



सत्यमेव जयते

Government of Meghalaya

# Chief Minister's Speech

On the Occasion of  
**Independence Day**

15<sup>th</sup> August 2025

My Dear Citizens,

1. It fills my heart with immense pride to greet you on this 79<sup>th</sup> Independence Day. Today, we remember and pay tribute to the visionaries who gave us a free India, Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. We pay homage to the patriots from Meghalaya's soil, U Tirot Sing, U Kiang Nangbah, and Pa Togan Sangma. We also honour the members of the defence, paramilitary and police forces who have made great sacrifices to protect the rule of law.
2. Meghalaya continues to be a peaceful state with an enabling atmosphere for development and business. A significant milestone has been the advancement made in resolving the long-standing border issues with Assam, guided by the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two states. Following the Chief Minister-level meeting, the construction of the inter-state boundary pillar in the Hahim area has been completed, and steady progress is being made in other locations. This marks a notable progress toward a lasting resolution and cooperation between the two neighboring states.
3. We have also strengthened the very foundations of justice in Meghalaya. New criminal laws are fully in force, with every police officer, prosecutor, and judge trained to use them effectively. Technology like e-Sakshya and e-FIR is making justice more rapid and accessible, while mobile forensic vans and expert teams now reach every district. A dedicated Directorate of Prosecution is in place, ensuring that when crimes occur, justice is not just promised, but delivered.
4. Friends, it is my privilege to address you for the eight consecutive Independence Day, as your Chief Minister. When I look back at the journey we began in 2018, it fills me with hope, confidence, and pride. Despite the global pandemic and other challenges, we are marching on the road of progress.
5. Today, Meghalaya stands tall as the second fastest-growing state in the country, just after Tamil Nadu. Our growth rate for 2024-25 at constant prices is 9.66%; this is double the State's growth rate of 5.1% in 2018 when the MDA Government came to power. I am also proud to share that Meghalaya is the only state in the country which has achieved a consistent growth rate of about 10% over 3 consecutive years post the COVID pandemic. This is an achievement that all of us should be very proud of. How did Meghalaya transform from a state growing at 5% to a state growing at 10%? Meghalaya's growth rate in 2015-16 was 2%, 2016-17 was 5%, 2017-

18 was 4%, 2018-19 was 5%, and 2019-20 was 5%. In contrast, the growth rates in 2022-23 was 10%, 2023-24 was 11%, and 2024-25 is 10%. This achievement is the result of years of persistence, careful planning, and the hard work of the Government.

6. Last month, the Union Finance Minister, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, spent four days in Meghalaya. She travelled across our beautiful state, meeting farmers, youth, entrepreneurs, women, and community members. After returning to New Delhi, she penned a heartfelt article about Meghalaya, commending our efforts to promote inclusive and sustainable development. She described Meghalaya as a shining example of a confident and self-reliant India.
7. I am thankful to the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri. Narendra Modi, who has recently recognized Meghalaya's development model, describing it as a blueprint for an Aatmanirbhar Bharat. Similar sentiments have been echoed by the Chairman of 16<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission, our development partners from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and leaders from the private sector. Friends, one thing is clear, Meghalaya is on the path of progress, and we are all on this glorious journey together.
8. There are challenges, but we shall overcome them, as we have done in the last seven and a half years. We are at a midway point in the 15-year journey, from 2018 to 2032, when we commemorate 60 years of Meghalaya's statehood. In 2018, our GDP was less than Rs. 30,000 crores. In seven and a half years, we have doubled the GDP to Rs. 59,626 crores. In the next seven and a half years, we will more than double our GDP from the current Rs. 60,000 crores to Rs. 1,40,000 crores. This increased GDP will lead to more jobs for our youth, more opportunities for every citizen, and make Meghalaya one of the top 10 states in the country. This is our Vision 2032, and the Government is making every effort to make it a reality.
9. As I reflect on the past seven and a half years, some of my most cherished memories come from travelling to every corner of our State and connecting with farmers, youth, women, headmen, community leaders and senior citizens. These experiences have taught me valuable lessons and guided the Government's priorities.
10. The Government has identified 10 opportunities to drive growth. I have also made 10 clear commitments to our people which we will deliver by 2032. These are improved connectivity and mobility, piped drinking water, reliable power supply, highspeed internet connectivity, housing for all, affordable healthcare, nutrition and early childhood development, joyful and

quality learning, effective service delivery and grievance redressal, and a caring and empowering state. We are working on the 10 opportunities, we are promising 10 commitments to the citizens, and we will become one of the top 10 states in the country by 2032. This is the Mission 10 of this Government.

11. As we step into the second half of our journey towards Vision 2032, the one message I want every listener to carry with them is to stay optimistic and be patient. Change takes time, but it is happening. Across the State and in every sector, wonderful things are unfolding. Today, I want to share some of these stories with you. Stories that reflect the resilience of our people, the strength of our vision, and the progress we are making together.
12. Let me start with lewduh, one of the oldest and busiest traditional markets in Meghalaya. Earlier this year, I visited lewduh for the first time. As I walked through the crowded lanes of the market along with my cabinet colleagues and officials, we saw how the vendors and shoppers struggled with waterlogged paths and poor amenities. I made a promise to take up a comprehensive redevelopment program of the market. Within three months, we sanctioned a project for Rs. 14 crores to improve public amenities of lewduh Market including street lighting and façade improvement. Under the newly launched Chief Minister's Urban Livelihood Grant, Rs. 10,000 has been provided as support to all the small businesses at lewduh. Similar support will be extended to small and informal businesses in all urban markets of the state.
13. Another successful initiative has been the relocation of hawkers at Khyndailad, the heart of Shillong's commercial area. For years, street vending remained unregulated, contributing to traffic congestion and making pedestrian movement difficult. No one in the last fifteen years had imagined that Government could peacefully execute a relocation plan. This Government's sincerity, empathy, and persistence has achieved what was thought of as unachievable. After multiple rounds of consultations with the vendors, we successfully relocated the 407 vendors of Khyndailad to the MUDA Shopping Complex last month. To ensure a smooth transition, the Government provided dedicated vending kiosks and relocation support of Rs. 20,000 to each of these vendors.
14. Our efforts in places like lewduh and Khyndailad reflect a broader commitment to inclusive governance and improving urban areas. Initiatives for strengthening the urban infrastructure are being implemented in Shillong, Tura, Jowai, and other towns. Iconic projects including the Meghalaya Secretariat Complex in New Shillong, Additional Secretariat Complex in Tura, and

the Integrated Administrative Complex in Jowai have been initiated. New Shillong City, which was only an idea till five years ago, is becoming a reality with several new projects like IT park Phase II, Unity Mall, Skills and Innovation Hub, Heliport, and Working Women's Hostel being executed. I especially want to thank the communities of Umsawli, Mawdiangdiang, Mawpat, Mawkhanu and Tynring who are working with the Government in making New Shillong a reality.

15. Majority of Meghalaya's population resides in rural areas and is dependent on agriculture. My Government is committed to more than doubling the income of our 3.5 lakh farming households and improving their livelihoods. We are working closely with co-operative societies and farmer groups to strengthen food processing, value addition, and exports. For instance, in Tikrikilla block, West Garo Hills, a co-operative society has developed a new brand of ice cream from locally grown fruits like pineapple, passion fruit, and jackfruit. Just as Amul grew from a co-operative in Gujarat to become a national brand, I believe Nokma brand can follow a similar journey for Meghalaya. This success was possible because of the hard work of 2,000 women farmers of this co-operative and also because the Government invested more than Rs. 10 crores in creating the infrastructure and providing planting materials to the farmers. Today, the 2,000 farmer members from this co-operative benefit by earning an additional income of Rs. 90,000 every year. This is the kind of change we are working towards, where farmers lead the way, local enterprises grow, and the people of Meghalaya take pride in building their own success stories.
16. Similarly, in Ri-Bhoi, we have taken steps to unlock the potential of ginger, one of the finest agricultural products of our state. For years, Bhoiymbong has been known as the largest ginger market in Meghalaya. The farmers here produce one of the best organic gingers, with the potential to reach international markets. However, the absence of large-scale processing facilities was a big challenge. To address this, the Government provided a grant of Rs. 22 crores to Eastern Ri-Bhoi Organic Farmer Producer Company for establishing the region's largest organic spice processing unit. When this unit is inaugurated in November this year, about 7,500 ginger farmers from the area will be able to get a better price for their ginger produce and export it to markets in Europe and Middle East.
17. The State Government is committed to supporting farmers in distress due to price fluctuations. A year ago, we observed that the incomes of nearly 40,000 broom grass cultivators had

declined sharply. To support the farmers, we launched the CM Assure programme. Under this initiative, the Government purchased 10,000 metric tonnes of broom grass from 15,000 farmers and credited Rs. 44,000 per farmer directly into their bank accounts. This is the largest market intervention program in the agriculture sector in the history of the state.

18. Crop-specific interventions are happening in lakadong turmeric, mushroom, khasi mandarin, strawberry, pineapple, bay leaf, pepper, tomato, potato, and other crops through CM Farm+ and other mission mode interventions. All these initiatives are contributing to Meghalaya's 10% growth rate.
19. Meghalaya is a proud Matrilineal society, and our women have been the key drivers of growth. Our state is witnessing a powerful movement of women-led Self-Help Groups. When I assumed office in 2018, there were just 6000 such groups. Today, that number has grown to 53,000, including 40,000 Lakhpati Kongs and Abis, women who earn over Rs. 1 lakh annually through their enterprises. Women are also leading Meghalaya's entrepreneurship story. Women comprise about 47% of the 5,500 beneficiaries supported under the PRIME programme. The story of the women entrepreneurs, laishah Rymbai & Lebaini Rymbai of Eri-Weave Pvt. Ltd has caught national attention. It was a moment of immense pride for all of us to see the two Kongs representing Meghalaya on Shark Tank India. Through the efforts of such women leaders and entrepreneurs, the traditional crafts like sericulture and weaving of the Ryndia silk are flourishing and creating employment in rural areas. The recent recognition of GI tag for Ryndia silk further strengthens this movement.
20. Our women leaders are also excelling in grassroots governance. Owing to our landmark legislation in 2021 reserving seats for women in Village Employment Councils, women's representation has seen a remarkable rise, from just 300 functionaries before the policy to over 4,500 women leaders today.
21. Meghalaya's greatest strength today lies in our dynamic and passionate youth. Across fields, many inspiring young people have shown that greatness can be achieved right here in Meghalaya. We are especially proud of youth like Pynshngain Kurbah, who won a historic bronze medal in Canoe Slalom at the 38<sup>th</sup> National Games, Meghalaya's first in a decade.
22. Addressing you all today from this iconic J.N Stadium, gives me a sense of immense pride. This newly developed field is today recognized as one of the premier fields-of-play in the country. We have successfully hosted prestigious events such as the AFC Qualifiers, ISL matches, and



the historic Durand Cup. A world-class turf protection system is in place and the stadium has truly transformed into a multi-purpose venue. It is now equipped to host not only top tier sporting events but also concerts, government functions, and celebrations like today's. This government remains committed to developing world class sports infrastructure. We are also building India's dedicated largest football stadium in New Shillong with a seating capacity of 40,000. Our goal is to be the football capital of India and through this create opportunities for our youth.

23. Another major milestone was the revival of the Meghalaya Games after 16 years, with the 6<sup>th</sup> edition held in Jowai in 2025 with 4,000 participants. But our journey does not stop there. In 2027, Meghalaya will proudly host the 39<sup>th</sup> National Games, a landmark moment for our State. From winning just 5 medals in the past, we have now set an ambitious target of securing 50 medals in 2027. Government has recently extended nearly Rs. 40 crores in financial assistance to the State Sports Associations and the Meghalaya State Olympic Association to train and prepare our athletes. I strongly believe that we have laid a firm foundation for sports development in Meghalaya. By 2032, I am confident that at least one Olympian from Meghalaya will represent India.
24. Another avenue for empowering of our youth is entrepreneurship. We understand the challenges entrepreneurs face, especially in accessing funding, mentorship, and networks. In response, we have launched the PRIME programme, through which we have set up incubation centres, organized hands-on training, connected entrepreneurs with investors, and provided seed funding and interest-free loans. One such inspiring entrepreneur is Keenan K Marak who started United Rice Brew, India's first handcrafted, canned, and carbonated rice beer, with Rs. 12 lakhs in government support. Drawing inspiration from the traditional Garo rice beer 'Bitchi val', the venture preserves centuries-old brewing techniques. By supporting young people like Keenan, we are helping thousands believe in their ideas and turn them into successful businesses.
25. To further support entrepreneurship, we launched the CM Elevate programme, focused on providing credit linkage and infrastructure support. I recently inaugurated True North Fitness Centre & Swimming Academy in Shillong, started by four young entrepreneurs. With Rs. 1 crores in government subsidy, they have built Meghalaya's first year-round fitness and swimming facility. 2,850 entrepreneurs have already benefitted from CM Elevate. We are

opening the next round of applications for the programme starting today. Under the new guidelines, 50% subsidy is being provided for all livestock-related and other businesses, 60% for fishery-related enterprises, 75% for agriculture and warehousing enterprises, and 80% for tourism homestays.

26. Skilling our youth has been my big priority. In the past few years, we have trained over 30,000 youth in more than 190 different trades, from farming to hospitality, from construction to healthcare. Over 8,600 of skilled youth have become micro entrepreneurs, creating businesses in tailoring, repairs, bakeries, nurseries, and more. Today, Meghalaya's nurses, caregivers, and skilled workers are earning respect and good incomes in Japan, Singapore, and Germany, each one a proud ambassador of our State. By 2032, we will place more than 5,000 skilled youth in international jobs. We will also continue to strengthen opportunities here at home in high-employment sectors like Tourism.
27. The Homestay Scheme was launched to provide livelihood opportunities even in the remotest areas of the state. Through this initiative, more than 800 new homestays are thriving across Meghalaya. Let me share the story of Isabella Areng, a woman entrepreneur from Baghmara, who started Wari-Chora Areng Homestay. With Government support, she was able to expand her property from two rooms to six rooms and employ six people from her village. Today, her annual income has increased exponentially, and she mentors other women in her village to pursue similar enterprises. Alongside homestays, the Government is actively promoting high-value tourism by developing infrastructure in various new circuits and destinations like Mawsynram, Sohiong, Mawdok, Marangar, Kynshi, Nongkhnum, Nongmahir, Resubelpara, Mandalgre, Adokgre and Siju.
28. Meghalaya's music, arts and culture are our greatest treasure. Today, our concert economy has emerged as a national model. In the last year, we hosted 7 major events creating an overall economic impact of Rs.133 crores and employing thousands of our youth. Through Chief Minister's Meghalaya Grassroots Music Program, 7,750 artists have been supported. About 500 filmmakers, music video creators and content creators are being supported through the Hello Meghalaya Program. New films and content in our own Khasi, Garo and Pnar are being created with Government support.
29. Friends, improved health, early childhood development, and education form the foundations of our growth story. The Government is deeply committed to ensuring that every citizen of



Meghalaya has access to quality and affordable medical care. I am proud to say that we have one of the highest healthcare budgets in the country. 7 years ago, our state was facing the biggest challenge of high maternal and infant deaths. Our flagship programs like the MOTHER programme and Chief Minister's Safe Motherhood Scheme have been instrumental in addressing this challenge. Through persistent efforts, perseverance, and dedication of our healthcare workers, these initiatives have led to a 51% reduction in maternal deaths and a 37% drop in infant mortality since 2020. We have also made healthcare more affordable. Under MHIS programme, insurance coverage has increased from Rs.1.6 lakhs to Rs.5.3 lakhs, and registration has grown from 50% to 90% over the last decade. Community engagement in health has been strengthened through the formation of Village Health Councils, which are now active in almost 7,000 villages of the state. Health infrastructure has been improved dramatically and nearly 2,500 professionals, including 457 doctors have been recruited to strengthen service delivery to the remotest villages.

30. Nutrition is a fundamental pillar of human development. In our schools, nutrition gardens have grown from 9% to 80%, and mid-day meals are now served in 11,000 schools, nourishing over 6 lakh learners daily. Through our pioneering Early Childhood Development Mission, we are expanding Anganwadi services to all uncovered villages, ensuring access to nutrition, early learning, and health services.
31. We have made remarkable progress in addressing long-standing gaps in school infrastructure since 2018. Today, thousands of schools across Meghalaya are equipped with electricity, drinking water, clean toilets, computers and internet connectivity. Additionally, more than 4,000 schools now feature libraries, book banks and reading corners. We are beginning to see tangible results; student enrolment is rising, and academic performance is improving across all levels. This year, 96% of students under the Meghalaya Board of School Education (MBOSE) successfully passed their SSLC examinations. This has been achieved through a targeted intervention called CM Impact.
32. A major milestone in Higher Education is the establishment of the Captain Williamson Sangma State University. To further expand access, 248 new posts have been created for science and commerce colleges, and these streams are now being introduced in several government institutions. The newly inaugurated Shillong Government College of Engineering will soon

begin its academic session, offering courses in Civil and Electrical Engineering. New Model Degree Colleges in Ri Bhoi and East Garo Hills will also offer multidisciplinary programs.

33. As we celebrate progress across sectors, we recognize that physical infrastructure is fundamental to sustaining growth. Improving connectivity has been one of the top priorities of my Government. However, building roads in Meghalaya has never been easy. Our hills, while breathtaking, pose serious challenges for construction. The steep terrain and heavy rainfall often wash away roads and the cost of construction is high. Despite these difficulties, we remain committed to ensuring safe and reliable roads for our citizens. In just 10 years, Meghalaya's road network has expanded from under 10,000 km to over 14,000 km. We have connected 280 villages, constructed bridges, and strengthened the logistics infrastructure. I am thankful to the Hon'ble Prime Minister for sanctioning the high-speed corridor from Mawlyngkhung to Silchar and a 29 km Tura bypass to ease congestion and boost regional trade. The Government of India and the World Bank have approved a MEGA project for improving road connectivity. Through this project we are strengthening more than 500 Km of vital roads such as Umtyngar - Sohra in Khasi Hills, Dkhiah - Semmasi in Jaintia hills, and Deku - Chokpot in Garo hills.
34. Our dream of landing larger flights like Airbus in Umroi Airport, Shillong, is becoming a reality. The Government has procured the additional land required for the expansion of the runway from the current 1829 meters to 2400 meters and the construction work is expected to begin soon.
35. In addition to connectivity, we are investing in essential infrastructure such as water supply, power supply and IT. In just five years, piped drinking water coverage has increased from 4,500 households to over 5.39 lakh. The New Shillong Water Supply Scheme will bring safe water to more than 2 lakh people. The Greater Tura Water Supply Scheme will deliver clean water to thousands of families. Our power network is stronger than ever, with 24 new substations, and 2,200 km of distribution lines. To secure the energy future of the State, the Government has initiated the plans for production of an additional 300 MW of hydropower in the coming years. We are also investing in modern IT infrastructure, with new hubs in Shillong and Tura to create jobs, support innovation, and connect Meghalaya to the digital economy.
36. We are also using the digital medium to resolve citizen grievances like never before. Last year, we launched CM connect with a simple yet powerful idea, that Government must listen and

respond to every citizen. Today, anyone in Meghalaya who has a problem can simply pick up the phone and call 1971, send a message on WhatsApp, or attend a public hearing, to resolve their grievances. In January this year, a citizen in Ranikor raised concerns about a school in Keniong village and we responded within 19 days. Almost Rs. 6 lakh was sanctioned to repair and expand the school. Today, over 100 children study in safer classrooms because their voices were heard. I have personally met over 15,000 citizens, across seven blocks in Adokgre, Bhoirymbong, Betasing, Laskein, Nongstoin, Ranikor and Khatarshnong Laitkroh as part of the CM Connect public hearings. 1,300 Village Data Volunteers have also been appointed to help citizens in grievance registration and redressal.

37. Infrastructure at the block and sub-divisional level is being upgraded to improve public service delivery. Block offices in all the C&RD blocks are being upgraded, with many being completed and inaugurated and remaining under construction. Further, office buildings for the newly created subdivisions at Chokpot, Raksamgre, Mawshynrut, Ranikor, Jengjal, Dalu, Rongjeng and Patharkmah are being sanctioned.
38. My Government has made citizen welfare as its core focus by ensuring the right support reaches people directly. Across villages in Meghalaya, MGNREGS continues to play a vital role in supporting rural livelihoods. Today, the average wage credited to each household under the scheme stands at Rs.17,200, a significant increase from Rs. 11,900 in 2017-18. As part of PMAY-G, we have completed 1,47,422 houses since inception, with a record-breaking 84,585 houses completed in 2024-25, the highest ever in the state's history.
39. Under FOCUS+, I have committed to providing financial assistance to one member from every household engaged in productive livelihoods. The programme has already reached over 1.5 lakh producers across the state. Just yesterday, we credited the first installment of the pending payments for the 2023-24 to the individual accounts of 93,000 registered FOCUS+ beneficiaries. The next tranche will be released in December. I urge all the citizens to register for this programme and avail the benefits.
40. The Government also approved the Chief Minister's Scholarship Scheme under which every student pursuing post-matric education will receive an annual grant of Rs. 6,000. I am also proud to share that under CM Care, our senior citizens, single mothers, and persons with disabilities are now receiving regular financial assistance with dignity and without delay. These are not just schemes; they are expressions of our gratitude and care. We have designed a

simpler and unified Meghalaya One portal to help citizens easily register and avail all these schemes. I urge all citizens to make use of these initiatives by registering on the portal or engaging with the Village Data Volunteers who will visit homes to offer support.

41. Over the last seven and a half years, Meghalaya's progress has been largely driven by public investments, laying a strong foundation for development. As we embark on the next seven and a half years of our journey towards 2032, it is time to mobilize the private sector. More developed states of the country have successfully leveraged private investments to generate employment and expand economic opportunities. Meghalaya is now well-positioned to follow this path. In North Garo Hills, Varun Beverages Ltd. has established a Rs.330 crores state-of-the-art facility to manufacture carbonated soft drinks and fruit-based beverages. The plant has been built just in one year and has created over 500 jobs, positively impacting hundreds of families. Private investments are gaining momentum across sectors. Lemon Tree Aurika is constructing a new 5-star hotel in Shillong and Intercontinental Hotels Groups is constructing a new 5-star hotel at Sohra. We are focusing on green industries that align with Meghalaya's natural strengths, such as hydropower and bamboo. Our goal is to attract Rs. 8,000 crores in private investments, which will play a critical role in driving employment in the coming years.
42. Friends, as we celebrate 79 years of Independence, let us look ahead with confidence and determination. We are now halfway through our journey toward Vision 2032, and the progress we have made so far gives us every reason to be optimistic about the future. We are working with perseverance and dedication to ensure that development reaches every corner of the state and benefits every citizen. I sincerely thank each one of you for your continued support and collaboration with the Government. As I look ahead to 2032, I envision a Meghalaya where our youth thrive in global workplaces and build successful enterprises at home; where our farmers' produce reaches international markets; where our athletes bring home Olympic medals; and where our women are the forefront of progress. I see every village connected, every household empowered, and every child confident about the future. Let us continue this journey together with a shared purpose and commitment to building a better tomorrow for Meghalaya.
43. I would like to conclude with some quotes from Khasi, Pnar, and Garo which reflect our traditional wisdom and the strength of our culture:

- a. "Ka Bhalang Ka Imlang" - What you do should be for the common good, encouraging community welfare and a shared social responsibility
- b. "Tip Bru Tip Blai" - If you want to know God, know man first, indicating respect for a fellow human being and honoring God
- c. "Bija gita ma.dime, na.tik gita skonge" - Together like the bees, together like the shrimps, emphasizing the importance of unity at the community, state, and national level.

I wish you a very Happy Independence Day.

**Khublei! Mitela! Jai Hind!**