the infrastructure of all the 659 health centres including District Hospitals, PHCs, CHCs and sub-centres is being taken under the World Bank funded 'Meghalaya Health System Strengthening Project' with an investment of ₹ 370 crore over the next three years. I am earmarking an amount of ₹ 55 crore for 2021-22.
23. We recently approved an all encompassing 'State Health Policy'. The Policy aligns with the draft National Health Bill, 2009, National Health Policy 2017 and the draft National Public Health Act, 2018 while including provisions that have been tailored to the State's unique context.

24. I am allocating ₹ 820 crore for the Health sector in 2021-22, an increase of 13 percent over 2020-21.
25. Sir, education is a top priority and has a bearing on every aspect of life. Ensuring universal access to elementary and secondary education is one of the key priorities of my Government. Accordingly, we have initiated various measures to improve the enrolment ratio of children in school. During the year 2019-20, there was an increase in the General Enrolment Ratio compared to the previous years.
26. Every child spends significant time at school. The infrastructure available at school shapes the child's experience of learning. A recent infrastructure audit of school facilities revealed that the classroom adequacy is only 11 percent at the elementary level. Further, 41 percent of elementary schools and 25 percent of Secondary and Higher Secondary schools need major building repairs. This Government has, for the past three years, taken steps to improve the situation. In addition to the 208 schools that are already being upgraded, another 500 will be taken up in 2021-22. I am allocating ₹ 150 crore for this initiative.
27. In addition to State resources we are also leveraging Government of India programs. Sanctions have been obtained for setting up 40 Eklavya Model Residential Schools in all the blocks of the State at a cost of ₹ 960 crore. These schools will transform the secondary education scenario in the State. On higher education, three new degree colleges have been sanctioned at Baghmara, Sohra and Williamnagar.

28. I am allocating ₹ 980 crore for the Education sector in 2021-22, out of which ₹ 453 crore is from State resources.

PRIMARY SECTOR

29. Sir, Meghalaya is predominantly agrarian and more than 70% of its population is engaged in the primary sector, consisting of Agriculture, Fishing, Forestry, Dairy and Animal Husbandry. Despite several initiatives, the production and productivity levels in the State remain low. The difficult terrain, distance from markets and inadequate availability of timely credit are mostly responsible for this situation. We realise that a comprehensive program for providing support to our farmers and producers is necessary. We also realize that our farmers need to be collectivized into Producer Groups and Farmers Producer Organizations so that they can better manage the value chains.
30. With this vision, the Government launched a one of a kind producer support program called the Chief Minister's Mobilization Support for Producers, to commemorate the year of the farmer. Under this program, all producers of the State, at the rate of one person per household, will be provided a one time grant of ₹ 5,000 for improving production and productivity. This amount will be provided to groups and the utilization will be supervised through a network of NGOs and facilitators. With this support, farmers and producers, be it the Turmeric growers of Laskein, the ginger growers of Kharkutta, the pig fatteners of Mawngap or the eri-silk weavers of Umden, will have the money to manage their immediate production challenges. In the second stage of the program, which is more entrepreneurship

focused, better performing producer groups will be further collectivized into Farmer Producer Organizations and Cooperatives. The FPOs will be provided zero interest loans for taking up higher level value chain activities like collective marketing, processing and exports.

31. Through the last year we ran pilot projects across the State to finalise this program. We have already formed over 2,100 groups comprising 31,000 producers across various products such as Piggery, Fruits and Spices. The first tranche of the Chief Minister's Mobilization Support for these groups has been released. The program will be upscaled to cover about 2 lakh producer households in the next financial year. Funds for this ambitious program are being provided through convergence from Externally Aided Projects, Central Sector Schemes and State's own resources.
32. For 2021-22, I am budgeting an amount of ₹ 100 crore for this program.
33. Flow of agricultural credit is essential for improving rural incomes. This financial year we launched a 2 percent interest subvention program for KCC borrowers in the State. This is over and above the 3% interest subvention given by the Government of India, thus bringing down the effective interest rates on KCC to 2%. An amount of ₹ 4 crore is being spent on this program.
34. Continuing with the theme of zero interest loans, I now propose to subvent the full interest on KCC loans being paid by our farmers. For the next financial year, a corpus fund of ₹ 10 crore will be set up to

provide interest subvention to the standard or regular KCC borrowers of the State.

35. Marketing of agricultural produce is another key intervention for the primary sector. This year we are constructing 15 lay-by markets at different strategic locations of the State at a project cost of ₹ 12 crore. Three lay-by markets , at Umrangksai - RiBhoi, Diengpasoh - East Khasi Hills and Lalong - West Jaintia Hills are already inaugurated. Farmers owned and farmer managed agricultural markets are also being constructed across the State. Twenty such markets are approved for this year. I am budgeting ₹ 10 crore for the construction of additional markets in 2021-22.
36. Alongside marketing infrastructure, production and research infrastructure is also essential. Accordingly, a Centre of Excellence for citrus fruits at Dawagre, East Garo Hills is being set up in collaboration with the Embassy of Israel. A second Centre of Excellence is being set up with State resources at Jongsha in the East Khasi Hills. I am allotting ₹ 10 crore for this project in 2021-22.
37. The Government will continue to implement the mission mode projects for Lakadong Turmeric, Mushroom, Jackfruit and Aromatic Plants. Under the Lakdong Mission, we are trying to enhance the production of rhizomes from 12 metric tons to 50 metric tons. Under the Aroma Mission, we will be covering 360 acres by the end of 2021. For the implementation of these four Missions, I am allocating ₹ 20 crore for the next financial year.

38. Sir, India's largest piggery development project, the Meghalaya Piggery Mission with a total outlay of ₹ 209 crore has been operationalized. Under the Mission, long-term zero-interest loans are being provided to cooperative societies. The Mission targets to increase the income of about 25,000 households in the State. The first tranche of zero interest loans of ₹ 17 crore have already been sanctioned to 95 Cooperative Societies. We will spend another ₹ 100 crore on the Piggery Mission in the next financial year.
39. Similarly, the Milk Mission has also been operationalized. New cooperative societies are being formed in the dairy sector, and a complete plan for implementation of the Milk Mission is in place. We will spend ₹ 50 crore on the Milk Mission in the next financial year.
40. Sir, apart from the Piggery and Dairy sectors, the third sector that has immense potential for livelihood generation and raising the overall nutrition of our citizens is the Poultry. Consequently, with support from the National Cooperative Development Cooperation, the Poultry Mission will be launched during the next Financial Year at a project cost of ₹ 121 crore.
41. The Government has also identified fisheries as one of the key sectors. I am happy to inform this august House that the implementation of the Meghalaya State Aquaculture Missions has benefitted 33,519 fish farmers through various income generating activities. Fish production has increased from 4,558 metric tons in 2010-11 to 14,128 metric tons in 2020-21. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 10 crore for taking continuing interventions under the Meghalaya State Aquaculture Mission.

42. Sericulture and Weaving are the important traditional cottage industries that provide gainful employment, especially to women in rural areas. To upscale the activities in this sector, the Government has created the Ryndia brand to popularise Eri Silk.
43. The Government also wants to support and expand the Muga Silk sector and to promote the development of the Muga value chain. I am allocating ₹ 10 crore for implementation of the Muga Mission.
44. I am allocating ₹ 559 crore for the Agriculture and the Allied sectors including ₹ 247 crore from the State's resources in 2021-22.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

45. Infrastructure is the backbone for the development of the State. To upgrade and improve the existing roads across the State, projects covering a road length of about 337 Kms at an amount of ₹ 742 crore have been taken up for construction under the Meghalaya Integrated Transport Project funded by the World Bank. I am proposing to allocate ₹ 110 crore in 2021-22 for this project.
46. In addition, we have sanctioned ₹ 580 crore during 2020-21 to strengthen and upgrade our state roads. Some of these projects include the Rongram-Phulbari road and the Mairang-Ranigodown-Azra Road that are being built at an estimated cost of ₹ 139 crore and ₹ 196 crore respectively. I am allocating ₹ 385 crore for funding these key projects in 2021-22.
47. Sir, last year in my budget speech we launched a new program for periodic maintenance of roads and made an allocation of ₹ 50 crore. Under this program, some very important roads like the

Umtyngar-Sohra road at an estimated cost of ₹ 12 crore, Agia-Medhipara-Phulbari-Tura road at ₹ 8 crore and the Mawphlang-Balat road at ₹ 6 crore have been taken up for systematic maintenance. This important scheme will continue in 2021-22, and I am allocating ₹ 50 crore for the same.

48. I am proposing an overall development budget of ₹ 1,080 crore for the road and bridges sector in 2021-22.
49. This Government is committed to provide safe drinking water to every rural household through functional household tap connections. While the national target for completion of 100% household tap connection is the year 2024, my Government has an ambitious vision to reach this target by the end of 2022. Accordingly, the entire machinery is mobilized to achieve this. I am allotting ₹ 540 crore in the next financial year for the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission. Out of this, ₹ 42 crore is from State resources.
50. Major water supply schemes are being implemented across the State. The Government is making every effort to complete these important projects. Towards this end, I am earmarking ₹ 10 crore for the Greater Sohra Water Supply Scheme, ₹ 25 crore for the Nongstoin Water Supply Scheme, ₹ 25 crore for the Greater Shillong water supply schemes, and ₹ 20 crore for the Greater Baghmara water supply scheme.
51. I am more than doubling the allocation for the Water Supply Sector to ₹ 802 crore for 2021-22.

52. The Government has taken a systemic view to reform the entire power sector, with particular focus on distribution. The State Government stood guarantee for a loan of ₹ 1,346 crore provided to the Meghalaya Power Distribution Corporation Limited to liquidate the various accumulated liabilities. It is pertinent to note that these liabilities have accumulated over the last decade and only this Government took the bold decision to deal with this legacy issue head on. Further, under the Meghalaya Power Distribution Sector Improvement Project, an amount of ₹ 980 crore is being invested for the installation of smart meters and for strengthening the power distribution network. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 50 crore for the implementation of this project next year. On the generation side, the Government is keen to get the 22.5 Mega Watt Ganol Small Hydro Power project operational. This will be the first generation project in the Garo Hills. An investment of ₹ 50 crore from State resources has been made this year. I expect the project to be completed by September 2022.
53. Other critical infrastructure projects include construction of a helipad at New Shillong Township and establishing the institute of Driving and Traffic Research, for which I am allocating ₹ 20 crore each in 2021-22. I am also allocating ₹ 50 crore each for the development of Tura and Jowai as smart towns. Further, an amount of ₹ 9 crore has been earmarked for completion of the Technology Park at Umsawli, New Shillong.

54. I am proposing an overall development budget of ₹ 2,461 crore for the Infrastructure Sector, including ₹ 893 crore from the State's resources.

EMPOWERING THE YOUTH - SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND SPORTS

55. Sir, about 35 percent of the State's population is in the age group of 15-35 years. This large section of young people need to be inspired and empowered to realize their full potential as individuals and members of their communities. The Government has formulated a comprehensive youth policy and has already placed it in the public domain. This policy will be notified soon and implemented from the next financial year. Several interventions are proposed under the policy including the setting up of a youth helpline, a youth portal and institutionalizing scholarships and awards in various fields.
56. The biggest intervention that is proposed under the youth policy is a comprehensive program for skilling called 'One Meghalaya', under which every youth of the State will be supported to take up one skill and one talent. The skill and talent providers will also be from within the State leading to entrepreneurship and employment. The program will cover about 50,000 youth in 2021-22 and I have allotted ₹ 30 crore for this program. I would also like to take this opportunity to declare the year 2021-22 as the year of the youth. I am allocating an additional ₹ 10 crore for taking up various youth related activities.
57. Another important facet of youth development and engagement is promotion of sports. This Government has a three pronged approach

towards sports development focusing on infrastructure creation, talent identification and nurturing and incentivization of athletes.

58. Mega sports infrastructure projects costing ₹ 300 crore at Tura, Shillong and Wahiajer are at different stages of implementation. I am allocating ₹ 120 crore for these projects for the next Financial Year. Other than these major projects, we are also undertaking about 100 sports infrastructure projects in rural areas at a cost of ₹ 70 crore. Many of these projects have already been tendered and I am allocating ₹ 50 crore for the next financial year for these projects.

59. In addition to infrastructure creation, we want to incentivize athletes as provided for in the Sports Policy. 264 athletes from various sporting disciplines like Archery, Football, Muay Thai, Jeet Kune Do, Karate Do and badminton have been identified for providing incentives in 2021-22.

60. I am allocating ₹ 200 crore for sports and youth affairs for the next financial year.

TOURISM, ARTS AND CULTURE

61. Sir, it goes without saying that the Tourism and Hospitality sectors have been affected the most because of the COVID pandemic. Some relief measures have been implemented for the hotel industry at a cost of ₹ 20 crore. The current disruption in the sector also presents an opportunity for us to realign our approach towards Tourism. We are working on creating niche products that can attract high value tourism with minimal ecological footprint.

62. Under the externally aided Experiential Eco Tourism project, we will create about 500 high value rooms in the next two years, in addition to building other enabling infrastructure. I am allocating ₹ 62 crore for the implementation of this project in 2021-22. Mega tourism infrastructure projects like the Tourism Complex at Sakal Aduma, Nokrek, West Garo Hills have already been initiated. The process for setting up of the Shillong peak ropeway is under way and I am allocating ₹ 30 crore for this project for 2021-22.
63. A new scheme for construction of homestays, restaurants, cafes and other related infrastructure will be implemented in convergence with the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Program (PMEGP). Under the scheme, each entrepreneur will be provided a subsidy of 70 percent towards projects costing upto ₹ 20 lakh. 35 percent subsidy will be provided by PMEGP and the other 35 percent will be provided by the State Government. We are planning to build around 200 homestays and other related infrastructure under this scheme next year. I am allocating ₹ 5 crore for this scheme.
64. In addition to infrastructure, we are focussing on niche tourism products around art, craft and music. We have already begun with the Ateliers program wherein the local craft entrepreneurs are identified and provided ₹ 5 lakh of grant support. Continuing with this, we are formulating a systematic program for engaging and supporting the musicians and music industry. Consultations with the music stakeholder have already begun and I am allocating ₹ 5 crore towards this initiative.

65. Another new initiative for the next financial year will be beautification of our towns and giving them a facelift through art. A program for conducting competition between the various localities and selection of the cleanest and most vibrant locality will be launched. Cash prizes will be provided to the winning neighborhoods and localities. For this initiative, I am allocating ₹ 5 crore.
66. In addition to the initiatives being taken up by the State Government, we are also successfully implementing the Government of India's flagship programs of Swadesh Darshan and PRASAD. An amount of ₹ 114 crore will be spent for Tourism infrastructure creation under both these programs.
67. For the Tourism Sector, I am allocating ₹ 100 crore for 2021-22.
68. Promotion of Arts and Culture and Tourism are interlinked. The iconic Shillong International Centre for Performing Arts and Culture (SICPAC) is close to completion. This centre will set new benchmarks as a platform for performing arts and will allow the State to host national and international events. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 27 crore for the completion of this project in the next financial year.
69. The construction work on the Tribal Research Centre at Babadam, West Garo Hills has begun. When completed in September, 2022, this project will be a centre for research and promotion of the culture and the crafts of all the tribes of the North Eastern Region.
70. All these mega infrastructure can be utilised to the fullest potential only when national and international visitors can easily access the State. Hence, the fundamental need for direct air connectivity with

major Indian cities. The consistent efforts of my Government led to the operationalization of the direct flight from Shillong to Delhi in December 2020. Beginning April, 2021 we will increase the frequency of this flight to twice a week. I am certain that this would give a huge boost to Tourism in the State. I am allocating ₹ 5 crore for provision of viability gap funding for this project.

71. As we move towards the 50th Anniversary of the Statehood, a number of programs will be held to celebrate the State and its people. These programs will be implemented by the different departments and a high level committee under my chairmanship has been set up to coordinate all the efforts. We will have literature, arts and culture festivals, sporting events, school and college level competitions involving children and the youth and celebratory campaigns on our history and heritage. The task force for the documentation of 50 years of Meghalaya, under the chairmanship of Prof. David R. Syiemlieh, has already started work. I am allocating ₹ 20 crore towards organising all the events related to the 50th Anniversary of our Statehood.

PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

72. Sir, my Government has identified entrepreneurship as one of the six core pillars of the developmental paradigm for the State. Accordingly, substantial efforts have been made over the last few years towards building an entrepreneurial ecosystem in the State. Under the umbrella of the PRIME Program, the Chief Minister's e-Championship 2.0 has already been launched. Additionally, to provide continued and systemic mentorship support to the entrepreneurs, three PRIME Hubs are already operational in Shillong, Tura and Songsak. We plan to

construct 15 more PRIME Hubs in the next financial year and a total of 50 hubs by the end of 2022. I am budgeting ₹ 20 crore for this initiative.

73. This year we created the PRIME Fund with a corpus of ₹ 25 crore under which Startup grants and Scale up loans are being provided to entrepreneurs. The first tranche of the grants and the zero interest loans of ₹ 1.2 crore has already been disbursed to 13 entrepreneurs. This program will be broad based and more applications shall be invited over the next few months. The ₹ 25 crore corpus fund will be used to leverage additional funds from other financial institutions and investors. I expect the PRIME Fund to grow to ₹ 125 crore over the next two years.

74. Another crucial enabler for a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem is access to timely, adequate and affordable credit. Currently, several of the State's villages are unbanked. We are taking steps to ensure that in 2021-22 we will be able to cover 90% of our villages under banking services. For this, we have launched a comprehensive program that involves reaching out to the unbanked villages via Banking Correspondents. Recently, a project was launched in partnership with Meghalaya Rural Bank, wherein, Micro-ATMs were distributed to 100 SHG members to take Banking services to the last mile. Additionally, 500 more Banking Correspondents shall be deployed in 2020-21. I am allocating ₹ 10 crore for the next financial year for improving banking coverage.

RURAL POVERTY ALLEVIATION

75. We continue to dedicate our attention to the issue of rural poverty alleviation in the State.
76. Sir, my Government has made significant progress in its attempt to develop social capital through institutions such as Self Help Groups, Cooperative Societies, Producer Groups and other collectives of women and farmers. We have also provided 50 per cent reservation to women in leadership positions of the Village Employment Councils, a major transformation of grassroot governance.
77. Our State continues to be a leader in the implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). While we spent ₹ 965 crore on this scheme in the year 2019-20, we expect to touch ₹ 1,600 crore this year. This spending translates to an annual income of about ₹ 17,000/- per rural Household in the State. The works undertaken under MGNREGS have helped the rural populace immensely in coping with the economic disruption caused by COVID-19.
78. The State Government has promoted over 29,000 SHGs so far, out of which over 21,600 have come into existence during the last 3 years. Out of the ₹ 132 crore that have been released to these SHGs so far, ₹ 124 crore has been released during the tenure of this Government. Till 2018, only 319 SHGs had received a bank loan. Today, that number stands at 6,288 SHGs. These women SHGs are becoming the beacons of hope and change in their communities fulfilling important development roles in both social and financial Sectors.

79. With a view to providing pucca houses for all rural households, we are targeting the construction of about 47,000 houses at an estimated cost of ₹ 611 crore under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G). For 2021-22, I am proposing an allocation of ₹ 120 crore for PMAY-G.
80. For rural poverty alleviation, I am proposing a total allotment of ₹ 1,138 crore for 2021-22.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND WELFARE

81. Sir, social security is the foundation of economic security for the people. It is a key aspect of human development. I made a commitment in the last budget speech to make regular monthly payments to all casual employees of the Government. I am happy that ASHA, Angawandi workers, muster roll and casual employees are now being paid their emoluments on the first week of every month. The ongoing Chief Minister's Social Assistance Scheme for providing financial assistance to 1.1 lakh beneficiaries at the rate of ₹ 500 per month will continue to be implemented.
82. Sir, I am also pleased to announce that the minimum wages have been revised to ₹ 343, ₹ 389, ₹ 435 and ₹ 480 per day for Unskilled, Semi-skilled, Skilled and Highly- skilled categories of workers respectively from 1st October, 2020.
83. Under the National Urban Livelihood Mission, the construction of Shelter for the urban homeless has been completed for Shillong, Jowai, Tura and Williamnagar.

84. The Meghalaya Drug Abuse Prevention Policy, 2020 was recently notified. This will enable us to combat drug abuse and to ensure coordinated efforts among the various stakeholders.
85. Sir, I am happy to inform that the automation process for all Fair Price Shops in the State has been completed. Further, to ensure complete transparency in PDS transactions among beneficiaries and fair price shops, we have introduced the electronic point of sale system across the State. This is an important step towards ensuring food security for all.

FOCUSSING ON SUSTAINABILITY AT ALL LEVELS

86. Meghalaya lies in an ecologically vulnerable zone and building sustainable, climate resilient livelihoods is essential for the overall development of the State. We are implementing several sustainability focussed programs and projects. These include the ongoing IFAD funded Megha-LAMP project, the World Bank funded CLLMP Project and the JICA funded Project for Community-Based Forest Management and Livelihood Improvement. For the implementation of all these externally aided projects focussing on environment and sustainability, I have budgeted ₹ 217 crore.
87. In addition to externally aided projects, Green funds such as Meghalaya Environment Protection and Restoration Fund amounting to ₹ 445 crore, CAMPA funds amounting ₹ 163 crore and Meghalaya Minor Minerals Reclamation Fund amounting ₹ 90 crore will be used for restoration and improvement of environment in a comprehensive manner.

88. Another threat to sustainability is the unscientific coal mining that has been traditionally practiced in the State. I am very happy to inform this august House that the Central Government has approved the SOP prepared by the State for granting prospecting license and mining lease. This is the first significant step for beginning scientific coal mining in the State.
89. Another new initiative to promote water conservation on a large scale is the building of Small Multipurpose Reservoirs (SMR). These reservoirs will be constructed at strategic locations leveraging on the hilly topography of the State. The stored rainwater will be utilized for multiple purposes including drinking, irrigation, fisheries and tourism development. I am allocating ₹ 10 crore for construction of SMRs.
90. A project for eco-restoration of Sohra area is also being conceptualized and I have allocated ₹ 25 crore for the same. Under this project, we will take up dense plantations using the Miyawaki method, plantations of fuel wood and aromatic grasses and other soil and water conservation works.

DISTRICT COUNCILS

91. The three Autonomous District Councils are important institutions delivering important public services at the grassroots. I am pleased to announce that because of the Government's persistent efforts, the 15th Finance Commission has allocated a grant of ₹ 711 crore for the Autonomous District Councils for the period of 2021-26.

IMPROVING GOVERNANCE

92. To enhance overall delivery of services at the grassroots level, we have enacted the Meghalaya Rights to Public Services Act, 2020. The act prescribes timelines for delivery of various public services and has a framework for penalising officials in case of delays. 81 services have already been notified.
93. In the last year we have also put in place a coherent framework for monitoring the implementation of various programs and projects. Meghalaya CM Dashboard is an integrated GIS platform with close to real time data on the various key programs of the Government. The public interface for this dashboard is also being developed so that both the administration and the citizens can view program information till the village level on their screens. This sharing of information will bring in greater transparency.
94. Another important initiative in Governance is the Meghalaya Enterprise Architecture project under which the functioning of the planning and the finance departments is being completely revamped. All processing of project proposals, submissions of bills and release of funds will be done electronically from the next financial year. We are computerising all the 1,200 plus Drawing and Disbursing Offices of the State. This reform will transform the overall efficiency of the Government. I am budgeting ₹ 10 crore for this project.
95. We are also taking steps to improve our ranking in the area of ease of doing business. This year we successfully completed the reforms relating to the District Business Reform Action Plan, auto-renewals

and central inspection system. Next year the reforms related to the State Business Reform Action Plan will be completed. I would like to highlight that this is the first time that a systematic effort is being made to improve the ease of doing business in the State.

96. Having a strong administrative machinery at the grassroots is essential for improving governance. I am therefore allocating ₹ 15 crore for construction of block complexes in the new blocks. Additionally there is a dire need for the improvement of police infrastructure, including upgradation of police stations, residential quarters and battalion complexes. These urgent requirements of the police forces have not been prioritized in the past. I am now allocating an amount of ₹ 80 crore for strengthening police infrastructure for the next financial year.

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2021-22

97. Sir, for 2021-22, I have estimated the total receipts at ₹ 17,509 crore, of which the revenue receipts are estimated at ₹ 15,232 crore and capital receipts at ₹ 2,277 crore. Excluding borrowings of ₹ 2,247 crore, the total receipts are estimated to be ₹ 15,262 crore.
98. On the expenditure side, I have estimated the total expenditure at ₹ 17,603 crore, of which the revenue expenditure is estimated at ₹ 13,956 crore and capital expenditure at ₹ 3,647 crore. Excluding repayment of loans of ₹ 771 crore, the estimated total expenditure is ₹ 16,832 crore.
99. Interest payments for 2021-22 is estimated at ₹ 1,047 crore and pension payments at ₹ 1,303 crore.

100. I am, therefore, presenting the budget of 2021-22 with a fiscal deficit of ₹ 1,570 crore, which is around 4.07 % of the GSDP.

CONCLUSION

101. When the MDA Government came to power in March , 2018, we made a promise to transform the State and to deal with several of the challenges facing the State including inadequate infrastructure, poor governance and several legacy issues.

102. After three years of our Government, we are witnessing visible changes because of interventions made in important sectors of roads, water supply, health and education infrastructure, programs for farmers welfare and support to entrepreneurs.

103. This Government has also been able to galvanise the entire administrative machinery and the society to work in a collaborative manner. I feel very privileged to have been part of this extraordinary journey. I want to reaffirm the commitment of this Government to continue with the same momentum in the next year as we move towards the 50th anniversary of Statehood. I want to conclude by thanking every citizen of the State, including our women, farmers, youth, artists, entrepreneurs, grassroot development workers and children.

104. Mr. Speaker Sir, with these few words I commend the Budget to this august House.

Khublei Mitela Jai Hind