ADDRESS

To The
Tripura Legislative Assembly

by
SHRI TATHAGATA ROY
HON’BLE GOVERNOR OF TRIPURA

Friday, January 8, 2016
Hon'ble Speaker and Hon'ble Members,

I would like to welcome all the Hon'ble Members to this first session of the Tripura Legislative Assembly for the year 2016. I convey New Year greetings and best wishes to the Hon'ble Members. I hope that this year would be very fruitful for the State in its continuous march towards peace and progress.

2. I request the Hon'ble Members of the House to join me in paying tribute to the men in uniform who made the supreme sacrifice in the call of duty as well as the civilians who lost their lives in the violence unleashed by the extremists and other anti-national forces.

3. The devastating recent flood in Tamilnadu which has caused immense loss to property and life deeply saddened us in Tripura. I would like to convey, on behalf of the people of Tripura, our condolences to the families of the deceased and our good wishes for early recovery of those who have sustained injuries.

4. During the current year, elections to the Members of Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council was completed peacefully and smoothly. Recently elections to Urban Local Bodies including the Agartala Municipal Corporation have been held and the newly elected bodies are now in place. New enthusiasm thus generated will define the contours of future development of our tribal and urban areas, in which small and medium sized towns will also participate in
the growth process. One of the main reasons for the extremely high turnout of voters in these elections is the high consciousness among voters in Tripura and nurturing of vibrant democratic traditions by the State and the society. This amply demonstrates the power of the common man. My Government has planned for capacity building of these elected public representatives, to enable them to provide smart leadership.

5. I congratulate Smt. Deepa Karmakar, Gymnast and proud daughter of the State, for winning bronze medal in 6th Asian Gymnastic Championship, 2015 and 5th position in 46th World Gymnastic Championship, 2015 and for receiving prestigious Arjuna Award in August, 2015. Tripura feels proud of her.

6. Despite its limitations, the Paris Agreement on climate change marks a milestone in preserving the earth's environment. It is the outcome of a long struggle by millions of citizens around the world. The 195 country-parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change have acknowledged that global climate action can no longer be postponed. In Tripura we shall have to work for preserving the environment in right order.

7. The year gone by has seen a spurt in terrorist activities in different countries. The cowardly attacks of extremists in Paris, Baghdad, Beirut, Afghanistan, United States of America and in several places in the world, has shocked the peace loving people. We
condemned these barbaric acts. I hope that the sensible people of the
globe will rise and continue their protest against any sorts of
extremism. At the same time there should be coordinated actions by
different Governments to combat the menace, which are disturbing
peace, tranquility and harmony in the society.

8. In various parts of India, communal tensions are being sharply
escalated, that seek to undermine the secular democratic foundations
of our country, civil liberties of the citizen and create widespread
insecurity amongst the religious minorities. India with people
inhabited by different faiths was always been known to be a society
with tolerance and fraternity. However, there have been disturbing
developments in different parts of the country with fundamentalist
forces raising their ugly heads, manifesting intolerance to other faiths
and beliefs. The growing intolerance and the spread of hatred in some
parts of the country may affect the very foundations of our democratic
and secular fabric. Hon'ble Members are aware that there have been
no communal disturbances and instances of intolerance in our State,
due to vibrant, democratic atmosphere, effective law and order
enforcement and appropriate development strategy. My Government
requests secular democratic minded people to make all out efforts
to ensure communal harmony, which is the essence of Indian polity
and culture.

9. The 125th Birth Anniversary year of Dr. Babasaheb B. R.
Ambedkar is being celebrated from 14th April, 2015 to 14 April, 2016. The drafting committee led by Dr. Ambedkar did a yeoman service to the nation in presenting the Constitution which was adopted on 26 November, 1949 and the day was celebrated as Constitution Day this year. My Government feels that Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity as enshrined in the Preamble of the Constitution and core national values, motivate our younger generation, in making our country a vibrant nation.

10. Global Growth for the year 2015 is expected at 3.1% which is 0.3% less than in 2014. The Global prospects across countries are uneven and recovery in advanced economies is yet to pick up. This has been further reflected in the negative growth of employment. The economies in the emerging market developing countries is projected to slow for the fifth year in a row impacting millions of poor in the world. The downside risks to the global economy have increased due to declining commodity prices, reduced capital flows into developing markets and rising global conflicts. The global economy is still far from assuring self-sustained growth.

11. With a new formula of calculation which is under dispute, the Indian economic growth is projected to be at 7.25%. While public investments have picked up, infrastructure bottlenecks still remain hampering full potential of the growth. Therefore, investments and exports have been very sluggish. The prices of essential commodities
have increased negatively eroding the purchasing capacity of the common man. India has to take major steps to revive growth to benefit poor, increase their purchasing capacity phenomenally and the fiscal policies should ensure that poor are not hurt and robust safety measures are taken to insulate them from the adverse impact of the fiscal adjustment policies.

12. The decision taken in the Union Budget for 2015-16 not to keep any provision under Block Grants that is, Normal Central Assistance (NCA), Special Plan Assistance (SPA) and Special Central Assistance (SCA) has drastically affected the position of finance of Tripura and fellow NE States. Consequently, the State Government may not receive the financial assistance of about Rs.2500 crore annually from the Government of India. Under these schemes, the State Government had received financial assistance of Rs. 2477.91 crore [NCA - 1202.91 crore, SPA - 475.00 crore and SCA - 800.00 crore] during 2014-15. The NE States suffers from infrastructure bottlenecks and is largely dependent on funding under SCA and SPA to meet its infrastructure requirements. My Government desires that NE States may be given funds, like earlier Block Grants to take care of requirements under state specific development needs, revenue deficit, etc.

13. As per the revised funding pattern, 18 schemes which were earlier funded in the ratio 90:10 have now been changed to the sharing
pattern of 80:20. Because of the change in the sharing pattern, the State Government will have to bear additional financial burden in the form of State Share. For example, the sharing pattern of BADP has been changed to 80:20. Considering that the main objective of BADP is to meet the special needs of the people living in remote and inaccessible areas situated near the border, this is bound to have a serious impact for the State like Tripura as the State has a border of 856 km. with Bangladesh which constitutes about 84%. My Government feels that the sharing pattern should, therefore, be immediately restored back and additional burden should be borne by the Union Government. My Government requests the Government of India to support special category states of NE Region with 100% or 90:10 funding in respect of all schemes.

14. There is a difference between the projected Non-Plan Expenditure and State's own Resources. The entire gap of Non-Plan Revenue Expenditure used to be provided by the Centre for Special Category States. Now, despite the increase in the devolution of central taxes to the states, it would be difficult for the NE States to meet the gap of Non-Plan account unless additional amount of fund is sanctioned. My Government desires that the additional amount is sanctioned to bridge the gap between Non-Plan Expenditure and State's own Resources.

15. It has been the constant endeavour of my Government to
achieve 100% financial inclusion. Hon'ble Members would be happy to note that Mandwi Block of Tripura is one of the first blocks in the country to achieve 100% coverage under Prime Minister Jan Dhan Yojana. My Government has been laying special emphasis for improving Credit Deposit Ratio in the State and banks are being persuaded to improve the CD Ratio to at least 50%, so that adequate credit would be available to the needy sectors.

16. Hon'ble Members are aware that the State has faced unprecedented financial difficulties due to unfavourable award of the 13th Finance Commission on account of under-estimation of Salary and Pension liabilities of the State. 14th Finance Commission has also not considered many grants including State Specific Grants, required for infrastructural development activities of the state. 14th Finance Commission has also not recommended any grant for Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council. As per present trend the receipt under Share of Central Taxes is also not as per projection made by 14th Finance Commission. In spite of all these adversities, my State has taken up a number of developmental projects for completion in a phased manner and maintained its tradition of prudent financial management to avoid Ways and Means Advance or Over Draft.

17. Hon'ble Members are aware that with the all round support and co-operation from the people there was noticeable improvement
in the Law and Order situation in the State. The insurgents could not revive their activities and were compelled to remain in their hideouts across the borders. There was no case of extremist violence reported in the State during the year 2015. The general crime situation under the head of Dacoity, Burglary, Murder, Rioting and crime against women also showed a sharp decline during the year.

18. Several measures have been taken for modernization of State Police forces. The State is implementing the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System with the objective of creating a comprehensive integrated system for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of policing through the adoption of principle of e-Governance and creation of a nationwide networking infrastructure. Steps have been taken to improve traffic management system in Agartala and other Sub Divisional towns by using modern gadgets like Speed Radar Gun, Breath Analyzer etc. and utilizing Vehicles Recovery Vans, Motor Cycles patrols and use of advanced communication equipment.

19. My Government is sensitive to the security needs of women and in this endeavor seven women Police Stations were set up in the State to deal exclusively with the crime against women. A community policing programme namely, PRAYAAS has been under implementation in the State since 2011, to prevent and check crime against women by promoting awareness on gender sensitization.
women's rights as well as about various Acts concerning the crime against women.

20. To make available fire service in different places of the State, 9 new fire stations have been sanctioned and five fire stations are already functional and Jampui Hill, Damcharra, Ompi and Hrishyamukh will be made operational soon. To modernize the fire services, procurement of 15 water fire tenders, 5 CO2 Foam fire tenders, 8 bolero camper, 43 portable fire pump, 12 water mist Compressed Air Foam fire extinguisher have been procured.

21. My Government has given emphasis on living conditions and holistic development of the inmates in Kendriya Sanshadhanagar, Districts Jails and Sub-jails. The department is maintaining one hospital in Kendriya Sansodhanagar. Meditation and yoga exercises are being conducted in the jails to improve the physical and mental health of the inmates. Vocational trainings, such as agriculture, weaving, tailoring, cane and bamboo etc are imparted to improve the skills of the inmates. New jails in Sonamura, Kailashahar and Dharmanagar are under construction.

22. The improvement and upgradation of National Highways network which forms the backbone of connectivity for the State has been accorded priority by my Government. Three new National Highways have recently been declared in the State, including the stretch of 134 km of NH-208 extension between Teliamura and
Sabroom via Amarpur. 43 km of NH-208A from Kukital to Kailashahar and 55 km from Khowai to Agartala corridor. Apart from providing quality connectivity for interior and tribal inhabited areas of the State, these will boost trade and commerce linkages. The State PWD has meanwhile taken over the entire length of 198 km of NH-44 between Churaibari and Agartala from Border Roads Organization and initiated projects for Rs. 346 crore for double-laning of 50 km and for Rs. 59 crore for major maintenance. Projects for double-laning and improvement of 122 km NH-44 stretch between Amtali and Sabroom have also been commenced in two Packages, involving a total project cost of Rs. 867 crore.

23. My Government has accorded high priority to development of rural road network for providing connectivity for rural habitations with all weather roads. Under Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojana, so far 6957 out of total 8132 targeted habitations have been connected with all weather roads and works are in progress to connect another 657 habitations. My Government is committed to convert all timber bridges to permanent RCC or Steel bridges or RCC culverts. Under this programme, 36 timber bridges have been replaced during the last one year and works are underway for replacement of the timber bridges that remain mostly on minor roads.

24. All the Hon'ble members are aware, Mega Block for broad gauge conversion of Badarpur-Kumarghat-Agartala section has commenced w.e.f. 1st October, 2015. Broad gauge conversion process
has been going on in full swing. According to NF Railway, goods train is likely to reach Agartala within January, 2016. Passenger service from Agartala is also expected to commence from April, 2016. Construction of broad gauge rail track on Agartala - Udaipur section has been going on in full swing and is targeted to be commissioned within March, 2016. My Government is providing full support to the railways for meeting the time line of commissioning of broad gauge lines upto Sabroom. We are requesting the Ministry of Railways for setting up Railway Division Office as also installing Railway Recruitment Centre in Tripura.

25. My Government has already given consent to the proposed elevated corridor for Indian portion of Agartala - Akhaura Rail Link project. Request has also been made to the Ministry of Railways for placing fund to the State Government so that land acquisition process may be initiated without further delay. The matter is being pursued with the Government of India so that the said International Rail Link Project is implemented without wasting of time.

26. As you are aware, efforts have been made towards augmentation of infrastructure facilities of the Agartala Airport. Modernization of Agartala Airport Project has been taken up by the Airport Authority of India. More than 70 acres of land has already been handed over by the State Government to the Airport Authority of India.
27. Construction of motor stands at Kanchanpur and Sonamura are opened for public use, while the construction of Kalacherra and Khumlwng motor stand is in progress. An Institute of Driving Training and Research Centre is being set up under Public Private Partnership mode near NIT at Jirania and the works are in progress. 34 new buses have been procured by the Tripura Urban Transport Company Ltd. 66 more buses for the urban transport are scheduled to be delivered by March, 2016. This will help in increasing frequency level of urban bus service for the benefit of the passengers. Agartala - Kolkata- via- Dhaka Volvo Bus service has been started from 16th October, 2015 for the benefit of the people of Tripura.

28. The peak demand of the state has reached to 272 MW during the year 2015-16 and the state is able to meet the full peak demand after getting the enhanced share from OTPC Palatana Project. A World Bank assisted project for construction of nine 132 KV sub-station, thirty four 33 KV sub-station, 470 KM 132 KV Line and 770 KM 33 KV Line including capacity augmentation of existing sub-stations and re-conductoring of existing Lines has been taken up through Power Grid Corporation of India Limited at a cost of Rs. 1367 crore. This will strengthen the transmission and sub-transmission system in the State and ensure delivery of quality power supply to consumers. It is likely to be completed by 2018-19. A Smart Grid Pilot Project for Rs. 63.43 crore is under implementation in Agartala and is expected to be completed by 2016-17.
29. At present, work for expansion of electric supply network in remote area covering electrification of 532 un-electrified habitations, 4782 partially electrified habitations and to provide service connection to 75,000 BPL families across the State, involving Rs. 316.22 crore is under progress. In addition, new rural electrification scheme for Rs. 74.12 crore under Dina Dayal Upadhaya Grameen Jyoti Yojana and urban electrification scheme for Rs. 73.87 crore under Integrated Power Development System has been sanctioned recently. The State Government has also provided Rs. 25 crore to extend power lines to 225 un-electrified habitations and work is on the verge of completion.

30. My Government has formed a new generation company to take up the conversion of existing open cycle gas turbine sets at Baramura and Rokhia to combined cycle gas turbines and also renovation and augmentation of Gomati hydroelectric project for future capacity addition and ensuring higher availability of plant. State has implemented IT enabled distribution system in 16 Towns under Restructured Accelerated Power Development and Reform Programme scheme and consumers are provided with online payment facility. The infrastructure of the distribution system in these towns has also been strengthened to ensure reliability and quality power supply with loss reduction. Construction of 400 KV Transmission Line initially to be charged at 132 KV from Surjamaninagar, Tripura to South Comilla, Bangladesh has been completed for radial power
supply of 100 MW to Bangladesh by Tripura. Power flow is expected to start soon.

31. My Government had taken special initiatives for planned development of agriculture in the state since 2000-01 through a long term Perspective Plan. The benefits of the plan have resulted in increase of food grain production from 5.13 lakh metric tons during 1999-2000 to 7.62 lakh metric tons in 2014-15, which was 35,000 metric tons more than 2013-14. Due to timely supply of agri inputs to the farmers during 2015-16, the anticipated food grain production is 8.12 lakh metric tons. The present level of cropping intensity is 189% which is the second highest among all the North Eastern States.

32. About 90,000 hectares area is anticipated to be covered under "System of Rice Intensification", popularly known as "SRI" during the current financial year, which is 4,700 hectares more than the achievement in 2014-15. During the year, special emphasis has been given to increase area under hybrid paddy and 43,000 hectares target has been kept as against 11,000 hectares of 2014-15 for increasing production, productivity and profitability of the farmers. The Action Plan for utilizing seasonal fallow land under crop diversification programme has also been implemented with greater thrust and it is anticipated that about 26,000 hectares area would be brought under cultivation during the current financial year as against the achievement of 15,058 hectares in 2014-15.
Among the important horticulture crops, Pineapple grown in Tripura is widely acclaimed as the best in the country, beside good quality production of Orange, Banana, Jackfruit, Mosambi and Mango. The State is still the largest producer of True Potato Seed (TPS) in the country and is surplus in several vegetable crops including Cabbage, Cauliflower and Tomato. Horticultural production has been increased from 12 lakh MT during 2011-12 to 17.15 lakh MT in 2014-15. An additional area of 3650 hectares has been brought under cultivation during the current year with different fruit crops and 1094 hectares with vegetables crops. This year, a massive programme has been launched for cultivation of mango variety Amrapali and 2.02 lakh grafted plants were distributed covering 50,500 families throughout the State. Potato being a cash crop, major thrust has been given on production of seedlings through co-operative farming system involving Tripura Horticulture Corporation Limited for procurement and preservation in cold store for use in the subsequent year. The climate of Tripura is most conducive for growing exotic flowers like Gerbera, Anthurium, and Orchid etc. The quality of all these flowers is well appreciated in various flora expo held in India time to time. With this background, additional 264 hectares area under cultivation of commercial flower has been taken up. 17 Rural Collection Centres for fruits and vegetables have been sanctioned during the year, which will provide an opportunity to the rural farmers for better marketing of their produce.
34. My Government is giving importance to the production of milk, meat and egg and production is 1,41,430 M.T., 34815 M.T. and 19.79 crore eggs respectively during the year 2014-15. The growth rate achieved in this sector was 9.63% in milk, 5% in meat and 10.25% in egg production. It is expected that the per capita production would reach 108.47 ml. Milk per day, 9.56 kg. Meat per year and 60 nos. egg per year during 2015-16.

35. The Fisheries sector is playing a crucial role in providing sustainable livelihood and also for meeting nutritional requirement. Realizing the importance of the sector, my Government has implemented number of schemes for providing required support and assistance to the fish farmers and progressive entrepreneurs. As a result of effective implementation of various programmes, the total fish production of the State has gone up to 64,780 tones (provisional) in 2014-15 as against 61,259 tons during 2013-14 from local sources. The Annual per capita availability of fish from local sources has also gone up to 17.50 Kg. (provisional) at the end of 2014-15 as against 16.81 Kg. during 2013-14. As a part of overall strategy, more and more fish farmers are being engaged in scientific Pisciculture for their additional income generation and for increasing fish production and productivity.

36. My government is making sincere efforts to utilize the rich forest resources of the state to support the livelihoods and the
development of forest fringe dwelling communities especially tribals. Through the Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs), it has strived to devolve greater role and responsibility to the local people, linking the locally available non-timber forest resource with the livelihood of people, such as broom-grass harvesting and value addition, wild cardamom, sustainable collection of medicinal plants and gandhaki collection and oil extraction. 1501 self-help groups have been established within the joint forest management committees benefitting 1,00,045 families. The Self Help Groups have adopted a number of livelihood options for income generation activities e.g. fishery, poultry, goat rearing, piggery, basket making, agro-forestry, broom making, weaving, embroidery, bamboo furniture making etc. The Self Help Groups members are imparted regular skill development and training in these areas to make them self-reliant.

37. Sincere efforts are being made to utilize the full potential of vast bamboo resources of the state and the artisans have been trained in bamboo furniture making, handicrafts, agarbatti, utility items, mats and even jewellery. In the last few years, the state has established 53,312 hectares of bamboo plantations, which now play an important role in supporting the livelihoods of poor people living near the forests. The state is supporting the beneficiaries who have been vested with land pattas among the Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 by establishing agro-forestry plantation. The state is a pioneer in this
regard and has so far established agro-forestry plantation over 8,297 hectares of patta lands with 9 agro-forestry models especially developed to suit conditions in the state.

38. To boost the growth of Tourism in the State, my Government has undertaken a comprehensive plan for upgradation of tourist facilities and infrastructure at major tourist attractions such as Sepahijala, Matabari, Chabimura, Narikel Kunja etc. under Swadesh Darshan Project of Rs. 99.79 crore. Similar coverage of the tourist destinations in the Northern part of Tripura is also targeted. The project for renovation and retrofitting of Neermahal palace is also due to be completed shortly. Local community has been involved in operation of tourist facilities at Brahmakunda, Chabimura etc.

39. My Government has targeted 1.40 lakh hectares out of the total cultivable land area of 2.55 lakh hectares for coverage under irrigation. In the last year, 800 hectares was brought under irrigation and the overall present coverage is 1.135 lakh hectares. In respect of the medium irrigation projects, works of Khowai have been completed and the works of Gumti project are also near completion. Works of Manu irrigation projects are also in progress. Presently, emphasis has been given for small storage and tube well projects. In the flood management sector, new works have been taken up for 2000 meters bank revetment and the drainage development Project of Rudrasagar.
40. My Government has taken steps to implement Vaidyanathan Package for 268 Credit Societies (LAMPS and PACS) which are now debt free and eligible for fresh loan for starting economic activities. Out of these, 55 LAMPS and PACS have opened banking counters. In view of bringing about transparency and uniformity, Common Accounting System has been introduced to all Cooperative Credit Societies. Responding to the need for a comprehensive development of cooperatives, Integrated Cooperative Development Project has been implemented with a project outlay of Rs. 14.80 crore, benefitting 293 cooperative societies under erstwhile South Tripura District. New Integrated Co-operative Development Projects are under consideration of National Co-operative Development Corporation for North, Unakoti and Dhalai Districts. For providing opportunities to the cooperatives to proliferate their business activities and also for strengthening the co-operative sector, the "Tripura Co-operative Development Incentive Scheme, 2015" has been introduced.

41. Tripura, only State in the North East Region, implemented the National Food Security Act, 2013. It has been implemented with effect from 1st September, 2015 covering 25.02 lakh beneficiary-population. Beneficiaries are provided rice at the rate of Rs. 2.00 per kg, for which the State Government is bearing subsidy of Rs. 1.00 per kg with an annual subsidy burden of Rs.16.80 crore. Other families not covered under National Food Security Act are also getting cheaper rice under PDS. To further improve delivery system,
a pilot project of Aadhar based delivery in 25 ration shops of Agartala city has been initiated. My Government has also increased the quantity of sugar supplied through ration shops at subsidized rate, against earlier scale of 1 (one) kg per card per month. it has been increased to 1 (one) kg per person per month in Agartala Municipal Corporation area and 600 gm per head per month for rest of the State.

42. The Legal Metrology Organization is a small, but important Organization so far as protection of the interest of the consumers is concerned. In a bid to achieve its prime goal, the enforcement officials of the Organization inspected 9958 business establishments throughout the state and penalized 194 defaulting traders during the current year till 30th November. Besides, complaints were lodged in the Court of Law in 21 cases. 20,932 nos. of verification have been done during the period.

43. Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation have remained major areas of concern and thrust of my Government. MGNREGA is being earnestly implemented in all the Districts. Tripura was ranked first within the whole country with an average persondays generation of 88 in 2014-15 while national average was 38, though Government of India had released only Rs 652 crore against approved labour budget of Rs 1407 crore during 2014-15. However, during the current financial year, my State has received Rs 1358.94 crore as of December, 2015. My Government has generated average persondays of 67 as of 15th December while national average is 34 only. Wage
rate under MGNREGA has been increased in the State from Rs 155 to Rs 167 per day per head with effect from 1st April, 2015. For the current financial year, 9550 IAY houses were sanctioned by Government of India in April, 2015. But in November 2015, Government of India has unilaterally reduced the sanction from 9550 to 6423 only. In spite of financial hardship, my Government has sanctioned 8850 houses under Tripura State Government Housing Scheme with State fund during the year. My Government urges Government of India to enhance IAY targets to benefit all homeless families of the State.

44. As part of my Government's commitment for providing safe drinking water and sanitation to the people on priority, all the 8723 habitations have been covered with drinking water availability. In all, 4990 habitations have reached fully covered status of over 40 liters per capita per day water supply and 3733 habitations have reached partially covered status with water supply between 10 to 40 liters per capita per day leaving no uncovered habitation in the State. During the current year, 100 deep tubewells and 298 small bore tubewells have reached commissioning status. Further works have been taken up for 17 Surface Water Treatment Plants, 53 deep tubewells and 147 small bore tubewells. My Government has also taken up the programme for coverage of Schools, Madrassas and Anganwadi Centres with drinking water facility. So far, 4754 out of 4800 schools and madrassas and 9807 anganwadi centres out of 9911 have been
covered. These activities have been carried out mainly with the State's own resources and despite a sharp reduction in the funds available to the State under the National Rural Drinking Water Programme.

45. For ensuring rural sanitation and promoting hygiene practices amongst the people, my Government has taken up extensive Information, Education and Communication activities. The State has also taken up the mission of achieving Open Defecation Free status for 501 Gram Panchayats and Villages of the State. Towards this, 18,000 sanitary individual household latrines have so far been constructed and another 35,600 are targeted to be completed within March, 2016. Moreover, another 49,353 Latrines would be provided to households below poverty line (BPL) in convergence mode through MGNREGA. State has also undertaken to replace defunct toilets for another over 91,000 households in this year, for which the State has sought funding from the Swacch Bharat Kosh.

46. Urban development is an important dimension of national development and our cities and towns are engines of economic growth. To improve the quality of life for urban population, my Government attaches high priority to universal coverage of drinking water and sanitation, scientific solid waste management, storm water drainage as also by addressing the residential, social and occupational vulnerabilities of urban poor. A scientific Solid Waste Management plant with capacity to process 250 MT solid waste daily has become functional at Devendra Chandra Nagar, Agartala. In Agartala, 130 km
drinking water pipeline, 8 overhead tanks and 2 water treatment plants have been constructed under JNNURM and under ADB-assisted NER Capital City Development Programme. 22 deep tubewells have been created and the work of laying 232 km distribution pipeline is in progress. Under Tripura State Government Housing Scheme, 1500 dwelling units have been sanctioned during the year. Agartala has been selected in the first stage competition for implementation of Smart Cities Mission, and a Smart City Proposal has been submitted to Government of India for its selection in the second stage.

47. I am happy to inform the members about national recognition to our PRI bodies. For holding Gram Sabha effectively in order to take decisions, conducting social audit transparency and considering the women leadership, Chalita Bankul ADC Village under Rupaichari RD Block has been awarded "Rashtriya Gourav Gram Sabha Puraskar" and for overall performance of Panchayati Raj System in the State, the Paschim Tripura Zilla Parishad: Kathalia Panchayat Samiti under Kathalia RD Block; Kaiyachanbari Village Committee under Jirania RD Block and Howaibari Gram Panchayat under Teliamura RD Block have been awarded "Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar" by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj on 24th April, 2015 in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi in the presence of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

48. My Government has taken a number of steps to make Tripura a destination of choice for Industry and Trade activities. Development of skills of all sections of society is important to lift them out of
poverty. Therefore, with a view to give more focus to skill development a separate Directorate of Skill Development in the Department of Industries and Commerce has been created. Keeping in view the demand for skilled workers in various sectors the Government is also implementing "Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gramin Kushalya Yojana" in the State. One more Border Haat at Kamalasagar has been made operational. Despite discontinuation of central schemes the State Government is taking steps to complete the pending infrastructure to promote Industry and Commerce in the State.

49. Development of Handloom, Handicrafts and Sericulture is an important element for boosting rural economy by utilizing local resources. Government of India has sanctioned one Apparel and Garment Manufacturing Unit with a project cost of Rs. 18.18 crore and it is almost completed and we expect to make it functional at the earliest. Similarly, to improve the local market for the products manufactured in the State, Urban Haat has been constructed at Agartala. This will be made functional shortly. To give a boost to the production of silk, one Silk Processing and Printing Unit is under construction.

50. Information Technology is playing a key role towards overall development of the State. In this field, my Government has implemented various projects under National e-Governance Plan. State Wide Area Network has been set up upto Block Level to provide
Internet connectivity for running e-Governance applications across the State which is being further extended to other Government offices under ongoing Horizontal Extension of SWAN project. State Data Center, acting as the Central Repository for all the Government Websites and e-Governance Applications, is operational on 24x7 basis. Thirteen online services under e-District project have been launched and Wi-fi Hotspot has been inaugurated at the Bir Chandra State Central Library, Agartala. Proposed International Gateway for Internet Services at Agartala through Cox Bazar, Bangladesh is expected to improve Internet services in Tripura and other North-Eastern States. Construction work of IT Complex cum Software Technology Park is going on and after completion, it will give boost to IT companies for setting up their units in Agartala.

51. The objective of my Government is health for all that is accessible, affordable and effective. To achieve this goal my Government has been taking several initiatives to strengthen infrastructure and improve quality of services. Eight new Primary Health Centres have been opened at Champaknagar, Gandhigram, Nidaya, 23 KM of Longtharai Valley, East Bhandharima, Dhalapati, Jhamthwng and Thelakum and District Hospitals at Santir Bazaar, Khowai and Dharmanagar have been made functional. 10 bedded medicine ICU at IGM Hospital has been started including emergency services. A new building at GB Hospital to accommodate Trauma, Ophthalmology and Surgery Departments etc have been opened. E-
hospital has been initiated at GB Hospital whereby patients can book online OPD appointments. Continuous improvement of skills of healthcare staff is very important. My Government has started a serious effort to train healthcare staff in the State as well as outside the State to improve quality of services. To benefit more poor patients, the Tripura Health Assurance Scheme to the Poor has been expanded to cover 53 procedures and 25 Super Specialty hospitals have been empanelled in the country.

52. My Government is attaching highest importance to the education sector, as it helps to develop human resources. The literacy rate in the State stands at 96.82% which is the highest in the country. All efforts are being made to improve quality of education for about 8.00 lakhs children in 4818 schools. Steps in the form of 'Vidyalya Chalo Abhiyan' have been taken to enroll the out of school children and Net Enrolment Ratio at Primary Level is at 98.49% for the year 2014-15.

53. For better supervision over functioning of the schools, my Government has created a separate directorate for elementary education. Inspection of schools is being carried out regularly to ensure proper functioning of schools. Initiatives were taken to provide safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in all the schools.

54. My Government is providing free text books to all students of elementary level and students of classes IX to XII belonging to BPL
families. Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation system has been introduced in all the schools from January, 2015 and all elementary level teachers have been trained for implementing the same. The eligibility criterion for teachers has been revised to ensure recruitment of qualified teachers with an overall objective to impart quality education to children. The Teachers Recruitment Board has been constituted for conducting Teacher Eligibility Test and for recruitment of teachers. The first TET examination has been conducted on 21st December, 2015. Regular trainings are being conducted for Head Teachers and Teachers for development of leadership and professional skills. The training of untrained in service teachers is going on with the help of IGNOU.

55. My Government is constantly striving to increase the scope and quality of higher education and planning to set up institutions of higher education of national repute in the State. An Act has been passed by the State Legislature for setting up of a State University namely Maharaja Bir Bikram University at MBB College campus and efforts are being made to start the MBB University from academic session 2016-17. The College of Teacher's Education has been started at Kumarghat from the academic session 2015-16 with an intake capacity of 100 students per year. A new Polytechnic Institute at TTAADC H.Q. Khumulwng will be started from the academic session 2016-17 after the approval from AICTE.

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56. My Government is committed to social security, development and welfare of the poor, persons with disabilities, women, senior citizens and children. Early childhood development including preschool education for children, programme for adolescent girls and women and a number of pension schemes, as a measure of social security, are being implemented. There are 27 pension schemes, of which 24 schemes are funded exclusively by the State Government, including 4 new pensions for People Living with AIDS, Transgender, Grade II leprosy deformed patients and Female Domestic Workers. 2.70 lakh beneficiaries are being paid pensions under various schemes. My Government is spending, on an average Rs 55 crore per annum, for implementation of the 24 State pension schemes. The Government is presently running 56 ICDS projects with 9911 Anganwadi Centres, wherein 3.49 lakh children and 0.86 lakh pregnant and lactating women are enrolled. In order to ensure quick response to the women affected by violence, One Stop Centre is being set up to provide basic first-aid, hospital assistance, support for lodging FIR, psycho-social support, counseling, etc. My Government has recently completed the construction of a home, named as "Ashray" for Government pensioners, with a capacity for accommodating about 104 persons, at the cost of Rs. 9.70 crore. It is expected to make the home operational in near future. The constructions of a hostel for Visually Challenged Persons and office building for Tripura Commission for Women at Agartala have also been taken up.

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57. My government has been pursuing the Policy of Sports for all and hence untiringly working for promotion of both participatory sports and competitive sports. In order to achieve these objectives, adequate emphasis has been laid on broad basing sports infrastructure in terms of construction/renovation of playgrounds from village level to State level, construction of Block and District level sports complex, setting up of Sports School with hostel facilities, searching of sports talent, participation in Regional, National and International level sports competition. Apart from Tripura Sports School, Badharghat, another residential Sports School at Panisagar has now been successfully running. 2500 seated capacity Indoor Stadium at Netaji Subash Regional Coaching Centre Complex is under construction.

58. The State Government attaches utmost importance to the welfare of working class of the society. The Rastriya Swasthya Bima Yojana, a cashless health insurance scheme for unorganized workers is being implemented in the State since 2009-10. 4.92 lakh families have been enrolled during the current financial year. Under Asanghatita Sramik Sahayaka Prakalp, 1.04,882 un-organised workers have been enrolled in 23 un-organised sectors and 19 self-employment occupations in the age group of 21-55 years. Besides, 62,090 construction workers had been registered under the Tripura Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board and financial benefits have been provided to those registered construction workers under

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the various schemes of the Board. 110 new factories have been given registration and factory licenses during the year 2015-16.

59. The socio-economic, educational and cultural development of Scheduled Tribes has been top most priority of the State Government. In this regard, a Special Development Package is being implemented for creating educational infrastructure, skill development, rehabilitation of the surrendered militants and initiatives for conserving and promoting the cultural and linguistic heritage of the Scheduled Tribes. Construction of five ST Boarding houses, with 50 seats capacity for girls and boys attached to various schools had been completed. One more Tribal Rest House at Santirbazar has also been completed. A total of 23,391 ST boys and girls have been provided boarding house stipend and also Merit Awards given to 7383 ST boys and girls. 475 un-employed tribal youths have been given loan by the Tripura Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation Ltd for starting small business. Initiatives taken for sustainable income by jhumias through agriculture, horticulture and pisciculture for which fund was provided under Vanabandhu Kalyan Yojana.

60. Educational and economic development of the Scheduled Castes has been one of the priority areas of my Government. A 5 year Special Development Package for SCs was taken up from 2013-14 to 2017-18. Development works in the area of education, health,
housing, drinking water, link roads, power, irrigation and income generating schemes etc. have been taken up under this package. The State implements different Stipend Schemes like Pre-Matric Scholarship, Post-Matric Scholarship, Boarding House Stipend and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Memorial Award. From this year onwards, the Scholarship schemes will be implemented through online system. About 65,389 students have been benefitted from Post Matric and Pre-Matric Scholarship. 5358 SC students were covered under the scheme of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Merit Award. Term loan to 257 entrepreneurs and educational loan to 58 SC students have been given up to November, 2015 through SC Development Corporation Ltd.

61. During the recent visit by the full Commission of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes, they appreciated the efforts made by the State Government to provide education to SC population and also praised the State for presence of good number of schools. The Commission also appreciated that the incidents of atrocity is almost zero in the State of Tripura.

62. My Government has declared Special Development Package for OBC for 5 years from 2013-14 to 2017-18 for expediting socio-economic development of these communities. This package is being implemented by the different line departments and monitored by the OBC Welfare Department. Under this project BPL OBC families are being assisted with allotment of land, housing, drinking water, power,
vocational training, income generating schemes, educational development programme etc. 64,172 students were benefitted from Pre-matric and Post-matric Scholarship, Merit Award etc. upto December, 2015. Tripura OBC Cooperative Development Corporation Ltd. has extended term loan to 689 un-employed youth for undertaking small business and to 176 students for higher studies.

63. Rapid socio economic development of various minority groups of the State has always been a matter of priority to my Government. A Five Year special package for welfare of minorities is being implemented from 2013-14 and activities like infrastructure and economic development, education, socio and cultural development are being implemented. Skill development training programme, job orientation courses have been taken up for 2520 minority youths of the State. In order to make minority students digitally literate, computer literacy training programme under the nomenclature of Cyber Gram Yojana has also been taken up to cover 18,109 minority students of the 191 Schools and 09 Madrassas of the State. Another skill development training programme called Sekho Aur Kamao scheme has recently been completed covering 720 of minority youths in different IT enabled services in order to upgrade the skill and employability of those minority youths. To facilitate accommodation of pilgrims, one Haj House is being constructed.
64. Environmental degradation and climate change have become the foremost concerns of mankind today. My Government is fully aware of the threats to our environment from unsustainable practices and is following a holistic approach to address the challenges. The Directorate of Biotechnology has undertaken an integrated pilot project to promote organic farming with the use of natural manure and bio-pesticides which would help improve long term productivity while preserving the health of environment. A series of legal, administrative and scientific measures have been taken to restore the health of the water bodies. State level Expert Appraisal Committee and Environment Impact Assessment Authorities have been constituted. Programmes have been undertaken to popularize the use of biogas and fuel efficient cooking stoves to reduce pressure on forests.

65. My Government is implementing successfully the National Land Records and Modernization Programme in the State for digitization of land records. Digitization of Maps has also been completed. This year two new Sub-Registry Offices have been opened at Teliamura and Santirbazar Sub-Division. Now, online registration of deed is being done in 17 Sub-Registry Offices in the State having integration with Computerized Land Records database. All the Tehsil Kacharies of the State have been computerized during the year. During current financial year, an amount of Rs.50.57 crore has been
sanctioned under Border Area Development Programme, for taking up infrastructural projects in 31 bordering blocks.

66. Continuous presence of more than 30,000 Bru (Reang) migrants for more than 18 years in the Relief Camps of North Tripura District, who migrated from Mizoram has given rise to various socio-economic and law and order problems to the State. For their repatriation to Mizoram, the migrants are demanding security to their lives and adequate facilities for their rehabilitation and resettlement in Mizoram. My Government requests the Government of Mizoram to sincerely sort out the problems in consultation with the Government of India for early repatriation of the migrants.

67. Disaster Management is being given importance as Tripura is located in highly earthquake prone zone and associated with other natural and man-made disasters. As a regular activity, awareness generation, training and capacity building, preparation of disaster management plans and mock drills are being organized at all levels. Various critical equipments have been purchased. State and District Emergency Operation Centres are functioning round the clock. As an alternate communication system, the Software Defined Radio is being installed in all Emergency Operation Centres at State and District levels. A Mega Awareness Week was organized both at state and district levels to mark the International Day for Disaster
Reduction on 13th October, 2015 involving various disaster management activities.

68. The improvement of the quality of justice delivery system in the State has always been the priority of my Government. In that direction two new Judicial Districts of South Tripura at Belonia and North Tripura at Dharmanganar have been made operational so as to make justice easily accessible to the common people. Further, Video Conferencing facility, connecting the three District and Sessions Courts of West Tripura, Unakoti and Gomati Districts with the Kendriya Sanshodhanagar, Bishalgarh, District Jail, Udaipur and District Jail, Kailashahar is nearing completion and will be functional shortly. The construction of building to accommodate all courts of Agartala, is in progress. Legal aid is being provided to the deserving people by the State Legal Services Authority besides organizing Lok Adalats etc. State Human Rights Commission has started functioning from January, 2016.

69. Newly established Passport Seva Laghu Kendra in Agartala will address the long-standing demand of the people of the State and will ease the process of getting passport. This assumes importance in view of improved connectivity to and through Bangladesh.

70. Hon'ble Speaker and Hon'ble Members of this august House, I have briefly presented the achievements, strategies and development plans of my Government. My Government is committed to the
philosophy of integrated development of the State by focusing on
the social and economic infrastructure. We are hopeful of fullest
support of the Government of India and all out cooperation from the
people of Tripura in our development and welfare endeavours.

With these words, I seek your leave.

JAI HIND