



GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

**BUDGET SPEECH OF FINANCE MINISTER
2017-18**

**BY
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7TH FEBRUARY, 2017

**Asato Maa Sad-Gamaya
Tamaso Maa Jyotir-Gamaya
Mrytonmamritang Gamayeti**

Hon'ble Speaker Sir,

By chanting the same sacred verse, last time, I stood before you on 26th of July 2016 for presenting the State Budget of 2016-17. After this august House passed the budget, the Assam Appropriation (No.IV) Act, 2016 was published in the Gazette on 24th of August 2016. It means that exactly after 5 months 13 days after notification of the last budget, I, now rise to present the Annual Financial Statement containing Receipts and Expenditure for the whole year of 2017-18.

1. Sir, I mentioned in my last budget speech that this duty of presentation of budget was solemnly carried out on the basis of three vital teachings from the Upanishads: **Reality, Knowledge** and **Selflessness**. Our dynamic and progressive leader, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam, too believes in these principles, in letter and spirit. Before I begin my speech, I would like to reiterate that the endeavour of our Government is to serve the 3.25 crore people of Assam. Our endeavour is to mitigate their plight and take them to newer heights of development. We are committed to the State of Assam which is our motherland. On this occasion, I recall a great poem of Padmashri Nalini Bala Devi expressing the deepest

gratitude to our motherland. I would recite two stanzas from this poem : While doing so, I also salute this great land and bow before the people of the State:

মেলিলো প্ৰথম চবু তোমাৰ বেণলাতে আই
জনমৰ আদিম পুৱাত,
মুদিম আবেৰ্ণ চবু তোমাৰ বেণলাতে শুই
জীৱনৰ শেষ সন্ধিয়াত।
মৰাৰ পিছতো যেন পাণ্ডাই আবেৰ্ণ ঠাই
চেনেহৰ শীতলী বেণলাত,
ভাগৰুৱা আত্মাই শেষৰ জিৰণি লৈ
জিৰাবহি তোমাৰ ছয়াত।

2. I have just mentioned that I am presenting this budget just after less than six months of the last budget notified. To be more precise, just five months and thirteen days how much or less is this 'time' for implementation of the annual budget meant for one full year? According to the Hindu theory of creation, 'time' (Sanskrit 'kal') is a manifestation of God. Creation begins when God makes his energies active and ends when he withdraws all his energies into a state of inactivity
3. This theory fits perfectly into the philosophy of electoral politics and democratic governance. We got a total time span of 5 months & 13 days to deliver the mandate. We regard this as God given opportunity as more than three crore people of Assam have blessed this Government Godspeed. Speaker Sir, we stand committed to serve all, with a special eye on serving the poorest of the poor. We firmly believe in Mahatma Gandhi's life philosophy, "*Serving the poor is serving the God*".

4. By saying so, I am invoking the concept of *Daridra Narayana*. Swami Vivekananda maintained that, "Service to God should mean service to the poor". He coined the word, *Daridra Narayana*- "God in the poor and the lowly"- as a religious axiom. *Daridra Narayana* brought in an element of sense of duty which was enjoined on men and women to serve the poor if they wanted to serve God. While Swami Vivekananda coined this term and preached this concept, Mahatma Gandhi followed and executed this in his daily life.
5. Presentation of budget is a solemn function. It is also an occasion to remember all the greats and their contribution in nation building. About 150 years ago, in a single decade of the 19th century, three great men were born in India: Kabi Guru Rabindranath Tagore on May 7, 1861, Swami Vivekananda on January 12, 1863 and Mahatma Gandhi on October 2, 1869. Each became a formidable figure in his sphere of work and became *maha manav* to inspire and influence this great nation forever.
6. As I proceed with my speech, you would find that the values and morals of these great people are the basic building blocks of our functioning. These values are the guiding force of our Government to pursue its four-point agenda to make Assam **Videshi Muk**, **Durneeti Muk**, **Santrashvad Muk**, and **Pradushan Muk** (Free from foreigners, corruption, extremism and Pollution).
7. We got a limited time since the last budget. I have this option - to avoid referring to my previous budget and state that our Government did not have enough time to implement the full year budget in such a short

time. Such an option is natural, genuine, easy and unquestionable.

8. Choosing an easy option, Hon'ble Members, is an ordinary approach. Our Government believes in *Parivartan*, both in words and deeds and this Government has fire in its soul and grace in its heart. I am a firm believer of the popular saying, "*What is to give Light must endure burning*". So, we will endure. We have chosen the difficult option of apprising this August House and people of the State on what we could achieve in these few months along with what we intend to do in the financial year 2017-18.
9. While a few have been heard saying that most of the budget announcements were not implemented, I humbly submit that we are implementing most of the pronouncements. Once the financial year 2016-17 is over, I will stand before you again and give you a detailed account of what we have achieved. This is my solemn assurance.
10. In my last budget speech, I mentioned about *Parivartan* as a process of Evolution that deepens the process of engagement of the Government with the people and with the last man and woman in the field and I also dwelt on seven changes that we intend to bring about.
11. I spoke about the New Model of Governance as an art and the practice of **Pure Politics** and **Clean Public Service**. I promised that the architecture of such Governance would be erected on four pillars, namely (1) Personal Integrity (2) Political Inclusivity (3) Governance Legitimacy and (4) People Participation and presented my first budget along these four themes. Our Government would like to reiterate our commitment to these four pillars of the New Model of

Governance in Assam and the current budget will continue to follow the same & deepen the process of Pure Politics and Clean Public Service.

12. Sir, we believe in **integrity**, which means choosing our thoughts and actions based on values rather than personal gains. Over a period of time, governance in the State was pre-occupied with personal gains through unethical and immoral activities. This darkness and corruption has eaten into the vitals of our society. It engulfed a constitutional body like the Assam Public Service Commission (APSC). In the Social Welfare Department, it gobbled up the food of malnourished pregnant mothers, poor nursing mothers, and that of infants & children. It did not stop at that. The very symbol of Assam's heritage and pride, the world famous one-horned Rhinoceros of Kaziranga was not also spared.
13. We want to change the political discourse of Assam for the better and forever. I need not boast of our Government's efforts of the last six months in removing this darkness and bringing honesty and integrity into the system. Our Chief Minister is humble. We are ordinary people. We are doing ordinary things. But the only difference is that we are doing ordinary things with absolute integrity. There is a saying, "*Great men and women are not extra-ordinary people who do extra-ordinary things. They are ordinary people who do ordinary things with integrity.*"
14. The very first decision of the first cabinet meeting under the bold leadership of our Hon'ble Chief Minister was to dismantle all illegal check posts in the State. Our Government would not like to take credit for the unprecedented and bold action taken for lawful action against people involved in systemic

corruption in APSC, Social Welfare Department, Forest Department, etc. Indeed we feel very low in the eyes of the people of the State and the country to have inherited such a governance. Our Government does not want to waste time in blaming anyone. Rather we want to reform the systems which will restore the honour and glory of the State. We have been trying to create an environment in which integrity will flourish at every level from individuals to the Society at large.

15. Our Chief Minister is leading by example in personal integrity. He strongly believes that the sanctity of higher educational institutions like Universities should be protected and Chancellorship of Universities cannot be held by the Chief Minister. By standing to these values, he has decided to make necessary changes in the legislations of the concerned Universities including the Cotton University.
16. I would also like to quote a small example on the impact of personal integrity in our governance. Education Department has been annually buying the laptops for Anundoram Borooah Award for the meritorious students. This year the value of laptop has suddenly come down by more than 30% from Rs 19,950 till last year to Rs 13,591 now. This shows the power of integrity and impact of clean systems in governance.
17. **Political Inclusivity** is another theme that this Government has been following in every policy and programme and we believe that the development and growth of the state will take strong roots only if every household of the State, irrespective of their political beliefs, party affiliations or caste and creed participate in the development process. Our Government organized visits of Hon'ble MLAs of all parties to the

international borders of the State to understand the complexities of the borders. For the first time in the history of Assam, State Government conducted pre-budget consultations with the Hon'ble MLAs of all political parties to seek their advice and guidance in the preparation of this budget. We have launched a large scale mission mode project, Chief Minister's Samagra Gramya Unnayan Yojana (CMSGUY) with a model of "saturation", covering every village of the State. In fact, this Mega Mission was inaugurated on 5th of February 2017 and I will dwell more on this in my subsequent paragraphs.

18. **Governance legitimacy** has started its fresh green shoots with a series of responsive and sincere attempts such as eviction of encroachers in Kaziranga National Park, and many other Government lands. Leading by example and leading by inspiration, our visionary leader, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal has been minutely monitoring every small development in the State with the highest level of sensitivity and responsiveness.
19. I said last time that each of our policies will be citizen-centric and always focussed on the last man or woman in the field. Within this short period, several such programmes were implemented with complete sincerity and respect to the people of the State. We immensely thank the family members of 855 martyrs of Assam agitation for giving us an opportunity to pay homage to the martyrs in Guwahati on 10th of December 2016 They had taken the trouble to come from the nook and corner of the State to bless this Government by accepting a cash reward of Rs 5 lakh per family as token of appreciation from the State Government.
20. Our rich culture and basic traditions are rooted in community activities and are associated with many

colourful festivals. The series of festivals and fairs that our Government has been conducting jointly with the Central Government, NGOs and other Social entities during the last five months are central to the theme of "*People participation in Governance*". Brahmaputra Literary Festival, Namami Brahmaputra, Festival of Faiths etc. are first-ever events being organized in the State.

21. We presented a White Paper in this August House on 3 June 2016 within ten days of this Government taking office. Innovation, self-confidence and restoring the sanctity of the budget were the cornerstones for new thinking and the goal has been to come out of the dependency syndrome and develop resources from within the State. In this direction, I clearly laid out in the White Paper that we wanted to surge ahead with a focused motto and launched the ReSTART Assam programme to mop up maximum possible resources from within the state through a coordinated and concerted mission mode programme, Restructuring Systems and Technology for Augmentation of Resources for Transformed Assam, in short, ReSTART Assam. I am happy to state that this has started yielding results and I will give you a detailed account of this in the second part of my presentation.

SYMBOL OF ASSAM'S GROWING SELF CONFIDENCE

22. A series of successful initiatives of our Government has caught the attention of everyone within and outside the State. Assam is in the limelight for a change, and for good reasons. In the last few months, there have been several proud moments which have raised the self-confidence of the State.

ASSAM : THE FIRST STATE TO RATIFY GST BILL

23. The great beginning started, rightly so, in this August House itself, when we ratified the GST Bill on 12th of August 2016 and thus helped Assam to become the first State in the country to do so. I congratulate all of you for this honour.

ASSAM'S SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN GST COUNCIL

24. As a member of the GST Council, Assam succeeded in drawing enormous long term benefits as part of the proposed legislation and our presence was acknowledged at the National-level deliberations of the GST Council. It was a historical achievement that we got a favourable compensation formula at fixed growth rate at 14% while in the last ten years our growth rate has never been at this level. Secondly, the tax exempted for industries as incentives was never treated as part of revenue calculations and Assam was able to convince the GST Council to include the same while calculating the loss arising out of GST. This special provision was now made in the proposed legislation for North East and Hilly States only. You will get full opportunity to deliberate and debate on this, when the State GST Bill is introduced in this House as soon as the draft is circulated to the States, by the GST council.

RECEIPT OF RS. 1450 CRORES AS OIL ROYALTY ARREARS IN ABOUT 70 DAYS OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT

25. The State of Assam has been deprived of its legitimate royalty on crude oil at pre-discounted price for the last one decade. This is a very serious matter for a resource-poor state like ours and we should not have wasted such a long time in mere politicising of the issue and it reminds me of Sir Issac Newton's saying, "We build too many walls and not enough bridges".

26. But our Government started building bridges with the Oil PSUs and GoI and made sincere efforts in the court proceedings. Our Government was quick in taking up the issue with central government and we have received Rs 1450 crore in the first week of August 2016 at par with Gujarat. We will continue our pursuit to get the remaining dues and we are very confident that we will come back to you with good news soon. We are working with Gujrat Government very closely on this.

HISTORICAL POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE DECISIONS

27. A quick but accountable system of expenditure of public money holds the key to rapid development. But we have more than 80 years old of colonial relic, called Assam Treasury Rules, 1937 still in force. As it was required to replace this with the most progressive set of Rules, the State Cabinet in its meeting held on 28th of January 2017 under the Chairmanship of our dynamic Chief Minister approved new Rules viz., Assam Treasury Rules 2017. This is a historic step and these Rules will come into effect from 1 April 2017.
28. Another colonial cousin of the Treasury Rules is the Assam Excise Act 1910. The new Rules were already made effective by our Government from 1st of September 2016. But the most amusing fact is that though this August House replaced the Assam Excise Act 1910 with Assam Excise Act, 2000, this new Act was not given effectiveness for 16 years! One can imagine what could be the reasons for the same and at what cost to the public exchequer for 16 years !
29. I compliment my cabinet colleague, Shri Parimal Suklabaidya, Hon'ble Minister, Excise Department, for the path breaking reforms in state excise covering

both IMFL and country liquor. In simple terms, the result of the reform is that now, excise duty is levied from 80 points across the state compared to the earlier procedure of collecting it from 2000 points spread across the state. More points for collection means more chances for leakages and corruption. The results in terms of increased revenues are already evident and I will give you the details in the later part of my presentation.

30. Similarly, another bold reform is set to happen in the much maligned and opaque systems of country liquor business. A new policy was recently approved by the Cabinet in this regard. It would provide for collection for excise duty/revenue from 80 points compared to the existing system of 178 points besides moving to less harmful grain based spirit from molasses based and hygienically bottled and labelled.
31. Agar wood can be "Green-Gold" for Assam's economy. But, the system has been encouraging the illegal trade and business of agar wood and in the process, the common villagers and cultivators are being harassed. Our cabinet has already considered the proposed new law and the Environment and Forest Department would be introducing the Bill very soon so that the cultivation, harvesting and processing of agarwood and its by-products would be encouraged and regulated in such a way that it would be a major source of rural income. I congratulate our senior member of the Cabinet and Hon'ble Minister for Environment and Forest Department, Smti Pramila Rani Brahma for this path-breaking and forward looking law. This would transform the department from a Regulatory into a Welfare Department.

ASSAM MODEL : SMOOTH HANDLING OF WAGE PAYMENT TO TEA GARDEN WORKERS DURING DEMONETIZATION DRIVE

32. When the demonetization was announced on 8th of November 2016 along with restrictions on cash withdrawals, the biggest challenge before us was to ensure the timely release of weekly wages in cash to more than 7 lakh tea garden workers of the State. We were fully conscious of the age-old tradition of weekly payment of wages in cash and how it developed into, over a period of time, if I may call, "a weekly life cycle" of an average tea garden worker and how critical the impact would be, if wages are not paid timely. Our swift move, by taking RBI, SBI and other major bankers into confidence, ensured the smooth payment of wages by allowing the tea garden management to draw the cash through Government accounts maintained by the district administration. Indeed, this procedure has become popular in other tea growing states as the "Assam model!"

MANY FIRSTS IN ASSAM: MANAGING THE DEMONETIZATION

33. We saw a great opportunity to push less cash economy at the heights of most challenging times of Demonetization. In fact, our Government would like to express its deep gratitude to the people of Assam for their exemplary discipline and enormous patience to bear with the hardships due to this national exercise. We also appreciate the sincere efforts of our friends from the banking sector, other stakeholders from trade and commerce and the District Administration. This helped us not only in bringing the situation to near normalcy in the state within a few days but also in innovating new ways to deal with

the situation. This is in fact the spirit of "Team Assam," that our Chief Minister has been talking about. Assam was, indeed, the first state to implement several measures in this regard. To quote, a few:

- a) Mobile ATMs in hospitals were deployed in Assam for the first time in the country and Government of India advised all other states to follow this measure.
- b) Worked with bankers as a single team and managed the queues and crowds in the first three days at the banks and ATMs very smoothly. Queues disappeared within the very first week after demonetisation itself.
- c) Door delivery of cash to pensioners in Guwahati and important towns.
- d) More than 6 lakh bank accounts were opened for tea garden workers in a record time and made them financially inclusive in real terms.
- e) ATMs were opened in tea garden areas and workers started to proudly use them to withdraw their wages.
- f) We on our own, declared 18 incentives from the State Government for promoting less cash and more digital means for financial transactions in Assam covering all important stakeholders of the society covering farmers, Mauzadars, Fair Price Shops, GPSS, Students, Patients, Gaon Panchayats, Municipality tax payers, Bankers, Deputy Commissioners and consumers of petrol and diesel. Assam was the first state to come up with such a comprehensive incentive package in this regard.

- g) We also exempted POS machines, ATMs, brand band equipment etc from entry tax till the end of financial year 2016-17 to facilitate digital transactions.
 - h) Massive campaign to promote more digital transactions through *Digidhan melas* up to Gaon Panchayat level.
34. Sir, you may be aware that our visionary leader Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister, spoke about these initiatives of our State in his "*Mann ki Baat*" and indeed, it was a proud moment for all the people of Assam and a real recognition of the sincerity of this Government in cleaning up the system and bringing integrity in all walks of life.
35. These are few shining examples that symbolize the growing self-confidence of the State.

THEME OF THE BUDGET 2017-18 : RESURGENT ASSAM

36. The central theme of this budget is 'Resurgent Assam'. This has six strategies covering the entire spectrum of the society. These strategies are: (1) Reform, Consolidate and Strengthen the Public Financial Management, (2) Boost the Public Infrastructure and the first ever focus on urban areas and on Professional Colleges and Universities (3) Farmer-Youth-Women-Divyang Welfare, (4) Rural Development and Employment Generation (5) Financial Inclusion and (6) Cultural and Economic Renaissance centred on History and Heritage of Assam.

The above strategies run across my budget speech and you will find the relevant policies and announcements in different departments for easy comprehension and of course, some will cut across multiple departments.

I would also like to highlight another unique feature of this budget. Our Government believes that the strength of Assam lies in its history, heritage, and its indigenusness. *Muga* is the Colour of our society. Tea is the Taste of Assam. Fish is the Life-line of our people and Rhino is the Energy that drives our spirits.

37. In this budget, you will find our missionary focus on *Muga*, policy interventions to unleash the land value of Small Tea Gardens, develop the gene bank for indigenous fish species like *Puthi*, *Dorikona*, *Baralia*, *Khalihana*, *Chelakani*, *Bata* and *Aleng*, establishment of Fast-track Wildlife courts in Kaziranga and the creation of more breathing space for Rhinos by evicting the encroachers in the National Park area.
38. Now I turn to the first strategy, which is to Reform, Consolidate and Strengthen the Public Financial Management.
39. You are aware of the fiscal situation that this Government inherited and that situation was clearly brought out in my white paper that was laid out in this August House on 3rd of June 2016 and I do not want to waste your valuable time dwelling on the same again.

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE MANAGEMENT: FROM CONTROL TO PROACTIVE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

40. Our emphasis is productive expenditure. Accordingly, we have been attempting to improve the systems and procedures.
41. As promised to you about 5 months ago in the last budget speech, we have already taken action as listed below:

- a) Cabinet approved Assam Treasury Rules, 2017 in place of existing Rules of 1937 and it will be effective from 1st of April 2017.
- b) Ceiling (FOC) has been made online from 1st of July 2016 as promised.
- c) All employees including Muster Roll (MR) & Work Charge (WC) employees will now get salaries & wages monthly as they are now being brought into the same budget category as other regular employees.
- d) Retention of posts have been simplified and no retention would be required except for contractual and MR and WC personnel.
- e) *Suo-moto* FOCs have also been made effective. As I stand and speak, a sum of Rs 1179 crore has been released *suo-moto* after I promised about 5 months ago.
- f) Out of the 25 new Treasuries proposed to be set up in next 5 years, one Treasury has been made functional and the proposal related to 17 number of treasuries are under consideration by RBI and AG office.
- g) Process of installation of CCTVs in major Treasuries is in progress. SMS alert to DDOs and Payees on clearance of bill by Treasuries has been activated.
- h) E-Kuber Platform of RBI was started on a pilot basis in two treasuries already.
- i) A Committee under the Additional Chief Secretary is considering the matter of draft Assam Public Accountability Bill.

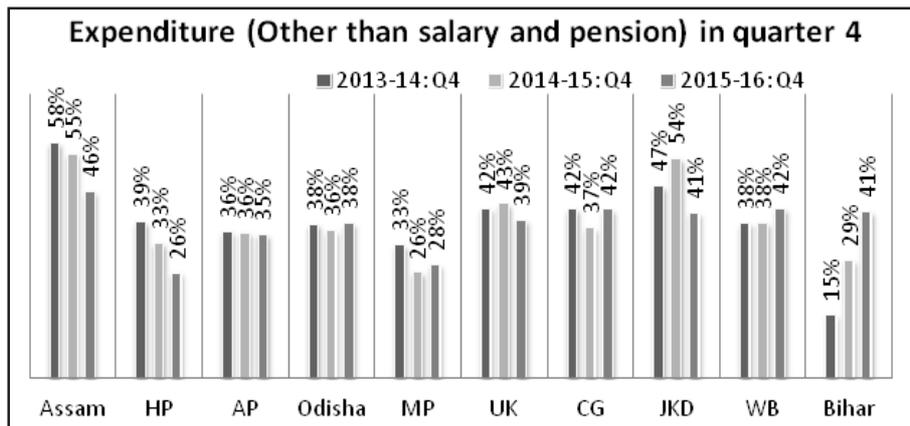
- j) We have issued a comprehensive and updated Delegated Financial Powers Rules in August 2016 after a gap of 17 years.
42. Apart from the above, the Finance Department has taken several proactive steps and I will briefly mention some of them.
43. I would like to draw your special attention to the some of the figures that I am quoting here. The departments has utilised Rs. 9348.16 crore till 31st of December 2016 against Rs. 6584.20 crore during the corresponding period of previous year. **This is about 42% more than the previous year.**
44. Sir, you would agree that this is a very good achievement by any measure for a new Government, which in a period of just 4 months of approved budget of 2016-17, has achieved these figures! But we have set ourselves very high targets and we want to achieve an expenditure of not less than 60% of the total plan allocation by February 28th, 2017 against an annual achievement of 37% in 2015-16.

PROPOSED ACTION PLAN FOR DEEPENING THE PROACTIVE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

45. The controlled systems of fund flow have, over a period of time, created several layers in the processing, sanctioning and releasing of funds. It is commonly stated that each proposal will have to cross more than 60 tables. Our Government has chalked out a plan to expand the online ceiling system in such a way that the moment Finance Department issues ceiling, the last point in the chain, i.e., DDO in the concerned department shall receive the ceiling instantly. We will implement this in the financial year 2017-18.
46. We have already prepared a project proposal in the name of ASPIRe (Assam State Public Finance

Institutional Reforms) with the assistance of World Bank at a project cost of 44 million US dollars, the equivalent of about Rs 300 crore. All steps required for the commencement of the project are complete and it is slated to start from May 2017. The activities will cover all aspects of financial management including strengthening the systems of Taxation, Excise Departments and budgetary controls with treasury management.

47. Finance Department will also set up a Cash and Debt Management cell so that cash flow to the department can become more proactive and cheaper options for borrowings can be tapped.
48. Further, quarter-wise expenditure is highly skewed and as it was noticed from previous years, the maximum funds are spent in the last few months of the financial year and this is the very reason for poor financial management. While many states have come out of this trap and currently have almost evenly distributed quarter-wise spending, Assam has not been able to focus on the same. The following table shows a comparison of expenditure of the last quarter of Assam vis-a-vis other states :



49. Thus, we set forth a target to increasing expenditure in the first three quarters and ensure that the last quarter spending will never go beyond 30% over the period of next three years.

RESTRUCTURING AND REFORMING THE BUDGET

50. We have worked overtime to restructure the budget during the past few months to implement what I said in the last budget.
51. I had promised that we will merge Plan and Non-Plan Heads and now I have come to you with a budget that has only Capital and Revenue Heads. It is a historical moment for the State's budget process and the budget 2017-18 will be remembered by the future generation of Economics and Management students of the State as the first budget prepared without the Plan and Non-Plan classification.
52. Sir, what this means is that all employees who were earlier drawing salaries from Plan Head will join those who were earlier drawing their salaries from Non-Plan and now all salaries are bucketed under the head "Establishment Expenditure". Thus the systemic discrimination in the budgeting of salaries of some categories of employees like Muster Roll (MR) and Work-Charged (WC) employees has been drawn to a close with this budget and I am happy to announce that everyone will now receive their salaries and wages regularly.

OTHER POLICY INITIATIVES

53. I am happy to inform you that our Government has decided to redefine the role of Planning & Development Department to a more challenging and unifying role for the development and transformation of the State. Thus, we plan to rechristen it as the "**Department**

for Development and Transformation of Assam (DDTA)”.

54. Further, we have already renamed the State Planning Board as the State Innovation and Transformation *Aayog* (SITA) and I have made adequate budget provision for the same so that SITA can play a very key role similar to NITI *Aayog* and guide the departments to take up innovative interventions.

Further, SITA has already identified specific areas for conducting the studies in the first phase. They include the Revival of Tea Industry, Skill Development, Revival of Sick Industries and Sustainable Management of River Brahmaputra. The concerned administrative departments will be closely involved in this process and I assure that there will be no constraint of funds for this purpose.

55. Earlier Plan funds were devolved to the Karbi-Anglong, Dima Hasao and BTC based on a formula that was suggested by the Phene Committee in the year 1987. Now we do not have Plan Funds. Hence, it is necessary to re-examine the whole matter comprehensively. Accordingly, it has been decided to constitute a Commission consisting of a Retired Chief Secretary to consult all the councils including the Non-Sixth Schedule areas and recommend a new methodology for this purpose.

FIRST EVER PROCESS OF PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS

56. (a) **With MLAs**

Sir, our Government believes in starting good traditions. For the first time in the State, we initiated the pre-budget consultations with Hon'ble MLAs of all political parties. I am very much grateful for the

cooperation extended by all of them in this regard and must place on record that some of the projects suggested by our Hon'ble Members are very innovative. The Finance Department has compiled all these proposals received MLA-wise and the same will be circulated to the departments concerned. I am hopeful to take up these schemes phase-wise and for this purpose, I earmark Rs.1000 crore from this budget for the various programmes.

Similarly, each and every department led by my Respected Cabinet Colleagues are also core to the budget making process. I have had detailed consultations with them also and they suggested several signature projects which feature in this budget. This is why Sir, I say that the Budget 2017-18 is historic and unique.

56. (b) **WITH CITIZENS AND CIVIL SOCIETY**

Further, for the first time in the history of Budget making, we held extensive consultations with the Vice Chancellors of all Universities in addition to that with trade bodies, business groups etc.

In response to my appeal for suggestions to improve our Budget and our Governance, we have received more than 1100 emails and letters from various stakeholders of the society extending their valuable suggestions for this budget. I express my gratitude to all of them. I am happy to inform that some of these suggestions like Public Paddy Procurement, Playgrounds in every village, regularisation of a large number of contractual TET teachers etc. have been included in my budget proposals for 2017-18.

EMPLOYEE WELFARE MEASURES

57. Sir, you will be happy to note that our Government has accepted the recommendations of 7th Assam Pay and Productivity Pay Commission, by and large. You

will remember Sir, the last Pay Commission's recommendations were implemented very late after 39 months and the issue of arrears was not completely addressed by the previous Government.

Our Government does not intend to disappoint our employees and we will implement the recommendations of the 7th Pay Commission from 1st of April 2016.

Now question is whether we will give arrears to the employees from 1st April 2016 or not? If we decide to pay arrears from 1st April 2016, then the estimated financial burden will be about Rs. 2200 crores. But, considering the rightful dues of our employees and the need for creating congenial work environment and to create a healthy relation between the Government and employees, I am pleased to announce that the Government will pay the arrear of Rs. 2200 crore from 1st April 2016, in spite of the fact that it will give tremendous pains to the State exchequer. The first instalment of the arrears will be released immediately in April-May 2017 and the balance arrears will be paid within the fiscal 2017-18.

58. Further, I would like to share an another good news that our Cabinet has already approved housing loan to be provided to all Government employees at a very low interest rate of 5.05% without any collateral security up to a limit of Rs. 15 lakhs. We will kick start this program with State Bank of India and subsequently include other banks and financial institutions also.
59. A Scheme for higher education loan for the children of all State Government employees has also been approved. The employees can avail this loan up to an amount of Rs. 10 lakhs at 4% interest rate with the

State Government bearing the rest of the interest component.

60. We are confident that, with the increased pay scales and with the two schemes of Housing and Educational loans at subsidized rates, we will be able to lessen the burden on our employees.
61. Respected Sir, I would like to highlight the issue related to compassionate appointments in the Government. It is generally seen that this policy has attracted more criticism rather than helping the family members of an employee if the employee dies in harness.
62. A legal heir of the deceased employee may not get the appointment immediately due to several reasons such as lack of educational qualifications and non-availability of vacancies within the stipulated five per cent of total vacancies etc.
63. In fact a large number of applicants keep moving from pillar to post and such situation has, over a period of time, created space for exploiters and middlemen. In view of above, our Government strongly feels that the real objective of the compassionate policy will be served if the immediate dependent of the deceased employee can be allowed to draw the last drawn salary of the employee without seeking any job. Such facility can be made available till the date of retirement had the employee been alive. Thereafter, the family pension as eligible can be extended to the eligible dependent. This would be a great relief to the family members of the deceased and our Government will consider the matter in this regard after discussing with the stakeholders.
64. Further, we also propose to encourage all our employees to wear Khadi and locally woven clothes. It

will not only help nurturing our social values but also boost the local Khadi and Handloom industry. For this purpose, I have made a provision in the budget so that every employee will be provided Rs.1000 on reimbursement basis upon buying two Khadi apparels every year.

65. Further, we have decided to abolish retention procedure for almost all posts and also merged earlier plan posts with non-plan. This will ensure regular monthly payment of salaries to all categories of employees.
66. Sir, with the above incentives, I am sure that the employees are very much aware that this huge cost to state exchequer on account of higher pay scales, cheap housing and education loans is borne by the tax payers and people of the State. After extending these benefits, if the work culture and attitude of the employees to the public do not improve and certain sections of employees continue to resort to seeking bribes, Government will take strictest action against such elements. I also trust and hope that the employees will follow the motto, “*Seva and Samvendanasilata*” in letter and spirit and bring laurels to the State as an ideal state.

ASTADASH MUKUTAR UNNOYONEE MAALA

67. Before, I turn to the Department-wise proposals, at the outset, I would like to announce 18 key initiatives, namely, *Ashtadash Mukutar Unnoyonee Maala*, for the year 2017-18 reflecting our growing confidence.
- 67.1 **SVAYEM (Swami Vivekananda Assam Youth Empowerment) Yojana**

Most inspirational and powerful quotes on youth always came from none other than Swami

Vivekananda, an evergreen youth icon of our Motherland. I am reminded of his clarion call to youth:

'Act on the educated young men, bring them together, and organize them. Great things can be done by great sacrifice only. No selfishness, no name, no fame, yours or mine, nor my Master's even! Work, work the idea, the plan, my boys, my brave, noble, good souls – to the wheel, to the wheel put your shoulders! Stop not to look back for name, or fame, or any such nonsense. Throw self overboard and work.'

With the above inspiration our Government would like to take up a flagship programme on youth empowerment taking lessons from Prime Minister's Mudra Yojana in Assam by name, Swami Vivekananda Assam Youth Empowerment (SVAYEM) Yojana. Under this programme, one lakh youth will be provided suitable credit support for taking up income generating enterprises. The loan amount will be up to Rs. 1 Lakh for the new business and up to Rs. 2 Lakh for the existing entrepreneurs. State Government will provide 20% subsidy and will also set up 'Risk Fund' with select banks so that the banks will be encouraged to advance loans without much hesitation of recovery issues. Detailed Guidelines of SVAYEM Yojana will be issued soon.

I set apart Rs. 200.00 crore in my budget towards 20% subsidy and Rs.100.00 crore for risk fund.

67.2 Kanaklata Mahila Sabalakaran Yojana (KAMS)

The contribution and sacrifice of our women for progress of Assam is well known. While recognizing the fact that energy of women is required to be used for economic growth of the state, our Government proposes to promote 1 lakh women self-help groups. Each SHG will be extended a financial support upto

Rs.5.00 lakh as loan including capital subsidy over a period of time. An initial grant of Rs.25,000/- will be provided to each group in the current financial year and then subsequent support will depend on fulfilling a set of criteria.

The P&RD Department will develop comprehensive guidelines in this regard so that the rural women move out of poverty through strengthening of SHGs and their network, financial inclusion, Skill development and marketing support.

This programme would directly help more than 10 lakh women in the State and currently I propose to allot Rs. 250.00 crore in the current financial year.

Also as a good will gesture and as a gift to our sisters, our Government will exempt the women SHGs from stamp duty for documentation related to Bank loan upto Rs.2.5 lakh in the financial year 2017-18.

67.3 Gene Bank for Indigenous Fish (GBIF)

Sir, as you know, Assam is replete with water bodies and is an abode of fish. 160 fish species i.e. more than 30% of the total fresh water fish varieties are found in our region. Due to various reasons, there has been a drastic reduction in the indigenous fish population in Assam and 82 species have already become endangered and might become extinct in the near future. These include Puthi, Dorikona, Baralia, Khalihana, Chelakani, Bata, Aleng etc. It is high time that we intervene in the conservation of the germplasm, propagation and restoration of these endangered fish species which will benefit our future generations.

This objective can only be fulfilled by scientifically developing a directory of indigenous fish species along

with a data base of gene-bank of entire Assam. With the aim of conserving the Fish Biodiversity of the State, a propagation technology will be developed and standardized for certain fish species to suit the local environment. This will be beneficial for the local fisherfolk also. Accordingly, in the greater interest of the State, it is proposed to initiate a Scientific Conservation Programme for Indigenous Fish (SCoPIF) by involving the Fishery College of Assam & the Fisheries Department, covering both experimental and natural habitat at an estimated cost of 9.36 crore. Accordingly, I allocate Rs. 2.00 crore in the Current Budget to kick start the project.

67.4 Reforms In Mid-Day Meal : Eggs & Cooking Gas.

Hon'ble Members, the importance of Midday Meal Scheme cannot be overemphasized. Providing nourishing food every day to the millions of school children is a key focus area of our Government.

We have 42.61 lakh children in Lower Primary and Upper Primary schools. Consequently, we have now decided to take the step of providing eggs to all of these children twice a week as part of the Mid Day Meal programme.

We have estimated that it will cost about Rs 130 crore per year. But it is not mere cost to us but is one of the most productive investments that we can make as Government. It improves nutrition of poor children and also creates a local demand for eggs helping the rural economy in its own way. Hence, I am proposing adequate provision in the budget.

Further, cooking the meal in the school by using firewood is one of the difficulties that the management faces and more so during rainy and winter seasons. Our Government intends to provide cooking gas

connection to every Government school providing Mid Day Meal. This will not just help our children get faster and hotter meals but also reduce the environmental impact. Funds are not a constraint for our Government for this.

The most important announcement that I would like is about ensuring timely availability of funds. There are expenditures involved : from the purchase of raw materials to the remuneration of cooks to other incidental expenses. But due to non-receipt of funds in time, the implementation of the programme suffers.

I therefore propose to introduce a system – something akin to Green Channel - wherein the required amount is released by the State Government in a timely manner without waiting for releases from Government of India. Such a system will ensure that there are no interruptions at any stage and that the scheme is implemented smoothly throughout the year. We will keep a provision for recouping the central share subsequently for necessary reimbursements.

67.5 Price Stabilisation Fund

Price rise affects the most the poor and disadvantaged. Every year our consumers are subjected to the vagaries of market demand for the Procurement of Essential Commodities. The prices of Onion, Dal, Sugar, etc among many other essential commodities often see a sudden spike in prices and go beyond the reach of the common citizens. This is often due to adverse climatic conditions which are aggravated by hoarding of these commodities by greedy traders.

To step in and correct this market failure, our Government aims to strengthen the hands of our Food & Civil Supplies department by providing them a “Price Stabilization Fund”. I have made a provision of Rs.

150 crores in my budget. In this regard, detailed operational guidelines will be issued.

67.6 Financial Incentives For Ujwala

One of the flagship schemes of Government of India, Ujwala, aims to provide free LPG connections to BPL families. This visionary scheme will not just increase the productivity of rural women and empower her to take up other economic activities but also have a positive effect on her health.

In order to incentivize the adoption of LPG connections by BPL families, our Government plans to provide financial assistance of Rs 1000/- per family. This will fasten the adoption of LPG connections and transform the kitchens of Rural Assam in a rapid manner. For this purpose, I propose to allocate Rs. 5 crore in this Budget. I will provide for more funds depending on the requirement.

67.7 Tejasvi Navadhitamastu Edu-Infra Funds (TNEIF):

Development of Professional Colleges and Universities

‘Tejasvi Nav-adhitam-astu’ meaning “May Our Knowledge become Brilliant” as stated in our Upanishads. Our Professional Colleges and Universities are the seats of high learning from where society gets its leaders in Science, Arts and various other fields of national life. However, the successive Governments in Assam have not given enough attention to strengthen these institutes.

Unlike other educational institutions, the role of University is too wide and critical for any society. Revered Teacher, Dr S Radhakrishnan, succinctly laid down the aims of University education as Chairman of the First Education Commission 1948. His guidance

has immense value and time-less relevance to us. The first and foremost of the 18 aims of University education that he mentioned was “to produce able citizens who can take up national responsibilities successfully in various fields. The University has to produce able administrators and suitable workers in various occupations and industries and the university has to provide leadership in the various walks of life in the best interest of the nation”.

Our Government cherishes this vision with full commitment and therefore, I propose to allocate special grants of Rs. 667 crore in the name of Tejasvi Navadhitamastu Funds for infrastructure development of Professional Colleges and Universities to be spent over a period of three to four years as detailed here :

Sl. No.	Name	(Rs in Crore)	
		Total outlay	2017-18
1)	Guwahati Medical College and Hospital	100.00	30.00
2)	Assam Medical College and Hospital	100.00	30.00
3)	Silchar Medical College and Hospital	100.00	30.00
4)	Gauhati University	25.00	12.50
5)	Dibrugarh University	25.00	12.50
6)	Assam Engineering College	25.00	6.00
7)	Jorhat Engineering College	25.00	6.00
8)	Bodoland University	25.00	10.00
9)	Kumar Bhaskar Varman University	15.00	10.00
10)	Cotton University	20.00	5.00
11)	Tezpur Medical College	20.00	10.00
12)	Jorhat Medical College	20.00	10.00

Sl. No.	Name	(Rs in Crore)	
		Total outlay	2017-18
13)	Barpeta Medical College	20.00	10.00
14)	Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat	20.00	10.00
15)	Horticultural College, Dharmapur	15.00	5.00
16)	IIIT, Guwahati	15.00	14.80
17)	Veterinary College, AAU, Khanapara	10.00	5.00
18)	K K Handique Open University	10.00	5.00
19)	Veterinary College, North Lakhimpur	10.00	10.00
20)	Agriculture College, Biswanath	10.00	10.00
21)	Government Ayurvedic Medical College	10.00	3.00
22)	Jorhat Institute of Science and Technology	10.00	5.00
23)	B Brahma Engineering College	10.00	5.00
24)	Science & Technology University, Assam	7.00	3.50
25)	Agriculture Collge, Dhubri	5.00	5.00
26)	Fishery College, Raha	5.00	5.00
27)	Homeopathy College, Jorhat	2.00	1.00
28)	Homeopathy College, Nagaon	2.00	1.00
29)	Homeopathy College, Guwahati	2.00	1.00
30)	Luit Konwar Rudra Barua State College of Music, Panjabari	2.00	1.00
31)	Government College of Art and Crafts, Basistha	2.00	1.00

I assure the hon'ble members that if I have missed any other similar state level institute; I will make necessary provision of funds in due course of time.

While focusing on the existing universities and professional colleges, our Government also strongly

believes in increasing the number of such institutes to strengthen the foundations of the society for generations to come.

I propose to start 8 women colleges in Minority dominated areas, three Government Degree Colleges, three Polytechnics, 20 B.Ed Colleges, 33 Skill Development centers, one Dairy Science College at Sorbhog, one Agro Forestry and Biodiversity College at Kukilabari, a new University of Veterinary and Life Science by carving from Assam Agriculture university, a new Cultural University in Majuli and three Universities at Hojai, North Lakhimpur and Barpeta District.

Hon'ble Members must have noticed that I have not mentioned the exact location of some of the proposed institutions as the Site Selection Committee will finalise the locations depending on the feasibility. However, I am pleased to inform that out of 20 B.Ed Colleges, three Colleges will be established, one each in Karbi-Anglong, Dima Hasao and B.T.A.D areas.

67.8 City Infra Development Fund (CIDF)

It is said that "The city is humanity's laboratory, where people flock to dream, create, build, and rebuild". To rekindle the dreams of our people, we are launching the 'Big Cities Amenities Development Fund (BCADF)' worth Rs.1200 crores to be spent on big public infrastructure projects, in the 6 large cities of the State with more than one lakh population: Silchar, Tinsukia, Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Nagaon and Tezpur. Each city will be allocated Rs. 200 crore.

Over a period of time, there has been a criticism that the successive State Governments have focused only in Guwahati. In this regard I would like to reiterate that our government is conscious of the fact that while

Guwahati will continue to get priority as State Capital and gateway to North East India, we need to focus on improving the urban infrastructure of other important cities and towns of Assam to ensure balanced regional growth.

Though there is some funding under the missions of the Union Government such as AMRUT, PMAY, etc, there is an acute need for more investment from the State Government in the urban areas, especially in more populous cities, in a consistent manner over a period of five years.

In this budget, I propose to allocate Rs 120 crore. I request the members of this august House belonging to these cities and the concerned districts to develop projects like river-front, Public Parks, Landmark Roads, Marriage halls, District Libraries, District Stadiums etc. For instance, in Dibrugarh, Riverfront development will be one of our big priorities.

67.9 CMSGUY – Entry Point Activities

In my last budget, I announced a mega mission, Chief Minister's Samagra Gramya Unnayan Yojana (CMSGUY) with an outlay of Rs. 30,000 crore over a period of five years to double the farmers' income.

I am happy to inform the honorable members that Rs. 500 crore was already transferred to the Mega Mission Society and Rs. 1000 crore more has also been provided in the Supplementary Demand of 2016-17. Other Missions under the Mega Mission are being registered.

Sir, you will be delighted to know that the Governing Council of the Mega Mission Society under the Chairmanship of our Hon'ble Chief Minister has recently decided to implement three important entry-point activities. These include:

- (a) Supply of new tractors for farm mechanization in each Revenue Village.
- (b) Football field development in convergence with MGNREGA in each Revenue Village.
- (c) Establishment of Knowledge Centres in each Panchayat.

67.10 **Mission Muga**

Some scholars referred that Kautilya (350 to 275 BC) mentioned that 'Dukula', a kind of silk fabric, produced from cocoons of certain species of insects, in ancient Assam. This 'Dukula' was described to have three varieties including one was of golden colour and was popular in 'Suvarnakudya' (present Assam). As per the British records, Ahom period was golden era for muga cultivation and no woman was considered accomplished unless she had attained proficiency in spinning and weaving. On the other hand, a girl having no knowledge of weaving was called 'Thupuri', 'a girl misfit for marriage'.

In Assam, strength of silk industry lies in 16.43 lakh weavers and 2.75 lakhs rearers and we all know 99% weavers are women. I propose a very ambitious mission to increase production of muga silk by 10 times by the year 2026 and our Government's vision is that Assam shall emerge as a leader in the world market.

Such programme requires a comprehensive and integrated mission mode project to cover whole range of activities from growing a large scale host plantation of muga, saulu, dighlati, involving the muga rearers, weavers and upto marketing through modern outlets and on e-marketing over internet to reach the customers globally. We have a registered society in the Handloom Textiles and Sericulture Department

namely Assam Silk Outreach Mission Society which will be responsible for taking up such challenging project to achieve the target of producing one million kg muga by 2026.

I propose to develop nurseries and host plantations in 500 hectares in Government lands, 2000 hectares in degraded forest area and 8000 hectares in private individuals' lands during 2017-18. In addition, we will work with basic seed producers from traditional families, weavers and local entrepreneurs. Further, the youth who are interested in this area and graduates from NIFT and such other institutions will be made partners in marketing. The serious entrepreneurs and active NGOs working in this sector will also be roped in.

For this purpose, I propose to allocate Rs.100.00 crore in my budget.

67.11 Zero Interest On Crop Loans

Financial inclusion is the heart of several programs of our Government. The low-level of Credit-Deposit Ratio in Assam leaves a great scope for expansion of credit flow to the rural areas particularly to the farmers.

Our Government is exploring innovative ways to increase the credit flow. To encourage the uptake of credit by our farmers, we propose to introduce "Zero Interest Crop Loans" by giving 100% interest subventions on agricultural loans taken by farmers of Assam upto Rs. 1.00 lakh.

Perhaps we are the first state in the country to take such a transformative intervention to drive agricultural loans. I strongly believe that this will encourage our farmers to avail loans for agricultural purposes and

help the rural economy. For this purpose, I have allocated Rs. 25 Crores in my budget for 2017-18.

67.12 Financial Incentives For Farmers Using Kisan Credit Cards (KCC)

As per bank records, over 9.60 lakh Kisan Credit Cards were issued in Assam. However, active cards are just a little over 1.34 Lakhs. As the data shows, over 80% of the KCC cards are inactive which is indicative of the fact that the credit flow from the banks to the farmers is not commensurate with the number of KCC holders.

As KCC's are intrinsically linked to the growth of the agricultural sector, it is important that we revive these inactive cards so that there are strong credit flows in the market. I am looking for creating a positive situation in the field by giving an incentive to the KCC holding farmers which will prompt the Banks to give more credit.

To activate these inactive KCC's, our Government proposes to introduce a one-time cash incentive of Rs. 3000 per inactive KCC holding farmer if he renews the Card. A detailed guideline will be issued for this purpose. I propose to allot Rs. 65 Crores in my budget for 2017-18.

67.13 Conversion Of 1000 Timber Bridges Into RCC Bridges And Construction Of Rail Over Bridges

Sir, as you are aware connectivity is a major challenge in the rural areas of Assam and many a life is put at risk while crossing the many timber bridges that connect Rural Assam. Our Government intends to convert 1000 of these timber bridges into permanent RCC bridges this year and for this purpose I allocate Rs. 100 crores in the current budget.

While we need more Railway lines in order to improve connectivity, unhindered movement of road transport over the railway bridges, in case the busy roads is also required to be addressed. For this purpose, we will provide Rail Over-Bridges (ROB) in the State.

Sir, it is heartening to note that since Independence, for the first time, our State got a place in the Ministry of Railways with our senior leader and Hon'ble MP, Shri Rajen Gohain, joining as Minister of State for Railways. We are really grateful to Hon'ble Prime Minister for giving this huge opportunity to Assam and it demonstrates his love and affection towards Assam.

With the active support and help from Shri Rajen Gohain, Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Railways and after detailed consultations with the officials of Indian Railways, we have identified 48 places in the State where ROB's can be constructed with 50% state share.

While we are committed to cover these bridges over a period of time, I propose to initiate the works related to 10 ROB's in the year 2017-18 at the following place:

- 1) Barpeta Road – Sorbhog
- 2) Kaithalkuchi – Nalbari
- 3) New Guwahati – Panikhaiti
- 4) Jagiroad Yard
- 5) Dhalpukhuri – Lanka
- 6) Lumding Yard
- 7) Tinsukia Yard
- 8) Bhalukmara – Jorhat Town
- 9) Naharkatia – Duliajan
- 10) Basugaon – Dangsai

Accordingly, I propose to allocate Rs. 50 crores for this purpose so that the works can be taken either by Railways or PWD(R) as per the feasibility and at mutual convenience.

67.14 Tea Garden Workers Financial Inclusion

Even after 70 years of Independence, majority of the Tea Garden Workers are still left out of the mainstream banking system and are caught in the 'weekly cash cycle'. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modiji's historic decision to demonetize gave us an opportunity to break this 'weekly cash cycle' and bring the banking system to the doorsteps of the Tea Gardens.

In the last couple of months, we have opened over 6.50 Lakh number of bank accounts for tea garden workers and this has strengthened our resolve further to improve their financial inclusion.

To drive the Financial Inclusion of Tea Garden workers further, I propose to pay Rs 5000/- to each tea garden worker in his or her bank account. Initially, Rs. 2500/- to each workers who have opened bank account and subsequently another Rs 2500/- will be paid to them if the wages are received through the Bank account continuously for six months.

I have provided Rs 287 crore in the budget for 2017-18.

67.15 HOUSING FOR ALL (URBAN)

We have taken up steps for large scale construction of houses in urban areas under the National Flagship Programme, "Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Housing for All" and eight towns viz. Guwahati, Nagaon, Silchar, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Jorhat, Kokrajhar and Dhubri are being covered as per the guidelines of the Central Government.

In order to help the poor and the homeless, our Government has decided to give a subsidy of Rs 50,000 to each beneficiary in addition to the other benefits already provided by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development. For this purpose, I have allotted Rs. 100 crore in this budget.

67.16 Wage Compensation For Pregnant, Temporary Workers Of Tea-Gardens

One special group we are extremely concerned about is the pregnant women in Tea garden areas who work through their pregnancy until full term, thereby compromising their health and also of their unborn children.

For better health and nutrition, we are announcing a onetime payment of Rupees 12,000 to each pregnant woman of garden areas so that she can better look after herself and her unborn baby without compromising the livelihood of her family.

We are hopeful to bring down high MMR and IMR of garden, through these interventions.

67.17 Deen Dayal Divyang Sahajya Achani

Hon'ble Speaker Sir, we are a sensitive lot. We are concerned with the welfare of our people. We would like to deal with them with an approach, which is out an out human, as preached and propagated by our elders and leaders. Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya is one such name that readily comes to my mind when it comes to humanism. I recall the life message of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhaya Ji and his unique concept of "Integral humanism" and the importance that he accorded to the economic progress of every human being are philosophies par excellence. We

take inspiration from this great person. Our Government is committed to place welfare of the poor at the centre of our thoughts.

As part of our mission to reinvent the Social Welfare Department, we would like to introduce some schemes with a humanistic approach. By calling the physically challenged persons as "*Divyangs*", Hon"ble Prime Minister put the agenda of this "*neglected*" section of the society into "*privileged*" category. In the above background, our Government proposes to provide Rs. 5000 for medical treatment of each of 4,50,000 Divyangs in the State. We wish to dedicate the Scheme to Pandit Deendayal Upadhaya by naming this flagship Welfare Programme as "Deen Dayal Divyang Sahajya Achani". Accordingly, I allocate Rs. 250 crore in the current budget. Indeed, any additional amount to be required for the Scheme will be provided in due course of the year.

67.18 **Setting Up Pravasi Asomiya Department**

Sir, we are all aware that substantial number of Assamese people settled in various countries up to second and third generations and are keen to connect to their roots in the State.

We also hear from such well-wishers that we do not have any suitable platform in Assam to facilitate interaction with the Government and other stakeholders. Some of the Non-Resident Assamese would also like to contribute to the trade, business and different walks of life. Our Government therefore proposes to set up a new Department namely, Pravasi Asomiya Department very soon.

HOME & POLITICAL DEPARTMENT : GUARDING ASSAM

68. I mentioned in my last budget speech that, Police is the face of the Government for 'Parivartan'. On these lines, the department has taken series of initiatives to positively change the Police-Public interface. I had announced Mission MOITRI in my last budget, a Thana based system reform programme, to create a sensitive and responsive Police force. 62 Thanas will be brought under the ambit of the MOITRI Scheme. I proposed to allocate an amount of Rs.125.00 Cr in this budget.
69. In the last budget, I had announced recruitment of more than 4000 Police personnel, 3980 policemen including 346 Sub-Inspectors. The process of recruitment is going on. It is proposed to recruit another 5013 personnel, which includes 17 SIs, 154 UBCs and 3455 ABCs against new vacancies. As such total new recruitment will be 8993. Further, in order to reduce the dependency on CAPF (Central Armed Police Forces) for law and order duties it is proposed to raise 2 (Two) nos. of new IR Battalions. The Police Training College in Dergaon will be upgraded as **Assam Police Academy** at par with global standards.
70. In order to make our police force mobile, responsive and tech-savvy, it has been decided to introduce **E-Challan system** in 2017-18 in Kamrup (Metro) and 10 other Districts.
71. Last year, we had announced a project on establishment of Traffic Signal System across 99 in Urban Centres in Assam. The implementation of the Project is in advance Stage. In the current financial year, an amount of Rs. 5.00 crore for the scheme will be provided.

72. Assam is a frontline state in realizing the dream of **Digital India** and cash-less economy. As economic transactions will move more towards digital platform our government is sensitised towards the need of building and upgrading its digital investigation and forensic capabilities to check any form of digital offences. There is a need to build a quality intelligence network which would ensure minimal use of force. *Even **Chanakya** mentions that only those societies which had the most effective intelligence network were considered to be the most secured.* Keeping this in mind, our Government is investing in creating **Cyber Dome** project which would increase the technical intelligence gathering capabilities of the state using cutting edge technology and trained manpower. It will also include cyber security, cyber forensics and social media monitoring cell. A budgetary provision of Rs.2.00 crore is proposed for the financial year 2017-18 for the same.
73. We can never forget the ultimate sacrifice that our security personnel make on the altar of duty while fighting insurgency and crime maintaining law and order. The great poetess Saroj Rani Jha in her famous poem “Sipahi ka Adarsh” says

जग भूले पर मुझे एक बस,
सेवा धर्म निभाना है।
जिसकी है यह देह उसी में,
इसे मिला मिट जाना है।

In a bid to perpetuate the hallowed memory of their saga of gallantry, valour and ultimate sacrifice, our Government will build a **Police Memorial in Guwahati.**

74. Our Government is conscious about the need to bring more than 16,000 surrendered militant and those who have come to ceasefire to the mainstream with proper rehabilitation measures so that they can be a source of inspiration to their colleagues who are in the jungles. With this aim in view, the Government will take steps for skill development of entrepreneurship with concomitant wherewithal so that they can lead a life full of dignity and can channelize their energies to the nation building process.
75. Government also proposes to establish a Police Sub-Division at Umrangso considering the anticipated rapid growth of this area.
76. **Forensics** is another important area in the criminal justice system and internal security. A complete revamp of the infrastructure and equipment for Forensic Science Laboratory has also been proposed. For this purpose, an amount of Rs.2.00 crore has been proposed in this budget.
77. The **Fire & Emergency Services** is also proposed to be strengthened by operationalizing 36 new **Fire Service Stations** notified by the Government and 6 new stations as recommended by DRSC. This will substantially augment the existing number of 124 Fire & Emergency Services stations and reduce the response time as well as increase coverage. We will enhance pocket money for VDP in the year 2017-18.

Updation of NRC (National Register of Citizens)

78. Updating of National Register of Citizens (NRC) continues to be top most priority of the government. The ongoing process of verification of documents and family tree is progressing steadily. The Government constituted a Sub-Committee recently on NRC consisting of senior officers to assist the NRC State

Co-ordinator in matters which require certain policy decision stressed upon the correct preparation of Draft NRC by way of causing proper verification of the documents submitted. State Government is closely co-ordinating with Registrar General of India (RGI) for expeditious completion of the exercise and we shall also take up with Government of India to streamline the fund flow directly from the RGI to State Co-ordinator.

BORDER AREAS DEPARTMENT : PROTECTING OUR LAND, OUR BORDERS, OUR TOMORROW

79. Hon'ble Members of this august House are quite aware about the sincerity and novel approach of our Government as far as border areas of the State concerned. Our Hon'ble Chief Minister initiated a unique programme by organizing team visits of Hon'ble members of this House along with senior most officers of the State Government to every part of the International Borders of the State to gauge the challenges and opportunities for development of the State.
80. Secondly, the development trust of our government in the border areas is crystal clear through our decision to rename the 'Border Areas Department as "Border Protection and Development Department".
81. In view of active role taken up by us, the border areas are witnessing a spurt of developmental works started by Government of India and State Government in these areas. In the Indo-Bhutan international border, Ministry of Home Affairs has approved to construct a road at a project outlay of Rs.1259 crores covering 313 KM from Ghamduar near Assam West Bengal Border in Kokrajhar district to Shikaridanga in Udalguri district. Ministry of Home Affairs has already

released Rs.9.88 crores to PWD (NH) for preparation of the DPR.

82. Another important achievement was that the long pending land dispute in Lathitila-Dumabari has been resolved and border pillars erected. We are very hopeful that with the vision of our Chief Minister and support of Government of India, we will be able to not only protect the border but also ensure proper development of the border areas.

AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT: GROUNDWORKS FOR PROSPERITY LAID

83. I have already announced in my speech a series of measures including zero- interest crop loans to farmers, financial incentives for farmers using Kishan Credit Card, interest subsidy to farmers on agriculture machinery and equipments etc.
84. Last year, I spoke about providing Identity Cards to the farmers. In this regard I am happy to state that this process is at advanced stage and Identity Cards will be issued to all farmers in the State within the fiscal year 2017-18.
85. In tune with the dream of Hon'ble Prime Minister for 'Harkhet Me Pani', we have prepared District Irrigation Plan, Annual Action Plan for Irrigation and also State Irrigation Plan. It will help us to develop Irrigation facilities for the State in a holistic manner.
86. Further continuing above mission to increase the area under Irrigation, 61,000 Shallow Tubewells will be installed under NABARD programme which were sanctioned as part of the last tranche. I am proposing for another 39,000 Shallow Tubewells in 2017-18.
87. It is our dream to make the name of Majuli as Assam's trade mark of organic products in the name of "O'Majuli" so that Majuli will be known as World's

popular organic brand in addition to its current status of World's largest Riverine Island.

IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT : UNLEASHING THE POTENTIAL

88. One of the most critical inputs for growth of Agriculture is Irrigation. Though State Government has so far created 7.89 lakhs hectares of Irrigation potential, we have a long way to go in this sector. Accordingly, in order to develop capacity to irrigate additional 81,188 hectares of land, we plan to complete 200 small irrigation schemes presently in progress.
89. Under CAD and WM programme, we will create 28640 hecters of Irrigation potential by undertaking four more Schemes in the year 2017-18.
90. We shall also undertake Irrigation Schemes through Deep Tubewells (DT) to be powered by Solar Energy under Signature Project and for this purpose I allocate Rs. 1000 lakhs in the current budget.
91. In this regard I would like to inform the Hon'ble Members that Union Government in its budget presented on 1-2-2017 announced setting up of Long Term Irrigation fund with an additional corpus of Rs. 20,000 crores in NABARD. Our Government would make serious efforts to access these funds for large scale development of irrigation facilities in the State.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND VETERINARY: ADDING TO THE FARMERS' INCOME

92. Recognising the potential of the Animal Husbandry & Dairy Sector, considerable efforts have been made in this budget for the improvement of the sector. Some of the actions which are being proposed to be taken up are as follows. Breed upgradation of the nondescript cattle population of the state will get top most priority.

At present 97% of the cattle population of the state is of nondescript type with very low capacity of producing milk and meat. The Dept. has already developed a Frozen Semen Bull Station having A-Grade certification capable of producing about 6.00 Lakh dozens of Bovine Semen Straws per year. Steps will be taken to ensure that these are fully utilized for artificial insemination so that better quality progeny is developed for better yield.

93. Emphasis will be given on organising large number of Dairy Co-operative Societies for organised milk production. Financial assistance from the World Bank assisted APART project will also be pulled in for the development of both organised and unorganised dairy farmers.
94. To boost up the Animal Husbandary, Veterinary and Dairy Sector in the State, I propose to bifurcate Jorhat Agricultural University and set up a new Veterinary & Life Sciences University. All Dairy and Veterinary Institutes of the State will come under this new University. Necessary bill in this regard will be moved during the course of the year.
95. I also propose to set up a Dairy Science College under the proposed University of Veterinary & Life Sciences at Sarbhog, Barpeta. This will open up great opportunities for the youth of the North Eastern States and will contribute towards enhanced production of milk and milk products in the State through research activities. A road map cum vision document will also be prepared in this regard by engaging consultants, if necessary. Similarly, new projects for manufacturing fodder blocks for use by dairy farmers to feed their cattle during the lean season and also during floods will be taken up.

96. To supplement the proposed activities, much stress has been given in this budget towards animal health. Vaccination programmes against the Foot & Mouth disease and other diseases of this kind will be taken up in a comprehensive manner. Insurance of cattle population of the State will also get top priority.

FISHERY : SELF-SUFFICIENCY IS THE TARGET

97. With its vast water resources in the form of ponds and tanks, wetlands, low-lying areas and water bodies that hold great potential for fish production, Assam's fishery sector can play a very important role in the economic development, generating employment opportunities for rural youth besides providing food and nutritional security to the people of the State.
98. A while ago, I had spoken about the conservation and protection of indigenous fish. Besides in order to facilitate easy access to quality fish seed for fish farmers, the Fishery department will implement a 'Fish Seed Bank' Project. For this purpose, new ponds of 22 hectares in size will be created. A model farm of integrated fish-pig farming will be taken up in Majuli on 10 hectare area.
99. Under Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF), we propose to construct 1000 hectares of new Fish Ponds, 430 hectares of village community tanks and four fish markets.
100. We understand that sustained extension service is critical for promoting fish production and as such a mass campaign is required to increase the fishery production. Our Government proposes to launch a special programme called "*Matsya Jagaran – Ghore Ghore Pukhuri Ghore Ghore Maachh*" in a campaign mode.

101. In total, I have allotted Rs.155.58 crore to Fishery Department in my budget for 2017-18 for taking up various developmental programmes.

SOIL CONSERVATION: CONSERVE THE DEGRADED FOR ALL-ROUND DEVELOPMENT

102. The major activities of the Department are Gully Control, Land Development, Nature Conservation, Cash Crop Development, Soil and Moisture Conservation, Waste Land Development *and* Watershed Development.

103. For the Financial Year 2017-18 an amount of Rs. 1139.11 Lakh have been allocated out of which for SOPD- Rs. 780.00 Lakh, IWMP- 611.11 Lakh and for RIDF- Rs. 4500.00 Lakh. Out of the fund allocated under SOPD our Government has proposed to take up Land Capability Classification mapping for the entire State with a financial outlay of Rs. 50.00 Lakh with the assistance of North Eastern Space Application Center (NESAC), Shillong. Our Government has also proposed to take up effective measures for protection of riverine land at Majuli with a financial involvement of Rs. 50.00 Lakh. Besides, our Government has proposed two schemes under Signature Project during 2017-18 which are mitigation of Flash Flood in the flood prone area of Guwahati city with a financial target of Rs 4000.00 Lakh. After completion of the project it is expected that a sizable amount of silt deposition in the drainage and other outlet will be reduced which in turn will reduce the Flash Flood in the city alongwith a scheme for wetland development project at Bongaon, Chamoria, Nazira, Sarukhetri, Roha, Morangi, with a

financial target of Rs.1186.82 Lakh for irrigating the cultivable fields and also for restoration of ecological balance.

HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE: JOURNEY CONTINUES FOR LARGER COVERAGE WITH QUALITY

104. Now I come to the Health Sector. In my Budget speech last year, we had articulated very clearly that our Government places a huge premium on health as one of our main focus areas. We have thus embarked on a journey – a journey full of aspirations and expectations, of “parivartan”- of a developed Assam, where children live to grow up to their fullest potential, our youth are skilled and gainfully employed, and our revered elders are well taken care of. And to deliver on these goals, we need, each of our citizens to enjoy a healthy mind with a healthy body. Last year, on the floor of this August Assembly, we had made some announcements as a first few steps on this journey of transformation in this sector. We still have a long way to go but I would like to take this opportunity to apprise the Hon’ble members of what we have achieved so far in the short span of 7/8 months, and our roadmap for the coming year and beyond.

I would like to focus your attention on a few critical areas of our work :

MEETING THE RESOURCE AND MANPOWER GAP:

105.1 Health care Infrastructure :

Last year, we had taken up an ambitious plan of reviving our District Hospitals and building new District and model hospitals. I am happy to share that we have started the up-gradation works of 5 (five) Sub Divisional Civil Hospital to District Hospital at

Biswanath Chariali, Sonari, Hatsingimari, Hamren, Garmur (Majuli) and we have approved one new District Hospital at Hojai.

Further a total of 116 Model Hospitals have been approved to be set up across the state; out of these, construction of 79 has been completed. Besides, altogether 62 Model Hospitals have been made functional with OPD, Delivery and Laboratory facilities.

I am happy to inform the Honble Members that the Essential Drugs List, the basis for provision medicines in our hospitals, has been revised upwards, from the existing 200 to 407 drugs. Such a move will benefit scores of patients including some requiring critical care.

We have taken another initiative to make the medicines available at affordable costs. One such pharmacy at GMCH, Guwahati is already functional. Very soon, AMRIT Pharmacies will start functioning in all the medical colleges and the district hospitals of the State.

105.2 **Cancer Hospital :**

Hon'ble Members, last year, we had taken up a very important task upon ourselves: of making our Cancer Hospital at GMCH truly functional. I am happy to share that we have achieved important milestones. The PET-CT, is now functional. In the meantime, we have taken up with the Government of India for assistance in making this Cancer Hospital one of the best equipped in its category in the country so that our people do not have to go far and wide for cancer treatment. I propose to install PET-MRI in the Cancer Hospital in the coming financial year with an estimated cost of Rs. 50 crore. This will be the first of its kind in the government sector. I am happy to share that our Cancer Hospital is likely to be declared State Cancer

Institute, and in the process, is likely to receive a sum of Rs. 108 crore from Government of India. The State Government will have to provide a matching grant of Rs. 12 crore which I propose to provide.

105.3 **Medical Education :**

Now I come to the important issue of Medical Education which is at the heart of our initiative to provide quality and reliable healthcare to all. We have delivered on our promise to establish new Medical Colleges at Nagaon, Dhubri and North Lakhimpur. Land has been identified in these places, and architectural plans and estimates have been approved. The tender process for allotting the works will be finalized soon. We are confident construction work on these three medical colleges will commence within the next 45 days.

In the next financial year, we will start construction for establishment of a medical college at Kokrajhar. Further, Hon'ble members will be happy to note that the building works of Diphu Medical College has made good progress. Hopefully, we will be able to inaugurate this landmark medical college sometime later this year. This will be a very meaningful development in an area of Assam which has lagged behind in terms of access to good health care.

We propose to start two new medical colleges at Tinsukia and Nalbari. This will fulfil the long pending demand of the people of these two districts of Upper and Lower Assam respectively. I propose to start a new Department of Sports Medicine in Guwahati Medical College Hospital.

Speaker Sir, in our state, there is perennial shortage of doctors. Often they have to travel outside the State

for medical treatment. In this backdrop, I have a dream: a dream of producing 1200 doctors annually within the State. The dream is to establish one medical college in each of the original districts of the State.

We have traversed on this important journey. We had only 3 medical colleges till about a decade back. We added 3 more, with the coming together of medical colleges at Jorhat, Barpeta and Tezpur. Diphu Medical College will come up this year. We are in the process of starting the work of 3 more, at Lakimpur, Dhubri and Nagaon. Works of Kokrajhar medical college will start soon. With these two Medical Colleges at Tinsukia and Nalbari, the dream target producing 1200 doctors will be realized. Speaker Sir, I consider myself fortunate to be part of this journey since day one. It is like dream coming true.

We also propose to increase the reservation of OBC candidates in MBBS and other courses from the current 15% to 29%.

105.4 **Assam as a Natural Nursing Hub**

The Nursing staff are an integral and critical part of our healthcare services. Our aim is to produce 5000 nurses in a phased manner annually by expansion and upgradation of training colleges and schools in the Government and private sector. We also propose to equip these nurses with necessary IT, language and soft skills for better employability. We want to make Assam the biggest hub for Nursing which should open up employment opportunities for thousands of our young, educated girls and boys nationally and internationally.

INNOVATIVE SCHEMES TO IMPROVE ACCESS AND QUALITY OF SERVICES

105.5 Atal Amrit Abhiyan :

In my last budget speech I had announced our Government's decision to implement a Health Assurance Scheme named "Atal Amrit Abhiyan" which covers select, high cost, critical care procedures in 6 disease groups: cardiac, kidney, cancer, neurological conditions, neo natal diseases and burns covering individuals in BPL and APL families upto an annual income of Rs 5 lakhs. This would be a unique, completely cashless programme covering upto 90% of our population.

A dedicated society is being formed to implement this scheme and the roll out of this programme is imminent, with enrolment process to start soon across the state. Each adult individual will be given a card with a unique family identification number. Every individual from eligible families will be entitled to Rs 2 lakhs worth of treatment costs per year for any procedure on the approved list, which will be paid directly to the empaneled hospitals within Assam or in any of the selected cities elsewhere in India.

In the interim period till the health cards are issued, applications are being accepted at all district HQs for providing benefits under the scheme on reimbursement basis. In this budget, I am allocating Rupees 100 crores for the successful implementation of this project in this budget.

105.6 Chief Minister's Free Diagnostics Scheme :

We are finalizing the blueprint of the Government of Assam scheme named Mukhyamatri's Free Diagnostic Scheme- which includes laboratory facility, X-Ray and

CT-Scan free of cost. This will be launched sometime soon.

105.7 **Samarth Assam :**

We have 45 lakhs children between 0 to 6 years, out of a total population of about 3.12 crores. Assam has the dubious distinction of having one of the highest infant mortality rates in India, at 47 per 1000 live births. A significant proportion of our infant deaths are due to serious birth defects which need urgent medical and surgical attention. Besides these, there is a large child population suffering from serious, often life threatening illnesses. Untreated and incompletely treated childhood disorders and birth defects lead to permanent disability and premature deaths.

There have been efforts to improve children health services in the past. However, we have failed to conceptualize a comprehensive health programme on children taking care of them from pre-natal to up to 6 years and beyond. We plan to put *Our future – Children First* and address most of these important issues in a phased manner and our first step is **Samarth Assam**: right from ensuring screening procedures for detection of birth defects to establishment of a robust database with Birth Defects Registry, to proper treatment and follow ups.

It is also our Government's commitment that a Children's Hospital will be established In Guwahati. The blueprint of this hospital will be on the lines of the best in class facilities. We realise that it is a huge challenge in terms of resources and manpower, but if we never aspire to be the best we will never achieve anything worthwhile. This hospital will have a state of

the art NICU, PICU, trauma center, paediatric specialties, special needs units like speech therapy and learning disabilities unit and child psychology. Today I seek this Honourable Assembly and the people of Assam's blessings such that we can make this initiative a grand success.

105.8 Employees Health Assurance Scheme :

The Government of Assam has been in dialogue with its employees to institute a healthcare scheme that is user friendly, and meets their needs satisfactorily. We therefore propose to start within the next financial year a scheme which will be smart card based and cashless at the point of care.

105.9 Population and Reproductive Health Policy :

Last budget, I had announced the Government's decision to come out with a population policy. A committee was constituted to come up with the contours of such a policy and the committee has submitted its recommendations which include a set of incentives and disincentives. I will place the first draft of the Policy before this August House in this session itself.

105.10 Healthcare initiatives for Tea Garden Workers :

In 2016, we had announced a special scheme for tea gardens which will have far reaching positive influence in the health outcomes of those brothers and sisters living in Assam's Tea gardens. We had analyzed the details of the health scenario of each of our Tea gardens. Hon'ble members will be surprised to know that , out of 758 surveyed Tea gardens, 428 (57%) only have functional Hospital in their premises and 247 (38%) Tea gardens do not even have Medical officers. Considering the pathetic situation of health

services delivery and health outcomes in garden areas, the Health and Family Welfare Deptt. has initiated an outcome oriented interventions. Although, initially we announced the institution of 40 dedicated Mobile Medical Units (MMU), the August house shall be happy to note that, we are coming up with 80 MMUs only for tea garden areas in this current year itself. This work has already started under PPP mode. The agency has started working in this initiative with a target to commission the first MMUs within March 2017. During 2017-18 we are aiming to cover 320 Tea gardens having the poorest health infrastructure and manpower through MMU. I am happy to declare that these MMUs shall have doctors, GNMs, Pharmacist, Lab Technician. Besides, 150 Tea garden are being covered under PPP mode by our Department and is being provided with Rs 7.5 lakh each for gap financing the deficit in infrastructure, HR and consumables. One special group we are extremely concerned about are the pregnant women in Tea garden areas who work through their pregnancy until full term, thereby compromising their health and also of their unborn children. For better health and nutrition, we are announcing a onetime payment of Rupees 12,000 to each pregnant women of garden areas so that she can better look after herself and her unborn baby without compromising the livelihood of her family. We are hopeful to bring down high MMR and IMR of garden, through these interventions. To encourage our tea garden brethren to join the medical profession, we have a provision of reservation of 8 seats, at the MBBS level, in the medical colleges of our State. We propose to increase this number to 18 seats from this year.

105.11 Dialysis services :

Further, with incidence of Diabetes and other lifestyle diseases on the rise amongst us, commensurately a large number of patients now come in with End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) requiring dialysis. High cost of dialysis makes it prohibitive for most patients and their families. Moreover, dialysis services are not available in most districts in our State. We therefore propose to provide dialysis services in all district hospitals from the early part of next financial year by entering into Public Private Partnerships.

105.12 AIDS victims- Children Care Home :

AIDS is a dreaded disease. Many of our young lives have been lost at the hands of this disease. Speaker Sir, the biggest victims, however, in the entire gamut are spouses and children of the deceased. Many a times, there are orphans, who have lost both their parents, looking for some care, some support. We had started one initiative at Guwahati. We would like to start three more centres to house such children. We propose to provide all infrastructures and support facilities for their upbringing with care and sensitivity. Honble Members, I feel that these are the real essence of the divine concepts of *Seva* and *Samvedana*.

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT :

106. Elementary Education Department: Reaching the unreached with quality :

A large number of initiatives have been taken to expand the Elementary Education system since independence and especially after the National Education Policy 1986 came into existence. After implementation the RTE Act, 2009 as notified by the Govt. of India, various initiatives have been taken in

the spirit of the Act. To improve the standard and quality of elementary education in the State, I propose to take a number of new initiatives in addition to the continuation of existing schemes:

- 106.1 Speaker Sir, we have around 47000 elementary schools in the State. Some of these schools are located in the same periphery, the distance being barely 1 kilometre between two schools. The enrolment of students, as a result, is low. It is observed that pooling of resources, especially that of teachers and other support infrastructures would result in their better utilisation and the maintenance of the ideal teacher-pupil ratio, as mandated under the Right to Education Act. This would also make our schools vibrant, full of activities, and result in better learning outcomes. The physical infrastructure of these left out schools would also be put to good use, through the active involvement of the community and village elders. We propose to issue suitable guidelines in this regard shortly.
- 106.2 Implementation of Guna Utsav programme, the biggest quality enhancement programme the State Government has undertaken so far. I propose to allocate a sum of Rs. 10 crore for implementing this programme.
- 106.3 As per the announcement of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, we propose to provide the photograph of Lachit Borphukan in all schools.
- 106.4 Providing infrastructure development of all Elementary Schools with Desk-Bench, Table-Chair for teachers, Office almirah, Green board with teachers photograph in all schools. I propose to allot a sum of Rs. 60 crore for this scheme in this budget. We will continue with the CM Scholarship Scheme,

for which an amount of Rs. 40 crore is being earmarked.

- 106.5 Several concerns converge on the issue of using local language or mother tongue in formal education. With increased globalization, one view that is often put forward is that the students must be proficient in international and regional languages for better employability. However, research clearly shows that using the learners' mother tongue is crucial to effective learning. We subscribe to this view. This is important from the perspective of preservation of our linguistic & cultural heritage as well. **We want to bring appropriate legislation to the effect that students of the State must be taught one local language as reflected in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution of India by all schools – public, government, private – up to Class 8.**
- 106.6 Hon'ble Members must be aware that in my last Budget speech I had informed this August House about my commitment to regularize the services of all TET pass candidates presently working on contractual basis under SSA in a phased manner. Accordingly, we have already regularized 7000 teachers on merit. I am happy to inform this August House that, before 31 March 2017, we will regularize the services of another 11000 such teachers. I commit to recruit an additional 10000 teachers with TET qualifications in the years ahead, taking the total to 28000 such teachers across the state.
- 106.7 I am also happy to announce that the Government of India has accorded approval for the establishment of DIETs at Baska, Udalguri, Chirang and Kamrup

Metropolitan districts along with three new College of Teachers Education in the districts of Bongaigaon, Karbi Anglong and Majuli. The construction works will start during the next financial year.

**SECONDARY EDUCATION DEPARTMENT:
EQUIPPING IS THE KEY**

- 107.1 Speaker Sir, our students are the future of our State, our country. To quote the Father of our Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, "*Education is the all-round drawing out of the best in child and man – body, mind and spirit.*" Our Government is committed to offer the best possible effort towards motivating the students for their all-round development i.e. physical, mental, spiritual well-being.
- 107.2 Government has initiated a series of ambitious programmes to improve the quality of Secondary Education segment. 'AAROHAN', is one such initiative, for the identification of talented students from the remote, rural and poor families for the mentoring and monitoring of their academic career. A web portal on '**Aarohan**' has also been developed and launched.
- 107.3 On the issue of provincialisation of schools, I assure this august House that a new Bill will be brought out soon in this direction for provincializing deserving & eligible Elementary, Secondary, Higher Education Institutions, Madrassas and Sanskrit tols etc., keeping in mind the observations of the Hon'ble High Court as well, after safeguarding the provisions of RTE Act 2009 and other relevant legal provisions. However, before coming out with the new Bill, we propose to bring a white paper on the subject.

- 107.4 Hon'ble Speaker, it is our bounden duty to look after the students belonging to the underprivileged and the poor strata of the society. We firmly stand for reducing the school dropout rates besides ensuring free, equal access to education for all. We have already provided free admission for students in Class XI in all Higher Secondary Schools and Colleges this year. We propose to continue this endeavour and earmark an amount of Rs. 10 crores for this purpose.
- 107.5 During the current financial year, we had provided free text books to the students of Class-IX & X. This scheme will be extended to the next year too, with the provision of Free Textbooks for the students of Class XI & XII, studying in Govt./Provincialised Higher Secondary Schools/Junior Colleges and Colleges, in five core subjects. A fund of Rs. 45 crores is being earmarked for this purpose in this budget.
- 107.6 We had waived examination fees for poor students appearing in HSLC and HSSLC examinations. This scheme will continue in the next financial year too, on an extended scale. From next year onwards, in addition to the Examination fees, centre fees will also be waived for the poor students. I have kept a budget provision of Rs. 35 Crores for this purpose.
- 107.7 As announced in the last budget, under the "Anundoram Borooh Cash or Laptop Award Scheme", laptops and cash award will be provided to students who secure 'Star marks' in the HSLC and High Madrassa Examinations.
- 107.8 Hon'ble Speaker Sir, as far as the education scene is concerned, tea gardens present a dismal picture, even after 70 years of Independence. Due to limited high schools in the tea garden areas, a large

number of students leave schools midway. In order to facilitate the completion of school education and to reduce the dropout rates, Government has decided to establish 100 new schools in these areas by upgrading existing LP and UP schools to High Schools up to Class-X in a PPP mode with experienced non-government societies. For this scheme, I propose a provision of Rs 10 Cr in this budget.

107.9 Hon'ble Members, the quality of education in some of our educationally backward areas remain a matter of concern. The main reason behind this is the lack of skilled teachers. Therefore, we propose to introduce Tele-Education through Virtual Classrooms at a budgetary support of Rs 10.00 Cr. The primary objective of this scheme is to inculcate concept based learning by way of interaction through Satellite System covering the core subjects of English, Science, & Mathematics from Class-VI-X. With the introduction of this innovative teaching learning process, both the teacher and pupils will be benefited.

107.10 Speaker Sir, we propose to waive school affiliation fees. We are also contemplating centralized payment of electricity bills of schools. Government will provide a fund of Rs 50,000/- per annum to each school through the Rashtriya Madhyamik Siksha Abhijan, Assam. In addition to this, from this year onwards, Govt. will provide an average of Rs 25000/- per annum to each school. We are also thinking to pay the electricity bills centrally for which I have provided Rs. 15 crore. Further, if the students get this relief, the expenditure of the school will be reduced and the guardians will not be burdened with this cost.

However, the school management may take lowest possible fee from the students for festivals etc.

- 107.11 Hon'ble Members, provision for construction of boundary walls in the examination centres of HSSLC/HSLC examination has been made. The requirement on this count may be more. I request the Hon'ble Members to provide additional support from their untied fund for this purpose. From my side, I have kept a budget provision of Rs. 40 crore towards this.
- 107.12 Hon'ble Speaker Sir, it is important for our students to know the cultural heritage and traditions of our country. Most of our ancient literature is in Sanskrit language. A good understanding of this language, one of the oldest in its category, is therefore required. Keeping this in view, I propose to make education of Sanskrit language compulsory to all students in a school where posts of Sanskrit teachers exist. Needless to add, all vacant posts of Sanskrit teachers will be filled up soon.
- 107.13 **I propose to provide two-wheelers to the top 1000 Girl students who pass Higher Secondary Examination 2017, in the next financial year, in order to provide easy access to them for Higher Education.** Accordingly, I propose to allocate a sum of Rs. 5 crore in this budget.
- 107.14 Speaker Sir, I propose to provide financial support of Rs.50 lakhs each for the infrastructure development of deserving Secondary Schools which are more than 100 years old.

Higher Education Department : Sky is the limit

108. Hon'ble Speaker Sir, Now I come to Higher education. Like the Elementary and the Secondary Education, Higher Education is of vital importance. It is a powerful tool to build knowledge-based societies of the 21st Century. With the growing size and diversity of the higher education sector, particularly in terms of courses, management and geographical coverage, it has become necessary to lay proper emphasis on this segment of education for shaping the future of our students.
- 108.1 Hon'ble Members, I have already announced the ambitious Scheme, Tejasvi Navadhitamastu for the development of Universities and Professional Colleges. So I am not repeating the names of individual institutions and the earmarked amount again.
- 108.2 Speaker Sir, We have already implemented the decision to waive fees including admission and tuition fees for the 1st year College Students belonging to economically backward families whose parent's annual income is less than Rs. 1 Lakh. The Government reimbursed such fees to the tune of Rs.43 crores to the Colleges during the year 2016-17 benefiting 1,38,085 College Students. This shall encourage more students to pursue higher studies in the future and reduce dropout rates after higher secondary. This year, this scheme will be extended for the poor students taking admission in the previous year of M.A., M.Sc, M.Com. I propose to allocate Rs.50 crore in the budget to continue this important initiative.
- 108.3 I also announce that the OBC reservation in the Higher Educational Institutions will be increased to 29%.

108.4 Hon'ble Speaker Sir, I would like to quote our Respected Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji who had the following words for our Gurujana Mahapurush Srimanta Sankardeva.

“Srimanta Sankardeva not only pioneered eradication of untouchability in India, five centuries ago but also took spiritualism to new heights by painting it with the colours of lives of the common man. It is unbelievable and unthinkable that a saint-reformer launched a mass movement five centuries ago to eradicate untouchability and other social evils, and that too in faraway Assam.”

Speaker Sir, in the last budget speech, as a fit tribute to Srimanta Sankardeva, we announced a sum of Rs. 10 crore to Srimanta Sankardeva University over a period of three years. I am happy to share that we have provided Rs 3.5 crores during the current financial year. This year also, I propose to allocate Rs 3.5 crores. To take the message of Srimanta Sankardeva across the length and breadth of this country, we propose to sign an MoU with five leading Universities to establish the Sankardev Chair at Banaras Hindu University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University, University of Hyderabad and Vishwa Bharati (Shantiniketan).

108.5 The construction of 21 Polytechnics in the State is in progress. Out of these, 11 are at an advanced stage with procurement of laboratory equipment & recruitment of faculty etc.

108.6 The remaining 10 Polytechnics shall be ready to start classes and impart technical education by July 2018 session. This process has been expedited.

- 108.7 At present, Assam has four Government Engineering Colleges including Assam Engineering College (AEC) and Jorhat Engineering College (JEC). The other two, Bineswar Brahma Engineering College (BBEC) and Jorhat Institute of Science & Technology (JIST) have been converted from a Society to a full-fledged Government Engineering College.
- 108.8 Apart from the above, the works of three new Engineering Colleges at Karimganj, Golaghat and Dhemaji are also in full swing.
- 108.9 Under Rastriya Ucchatar Siksha Abhiyan (RUSA), three more Engineering Colleges have been proposed. The preliminary works of land allotment and fund allocations are underway. Necessary funds shall be allocated in consultation with the MHRD. Since the State has a huge deficit in the production of technically qualified manpower, there is an urgent need to start more Engineering Colleges. Therefore, I would like to announce two more Engineering Colleges from the State resources. Site of these colleges will be announced in due course after consulting educational experts and assessing the needs of various regions.
- 108.10 Five Model Degree Colleges at Dalgaon, Amjonga, Tulungia, Eraligool and Behali will be started from next academic session i.e. July this year. For this purpose adequate provision has been made in the budget.
- 108.11 Cotton College & Cotton College State University will be merged and shall become one entity under the new bill being brought in the Assembly. This bill shall potentially resolve the problems presently being faced by the prestigious institution. It is hoped that this step will help it

not only maintain its past glory and heritage but also raise its academic excellence.

- 108.12 Three colleges one each in Barpeta, North Lakhimpur and Hojai districts will be upgraded to the University level. A Bill for the same shall be introduced in the next session.
- 108.13 Speaker Sir, For infrastructure Development of Provincialised Colleges, the Govt. has allocated grants of Rs.1 Crore each to 33 Colleges in the current financial year. We propose to continue such grants during 2017-18 as well to another 40 colleges.
- 108.14 The Government also proposes to open a new University of Culture at Majuli with a view to promote Assamese Art & Culture, in other parts of country and abroad.
- 108.15 Hon'ble Memebhrs, The Government proposes to initiate some preparatory works in the Jonai Campus of Tezpur Central University. For this purpose, I propose to allocate a sum of Rs.200.00 lakhs.

SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT : IN REFORMS LIES THE KEY

109. Now I turn to one of the most important chapters of today's Budget. It is Social Welfare. This Department deals with social up-liftment of the weaker and downtrodden members of the society. It deals with infants, pregnant women, widows and Divyangs. It is but obvious that we need a sensitive hand and strong institutional mechanism to deal with this set of special populace. Any insensitivity or neglect is non-negotiable in this realm. Honble Speaker Sir, governance is a continuous process. But during the

course of time, some Institutions of the Government become vulnerable to social evils such as systemic corruption dominated by vested interests. We are aware about what happened to Social Welfare Department in our State. Our Government is quite sensitive to the fact that any Institution afflicted by such evils will be reformed carefully and effectively, so that the functioning of the department improves. After all, Institutions are instruments for development provided they are led honestly with sincerity of purpose.

110. We are committed to reinvent and reorient the Social Welfare Department. Indeed, this Department is meant for the real welfare of our society - ranging from infants to pregnant women, old widows to Divyangs.
111. Another relevant point that readily comes to mind relates to provision of adequate care for our elderly. It is expected that the percentage of the population over the age of 60 will continue to increase due to the changing population age structure. Services to cater to this increasing population of the elderly will need to be provided not only by institutional sources but also through familial structures. **To initiate the process, we would like provide a legislative cover to such familial responsibilities.** The employees working in the government /government undertakings / State PSUs/employees of companies will be expected to take care of their respective elderly parents in a desirable manner. In case of non-compliance, the proposed legislation would mandate that a certain portion of the salary of such employees would be deducted to be given to their respective parents. The Social Welfare Department will bring the necessary legislation in this regard during the course of the year.

I think this would be a worthy tribute to our elderly population.

112. Besides, I propose to set up two Higher Education Institutes for Mentally retarded children in order to provide a dedicated professional teaching to them. In case feasible and required, reputed NGOs and trained faculty members will also be made partners in this divine project. For this purpose, I allocate Rs. 200 lakhs during 2017-18.
113. Further, existing Women Homes need strengthening. We also need to establish new hostels for working women. I propose to set apart Rs. 800 lakhs in this budget for this purpose.
114. Our Government is making every possible effort to ensure that the existing Schemes of the Department are implemented through Anganwadi Centers. Further, as token of appreciation to the dedicated service of Anganwadi Workers and helpers, I propose to allocate a sum of Rs.542 Lakhs as Anganwadi Employees Welfare Fund to provide emergency financial assistance to them.

WELFARE OF TEA TRIBES

শ্যামলী অপৰূপা চাহ বাগিচাত
লভিলো মই জনম
য'ত শিৰিষে যাঁচে শীতল ছাঁ
কেঁচা পাতৰ মৰম।'

115. This couplet truly reflects and sums up the life in our tea gardens, an inherent and integral part of our greater Assamese Society. The contribution of our brothers and sisters of Tea Gardens to the State's economy is widely known. Their immense contribution

to the formation and subsequent development of Greater Assamese culture too is unparalleled.

116. Incidentally, these beautiful lines have been penned down by Late Shankar Kishen, elder brother of our dear colleague in this August Assembly, Shri sanjay Kishen, Honble MLA Tinsukia.
117. Honble Speaker Sir, our Government accords highest priority to the welfare of tea garden workers. Our intention is clear: to back all announcements with concrete, tangible actions and projects. Honble Members would have already noticed that in this budget, many important measures have been announced. Speaker Sir, I want to propose another ambitious plan today: I propose to earmark at least 5% of the Budget of all the departments, excluding budgetary outlay on salaries, would be spent in the tea garden areas. This is a momentous decision, which stands to guarantee all-round development of our people residing in the State's tea garden areas. This will surely change the mechanics of government spending for the welfare and, importantly, development of tea garden brethren. We are coming out with policy guidelines in this regard very soon.
118. I have already announced to increase the number of seats for the students of tea garden communities in our medical colleges. I take this forward, and propose to introduce reservation of seats for tea garden students in all higher educational institutions. Further, another 670 students pursuing engineering, medical and various other technical courses would be provided assistance under Financial Assistance for Higher Studies.
119. For promotion of Sports and Youth Welfare among the tea tribes' communities, "Chief Minister's Cup Inter

Garden Football Tournament” was organized where a total 446 Tea gardens from across the State participated. This will be organized in coming years as well. To encourage the budding sporting talent, we propose a state-of-the-art Football Academy in the months ahead.

120. Further, to preserve the cultural traditions of our tea garden communities, we propose to construct Rangmanch in each of our 750 odd tea gardens at the unit cost of Rs. 15 Lakh. For the coming financial year, I propose to take up 50 such tea gardens.
121. The Govt. has made budget provisions for distribution of 1,21,000 nos. of energy efficient LED bulbs of to 40,400 nos. of families. We also propose to provide Insurance Premium @ Rs. 12/- for 10 Lakh beneficiaries registered with Assam Tea Employees Provident Fund Organization. We propose to extend a grant of Rs. 25000 each to 1000 Divyangs belonging to tea tribes.
122. On the rural development, we propose to provide a sum of Rs. 10000 to about 2000 Women Self Help Groups. Speaker Sir, we will also take up the revival plan of the gardens of Assam Tea Corporation in a phased manner.

WELFARE OF PLAIN TRIBES AND BACKWARD CLASSES : UNSTINTED SUPPORT

123. The colour and vibrancy of Assam lie in its ethnicity, customs of tribal and other communities. This strength of our society is required to be showcased and demonstrated to new generation in the State and also to the World. The strong brotherhood and human bonds across more than 70 tribes is our valuable asset and our Government cherish the same. We therefore,

propose to create a unique centre called **Sahodar Samannay Khetra** at a central place in the State. Such centre would display tribal icons, symbols of culture and traditions of various communities. This centre will be developed at global standards.

124. We have thoroughly reviewed various Government of India's schemes meant for Welfare of Tribes and Backward classes. We will take maximum benefit out of them so that a greater proportion of this population can be covered.
125. Further, for Pre-Matric and Post-Matric scholarships for SC, ST and OBC students, we will ensure that the full amount of scholarship will be received by the students without any delay and without any budgetary constraints. I have provided Rs.35.90 crores for Pre-Matric scholarship and Rs.204.00 crores for Post-Matric scholarships for the students of SC, ST and OBC in my budget for 2017-18. In addition, an innovative scheme has been proposed this time to develop 12 number of ST villages as Model Villages to showcase the tribal culture. For this I have allocated Rs.12.00 crores during 2017-18.
126. During my last budget speech I had also outlined the importance that this Government attaches to the Autonomous Councils and development of the population being covered by them. The matter of timely release of adequate funds to these Councils was also examined and it was decided to issue detailed guidelines so that Autonomous Councils can follow the procedures for effective implementation of the schemes. I also urge the Autonomous Councils to take up bigger projects which will create durable assets to meet the demand of the local population.
127. The general trend of annual incremental growth in plan allocations to line Departments and Autonomous

Councils has generally been not more than 10%. Sir, you will be pleased to note that this time I have increased the allocations to Autonomous Councils as high as 20% compared to the previous year. I personally feel that this is a very good gesture from the State Government under the leadership of our large hearted Chief Minister.

128. This year I now propose to allocate the following amount in the current budget against each of 6 (six) Autonomous Councils for 2017-18.

a. Lalung Tiwa Autonomous Council	-	Rs. 36.00 crores
b. Mising Autonomous Council	-	Rs. 72.00 crores
c. Rabha Hasong Autonomous Council	-	Rs. 54.36 crores
d. Deuri Autonomous Council	-	Rs. 20.35 crores
e. Sonowal Kachari Autonomous Council	-	Rs. 33.18 crores
f. Thengal Kachari Autonomous Council	-	Rs. 18.00 crores

As regards, construction of permanent Secretariat buildings for these Councils, I have earmarked Rs.5.00 crores per each Council and in the current budget I have made adequate provision in this budget.

WELFARE OF MINORITIES & DEVELOPMENT: ON THE PATH TO INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

129. Speaker Sir, today, we need to focus on our women belonging to minority community for raising the levels of their educational and health standards. Statistics reveal that there are issues relating to high infant Mortality and Maternal Mortality amongst this demographic segment. Time has come to create a progressive atmosphere, which can support education, literacy, livelihood and overall development of our minority women. We need to create an environment that is conducive to gender equality. We need to

empower our women belonging to minorities community.

130. Self Help Groups movement continues to be a proven method for empowerment of women in the rural areas. Our Government would like to use this platform, and take it forward. The SHG movement which was announced in the last Budget will be extended to the minority dominated areas for opening of livelihood opportunities to the women and girls belonging to minorities' community. Each such Women SHG will be entitled to receive a monetary incentive of Rs. 5 Lakh over a period of time under *Kanaklata Mahila Sabalakaran Yojana*, as already announced in one of the preceding paragraphs.
131. Further, to raise the level of literacy and importantly higher education, we propose to establish 8 Women's Colleges in the minority areas.
132. Under infrastructure development, we also propose construction of Community Complexes for the 5 nos. of notified minority communities and Girls Common Room with Toilets in areas not covered by the MSDP Schemes of Govt. of India.

FOOD, CIVIL SUPPLIES AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS: THE POOR MUST BENEFIT

133. Our Government believes that the objectives of National Food Security Act will be defeated if the food grains do not reach the 2.52 crore people of the State who are eligible under the programme. Availability of food grains inadequate quantity and on time is the priority of our Government.
134. We are all aware that food is of value only when supplied on time. But if it is given after the scheduled time, it will lose its worth and value and goes waste.

135. I am happy to inform the Hon'ble Members that our Government has studied the root-cause of this problem to find out the reasons why NFSA food grains do not reach the consumers in a timely and adequately. We found that the State Government was releasing the funds meant for transportation cost and margin money for GPSS/TPDS agents only after the funds were received from the Central Government. Thus, there had always been a time lag of 3 to 4 months and sometimes even more than six months. This resulted in the twin problems of - one being that the agents resorting to cover their cost of transportation by allegedly reducing the quantity of food grains to each beneficiary and when regular amount was received that benefit does not get transferring to the beneficiaries. Secondly, some of the agents have not been able to supply the food grains on time. To address this problem, our Government is keen to take steps to make systemic correction by changing the process.
136. From 2017-18, we will first release the transportation cost and margin money to the GPSS and other agents in advance. Thereafter, the State Government will adjust this money against the funds to be released by Ministry of Food & Civil Supplies subsequently. However, we are also cautious that Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Department shall ensure utilization of these funds against only eligible expenditure and also the cycle of release of each installment from Government of India be suitably synchronized. For this purpose, I have allocated Rs. 504.92 crores in my budget.
137. Our Government will implement an Innovative Programme for doorstep- delivery of 22 non PDS items in Ecofriendly E-Rickshaw through unemployed

youths. The basic objective of the scheme, "**AamarDukan on Wheels**" is to control price of essential commodities by cutting the role of the middle man. The Department will endeavour to ensure that the daily requirement of essential commodities is made available at the doorsteps of the consumer at the reasonable price. For this purpose I have made adequate provision in the budget. Further, we also increased number of Aamar Dukans by opening 588 more new shops.

138. Lack of public procurement of Paddy by State Government and FCI has resulted in lower prices to the Farmers. There have been reports that most of the farmers are deprived of Minimum Support Price declared by Government of India. In fact, states like Chattisgarh have done exemplary work by carrying decentralized paddy procurement through the state government agencies. The increased production of paddy is sustained only if we put effective systems of procurement in the field. It will also increase the income levels of farmers directly. In view of this, our Government is working on a detailed action plan for engaging the Food & Civil Supplies Department very actively for a large scale paddy procurement operations from 2017-18 onwards for which I have made adequate budget provision.

**PANCHAYAT & RURAL DEVELOPMENT:
PROSPERITY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE**

139. You must have heard from the Union Budget 2017-18, the allocation under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act has reached historical heights at Rs. 48000 Crores. Taking advantage of this enhanced allocation, we are very particular that maximum funds be utilized in the rural

areas of Assam. Thrust will be given on spending 65% of the expenditure for Natural Resource Management during 2017-18 under MGNREGA.

140. Accordingly, we will use the funds from MGNREGA through convergence with other funds available for large-scale plantations in each Gaon Panchayat under an innovative scheme called Mukhyamantri Aranya Nirman Achoni. Under this scheme, we will create nurseries of 2 Hectares in each Development Block, and raise 1.02 Crore seedlings and plant them along embankments, tanks, roadside, VGR etc. I have made adequate budget provision in this regard.
141. Further, we will channelize 20% of the funds from MGNREGA to Individual Beneficiary Schemes (IBS) which will give a fillip to the rural economy.
142. A wide range of developmental activities have been initiated under the National Rural Livelihood Mission. We will promote 70000 Women SHGs to cover 10 Lakh households under NRLM and each group will be provided with a revolving fund of Rs. 10000-15000 each. I have provided Rs. 1 crore in this budget for kickstarting this initiative. Further, 50000 SHGs will be provided with Community Investment Fund of Rs. 50000/SHG for taking up economic activities. We will provide Rs. 225 crore for this purpose over the course of the year.
143. Besides, our Govt. has also launched the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (G) with the objective of providing houses to 2.19 Lakh families within May 2017 in addition to the backlog of 1.78 Lakh houses that will be completed this financial year. Further, our Government has also decided that all the buildings constructed under PMAY (G) will be painted with the same colour and necessary guidelines will be issued in this regard.

144. I am also happy to inform you that under the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-JKY) we will provide skill development training to 78,500 poor rural youth during 2016-19.

145. We duly acknowledge the key role played by the State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development in creating rural entrepreneurs in our State over the years. **Recognizing this, we propose to establish 5 new SIPRDs in different parts of the State.** The sites will be decided in due course after consultation with the stakeholders.

POWER DEPARTMENT : PROPELLING ALL-ROUND GROWTH

146. Electricity is of paramount importance in the modern world. Nowadays, the development of a country is no longer determined by its gross capita income, rather it is decided by the energy availability and per capita consumption of energy.

147. The priority of our Government is to provide sufficient and reliable power supply to everyone in the State. However, with the given resource position and infrastructural constraints, it would take some time to put the system in place for supply of quality and uninterrupted power supply.

148. However to begin with, I propose to take steps in this direction to cover a few important places of tourist attraction which needs a good infrastructure including of uninterrupted power supply to these places. **As a part of this 24x7 dedicated feeder to Kamakhya, Kaziranga, Majuli, Tezpur, Sualkuchi, Manas and Pabitora. Accordingly, I propose to provide Rs.3000.00 lakh in the present Budget.**

149. Various new projects have been taken up in the state power sector recently such as infrastructure development, providing uninterrupted power supply

to all etc. In 2017-18, 6 (six) new power projects with an installed capacity of 247 MW have been proposed in the Budget. Moreover, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Govt. of India has proposed 688 MW of generation capacity from the renewable energy sources in Assam till 2021-22 out of which 663 MW will be from Solar and 25 MW will be from small hydro electric power projects.

150. Under the Deen Dayal Upadhaya Gramjyoti Yojana, a total of 928 numbers of un-electrified villages have been electrified till date in 2016-17. Power will be supplied to the remaining 1022 numbers of un-electrified villages within 31st May, 2017. Moreover, a total of 5,41,953 number of BPL beneficiaries will be provided electricity connections free of cost.
151. Under Restructured Accelerated Power Development and Reform Programme (R-APDRP), advanced IT implementation has been successfully completed in 67 towns across Assam including Guwahati. Initiatives have been taken to reduce the AT&C losses in these towns considerably. Implementation of SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system alongwith Smart Grid Pilot Project at Guwahati is in progress along with Smart Grid Pilot Project. These two projects are expected to help in maintaining round the clock power supply in Guwahati City.
152. For the Financial Year 2017-18, our Government has decided to launch the 'Flagship' programmes of setting up of 2 (two) numbers of solar power plants having capacities of 69 MW at Amguri in Sivasagar district and of 20 MW at Chandrapur in Kamrup district of Assam respectively and also for providing 24x7 power supply to 5(five) towns in Assam namely, Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Sualkuchi, Rangapara and Jorhat.

153. Number of states in the country has segregated HT (Industry) and LT (Non- industry) feeders and this has resulted in reduction of AT&C loss of DISCOMs. Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat are some of the states which have done it successfully. Hence, our Government will support such proposal for dedicated HT feeders for the HT consumers. I propose to allocate Rs.1000.00 lakh in the current year for preparatory works.
154. As regards pension dues of former Assam State Electricity Board, it was agreed by the State Govt. to take the responsibility of this liability during unbundling of the board. However, the State Govt. has not been able to fulfil the commitment completely.
155. As such, I propose to revise Assam Electricity Duty under the relevant Act in due course of time. Further, we are also keen that the pension fund available be managed professionally in such a way that it will be invested to get the maximum return.

**URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT:
EXPANDING HORIZONS**

156. Sir, as you are aware, Urban centres are 'engines of growth' and all large States in India have atleast four to five large cities which are 'drivers of economic growth'. Over a period of time, there has been a criticism that successive State Governments have focused only on Guwahati City. In this regard, I would like to reiterate that our government is conscious of the fact that while Guwahati will continue to get priority as the State Capital and as the Gateway to North East India, we need to focus on improving the urban infrastructure of other important cities and towns of Assam to ensure balanced regional growth.
157. Though there is some funding under the Missions of the Union Government such as AMRUT, PMAY, etc.,

there is an acute need for more investment from the State Government in the urban areas, especially in more populous cities, in a consistent manner over a period of five years.

158. Accordingly, to begin with, we would like to take up big infrastructure projects in the 6 cities that have about one lakh population - Silchar, Tinsukia, Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Nagaon and Tezpur. We will prioritize and take up critical infrastructure projects in these six big cities at a total outlay of Rs. 1200 crore over a period of four years under a new Scheme, called, **City Infrastructure Development Fund (CIDF)**.
159. All these 6 Big Cities fall under the Urban Development Department, and I propose to allocate Rs 120 crore in the current budget for taking up projects in these cities in 2017-18. I request the members of this August House belonging to these cities and the concerned districts to develop projects like River-front, Public Parks, Landmark Roads, Marriage halls, District Libraries, District Stadiums etc. For instance, in Dibrugarh, Riverfront development will be one of our big priorities.
160. Sir, as you are aware, adequate street lighting is a basic requirement in towns and cities and I must admit that large parts of our cities and towns do not have these facilities and the citizens are put to inconvenience. To address this perennial problem, our Government would like to take up a unique project of installation of 15,000 Energy Efficient LED lights in all the 97 urban local bodies. I have set aside Rs 10 crore for this purpose in this budget.
161. I would also like to mention here that, in the Union Budget that was recently presented on 1st of February 2017 by the Hon'ble Union Finance Minister, Rural

Housing was given “Infrastructure status”. Since large parts of our state are rural in nature, this “Infrastructure status” will give a fillip to the trade and business of the small towns of Assam and our Government will take full advantage of this.

162. Further, I allot Rs.186.92 Crore for PMAY (Urban), in this budget for the construction of 24340 houses under the Beneficiaries Led Component (BLC).
163. In addition, our Government is closely monitoring the implementation of another flagship programme of the Central Government i.e., Atal Mission for Rejuvenation & Urban Transformation (AMRUT) covering Guwahati, Silchar, Nagaon and Dibrugarh. I am pleased to inform the Hon’ble Members that, Government of India has already approved the Service Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) for the Mission period 2015-19, for a total amount of Rs. 655.25 Crore for implementation of park / green spaces in Water Supply Projects.
164. In the last few months, we have completed Skill Development Awareness Programme -UTKARSHA in 25 cities and 5959 candidates were trained in different trades under the Skill Training and Placement component.
165. Further under the National Livelihood Mission (urban), we propose to train 50,000 urban-poor youth under the Skill Development component. Moreover, 3000 Women Self Help Groups (SHG) will be provided Revolving Fund (RF) and City Livelihoods Centre (CLC) in 15 prominent towns / cities of Assam. Schemes will be taken up for the construction of Link Roads in the SC dominated areas under SCSP of Assam.
166. In order to improve the Urban Sanitation scenario, under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) Assam, all 97 Urban Local Bodies of Assam will be declared Open

Defecation Free (ODF) before Oct 2nd 2017. For this, 66624 Individual Household Latrines and 2280 seats of community & Public Toilets will be constructed.

GUWAHATI DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT: THE GATEWAY MUST GET ITS DUE

167. As you are aware, Guwahati is the only Corporation in the entire State and has been seeing rapid growth and expansion. For the continued growth of the city and to prevent haphazard growth in outlying areas, a long-term plan and zoning is paramount.
168. Keeping this in view, our visionary Hon'ble Chief Minister announced in his address on the last Independence Day that, a State Capital Region will be established encompassing Guwahati and its neighbouring areas. In this regard, we have initiated the preparatory works and different city development models available in the country including the National Capital Region are being studied. It is envisaged to establish a separate authority namely, "Assam State Capital Region Development Agency". This agency will work in coordination with the existing agencies like GMDA, GMC and other Urban Local bodies, Panchayats to transform Guwahati region into a large, vibrant metropolis. We will soon come to you with a draft legislation to make the "Assam State Capital Region Development Agency" a reality.
169. Laying emphasis on the expansion of the city to the North bank, a new project is conceived for the construction of two bridges across River Brahmaputra, one connecting Panbazar to North Guwahati and another connecting Palashbari to Sualkuchi. A global tender has been called for the Consultancy Works for the preparation of the DPR. I allocate Rs. 100 Crore in this financial year for construction of these bridges.

Once this project is completed, Guwahati City will expand towards the North Bank and the congestion in the city will be relieved.

170. I had spoken about the City Infra Development Fund earlier in my speech and obviously Guwahati also needs large scale investments and accordingly, I propose to allot an amount of Rs. 200 Crore in my budget, which will be released over 3 years to develop landmark public infrastructure projects in the city.
171. I would also like to inform that the preparatory works for the “Guwahati Smart City” Project have been initiated and an amount of Rs. 189 Crore as Central Share has been received. I have provided Rs. 400 Crore in the current budget for this prestigious project.
172. Our Government has also decided to develop an International Standard Botanical Park at the site of Old Jail Land Complex in Fancy Bazar on the lines of Singapore’s “Park Interconnect Model” under “Guwahati Open Spaces and Park Integrator (GOPI) network”. Further, the long pending “Ropeway Project connecting South & North Guwahati” is targeted to be completed by July, 2017 for which financial sanction for an amount of Rs. 18.46 Crores has already been issued.
173. Sir, as we are aware, solid waste management and sewage disposal are significant problems that the city of Guwahati faces. To resolve these issues, Guwahati Jal Board will implement a Sewerage Project for a major portion of the city which shall be completed by 2022. For up-gradation and better management of Solid Waste in the city, IIT-Kharagpur has been engaged as Consultant to suggest the basic design of the item required for scientific management of the dumpsite at Boragaon to prevent environmental pollution.

174. To provide drinking water to the citizens of this great city, JNNURM assisted SGWWS Project shall also be commissioned in April, 2017 and accordingly, Phase I of JICA assisted GWSP shall supply water through partial commissioning in 2017. For the financial year 2017-18, an amount of Rs. 205.28 Crore has been proposed for JICA-assisted GWSP.
175. To resolve the perennial problem of artificial flooding in Guwahati, the construction of RCC drains at Noonmati basin for the diversion of entire flood water of Zoo Road, Chandmari, Jyoti Nagar & Noonmati area has been taken up and is expected to be completed during April, 2017. Further, the construction of Sump Wells at Anil Nagar and Lachit Nagar have also been initiated which will result in the stoppage of backflow of River Bharalu and facilitate the effective pumping of flood water to reduce the duration of water logging.
176. Members of this August House, to resolve the issue of lack of public vehicle parking spaces in Guwahati, two Multilevel Car Parkings, one at the Text Book Corporation land at Panbazar and another underground car parking below the existing GMDA parking at Ganeshguri are proposed during F.Y. 2017-18 at an estimated cost of Rs. 32.00 Crore.
177. Sir, this Government is also proposing to establish a State Institute of Urban Development in Guwahati for which an amount of Rs.2.00 Crore has been proposed during the F.Y. 2017-18 which will help build capacities among the municipal staff.

**SKILL DEVELOPMENT, EMPLOYMENT AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND LABOUR WELFARE:
OUR PRIME PRIORITY**

178. Under the visionary leadership of Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister, the labour and employment

sector has seen a paradigm shift in our country as the focus has shifted to skilling and entrepreneurship.

179. In tune with this vision, our Government has already created a new department under the name of Skill Development, Employment and Entrepreneurship Department. This would help our State to join the country in its journey as global leader in providing skilled manpower to the world. It is through focused and well coordinated governance architecture that we can make skilling initiatives truly effective.
180. I am also happy to inform you that 33 Skill Development Centres will be established in our State in alignment with PM Kaushal Vikash Yojana to open up ample employment opportunities to the youth of Assam. The exact location of these centres will be decided very soon after proper study. In the current budget, I propose to allocate Rs 10 crore for this purpose.
180. We will also expedite setting up of Driving Schools in tune with my last year's budget announcement.
181. Our Government also proposes to setup a 'Skill City' in the State. This would house a number of specialized skill schools, each catering to a sector or group of skill sets. The first of such schools shall be set up within this year in the hospitality sector. I am happy to inform that our Government has already signed MoU with ITE, Singapore in this regard. For setting up Skill City, I propose to allocate Rs.200.00 lakh in the budget to undertake preparatory works.
182. Under this new department, the Assam Skill Development Mission will be nurtured into an umbrella organization to have in its fold the entire gamut of skill development initiatives in all sectors throughout the State.

183. We also propose to setup a special ITI for Divyangs. The employment exchanges shall be converted into modern and computerized career counseling centres for these specially-abled youth with facilities to register online and to seek career guidance and placements facilities. This would be a great initiative for the empowerment of Divyangs and I have made adequate budget provision in the current budget.
184. Our Government appreciates the initiative of the bankers in capacity building of youth for self-employment through Rural Self-Employment Training Institute (RSETI) in Assam. We are keen to partner with the bankers in this critical area for helping our youth and accordingly, I propose to allocate Rs 10 lakh as one-time grant to these Institutes in the current budget.

TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT: CONNECTING HIGHWAYS, RIVER WAYS AND BEYOND

185. Our Government in order to reduce road accidents and fatalities has notified “State Road Safety Policy”. Simultaneously, our Government has also taken steps to constitute “The State Road Safety Authority”.
186. The Transport Department has initiated online registration of vehicles at dealers point and will cover all districts in phased manner. Provision is also made for providing CCTVs in all District Transport offices in the state. Adequate steps have also been taken revamp IWT Sector. With this end in view, our Government has approved the formation of “Assam Inland Water Transport Development Society” to implement the Assam Inland Water Project.
187. Our Government shall also introduce new, modernized vessels and river taxies to cater to the demands of passengers and tourists. While our Government will

take all possible steps to restructure and revamp Assam State Transport Corporation, our Government has decided to set up a mini ISBT at Khanapara for the benefit of the passengers travelling to upper Assam. Two more ISBT, one at Tezpur and the other at Kokrajhar will be set up.

188. Our Government has also proposed to set up electronic check gates for collection of toll tax and to undertake new projects like the Chief Minister's Gramin Paribahan Yojana. Further, a multi model terminal will also be set up at Jagiroad.

HANDLOOM TEXTILE AND SERICULTURE DEPARTMENT: WEAVING THE FUTURE

189. In the beginning of my speech, I have announced Mission Muga as one of the flagship programmes of our Government and I have already allocated Rs. 100 crores for this programme for 2017-18. This Mission is the most comprehensive Project covering from the Production to developing the marketing outlets.
190. In addition, developing more yarn banks and strengthening of the existing ones is our priority so that the weavers of the State particularly the poor women would get the supply of quality yarn timely and at affordable price. Accordingly, I propose to allocate Rs. 3.46 crores.
191. Secondly though Sualkuchi is known as a renowned Centre for Silk trade, of late, the business is sliding down because of high cost of Mulberry Silk Yarn. If State Government does not intervene to arrest this trend, I am afraid that the glory of the Sualkuchi and Assam Silk will be lost forever. It is therefore, proposed that this challenge shall be addressed in two ways:- first, we need to establish a exclusive Mulberry Silk Yarn Bank to ensure that the required quantity and

quality of silk is readily available. Secondly, we propose to supply same at cheaper rate and State Government will provide 20% subsidy over the market price. For this purpose, I allocate Rs.20 crore in this budget.

We have several Khadi Centres under Assam Khadi Village Industry Board (AKVIB) and they are our strength provided we can make them alternative and be professionally managed. Accordingly I propose to upgrade 47 such Khadi Centres. I have allotted Rs. 4.7 crore initially.

INDUSTRIES & COMMERCE: CREATING GROWTH ALL AROUND

192. I propose to establish a high end Handloom Production Centre during 2017-18. In our vision document, development of Industries and Commerce has been given top priority. It was also mentioned about the importance of improving the Ease of Doing Business in the state. I have already spoken about one of the largest self employment programmes, SVAYEM Yojana, in my preceding paragraphs. It is my assurance to this august House that, depending on the success of the scheme in 2017-18, we will expand the scheme next year.
193. Sir, you will be pleased to know that we passed the “Ease of Doing Business Act” in the very first Assembly Session after the new Government was formed.
194. In my last Budget Speech, I spoke about organizing a Business Summit called “Vivacious” Assam in Guwahati. However, due to the overlapping of various other events, our Government now proposes to organize the same during October/November, 2017. We also propose to take some critical policy decisions to attract investments well before the Summit. We have already sanctioned Rs. 20 crore for this purpose and I

hope that this Summit will be comparable to the Vibrant Gujarat Summit in due course of time.

195. Creation of Industrial Land Bank and a transparent policy for allocation of this land to Industries is on our agenda. Our Government proposes to create sectoral parks viz. Food Park, Pharmaceutical Park, Tea Park & Textile Park in the state. In order to encourage “Start ups” from the State, incubation centres will be promoted. We also propose to establish “Industrial Townships” in different locations of the state.
196. Our Government is very keen to promote bilateral trade with the neighbouring countries. We propose to create a new ‘Department of Act East’ in order to engage with the stakeholders for promoting trade with ASEAN and South Asia. The variety of cultures and traditions of Assam makes Assam a power house of creativity for handicrafts. For strengthening the Craft Industry, a “Craft Policy” will be announced shortly for providing a platform for marketing the products of the Craft Industries as well as other Micro & Small Enterprises.
197. In order to promote inclusive industrialization of the State, “Primary Production Centres” are being proposed to be set up at the point of production for primary processing of food/agriculture produce.
198. *Sir, You will be delighted to know that Numaligarh Refinery Ltd. is implementing a “Bio-Refinery Project” to produce “Fuel Grade Ethanol” at a cost of Rs. 950 crores. This plant will process 5 Lakh Tons of Green Bamboo annually. This project will help in the Ethanol Blending Programme of Government of India and will also promote large scale local employment through bamboo cultivation and semi-processing facilities.*

199. *This unique Project is a real blessing to our society as bamboo is widely grown here. It is a great boon at this point of time especially when the area under Bamboo is reducing. Such a huge demand by NRL Bio-Refinery will be a 'game-changer' for the rural economy of Assam and will stimulate the expansion of the area under bamboo and we eagerly await the commissioning of the project. The State Government will pro-actively support this 3rd Generation technology project and will partner and provide necessary incentives for the success of this project.*
200. I propose to allocate Rs.433.50 crore in the current budget to the Industries and Commerce Department for undertaking various activities including those mentioned above.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY: PEOPLE MAKING TECHNOLOGY WORK

201. Our Govt. has given high priority to sustainable development of Science & Technology. Initiatives have been taken to promote science among the masses and establish new institutions of excellence in the state.
202. In order to promote science in every nook and corner of the State, Govt. has decided to establish 23 nos. of **District Science Centres** in the year 2017. The mega **Science City Project** is coming up at Sonapur near Guwahati as a joint venture between National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) and Govt. of Assam which is expected to be completed in next 3 years.
203. **219 Nos. of Block Level Aryabhata Science Centres** are yielding good results as interest of the student community and common masses in the field of Science, Technology, Innovation and Astronomy is growing significantly.

204. **Six more new planetariums** have been planned to be set up **at Majuli, Kaliabor, Amingaon, Bongaigaon, Diphu and Silchar**. Land for the proposed new planetariums have been identified. Construction of Planetariums at Nalbari, North Lakhimpur and Kokrajhar are at advanced stage of completion.
205. Under JNNSM, MNRE, GoI launched a programme Grid Connected rooftop and small Solar power plants programme for generation of Solar power locally and to feed the excess power to grid. The Assam Electricity Regulatory Commission has published the regulations of grid Interactive Solar PV systems, 2015 on 14th May 2015 regarding net metering arrangement of Solar PV systems. There is 70% Central Financial Assistance from MNRE, GoI for implementation in residential, institutional and social sector etc. The Assam Energy Development Agency (AEDA) got in-principle approval of 14MW capacity for implementation of the above scheme in the State at 70% Central Financial Assistance.
206. For Biotech Park, 62 Bigha, 4 Katha and 11 Lessa (21 acre) of land in Amingaon has been provided by Govt. of Assam to Guwahati Biotech Park and also 7 bighas of free land has been identified to start the construction of the Guwahati Biotech Park Incubation Centre (GBPIC). DPR for the construction of Guwahati Biotech Park Incubation Centre has been prepared by PWD (Building). I have allotted 55.82 crore for Science and Technology Department in my budget.

CO-OPERATION DEPARTMENT : TOGETHER WE STAND

207. Registration of new cooperative societies in agriculture and allied sub-sectors as well as Village Organizations under the National Rural Livelihood Mission gives a boost to the cooperative sector.

208. Model advocacy programme as well as up-gradation and registration of village organizations will be taken up as a continuous process. 3000 odd Village Organizations are proposed to be upgraded during 2017-18. For improving the financial health of 337 weak societies, bank linkage schemes will be taken up.
209. The cooperative societies will further be encouraged to participate in the paddy procurement under MSP to facilitate the farmer shareholders to sale their paddy with ease under the guidance of Food & Civil Supplies Deptt., NABARD and FCI. An amount of Rs.100.00 lakh has been proposed in 2017-18 as cash award to better performing cooperative societies in four categories at State, District, Sub-Division and society level.
210. Construction of 200 plus rural godowns of cooperative societies will be taken up in 2017-18 at an outlay of Rs.7600 lakh. Besides, two multi-compartmental cold storages of at least 5000MT capacity will be constructed at Pachhim Boragaon of Guwahati and Hojai on the land of the Assam State Warehousing Corporation.

TOURISM DEPARTMENT: AWESOME ASSAM

211. Assam is known for its warm hospitality across the world. We have taken a number of initiatives in this important, revenue-earning sector. The tourist inflow to the State has increased significantly. To showcase our rich cultural traditions and places of tourist interests both in India and Overseas and for aggressive marketing thereof in a systematic manner, the Government has engaged renowned film artist Ms. Priyanka Chopra as the Brand Ambassador of Assam Tourism. This would definitely take Assam on the national and international tourist map.

212. We propose to send 15000 pilgrims from our State to Puri-Brindaban- Ajmeer-DargahShariff and other important religious places of India for religious and cultural visit through Indian Railway and Catering Indian Railway catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC). I have made a budgetary provision of Rs.10.00 crores for this purpose.
213. Another significant step taken up by the Government is to upgrade the quality of the existing Prashaanti Tourist lodges. We propose to do so under PPP Mode. This would definitely help ease out the accommodation problems and encourage the private entrepreneurs to come forward and invest in tourism infrastructure. We propose a budgetary provision of Rs. 5 crores for this purpose.
214. We propose to set up of a Three Star Category Resort / Hotel at Majuli with the cost of 10 Crores with finance under RIDF scheme.
215. I committed to start to set up the Tea Museum at Dibrugarh in last Budget. For this tender process has already completed We propose to start "Ropeway from Kamakhya Railway Station to Kamakhya Temple" with a joint venture with IRCTC. I am keeping a budgetary provision of Rs.15 crore for the project.
216. Speaker Sir, we propose to start 'Amar Alohi', a Scheme for developing rural home stays in Assam. It is expected that this initiation will be beneficial for boosting tourism apart from encouraging the rural people of Assam to become entrepreneurs. For this Scheme, a provision of Rs. 3.00 Crores has been proposed in the Budget.
217. Speaker Sir, development of tourism infrastructure works for wildlife tourism in Manas, Pabitora, Kaziranga, Dibru Saikhowa, Panidihing and Nameri

have already been initiated from this year. We propose to take up tourism infrastructure development works in the following heritage sites in the next financial year :

Sl. No.	Name of district	Name of Heritage site	Amount in Crores
1	Sonitpur	Kanaklata Udyan	6.09
		Bamuni hills	2.66
2	Majuli	Kamalabari area	30.95
		Tribal theme village	6.98
		Samaguri satra	4.31
		Salmara pottery Village	9.07
		Rawanapara Pond	1.69
3	Sivasagar	Rang ghar	7.74
		Talatal Ghar	15.47
		Joysagar Tank	4.42
		Charaideo Maidam	4.90

218. In order to showcase our rich cultural and historical heritage, we propose to create a Centre of Study for cultural and educational research in the name Cherai-Doy Cultural and Educational Complex, in close vicinity of Cheraideo Raja Maidam. I have made a suitable provision in this budget for preparing a detailed project report.

CULTURAL AFFAIRS: PRESERVING HERITAGE

219. In the last budget, I had announced establishment of Kumar Bhaskar Barman khetra, Swami Vivekananda Cultural and Research Centre in Barak Valley and Azan Peer Khetra near Gorgaon in Sivasagar District. It is a matter of satisfaction that we have made progress, and full-fledged works on all the three centres will start soon.

220. One of the greatest cultural icons of Assam, **Khagen Mahanta** is a household name. We propose to develop a park around his memorial, situated near Sankardeva Kalakhetra.
221. **Vrindavani Vastra** is part of our historical and cultural tradition. Honble Members are aware that parts of the original Vrindavani vastra are presently owned by the British Museum in London and Musee Guimet in Paris. Keeping the collective sentiments of our people, and also rebuild our cultural heritage, the Government has decided to bring these art works to the State for exhibition. I propose to allocate a sum of Rs. 2 crore for this endeavor.
222. Majuli, the largest inhabited riverine island in the world, is one of the greatest seats of Vaishnavite Bhakti tradition. For quite some time, Government is trying for the inclusion of Majuli in the list of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites. We would like to prepare quality nomination dossier for consideration. I allocate a sum of Rs. 2 crore for this important endeavor.
223. We need to preserve our theatrical traditions and Drama art forms. We would like to establish one State School of Drama, on the lines of National School of Drama. I propose to allocate a sum of Rs. 2 crore for starting the work of this important cultural training institution.
224. Honble Speaker Sir, the auditoriums of Sankardeva Kalakhetra have been optimally utilized for a plethora of activities, cultural, educational to hosting of Governmental functions – these auditoriums have seen them all. I propose to allocate a sum of Rs. 2 crore for the third state of the art auditorium at Sankardeva Kalakhetra.

225. Assam has the great tradition of making films by eminent film makers like Rup Kunwar Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, Bhabendra Nath Saikia and others. It is proposed to hold an International Film Festival annually in Guwahati on the lines of major International Film Festivals in Goa (IFFI), Kolkata (KIFF), Thiruvanthapuram (IFFK) and Mumbai (MAMI), etc. For this, I am proposing a sum of Rs. 1 crore. We would also like to preserve Chitaban Film Studio at Bholaguri Tea Estate set up by Rup Konwar Jyoti Prasad Agarwala.
226. To commemorate the memory of our freedom fighters, we would like to preserve and protect the original buildings of Gohpur, Dhekiajuli and Sootea police stations. We also propose to build Dhekiajuli Martyrs' Park in the memory of 13 people who lost their lives on 20 September, 1942 during the Independence struggle.
227. An additional amount has been proposed for conservation & development of Madan Kamdev and Charaideo Maidam archaeological sites to promote tourism as well as for preservation of the Cultural Heritage of Assam.
228. The festival of Ali Aye Ligang and Me- Dam-Me- Phi will be celebrated with traditional gaiety and fervor and will be incorporated in the annual calendar of Cultural Affairs Department from this year onwards.
229. To promote the ethnic and Cultural identity of the Mishing Tribe, setting up of Cultural Complex in the name & style of "Abotani Dirbi Lotta" in the premises of Paramannada Atoi Niketan, Gogamukh is under process.

230. Cultural Affairs Department has also laid emphasis on Protection, Preservation and Development of Archaeological Sites and Monuments of the State of Assam and has conserved 115 Nos. of Archaeological Sites and Monuments till date.
231. Since their inception, Museums have served varied and ever increasing audience of Assam. In the hallowed memory of Swahids of Patharughat, a Museum on Darrangi Art & Culture will be established at Patharughat, Darrang.
232. Bare Saharia Bhavna of Jamugurihat is a famous cultural event of the State. I propose to allot a sum of Rs. 1 crore for its preservation.
233. Traditional knowledge is integral to the identity of most local communities. It is a key constituent of a community's social and physical environment and, as such, its preservation is of paramount importance. We accord high priority to our tribal and ethnic traditions. We would like to preserve this traditional knowledge and collective wisdom in a scientific manner. We would like to establish institutional mechanism for this initiative.
234. We propose to construct cultural complexes in the honour of Bir Raghav Moran, the iconic hero of Moran community, and Maha Bir Chilarai.
235. In order to help the film industry of the State, I propose to give a subsidy of Rs. 50 Lakh for reopening of closed cinema halls and Rs. 25 Lakh for renovation of the existing / functional cinema halls. I also propose a subsidy of 25% of the capital cost in case of establishment of new cinema halls. The Department will soon issue detailed guidelines in this regard.

**PUBLIC ENTERPRISES :
TOWARDS REVITALIZATION**

236. As a result of the constant efforts and various initiatives of the PE Department, the numbers of profit making state PSUs have gone up substantially. The Department has undertaken the task of formulating a State Public Enterprises policy to improve the performance of the Public Sector Enterprises of the state through reform measures, effective administration, management and control. It is expected that with the strong favourable policies of the present Government, most of the state PSUs, in the near future, will become economically self-reliant and will be able to contribute to the development of the state.

**PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (BUILDING & NH):
BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE**

237. Our Govt. has given due emphasis for the integrated development of Highway Network in the State for development of other sectors like Agriculture, Horticulture, Tourism, Health, Education etc. This we would like to envision in the perspective of the Act East Policy and Trans-Asian Highways.

238. Our Government greatly acknowledges the contribution of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways' (MoRTH) contribution and their guidance in this regard. We would also like to place it on record the pro-active role of Hon'ble Union Minister, Shri Nitin Gadkari in this regard. You are well aware that the new bridge at Saraighat over river Brahmaputra was recently inaugurated which is expected to reduce traffic condition.

239. In addition to above, we propose to construct an alternative 4 lane road from Changsari (East West Corridor) to Kuruwa along the North Bank with a six lane Bridge over River Brahmaputra Between Kuruwa and Narengi to connect East West Corridor near Khanapara. This would further ease the traffic congestion in Guwahati By-pass. I am happy to inform that MoRTH has agreed in principle to construct this bridge by NHAI.
240. Our Government is also taking all necessary steps for the construction of the missing links of Srirampur-Dhubri-Fulbari, Desangmukh-Tekeliphuta-Dhakuakhana-North Lakhimpur-Majuli. Out of the 13 numbers of newly declared National Highways, the preparation of feasibility report & DPR are at the advanced stage in 3 nos. of NHs covering a total length of 178.22 km.
241. We have also initiated the process of introduction of energy efficient GREEN BUILDING concept in all ongoing and future Major building projects. We emphasize environment friendly construction for all future buildings projects.
242. We shall endeavour to complete the major ongoing Building projects like New Assembly Building at Dispur and National Judicial Academy and Law School at Amingaon on time.

**GOVERNMENT CONVENTION CENTRE,
GUWAHATI**

243. Consultation and Communication are critical elements of effective governance. This needs a physical environment for meeting of all stakeholders. Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi is an ideal example for this. While almost all states including those in the north east region, have marquee convention centre, our

State does not have any such venue. Therefore, it is proposed to construct the Assam State Convention Centre and the State PWD will come up with an iconic design with modern amenities including parking space etc. I set apart Rs.10 crore for preparatory works for this purpose in the current budget.

SUGAM ASSAM

244. With the renewed focus of our Government on *Divyangs*, the public infrastructure in general and the Government buildings in particular is also required to be **'barrier-free'** for the *Divyangs* so that their physical movement of these people will become as seamless as for anyone. With this noble objective, our Government will launch a State level programme in a mission mode, called **'SUGAM ASSAM'**- *barrier free Government buildings*. As you would appreciate Sir, though this is a small initiative to make the lives of the *Divyangs* easier, it will act a significant enabler for them in joining the mainstream society.

245. On the floor of this august House, I also urge all the private organizations –schools, hospitals, offices etc. to join us in this journey of making Assam, the **"First Barrier- Free State"** in the country. As part of this, we will make provision for barrier- free access in Government offices within 2017-18. For this pious act, I have provided Rs. 10 crore in the budget of PWD(R) Department.

PUBLIC WORKS (ROAD) DEPARTMENT

246. Road infrastructure is the most critical requirement for growth and development of the State and the roads are the lifeline for the rural economy. In my last speech, under Chief Minister Path Nirman Yojana, I committed to allocate Rs. 2000 crores for construction of new roads and maintenance of old roads for a period

of three years making provision of Rs. 600 crores in 2016-17 and assured Rs. 800 crores in 2017-18 and Rs. 600 crores more in the 3rd year i.e. 2018-19. I have accordingly allocated Rs 800 crore in the current budget. Hon'ble members will appreciate that this is one of the largest allocations to the road sector from the State resources.

247. Further, increased traffic congestion in big towns has posed a very serious challenge. Our Government will give priority for construction of Flyovers in phased manner in all important Cities/Towns. In this budget, I propose to construct one Flyover at Ganeshguri connecting Zoo road to Ganesh Mandir over the existing flyover and one at Supermarket tri-junction.

248. Our Government gives priority to the similar requirement in other cities of the State also and accordingly, I propose to construct one flyover in Silchar from *Rangirkhari* Point to Silchar Railway Station at *Tarapur* via *Premtola*. Further, we will also construct one flyover in Dibrugarh from junction point of Convoy Road and NH-37. For this purpose, I have kept aside Rs. 100 crores in this budget.

WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

“ব্রহ্মপুত্র মহাবাহু শান্তনুকুল নন্দন
অমোঘা গৰ্ভসম্ভূত সৰ্বপাপং লভিত মে হৰ।”

*(The mighty Brahmaputra is a son of Shantanu Dynasty.
One can get rid of all sins by a dip in the river
Brahmaputra.)*

249. The river Brahmaputra and Barak are the life lines of Assam .To convert the problems related to these rivers into resources, this Government is making all efforts. As a part of this, to increase navigability of the

Brahmaputra and reduce flood and erosion, dredging of Brahmaputra and construction of “Brahmaputra Express Highway” on both banks have been conceptualized. In this respect, preliminary survey for the proposed “Brahmaputra Express Highway” has been inaugurated by the Hon’ble Chief Minister, Assam on 24/12/2016 at Dibrugarh. Further, the proposed Express Highways on both banks of the river shall protect the valley from recurring flood events every year and shall play a major role as adaptive measure of climate change. A budget provision of Rs.2.50 Crores has been kept for survey and investigation for this ambitious project. In this connection an expert committee has been constituted.

This Government lays emphasis on proper utilization of the rich water resources of the State. Reorientation and modernization of the Department will bring in professionalism for better water resources development and management for which efforts are being made.

“কলং এতিয়া তেনেই তৰাং, খোজকাঢ়ি পাব হ’ব পাৰি
বৰফুটীয়া বালিৰে ভৰি পৰিছে কলঙৰ সাৰুৱা বুকু।”

(Now Kollong has become shallow and can be
crossed on foot. The bed of the
river is filled up with sand)

The Kollong an off shoot channel of the Brahmaputra, was a life line of middle Assam for ages contributing to the economic, social and cultural prosperity of the region. This Government is making sincere efforts to rejuvenate the now defunct and dead Kollong for which a Signature Project is proposed and a provision of Rs.10.00 Crores is made in this budget for survey and investigation. Further, government have constituted an expert committee for rejuvenation of Kollong river.

250. With persuasion of the State Govt., DEA, Ministry of Finance, Govt. of India has posed to the World Bank the proposed Assam Flood Erosion and River Management Modernization Project (Rs.1500.00 Crores). The First Identification Mission of World Bank visited the State during 7th - 11th November, 2016. This project aims at developing an integrated Flood and Erosion Management System in Brahmaputra and Barak valleys of Assam.
251. This time the Water Resources Department have started restoration work of embankment in the month of December which are targeted to be completed by 31st March, 2017. This time the quantum of fund allotted for such purpose is nearing four times to that allotted in earlier year. It is expected that reconstruction work of breached reaches of embankments will be completed within the stipulated time.
252. This Government have given special emphasis on the flood and erosion problem of Majuli the largest populated river island in the world. Department have already started construction of a large full fledged water resources complex at Majuli. Further to arrive at a permanent solution of flood and erosion problem of Majuli, an expert committee has been constituted.
253. Embankments are the basis of our rural economy and proper protection and maintenance of the vast network of embankments of the State with active participation of people – especially those residing along these structures will be given emphasis by our Government. It is proposed to engage rural youth for participating in the maintenance and protection of dykes for 4 to 6 months of the flood season for which necessary budget provision is being made.

**PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING :
CLEAN WATER-CLEAN ASSAM**

254. Our Government has set the goal for Open Defecation Free and Clean State under Swachh Bharat Mission (*Gramin*) by 2nd October' 2017. A special drive has been launched to expedite the construction of Individual Household Latrines (IHHL) in the state as the performance of Assam till last year was abysmally low. Weekly video conferences are being held with the Deputy Commissioners by the Chief Secretary. This is also being reviewed regularly by the Hon'ble Chief Minister. This has started yielding results and during this financial year, we have constructed over 5.6 Lakh IHHLs till January, 2017. Around 17.58 Lakh families have been targeted for providing low cost sanitary toilets during 2017-18.
255. Also, 191 Community Sanitary Complexes and 93 nos Solid & Liquid Waste Management projects shall be taken up during the coming financial year.
256. You will be happy to know that under the Neer Nirmal Pariyojana, works have been started in 63 Gram Panchayats in the 3 districts of Hailakandi, Jorhat and Kamrup (M) with a target to complete by 2018 ata total project cost Rs. 676.03 Crores.
257. Second Batch of the project will cover 98 Gram Panchayats more in the 3 districts of Sivasagar, Bongaigaon, and Morigaon at an estimated cost of Rs. 822.67 Crores.
258. Sir, we are acutely aware that drinking water is a serious issue in many towns. In a phased manner, we shall consider the same. But, in this budget, I propose to set apart of Rs.1000 lakhs for providing drinking water to Lumding which is one of the oldest towns in the State.

Further, it is noticed that the drinking water schemes could not be run efficiently due to lack of power supply, especially in remote areas. Our Government proposes to provide Solar Power System in Chaparis, Majuli, Remote and other difficult areas (Tribal Char Areas) for energizing the Water Supply System. For this, I propose to allot Rs. 400 lakh in 2017-18.

259. Similarly, there is a need to provide potable water in tea garden areas and to begin with, I propose to provide Rs.500 lakh for the same in the current budget.

260. Altogether, 3442 nos. of habitations have been brought under the category of Arsenic affected habitations. Our Govt. will take steps to cover more villages under new National Sub-Mission of Govt. of India which aim to cover all Arsenic & Fluoride affected habitations by 31st March 2020.

ENVIRONMENT & FOREST: TOWARDS A GREEN COVER

261. Hon'ble Members, it was not long back, people used to symbolize Assam as home of environment & forests. This epithet may not be true today. Our forests need protection. We need to work on our environment. We want to regain our lost glory on this count. This is an important agenda before our Government today.

262. I sincerely feel that if Human civilization is to continue its march forward, unabated, it has to worship nature, who is our mother. This tradition of conservation of nature has been handed down to us by our ancestors, by our culture and our heritage. Atharva Veda states :

***“Mata Bhumi Putrahom Prithva”,
“This world is our Mother and we are her children”.***

263. After the present Government came to power, the Department has taken up plantation of more than 1.42 crore seedlings. We have decided to take up massive plantation in degraded lands in aid of densification of the existing canopy cover. We are earmarking an amount of Rs.1500 lakh for improvement of forest cover through restoration and afforestation. Further, an amount of Rs. 500 lakh has been set aside for taking up a greening initiative for greater Guwahati city.
264. In this initiative, Mr. Speaker Sir, we want to take people along. We want to make this a people's movement. Towards this end, we propose to take such programmes to the villages. An amount of Rs.500 lakh has been set aside for this purpose. All these measures are expected to go a long way in helping Assam gain the status of a Carbon Negative State.
265. Our Government has taken up strong initiatives for protecting wildlife as well as for making our forests free from encroachment. As Hon'ble members are aware, the Deosur and Bandardubi villages in Kaziranga have been cleared of all encroachments. Steps are afoot for clearing encroachments in other areas too.
266. Our Government has initiated steps for appointing 525 frontline staff and 274 members of forest protection force. For protection of wildlife in Kaziranga and other reserved forest areas, it has been decided to provide sophisticated arms and equipment to forest guards and forest protection forces. An amount of Rs.20 crores has been earmarked for this. Our Government has decided to enhance the ex-gratia payment to the victims of man-animal conflict from

Rs.1 lakh. The Department also proposes to set up two Interpretation Centre cum Museums at Jaypur and Manas Wildlife Sanctuary, respectively.

MINES AND MINERALS DEPARTMENT :

267. Our Government has laid a special focus on the development of mineral resources of Assam. In order to increase the revenue, department has already granted 3 (three) Petroleum Mining Leases and one to Oil India Ltd. for production of Crude oil and natural gas.

268. As part of Re-START Assam, the department has initiated mission mode approach for innovative policy measures such as possible participation in auction of marginal oil fields, acquiring small coal fields etc. Besides we are proposing to take reformative measures to increase number of Sand Mahal in both Forest and Non Forest areas in the state so that the construction activities in the State will be greatly benefitted and expedited.

SPORTS : ONE SPIRIT, ONE TEAM

269. There have been some good developments on this score in recent times. Guwahati is fast emerging as the sports capital of the country, courtesy a series of national and international sports events that the city witnessed during the last few months. You are aware that we have been successful in getting FIFA- under 17 to Guwahati. It is indeed an honour to our State.

270. On the crucial issue of sports infrastructure, we propose to adopt two pronged strategy : strengthen the existing infrastructure, and build the new ones based on assessment. We also want to lay emphasis on coaching and exposures.

271. **In this regard, utilizing the existing infrastructure of Sarusajai Sports Complex, we propose to establish one State of the Art sports facility named after the great Arjuna awardee Arjun Bhogeswar Baruah State Sports Academy.** Equipped with latest sporting infrastructure, this Academy will have accommodational facilities for our budding talents. I propose to allocate Rs.500.00 lakh in the current budget for this purpose.
272. Honble Members would agree that there is an urgent need to strengthen the infrastructure of Rudrasingha Sports Complex, Dispur in order to provide modern gym, swimming pool etc. Accordingly, I set apart Rs.200.00 lakh for this purpose.
273. This August House is aware that we conducted South Asian Games at Guwahati with grand success under the able leadership of our Chief Minister Shri Sarbananda Sonowal in his capacity as the then Union Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs. We managed to earn nationwide accolades. ‘Tikhar’, our mascot, became so popular. To keep the memory of the South Asian Games alive, we propose to set up of a Theme Park in the name of Tikhar at Jalukbari with an initial allocation of Rs.200.00 lakh for preparatory works.
274. In the last budget, I had announced three new stadiums at Dibrugarh, Kamrup and Lakhimpur. As the Department has progressed in preparatory works, I allocate Rs.600.00 lakh for 2017-18. Once the progress of three stadiums is achieved, similar State of the Arts Complex will also be set up in other district Headquarters of the State in due course of time.
275. Sports Talent Search Scholarship will be given to the students and players of the State for their outstanding performance in the sports competitions at State, National and International levels.

276. Further, an amount of Rs. 50.00 lakh has been proposed initially for establishment of NCC Academy at Jorhat. The Academy will focus on the youth of the State for all round development and also encourage patriotic feeling through participation in NCC activities.

REVENUE AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

277. When we think about Land Revenue in Assam, we are reminded of Gaonburas and Mouzadars. Our Government recognizes the service rendered by these two Institutions to the people of the Assam. I am happy to inform this house that we will ensure the full budgetary provision for the remuneration of the Gaonburas so that they can receive regular payment in time. Accordingly, I propose to make an allocation of Rs.4423 lakhs in the current year.

278. Our Government has also decided to introduce Mouzadar system in place of existing Tahasildar system in eight districts. Further in order to encourage digital transactions, our Government announced financial incentives to Mouzadar also.

279. Besides Government has an action plan for computerization of all the Mouzas in a time bound manner.

With changing times, our Government wants to give new orientation to the Land Revenue Department by involving itself in preparation of "History of Settlements in Assam" This is aimed at documenting the socio-economic and cultural pattern of settlements across the State having evolved since pre-independence period. This Project named as "DISCOVERY OF ASSAM" will help reinventing the roots of history, culture and economy of all the major and minor ethnic and social groups of the State and highlight their

religio-cultural traditions, social customs and practices. It will also document the defining moments and events in the history of these settlements and the important landmarks associates with them.

280. The Project is proposed to be implemented in collaboration with Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development, Guwahati. Accordingly, I propose to allocate Rs.200 Lakhs for the related works of this Project in this budget.
281. Our Government has come across a peculiar situation in case of households who were allotted Government land on the grounds such as landless people, rehabilitation due to natural or man-made disasters or land acquisition. Though such situation was not voluntary from these households, they are forced to pay premium while giving them permanent settlement or *myadi patta*. Our Government will give complete relief to these cases by bring out a suitable policy to exempt them for payment of premium while issuing *myadi patta*.
282. Our Government is committed to bring the administration closure to the common man and accordingly we feel that there is a need of creation of more Revenue Circles in the State rather than creating more districts. We therefore, propose to constitute a Committee to examine the matter to create new Revenue Circles in most needy places only.

SMALL TEA GROWERS- REKINDLED SPIRIT OF YOUTHFUL ASSAM

283. We are all aware about the revolution in tea cultivation in Assam. Small tea growers have changed the landscape of the State- both literally and physically. About 1,25,000 small tea gardens across the State changed the rural economy and we have 78,268 small

tea growers registered with the Directorate of Tea in Assam. This has become example for rest of the tea growing states in India.

284. We would like to reiterate our commitment to stimulate and encourage this sector with more constructive and innovative policy decisions. Our Government is committed to remove the cess on green tea leaves completely over a period of time. During the last six months, we reduced this amount from 25 paise to 15 paise per kilogram of green leaves. I am happy to announce to reduce this now further by another 5 paise to make it only 10 paise per kilogram with effect from 1st April 2017.
285. We have noted that the land records of small tea growers are the biggest challenge in monetization of the land value for investment of funds for improvement. One of the reasons was that the State did not have properly cadastrally surveyed and updated land records historically. In view of above, our Government will come up with a unique incentive to the small tea growers for settling of the land after fixing a nominal amount of premium i.e., Rs.1000.00 per bigha for the existing small tea gardens and also for the future start-up small tea gardens.
286. Further this benefit will be given to Small Tea Growers who registered themselves with Tea Board of India and those who have the land holding up to 30 bighas only so that the benefit reaches the most deserving section of the Society.
- Further, a Training & Research centre at an estimated cost of Rs. 17 crores will be set up funds for which will be drawn out of the Cess Fund available.
287. In the last budget, we announced an incentive for inputs for Rs.5000 per bigha for new plantations to

be developed by small tea growers by bringing uncultivable/fallow lands and the detailed guidelines were issued by the Industry and Commerce Department. For implementing this scheme, I set apart Rs.1000 Lakhs in the current budget. Further our Government is keen to unleash the monetary value of land under cultivation by small tea growers.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

288. During the financial year 2016-17, I had allocated Rs.1.00 crore to each Assembly Constituencies in one go, thus discontinuing the earlier practice of such releases in instalments. For the next financial year also, I follow the same pattern, and accordingly a sum of Rs. 126 crore under MLA Local Area Development Scheme is being allocated. Like the current year, I have allocated Rs. 63 crore for implementing SUHRID in the next financial year as well.
289. Our Government desires to rename the Planning & Development Department as “**Department for Transformation and Development of Assam (DTDA)**.”
290. Hon’ble Members would appreciate that there are plethora of schemes being implemented at the state government level. In order to harness the full potential of these schemes, we need an effective monitoring framework. We also need a common platform for channeling resources from various quarters: ranging from Central Sector Schemes to Externally Aided Projects. It is hoped that this new Department–DTDA will provide an enabling environment so that the fruits of all CSS and EA Projects are meaningfully utilized.
291. As I mentioned earlier, one of the four pillars of our new modern Governance is people’s participation. Accordingly, we propose to utilize services of citizen’s committee in improvement of the service delivery in

critical sectors like Education, Health, Drinking Water, Sanitation and Agriculture etc. Thus we will constitute “Citizen’s Committee to facilitate district administration for qualitative service delivery” by forming such Committees in every block of our State.

292. The Committee will consist of the district level heads of the concerned Department as members alongwith 5 leading citizens of the district having expertise in the matter. The members of the Committee will have the power to visit the field offices, Schools, Hospitals at regular intervals or as per decision of the Committee and give feedback to the district administration for consideration.

293. Another visionary step of our Government was to prepare and publish vision Assam 2030 – everything and everyone – achieving inclusive and sustainable development. We set up SDG cell and have already prepared 7 years Strategic Plan and 3 years Action Plan (SPSP) to catalyze implementation of SDGs as a single Synergized Holistic Initiative (SSHI) is under progress. I am happy to announce that first ever outcome budget aligned to SDGs has been prepared and place before this August House.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

294. As I stated earlier, the works related to extension of Assam House, Shillong and Assam Bhavan, Mumbai are completed and construction of new multistoried Assam Houses/Bhavans at New Delhi, Bangalore, Bhelore, Chennai and additional one at Kolkata are nearing completion. We are hopeful that these facilities will be made functional from 1st day of new Assamese year, Rangali Bihu, 2017.

295. Our Government believes in putting the systems in place to serve the very purpose of announcing 6 (six)

new districts. Accordingly I allocate Rs.5000.00 lakh in the current year to create the infrastructure required in the new districts and depending on the progress, additional amount is provided as in course of time.

296. We propose to constitute a Committee to firm up the establishment of a Mini Secretariat in Barak Valley. The terms of reference of this Committee will, inter alia, include identification of land and other required infrastructural facilities. The Committee will also make recommendations on the extent of devolution of powers under the Rules of Executive Business.

SECRETARIAT ADMINISTRATION

297. Efficiency of Administration can be increased by capacity building of Human Resource and transparent system in movement of files in the Secretariat. Accordingly it is proposed that Human Resource Management System (HRMS) will be rolled out alongwith introduction of File Management System (FMS) in all the Departments in Assam Secretariat. Besides, we propose to depute 100 employees to other State's Secretariats/National Capital for exposure visit.

298. As a welfare measure and safety for Women employees of Assam Secretariat, it is proposed to provide Staff Bus for their commuting to the Office.

299. Since the Secretariat is the centre of the administration, we will ensure that all 602 numbers of vacant posts will be filled up on priority.

INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATION

300. In my last budget speech, I promised to streamline the entire mechanism involved in payment of bills against the advertisements in the newspapers so that

payments to the media houses can be made promptly. In this regard, I am happy to share with you that during the last few months, we have released about Rs. 22 crores till 31st January, 2017 to clear the huge pending bills lying unsettled from the past.

301. We have now made an obligatory ceiling system for this purpose to release Rs. 1.4 crores every month without going through normal ceiling procedures. This has yielded good results and as on today except a few running bills, no amount is pending with the I & P R Department.
302. We also feel responsible to the families of journalists who may lose their lives while in service due to various reasons. In recognition of the profession of journalism and its critical role in social advancement, I propose to constitute '**Journalist Family Benefit Fund**' for providing suitable financial assistance to the bereaved family members of such journalists. Detailed guidelines of the scheme will be prepared by the Information and Public Relation Department and I have made adequate budget provision for this purpose.
303. Continuous improvement in professional skills and updating knowledge in journalism is pre-requisite for quality reporting and constructive role in development of the society. Recognizing this, our Government is happy to announce that media fellowship of Rs. 50,000 (Rupees fifty thousand) to selected journalists for pursuing higher studies in the relevant field of journalism. In 2017-18, 20 such fellowships will be awarded. Information & Public Relation Department will issue necessary guidelines in this regard. I have made adequate budgetary provision for this purpose.
304. Many respected journalists who have dedicated their lives to the public service in the field of journalism

may need financial security after retiring from the profession. In view of above, you will be delighted to know that **Journalists' Pension** will be introduced for this purpose on the lines of "literary, artists and sports" pension from 2017-18 onwards.

LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT

305. Our Government is keen to help expeditious redressal of legal cases. As part of this, legal aid was provided by the Assam State Legal Services Authority and the District Legal Services Authorities to 3712 persons covering Schedule Caste, Schedule Tribe, backward classes, women, children and others during 2016-17.
306. Further, as I promised in my last budget speech, a record number of cases were disposed of through Lok Adalat. Cases worth about Rs.8000.00 lakh. was settled and 52,473 cases were disposed off. I place on record the appreciations of State Government for this great service rendered by the State Judiciary.

JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT

307. As a student of law, and as a citizen, I have always believed in the dictum –"justice delayed is justice denied". It is not a simple quote. It encompasses many grave meanings. However, we must look into the support system that enables our judicial system to function well. Mostly, it is the deficits, in terms of human resources and physical infrastructure that comes in the way of effective functioning of the judicial system. We are committed to resolve these deficits in a phased way.
308. Our Government is citizen-centric. It has been making serious efforts to improve the access of State judiciary in the interior places of the State. In this regard, we are grateful to of our Hon'ble Chief Justice, Gauhati

High Court, Shri Ajit Singh for his pro-active stance. Honble Chief Justice has been working very closely with the State Government for bringing the justice delivery system to the door- steps of the common people. Many initiatives are in the offing in this realm: the High Court has proposed for construction of new Judicial Court Buildings in Mangaldoi, Gohopur, Bilashipara, Sadia, Udlaguri, Hajo, Kamrup (Amingaon) and Dhubri. We commit to provide requisite funds for construction of the Court buildings and other infrastructures. We feel grateful to the Gauhati High Court for constituting the Commercial Bench in the High Court and designating Commercial Courts in the Districts. This is a significant step forward which will also aid our avowed goal of 'Ease of Doing Business'.

309. We heartily appreciate the initiative taken by the Hon'ble Gauhati High Court by designating the senior most Addl. District & Sessions Judge in the Districts of Golaghat, Jorhat, Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Nagaon, Sonitpur, Barpeta, Cachar, Darrang and Udalguri as Fast Track Court for trial of offences under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. We propose to establish one Fast Track Court each in the districts of Cachar, Tinsukia and Hojai at an estimated amount of Rs. 33 lakh each.
310. For residential infrastructure of judiciary, I propose to allot Rs.138 lakhs for construction of two new Judges' bungalows and Rs.123 lakhs for residential quarters of Grade-IV and Grade-III employees of Guwahati High Court at Kharguli, Malibagan during the current financial year.
311. I am happy to share that very soon the National Law University and the Judicial Academy (NLUJA) will have their own campuses full of modern facilities at

Guwahati very soon. It is likely that the regular classes will be held in the new campus from the current academic session. To complete the remaining work of NLUJA, I propose to allot to Rs. 800 lakh for this purpose.

I also propose to establish Special Court for Redressal of Land Grabbing Cases.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

312. Digital uplift of the society holds the key for transforming the lives of the people of our State. Digital transformation has become highly relevant after the epoch making revolutionary demonetization scheme of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.
313. Keeping this in view, our Hon'ble Chief Minister has laid great emphasis on promotion of digital literacy under the banner of Digital Assam. He always emphasized that we should strive for a happy marriage between technology and Psychology and that digital world reaffirms the concept of "*vasudhaiva kutumbakam*" (the entire world is a family). Therefore, our Government proposes to connect the villages of the state through a triple play optical fibre connectivity covering voice, data and video.
314. I am happy to inform you that the khetri GP was made fully digital and we can now plan to make Majuli a fully Wi-Fi district of the State. Along with high speed connectivity, we have a plan to establish a state of the art State Data Centre. The department is proposing to set up Nagarik Sewa Kendras, which would be ICT enabled Kiosks in the state in partnership with the local educated youth of the state. It is proposed to set up 500 Nagarik Sewa Kendras to start with.
315. Besides we are formulating a project "Making Assam IT Nucleus and Electronics Hub" (**MAIN-eHub**) incorporating components for High Performance

Computing, hub for electronics manufacturing and allied infrastructure to be posed for external assistance.

316. As the economy is getting more and more digital, I cannot but think of the security in all digital transactions and IT systems with foolproof encryption. The word encryption invokes in my mind the wisdom of our ancient sages who had mastered the art of encryption to perfection. Using the “*Katapayadi*” system of encryption, the great mathematician Madhava of Sangamgrama near Cochin composed poetry such as “*Shreshtham naam varisthanam, himadri vedabhawanah...*” which actually represents numerical values of sine function of angles, which have been found accurate to several decimal places by the modern mathematicians. Similarly the shloka “*Gopi bhaygya madhuvratah srngiso dadhi samdhigah khalajivita khatava galahala rasamdharah*” gives the value of Pi to 31 decimal places. Inspired by the great wisdom of the sages, our Government is committed to take the people of Assam on a safe digital journey in the times to come.

317. In the current budget, I propose to allocate Rs.78.00 crore for the Information Technology Department which is 100% more than the allocation of last year.

TRIPLE INCENTIVES FOR PROMOTION OF BPOS/IT/ITES INDUSTRY IN ASSAM

318. Assam Vision Document 2016-2025 envisages the setting up of 100 BPOs in the State and accordingly, our Government is committed to make sincere efforts in this direction.

We realize that we may not be able to compete with the existing ecosystem already available for this sector in places like Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Pune,

Gurgaon etc. We also fully appreciate that there exists regional constraints to the BPO industry and hence substantial incentives need to be given to make Assam an attractive destination for the BPO industries.

319. In the current context of Skill-India and Start-up India initiated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister and in addition to North East BPO Promotion Scheme (NEBPS) announced by Government of India, we feel that a very attractive incentive package is necessary to this industry. Accordingly, our Government proposes the following:

- State Government will provide upto 90% of one time expenditure incurred on capital support without any upper ceiling. Perhaps this kind of incentive has not been provided by any other State and even GoI only provides a 50% one time expenditure on admissible items subject to a upper ceiling of Rs. One lakh per seat.
- We will also provide 100% reimbursement of stamp duty/transfer duty and registration fees paid by BPO/IT/ITES on sale/lease deed.
- Land will be provided on a long term lease basis at cheaper rates and we will demarcate exclusive land parcels for the promotion of this Industry.

We are hopeful that with these slew of radical incentives, Assam will be able to attract a number of BPO firms.

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND TRAINING

320. Our Government announced in the last budget to set up ACS Training Academy of global standards at Umrangshu on the lines of IAS Academy, Mussoorie. I am happy to inform you that 1000 Bigha of land has been identified at Lobang, Umrangshu for this

purpose. In the current year, I propose to allocate Rs. 200.00 lakh for the preparatory works.

321. Our Government is keen that a large number of youth from Assam should find their place in IAS, IPS etc. We appreciate the constraints of our students. Accordingly, I propose to provide Rs. 1 lakh per candidate who clear preliminary examination so that they can prepare for the main examination. Further, I would like to state that if more candidates clear the preliminary examination, I assure the Hon'ble Members, that we will accordingly enlarge our financial envelope.
322. While giving the priority to training of Grade I officers, we cannot ignore the importance of supporting staff. In this regard, I am also happy to inform you that we propose to set up 4 Training Institutes for Grade III and Grade IV staff at Guwahati, Majuli, Bongaigaon and one in Silchar. For the current year I propose to allocate Rs. 400 lakhs to begin the preparatory works.
323. In order to improve the productivity of administration, manpower need analysis for each department is the basic step. I, therefore, propose to undertake a work study for this purpose and I propose to allocate adequate fund for this purpose.

PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

324. This Government is determined to bring back the sanctity of the constitutional body, Assam Public Service Commission (APSC) and take all steps to repose public faith in its functioning as one of the most competent and model Commissions of the country.

We shall also take all steps to fill up the regular vacancies in various Departments in a time bound manner.

PENSION & PUBLIC GRIEVANCES DEPARTMENT

325. I am happy to announce that after our Government took over, average number of Pension cases sanctioned increased by more than 100% to 1000 cases per month. During this short period, we sanctioned 6040 General Pension cases so far and we propose to sanction 11,000 cases before the end of the financial year. I can confidently say that this is one department that has done wonderful jobs and I compliment the department and Directorate of pension for such great humanitarian job. I hope that they will be able to contribute to the welfare of retired employees with same vigour in future also.

236. Further, you will be pleased to know that, now the Administrative departments can sanction arrear pension amount up to Rs.1,00,000/- without the approval of pension sanctioning authority. The rate of interest on GPF has now been increased at par with Governing of India at 8% w.e.f. 01.10.2016.

In addition to above, Special family pension has been revised for allowing the family members of a deceased Government servant to get the benefit of pay as per ROP 2010 and also disability pension and family pension benefits have been extended provisionally to the disabled /deceased Government servants under New Pension Scheme in line with the Government of India.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ASSAM ACCORD DEPARTMENT

327. In my first budget Speech, I stated that the Assam agitation was not only an agitation for saving Assam from the aggression of foreigners but also it was an agitation to protect sovereignty and integrity of the Country.

328. As promised by me, we paid our respect to family members of the martyrs of Assam agitation in 'Shraddhanjali Anusthan' held at Veterinary Field on 10th December, 2016. We are very grateful to them. We are also conscious of the fact that there are persons injured during the agitation and our Government would extend necessary financial assistance to them as a token of respect. The Implementation of Assam Accord department will prepare required guidelines and I have allocated Rs. 5 crore for this purpose.
329. You are aware that our Government has started wider consultation with all stake-holders of the society on the 'Clause-6' of the Assam Accord.
330. In this regard we are concerned about land issues of indigenous community and protection of their rights. I am happy to inform you that we have decided to constitute high level Committee under the Charimanship of Shri Harishankar Brahma, former Chief Election Commissioner of India to examine the matter comprehensively and submit its recommendations to safeguard land issues related to indigenous communities
331. As announced in my last budget to build a memorial Park in the honour of martyrs, we have already identified land for this purpose and work of 'Swahid Smarak Khetra' shall commence shortly. I have made adequate budget provision in this regard.

SIXTH SCHEDULE AREAS OF ASSAM

332. Our Government is fully aware of both challenges and opportunities in development of areas in Assam under VIth Schedule of Indian Constitution. The area specific special requirement of Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao and Bodoland Territorial Council will always be our priority and we will continue to give our special attention to the Councils.

333. As I mentioned earlier, this time I have made an all time higher allocation of funds to the Councils. This amount is about 20% more than last years' budget.

334. Over and above this allocation, I now propose to allot one-time special grant also to the Councils without being quoted as precedence in future. Council wise allocation proposed is as follows:-

BODOLAND TERRITORIAL COUNCIL

335. Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi in his public rally in Kokrajhar encouraged the State Government to facilitate developmental activities in BTC area. In order to meet the critical infrastructure gap in this area, our Government proposes to allot Rs.200.00 crore as one time grant in 2017-18 over and above the SOPD allocation. However, this allocation will not be quoted as precedence in future.

336. Secondly, though education sector is entrusted subject, looking at the critical gaps in education infrastructure, I propose to provide Rs.25.00 crore to BTC in the current budget for this purpose.

KARBI ANGLONG AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL

337. I propose to allot Rs.50.00 crore as one-time special grant for undertaking various developmental works in Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council area.

338. Steps will be taken to make the Assam University Campus set up in Diphu, more vibrant with adequate infrastructure and academically more efficient and we will make all serious efforts by taking up with Government of India.

339. Since, there is only one Government college in Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council area, I propose one more Government college for Science stream and for this purpose I propose to allocate Rs.1.00 crore in 2017-18.

DIMA HASAO AUTONOMOUS COUNCIL

340. In case of Dima Hasao Autonomous Council also, Rs.20.00 crore is proposed to be allotted as one-time special grant.

I would also like to mention here that many other important announcements in this budget including new educational institutions, silk mission etc. will also be implemented in VIth Schedule Areas in addition to the special schemes to be taken against the one-time grants as announced above.

PART-II

Respected Sir,

The beginning of the budget process is estimation of resources and such estimation shall remain theoretical unless we take comprehensive steps involving policy, legislative, administrative and regulatory framework of concerned revenue earning departments.

Over a period of time, such focus on revenue generation was lacking in the State and I started a separate presentation in this August House last year dividing Budget Speech into two parts- the Part II with exclusive emphasis on augmentation and restructuring of tax revenues.

As stated in my White Paper on state finances tabled in the House on 3rd May, 2016, our Government highlighted the strategy and mechanism on measures to be taken for increased revenue in Assam. It was sought to be achieved through mission mode approach called Re-START Assam (Restructuring of Systems and Technology for Augmentation of Resources for Transformed Assam).

I am pleased to inform the Hon'ble Members that with the support of our dynamic leader and Hon'ble Chief

Minister Shri Sarbananda Sonowal and active participation of my cabinet colleagues, the Re-START Assam has been able to facilitate several such steps involving policies, legislative and administrative action for improvement and enhancement of revenue by respective departments.

Our country is poised to implement GST, the most significant tax reform in the field of indirect taxes, which is set to be rolled out from 1st July, 2017. The GST Council is likely to approve the Model GST Law and Rules within February, 2017. As soon as the draft model GST law/rules are made available to us by the GST Council, we will place the Assam GST Bill before you for its consideration.

The prevailing differential tax structure in our country and more particularly amongst various NE States, has always been posing serious challenges in tax administration because of trade diversion and consequent tax evasion. I am happy to inform this August house that under the upcoming GST regime, the dream of uniform tax structure in the entire NE region will be fulfilled and this will result in stoppage of trade diversion and subsequently, bring buoyancy in our tax revenues.

I am happy to state that Assam has played a vital role in GST Council as regards industrial tax exemption. Though the GST Council refused to consider this amount initially, this will now be part of revenue of the State for the purpose of calculating the amount of GST compensation. This arrangement has specially been done for North Eastern States and J & K. This is a positive development as our State will get a benefit of about Rs. 300 crore per annum in terms of GST compensation for five years with annual growth rate of 14%.

Further, once GST regime is implemented and stabilized, it may be possible that we may be in a position to gradually remove the Check posts subject to any decision of the GST Council.

TAX PROPOSALS

Respected Speaker Sir,

This august house will be delighted to know that I do not want to propose any new tax measure for this financial year 2017-18. In fact for a change, I would like to give an account of series of path breaking measures taken by us in the last few months and I assure you Sir, all these interventions will be monitored, consolidated and strengthened during the fiscal of 2017-18.

These measures taken by us have already started yielding fruits to the State economy. I am happy to share that there has been buoyancy in revenue collection up to December, 2016 and this is far higher than any of the previous years as shown below :

COLLECTION OF REVENUE AS ON 31.12.2016

Sl. No.	Department	Rs. in crores		Growth
		Dec, 2016	Dec, 2015	
01.	Transport	365.04	318.35	14.66%
02.	Excise	657.47	537.61	22.30 %
03.	Taxation	7237.40	6190.74	17.00 %
04.	Mines & Minerals (Including Oil Royalty)	1555.97	1407.68	10.53 %
	Oil Royalty (Arrear)	1450.00	-	-
	Total (with arrear)	11265.88	8454.38	33.25 %
	Total(without arrear)	9815.88	8454.38	16.10 %

To augment revenue collection of the State, many tangible measures have already been taken. I further propose to take some measures in this direction and I would like to give the Hon'ble Members a glimpse of the measures which have already been taken and which I propose to take now:

A. FINANCE (TAXATION) DEPARTMENT :

- Relevant provision of the Assam VAT Act have already been amended for imposition VAT on sale of liquor on first sale transaction within the State in unison with the levy of excise duty on liquor as per the new Excise Rules 2016. This has been done in order to arrest evasion of tax taking place through inter-bond sale route. Besides, MRP based tax has been introduced in case of liquor.
- Online issuance of statutory forms like Delivery Note has already commenced.
- The Entry Tax pending in the Supreme Court was effectively handled and concluded in favour of the State. This resulted in additional revenue collection of more than Rs.400 crore.
- VAT on specified petroleum products, which will not be subsumed into GST immediately, will be adjusted in such a way that the existing State-specific charges levied by oil companies on these items on account of entry tax on crude oil will get subsumed into VAT so that State do not suffer any financial loss and consumers also do not pay any additional tax. We need to take care that we augment our revenue without putting any additional burden on our consumer on this count and we will ensure that.
- The State Government will sign a MOU with CBEC/ CBDT for sharing information or data with State Government since such sharing of information among revenue earning Departments is fundamental for bringing efficiency and effectiveness in any tax administration.

B. EXCISE

- New Assam Excise Rules 2016 has been notified from 1st September, 2016 which, inter-alia, has shifted the point of levy of excise duty to first point to ensure that only duty paid liquor comes out from manufactories and this has curbed leakage of excise revenue.
- New Country Liquor Policy has already been approved by the Cabinet. This new Policy, which replaces *mahal* system, will ensure that the country spirit is produced in a bottling plant like Indian Made Foreign Liquor in a hygienic environment with much better quality.
- Policy on production of traditional/heritage alcoholic liquor at commercial level is being made ready.
- Cabinet has also approved amendment in Excise Rules for according status of bonded warehouse to CSD Canteens to enable them to pay excise duty at the time of sale.
- Barcode containing holographic label on the liquor bottles is being implemented after completing the formalities like floating the tenders.
- e-Governance has been taken up under the ASPIRe (Assam State Public Finance Institutional Reforms) Project and all kinds of revenue collection, permits, licences shall be made online and fully digital.
- To deal with the menace of illicit liquor, it is contemplated to make certain offences non-bailable.

C. TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT

- Certain provisions of Assam Motor Vehicle rules, 2003 have been amended for enhancement of revenue from :-

- Restructuring of fees for Conductor License, Duplicate driving License, Trade License of M.V. Dealers, Agent License, Inspection fee of vehicles on arrival at Dealers point, Registration permission of new model of vehicles.
- Auction of Fancy/choice Registration mark.
- Assam Motor Vehicle Taxation Act, 1936 is being amended for effective taxation on ad-valorem basis in case of 2 Wheeler/3 wheeler (Private)/Ambulance (commercial use).
- Online Dealer point registration of vehicle has been successfully initiated.

D. LAND REVENUE AND REGISTRATION :

- Land re-classification will be done immediately with online provision as it has proved to be major source of hindrance to industry and breeding ground for corruption.
- In eight districts, Mouzadar system will be introduced in place of existing Tahsildari system. Sale permission will be made online and time bound. Land revenue activities will be made online in an integrated manner. Mouzas will be computerized. Collection of land revenue will be monitored online.

E. GEOLOGY AND MINING:

- State Government will pursue auction of marginal Oil fields.
- Department will take up with Govt. of India for small coal fields, which are not allotted to any PSU and vulnerable to illegal mining, for development by the State Government.

- Department will come out with a strategy and policy for managing the non-forest Sand *Mahals* by the Department itself.

F. ENVIRONMENT & FOREST DEPTT.:

- Review the issue of Transit Permits to vehicles entering the State, license for Agar wood industrial units along with the proposal for flat rate permits.
- 101 new areas identified for extraction of Sand shall be expedited for commission so that it will fetch estimated additional revenue of Rs. 45 crore.

TAX EXEMPTIONS :

Sir,

As I stated earlier, I do not wish to put any additional burden on the people in this budget. Rather I intend to give some relief to certain sectors which would stimulate growth in tourism, entertainment, etc.

- We need to boost the tourism industry especially the ecological and botanical strengths of our State in rural areas. For this, State Government has already launched a programme to encourage Home-Stays in Assam. It is, therefore, required to propose to exempt luxury tax in respect of hotels and lodging houses, including home-stays, providing residential accommodation in rural areas.
- There is a general criticism that modern cinema halls like multiplexes are not very keen to screen Assamese/regional films. In order to encourage exhibition of local films, I propose to grant 50% entertainment tax exemption for a period of three years to Permanent multiplexes, which have commenced or commence their commercial operation during specified period provided they give a written undertaking to the effect that they will

show Assamese/Regional Film in one of the screens, if such Assamese/Regional Film is available for screening at a particular point of time.

- In recognition of the contribution of small tea growers in the economy in Assam, I had reduced cess on green tea leaf from 25 paise per kg to 15 paise per kg under the Assam Taxation (On Specified Lands) Act in my last budget and I further promised to reduce it in phased manner. Accordingly, I now propose to reduce such cess to 10 paise per kg of green tea leaf for small tea growers.
- As a goodwill gesture and as a gift to our sisters, our Government will exempt the women SHGs from stamp duty for documentation related to Bank loan upto Rs. 2.5 lakhs in the financial year 2017-18.

In the end, I would like to remind Hon'ble Members that I dwelt in detail in my last speech about the taxation as core requirement of any Government. While our Government is fully conscious about this, I would also like to highlight that this Government is not keen to impose the tax or additional burden unless it is really required to meet our sovereign and developmental duties. With the current level of policy reforms coupled with strict monitoring, we are confident that the revenue growth rate will improve further in the fiscal 2017-18.

BUDGET ESTIMATES

- Sir, I come to the Budget estimates for the financial year 2017-18. Every year State Government has been placing five year medium term fiscal plan and the other statements required to be placed in the House as per Assam Fiscal Responsibility & Budget

Management Act, 2005. In this regard, you will be delighted to know that we have tried to improve the content of this statement by including an Overview of the State's Economy, State's Finances, Fiscal Correction Path etc.

- The budget estimates of 2017-18 show a receipt of Rs.84732.16 crore under the consolidated fund of the State. Out of this, Rs.70719.61 crore is on Revenue Account and the remaining Rs.14012.55 crore is under Capital Account. I have shown the estimated receipt in the consolidated fund from different sources at Table-1. After adding the receipt of Rs.162580.51 crore under Public Account and Rs.100 crore under Contingency Fund, the aggregate receipts amount to Rs.247412.67 crore. As against this, total expenditure from the consolidated fund of the of the State in 2017-18 is estimated at Rs.85922.69 crore of which Rs.68319.45 crore is on Revenue Account and Rs.17603.24 crore is on Capital Account. The estimates of grant-wise expenditure from the Consolidated Fund during 2017-18 have been shown in Table-2. Taking into account the expenditure of Rs.161757.17 crore under Public Account and Rs.100 crore under Contingency Fund, the aggregate expenditure for the year is estimated at Rs.247779.86 crore. Thus, estimated transactions during the year will result in an estimated deficit of Rs.367.19 crore. This, together with the opening deficit of Rs.1982.60 crore will lead to a budget deficit of Rs.2349.79 crore at the end of the financial year 2017-18.
- In the last budget, we had made number of announcements. This obviously generates questions in the mind of our people whether we will be able

to implement them. Undoubtedly, implementation is a big challenge. But, we will make sincere efforts involving everyone in the true spirit of *Team Assam* so that the fruits of the programmes announced in this Budget reach the common people.

With this, I commend this budget for consideration of this August House.

স্বৰ্গ বিচাৰি নেযাওঁ জননী
আৰু যে স্বৰ্গ নাই,
তয়ে আমাৰ চিৰ সাধনাৰ
চৰম লক্ষ্য ঠাই।

তোৰ চৰণৰে ধূলি সানি সানি
তোৰেই পদজল এচলু খাই,
তোৰ কোলাতেই মুদিম দুচকু
শেষত ভকতি-ভতিমা গাই।

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JAI AAI ASOM
BHARAT MATA KI JAI

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