

**GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA, OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MINISTER
Media & Communications Cell
Shillong**

Press Release | Shillong | Sept 27, 2020

CM ADDRESS ON WORLD TOURISM DAY

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Sunday attended a virtual World Tourism Day conclave organised by the Ministry of DoNER, Govt of India on the theme – “Emerging Delightful Destinations”, wherein he spoke of the vital role tourism plays in leveraging the economy and enhancing livelihood.



The North Eastern Council, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region organises the event annually in different parts of the country to promote and showcase the rich cultural heritage of the North East to the rest of the country. This year because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was organised virtually, which was inaugurated by the Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State (I/C), Ministry of DONER.

Talking on the theme of this year’s World Tourism Day -- “Tourism and Rural Development”, Chief Minister said, “It blends well with the theme of the event and is a reminder to all of us about the vital role of tourism in developing and enhancing rural economies”.

Speaking at length on the tourism potential of Meghalaya that is blessed with bountiful nature, forests, waterfalls, caves, wildlife, flora and fauna, the Chief Minister said “Our cultural

heritage and traditions are deeply rooted in nature and it is in rural Meghalaya that the best of our tourist destinations are located, be it in Sohra, Mawlynnong, Shnongpdeng or Nokrek”.

Informing that in 2019 Meghalaya recorded 1.2 million tourist footfall and the tourism sector has played a pivotal role in providing direct and indirect employment to the local people, he said, “Meghalaya is one of the fastest-growing and travel destinations in Northeast”.

He remarked that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, tourism in the State has been badly hit, however, the Government has prepared a roadmap to revamp the tourism sector in the State. “The Government of Meghalaya is conscious of the impact of Covid-19 on the growing tourism industry in the state and therefore, it is crucial to plan the reopening of tourism in Meghalaya so that it benefits all the tourism stakeholders involved, the residents of the state and the travellers & visitors alike”, he added.

Stating that due to Covid-19 pandemic, there are travel restrictions globally and within India which has created an opportunity for Northeast, he said, “Amidst the disruption caused by the pandemic, there is also an opportunity for Meghalaya and Northeast. India has almost 26 million outbound tourists. A large section of these will look for exotic destinations within the country. Meghalaya is one such exotic destination that will be ready to welcome a big section of these high-value tourists”.

He informed that the Government is committed to bring in investment in the emerging tourism destinations by creating resorts and luxury tented accommodations which will revive the rural sector. “We are also investing in upskilling the rural tourism stakeholders and we expect the mode of revenues from tourism to flow into the rural areas as we open up”, he stressed.

Talking about air connectivity Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma informed that direct flights from Delhi to Shillong will start in end of October 2020, which will further add to the growth of the tourism sector in the State. He also expressed his optimism that direct flights to Shillong will also start soon from other cities like Mumbai and Hyderabad.