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**Meghalaya launches key initiatives under Education Sector to nurture young minds;
Education Minister urges teachers to create joyful learning environment**

PRESS RELEASE

Shillong | Feb 29, 2024

With an aim to foster and nurture homegrown technology and innovation and to reaffirm the commitment to scientific enquiry while fostering scientific temper among State's youth, the National Science Day was celebrated in Shillong in a two day event from February 28 to 29, 2024 at State Convention Centre, Shillong. The theme of the event this year was "Indigenous Technologies for Viksit Bharat". The event saw the participation of high school students and teachers from in and around Shillong city.



Speaking during the inaugural session of the event, the Chief Guest, Mr. Rakkam A Sangma, Minister of Education, and Government of Meghalaya expressed his excitement while interacting with the young minds, stating that he too is a keen learner with great interest in science and math subjects. Speaking about the importance of the subjects in not only nurturing and developing the cognitive skills of children, but more so, in navigating the complexities of life, Sangma announced that from the year 2024, the Government will make Science and Maths as mandatory subjects in the school curriculum, keeping in mind the importance of these subjects in developing life skills among youth. He also informed that the State is in the process of developing a state

curriculum framework which will be completed soon. He added that NCERT textbooks will soon be included in the school syllabus across the State, as previously announced.

He encouraged teachers present at the event to exercise patience with their students, especially when explaining concepts, theories and formulas so that the students are motivated to know more about the subject. He urged teachers to create a joyful learning environment for students.

Speaking on the issue of job reservation, the Minister urged students to look beyond Meghalaya and to inculcate a larger vision of contributing to the nation and the world.

"There is a need to develop an open mindset and prepare ourselves and especially our youth to look and go beyond Meghalaya", he said, adding that the future of tomorrow will be decided by nurturing the ideas that we have today.

The 1st day of the programme witnessed the launch of key initiatives:

1. **Launch of Queen's Gambit:** A New Era of Chess Education in Meghalaya: This is an initiative where, with an aim to enhance cognitive skills, strategic thinking and problem solving abilities among children and adolescents, chess is being introduced in schools. Launched under the banner of 'Queen's Gambit' to attract attention from school students, all schools were urged to register themselves for the programme.
2. **Launch of Meghalaya STAR 30:** Guiding Aspirations for NEET/JEE exams: under this initiative, annual residential coaching facilities is being initiated for 30 students per cohort from across Meghalaya, especially from rural areas for aspirants to be able to prepare and clear the NEET/JEE examinations. STAR 30 will offer residential coaching facilities for students who have completed 12th standard, providing dedicated mentorship from expert resource persons.
3. **Launch of PULSE (Promoting Understanding and Learning in Science Education):** PULSE is aimed at nurturing and developing an interest in students for the science subject through demonstrated as well as visual representations. During the poster launch, the Shillong Science Centre was launched through which interested students can register for PULSE. Through this, students are being given opportunities to visit the center through their schools.
4. **Launch of Tech Tutor Meghalaya :** Exploring Science and Maths in the Virtual Classroom: the launch included a



trailer video urging students to subscribe to the SCSTE Meghalaya YouTube Channel. This unique initiative is designed to make education easily accessible to all students, especially those living in remote areas. Lessons in Science and Maths by expert resource persons will be uploaded on the YouTube channel everyday in local languages as well as in English.

Delivering his keynote address, Mr. Gunanka DB, IFS, Joint Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya, Planning Dept & Member Secretary, State Council of Science Technology and Environment (SCSTE)-Meghalaya said that the core mandate of the SCSTE is to work towards

developing the cognitive abilities of our children and adolescents, and especially to develop a penchant for science and math subjects. He said, "The SCSTE is working to address the learning outcomes, while supplementing the activities of the Education Department".

Speaking about the launch of initiatives including the Queen's Gambit, Meghalaya STAR30, PULSE and TechTutor Meghalaya, Mr Gunanka said that all the initiatives are mostly targeted at not only making education accessible to students in rural areas, but more so, in creating an interest among students for Science and Math Subjects as they can help them navigate the complexities of life. He also spoke about the plan of having a science lab on wheels which will travel to schools located in remote areas. He added that all the initiatives are aimed at sustaining perennial interest in the aforementioned subjects, rather than just making it a one day affair.



The Guest of Honour, Mr Sampath Kumar, IAS, Development Commissioner and Principal Secretary, Government of Meghalaya spoke about the recently launched Meghalaya Multi Sectoral Programme for Adolescent Well being and Resilience (MPOWER) and added that adolescent period from 9-19 years of age offers a critical window of opportunity for nurturing and creation of a cognitive capital for the State, and this project is aimed at providing an enabling support to the target group.

He said that we should develop and nurture our skills in such a manner so as to help others around us. He added that homosapiens have been able to progress essentially due to science and scientific thinking. Echoing the words of the Education Minister, he further went on to emphasize the significance of teachers in nurturing young minds. "It is a joint effort by the parents, teachers and students to work with a purpose", he said, while urging students to come up with STEM clubs in schools and also visit the Chief Minister's Youth centers to avail the facilities therein. He reiterated, "we should all work with a collective goal of making Meghalaya one of the top 10 states in India and work towards making the State the cognitive capital of the world to fulfill the Chief Ministers vision of making Meghalaya one of the top 10 states in India".



The programme witnessed the felicitation of Meritorious Students who scored the highest marks in Science, Technology & Mathematics of Secondary & Higher Secondary MBOSE Examination 2022-2023. Students and teachers were sensitized about the MPOWER Programme by Ms. Grazeldiz Lyngdoh from the State Capability Enhancement Project (SCEP) team.

Stations and stalls representing MPOWER, Meghalaya Early Childhood Development Mission (MECDM), Chess Corner, Water Resources Department, Directorate of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary, Zoological Survey of India, Botanical Survey of India, among others, garnered huge

attention from students who attended the event.

The second session included science activities with Science Popular talk and video screening of Indigenous Technical Knowledge, Science skits through a puppet show, Science Exhibition & Innovation Exhibition, Technologies propagated by SCSTE, Poster presentation, Science Experiments & Demonstration and Science Model Exhibition by School Eco Clubs.



The second day of the National Science Day celebrations witnessed Poster presentations by Research Scholars, North Eastern Hills University (NEHU) and National Children Science Congress (NCSC) Projects. Open quiz & Extempore speech Competitions also witnessed good participation from students. The weeklong National Science Day Carnival ended with a Night Sky Observation.

The Closing session was marked with a prize distribution ceremony to winners of different competitions (posters/models/drawing/painting). Certificates of participation were also distributed to the participating organizations/Institutes/Schools. The vote of thanks was presented by Mr.

Twinkle Kharbuli from Shillong science center, Meghalaya.

It may be mentioned that as part of celebration of National Science Day 2024, the State Council of Science Technology and Environment (SCSTE) Meghalaya, along with Shillong Science Center had initiated a weeklong Science Programme from February 26th to March 2nd, 2024.

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Copy to:

1. The Director, Directorate of Information and Public Relation, for kind information with a request to issue the above Press release in tomorrow's edition of the all daily newspapers.

(Gunanka D. B. F'S)
Joint Secretary, Planning Department &
Member Secretary, SCSTE
Govt. of Meghalaya