

ASSAM BUDGET 2015-16

PRESENTATION OF BUDGET 2015-16 BY FINANCE MINISTER/HON'BLE CM ON 10TH MARCH

Hon'ble Speaker Sir, with your kind permission, I rise to present the budget of the Government of Assam for the financial year 2015-16.

2. At the outset, I wish to express my gratitude to the people of the State for the trust they have reposed on my Government for more than a decade now. It is a true honour and privilege for me to present the Budget as Finance Minister.

3. JOURNEY SO FAR:

3.1. Before I proceed to present my budget proposals, I would like to apprise this August House about the overall position of State Finances.

3.2. This August House and the people of this proud State stand witness today to the journey so far made by my Government in the last 14 years. We all remember the financial position that the State inherited in the year 2001. We have come a long way since then. Gone are the days of empty coffers. Gone are the days of 2000-01 forcing the State to resort to overdraft for 294 days in a year when there was hardly any funds for taking up development and welfare activities. Gone also are the days when Government employees were compelled to go without salary for months together. With the support of people and prudent financial management, my Government could bring a turnaround so that today, the State is financially stable and is able to post revenue and fiscal surpluses. I would like to place some facts before this August House in this regard.

3.3. During the last few years, the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of Assam has shown a favourable trend of over 6% growth. The rate of growth of GSDP was 4.07% during 2001-02 which has increased to 14.85% in 2013-14. The Gross Domestic Product (GSDP) at current prices has increased from Rs. 38,313 crore in 2001-02 to Rs. 1,62,652 crore in 2013-14. The per capita income of Assam at current (2004-05) prices in 2014-15 is estimated to be Rs.46,354 and as per Advance Estimates it has registered a growth rate of 11.75 percent. Further, as per Economic Survey of India recently published, the growth rate of Net State Domestic Product of Assam is 12.5% while the Country's growth rate was only 11.5%.

3.4. The financial year 2013-14 ended with a revenue surplus of Rs.222.91 crore. During 2013-14 our Fiscal Deficit-GSDP ratio stood at 2.33% as against FRBM target of 3%. Similarly our debt-GSDP ratio as on 31.03.2014 was 17%, which was well below the FRBM target of 28.4%. The tax revenue of the State has increased more than two-fold from Rs.4986.71 crore in 2009-10 to Rs.8,995.00 crore in 2014-15 indicating an average annual growth rate of 17%.

4. MAJOR CHALLENGES AHEAD:

4.1. However, Hon'ble Speaker, Sir, this year we have been noticing disconcerting policy shifts by the Central Government. The indications available do create serious apprehensions at this juncture when the State has been moving steadily on the growth path and is now poised to take the road for accelerated development to meet the aspirations of its people. Similar note of concern has been raised by the respected Members in this August House cutting across political affiliations during the current session itself. These concerns mirror the apprehensions of the people of the State at large. Let me therefore briefly summarise these concerns.

4.2. With the disadvantage of geographical isolation, the State of Assam underwent massive reorganisation. The State received very low investment, public or private and consequently suffered from a very slow pace of development. Social and development indicators lagged behind that of the rest of the country. Then the people of the State took a resolve to elect a Government which could foster economic development in right earnest. Since 2001, as I stated earlier, peace, progress and growth have become our unwavering goals. Now that we are poised to take the State to new heights of development, indications of abrupt changes in the policies and planning by the Central Government in a manner that appear to ignore the special requirements of the State, have created uncertainty and many apprehensions.

4.3. As this August House is aware, Special Category Status, enabled by the Central Government in the past is a modality to provide resources for the development of the region and Assam by providing funds on easy terms commensurate with the capacity of the States to provide their share. Of late, the indications are that the principle of assistance to special category states is being diluted. Some schemes have been proposed with higher State Share while central share is proposed to be withdrawn altogether for some ongoing important schemes and socially significant programmes. Such abrupt change in policy by the Central Government would not only leave the ongoing schemes in a state of uncertainty and possibly depriving millions of poor but also disrupt the efforts of special category states like Assam towards growth.

4.4. In addition, Assam suffers from the annual cycle of floods and erosion, causing loss of human life, crops and livestock and damages to infrastructure like roads and bridges. Assam suffers the most damages amongst all States due to floods and erosion. We lose nearly 8000 hectares of arable land every year due to erosion. Since independence, the State has lost nearly 4 lakh hectares. This amounts to 7.4% of its area in Brahmaputra valley alone. The above circumstances result in the State having to commit large volume of resources for restoration, relief and rehabilitation efforts.

4.5. During 2014, the Central Government decided to wind up Planning Commission all of a sudden. My government is of the firm view that Institutions like Planning Commission are critical to the economic development in a manner that enables political stability and social cohesion. We would welcome efforts by the Central Government to improve such institutions with proper consultation with the States, taking into account their concerns in a genuine spirit of Cooperative Federalism. However, we cannot help but feel these concerns now appear to be forgotten with the sudden winding up of the Planning Commission. There is also lack of clarity as to the role of the newly setup Niti Aayog in addressing the genuine and felt needs of the states in allocation of resources. Indeed such gaps are huge, particularly in infrastructure.. We have come a long way over the last decade in improving social indicators with the support of the Planning Commission but much remains to be done. For instance, although we have been able to lower Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) by 14 points from 68 in 2005 to 54 in 2013. Yet, it is still below all India average of 40. Similarly, due to our efforts we have succeeded in reducing the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) by 180 points (from 480 in 2004-06 to 300 in 2011-13 but still it is below All India average of 178. Besides this, we have an average of 3062 persons per bed in hospital as against the all India average of 879. The gross enrolment ratio for classes I to V is only 94.3 as against the All India average of 116, while for classes I to VIII, it is even less, that is 84 –as against the national average of 104. All this requires massive, sustained investment. While we shall leave no stone unturned to bring these parameters at par with or even surpass those for the rest of India, now we are not clear who would support us in bridging this gap.

4.6. Then let me come to per capita income. Although the per capita income in the State has increased notably, yet the gap with some other developed States is very huge. At current prices, our per capita income is Rs 46354 as against the All India average of Rs 74920. This gap shall have to be bridged so that there is equitable development in the country, with all sharing in the fruits of development fairly. But, this can happen only with active support of the Centre whereby funds flow in and additional wealth and capital gets generated. With uncertainties in the pattern of assistance for many schemes and programmes, States such as Assam, whose revenue base is limited, face a bleak future.

4.7. Of late, it is reported that the Central Government proposes to lay much emphasis on the manufacturing sector. While the slogan “Make in India” may have laudable intentions, it would remain an empty slogan for states like Assam which has huge gaps in various infrastructure, lack of access to modern technology, technical capacity and inadequate social and developmental investment, although Assam has a huge reservoir of capable human resources. Only if we get the requisite support from the Central Government to overcome the investment constraints in developing manufacturing capability, we will be successful implementing “Make in Assam” which will enable “Make in India” to be successful in all respects.

4.8. India lives in the States of the Union. The federal structure envisaged by the Founding Fathers of our nation recognises the important role played by the States in making the Union strong and its growth and development sustainable. By reasons of geography and historical legacy, all states are not equally placed. Can an approach that leaves the States, big and small, economically developed or otherwise, to their own fate, be called Cooperative Federalism? If the Centre decides such abrupt changes in planning process without deeply consulting the Special Category States like ours who need special attention due to limited resources and without looking at their capacity to raise their own resources, the word and spirit of ‘Cooperative Federalism’ cannot be fulfilled. “One-Size-Fits-All” approach is not suitable for our diverse nation and cannot be accepted by us. Further the stated shift from planned economy to market economy would widen the disparity between resource poor States like us vis-a-vis developed States and therefore, the Centre should continue to augment resources in Assam.

4.9. Here, I would like dwell upon another major concern that is unique to the North East, particularly Assam. Cooperative Federalism for us will have no meaning if the growing economic aspirations of the people residing in the Autonomous Councils established under Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India are not fulfilled. We have two District Autonomous Councils namely, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council and Dima Hasao Autonomous Council and one Territorial Autonomous Council, Bodo Territorial Autonomous Districts (BTAD) . The population of these areas is comparable to and even more than that of the States of Meghalaya, Nagaland or Mizoram. Yet the Plan allocation available to these two districts and BTAD is substantially lesser than the Plan Assistance received by these States. Thus, there is a very strong case in favour of Assam to get devolution of more funds both from central taxes, plan grants and special grants as a Special Category State. I congratulate the members of this august House, who have united across party lines to pass a resolution seeking continuation of special categories Status for Assam.

5. UNCERTAINTY IN FLOW OF CENTRAL RESOURCES:

5.1. Speaker Sir, a view is being put forward that fiscal devolution to the States has been increased as per recommendations of 14th Finance Commission. However, it is also seen that there is reduction in the current budget in central share for a host of programmes including RKVY, NHM, RMSA, ICDS. I am perplexed at this version of fiscal federalism as with the reduction of the Central share, the States would have to increase spending their own funds which are now proposed to be transferred through the Finance Commission award, to sustain these ongoing programmes. My Government has already apprised the august House on the scheme-wise reduction of allocations of the Central Government. In such case, there would not be much room for the States to implement their own schemes without a major disruption due to sudden cessation of many ongoing developmental programmes. Consequently the States would hardly have any scope to use the own resources for the State Specific schemes.

5.2. The financial difficulties of the States get further compounded as they do not even get a fair recompense for the natural resources they contribute to the national kitty. This constrains their ability to raise their own resources. One of the prized resources of Assam is Oil. As the state is constitutionally recognized as the owner of such resources, they are paid royalty. However, in the case of oil, Assam loses substantial revenue as the Central Government pays royalty on the basis of heavily discounted well-head price arrived at on the basis of the price fixing formula of the Central Government intended to lower the cost of feed stock to various users in the country. Even keeping the rate of royalty at the current rates, because of the discounting formula, my Government estimates that Assam has cumulatively lost revenue of more than Rs. 10,000 crore since 2008-09. We have raised this issue before the Centre several times and we hope that this would be speedily addressed.

5.3. Having brought forth above challenges and having served the State for the last 14 years, my Government has full confidence and courage to meet the approaching challenges and take the State to new heights. With the support of all, our objective is to ensure that Assam moves forward in terms of employment, development and growth. Thus, I would like place the following before the August House as a Road Map Ahead.

6. ROAD MAP AHEAD:

6.1. You are well aware that the period of 4th Assam State Finance Commission will expire on March 31st, 2015. During 2014-15 the Commission recommended transfer of fund amounting to Rs. 1090 crore to Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), which consists of Rs.550 crore as tax devolution and Rs.540 crore as grant.

6.2. I am happy to inform the August House that in order to synchronize the tenure of the State Finance Commission with the Central Finance Commission, my Government constituted the 5th State Finance Commission well ahead of time on 05.03.2013. The 5th Assam State Finance Commission has submitted its report to the Government of Assam on September 12, 2014, which is under active consideration of Government.

6.3. The 14th Finance Commission's grants and devolutions are far from the realities of the State Government's requirements. Though the Central Government has declared that they have accepted the Commission's report, my Government will take up with the Centre on the principles and quantum of funds that we are logically entitled to. I seek support of all the members of this August House for the same.

6.4. My Government has been making serious efforts in facilitating and implementing a number of Externally Aided Projects (EAPs). Such EAPs facilitate additional investment in several vital sectors I am happy to announce that we have taken the number of EAP projects to eleven as of now. These include Assam Agricultural Competitiveness Project, Assam State Roads Project, Assam Integrated Flood & River Bank Erosion Risk Management Project, Assam Power Sector Enhancement Investment Programme, Assam Power Sector Investment Programme, NER Power System Improvement Project, Guwahati Water Supply Project, Assam Urban Infrastructure Investment Programme, Rural Water Supply & Sanitation Project, Assam Municipal Development Project and Citizen-Centered Service Delivery Project. Besides, I would like to include new sectors like Handloom, Textiles and Sericulture in this year.

6.5. We have been laying tremendous emphasis on rural connectivity and on strengthening the assets in rural areas for acceleration of growth and employment. So far our Government has availed loan assistance of Rs.3613 crore covering 2686 projects from NABARD under RIDF. We have diversified the projects where assistance from such loans may be invested to include Irrigation, Flood Protection, Soil Conservation, Beel Fisheries, Marketing Infrastructure (Vegetable processing), Rural Godowns, Animal Husbandry-Veterinary Hospitals & Sub-Centres, Cattle Feed Plant, Modern Abattoirs, Sericulture, Small Hydel Power, Handloom Silk Dyeing unit, etc.

6.6. I am happy to inform the August House that due to our constant efforts, the supply of rural credit has improved. The Credit Deposit (C: D) ratio of banks in Assam has increased from 32.53% as on 31-03-2004 to

45.43% on 31-12-2014. You would be happy to know that in 2001, the total deposits were Rs.10,992 crore and the same was increased more than 7 times to Rs.76,795 crore in 2013-14. Similarly the quantum of loans disbursed were mere Rs.3,663 crore and it was increased 10 times to Rs.33,763 crore in 2013-14. We have been closely working with the banks to effectively implement the financial inclusion programme. I am pleased to announce that we have achieved 100% saturation in all the 27 Districts with every household having one bank account. We have constituted the State Level and District level Committee for effective implementation of the programme.

6.7. For protection of the interest of the depositors, the 'Assam Protection of Interests of Depositors (in Financial Establishments) Act, 2000 was further amended in 2013. We are taking all required efforts to monitor the operations of financial companies in the State and to protect the interest of the depositors.

6.8. There is a strong need to usher in a modern system of financial management, enhanced efficiency of treasury and tax administration to ensure faster delivery of services to tax payers to facilitate easy compliance. Accordingly, the Commissionerate of Taxes and the State treasuries will be provided facilities to enable operation in electronic mode with use of Information Technology. All institutions under the State Finance Department including the Commissionerate shall be made into centres for good governance on public finances. Steps will be taken for capacity building and skill upgradation of the Assam Taxation Services & Assam Finance Service.

6.9. My Government will continue to give priority to employment generation, skill development and to increasing the income of the common people, which will in turn lead to higher purchasing power. We shall strive to create an inclusive society by giving special focus to marginal and deprived sections of the society. I trust that the schemes and programmes of my Government's budget for 2015-16 will meet the aspirations of the people and usher in accelerated progress for the State. Emphasis has been given to inclusive growth through development of backward sections of the State including women, minorities, tea tribes, schedule tribe, schedule cast and other backward classes. In the last fourteen years, the State has seen significant development in social and economic spheres. Now in 2015, we once again resolve to work harder for accelerating this pace of development.

6.10. The Hon'ble members are aware that I have introduced many new and innovative development and welfare oriented schemes during the last few years. The existing development and welfare oriented schemes will continue in the next financial year also. For the sake of brevity, I shall not repeat them here.

6.11. Despite fiscal constraints and unique challenges as explained earlier and impediments arising out of sudden changes in the policies of the Central Government, my Government would give full thrust to development in all sectors. Thus, I would like to announce new schemes and provide adequate funds for existing schemes for overall long term development as well as to make an immediate impact on the social and economic conditions of marginalized segments of the population. Accordingly, I have allocated substantial amount of fund for these new schemes. I assure the Hon'ble Members that utmost care would be taken to ensure that the allocated funds are released timely and the respective schemes implemented expeditiously. I shall now announce them.

7. WOMEN AND CHILDREN

7.1. My Government is sensitive to the problems faced by women and children and different schemes have been implemented for their benefit of women and children. We will also continue these schemes including Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls, Mukhyamantrir Mahila Sambridhi Achoni, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence, Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahayog Yojana. We have also operationalised 62,153 Aganwadi Welfare Centres.

7.2. Special emphasis shall be laid on providing drinking water facilities in schools and provision of toilets for girl students. My Government has taken a number of initiatives for ensuring pure drinking water and toilet facilities. Health of school children will continue to be the priority of my Government. Construction of 6488 separate girl's toilets are being completed during this financial year.

7.3. I propose to allocate additional funds for Social Welfare sector including welfare of women, children, the aged and development of tribal and schedule castes, backward classes, minorities, people in difficult areas like chars and tea gardens and various ethnic groups under developmental councils.

7.4. A separate Development Authority for Women and Children shall be set up to facilitate expeditious implementation of schemes for their welfare.

7.5. I propose to construct Working Women Hostels in all district headquarters.

7.6. My Government will set up Residential Girls School in every district headquarters for BPL girls with private sector involvement. BPL Girls of class V to 12th Standard will be covered. In the initial phase Pilot projects in 5 districts with low literacy rates shall be taken up.

7.7. In order to encourage retention of girl students in schools, My Government will provide sanitary pads at very low cost to school going girls. We would encourage Women SHGs in production of the pads.

7.8. I propose to provide Financial assistance of Rs.10,000/- each for one lakh women SHG for taking up income generating activities.

7.9. I also propose Financial assistance Rs.10,000/- each to BPL families for performing marriages of their unmarried girls under the Nabuari scheme.

7.10. My Government will further extend financial assistance of Rs.10,000/- each to unmarried women of age between 40 to 60 years under the Baideo scheme.

7.11. We understand the hardships faced by widows living in the State. I therefore, propose Financial support of Rs.10,000/- each to 200 poor widows in each LAC to give succour to them under Nabau scheme.

7.12. My Government is presently providing fixed deposits of Rs. 5,000 against each girl child born under Majoni scheme. Now, My Government will provide Rs. 5000 each to the mother to support the mother of the child to provide proper nutritious food to her child

7.13. Malnutrition amongst children is still a serious concern in the State. Therefore, I propose to undertake a new Mission with objectives and resources to eliminate this social malady altogether in a time bound manner.

7.14. For guaranteeing proper care to the orphan children, I propose to construct special children's homes for orphan children.

7.15. To enable income generation to women in the rural areas, My Government will provide two cross breed heifers to each woman beneficiary of 100 number of women Dairy Cooperative Societies in selected districts. My Government will also take up a scheme of distribution of commercial pullets to 2500 woman beneficiaries.

7.16. I propose to strengthen the Women Cooperatives by giving one time monetary grant to 2486 numbers of Women Cooperatives.

7.17. Women's representation in the management of Public Sector Undertakings will be ensured by inclusion of at least one woman Director in the Board of Directors of State Public Sector Undertakings.

7.18. In order to effectively tackle crimes against women, my Government proposes to set up Women Cells in all police stations of the State.

7.19. I also propose to reserve 30% of posts of unarmed Police Constables for the women so that the Police force is equipped to deal with crimes against women very effectively.

7.20. My Government proposes to purchase 65 IT enabled and women friendly buses to further strengthen the rural connectivity.

8. OLD AGE PEOPLE:

8.1. You are aware that My Government has already taken up schemes for welfare of senior citizens like health care for the Aged and setting up of Old Age Homes. My Government is also implementing the Maintenance & Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007. In addition, I propose to provide Old age pension for 1 lakh people who were not covered under Central Govt. old age pension scheme.

9. TARGETED SUPPORT TO POOR FAMILIES:

9.1. My Government will provide financial assistance of Rs.25,000/- each for construction of one lakh dwelling houses for the homeless people of the State in addition to the existing programmes.

9.2. An amount of Rs. 100 crores has been earmarked for the year 2015-16 for distribution of yarn and blankets among the poor weavers under the Chief Minister's Special Programme.

9.3. My Government would lessen the burden of the power bill on the common man and accordingly decided to

bear financial burden of Rs 361.80 crore to benefit 37,06,736 number of consumers .

10. SUPPORT TO SMALL TEA GROWERS

10.1. Small Tea Growers (STGs) are playing a vital role in the economy of the State. At present more than 80000 nos. of STGs produce 30% of the total tea in the State. I propose to amend the policy for welfare of the Small tea gardens for using the cess collected to make it more effective.

10.2. Small cold storage units in tea growing districts is the need of the hour, which will help in maintaining the prices of green leaf during peak cropping season. I propose to set up such cold storages jointly with the small tea gardeners.

10.3. I also intend to provide funds for Self Help Groups of Small Tea Growers to set up bought leaf tea factory @ Rs 10 lakhs as incentive.

10.4. My Government is aware of the difficulties being faced by the Small tea Growers. In order to resolve all issues, I propose to constitute a Task Force to comprehensively address the matter in a time bound manner.

11. ARTISAN AND PETTY TRADERS

My Government has been making efforts to safeguard the traditional industries in the State. We have been successful in obtaining Trade Mark registration for Bell Metal Industry of Sarthebari and Sital Pati industry of Goalpara and Barak Valley. In addition, My Government now proposes financial assistance of Rs.5000/- each for 1000 persons in each LAC for Artisans and Petty Traders dependant on traditional industries.

12. STUDENTS AND EDUCATION

12.1. My Government has been always allocating major chunk of funds for education at all levels from Primary to higher and technical education and even Universities. We wanted to make education accessible in remote parts of the State and therefore provincialised the services of 20,874 working teachers of 6,802 venture L.P. and recognized U.P. schools in 2013-14 alone. Six rounds of Teachers Eligibility Tests (TET) were conducted so far where 88,571 candidates have successfully qualified. As many as 52,748 Elementary Teachers have been appointed from time to time under SSA during the last three years.

12.2. During 2014-15, as many as 8,913 regular vacant posts of Asstt. Teachers of LP Schools are being filled up from the TET qualified teachers; establishment of 21 new Lower Primary Schools will be completed under SSA, and construction of 6,488 separate girls' toilets will be completed within March, 2015.

12.3. As many as 1,554 Educational Institutions were provincialised along with the services of 16,109 employees under Secondary Education. Financial assistance/incentive was provided to 958 Venture Educational Institutions during 2013-14 and similar assistance to 867 more institutions is under process.

12.4. Fourteen model schools have started functioning from 1st January, 2015.

12.5. A total of 12 rank holders of HSLC, High Madrassa and HSSLC examination visited NASA, USA during 2014 under the Scheme "Late Debakumar Borah Memorial NASA Tour 2014".

12.6. A new scheme 'Moulana Azad Taleem-e-Balighan' is being introduced in eight districts for promoting literacy, basic and vocational education among adults of minority communities.

12.7. In Higher Education sector, during 2014-15, services of 57 venture colleges have been provincialised creating 1,130 new posts of different categories. Infrastructure development grants are being provided to the six State Universities and 102 rural area colleges and 45 provincialised colleges. Establishment of 12 new Government Model Degree Colleges has been taken up. The Assam State Higher Education Council under Rastriya Uchcharat Siksha Abhiyan has been formally constituted.

12.8. In Technical Education sector, to meet the growing aspiration of new generation, three new engineering

colleges are being established at Golaghat, Karimganj and Dhemaji. During current financial year, infrastructure of these colleges shall be developed.

12.9. Three more engineering colleges are proposed to be established at Nalbari, Nagaon and Udalguri.

12.10. The newly upgraded Jorhat Science College is being developed into Jorhat Institute of Science & Technology. Upgradation of the infrastructure of the existing nine polytechnics has also been taken up.

12.11. New polytechnics in 21 districts are being established and works are in progress.

12.12. The academic session of the Women University at Jorhat has started in the temporary campus in Assam Agricultural University.

12.13. In order to upgrade and standardize the technical education in the State to national/international level, the Government shall also pursue collaboration with other national and international universities from time to time.

Further to above, now I also propose that:

12.14. For encouraging students to go for higher education, my Government proposes to minimize the burden of the bank loan interest of the students. 50% of the interest will be borne by the State Government.

12.15. My Government will also propose to provide Solar Lamps for 2 lakh students.

12.16. For facilitating availability of required guidance and support to Civil Service/other central Govt. service aspirants, My Government proposes to set up Coaching Institutes in the State.

12.17. I propose to initiate free healthcare scheme for BPL students below 18 years.

12.18. I propose to give financial assistance to all Schools and educational establishments which are more than 50 years old as these buildings need complete reconstruction.

12.19. All Engineering Colleges will be provided Rs 2 crore each for upgradation of infrastructure.

12.20. An integrated hostel campus for students will be created at Guwahati with various facilities for studies, recreational facilities and will have transportation facilities for students to commute to different institutions.

12.21. Health of school children will continue to be the priority of my Government. For this, I propose to introduce Health cards for school children.

12.22. My Government believes that rural education through Rural Libraries is very important. Therefore, the existing rural libraries would be provided with annual funds towards procurement of important books and periodicals from this year onwards.

12.23. I propose to start Vivekananda Youth Development Centre to ensure overall and holistic development of the youth to help them build up value systems and work for the welfare of the society.

12.24. I also propose to establish an Institution for Oriental Studies to help conserve and study the languages of the society and build bridges with the rest of the South East Asian countries.

13. EMPLOYMENT, YOUTH WELFARE AND SPORTS

13.1. We are all aware that the Government sector employment is the major source of employment in Assam unlike developed States. Therefore, My Government has so far approved to fill up 2,11,108 regular posts in Government Sector besides providing contractual engagement to another 2 lakh youths.. I propose to fill up 65,000 posts in the current financial year. In this regard, the stipulation of 13th Finance Commission to keep the salary expenditure within 35% of Revenue Expenditure is impractical for Assam where the private sector employment avenues are very less. Therefore, my Government had very strongly taken up with the 14th Finance Commission during the last year to appreciate the limited resource base of the State and the very limited private employment avenues and this ceiling needs to be relaxed for the State.

13.2. My Government believes in the strength and spirit of the youth of the State. The new generation is the

source of inspiration to my Government and would eager to work with them. My Government will make all efforts for employment generation for more than 7 lakh young people in near future.

13.3. I propose to fill all vacant posts of State Police within this year including 6748 posts of AB constables, 340 UB Sub Inspectors and 345 APRO constables. This will strengthen law enforcement in the State.

13.4. All Employment Exchanges will be converted to Career Centres. This will be taken up as pilot project in one/two Employment Exchanges in the State during the year 2015-16.

13.5. A scheme for Digital Literacy for youth of socially and economically Weaker Sections shall be implemented during 2015-16. This scheme shall target 30,000 educated unemployed youth of the SC/ST/ OBC/ MOBC/ Minority Communities/Tea tribes and all BPL category of the General Caste including women in rural areas.

13.6. I also propose to set up a BPO cum Training Hub on PPP mode to bring BPO business and create employment opportunities in rural areas.

13.7. I also propose to take focused approach for Youth Welfare through formation of a dedicated Youth Development Authority.

13.8. I shall propose to converge all efforts of skill development measures in the State through a single umbrella organization to be called Skill Development Mission.

13.9. During the recent past, my Government could create world class sports infrastructure and organize international sports event which boosted the sporting environment in the State. Further, in order to nurture upcoming sports talent in the State, I propose to provide financial assistance to sports clubs/organizations in each LAC.

13.10. My Government has promoted mountaineering and adventure sports for which the initial works for establishment of Centre of Excellence for Mountaineering and Adventure Sports in Guwahati has started.

13.11. I propose to give Sports Talent Search Scholarship to players. I also propose to revitalise the Bordoloi Trophy.

13.12. For promoting sports at the grass-root level, fund has been allocated for Chief Minister's Football Cup 2015.

13.13. Construction of one Indoor Stadium and one Outdoor Playfield will be taken up in the State within each Block Headquarter in a phased manner under Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan.

13.14. It gives me pleasure to announce that a Wrestling Academy at Rajiv Gandhi Indoor Stadium, Amingaon is going to be made functional shortly.

13.15. My Government will support Assam Mountaineering Association in undertaking "Asom Mt. Everest Expedition, 2015".

14. WELFARE OF ETHNIC GROUPS AND SCHEDULED CASTES:

14.1. My Government proposes to undertake a new scheme for overall improvement of the standard of living and of the social indicators of various communities and ethnic groups.

14.2. My Government has always reached out to all weaker sections and ethnic groups of the State by empowering them through Development Councils. So far, 19 Councils have been created and those include, Bishnu Priya-Manipuri Development Council, Maimal Development Council, Moran Development Council, Mattak Development Council, Maria Development Council, Gorkha Development Council, Adivasi Development Council, Koch-Rajbongshi Development Council, Chutia Development Council, Nath-Yogi Development Council, Tai-Ahom Development Council, Mech-Kachari Development Council, Manipuri Development Council, Sadharan Jati Parishad (Development Council), Singpho (Man Tai, etc) Development Council, Tea and Ex-Tea Garden Tribe Development Council, Barak Valley Hills Tribes Development Council, Sarania Kachari Dev Council, Amri Karbi Development Councils .

14.3. I also propose to form six more Development Councils for Garo, Kumar, Madahi, Sut, Hajong and Chaodang communities and provide adequate funds for their development through these councils. Besides, I believe that every section of this multi-ethnic and multi-lingual State needs to be involved in the process of development and therefore, developmental councils will be established for Bengali-speaking and Hindi-Speaking people also.

14.4. My Government has decided to enhance fund allotment to Autonomous and Development Councils ensuring that such funds are utilized transparently for the benefit of the targeted beneficiaries.

14.5. A Scheduled Caste Development Council will be set up to ensure all round development of the scheduled castes in a focussed manner

15. HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE

15.1. My Government has made considerable progress in health care delivery in spite of shortage of health care professionals in the state. Though a good distance is yet to be covered, we have been able to lower 14 points in Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) in the state. Similarly, the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) reduced by 180 points. As regards medical education and infrastructure, we have made significant progress. I am happy to inform the August House that the 6th Medical College & Hospital of Assam namely Tezpur Medical College & Hospital, Tezpur has started functioning. Admission for the session 2014 with 100 students has also been completed. For the three new Medical Colleges at Nagaon, North Lakimpur and Dhubri, Detailed Project Reports have been submitted to Govt. of India for consideration. MoUs for the new Medical Colleges at Dhubri, Nagaon, North Lakhimpur and Diphu have been signed with Govt. of India.

15.2. I also propose to establish 50 bedded cancer wings in all the Medical Colleges.

15.3. My Government proposes to establish a Dental College, B. Sc Nursing College, Institute of Paramedical Science at Barpeta and Institute of Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Centre at Jorhat.

15.4. I am proud to announce that GMCH, Guwahati and AMCH, Dibrugarh have now state of the art model Blood Banks with Blood Component Separation Units (BCSUs). State Reference Laboratory (SRL) at AMCH Dibrugarh and SMCH Silchar has achieved the NABL accreditation during the year 2014-15.

15.5. Further, a scheme for free healthcare for BPL students below 18 years of age is proposed to be initiated.

15.6. I propose to start an innovative and outreach preventive health check-up for Cancer through mobile laboratory in rural areas. Such check-up would cover whole range of diagnostic tests including blood tests, X-ray etc.

15.7. Earlier, through funds received from Government of India, the State Government distributed baby-kit as a gift to the newly born babies in hospitals to encourage institutional delivery. Now, the Centre has discontinued this programme. But, my Government would like to allocate funds from the State resources and continue the Mamata programme, and show our love and affection to the new generation.

15.8. Steps will be taken for strengthening of existing GNM and ANM educational and training institutes so that they can be made to function at full capacity in a phased manner in order to reduce the shortage of nurses as well as improve their quality of education. A Directorate of Nursing will also be created.

15.9. My Government proposes to strengthen the para-medical institutions.

15.10. I also propose to gear up the functioning of the Food Safety Authority by up-gradation of laboratory and regulatory infrastructure.

15.11. My Government will initiate steps to standardize and popularize the indigenous medicines of Assam in the current year with systematic approach as part of alternate medicine.

15.12. We will start alternate medicine efforts in a big way this year onwards and under the National Ayush Mission, we are poised to frame the Annual Action Plan and the mission is likely to be operationalized in this financial year. Drug Licensing Mechanism under Directorate of Ayush is also being strengthened.

15.13. My Government will take steps at the earliest for registration and regulation of all clinical establishments with a view to prescribing the minimum standards of facilities and services provided by them.

16. RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION

16.1. My Government has laid stress on safe drinking water. Priority will be given to fluoride and arsenic affected areas in implementation of water supply schemes. So far, 9073 Piped Water Supply Schemes and 3,27,237 spot sources have been completed. Further, we are working to cover 6334 numbers of partially covered habitations and 3604 water quality affected habitations.

16.2. With the aspiration that all rural households have access to piped water supply in adequate quantities throughout the year, house connections are being provided from a number of existing as well as new water supply schemes.

16.3. Safe drinking water facilities are provided to 2,147 numbers of Arsenic affected habitations of the state, which include 2,509 numbers of spot sources, 294 numbers of Piped water supply schemes with a project cost of Rs.345.13 crore. Titabor Mega Piped Water Supply Scheme (Zone I & Zone II) was completed to cover 308 numbers of Arsenic affected habitations with 199 numbers of other habitations serving 2,19,795 persons with a project cost of Rs.98.1858 crore.

16.4. Safe drinking water facilities are provided to 618 numbers of fluoride affected habitations in seven districts of Assam which include 931 numbers of spot sources, 27 numbers of Piped water supply schemes with a project cost of Rs.98.66 crore. We have also undertaken seven large multi-village schemes under World Bank Assisted Projects in select areas of seven districts of the State with a total outlay of Rs.1474 crore.

16.5. Assam has launched MANASA (Mukhya Mantri Nirmal Aru Seuj Abhijan) with a mission to make Assam clean and green. Simultaneously, all the districts are taking up various cleanliness and awareness programmes on sanitation in a massive way. The mission aims to transform all towns and villages to clean towns and villages. In this connection, all individual households will be provided with Individual Household Latrine (IHHL) to eliminate open defecation by the year 2019.

16.6. A massive plantation drive across the State will be taken under MANASA.

16.7. It also aims to create the habit of using the toilets by all rural masses to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi.

16.8. My Government will construct 6,00,000 Individual Household (IHHL) Toilets in 2015-16 for which an amount of Rs. 860 crore has been earmarked. In addition, State Government would provide Rs 500 per household as an incentive money for those who install the toilet under the ongoing Government programme.

16.9. It is proposed to cover 300 G.P.s this financial year by Solid Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) scheme, construction of 270 Community Sanitary Complexes (CSC's) and repair of public toilets in government offices.

16.10. My government has initiated the process of undertaking seven large multi village schemes with a total outlay of Rs. 1474 crore for providing drinking water to rural areas with World Bank Support, in addition to construction of 1100 Piped Water Supply Schemes at an earmarked outlay of Rs. 550 crore for rural areas.

16.11. It is proposed to ensure the availability of sanitation facilities to all the people in the State and to make Assam open Defecation free.

16.12. I also propose to develop 123 numbers of old toilet blocks of 29 bus stations under MANASA).

17. WELFARE OF MINORITIES

17.1. Our Government is committed to take up various welfare measures for removing educational and socio-economic disadvantages of the minority communities. We have been implementing various programmes under Multi-Sectoral Development Programme (MSDP) in 118 Development Blocks and 1 Municipal town in 15 Minority Concentrated Districts (MCDs). However, we will continue with our efforts further improve their social indicators.

17.2. As my Government has given priority in employment generation schemes among the minorities, 48 numbers GNM trainees and 90 numbers ANM trainees are pursuing 36 months and 24 months training respectively. Besides 121 beneficiaries both boys and girls from minority communities are undergoing 12 months Airlines Hospitality and Management training. Besides, large number of small and marginal farmers have been assisted with distribution of hand sprayers, tractors, pump-sets to improve quality production and better farming. Small entrepreneurs were given rickshaws and bi-cycles with containers for sale of fish to augment their daily

income.

17.3. I propose to set up Assam Minority Development Council with provision of additional funds for effective implementation of the schemes for development of minorities. Funds would be allocated in the critical areas like health, drinking water, education, nutrition, skill development and income generation activities.

18. EX-TEA AND TEA TRIBES WELFARE

18.1. We have all along been committed for the welfare of ex-tea and tea tribes community. During the last four years, My Government has been extending assistance for education, skill development and employment of tea tribes in the State. So far, 53,529 beneficiaries have been provided with grants (both cash & kind) under Family Oriented Income Generating Scheme and 3,85,554 students have been awarded Pre-Matric & Post-Matric Scholarship. Financial grants were given to 600 educational institutions and to 5684 students prosecuting higher studies including studies in foreign country.

18.2. Further, during this period, 3,82,000 number of individual electric meters have been provided for installation in the Tea Workers quarters and financial subsidy awarded to 700 youths for purchase of Taxi-cab against bank loan for self employment.

18.3. In the current year, I propose to provide Residential schools and free education including hostel facility to needy and meritorious Tea Community students. I would like provide Special Programme for Education and Skill Development for the Tea Community. My Government will take up a Special Programme for Development of Adivasi people in Assam besides continuing the current programmes for ANM/GNM/B.Sc. Nursing, Para-Medical, Hair Dressing, Beautician etc. for women empowerment and family Oriented Income Generation Programmes.

18.4. Steps have been initiated for augmentation of welfare schemes as well as for wage revision for plantation workers under the provision of the Plantation Labour Act

19. EMPLOYEES

19.1. My Government will soon constitute the State Pay commission for the benefit of State Government employees.

19.2. In order to encourage competitiveness and enhance the efficiency of the Public Sector Undertakings, it is proposed to initiate Performance-Based Incentives to the employees of profit making PSUs.

19.3. A new scheme for health insurance coverage of existing and retired State Government employees for comprehensive healthcare facilities will be introduced soon.

19.4. Provision will be made for women employees having minor children to be granted Child Care Leave for a maximum period of two years during their entire service for taking care of upto two children.

20. FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES & CONSUMER AFFAIRS

20.1. We have been giving priority for food security and My Government will continue the earlier scheme introduced for distribution of subsidized foodgrains under TPDS, AAY and Mukhya Mantrir Anna Surakhya Yojana

20.2. In order to streamline the Public Distribution System, my Government has created the Assam Food and Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd. Creation of database of PDS/ TPDS beneficiaries and computerization of complete supply chain is going on in all the Districts/Sub-divisions of the State.

20.3. I propose to make adequate budgetary provision for implementation of National Food Security Act 2013. Though my Government has been trying to begin the programme early, the same has got delayed due to insistence of the Central Government to digitize the Cards. We shall take up with the Centre for their help in extending the Food Security Programme to Tea Gardens. We have taken up with Government of India to continue allocation under APL category till NFSA is fully implemented, the supply of APL rice to tea workers as ordered by Hon'ble Gauhati High Court.

20.4. Under the Randhanjyoti Scheme so far, total no of 1.79 lakh families have already been benefited and I propose to continue the same this year also.

21. WATER RESOURCES:

21.1. I have already highlighted that no State in India is comparable to Assam when it comes to problem of flood and erosion. We therefore have proposed to set up Brahmaputra and Barak Valley Authority. We have also proposed reclamation of Brahmaputra and other rivers through digging of river bed. We desire that the Central Government would also help us to a great extent.

21.2. I am happy to announce that out of 100 flood management schemes taken up under Flood Management Programme in XIth Plan, 92 schemes are physically completed. Another 41 Flood Management Programme schemes costing Rs. 1387 Crores have been approved by the Government of India under XIIth Plan and works of which are in progress.

21.3. NABARD has also sanctioned 11 schemes under RIDF-XX and they are expected to be completed during 2015-16.

21.4. Under Chief Minister's Special Package, 10 schemes have been proposed in Barak Valley under Phase-II, 4 schemes for Dhakuakhana and one scheme for Dhemaji.

21.5. The Government has taken up works of 11 nos of State Specific Schemes at a cost of Rs. 61 Crores for improvement of drainage of Guwahati city.

In addition, I also propose:

21.6. Setting up The State Water Mission for proper management of water resources of the State..

21.7. Setting a State Level Water Management Authority to mitigate flood and erosion problem in a comprehensive manner.

21.8. To enable sustainable management of the State's environment it is proposed to set up the State Environment Management Authority.

22. MINES AND MINERALS

22.1. My Government is poised to undertake scientific exploration of the mines and minerals comprehensively and in a sustainable manner. During the current year, we would initiate detailed investigation of coal in Karbi Anglong District; geochemical mapping and specialized thematic mapping in Kamrup District; hydro-geological investigation of groundwater; and district-wise assessment of groundwater quality with GIS technology.

23. IRRIGATION:

23.1. I have been laying emphasis on irrigation from the very beginning. This has yielded results as the area under irrigation potential increased to 7 Lakh hectare.

23.2. In Major/Medium Irrigation sector, work of ongoing Dhansiri Major Irrigation Project and Borolia Medium Irrigation Project are proposed to be taken up to achieve 30,911 hectare irrigated area.

23.3. Preliminary investigation works of new projects (Puthimari Major Irrigation Project, Burisuti Medium Irrigation Project, Buroi Medium Irrigation Project & Dikhow Medium Irrigation Project) are proposed to be taken up along with preparation of Detailed Project Report.

23.4. In Minor Irrigation Sector, work of 246 numbers of Minor Irrigation Schemes are proposed to achieve 1,09,943 hectare irrigation potential under AIBP, SCSP, TSP, NABARD, CM's Special Package for Dhemaji District, NLCPR and NEC's assistance.

23.5. Command Area Development and Water Management Programme of Bordikorai Irrigation Project, Pahunara Irrigation Project, Dhansiri Irrigation Project, Maloibari LIS (Minor) along with new schemes are

proposed to cover 19,335 hectare of Command Area.

23.6. I also propose Mukhya Mantri Minor Irrigation Achoni to promote minor irrigation for overall development of agriculture in a comprehensive and holistic manner.

24. ENVIRONMENT & FOREST

24.1. My Government will implement an exclusive and comprehensive scheme to reduce man-elephant conflict and set up a State Environment Management Authority.

24.2. We started Rhino Vision 2020. As part of that, a total of 18 Rhinos were translocated to Manas National Park from Pabitora Wildlife Sanctuary and Kaziranga National Park. We shall take all measures to ensure the complete protection of Rhino population in the State.

24.3. We are very much concerned with the reports of poaching of rhinos and other wild animals. With the help of Government of India, my Government has been taking serious efforts to control the menace within a time-bound and sustained manner.

24.4. The raising of the 2nd Assam Forest Protection Force Battalion with Head Quarter at Seconee at Nagaon is another milestone towards better forest protection.

24.5. My Government will put emphasis on existing clean and green mission. We also propose to seek experts' help for resolution of man-animal conflict.

24.6. In order to combat climate change, we need to emphasize on forestry and technology. For this, a new scheme will be taken up.

25. CITIZEN SERVICES DELIVERY

25.1. Rajjor Podulit Rajjor Sarkar (RPRS) has been reintroduced in 2014-15 so as to bring the Government closer to the people.

25.2. I propose for implementation of an Integrated District Administration Project in every District to accommodate all district Head Offices in a single campus.

25.3. Further, process has been initiated for establishment of Mini-Secretariats in each Divisional office to facilitate easier access to Government services at the divisional level for the people in districts under a particular division.

25.4. A post of Deputy Development Commissioners in each district will also be created for effective ground level supervision of developmental activities.

25.5. Public Facilitation Centres will be set up at each Government office with proper facilities for the public like waiting area, drinking water etc.

25.6. A Cabinet Sub-Committee has been constituted to examine the matter of creation of new Sub-Divisions in the State for ensuring all-round development of all areas. We shall take it to logical conclusion in the current financial year.

25.7. My Government has decided to improve various public facilities, including public toilets in each DC and SDO (Civil) Office premises.

25.8. My Government will enable quick delivery of services and check corruption with e- District Project in all the districts. For this, my Government will accord top most priority. Under the Assam e-District Project, citizens will be able to access a number of Government services from Circle Offices, Sub divisional Offices etc., shortly.

25.9. Right to Public Service Act, 2012 will be implemented vigorously.

25.10. The Secretariat Less Paper Office project is ready for launch and will make the workflow in Assam Secretariat transparent and effective.

25.11. Improvement of the existing Circuit Houses and construction of the Circuit Houses in all Districts headquarters/Sub-division will be undertaken.

25.12. I am happy to announce that steps are being taken to establish Assam House/ Bhawan at Hyderabad, Telangana to provide facilities for people of Assam visiting the State.

26. LAND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

26.1. While opposing the Ordinance to amend the Land Acquisition Act, I would like to reiterate that we need to balance the needs of farmers and industry as the latter cannot develop at the cost of farmers. I propose to draft a Revenue and Land policy to protect the interest of the farmers and at the same time extend all necessary assistance to the growth of industry in the State.

26.2. My Government will also come up with a policy to regulate conversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purpose in order to control haphazard urbanization.

26.3. I also propose to create Assam Land and Revenue Service for smooth maintenance of land records and other revenue matters.

27. AGRICULTURE

27.1. Against the negative growth rate of agriculture in the State during 2000-01, my Government has been able to achieve a growth rate of 4.5% during 2013-14. During last fourteen years from 2000-01, My Government has achieved 40% increase in the contribution of agriculture to GDP. The State has achieved all time high production of 51.93 lakh MT during 2013-14 with surplus by 6.00 lakh MT. In order to build on these successes, we will strive with renewed vigour to support my farmer friends.

27.2. During the year 2015-16, it has been proposed to develop rainfed and waste land along with reclamation of unproductive cultivable land in order to improve cultivable agricultural lands.

In this connection, I further propose as follows:

27.3. My Government will ensure the use of mechanization and technology to increase agriculture productivity in the State.

27.4. I also propose and allocate adequate funds for better seeds, fertilizer, soil health card and a specific code to limit the use of pesticides.

27.5. I am also setting aside funds to introduce Special schemes for small and marginal farmers including setting up of farmers cooperative societies and self-help groups in order to ensure that farmers receive the proper value for their products.

27.6. A special programme for assistance to Small & Marginal Farmers to provide Cash Assistance @ Rs. 5000/- each covering 1000 farmers per LAC and altogether 1,26,000 beneficiaries will be covered with the provision of Rs. 63 Crores during 2015-16.

27.7. My Govt. will take up initiatives to increase infrastructure facility for improvement of Agriculture in the State.

27.8. I also propose to provide 1890 Tractors & 5000 Power Tillers at 75% subsidy along with other tools & implements for increasing farm productivity.

27.9. My Government will set up 219 Agriculture Service Centres covering all Block Head Quarters for easy access to information pertaining to new technology and departmental programmes.

27.10. I also propose to introduce Best Farmers Award in the name of Late Moinul Haque Choudhury from this year onwards.

27.11. We will emphasise on climate smart agriculture with the aim of increasing productivity, farm income, enhancing resilience of livelihood/eco system and reducing/removing Green House emissions.

27.12. I also propose to start Mission Double Cropping named "Mukhya Mantrir Momai Tamuly Barbaruah Achani" to boost farm income generation of the community.

27.13. For the first time, certified seed production programme of Potato will be taken up in a massive way to meet the demand of certified seeds in the State. For this purpose, I would like to set aside an amount of Rs.30 crore to cover 2000 hectare area.

27.14. My Government also proposes to establish 2 units of cold storages of 5000 MT capacity each for potatoes and onion farming at a cost of Rs. 5 crores.

27.15. To generate bulk quantity of genuine disease free planting materials, I propose to set up a tissue culture laboratory in public sector in this budget.

27.16. In order to reduce post harvest loss, I also propose to set up two fruit and vegetable processing units are proposed to be established with Govt. subsidy.

27.17. To encourage production of high value and off season cultivation of various vegetables under controlled conditions, my Government will provide subsidy to farmers to erect Steel structured Poly Green Houses at farmers' fields.

27.18. Special thrust on floriculture sector will be continued to transform it into a commercial sector. A special scheme on floriculture will also be implemented to boost-up this sector.

27.19. In order to increase both production and productivity of horticultural crops, I propose to allocate Rs 10 crores, as a first phase, for installation of drip and sprinkler irrigation system at farmer's fields.

27.20. I also propose to set up a Centre of excellence of Potato and vegetables will be set up at Nagaon district. For this purpose, I have allocated Rs.10 crores and another for Oranges at Boko. My Government will set up a Centre of Excellence at Khetri Government Farm for Orchid and off-season vegetables.

27.21. I also propose to continue the interest subvention scheme on crop loans during 2015-16.

27.22. Efforts would be made to simplify the process of issue of Kisan Credit Cards and Crop Insurance coverage to cover more farmers.

28. LIVESTOCK AND DAIRY DEVELOPMENT

28.1. During the last 14 years, production of milk, egg and meat production increased many fold due to concerted efforts of my Government As a result milk production in the State has increased by 104 million litres from 750 million litres in 2001-02 to 854 million litres in 2013-14. We are giving priority to the cattle up gradation programme.

28.2. My Government propose to organize 100 more Dairy Cooperative Societies in 10 districts of Assam.

28.3. For enhancement of milk production, 5 Commercial Dairy Farms with 80 high yielding milch cattle with cold chain facility will be established through bank finance at a total cost of Rs.160 Lakh.

29. FISHERIES

29.1. My Government recognises that the Fishery sector is one of the most promising sectors in the State that can provides livelihood and employment opportunities to a sizeable section of society especially in rural areas. During the last few years this sector has been growing at an average rate of over 4% annually in terms of fish production. In the year 2013-14 total fish production in the State reached 267 thousand tons. Several institutional reforms have been brought in the sector like development of 2,482 hectare water area for scientific fish culture, starting of a fresh water prawn hatchery at Meen Bhawan complex for popularizing prawn farming. Fish markets are under construction at Silchar, Jorhat, Lakhimpur, Nalbari, Nagaon, Morigaon and Karimganj. In addition, I propose in the current year, the following:

29.2. Fish production in the State will be further enhanced through construction of new ponds covering 160 hectares, renovation of existing tanks for modern fish culture covering 100 hectares.

29.3. 25 hectares of new pond construction through women SHGs is also proposed.

29.4. Reclamation of 240 hectares of potential derelict and low lying areas is proposed for fish production.

29.5. Renovation of existing domestic/community ponds for fish culture through individual/ community/SHGs for harvest in lean period.

29.6. Reclamation of derelict water bodies for development of 240 ha of potential derelict/low-lying area for fish production.

29.7. Construction of modern hygienic fish markets for which an amount of Rs. 10 crore is earmarked during the year 2015-16 for construction of such markets.

29.8. Under the NABARD assisted Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF), it is proposed to develop infrastructures such as rural fish hat, fish landing centre, improvement of departmental farms etc.

30. PANCHAYAT & RURAL DEVELOPMENT

30.1. Employment generation in rural areas is one critical area that my Government has been focussing. Over 158 lakh man-days have been generated in the current year. More than 41 lakh numbers of rural households have been provided job cards. Assam has pioneered rollout of mobile based software for capturing demand, recording attendance, taking photograph, muster roll etc. and updating this information on the national server of MGNREGA through mobile network.

30.2. Under IAY programme, more than 77,094 numbers of incomplete IAY houses of the previous years have been completed. Similarly, more than 1,61,476 houses have been sanctioned and construction has already started.

30.3. Under CM's Special Package, 16,244 beneficiaries belonging to the landless poor families have been provided with a bicycle while 19,038 numbers of beneficiaries belonging to the erosion affected BPL families have been provided with 2 bundles of GCI Sheets and cash @ Rs.5000.00 to each family during 2013-14.

30.4. To ensure all round development in rural areas, we implemented a series of programmes such as Bhupen Hazarika Mukuli Manch, Rudrasingha Pukhuri Prakalpa, Indira Gandhi Pokipath, Rajeev Gandhi Krira Prakalpa, and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Seuj Prakalpa.

30.5. For smooth implementation of the Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (RGPSA), 84 new buildings of the Gaon Panchayats have been approved. Similarly for IT enablement of the Panchayats, 983 numbers of computers have been provided to Gaon Panchayats. For technical support at GP level, 2111 numbers of Accountant-Cum-Computer Operators have been engaged across the state during the current year. Further, 2202 post of Junior Engineer and equal numbers of post of Panchayat Sahayak and 247 Panchayat Development Officers have been approved by Govt. and process for their engagement has already been started.

30.6. Under National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), more than 7 lakh persons have been provided pension benefit. Moreover, 1,08,252 widows and 39,623 disabled persons have also been given the pension. Similarly, about 1,794 BPL families have been provided with one time financial assistance @ Rs.20,000/- due to death of the primary bread earner of such families during the current year.

30.7. More than Rs. 69.84 crores have been utilized and 2045 numbers of schemes have been completed under District Development Plan. Similarly, about Rs.71.00 crores have been utilised and more than 1638 numbers of schemes have been completed under Backward Region Grant Fund during the financial year. Socio-Economic & Caste Census have been completed in the State.

30.8. During 2014–2015, the State Institute of Rural Development, Assam has undertaken social audit in all the

2201 Gram Panchayats and VDC/VCD areas of autonomous districts for all the rural development programmes implemented during 2013 – 2014 & 2014 – 2015 by involving 10,686 social auditors. The institute proposes to impart training to 140000 persons under the various training programmes for elected representatives of PRIs, functionaries, farmers, youth and other stakeholders during 2015 – 2016.

30.9. Presently, women SHGs from 4 districts viz. Dhemaji, Hailakandi, Jorhat and Nagaon are availing bank loan at the interest rate of 4% and women SHGs from remaining 23 districts are availing bank loan at an interest rate of 7% on prompt repayment.

30.10. To equalize the rate of interest on bank loan across the State, Govt. of Assam has taken initiative for interest subvention to eligible SHGs, so that women SHGs from remaining 23 districts can also avail bank loan at an interest rate of 4% .

30.11. I propose to start an innovative programme in Rural Development, called, Mahatma Gandhi Rural Skill Development Programme.

31. COOPERATION

31.1. In a bid towards the re-organization of the Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies in the State; the Department has taken steps for creating another 1777 numbers of Gaon Panchayat Level Multipurpose Samabai Samities (GPSS)/Large Area Multipurpose Cooperative Societies (LAMPS) co-terminus with each existing Gaon Panchayat in the State in addition to the already existing 709 numbers of GPSS and 64 numbers of LAMPS.

31.2. It is proposed to facilitate the construction of 300 MT capacity Godowns by the 1474 newly created GPSS under the Chief Minister's Special Scheme in phases. In the first phase it is proposed to identify those new G.P.S.S who possess their own land and provide them with financial assistance to initiate their infrastructure development.

31.3. Required monetary grant would be provided to 2486 numbers of Women Cooperatives.

31.4. The infrastructure development of the Assam Rajiv Gandhi University of Cooperative Management (ARGUCOM) has been identified as an important programme under the Chief Minister's Special Scheme for the year 2015-16.

32. PUBLIC WORKS

32.1. Hon'ble Members are aware that my Government has been placing great priority on road network development. An efficient and comprehensive road network is the basis of all efforts to remove poverty and accelerate development and we have been undertaking a number of projects. Priority has been accorded to construction of all weather roads in rural and urban areas and also construction of RCC bridges by replacing old timber bridges.

32.2. Since 2001, more than 23,000 km of all weather roads and about 3800 numbers of RCC bridges have been constructed. Moreover, construction of about 5000 km all weather road including construction of 1250 numbers of RCC bridges are in progress and expected to be completed in next couple of years.

32.3. Further, three stretches of roads namely, Kalitakuchi-Barpeta, Bilasipara-Fikragram and Udalguri Tamulpur have also been taken up for improvement ,

32.4. Over and above, special initiative has also been taken up as CM's Special Packages for improvement of the road network in the Barak Valley, Dhemaji District and Dhakuakhana Sub-Division. In the meantime, in the Barak Valley and Dhemaji District. 427 Km and 40 Km road respectively have been sanctioned and the works are in progress. Special package for improvement of the inter-state border roads have also been taken up. Moreover one major project for construction of RCC Bridge over river Barak at Sadarghat near Silchar Town has already been sanctioned.

32.5. Under National High way sector , notable achievement during recent years are strengthening and widening of 403 km of NH, rehabilitation of 72 numbers of RCC bridges on NH and repair/renewal of 500 km of NHs and construction of flyover at LGB International Airport junction point at NH-37, Seven ongoing major road projects and works of 9 numbers of bypasses. are in progress for ensuring free flow of traffic on National Highways. Besides, 8 road projects have been completed under Special Accelerated Road Development Programme-North East (SARDP-NE) and works under one project is in progress.

In addition to that, in the current year:

32.6. I propose to construct 500 Km all weather roads (Paki Path) in all LACs including Char and Border areas in the year 2015-16.

32.7. My Government will initiate steps to construct 6-lane bridge over the Brahmaputra between Narengi and Kuruwa with road link up to Dumnichowki on NH-52 and will complete the feasibility study soon. The project will reduce traffic congestion in the city and distance to North Assam towns from Guwahati will be reduced by about 30 km.

32.8. We will expedite the five major projects, viz., Improvement of Jorhat Morioni Mokochang Road, Morigaon-Nagaon-Naltoli Road, Dudhnoi-Goalpara-Pancharatna Road, Barpeta–Abhayapuri- Bongaigaon Road, and construction of RCC Bridges over river Khabalu and Lohit on North Lakhimpur Kamalabari Road under the World Bank funded Assam State Roads Project.

32.9. I am happy to announce that the major infrastructure projects completed during last three years include Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed Medical College at Barpeta, new High Court Annexe building, 200 bedded Cancer Hospital at GMCH & Super speciality Hospital at GMCH, Tezpur Medical College, Women University at Garmur (Jorhat), Assam Bhawan at Shillong and Sanskrit University at Nalbari.

32.10. My Government will ensure early completion of the main building of the Assembly, Assam Bhawan at Bangalore, Higher Judicial Court building at Dibrugarh, Jorhat and Barpeta and the 3 Planetaria at Kokrajhar, Lakhimpur and Nalbari.

33. POWER

33.1. My Government will take all steps to increase the generation and supply of uninterrupted power supply to the people of Assam.

33.2. I am happy to announce that with the implementation of RGGVY 12th plan project, almost all the villages will be electrified. Projects amounting to Rs. 1000 crores has already been sanctioned for strengthening Transmission and Distribution network in the State.

33.3. Detailed Project Report of 120MW Lower Kopili Hydro Electric project for an estimated cost of Rs.1490 crores has been submitted to the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) for Techno Economic Clearance (TEC). Govt. of Assam has already agreed to bear the cost of equity portion amounting to Rs.450 crores. ADB has expressed willingness to extend financial loan to the tune of 200 million USD for the project.

33.4. Present handling capacity of AEGCL grid is around 1617 MW and the same will be increased to 1950 MW after completion of 1072.11 ckm Transmission line and addition of 1516 MVA by 2016.

33.5. There are a number of upcoming projects under APGCL which includes Namrup Replacement Power Project (1x100 MW), Super Critical Margherita Thermal Power Project (660 MW) and Lower Kopili Hydro Electric Project (120 MW).

33.6. Bongaingaon Thermal Power Plant has been the product of the constant persuasion of my Government and it is an advanced stage of completion.

34. INDUSTRY:

34.1. I have always been laying emphasis on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector. My Government has already launched the Angel Fund for providing soft loans at negligible interest rates for first generation micro entrepreneurs. Further, I propose as follows:

34.2. My Government will initiate special incentive package for Small and Medium Industries.

34.3. Emphasis will be given on the development of food processing, medicinal plants, bamboo, rubber etc Industries in the State.

34.4. The Mega Food Park at Tihu, a Bamboo Park at Chaygaon and Plastic Park at Tinsukia will be completed shortly.

34.5. In order to keep the momentum of Growth of Micro & Small sector as well as to encourage the Scheduled

Commercial Banks/State Financial Corporation to finance viable projects, I propose to implement "Credit Linked Special Incentives Package" for Micro and Small enterprises. Under the package, 10%-50% interest subvention will be provided to Micro & Small enterprises on the Term Loan disbursed by the Scheduled Commercial Banks/State Financial Corporation depending on the scale and entitlement. It is expected that the scheme will encourage flow of credit to Micro & Small enterprises and enhance their viability.

34.6. Adequate Industrial Infrastructure is a prerequisite for Industrial Development. My Government will pursue conversion of land available with the Closed PSUs into productive Industrial Infrastructure.

34.7. I propose to establish Industrial Estates in all district headquarters.

34.8. Tea is our heritage. I propose to come up with a Comprehensive Tea Policy in order to protect quality, safety and productivity of tea in Assam.

34.9. Gas Cracker Project is going to see the light of day very soon. I would like to thank all stakeholders who have supported this initiative of the State Government and support of the Central government in this project. We sincerely hope that after commissioning of the Project, State would get a boost in industrialization.

34.10. In order to promote business in gold and gold ornaments, Central Government will be requested to open a Gold Bank at Guwahati so that the consumers can be benefitted.

35. HANDLOOM, TEXTILES AND SERICULTURE

35.1. We are all aware that Assamese culture is closely knitted to sericulture, handloom and textiles. Muga and Eri are our age-old pride and heritage. There is a significant proportion of country's weavers population in Assam. We have about 18 lakh weavers and 3 lakh muga and eri rearers in the State. The development in rural areas is incomplete without developing these sectors and as such it needs concerted, holistic and integrated approach in mission mode.

35.2. Therefore, I propose Assam Silk Outreach Mission titled Seneh Jori. This Mission would be for ten years from 2015-2025 to increase muga production by 10 times and eri by 5 times. This Mission is to produce One Million Kg Muga and Ten Million Kg Eri Silk by 2025. Necessary funds and expertise would be explored from various internal resources and also Externally Aided Agencies including JICA.

36. HOME AND POLITICAL

36.1. My Government's success in maintenance of Law and order was largely because of effective policing by the security personnel. These efforts resulted in record 21 agreements that we signed with 21 outfits for suspension of operations/Memorandum of Settlement.

36.2. I proudly state that for the first time in the North East Region, the Commissionerate for Guwahati City was set up. In addition, to improve the capability and effectiveness of the police force, 5 (five) new Police Districts in remote places like Sadiya, Majuli, Biswanath Chariali, Hojai and South Salmara have also been created.

36.3. Modernisation of Police Force is our topmost priority. We have released Rs. 50 crores in 2014-15 for strengthening police stations and outposts. I propose to provide more funds in the current financial year. I propose to fill all vacant posts of State Police within this year including 6748 posts of AB constables. I also propose to fill up 340 UB Sub Inspectors and 345 APRO constables. Women safety has always been the concern of my Government. Therefore I propose to set up Women Cells in all police stations of the State.

36.4. To boost the morale of the security personnel engaged in fighting the insurgents, the ex-gratia grant to the next of kin of the security personnel including Home Guards, killed in direct encounter has been increased to Rs.20.00 lakhs.

36.5. While continuing the efforts to strengthening the State Police, I propose to increase the wages of Home Guards and also take steps to improve their service conditions.

36.6. In this budget, I propose to increase the pocket money for Village Defence Parties from Rs 500 to Rs. 1500 per month.

36.7. The crime and criminal tracking network system (CCTNS) has been set up in the State to enable more versatile and citizen friendly policing to the public. The system will connect all Police Stations and higher offices of the State soon and already more than 52,000 FIRs have been recorded in the system. The project will be

completed within the next financial year. The CCTV project in Guwahati City will be completed within June, 2015.

36.8. In view of the illegal activities of miscreants and attempts to encroach into Assam territory, 7 new Border Outposts/Forest Protection camps have been sanctioned for the inter-state borders with Nagaland, Meghalaya, and Mizoram. 27 new Border Outposts/Forest protection camps are proposed to be established in the coming year.

36.9. I also propose to set apart 5% of budget of every department for development of border areas.

36.10. Our Government is committed to implement the Assam Accord in right earnest. The works relating to updating of NRC 1951 is going on under the supervision of the Registrar General of India as per schedule. A Call Centre based helpline has become operational where public can call up for their queries about NRC updation. 2500 NRC Sewa Kendras (NSK) will be setup in the districts. The data of NRC 1951 and all available printed pre-1971 Electoral Rolls will be published soon. My Government will take all possible steps to ensure that the works are completed as per the prescribed timeline in a transparent manner.

37. TRANSPORT AND ROAD SAFETY:

37.1. My Government is very much concerned about the spate of road accidents leading to loss of valuable lives and there is a need for comprehensive steps including awareness, training for drivers, road signage etc.

37.2. A Road Safety Authority shall be set up in the State to enable multi disciplinary coordination for prevention of road accidents;

37.3. I propose to start 5 driving training schools in the State in the current financial year.

37.4. Besides that, my Government is keen to give priority for traffic management system and establish Road Accident Trauma Centres in the State.

37.5. There will be comprehensive computerization of the DTO offices in Assam and the sharing of information amongst within the agencies in State and with other States will be facilitated.

38. TOURISM

38.1. Tourism has seen a massive growth during the tenure of my Government as the flow of tourists into the State increased more than four times from 10 lakhs in 2001 to 45.44 lakhs in 2013-14.

38.2. Development of new circuits, including pilgrimage circuits and circuits that allow adventure sports opportunities and upgradation of facilities at existing circuits will be the endeavour of my Government in 2015-16.

38.3. Major initiatives are being planned in 2015-16 to promote and market Assam as a Tourist destination in source areas across the country and the world. For the first time, my Government is engaging a Branding and Communications Agency with the specific objective of promoting and marketing Assam aggressively in a professional manner.

38.4. The Tourism Department will continue to focus on intensive training of various stakeholders in the Tourism sector, including officials and employees of the tourism department, tour operators, hoteliers, home stay operators, drivers, mahouts, tourist guides, adventure sports enthusiasts, chefs etc.

38.5. In order to lay down standards for tour operators, hoteliers etc. and with the objective of preventing harassment of tourists, my Government proposes to regulate the industry by laying out standards for the providers.

38.6. The Tourism Department has initiated work on drafting a policy of incentives for the industry and this will be unveiled during the FY 2015-16.

38.7. I am happy to announce that among the big ticket tourism schemes that are under consideration for execution in the Financial Year 2015-16 is the launching of the Safari Express, a luxury train journey for Tourists from Guwahati to Tinsukia in partnership with the NF Railways and the IRCTC.

38.8. My government is keen to ensure availability of hygienic toilets with all facilities at all tourist

destinations/amenities centres, venues of fairs and festivals and along the Highways. To that end, existing toilets shall be overhauled, e-toilets and bio-digesters shall be set up at identified locations and mobile toilets procured for use at venues of fairs and festivals.

38.9. The Tourism Department has taken up an ambitious scheme for online booking of reservation of rooms at the various lodges and guest houses run by Assam Tourism. This will facilitate booking of rooms by people over the internet.

38.10. My government is committed to encouraging Public Private Partnership (PPP) in the Tourism Sector for development of Star Resorts and Wayside Amenities, River Cruises and Golf and Tea Tourism. The process of obtaining PPP partners has already begun and shall come to fulfilment in 2015-16.

38.11. Tourism circuits shall be developed at various locations in the State to enable people to visit a variety of places comprising heritage; rural and folk lifestyle, local culture, wildlife and natural beauty;

39. ART & CULTURE AND INFORMATION & PUBLIC RELATIONS

39.1. Provision shall be made for preservation and upkeep of various historical and ancient monuments in the state.

39.2. We have already started Tribal Museum in Sonapur and the same is attracting large crowds.

39.3. Modern Art Galleries will be established at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra Society, Panjabari and Pratima Pandey Baruah Cultural Centre at Dhubri/Guwahati. The works of Dr Bhupen Hazarika Samadhi Kshetra will be completed soon.

39.4. In order to promote communal harmony amongst all communities, an award will be instituted in the name of Baskandi Sheikh Ahmed Ali.

39.5. A literary award will be introduced in the name of Syed Abdul Malik

39.6. It is proposed to provide financial incentive for setting up of Mini Cinema Halls in Block Head Quarters. Fund will also be provided for Assam State Film (Finance and Development) Corporation Limited for supporting film production.

39.7. I also propose to extend financial assistance to encourage Assamese cinema from 2015-16 onwards.

39.8. My Government proposes to produce documentaries reflecting the lives and achievements of great women personalities such as Sati Joymati, Sati Radhika, Mula Gabharu, Chandra Prava Saikiani, Bhogeswari Phukanani, Sati Sadhini, Amal Prava Das, Kanaklata, Mamoni Raisom Goswami etc. in order to focus on women empowerment.

39.9. Asom Mahotsav will be organized in the metropolitan cities.

39.10. Funds will be provided to Institute of Research and Documentation of Indigenous Studies (IRDIS) with whom my Government has already entered into a partnership. A MoU has already been signed between IRDIS and three research centers under Stanford University, USA,

39.11. I strongly believe that there is a need to further recognize, encourage and provide direct support to the relentless efforts of some dedicated persons in preserving and spreading of different cultures in Assam. I therefore propose a new scheme, Marg Darshan to provide financial assistance of Rs 10000/- per person at the rate of 150 beneficiaries in all LACs.

39.12. I propose to take comprehensive scheme to promote and support Satriya dance, Bhaona, and other forms of dances and dramas of the State of all ethnic and tribal groups.

39.13. During 2015-16, Information and Public Relations Department is going to introduce a new scheme 'e-books'. Under this scheme different government publications will be converted into 'e-books'. This will be available online and readers can download the 'e-books' which will be readable on computers, tablets and smart phones. This effort will attract the net and gadget-savvy generations to avail the opportunity to read 'e-books' of government publications which will be in English and Assamese.

39.14. Under the Journalists Medical Welfare Scheme, so far 31 numbers of ailing Journalists benefited. This will also continue during 2015-16.

39.15. We would also formulate required rules for contributing to the welfare of the bereaved families of journalists who have died untimely while in service.

39.16. The initial works of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika Photo & Film Archive & Research Centre has been started for construction of the permanent campus at Amingaon.

39.17. I propose to institute an award in the name of Late Kamal Saikia for excellence in the field of journalism.

39.18. Mukhyamantrir Shabdajyoti Achoni has been implemented in 373 numbers of Government & Provincialised Higher Secondary Schools by providing Public Address System Kits since 2013-14. The Scheme will continue with a target to cover 250 number of schools during 2015-16.

40. FREEDOM FIGHTERS

40.1. Financial assistance will be provided monthly to the Asom Rajyik Mukti Jujaru Sanmilon for proper maintenance and functioning of its central office and rest house at Rupnagar, Guwahati.

41. URBAN AND GUWAHATI DEVELOPMENT

41.1. My Government attaches importance to the planned growth of all the towns of the State for the benefit of all citizens. Self Government in all the Municipal Boards and Town Committees has been enabled through peaceful and orderly elections. My Government shall continue to work for their improved functioning and capacity development.

41.2. Schemes and programmes shall be taken up to develop the cities and towns in Assam as SMART Cities with provision of digital connectivity, appropriate infrastructure and sustainable living.

41.3. To enable orderly development, master plans are being prepared for different urban centres. Till now 29 final master plans and nine draft master plans have been prepared. Another 45 draft master plans are under preparation and 15 Final Master Plans are being prepared by using GIS based mapping. In addition, 109 major infrastructure projects are being implemented through urban local bodies and development authorities with total project cost of Rs. 892 crores. Special emphasis is being placed on development of infrastructure for hawkers & vendors, truck terminus, multi-utility building, roads, storm water drainage, commercial complexes, etc. Under Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme 2,720 houses have been constructed for the urban poor in 13 towns.

41.4. The Assam State Housing Board has taken up construction of 978 housing units. The Assam Urban Water Supply & Sewerage Board has taken up 58 urban water supply schemes in 50 towns including a part of Guwahati city under various programmes. The Fourth Assam State Finance Commission (2011-2016) has earmarked 31 towns for taking up by the Board during the financial years up to 2015-2016. All these schemes shall be continued.

41.5. For planned and orderly development of the Guwahati Metropolitan Region, the review and revision of existing master plan has been taken up. The proposals for development of the Guwahati Metropolitan Region encompassing the city of Guwahati and its surrounding areas shall be put forward for public consultation shortly. In order to revitalize the Guwahati riverfront and to rejuvenate the city, development of Brahmaputra riverfront from Nilachal Hill to Governor House has been proposed. The feasibility study regarding rail-based MRTS project for Guwahati city is in progress covering the delineated Guwahati Metropolitan Region.

41.6. My Government has taken up the challenge of tackling the problem of urban flooding in right earnest. Schemes shall be taken up for flood management and drainage during the coming year to mitigate urban flood in Guwahati city and other affected towns in Assam. Existing drainage systems shall be repaired and new drains constructed where necessary. To mitigate flooding of Guwahati city, drains and diversions shall be constructed to divert the storm water to the Brahmaputra through a system of sluice gates and pumps of requisite capacity. The existing drains will be improved and new ones constructed including on the southern side of National Highway Bye-pass. We also propose to take steps for dredging and cleaning of the natural channels and wetlands of Guwahati City. Rs.10 crore has been earmarked for purchase of various machineries for the purpose during 2015-16.

41.7. The construction of Multi-storey Market at Ulubari, Rupnagar and Beltola in Guwahati are in progress. Adabari Bus Stand will be converted as a state of the art, interstate Commercial Hub along with bus stand in PPP

mode.

41.8. Guwahati Municipal Corporation has taken up the solid waste management of the city by engaging NGOs. The Corporation has started providing street lights in all the lanes and bye lanes of the city.

41.9. The coverage of modern and energy efficient street lighting will be expanded;

41.10. It is proposed to establish a State of the Art "City Centre" equipped with offices of GMC, Mayor's Office, Commercial Hub, Town Hall, Convention Centre, Open Air Theatre, Parks, etc at Rupnagar

41.11. I propose to take up a composite scheme to develop the Umananda Temple and Navagraha temple and Ma Chandika Devalaya at Chaygaon as major tourist and pilgrimage centres.

PART B

PART B

8. Though the Budget is essentially a Statement of Account of public finances, it is also a significant opportunity to indicate the direction and the pace of State's economic growth and prosperity. My proposals lay out the roadmap for passing on the benefit of the growth process to the common man: those, whose quality of life needs to be improved.

9. BUDGET ESTIMATES

9.1. I now turn to the Budget Estimates for Budget 2015-16.

9.2. Non-Plan expenditure estimates for the Financial Year are estimated at Rs 39803.45 crore. Plan expenditure is estimated to be Rs.26338.71 crore, Total Expenditure has accordingly been estimated at Rs.66142.16 crore.

10.3. Tax receipts of the State are estimated to be Rs. 12892.39 crore. Non Tax Revenues for the next fiscal are estimated to be Rs. 4325.87 crore.

10.4. With the above estimates, fiscal deficit will be 2.18 per cent of State GDP and there would be Revenue Surplus of Rs 5501.25 crore and is 2.76 per cent of estimated State GDP of 2015-16.

11. TAX PROPOSALS:

Honourable Speaker, Sir,

11.1. I now turn to my tax proposals.

11.2. Increased tax collection is the need of the hour to help the Government to provide physical and social infrastructure and to address the basic issues of poverty, unemployment and inequitable development. In this direction, My Government has been striving during last fourteen years to strike the fine balance between taxation and burden on the common man by widening the tax net through VAT and arresting the leakages rather than rising the taxes and fees unreasonably.

11.3 I have always taken utmost care not to put any burden on common man or consumers. Similarly, in order to create congenial environment for trade, commerce and business, My Government has been ensuring a stable taxation policy and peoples' friendly tax administration.

11.4 These efforts have led to quantum jump in tax collections. If we compare the figures, Government collected Rs 1270 crore in 2001-02 which has increased 6 times to Rs 7719 crore in 2013-14.

11.5 However, over a period of time, there has been inflation and increase in Government expenditure both developmental and overheads. Secondly, during the current year, there has been unprecedented reduction in prices of crude oil, petrol, petroleum products, and bannign of coal trade in Meghalaya, etc pose challenges in increasing the revenue collections. More importantly now as the fund flow from the Centre is not likely to be improved, a rationalised imposition of tax is required without affecting the common man. I have considered the matter carefully all aspects and propose the following:

11.5.1 As I said that I do not intend to impose any burden on common man, I am not proposing any substantial increase in the taxes. But, My Government would create a state of the art IT-enabled taxation system with online tax compliance facilities so as to ensure minimum contact between the tax payers and the tax collecting officials. In this process, we will increase the ease of business. By doing so alone, we would be able to arrest the leakages and we can rise tax collection by 4-5% of the total collections i.e., to the tune of about Rs 350 Crores during the year 2015-16.

11.5.2. My Government shall deal with a very firm hand both black-marketers and Government officials facilitating such elements. Secondly, I would like to come up with an Act very soon so as to confiscate the properties of such officials who have amassed personal wealth disproportionate to their known sources of income. In addition, Government will ask them to upload the photographs of their owned residential houses on the website to act as deterrence for those involved in corrupt activities at the cost of state revenues.

11.5.3. As I said earlier, tea is our heritage. To encourage the tea exports, we earlier gave the benefit of Rs 6 per kg of made tea from Agricultural Income Tax if exported through Inland Container Depot (ICD), Amingaon upto 2014-15. To encourage the export of tea through the ICD, I would propose to extend the benefit to the tea industry for three more years i.e, upto 2017-18.

11.5.4 Secondly, there is a need to increase the sale of tea through the prestigious Guwahati Tea Auction Centre (GTAC) to ensure more competition and increase the levels of tax compliance as well. Accordingly, I propose to increase the VAT on private sale of tea from 1% to 2% while retaining the current rate of 0.5% of VAT on auction sale in GTAC.

11.5.5. Assam Agriculture Income Tax (AAIT) Act stipulates the taxation of several agricultural commodities including tea. This has been hampering the efforts of progressive farmers to produce high value crops like vegetables, horticulture, floriculture, etc. In order to boost agriculture and incentivise these farmers, all agriculture commodities would be exempted from tax under AAIT Act. However, Government would continue the current level of taxation under this Act for tea without proposing any additional burden.

11.5.6. Earlier we had disallowed Input Tax Credit (ITC) in case of inter-State sales of goods made out of locally bought/manufactured goods. This was done to compensate the loss of revenue on account of reduction of CST rate to 2% from 4%. However, it has resulted in trade diversion and the local traders have become less competitive. This matter has been considered carefully and felt that activity of manufacturing and trade in Assam would enhance if the ITC disallowance is withdrawn so as to sell the goods to other states. It would spur more employment, income to the people and revenue generated due to the generation of the trade would not result in any revenue loss to the State. Therefore, I propose to withdraw the disallowance of ITC to such sales from the year 2015-16. This would address the long standing grievance of the industry and trade in Assam.

11.5.7. Earlier, my Government decided to exempt the raw materials sourced from outside of the State but not locally available from Entry Tax. I reiterate that the same facility would continue and take steps to ensure that the necessary orders are issued at the earliest.

11.5.8. I am happy to inform the august House that we have given industry status to the Hotel business and exempted the plant and machinery to be imported from outside from Entry Tax.

11.5.9. Luxury Tax on hotels and restaurants is required to be restructured to improve the ease of business and also increase the tax compliance. Besides, I also intend to give relief to the low budget hotels. Accordingly, I propose to increase the existing slab for exemption of luxury tax on room tariff from Rs 1000 up to Rs 2000/-. However, the next slab would be from Rs 2000/- up to Rs 5000/- with rate of luxury tax of 10% and for the room tariff of more than Rs 5000/- , the luxury tax would be at the rate of 14%.

11.5.10. Smoking is injurious to Health. Therefore, I propose to impose a cess of Rs.1 per pack of cigarettes to raise funds for improving Health Services in Assam.

11.5.11. The current system of taxation on the liquor sold in the bars and restaurants is very complex and difficult to administer and therefore resulting in less compliance. I, therefore, propose to rationalize the tax system by putting a turn-over tax on the liquor consumed at the rate of 6% on the whole without any credit.

11.5.12. There is a need to encourage the local jewellery over the rest and also incentivise the local goldsmiths in Assam. Locally handmade jewellery made out of gold and silver is currently being taxed at 1%. Accordingly, I propose to reduce the VAT of these items to 0.5% from the current level of 1%.

11.5.13. My Government has always been extending various benefits to the women. While not increasing tax on any item being used by the women, I propose the following tax benefits to them:

(i) To encourage women artisans, I propose to exempt embroidery or jari, chumki, beads, etc from payment of VAT.

(ii) I would also propose to exempt the glass bangles from VAT.

(iii) Government had already exempted Mekhala-Chadar, etc from VAT. While continuing the benefit, I propose to exempt "Saree" not exceeding value of Rs 500 per piece from VAT so that the women from low income group can save their hard-earned money.

11.5.14. My Government has taken several steps for student welfare. In order to give relief to students, I propose the following:

(i) to exempt all writing instruments (pens/pencils) which cost not exceeding Rs 10 per piece from VAT.

(ii) to exempt school bags which cost not exceeding Rs 250 per piece from VAT.

11.5.15. My Government had earlier exempted several items related to handlooms and sericulture like yarn, muga silk, handlooms, etc. In addition and to encourage sericulture, I propose to exempt fully the following from the current level of 5% of VAT:

(i) HDPE Cocoon crate

(ii) HDPE Mountage with frame

(iii) HDPE Plastic Cocoon Harvesting box

(iv) HDPE Rearing Trays for Silkworms

Further to encourage scientific methods for silk and yarn by the local weavers, I propose to exempt *Yarn Dernier Scale Weighing range-Natural Silk* from VAT from the current level of 14.5%.

11.5.16. You are aware that my Government had already exempted anti-malaria drugs from VAT. Now, I have noticed that the cancer patients have been increasing in the State and cancer drugs are being taxed at the rate of 5% of VAT. To give relief the patients and their families, I propose to exempt the cancer drugs sold in the State from VAT.

11.5.17. I found that the medicinal oxygen and Oxygen used in the Hospitals is taxable. Looking at the criticality of its need and with an intention to pass the benefit to the patients, I propose to exempt the medicinal Oxygen from VAT.

11.5.18. It has come to the notice of my Government that the vehicles supplied by Government of India as part of the central government schemes for the purpose of official use of the State Government are taxed under Assam Entry Tax. Since this is for Government use, I propose to exempt such vehicles from Entry Tax.

11.5.19. My Government introduced the rates of tax on pre-owned cars about ten years ago in 2005 at the rate of Rs 3000/- on cars up to 1000CC and Rs 5000/- on more than 1000CC. I realise that both the business and the prices of pre-owned cars increased during the last 10 years. Despite of that, I do not intend to increase the rates for cars up to 1000 CC so that low income groups continue to get the relief. However, I propose to increase the rate on high-end pre-owned cars above 1000CC from the current rate of Rs 5000/- to Rs 10000/-.

11.6. Now I come to Motor Vehicles (MV) Tax. I would like to apprise the hon'ble members that my Government did not increase the rates of MV Tax from 2011 and Permit fee from the last 12 years since 2003 and the rates in other States have been several folds more than our rates. In this background, I have very carefully studied the matter and accordingly I propose as follows:

11.6.1. Though MV tax was revised from 2011, I would not like to propose any change in MV Tax on Non-Transport (Personalized) two wheelers and three wheelers so that the low income groups are benefitted.

11.6.2. Further, my Government has also not revised the annual tax on three wheeler transport vehicle (commercial)-passenger and goods since 2011. In this case also, I do not intend to put any burden on the common man even now and continue the same tax structure.

11.6.3. Similarly, My Government is aware of the hardships of persons running commercial three wheeler and four wheeler vehicles with passenger carrying capacity upto 30 persons and therefore I do not propose any hike on them.

11.6.4. I would also like not to impose any hike of tax on tractors, trailers, mechanical crane mounted on motor vehicles.

11.6.5. I have noticed that Ambulance, Dead body carrying vans and Hearse plying on hire/contract and commercial use are being taxed at the rate of Rs 12000/- annually. My Government appreciates that the service of these vehicles is very valuable and sacred and therefore, I propose to exempt these vehicles completely from taxes.

However, in order to mop up additional resources, I propose the following that:

11.6.6. One Time Tax (OTT) on all new four wheeler vehicles which cost up to Rs 12 lakhs would be raised by just 1% from the existing rates and raised by 1.5% over the existing rates for vehicles costing between Rs 12 lakhs and upto Rs 15 lakhs, by 2% for those costing Rs 15 lakhs and upto Rs 20 lakhs, by 4% for those costing Rs 20 lakhs and upto Rs 30 lakhs and finally by 6% for those which cost above Rs 30 lakhs.

11.6.7. As regards old vehicles required to be registered in Assam on transfer from other States, the OTT fixed earlier in 2011 is not proposed to be changed. However, it has been experienced that OTT being fixed after allowing a depreciation for vehicles which are less than 5 years old and those 5-10 years old and not provided anything for vehicles above 10 years and upto 15 years. Now I propose to cover such vehicles for imposing OTT after allowing a depreciation @ 12% per annum of tax payable.

11.6.8. I propose to increase the annual MV tax on commercial vehicles with passengers carrying capacity more than 30 persons from Rs 12000/- plus Rs 110/- per every additional seat more than 30 to Rs 14,400/- plus Rs 130/-; for Omni Tourist Bus from Rs 15000/- to Rs 18000/- ; for Deluxe/Super Express Bus from Rs 12000/- plus Rs 120 for every seat above 31 to Rs 14,400/- plus Rs 145 and for All Assam Super Deluxe Contract Carriage from Rs 50000/- to Rs 55000/-.

11.6.9. I also propose to increase the annual tax of vehicles used for carriage of Petroleum Products, LPG, CNG and Hazardous goods as follows:

For authorised to carry less than 9 MT, the rate would be increased to Rs 12000/- from the existing Rs 10,000/-.

For authorised to carry more than 9 MT and upto 12 MT, the rate would be increased to Rs 14,400/- from the existing Rs 12000/-.

For authorised to carry 12 MT and above, the rate would be increased to Rs 16, 500/- plus Rs 500/- for every additional MT from the existing Rs 14,000/- plus Rs. 450/-.

e) As regards the permit fee, I would like to inform the august house that these fees were not raised for the last 12 years since 2003. The rates of the neighbouring states were also studied and found that there is a necessity to raise the permit fees marginally. This would result in additional revenue of Rs 15 crore, the permit fee on different categories of permits under Rule 46(B) of the Assam Motor Vehicle Rule, 2003 except for ASTC's own vehicles as stated at Annexure-I.

12. Now, I turn to propose to dwell upon the royalty rates on minor minerals dealt by the Forest Department.

12.1. Current level of revenue collection under this category is Rs 42 crore per annum and My Government would like to increase this to Rs 100 crore during 2015-16 and the rates of royalty on minor minerals were earlier revised about 6 years ago in the year 2009.

12.2. In order to do so, I propose to increase the rates of royalty of 17 various minor minerals as stated at Annexure-II which would result in increased revenue collection from Rs 40 crore to Rs 80 crore.

12.3. Apart from above, I propose to impose levy of Rs 500 per truck (above 9 tonne capacity) on the coal carrying transit vehicle entering into Assam from other states and going to outside of Assam.

13. Finally, I would like place my proposals for revenue generation through the Excise Department as follows:

13.1 I propose to substantially increase fees and taxes on liquor with a view to discourage alcoholism and spread of bar and liquor shops.

13.2. Secondly, the excise revenue in the State has been less and I have got the matter studied compared to similarly placed states like Orissa, etc.

13.3. Thirdly, the existing licence fee structure has not been increased since April 2011 in most of the cases.

13.4. Fourthly, the State needs to augment the resources to meet the developmental expenditure also.

13.5. Accordingly, I propose to increase various licence fees and introduce application fee as enclosed at Annexure-III. This would mop additional resources of about Rs. 600 crore during the year 2015-16.

13.6. I also propose to increase the competitiveness of the local entrepreneurs and help them to export liquor to other states. Accordingly, My Government proposes to reduce the Export fee of IMFL from existing Rs 50/- per case to Rs. 5/- and this would be at par with the neighbouring states like Meghalaya.

13.7. By taking above measures, I would estimate that the collections from excise revenue would increase to Rs 1250 crore from the current level of Rs 650 crore. In addition, I would like to ensure strict enforcement and arresting of leakages also on sustained basis in the interest of state revenues.

With these words, Mr Speaker, Sir, I commend this budget to the House.

JAI AAI ASOM

JAI HIND