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**NORTH EAST COUNCIL – INITIATIVES FOR BALANCED
DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION**

(Source- Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region)

Vth Sectoral Summit of the North East Council to review Air connectivity

Rapid development of the North East Region being a collective task of the Central and State Governments, the Prime Minister while reviewing the position stressed the need for coordinated and well planned development strategy for the North Eastern Region.

2. To give shape to the directives of the Prime Minister, the North East Council in its 53rd Meeting held at New Delhi (on 15th –16th November, 2006) decided to take up review of Major Central Sector programmes being implemented in the North Eastern Region. According to the programme, so far four sector summits have been held. The 1st summit held at Pasighat on 16th –17th January, 2007 reviewed the power sector programmes. The 2nd summit held at Shillong on 8th –9th February, 2007 reviewed the road sector programmes. The 3rd summit was held at Guwahati from 9th –11th March, 2007. A comprehensive reviews of the activities of the Commodity Boards, viz., Tea, Rubber, Spices and Coffee and the APEDA were taken up on the first day. This was followed by a review of the Inland Water Transport (IWT) and the Flood Control and Irrigation Sectors. The 4th summit held at Gangtok on 27th –29th April, 2007 reviewed the tourism and hospitality sector programmes.

3. The 5th Sectoral Summit was held at Aizawl on 19th May, 2007 to review the air connectivity sector programmes being implemented in the NER. The following ‘Statement on Air Connectivity’ was endorsed by the Summit.

4. With the objective of operationalizing upto 50 airports/airstrips in the North Eastern Region by the end of the XIth Five Year Plan and providing upto 600 flights per week within the Region, by using the appropriate type of aircraft, making the required improvements in existing airports/airstrips in a time-bound manner, the 54th Plenary Session of the NE Council endorsed a report of the Sidhu Committee and directed the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region and other related agencies of the Government of India to proceed expeditiously with advertising, screening and evaluating Expressions of interest from potential operators so as to name by August 15, 2007 ‘Independence Day’ the party/parties which will be entrusted the task of setting up a dedicated airlines for the North Eastern Region.

5. The conclusions arrived at in the meeting were as follows:-

- (i) The Report submitted by the Committee Chaired by Dr. S.S. Sidhu, H.E. Governor of Manipur on a ‘Dedicated Airline for the North Eastern Region’ was endorsed/accepted by the members present at the sectoral summit.

- (ii) Specific milestones were tentatively decided for implementing the basic recommendation of the Sidhu Committee for selection of an operator for the proposed dedicated airline:
- 25th May 2007 – Issue of Public Notice inviting Expressions of Interest.
 - 25th June 2007 – Last date for receipt of Expressions of Interest.
 - 15th July 2007 – Evaluation of technical and financial bids.
 - 15th August 2007 – Awarding of contract to the party and announcement by Hon'ble P.M. about dedicated airlines in the North East.
- (iii) Guwahati to be developed as an airline hub in North part of NER and Agartala/Imphal to be developed as hubs in the Southern region of NER.
- (iv) Night landing facility to be provided at Imphal by the end of 2007.
- (v) Pending finalization and implementation of a dedicated airline in the Region, the interim period has to be serviced by Alliance Air. M/s Alliance Air to workout an agreement for extending the existing MOU for another year.
- (vi) M/s Alliance Air was advised to increase flights in the Category-II routes pertaining to the North Eastern Region.

Follow up action, pursuant to the conclusions, is being taken by all concerned in order to ensure timely completion/implementation of the decisions.

VIth Sectoral Summit of North Eastern Council on 'Rail Connectivity'

The VIth Sectoral Summit of North East Council on Rail Connectivity Programme in the North Eastern Region was held on 19th June, 2007 when the entire situation was reviewed and it was observed that the rail network is about 2578 kms rail-route length in NER which constitutes only 4% of the country. In the last 10 years, double line connectivity from Howrah to Guwahati has been provided by commissioning New Jalpaiguri-Siliguri to New Bongaigaon gauge conversion, new line from New Bongaigaon to Jogighopa to Guwahati, doubling of Eklakhi-Harishchandpur. The total expenditure incurred in the North Eastern Region during last five years (2002-03 to 2006-07) is more than 10% of Railways' GBS. The outlay planned for 2007-08 is Rs. 990 crore.

2. Since 1992-93, about 1079 kms of gauge conversion and 163 kms of new lines have been completed in the Region. Presently, work is in progress on 14 projects.

These are 8 New lines, 5 Gauge Conversion, 1 Doubling of line. Besides, survey works are in progress on projects in the North Eastern Region.

3. In order to complete all the ongoing projects, Ministry of Railways will require about Rs. 10,000 crore. The Railways need to allocate between 1200-1300 crore every year for projects in the NER. The Railways had provided Rs. 750 crore in their annual budget of 2006-07 apart from Rs. 200 crore spent as an additional outlay. With the ongoing works under gauge conversion it is expected that the entire meter gauge will be converted to broad gauge during the 11th Five Year Plan.

4. It was concluded that in the regional context, Railway Sector required accelerated development to provide alternative mode of transport in the region. It offers bulk movement of freight and passenger traffic. Lack of funds, in spite of projects being declared as 'National Projects' needs to be looked into as Ministry of Railways is unable to tie up source of funding and depend entirely on Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance for additional resources. Government of India is committed to financially supporting 'National Projects' and therefore adequate funds will be provided at BE stage. A comprehensive plan is being prepared by the Planning Commission which prefer to release funds through GBS, which would ensure 'Assured Funds' and enable long-term plan. Further, in the North Eastern Region, projects are not being looked into from the angle of viability or rate of return but developed for overall economic upliftment of the region.

5. As far as Railways are concerned, there is no capacity problem for the North Eastern Region to absorb major inflow of resources and implement projects. There is a need to ensure that funds allotted to Rail Projects in the North East are spent timely. It was concluded that allocation of funds for these projects should be made at the BE stage which is more appropriate and is a distinct advantage to the Railways who are planning implementation of the projects. Timely completion of the projects needs to be ensured through monitoring mechanism. Given the progress of the ongoing projects and the commitment of the Government of India to provide necessary funds for the ongoing projects, it is expected that the Ministry of Railways will implement 14 approved projects in the 11th Five Year Plan.

6. To cut down delays, alignments for rail projects which are once firmed up is not to be altered, land acquisition and environment & forest clearances issues sorted out at the beginning of the project and security concerns at project sites addressed by State Government and the Ministry of Home Affairs. It was also emphasized that the State capitals need to be connected by rail. In cases where the rail links are being terminated short of the capital such as Jiribam to Tupul (Imphal), Dimapur to Zubza (Kohima), Sivok to Rangpo (Gangtok), the Railways should conduct feasibility studies for extending the railway links upto the State capitals.

Other initiatives by Ministry of DONER towards developments of NER

(i) The department related Parliamentary Standing Committee of Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region met on 13.4.2007 and had extensive discussion

of schemes and programmes of the Ministry of DoNER as well as other Central Ministries for the development of NE Region.

(ii) The Ministry, in association with the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Kolkata, organized the 3rd North East Business Summit on 10-11 April, 2007 to promote the NE as an investment destination. The Summit was attended by over 900 Indian delegates, 80 foreign delegates, 40 Heads of Missions and 5 Union Ministers apart from high level representation at the level of Governors and Chief Ministers from the NE States, besides senior officials from several Central Ministries. It was inaugurated by the Vice President and the Valedictory Session was attended, among others, by the Commerce Minister of Thailand. The main event in New Delhi was preceded by a Road Show in Bangalore, Kolkata and Bangkok. As a result of the Summit, 128 expressions of interest were received from entrepreneurs for investment in the NE.

(iii) The 4th Special Sectoral Meeting of the NEC to review the Tourism & Hospitality Sector was chaired by the Minister, DoNER at Gangtok on 27-29 April, 2007. The meeting was also attended by Union Minister of Tourism & Culture. The deliberations led to the identification of thrust areas for the promotion of tourism in the Region.

(iv) Minister, DoNER along with Union Power Minister took a meeting on 19.4.2007 to follow up the decisions taken at the first Sectoral summit on power which was held in Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh. The meeting was attended by senior officials from the Ministry of Power, DoNER, Central Electricity Authority and all concerned PSUs.

(v) In a major initiative towards Capacity Building in the NE States, the Ministry sanctioned a number of vocation programmes for the unemployed youth to be conducted by the Indo German Tool Room, Ahmedabad and Aurangabad. The programmes include both short and long term courses. A total of 442 persons would be trained at these centers at a total cost of Rs.2.56 crore.

(vi) Recently the PM, while laying the foundation stone for the Assam Gas Cracker Project, emphasized on the large number of employment opportunities that would be available in downstream activities. In this regard Secretary, Ministry of DoNER visited the Central Institute of Plastic Engineering & Technology, Chennai on 18th April 2007 to discuss various training programmes that could be conducted by the Institute. To formulate a road map, the Ministry is also proposing to hold a workshop in Assam in association with the Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals.

(vii) Minister, DoNER chaired the 54th Meeting of the North Eastern Council at Aizawl on 18.5.2007. The participants included Governors of Mizoram and Nagaland, Chief Ministers of Nagaland, Mizoram, Assam and Tripura, other Ministers and senior officials from the NE States and Central Ministries including Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Defence. The Council discussed a host of issues relating to peace and development in the Region.

(viii) The Ministry, in collaboration with NASSCOM has taken a major initiative for conducting an Assessment and Certification Programme in IT sector for the undergraduate youth in the North-East States. The NASSCOM Assessment of Competence Test (NAC), an employment benchmarking assessment and evaluation programme, is being piloted for the first time in the NE Region. It will target a total of 20,000 final-year students who will be venturing into the job markets after a year's time. Apart from helping the youth to gain employment in IT industry, the programme will also help in identifying the gaps and consequently addressing them through appropriate modification of curriculum and training.

(ix) Secretary, Ministry of DoNER chaired inter-ministerial meetings on 10.5.2007, 11.5.2007, 29.5.2007 and 30.5.2007 to discuss Border Area Development, Civil Aviation, Tourism and Railway sectors respectively.

(x) A high level business delegation from Thailand, led by the Thai Minister of Commerce visited the North-East States of Tripura, Assam and Meghalaya during 22-24 June 2007 at the invitation of the Minister, DoNER. This was a major breakthrough in being the first ever visit by a foreign Minister to these States in the context of the development of the North-East Region and gives, at long last, a North-East Region dimension to our 'Look East Policy. Apart from Minister, DoNER, MOS, Commerce, Shri Jairam Ramesh, Governors and Chief Ministers of the States concerned, senior officials of the Central Ministries and State Governments and Indian businessmen participated in the deliberations. There were presentations and discussions on important sectors like roads, power, tourism, inland water transport, rubber, handloom & handicrafts and food processing in which Northeast India-Thai cooperation can be mutually beneficial.

(xi) According to the Thai Minister and his colleagues, the North-East Region appears to have made a considerable impression on the minds of the delegation, with the investment potential being described as tremendous. The Thai Minister has proposed a North-East India Week in Bangkok in September-October 2007 and added that he would like to return to North-East India to cover some of the remaining States. The Ministry is taking follow-up action to carry the momentum forward.

(xii) In continuation of its initiative for capacity building the Ministry, sanctioned a major programme of training of unemployed youth in various industrial disciplines at the Institute of Electrical Measuring Instruments (IDEMI), Mumbai. Under this, a total of 380 youth would be trained with a total support of Rs.1.49 crore from the Ministry.

(xiii) The Administrative Staff College, Hyderabad organized a conference on 1-2 June on "The North Eastern Region of India: Constraints & Opportunities for Development" with financial support from the Ministry. Minister, DoNER delivered the keynote address on the inaugural day of the conference attended by a large number of experts from the Region.

NORTH EAST INDUSTRIAL AND INVESTMENT PROMOTION POLICY **(NEIIPP), 2007**

(Source – Ministry of Commerce & Industry)

The Government has approved a package of fiscal incentives and other concessions for the North East Region namely the '**North East Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy (NEIIPP), 2007**', effective from 1.4.2007, which, inter-alia, envisages the following:

(i) Coverage:

The North East Industrial Policy (NEIP), 1997 announced on 24.12.1997 covered the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura. Under NEIIPP, 2007, Sikkim will also be included. Consequently, the 'New Industrial Policy and other concessions for the State of Sikkim' announced vide O.M. No.14(2)/2002-SPS dated 23.12.2002 and the Schemes thereunder i.e. Central Capital Investment Subsidy Scheme, 2002, Central Interest Subsidy Scheme, 2002 and Central Comprehensive Insurance Scheme, 2002, notified vide Notifications No. F.No.14(2)/2002-SPS dated the 24.12.2002 have been discontinued from 1.4.2007.

(ii) Duration:

All new units as well as existing units which go in for substantial expansion, unless otherwise specified and which commence commercial production within the 10 year period from the date of notification of NEIIPP, 2007 will be eligible for incentives for a period of ten years from the date of commencement of commercial production.

(iii) Neutrality of location:

Incentives will be available to all industrial units, new as well as existing units on their substantial expansion, located anywhere in the North Eastern Region. Consequently, the distinction between 'thrust' and 'non-thrust' industries made in NEIP, 1997 has been discontinued from 1.4.2007.

(iv) Substantial Expansion:

Incentives on substantial expansion will be given to units effecting 'an increase by not less than 25% in the value of fixed capital investment in plant and machinery for the purpose of expansion of capacity/modernization and diversification', as against an increase by 33½ % which was prescribed in NEIP, 1997.

(v) Excise Duty Exemption:

100% Excise Duty exemption will be continued, on finished products made in the North Eastern Region, as was available under NEIP, 1997. However, in cases, where the CENVAT paid on the raw materials and intermediate products going into the production of finished products (other than the products which are otherwise exempt or subject to nil rate of duty) is higher than the excise duties payable on the finished products, ways and means to refund such overflow of CENVAT credit will be separately notified by the Ministry of Finance.

(vi) Income Tax Exemption:

100% Income Tax exemption will continue under NEIIPP, 2007 as was available under NEIP, 1997.

(vii) Capital Investment Subsidy:

Capital Investment Subsidy will be enhanced from 15% of the investment in plant and machinery to 30% and the limit for automatic approval of subsidy at this rate will be Rs.1.5 crores per unit, as against Rs.30 lakhs as was available under NEIP, 1997. Such subsidy will be applicable to units in the private sector, joint sector, cooperative sector as well as the units set up by the State Governments of the North Eastern Region. For grant of Capital Investment Subsidy higher than Rs.1.5 crore but upto a maximum of Rs.30 crores, there will be an Empowered Committee Chaired by Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion with Secretaries of Department of Development of North Eastern Region (DONER), Expenditure, Representative of Planning Commission and Secretary of the concerned Ministries of the Government of India dealing with the subject matter of that industry as its members as also the concerned Chief Secretary/Secretary (Industry) of the North Eastern State where the claiming unit is to be located.

Proposals which are eligible for a subsidy higher than Rs.30 crores, will be placed by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion before the Union Cabinet for its consideration and approval.

(viii) Interest Subsidy:

Interest Subsidy is available @ 3% on working capital loan under NEIIPP, 2007 as was available under NEIP, 1997.

(ix) Comprehensive Insurance:

New industrial units as well as the existing units on their substantial expansion will be eligible for reimbursement of 100% insurance premium.

(x) Negative List:

The following industries will not be eligible for benefits under NEIIPP, 2007:-

- (i) All goods falling under Chapter 24 of the First Schedule to the Central Excise Tariff Act, 1985 (5 of 1986) which pertains to tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes.
- (ii) Pan Masala as covered under Chapter 21 of the First Schedule to the Central Excise Tariff Act, 1985 (5 of 1986).
- (iii) Plastic carry bags of less than 20 microns as specified by Ministry of Environment and Forests Notification No.S.O. 705(E) dated 02.09.1999 and S.O.698 (E) dated 17.6.2003.
- (iv) Goods falling under Chapter 27 of the First Schedule to the Central Excise tariff Act, 1985 (5 of 1986) produced by petroleum oil or gas refineries.

(xi) Incentives for Service/other Sector Industries

Incentives under NEIIPP, 2007 will be applicable to the following service sector activities/industries:-

I. Service Sector:

- (i) Hotels (not below Two Star category), adventure and leisure sports including ropeways ;
- (ii) Medical and health services in the nature of nursing homes with a minimum capacity of 25 beds and old-age homes ;
- (iii) Vocational training institutes such as institutes for hotel management, catering and food crafts, entrepreneurship development, nursing and para-medical, civil aviation related training, fashion, design and industrial training.

A number of tax concessions under the existing provisions of Section 10A and 10AA of the Income Tax Act are already available to the IT sector. However, one of the important impediments to the development of Software Technology Parks or IT related SEZs in the North Eastern Region is the non-availability of trained human resources in the North Eastern Region. Accordingly, tax benefits as is availed under Section 80 IC of the Income Tax Act would be extended to IT related training centers and IT hardware units.

II. Incentives for Bio-technology industry:

The biotechnology industry will be eligible for benefits under NEIIPP, 2007 as applicable to other industries.

III. Incentives for Power Generating Industries:

Power Generating plants will continue to get incentives as governed by the provisions of Section 81A of the Income tax Act. In addition, power generating plants upto 10 MW based on both conventional and non-conventional sources will also be eligible for capital investment subsidy, interest subsidy and comprehensive insurance as applicable under NEIIPP, 2007.

(xii) Establishment of a monitoring mechanism for implementation of the NEIIPP, 2007:

In order to establish a monitoring mechanism for implementation of NEIIPP, 2007, a 'High Level Committee' / an 'Advisory Committee' under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion and comprising Secretaries of the Ministries/Departments of Revenue, Department of Development of North Eastern Region (DONER), Banking and Insurance, Representative of Planning Commission, CMD, NEDFi as well as major stakeholders including the industry associations of the North Eastern region would be constituted. In addition, an 'Oversight Committee' will be constituted under the Chairmanship of the Union Commerce and Industry Minister with Industry Ministers of NE States as its members.

(xiii) Value Addition

In order to ensure genuine industrial activities in the North Eastern Region, benefits under NEIIPP, 2007 will not be admissible to goods in respect of which only peripheral activities like preservation during storage, cleaning operations, packing, re-packing, labelling or re-labelling, sorting, alteration of retail sale price etc. take place.

(xiv) Transport Subsidy Scheme

The Transport Subsidy Scheme would continue beyond 31.3.2007, on the same terms and conditions. However, an early evaluation of the scheme will be carried out with a view to introducing necessary safeguards to prevent possible leakages and misuse.

(xv) Nodal agency

The North East Industrial Development Finance Corporation (NEDFi) will continue to act as the nodal agency for disbursement of subsidies under NEIIPP, 2007.

2. The 'New Industrial Policy and other concessions in the North Eastern Region' announced vide O.M. No.EA/1/2/96-IPD, dated 24.12.1997 (NEIP, 1997) will cease to operate with effect from 1.4.2007. Industrial Units which have

commenced commercial production on or before 31.3.2007 will continue to get benefits/incentives under NEIP, 1997.

3. Government reserves the right to modify any part of the Policy in public interest.

4. All concerned Ministries/Departments of the Government of India have been requested to amend their respective Acts/rules/notifications etc. and issue necessary instructions for giving effect to these decisions.

NEW CENTRALLY SPONSORED SCHEME OF NATIONAL BAMBOO MISSION

(Source – Ministry of Agriculture & Cooperation)

Bamboo is a versatile and useful group of plants, capable of providing ecological, economic and livelihood security to people. As per estimates, 8.96 million hac forest area of the country contains bamboo amounting to 12.8 percent of the forest cover. India has the largest bamboo forests in the world. Two-third of the growing stock of the bamboo in India is available in the North-Eastern States.

There has been a growing awareness in recent years about the importance of bamboo being an important means of economic growth and of improving the socio-economic conditions of the rural poor. Bamboo as an industrial material can substitute wood and that too at low cost. The demand for bamboo has increased, in recent years, within the country and abroad as a raw material for furniture making, as panel boards substituting wood, as agricultural implements, house/construction related uses and as a vegetable.

With a view of harness the potential of bamboo crop in the country through a multi decision approach, the Department of Agriculture & Cooperation (DAC), Ministry of Agriculture has launched a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National Bamboo Mission (NBM) for implementation in 28 States in the country in January during the financial year (2006-07) of the Xth Five Year Plan and next four years (2007-2011) of the XIth Five Year Plan at a proposed outlay of Rs.56823 lakhs including Rs.9137 lakhs for 2006-07 (with 100% support of the Centre).

The objectives of the NMB are to promote holistic growth of the bamboo sector through area based regionally differentiated strategies; to increase the coverage of area under bamboo in potential area; with appropriate varieties to enhance yields; to promote post felling management, marketing; to promote bamboo shoots as nutritional supplement; to establish convergence and synergy among stakeholders for development of bamboo and bamboo based products; to promote, develop and disseminate technologies; to generate employment opportunities for skilled and unskilled persons, especially unemployed youths.

Strategy/Interventions

The interventions for addressing the four major areas of bamboo development viz. research, plantation development, post felling management and marketing will vary among States and regions. A mix of either and/or cooperatives,

self-help group, incorporated companies, individual entrepreneurs, State Government undertakings or any agency recognized for the purpose will be involved for ensuring proper delivery. The Mission activities would be undertaken on the basis of properly identified compact areas to facilitate development of requisite infrastructure and intensive management. For achieving the objectives of the Mission it will be necessary for the States to remove restrictions coming in the way of development of bamboo including amendment of the State Transit rules under Indian Forest Act, 1927 to facilitate cultivation, felling and transport of bamboo and bamboo based products.

Planting Material shall be arranged under the National Bamboo Mission for two categories of areas viz. Forest Areas and Non-Forest Areas. Under each category, there will be centralized nurseries (public/private) and decentralized nurseries (mahila and kisan nurseries).

In order to monitor the implementation of NBM, a National Level Apex Committee under the Chairmanship of Union Minister of Agriculture, a National Steering Committee headed by the Secretary, Department of Agriculture & Cooperation have been constituted. Working Groups have been set up to oversee each of the sectors viz.. Research, plantation development, post felling management and marketing. The Mission Director will be the chairman of all the Working Groups. Similarly, the State Bamboo Steering Committees, Bamboo Development Agency and District Bamboo Agency will also be set up at the state level to execute and monitor the programme of NBM.

Employment Generation

- Bamboo Plantation activities in 1.76 lakh hectares over 5 years would generate about 50.4 million man days of work.
- In the nursery sector, total estimated employment to be generated every year will be around 9.7 lakh man-days.
- Besides this, there will be employment generation in both skilled and unskilled segments in the primary processing sector and the industries.

The other outputs

- Coverage of 1.85 lakh hac under pest and disease management.
- Coverage of 48783 hac under micro irrigation.
- Setting up of 195 Bamboo Bazaars.

The anticipated outcomes

- The area covered under perennial green canopy shall be 2.12 lakh hac including 1.76 lakh hac by way of new plantation and 9.36 lakh hac by way of improvement of existing senile plantation.

- Production of 3.02 million tones of Bamboo per year from 4th year of completion of plantation targets.
- Improvement of productivity of Bamboo to the average level of 18 tonnes/hac. from the average level of 2-3 tonnes/hac.

Progress during 2006-07

Details of financial release made during 2006-07 are as under:-

(Rs. in lakhs)		
S. No.	State/Agency	Amount
1.	Arunachal Pradesh	1510.35
2.	Assam	1080.31
3.	Manipur	647.17
4.	Meghalaya	507.31
5.	Mizoram	865.45
6.	Nagaland	1315.96
7.	Sikkim	429.32
8.	Tripura	122.16
9.	Cane and Bamboo Technology Centre, Guwahati	91.95

The funds were released to the State in the last week of March 2007.

Allocation for 2007-08

A sum of Rs.7000 lakh has been allocated for implementation of the Scheme during 2007-08. The State proposal are awaited.

NEWS NOTES

(i) People in Manipur upset with the militants' threat to cinema halls

People are loosing patience with militancy in Manipur. They are fed up with continuous interference by the under ground groups in their day-to-day lives. Citizens of Imphal came on the street to protest against the closer of the cinema halls in the area due to extortion demand by the under ground groups.

According to the people the theatre hall located at Mayai Lamb Road in Imphal must have screened many movies depicting loss and tragedy. Now the hall itself has become a subject of sad story-victim of modern reality of Manipur- a reality of extortion, victimization by the under ground groups. People were not happy with development and wanted the immediate reopening of the hall. The closer of the hall had affected them. According to some of them "It affects not only to the cinema halls but also those who are running petty shops around the cinema halls whose livelihoods are dependent on them. When films are stopped screening, the small shops could not run their business. It is very bad sort to say." Public anger and criticism of the local administration in its failure to curb the menace of militancy, the city police got into action and started combing operation. Some

people found it inconvenient but they were largely in favour of strict action against the under ground groups in the state.

(ii) Girls Polytechnic of Guwahati Gesture

The Girls Polytechnic of Guwahati opened its doors to unemployed young men coming from poor families from the 12th of June to impart free one month long training on electrical house wiring. Sponsored by the HRD Ministry for manpower development, this project is one of the many schemes of the government to pave a way for self-employment among the youth of Assam. Here, the young people are learning everything, from fitting switches to laying wires and thus are being readied for jobs of electricians. Apart from electricians course, the ministry is also sponsoring, courses on TV repair, mobile repair, soap and candle making, etc. Large number of youth, specially from villages are taking advantage of these courses and becoming self sufficient and capable of earning their livelihoods after undertaking these training.

LETTERS TO EDITOR

Respectfully, I beg to state that I have received a copy of your newsletter from a friend, and I find it very informative. I would like to continue to receive your newsletter and to be on regular mailing list (in English)

KAKAI KIPGEN
BONGJOL, SAPORMEINA,
SADAR HILLS,
P.O.- MOTBUNG – MANIPUR.

We registered NHO working for Community Health, environment protection, infrastructure development, sanitation etc. So, we request you to send free copy of the N.E. Newsletter for our NGO.

SRI HARAPATI BARMAN
SECRETARY,
MEEN AND PARIBESH UNNAYAN
SANGSTHA (SARUKHETRI),
DISTT. BARPETA - ASSAM

I shall be thankful if you could kindly send me NE Newsletter.

SONDIP CHAKRABORY
LECTURER IN GEOGRAPHY,
INDIRA GANDHI GOVT. COLLEGE- TEZU,
DISTT. LOHIT, ARUNACHAL PRADESH.