

My Dear Meghalayans,

1. On this momentous occasion of the 75th Independence Day, I convey my heartfelt greetings to all of you. Today we remember and pay homage to our freedom fighters and founding leaders of the world's largest democracy- Mahatma Gandhi who taught us the lessons of truth and non-violence, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who united this Country, Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar who gave us our Constitution, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose who raised the first Indian National Army 'Azad Hind Fauj', Jawahar Lal Nehru for his vision of a new industrialized India and many known and unknown names. We also salute the sacrifices of the patriots from Meghalaya like U Tirot Sing, U Kiang Nangbah, Pa Togan Sangma for their courage and commitment towards freedom. These three heroes are being honoured through various programs as part of the 'India at 75' celebrations.

2. 74 years ago, on this day we declared our independence from a distant invader. Today, our fight is against a deadly virus. Since the onset of COVID-19, we have had more than 71,000 positive cases in the State. We have also lost more than 1,200 lives. I salute our frontline healthcare workers, doctors, nurses, volunteers, community leaders, religious leaders, police personnel, municipal workers, political representatives and district administration teams who selflessly risked their lives every day to serve others in need. To those who have suffered and lost their near and dear ones, I would like to extend my sincere condolences.

3. Since the beginning of this pandemic, we have followed a collaborative approach in dealing with every challenge, by involving the community leaders, localities, religious institutions and above all the people of the State. Through this process we have been able to deal with the various issues and reduce the suffering of our citizens. We are still in the second wave of the pandemic. Though the number of cases today is on the decline compared to the peak in May 2021, our positivity rates continue to be high. We need to be extremely vigilant and follow all COVID-19 protocols.

4. Most importantly, we need to increase vaccination coverage. The State opened up COVID-19 vaccination for people over 18 years and above from 14th May, 2021. Covishield vaccine is being administered free of cost in the Government vaccination centres. Despite the understanding that COVID-19 vaccination is crucial for protection against severe disease and death, the progress of COVID-19 vaccination in the State is sadly unsatisfactory. As on date only 47% of eligible individuals have taken at least their first dose. There is considerable vaccine hesitancy in the State especially in the rural areas largely due to misinformation.

5. Along with vaccine hesitancy, the State is also confronted with refusal for testing and delays in seeking medical attention by infected persons. Studies and statistics world over as well as practical evidence have indicated that the impact of COVID-19 has not been severe on persons who have been vaccinated. Vaccines give protection from serious illness and death.

6. While the Government has been making all efforts to control the pandemic, significant impact can be achieved only with the cooperation of the community and the residents. Please wear your masks correctly, keep distance from others, wash or sanitize your hands frequently and vaccinate yourselves immediately. Let us be responsible, not only for our safety, but more so, for the safety of our near and dear ones.

7. The State Government has also decided to award the first 100 villages which achieve full vaccination coverage of eligible population by 31st August, 2021. An amount of Rs. 5 lakhs will be given to every such village for carrying out development works.

8. Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020, the State Government has upgraded the infrastructure of several health facilities. The number of beds has been increased and oxygen facilities have also been set up in the district hospitals and Community Health Centres in view of the importance of medical oxygen for management of COVID-19 patients. Medical gas pipelines and PSA oxygen generation plants have been installed at various hospitals. A cryogenic oxygen plant is now operational at Umsawli, East Khasi Hills and another is ready to be inaugurated at Jenjal, West Garo Hills. Fortunately, we did not face any severe shortage of oxygen during the peak period of the second wave.

9. In addition to upgrading the health infrastructure, we have taken a number of relief measures. Last year during the first wave of the pandemic we provided monetary support to registered and unregistered labourers and other workers, monetary support to the citizens who got stranded in other States, arranged transport for them to Meghalaya and provided support to community quarantine centres. We also distributed provision kits to the quarantined and positive case households. We set up quarantine and corona care centres across the State. This year, during the second wave, we continued with the running of quarantine and the corona care centres and distribution of provision kits. Further, given the unfortunate increase in the number of fatalities, we are providing an ex-gratia payment of Rs. 50,000 to the family members of the deceased. We have also enhanced the coverage of Meghalaya Health Insurance Scheme to reduce the out-of-pocket expenditure for the hospitalized individuals and regulated the rates of COVID-19 treatment by private hospitals.

10. Despite of COVID-19 pandemic, our focus on basic healthcare services and maternal and child health has remained strong. With 90% coverage during 2020-21, Meghalaya has ranked 2nd in the country in routine immunization. Through focussed monitoring under the MOTHER program, the institutional deliveries have increased in nine out of the eleven districts last year. We have also started a 'Rescue Mission' to save the lives of mothers, neonates and infants. Under the Government of India's Maternity Benefit Programme, cash incentives of Rs. 5000 were given in three installments to 31,800 beneficiaries over the last three years.

11. A comprehensive program for the infrastructure upgradation of all the 659 health facilities is being implemented with support from the World bank. 340 health facilities are being upgraded to Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres. We have also launched telemedicine and tele-consultation services to enhance our health facility coverage in rural areas.

12. Along with health, education forms the core of human development. Many challenges remain in primary, secondary and higher education sectors. We have undertaken a range of steps to address several of the issues with particular focus on infrastructure upgradation. The construction of 39 Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) have been initiated. At present, the construction of two EMRS at Pahamsyiem in Ri Bhoi and Samanda in East Garo Hills are at an advanced stage. For the remaining EMRS, works are under various stages of implementation. The upgradation of infrastructure at another 208 schools has also been taken up this year.

13. In higher and technical education, the Shillong College of Engineering, College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tura, the Capt. Williamson A Sangma Technical University, the Patharkhmah Model Degree College and the Rongjeng Model Degree College are near completion and will be operationalized soon. I am optimistic that all these efforts shall lead to comprehensive improvement in the education sector.

14. Dear citizens, since the MDA Government came to power, we have been prioritizing development and I am confident and proud to say that this

Government is living up to its promises on the delivery of developmental services. We have set for ourselves a very ambitious target of transforming Meghalaya into one of the Top 10 Indian States in terms of Per Capita Income and achievement of SDG Goals within the next 10 years. In my last Independence Day speech, I launched the Restart Meghalaya Mission promising an investment of Rs. 14,515 crores in various critical sectors. I am happy to report that many of these investments are being done. Some of these investments are already showing results.

15. Infrastructural development is foundational for sustainable growth. Lack of proper road connectivity prevents farmers from accessing markets, women from accessing health care and hinders overall development. To solve this problem, my government has been working tirelessly to construct rural roads on a never before seen scale. In the last two years we have completed the construction of about 1,000 Kms of rural roads under the PMGSY program. Another 1,850 kms of roads will be completed in the next two years.

16. Alongside rural roads, we are investing about Rs. 1,700 crores in major roads and bridges. Critical roads like the Bajendoba-Resubelpara-Medipathar-Damra Road, the Umling Patharkhmah road, the Pasyih-Grampani road, the Mairang-Ranigodown road and the Rongram-Phulbari Hill road are under construction and will be completed by the end of 2022. Iconic Bridges are being constructed on the Umngot river in West Jaintia Hills, Shella river in East Khasi Hills and Damring river in North Garo Hills. Work on two key National Highway projects is underway- two laning from Tura-Dalu road of NH-51 covering a total length of 54 Kms and

improvement of NH-40 between Shillong and Dawki and construction of Dawki bridge covering a total length of 80 Kms.

17. In water supply, we have a very ambitious vision of providing functional tap connections to the 5.9 lakhs Households in the State by the end of 2022. Of these, we have already completed 1.33 lakhs. This aggressive implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission is transforming the lives of the people. For instance, in Rikhen Village in Mairang Block, West Khasi Hills, women and children have been freed from the drudgery of fetching water from far away springs thanks to the Functional Household Tap Connections provided in all the 145 households. We want to bring such transformation and comfort to our women and children across the rural areas of the State.

18. We are also implementing large water supply schemes in Shillong, Tura, Nongstoin and Baghmara. Recently, the Greater Sohra Water Supply Scheme, constructed with an investment of Rs. 24 crores, was inaugurated.

19. Friends, the availability of quality and reliable power supply is crucial for all including farmers, small businesses and large industries. Unfortunately, the sector has faced persistent challenges on account of the financial liabilities that had accumulated over the last 10 years. These liabilities had been crippling the entire sector. My government had to take the bold step of availing a loan of Rs. 1,345 crores under the Government of India's Atma Nirbhar Scheme to clear all the pending liabilities.

20. We have also made a detailed action plan for reducing the aggregate transmission and distribution losses along with improving our billing and collection efficiencies over the next three years.
21. The construction of the 22.5 MW Ganol Hydro Electric Project is progressing well. In 2022, we will be able to generate power in the Garo Hills and fulfill a long held aspiration of the region. We are also making efforts to set up solar power projects to diversify the energy-mix of the State.
22. Several other critical infrastructure projects are getting implemented at a fast pace. We intend to complete these projects well before the Golden Jubilee celebration of our Statehood in January next year. These include the new Assembly building, the Shillong International Centre for Performing Arts and Culture (SICPAC) and the IT park at New Shillong Township, various schemes under the Shillong SMART city project, the Tribal Research Institute at Babadam, West Garo Hills and the PA Sangma football stadium at Tura. Recently, we inaugurated the Inter-State Bus Terminus (ISBT) at Mawlai Mawñong.
23. Continuing on the theme of infrastructure, I would like to emphasize on Border infrastructure. We share a border of 444.8 kms with Bangladesh; increasing border trade could give a boost to the economies of our border villages. I believe that Bangladesh offers huge potential for economic cooperation in the sectors of Agriculture and Tourism. This year three Border Haats were inaugurated at Bholaganj and Ryngku in East Khasi Hills

and Nalikata in South West Khasi Hills. Construction of another three haats is underway.

24. Dear Friends, our State is an agri-based economy and more than 70% of our population is engaged in Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries, Livestock and Textile sectors. As we gear up to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Statehood, this Government wants to do something fundamental for the farmers and producers of the State. With this vision we launched a comprehensive program called FOCUS- Farmers' Collectivization for Upscaling Production and Marketing Systems.
25. The program aims at collectivization of farmers into Producer Groups, FPOs and Cooperatives. Under the program, over the next 15 months, Rs. 5,000 will be provided to every farming household for taking up activities related to value chain development. This funding will be provided as a corpus to the producer groups. An amount of Rs. 200 crores will be spent on the FOCUS program. The pilot phase of the program has been successfully implemented with the formation of over 2,200 new Producer Groups comprising about 30,000 farmers. An amount of about Rs. 12 crores has already been credited into the bank accounts of the producer groups.
26. I have personally interacted with the Banana and the Ginger groups in Songsak block and the Bayleaf and Honey producer groups in Mawkyrwat block who have been provided funds under the FOCUS program. The response from the farmers is overwhelming. They now have money at hand

to invest in the immediate needs of production rather than having to look for money lenders or financial institutions or government departments.

27. Mission Mode projects with specific product focus continue to be implemented. Under the Lakadong mission an additional area of 1,075 hectares has been covered benefitting over 6,000 farmers in the Laskien and Thadlaskien blocks. Export shipment of our Turmeric has also been facilitated to the Netherlands, Russia, UK and USA. Under the Mushroom Mission, annual production of oyster and button mushroom has increased from 27 metric tons to 200 metric tons during 2020-21.

28. New initiatives in Horticulture include the focus on Citrus revival, development of the Bee Value Chain, promoting floriculture and increasing vegetable production. Centres of Excellence are being set up for Citrus at Dawagre in East Garo Hills, for Vegetables at Jongsha in East Khasi Hills and for Bee Development at Sambrak in North Garo Hills. Another aspiration for our State is to be completely organic by 2030. The Bio-Resources Development Centre at Upper Shillong has been declared as the State Nodal Agency for Organic Certification.

29. Fisheries and Aquaculture are key sources of income generation in Meghalaya. We continue to implement Meghalaya State Aquaculture Mission 2.0. In addition to area expansion and increasing production, development of fish sanctuaries is also being prioritized.

30. Leveraging our State's strength in rearing livestock, we have been implementing Piggery mission and Milk mission successfully. Under the piggery mission, 95 cooperative societies and 1,367 producers have been sanctioned interest-free loans for breeding and fattening.
31. Friends, another primary sector activity that is particularly important for our women farmers is weaving and sericulture. The Government is supporting the Eri and Muga weavers in adopting scientific methods. The process of obtaining the Geographical Indication for Meghalaya's unique Eri – The Ryndia Peace Silk is under progress.
32. An issue that plagues all rural farmers in the State is access to credit. With limited penetration of banks in rural Meghalaya and COVID-19 pandemic, our farmers are facing extreme hardship in accessing banking services. Unfortunately, it has become a common sight to see long queues of villagers, particularly women, sometimes with infants, waiting for hours together in front of banks either to deposit or withdraw cash. Such hardships are not acceptable in this information technology age. We are working on expanding the banking network in rural areas - 19 new bank branches are planned to be opened by the end of 2021-22.
33. I also understand that brick and mortar financial institutions cannot be set up everywhere owing to business considerations. As an alternative, we have been working on a model of deploying Banking Correspondents (BCs) to provide banking services at the doorstep of rural people. 185 such BCs, equipped with micro ATMs and covering about 800 unbanked villages,

have been deployed so far. These BCs are solving the last mile access problem very effectively, while generating employment for themselves. For instance, Kong Boklinsha Kharwanniang, BC agent deployed in Mawkyrwat block of South West Khasi Hills earned a commission of Rs. 1.96 lakhs, while providing banking services to several villages. I compliment all the 185 BCs, the State Rural Livelihoods Society and the Meghalaya Rural Bank for building this successful model. We will now expand this model to cover all the underbanked villages through a network of another 400 BCs.

34. Another initiative for increasing the access to credit is the 2% interest subvention on Kisan Credit Card (KCC) loans. About 26,000 farmers benefited from the program in 2020-21. From this year, we will fully subvent the interest to be paid by farmers on KCC loans. This effectively means zero interest credit to our farmers under the KCC program.

35. In addition to easing the access to credit, the Government has facilitated an effective cash transfer of about Rs 14,500 to all the registered rural households in the State under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). The State spent Rs 1,370 crores on the Scheme in 2020-21. Several successful models of community project implementation and asset creation have emerged under the program. For instance, in Lwang village, Mawryngkneng Block, East Khasi Hills, a project was undertaken to construct a check dam to preserve water resources and indigenous fish species. The area, once used as a dumping ground, is now transformed into a huge water resource which has helped in revival of indigenous fish population and enabled construction of irrigation channels for farmers. This is a classic example of how Meghalaya

is achieving the objective of rural wage employment while simultaneously building infrastructure to improve the quality of life of the people.

36. I congratulate the Community and Rural development team, including all our Block Development Officers and grassroots staff, for consistently making Meghalaya one of the best performers in the country under the MGNREGS program over the last three years.

37. To create self employment for women, the Self Help Group movement is being prioritized. Under the National Rural Livelihood Mission, over 32,000 Self Help Groups are functional - majority of these groups have been formed over the last three years. These SHGs are bringing about a sea change in the empowerment of women and promoting economic and social development in the rural areas. For instance in Gaobari village in South Garo Hills, the Nokrek A-Bri Village Organization set up a poultry farm with an overall investment of Rs 19 lakhs. The unit started its operation in May, 2021, and is providing much needed employment and income to the women of the village in addition to increasing the nutritional well being of the children.

38. The third priority group for this Government alongside women and farmers is the youth of the State. In our State, 85 percent of the population is under 45 years of age, 74 percent is under 35 years of age and 59 percent is under 25 years of age. This large proportion of the young population, if provided the right opportunities, could become the key agents for social change, economic development and technological innovation. Taking due

cognizance of this, the State Youth Policy was approved recently. It lays out a detailed framework for engaging and empowering the 12 lakhs young people of the State in the age group of 15-29 years.

39. Another area of importance for youth is Sports. In the last few weeks, we witnessed the youth of the country put up their best ever performance at the Tokyo Olympics. I would like to congratulate all our medal winners whose performances have made us proud. I am also, however, saddened for not having any athlete from our State on the national Olympic squad. I am determined that we should atleast have a few of our athletes on the Paris Olympic squad in 2024. Today, I make a commitment to our athletes and the Sports Associations that the Government will do everything possible to achieve this dream.

40. We have already started building world class sports infrastructure at Shillong, East Khasi Hills, Tura, West Garo Hills and Wahiajer, West Jaintia Hills. Rural infrastructure including football grounds, running tracks and basketball courts are being constructed across various locations in the State.

41. A fundamental concern for the youth is employment. The youth unemployment rate in the urban areas in Meghalaya at 23.1 percent is higher than the national rate of 20.02 percent, while the rural rate of 8.9 percent is much lower than the national rate of 17.3 percent. We are focussing on skill development and entrepreneurship promotion to deal with the challenge of unemployment.

42. In the last three years, more than 41,000 youth were trained in sectors like fashion, retail and hospitality under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana program. Ten out of the twelve ITIs in the State have been upgraded during the last two years. Given the pandemic and the uncertainties in the labor market, we are concentrating on skill development for the local economy in the agri and allied sectors.
43. I also believe that skilling should start early in a person's life. Accordingly, we will expand the existing vocational education programs and are launching a unique program called Meghalaya One Skill One Talent. Under this program 50,000 mid-adolescents in the age group of 14-18 years will be trained for 10-15 hours in their chosen skill and talent. I believe this program will provide a strong foundation for youth development, enabling our children to discover themselves and to choose their life paths better.
44. Over the last three years, we have given a sustained push to entrepreneurship promotion. The State's flagship entrepreneurship program called PRIME has reached out to and supported hundreds of entrepreneurs. Two editions of the Chief Minister's E-championship challenge have been conducted to identify the best start up business ideas in the State. Over 1,600 people applied for the second edition of the challenge. We have set up PRIME Hubs as one-stop-shops for all enterprise support activities at Shillong and Tura. Funding windows in the form of Kickstart grants of upto Rs. 5 lakhs and interest free and collateral free loans of upto Rs. 25 lakhs are being provided to the entrepreneurs. I urge all entrepreneurs to apply for these funding support and avail the end-to-end support available under the PRIME program.

45. The stories and journeys of several of our entrepreneurs are inspiring. Pangsri N Sangma of VeroCrafty from West Garo Hills, Panseng Sangma of PM Sangma Fish Feeds from East Garo Hills, Bandapbiang Dewkhaid of Shillong Bamboo from East Khasi Hills and Justipassing Rynthathiang from Mairang, West Khasi Hills are just a few of the many Entrepreneurial champions of our State.
46. A special entrepreneurial segment that has huge potential in the State is Cultural and Creative Industries. To further this, we have started providing funding support for our artisans and creative entrepreneurs. An inspiring story is of Mirilla R Marak, a 65- year old potter from Siju in South Garo Hills. She is one of the longest practitioners of the centuries old craft of hand pottery. Thanks to the Rs. 5 lakhs of startup grant she recently received, she is building a pottery studio that will be used both for enhancing production, training the younger generation and promoting tourism.
47. Friends, the tourism sector has been the lifeline for thousands of our citizens and has played an instrumental role in putting Meghalaya on the world map. Globally, the sector has been under tremendous stress and stakeholders have suffered because of the ongoing pandemic. To partially mitigate the distress of the hotel industry, the government has been using many hotels for providing accommodation to the frontline workers and as quarantine centres. Till now Rs. 24 crores has been released to such hotels and this has prevented job losses for those engaged in the sector.

48. As and when tourism opens, we are ready to receive tourists in a systematic manner. As was promised to the citizens, the facilitation centre at Umling was set up and is fully operational. The construction of the centre at the Mendipathar Railway station is completed. The construction of facilitation centres at Berubari, North Garo Hills and Ratacherra, East Jaintia Hills are underway.
49. Our fundamental priority now is to create quality tourism infrastructure in various places. The much awaited CrowBorough Hotel in the heart of Shillong will be operational by the end of the year. The construction of luxury resorts at Sakal' Aduma in Nokrek, West Garo Hills and at Shnongpdeng, West Jaintia Hills has been initiated. New resorts are planned at Sohra and Laitlum in East Khasi Hills, Umling and Mawlyndep, Ribhoi and at Balpakram national park in South Garo Hills. Holistic development of tourism infrastructure will also be undertaken in villages with high tourism potential like Kongthong in East Khasi Hills, Kudengrim and Darrang in West Jaintia Hills, Shnongrim in East Jaintia Hills, Nongkhnum and Mawthadraishan in West Khasi Hills, Jakrem and Nongnah in South West Khasi Hills, Siju in South Garo Hills, Dalmagre in South West Garo Hills, Bansamgre in East Garo Hills and Resubelpara in North Garo Hills and others. Efforts are also on to improve air connectivity to the State. Currently we already have direct flights from Umroi to Kolkata, New Delhi, Silchar, Agartala and Imphal. We are hopeful that with improved connectivity and infrastructure, the tourism sector will achieve its potential and go on to become the main driver of growth and employment generation.

50. Friends, our State is one of the rainiest places on planet earth with water and forests deeply entwined with our lives and livelihoods. An unparalleled push is being given to water conservation. About 100 Small Multipurpose Reservoirs (SMRs) are being constructed across the State. An ambitious plan for construction of another 2,500 such reservoirs with an investment of about Rs 730 crores has recently been approved by the Ministry of Finance. The construction of these reservoirs will begin before the next monsoons.
51. We all know that Forests are the best natural reservoirs for conserving water and soil. About 76% of its geographical area of the State is under forest and tree cover. The Government is working towards bringing an additional 500 Sq. Km. area under forests by 2030. Towards this goal, about 10 lakhs saplings have been planted this year. We are building both government and community nurseries so that one crore saplings can be planted in the next season.
52. Policy initiatives like the Meghalaya Electric Vehicle Policy 2021 have been taken up to reduce pollution and protect the environment. As per the policy, 20,000 Electric Vehicles are planned to be inducted over the next five years. Further, we are also taking all the necessary steps to move towards scientific coal mining. Five applicants from the State have got prior approval for prospecting from the Government of India. I am optimistic that in the coming months mining leases will be granted with the approval of the Ministry of Coal.

53. I am happy to inform you that the Union Government is supporting us in our natural resource management endeavors. Recently, the Hon'ble Union Home Minister, Shri Amit Shah Ji inaugurated the Sohra Eco-restoration project, which aims at increasing the green cover and providing green livelihoods to the 45 villages in the Sohra area.
54. Dear Citizens, all the developmental efforts of the government rely on the foundations of peace, law and order and good governance. This year, the overall law and order situation in the State was by and large peaceful. Various festivals and National Days were celebrated peacefully following the health protocols. Elections of the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council were successfully conducted in April, 2021.
55. The inter-state boundary with Assam has been a long pending issue. Meghalaya shares an 884 kms boundary with Assam. There are 12 areas of difference between the two States that need to be resolved. Both State Governments are keen to discuss and bring about a long lasting solution. To take this forward, I held two meetings with the Chief Minister of Assam. We decided to take up six out of the 12 areas of difference in the first phase and the remaining six areas in the next phase. Joint Committees headed by a Cabinet Ministers from Meghalaya and Assam will conduct inspection of the six areas of the first phase namely, Tarabari, Gizang and Hahim in West Khasi Hills, Boklapara and Khanapara – Pillangkata in Ri-Bhoi and Ratacherra in East Jaintia Hills. The State Government is committed to finding an amicable solution to the boundary dispute with Assam. Law and Order situation along the Assam-Meghalaya inter-state border is normal except for a few incidents, which have been addressed immediately.

56. Friends, good governance is a core pillar of the State's Vision 2030 and the MDA Government has taken several steps in the last three years on this front. These include actions to improve the ease of doing business, the passage of the Meghalaya Right to Public Services Act, the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals and increased usage of Information Technology in various Citizen to Government and Government to Government transactions. The recently launched online life-certification for pensioners through the use of facial recognition technology is being used by over 10,000 pensioners.

57. Before I conclude, I would like to once again appeal to all of you to follow the COVID-19 protocols and get vaccinated. I would like to reaffirm that vaccines work and are effective against preventing the spread and reducing the fatality associated with COVID-19. Data from Meghalaya itself validates this. Almost 92 percent of the people who lost their lives over the last four months were unvaccinated. These unfortunate casualties could have been avoided had they received vaccinations on time. With our collective efforts, I am hopeful that we can overcome the pandemic in the coming months.

58. The year 2022 is of great significance for the State as we celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Statehood. I have requested the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi Ji for the grand celebrations that we plan to organize at Shillong on 21st January, 2022. As we move towards that milestone, my Government and I are committed to lead Meghalaya and its 38 lakhs

citizens into a better future. A future where everyone has the opportunities for individual fulfillment and to contribute to the common good.

Once again, I wish all my fellow citizens a very **“Happy Independence Day”**.

KHUBLEI ! MITELA ! JAI HIND !

