Government of Tripura

ADDRESS

to the
Tripura Legislative Assembly

by
Dr. D. Y. Patil
H. E. the Governor of Tripura

Friday, March 15, 2013
Hon’ble Mr. Speaker and Hon’ble Members,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all the newly-elected Hon’ble Members to the first Session of the 11th Tripura Legislative Assembly which has been constituted after a historic election. I take this opportunity to convey my greetings to all of you and to the people of Tripura.

2. The process of constituting of the 11th Legislative Assembly has indeed been remarkable. The State has achieved the distinction of having recorded the highest-ever voter turn-out in the country, with over 93.5% populace exercising their franchise. The participation of women has been unprecedented. The Elections were held in a completely free, fair and peaceful manner. I would like to compliment the people of the State for their whole-hearted and enthusiastic participation in the election process. I also compliment all the officials, the security personnel and all others who contributed towards successful conduct of elections.

3. Hon’ble Members, while the successful conduct of the Assembly elections is a matter of great satisfaction for all of us, the prevailing situation around us is far from satisfactory. The economic crisis, triggered in December 2007 by the inherent flaws of the capitalist system, continues to deepen, with no end in sight. As per the recent World Bank estimates, the Global GDP grew by only 2.3% during 2012 and most of the growth has been contributed by the developing countries. The Euro Zone registered negative growth rate during 2012 and is expected to do the same during 2013. US, Japan and other capitalist countries also continue to register very low growth rates. The unemployment rate in United States is still as high as 7.9% (in January, 2013) and the same is far worse in crisis-hit European countries like Greece, Spain and Portugal. The policies pursued by the US and
other capitalist countries for tackling this crisis, have further aggravated the situation. The reckless monetary expansion by Central Banks has only resulted in propping up the failing banks and the stock market prices, thereby benefitting precisely those affluent sections of Society, who caused the crisis in the first place. There has been no real boost to economic growth or employment as a result of these policies. On the contrary, due to pressure being put on many Countries to cut essential expenditure in the name of reducing fiscal deficit, poor sections of Society have been subjected to increasing poverty, unemployment and deprivation.

4. The ill effects of the economic crisis triggered by the Capitalist System have been further aggravated by the widening inequalities in income and wealth in US and other Capitalist countries. The situation is so bad that it has given rise to a new protest movement called Occupy Wall Street (OWS) Movement since September 2011. The movement that started in New York has spread all over the world. The main slogan of the movement is "We are the 99%". It is the protest movement of 99% people against the unjust and unfair system which is resulting in concentration of income and wealth in the hands of 1% population. The protesters are demanding more and better jobs, more equal distribution of income and reduction in influence of large corporations on politics.

5. In contrast to the economic crisis of the Capitalist System, the path of planned economic development adopted by the Governments of various Socialist/ Communist countries has resulted in balanced economic development and enhancement of well-being of their people. Some countries like China and Vietnam have followed a different Model – a regulated mix of State Control and Free Enterprise – with good results. Some studies show that in China, the poverty rate declined from 53% in 1978 to just 6% in 2001.
6. India has been adversely affected by the economic crisis in US and Europe since the country has taken the path of so-called globalisation and liberalisation. The growth rate of India’s exports to US and Europe has slowed down, adversely affecting balance of payments position. The Current Account Deficit (CAD) of India, which was extremely high at 4.2% of GDP in 2011-12 has further widened to 5.4% during second quarter of current financial year, which is an alarming situation. The inflation rate continues to be very high. The inflation rate based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) was as high as 10.79% for January, 2013. The recent decisions of Government of India to increase Diesel Prices and the Railway Passenger Fares will only add to the inflationary pressures. The GDP Growth Rate for the country for 2012-13 is expected to be only around 5%, which will be the lowest in a Decade. The Central Government has been adopting policies that reduce the benefits for the poor and the common masses and increase their financial burden – all in the name of tackling the economic crisis. It is high time we evolve pro-people economic policies suited to our needs, rather than blindly following the disastrous prescriptions of the World Bank, IMF and WTO.

7. Another disastrous policy move of the Government of India has been the decision to allow FDI in multi-brand retail. Retail Sector is one of the pillars of Indian Economy, accounting for about 14-15% of GDP. The Sector provides employment to about 4 crore people. The size of the Indian Retail market is estimated at US$ 450 billion. Indian Retail market is one of the top five markets in the world and is one of the fastest growing markets. This naturally makes the Indian market very attractive of large multi-national retail chains like Wal-Mart, Carrefour and Tesco. Allowing large multi-national retail chains to operate in multi-brand retail will inevitably result in large-scale unemployment for the people currently engaged in this Sector. The well-known Nobel Laureate American Economist Joseph Stiglitz has said
during a recent visit to India that FDI in multi-brand retail in India would promote instability due to exploitative and corrupt practices adopted by MNCs to monopolise retail markets in any country. It is a known fact that Wal-Mart spent millions of dollars on lobbying for getting a foothold in retail sector in India.

8. This House is aware that India has been rocked by a series of corruption scandals during last few years, the most recent being that of payment of kickbacks in the Agusta Westland Helicopter Deal. There has been wide-spread resentment in the country against corruption in high places in the country. The Lokpāl Bill is yet to be enacted despite strong nation-wide public movement for the same.

9. The Government of India has adopted an aggressive policy of disinvestment of equity in public sector undertakings (PSUs) in order to reduce fiscal deficit. The Central PSUs have been playing an extremely important role in economic development of the country. The resources of PSUs are used for public good and not for furthering personal interests of any individual industrialist. The PSUs keep the private sector in check. In view of this, the policy of disinvestment in PSUs should be discontinued in the greater interest of the Country.

10. The people of India are peace-loving and have faith in values of tolerance, co-existence and brotherhood. However, of late, there has been a sense of deprivation and alienation among certain section of the Society due to uneven development of the country. There are divisive forces in the Country which are always on the lookout to take advantage of the genuine grievances and dissatisfaction prevailing in the Society. There has been an unfortunate attempt by fundamentalist forces to involve minorities and create disturbance in the country. In such a situation, it is necessary that proactive efforts are made by all the secular
democratic forces in Country for effectively countering the divisive, secessionist and sectarian forces.

11. In nutshell, there is all-round disillusionment among the people of the country due to the anti-people policies being followed by the Central Government in almost all spheres. It is a reflection of this unfortunate state of affairs that an unprecedented 48-hours strike was called on 20-21 February, 2013, jointly by all the major trade union organisations of the country, including INTUC, AITUC, CITU, HMS and BMS, in support of their 10-point demand charter relating to checking of price rise, generation of employment, halting of disinvestment in public sector enterprises, implementation of labour laws, etc.

12. In contrast, my Government has been continuously working for the all-round development of the State and for raising the standard of living of the people. The developmental priorities of my Government include agriculture and allied activities, drinking water supply, housing, road connectivity, rural electrification, education, health, poverty alleviation and generation of employment.

13. My Government has an impeccable record of prudent financial management. The State Government has not gone into overdraft since 1992. The State Government enacted the FRBM Legislation in the year 2005 and consistently achieved the FRBM targets during first 4 years. However, the inadequate Award of the 13th Finance Commission has put the State in an extremely difficult position. The Finance Commission did not even accept the committed salary and pension liabilities of the State. Moreover, the Commission adopted the same normative approach for the whole country in respect of level of employment, not realizing that in a North-eastern State like Tripura, the requirement of employment
in Government is much higher than the relatively developed mainland States, due to factors like the requirement to maintain higher level of security forces for combating insurgency, need for higher level Government intervention in social sectors like education and health as well as other sectors in the absence of participation of the private sector, etc. The numerous requests of the State Government to the Government of India for providing additional support have not yielded any results. I would once again urge upon the Government of India to provide necessary support to enable the State Government to carry on its developmental activities in a smooth manner.

14. Maintenance of Law and Order is the pre-requisite for any sustainable development. My Government has set an example by effectively dealing with the extremist problem by adopting two-pronged strategy of accelerating the development process and effective security operations against the secessionist extremist forces - with the active cooperation of the peace-loving people of Tripura. In fact, due to the frustration and disillusionment in the extremist camps and the proactive approach of the Government, a good number of extremists have been coming over-ground to surrender and join the mainstream. However, the State Government is not complacent in the matter and continues to make efforts to eliminate the extremist problem from Tripura. In fact, I would like to take this opportunity to make an appeal to all the misguided youth who have taken to the path of violence, to come over and join the mainstream of the development process. The general law and order situation in the State also continues to improve day-by-day. The recent conduct of the Assembly Elections in a peaceful manner is a testimony to the all-round improvement in the law and order situation in the State. The State Government has taken special measures to prevent and effectively tackle ‘crime against women’. Under the ‘PRAYAS’ initiative, which involves close interaction between the Police Force
and the People, efforts are being made to bring down crime against women through proper counselling. In fact, steps have been initiated to inculcate ‘respect for women’ in the minds of children from very early stage in their life.

15. Continued presence of over 37,600 Reang (Bru) Refugees who migrated from Mizoram to Tripura due to ethnic violence in Mizoram, has been giving rise to various problems in the State. During the years 2010, 2011 and 2012, 4,006 refugees were repatriated to Mizoram, in four phases, after a lot of persuasion. However, the process has since been stopped due to various issues raised by the Mizoram Government. I would urge upon the Government of India to resolve the matter so that these families are repatriated with respect and honour to their places of original residence in Mizoram at the earliest.

16. Tripura has a strong tradition of democracy at the grass-root level. The State has 3-tier Panchayati Raj System for the non-ADC rural areas. For the non-ADC urban areas, there are elected local bodies in the form of Agartala Municipal Council (AMC) and 15 Nagar Panchayats. For the tribal areas, the State has a Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) along with 527 Village Committees. My Government has progressively transferred more and more functions, manpower and resources to these local bodies. I am glad to inform this august House that the Government of India has awarded Panchayat Shashaktikaran Puraskar for 2011-12 to Killa BAC, Atharabhola Village Committee under Killa Block and Jirania Gram Panchayat under Jirania Block, as a mark of recognition for empowerment and strengthening of the PRI/ADC bodies. Not only that, the State has also been honoured by the Government of India with e-Panchayat Puraskar for 2011-12 (First Prize) for effective implementation of e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project in the State.
17. Development of basic physical infrastructure is a pre-requisite for development and therefore, my Government attaches highest priority to development of infrastructure, including roads, railways, airports, power and telecommunication. As far as the road network is concerned, the State is committed to connect all the habitations with all-weather roads. Under Prime Minister’s Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), the work is being taken up for providing new connectivity as well as for upgradation and renewal of existing roads. So far, total 6,634 out of 8,132 habitations have been connected by all-weather roads. In addition, about 351 km. roads have been improved under the 40% Renewal component of Bharat Nirman Scheme. The condition of National Highway-44 is very bad in different patches. Attention of the Government of India has already been drawn many times, but there is no visible improvement. The State Government has been making persistent efforts for 4-laning of NH-44, but it has now been decided by the Government of India that initially 2-laning will be done and later on, 4-laning will be taken up. The entire matter is progressing in a painfully slow manner. The work has started very recently on a 10 km. stretch on NH-44. The matter is being followed up with Government of India for speeding up the work of NH-44, for development of an alternative National Highway from Kukital to Sabroom as also for expeditious completion of the work of Manu-Simlung Road (NH-44A).

18. The State Government has always pursued the matter for expeditious implementation of Railway Projects. The work of broad-gauging of railway line on Lumding-Silchar section needs to be speeded up. The work of extension of railway line on the Agartala-Udaipur section is progressing well. The work on Udaipur-Sabroom section has also started. The Project is targeted to be completed by March, 2014. The preliminary work for establishment of Agartala-Akhaura Rail Link has also started.
19. Agartala Airport is the 2\textsuperscript{nd} busiest Airport in the North-East after Guwahati and presently, about 22 flights operate to and from Agartala every day, carrying about 2,700 passengers per day. The matter is being actively pursued with the Government of India for upgrading Agartala Airport as an International Airport with connectivity to Dhaka, Chittagong and other foreign locations. The matter is also being pursued for making Kailashahar and Kamalpur Airports operational.

20. The power situation in the State is improving gradually due to persistent efforts made by the State Government. Construction of one 21 MW Gas Thermal Unit at Rokhia is scheduled to be completed in 2013. As regards the 726.6 MW Palatana Power Project, the first unit of 363.3 MW capacity is under test run and is expected to start commercial production very soon. The second unit is also expected to be completed in 2013. The 104 MW NEEPCO Power Project at Monarchak is also expected to be commissioned in 2013. With all these power projects nearing completion, the State will be power-surplus and very well-equipped to meet all its power requirements.

21. Rural electrification continues to be a thrust area of the Government. As per the new definition of Government of India, 798 out of 858 villages are considered as electrified. Steps are being taken for expeditious completion of the current RGGVY (Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana) Project with total outlay of about Rs. 197.28 crores. So far, about 95,980 BPL service-connections have been provided under this Project against total target of about 1,09,180 connections.

22. The State Government has been making serious efforts for promoting use of environment-friendly renewable sources of energy. The Remote Village Electrification (RVE) Programme is being
implemented, using solar energy, for electrification in villages where the conventional electric connections are not feasible or viable. Under this Programme, Solar Home Lighting System has been provided to over 6,044 families in 251 hamlets during 2012-13 (up to December, 2012). Besides this, Solar Hot water Plants have been installed in some Hospitals, Hostels, Schools, etc. Solar Lanterns have been distributed to over 20,000 families in urban areas during 2012-13 (up to December, 2012).

23. The telecommunication network in the State has expanded at a fast pace. Besides the BSNL, a number of private operators are providing mobile telephony and other services. The total number of mobile subscribers in the State now exceeds 16 lakhs. However, the telecom link between Tripura and the rest of the Country is still not very reliable. The matter is being followed up for speedy completion of alternative OFC links by BSNL and RailTel and for building OFC connectivity with and through Bangladesh.

24. The economy of Tripura is primarily an agrarian economy, providing employment to over 50% of State’s population. Although the cultivable area is only about 27% of the total area of the State, my Government has been striving to achieve self-sufficiency in foodgrain production through increase in productivity. The total foodgrain production in Tripura has significantly increased from 5.13 lakh MT in 1999-2000 to an all-time high level of 7.30 lakh MT in 2011-12 and the same is expected to further increase to about 7.79 lakh MT during 2012-13. I am glad to inform this august House that the Government of India has honoured the State with a Commendation Award for 2011-12 in recognition of the increase in production and productivity of total foodgrains recorded by the State in 2010-11. Hon’ble Members may recall that in the preceding year, the State was honoured with “Krishi
Karma Award” for best performance in the field of Agriculture among Category-III States having production of foodgrains of less than one million tonnes.

25. My Government has been taking numerous steps to increase agricultural production and productivity. During 2011-12, about 86,630 hectares of area was covered under ‘System of Rice Intensification (SRI)’, which is expected to increase to about 1,00,000 hectares during 2012-13. The seed replacement rate of 33% is being maintained in respect of Paddy. The State is producing certified HYV Paddy and Mustard Seeds in excess of its requirement and the excess is being exported to other States. About 1.11 lakh hectares of area has been brought under irrigation by the year 2011-12 out of the total irrigable area of about 1.17 lakh hectares. The consumption of chemical fertilizers was about 55 kg. per hectare during 2011-12, registering an increase of about 25% over the preceding year. Not only that, the consumption of Bio-fertilizers increased from a meagre 258 MT during 2009-10 to about 1,500 MT during 2011-12 and the same is expected to further increase to about 2,000 MT during 2012-13. The credit disbursal under Kisan Credit Cards (KCCs) has registered a quantum jump from about Rs. 79.88 crores during 2010-11 to about Rs. 208.16 crores during 2011-12. The College of Agriculture, Lembucherra, set up in 2007, has been functioning well. Two batches of 34 students have successfully passed out from the College and 100 boys and girls are currently studying in the College.

26. The agro-climatic conditions of the State are suitable for growing a large variety of horticultural crops. My Government has successfully implemented a 10-year Perspective Plan (2002-2012) for increasing production of horticultural crops (including fruits and vegetables) from about 6.62 lakh MT in 2001-02 to about 12 lakh MT by 2011-12. I am
glad to inform this House that the total production of horticultural crops was about 13.87 lakh MT in 2011-12. It is proposed to further increase the production to about 23.32 lakh MT during the 12th Five Year Plan.

27. The Livestock sector plays a vital role in the rural economy. The State Government has taken a number of initiatives for achieving self-sufficiency in production of meat, eggs and milk. During 2011-12, total production of meat, eggs and milk was about 25,000 MT (i.e. 7.00 kg. per capita per year), 16.50 crores (i.e. 45 eggs per capita per year) and 1.10 lakh MT (i.e. 81 grams per capita per day) respectively. The State has achieved self-sufficiency in meat production. There are significant developments in poultry sector as well. Currently, about 12 lakh Broiler Chicks are reared in the State every month. About 80% of the requirement of Day-old Broiler Chicks (DOBC) is being met through Hatcheries within the State. Efforts are being made to enhance milk production in the State by increasing the productivity.

28. The State Government attaches high priority to development of Fisheries Sector. The target for production of 13 kg. per capita per annum, set under the Perspective Plan (2004-2012), was achieved one year ahead of schedule. The fish production in the State further increased to about 53,350 MT during 2011-12, which works out to about 15 kg. per capita per annum. The productivity has progressively increased from 1,280 kg. per hectare in 1997-98 to about 2,500 kg. per hectare in 2011-12. The State is currently surplus in carp seed production. Considering the dietary habits of people and still higher demand for fish, it is planned to further increase the fish production to about 20 kg. per capita per annum during the 12th Plan Period.

29. My Government has been making sincere efforts for afforestation, with active involvement of the people through Joint Forest Management
Committees (JFMCs). So far, over 946 JFMCs have been formed involving about 95,050 forest-dependent families. Two Externally-aided Projects, namely, JICA Project and Indo-German Development Cooperation Project are also being implemented, inter-alia, for rehabilitation of degraded forests and for generating livelihood opportunities for the people. During the current year, plantations have been raised over about 19,130 hectares of degraded forest area, out of which about 8,015 hectares of area has been covered by bamboo plantations. The forest cover in Tripura now stands at about 76.04% of the total geographical area as against 21.05% for the country as a whole.

30. Tripura has a long tradition of effective implementation of various Rural Development Programmes. The State has done exceptionally well in implementation of MGNREGA Scheme. During 2011-12, total about Rs.945.60 crores was spent and about 490.13 lakh man-days were generated. The average man-days generated by Tripura during 2011-12 work out to 86 man-days per job card holder, as against the national average of 42.43 man-days, which was the highest in the country. During current year, Tripura has already achieved average 61 man-days upto 31st December, 2012, as against the national average of 33.38 man-days, which continues to be the highest in the country. Under Indira Awas Yojana, total 23,317 houses have been taken up for construction during current year with total outlay of about Rs.113 crores. Under Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY), 1,943 new self-help groups were formed and an amount of Rs.28.00 crores was spent during 2011-12. As per Government of India decision, the SGSY Scheme is to be restructured and subsumed into National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) Project. Necessary steps have already been initiated for implementation of the NRLM Project.

31. Provision of potable drinking water for all the people of the State is one of the key policy objectives of the Government. As on 31st
December, 2012, 7,740 habitations out of total 8,132 habitations have been fully/partially covered through drinking water sources. The sources created so far include about 1,351 Deep Tube Wells, 1,687 Small Bore Tube Wells, 606 Iron Removal Plants, 26,699 spot sources, 47 Surface Water Treatment Plants and about 9,325 Kms. of pipelines. Proactive efforts are being made for full coverage of all habitations. Efforts are also being made for 100% coverage under Rural Sanitation Programme. The achievement so far includes construction of about 4.49 lakh individual household latrines (IHHL) for BPL families, 1.57 lakh IHHL for APL families, 13,175 toilets in schools and Anganwadi centres and 249 sanitary complexes.

32. Effective steps are being taken for upgradation of urban infrastructure with the help of the elected bodies, namely, Agartala Municipal Council and 15 Nagar Panchayats. The major ongoing Projects under JNNURM and other Schemes include Sewerage and Water Supply Projects in North Zone of Agartala, Road and Storm Water Drain Projects in various Nagar Panchayats, construction of dwelling units in various Nagar Panchayats under IHSDP, sinking of 22 Deep Tube wells (of which 6 have been completed) at Agartala under ADB Project, construction of town halls and market complexes, construction of low-cost sanitary latrines, etc. The implementation of Drainage Project for AMC under 13th Finance Commission assistance has also started. The Government is implementing an Employment Guarantee Programme in urban areas, namely, Tripura Urban Employment Programme (TUEP) on the pattern of MGNREGA. For improving the transport facilities at Agartala, the Agartala City Bus service is being operated with 52 buses procured under JNNURM. 22 more buses are expected to be inducted shortly.
33. The Government has also been making efforts to accelerate the industrialisation process in the State. Bodhjungnagar Industrial Complex, spread over an area of over 750 acres, is emerging as the flagship industrial cluster of Tripura. Total investment of over Rs.580 crores has already taken place in this Complex. Steps are being taken to augment industrial infrastructure in other parts of the State as well. In order to encourage investment, ‘Tripura Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy, 2012 was launched with effect from 1st April, 2012. Assistance is being given to first generation entrepreneurs under self-employment programmes, namely, Prime Minister’s Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) and Swavalamban. During 2011-12, total 3,404 entrepreneurs were assisted under these Programmes, involving total disbursement of about Rs.85 crores. Further, in order to impart job-oriented technical skills to the youth, 4 new ITIs were commissioned during the year at Khumulwng, Manubankul, Khowai and Sonamura, increasing the total number of ITIs in the State to 12. Steps have been initiated for setting up of additional 4 ITIs at Bishramganj, Teliamura, Kamalpur and Longtarai Valley. Small Tea Growers now contribute about 12% of total green leaf production in the State. The process of installation of machinery for doubling the processing capacity of the Dhalai Tea Processing Cooperative Factory is going on and a new Tea Processing Factory of TTDC is being set up at Brahmakunda (West Tripura), so that small tea growers do not face any difficulty. The Tripura Bamboo Mission continues to do a commendable job for integrated development of bamboo sector. The turnover of the bamboo sector has increased over three times since 2007. Steps have also been taken to promote trade with Bangladesh. The total volume of trade with Bangladesh has increased from Rs.49.56 lakhs in 2006-07 to Rs. 330.60 crores during 2011-12.

34. Tripura offers great opportunities for tourism, including archeological and heritage tourism, cultural tourism, religious tourism
and eco-tourism. A number of Projects, involving total outlay of over Rs.66 crores, are being implemented for promotion of tourism. The construction work of the Institute of Hotel Management at Anandanagar near Agartala is progressing well. The Institute is being set up with a view to improve availability of skilled manpower for tourism industry in the State. The process of setting up of the State Museum at Ujjayanta Palace is nearing completion. This would make the Palace an important tourist attraction.

35. My Government attaches the highest priority to the development of human resources. The Government has been making concerted efforts towards the goal of ‘Education for All’. The State Government has initiated necessary steps for effective implementation of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, which provides for free and compulsory education for all children in the age group of 6-14 years. The Government has been implementing Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RSMA), Mid-Day Meal and other Programmes for universalisation of School Education, in the right earnest. In this regard, my Government has introduced a new Scheme of distribution of text books to the students of Class-XI and XII belonging to BPL families from the coming Academic Session. The Government has been setting up new Schools as well as upgrading the existing Schools every year. The infrastructure of schools and Madrassas is being upgraded every year in a phased manner. Science stream has been introduced in 165 schools upto 2011-12. As on 31st March, 2012, over 7.88 lakh students were studying in 4,635 Schools in the State. The drop-out rates have been declining year after year and were 3.61% at primary stage and 9.05% at elementary stage during 2011-12. A number of steps have been taken during the current year for development of Kokbarak and other minority languages, including setting up of a new Directorate for this purpose.
36. A 10-Year Perspective Plan (2010-2020) has been finalised for development of Higher Education. During current year, 6 new General Degree Colleges at Bishalgarh, Mohanpur, Teliamura, Longtarai Valley, Santir Bazar and Kanchanpur have started functioning. The intake capacity of existing General Degree Colleges is being augmented through construction of new Academic Blocks. Currently, there are 24 General Degree Colleges in Tripura with total enrolment of about 33,000 students. In order to expand the facilities for technical education, new Polytechnics are being set up. The construction work for Polytechnic at Fulkumari has been completed and the same is expected to start functioning from next academic session (2013-14). The construction work for Polytechnic at Bagbassa in Dharmagar is progressing well and work for Khumulwng Polytechnic has also started. For upgradation of facilities in professional education, construction of new building of Government Law College, Agartala and Institute of Advanced Studies in Education (IASE), Agartala and setting up of a new College of Teachers’ Education at Kumargarh has been taken up. Construction of a new Academic Block in Tripura Institute of Technology (TIT) has been completed. The Government of India has approved setting up of an Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) at Agartala. Necessary preparatory steps are being taken for starting the construction work for the IIIT.

37. The State Government places very high emphasis on various Social Welfare and Social Security Programmes. The ICDS Programme currently covers over 4.69 lakh children and mothers in the State through 9,906 Anganwadi Centres. Construction of new buildings for about 3,864 Anganwadi Centres has been taken up, of which 2,991 buildings have been completed. Steps are also being taken to provide safe drinking water, sanitation and kitchen facilities at all Anganwadi Centres. The State Government has so far introduced 19 Social Security Pension or
Benefit Schemes in addition to the 3 Schemes jointly funded by the Government of India and the State Government. In fact, 6 out of 19 Schemes have been introduced during current year itself, namely, for Motor Shramik, Laundry workers, Barbers, Handloom Workers, Fishermen and for unmarried women aged 45 years and above under BPL category. Currently, over 2.50 lakh persons are benefiting from various Social Security Schemes.

38. Hon'ble Members would agree that sports and games play an important role in development in human resources. The Government has been making serious efforts for development of the sports infrastructure. During the current year, the projects for Tripura Sports School, Badharghat and Grand Stand at Umakanta Mini Stadium have been completed. The ongoing Projects include Dasharath Deb State Sports Complex (DDSSC), Badharghat, Regional College of Physical Education, Panisagar, Swami Vivekananda Maidan (Astabal Ground), upgradation of Bhagat Singh Youth Hostel at Khejurbaragon by construction of 350-bedded Hostel, development of an Indoor and Gymnasium Hall (with all modern amenities) at NSRCC (Netaji Subhas Regional Coaching Centre) and District Sports Complexes at Kailashahar, Udaipur and Ambassa. Under the Panchayat Yuva Krida Aur Khel Abhiyan (PYKKA), sports activities are being promoted right up to the village level.

39. To achieve the goal of ‘Health for All’, the healthcare infrastructure is continuously being upgraded. The Government has decided to set up one Health Sub-Centre in each Gram Panchayat/ ADC Village. Currently, total 760 Health Sub-Centres are operational. Steps have been initiated for construction of additional 248 Health Sub-Centres in order to cover the remaining Gram Panchayats/ ADC Villages. Further, 11 new PHCs were commissioned during the current year, taking
the total number of PHCs to 83. In addition, construction work is going on for 23 new PHCs. 6 PHCs were upgraded as CHCs during the year, taking the total number of CHCs to 18. At the Sub-divisional level, the work for upgradation of Khowai and Dharmanagar sub-divisional hospitals was completed during the year and the work for Santirbazar, Teliamura and Belonia sub-divisional hospitals is progressing well. I am glad to inform this august House that the three newly-constructed District Hospital Complexes at Udaipur, Kailashahar and Ambassa have been commissioned during the current year. At State level, the upgradation work of IGM Hospital, by way of construction of a new G+6 hospital building with provision of 327 beds, is nearing completion. Construction work for a new Teaching Hospital in G.B. Pant Hospital, with capacity of 395 beds, is progressing well. Steps have also been initiated for construction of a B+G+5 building at Cancer Hospital and for construction of Central Blood Bank at GB Hospital.

40. The Government is placing high emphasis on Medical Education. Agartala Government Medical College (AGMC) has completed 7th year successfully and has now stepped into 8th year. Total 139 doctors from two completed batches have joined Tripura Health Service and have started rendering health services to the people of the State. Post-graduate Degree courses have been introduced in AGMC in 13 disciplines and in all, 42 students are doing Post Graduation in AGMC at present. The Tripura Medical College (TMC) is also functioning smoothly. The first batch of doctors has already passed out from the College. Steps are also being taken to introduce PG courses in TMC.

41. The Government is also taking proactive steps for implementation of Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) for providing healthcare facilities to BPL families. Total about 5.02 lakh families have been enrolled and provided with Smart Cards and so far, about 1.00 lakh
patients have got benefit under the Scheme. The Health Indicators of Tripura are far better than the National Average and the same are improving consistently with the effective implementation of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) in the State. It gives me pleasure to inform this august House that a team of officers led by the DM & Collector of undivided North Tripura District got the Prime Minister’s Award during the year for Excellence in Public Administration for successful implementation of the Project “Village Health and Nutrition in complete convergence mode”.

42. Welfare of the tribal communities continues to be a matter of highest priority for my Government. During 2011-12, over 1.65 lakh ST students have benefited from various Schemes for promoting education like scholarships, stipends, free textbooks, coaching centres, etc. During current year, 22 new Hostels for ST students have been completed. Ashram Schools and Eklavya Model Residential (EMR) Schools have been set up for providing quality and value-based education. The State Government has been facilitating return of misguided youth to mainstream through various rehabilitation schemes.

43. A significant step for the upliftment of the tribals has been the implementation of the Schedule Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. Tripura is one of the leading States in the Country in implementation this Legislation. So far, 1,20,418 Forest Dwellers have been vested with Forest Rights involving about 1,69,003 hectares of Forest Land (which works out to about 16.1% of total geographical area of the State). Patta Pass Books have been distributed. The work of Pillaring, after demarcation of land using Global Position System (GPS) devices, has been completed for over 93% beneficiaries and will be completed for the remaining beneficiaries very shortly. The Government has also been implementing
programmes for economic upliftment of these families through convergence of funds available under MGNREGA and other Schemes. In addition, a Special Project has been formulated, with project outlay of about Rs.440 crores, for taking up land-based activities like agriculture, horticulture, bamboo plantation, fodder cultivation, etc, covering an area of about 1.04 lakh hectares over a 3-year period. The matter is being followed up with Government of India for funding of this Special Project.

44. My Government has been taking several steps for educational and economic development of the Schedule Castes (SCs) and Other Backward Classes (OBC). During 2011-12, about 1.50 lakh SC and OBC students benefited from Stipends, scholarships and other programmes for promoting education. During current year, 230 Students have been sent to other States for job-oriented courses like D. Pharm., GNM (General Nursing and Midwifery), etc. For the economic advancement of the SCs and OBCs, credit-linked assistance has been arranged through the Tripura SC Cooperative Development Corporation and Tripura OBC Cooperative Development Corporation for 922 beneficiaries during current year (upto 31st December, 2012).

45. The Government attaches high priority to the development of the religious minorities in the true spirit of its tradition. A comprehensive Action Plan is being implemented since 2008-09 for all-round development of 72 minority-concentrated villages (with 30% or more minority population), which includes construction of roads, electrification of villages, drinking water supply, irrigation, construction of dwelling houses, market sheds, health sub-centres, girls’ hostels, etc. During the current year, the Government decided to expand the scope of this Action Plan to cover 124 Gram Panchayats/ Villages and 27 Wards of AMC/ Nagar Panchayats having 20% or more minority
population. A number of Schemes have been taken up for promoting Education like providing scholarships to students, special incentive to minority girls, awards for meritorious students, sponsoring students outside State for job-oriented courses, etc. During the current year, over 31,900 students have benefited from these Schemes. Besides these, various Schemes for economic development and welfare of the minorities are also being implemented. During current year, over 4,600 families have benefitted from such Schemes.

46. My Government is committed to maintenance of an efficient Public Distribution System (PDS) for the benefit of the poor people. During the current year, the State Government took the landmark decision of providing rice to BPL and AAY card holders @Rs.2 per kg., benefitting 2.95 lakh families. Further, in case of APL card holders, the scale of rice has been increased from 22 kg. to 25 kg. per family, benefitting 4.96 lakhs families. Not only that, about 1.52 lakh uncovered listed BPL families from 7 Districts (other than Dhalai District which is already covered under a Government of India Scheme), who are holding APL cards at present, are now being provided 22 kg. rice per month at the BPL rate of Government of India. These steps will go a long way in ensuring food security for the people of the State.

47. The Government has taken effective steps for rejuvenation of Cooperative Institutions in the State. The LAMPS/ PACS have already become debt-free as a result of assistance under the ‘Vaidyanathan Package’. They have started working as agents of Tripura State Cooperative Bank (TSCB) as credit dispensing institutions. LAMPS/PACS have opened banking counters enabling them to mobilise deposits and undertake other credit activities. TSCB has been able to wipe out its accumulated losses and has also obtained Licence from Reserve Bank of India for banking operations.
48. The State Government has been pursuing the policy of allotting small plots of Government (Khas) land to landless/homeless families, subject to availability of such land, to enable them to build their house, to pursue some economic activity and to live with dignity. Upto 31st March, 2012, total about 2.27 lakh acres of land was allotted to about 1.86 lakh families. During current year, additional about 1,600 acres of Khas land has been allotted to 7,743 families.

49. My Government is fully committed to protection of rights of the workers as also for their welfare. The Government currently stipulates minimum wages in respect of 24 scheduled employments, benefiting a large number of workers. The system of Variable Dearness Allowance has also been introduced in the State with effect from 1st January, 2013. A major Social Security Programme called Ashangatitha Sramik Sahayika Prakalpa (ASSP) is being implemented for unorganised workers, under which over 66,340 workers have benefitted so far. An Employees State Insurance (ESI) Dispensary has been set up at Agartala to provide healthcare to organised sector workers. During current year, over 70,900 patients have been treated in this dispensary upto 31st December, 2012. The Government has also launched a welfare scheme for construction workers and set up a Welfare Board. Till 31st December, 2012, total 32,747 workers have registered under the Scheme and during current year, 4,060 workers have received financial assistance for education, healthcare and other permissible activities.

50. The Government has been making continuous efforts for strengthening the Justice Delivery System in the State. It gives me great pleasure to inform this august House that the Government of India has finally approved upgrading of the Agartala Bench of Gauhati High Court into a full-fledged High Court. The necessary Central Legislation to this effect has come into force and the process of setting up of a full-
fledged High Court at Agartala has started. This has been possible only due to the persistent efforts of the State Government, supported by the people of the State. The Government has also taken up a number of Projects for upgrading the infrastructure of various Court Buildings as also some buildings for the Bar. In order to impart legal training to Government officials, lawyers and judicial officers, a new Tripura Law Training Institute has been set up during the year. Proactive steps are also being taken to promote legal literacy and awareness among the people through the State Legal Service Authority.

51. The Government is committed to promotion of science and technology and preservation of environment in the State. The State Action Plan on Climate Change has been approved by the Government of India. In order to promote scientific temper in the State, esp. among the children and the youth, a Science City (Vigyan Gram) is being set up at Badharghat at a cost of about Rs.62 crores. Preparatory steps have been taken and the construction work is expected to start shortly.

52. My Government has taken various e-Governance initiatives for effective delivery of services to citizens at their door-steps. The infrastructure required for delivering of e-Services has been put in place. A State Wide Area Network (SWAN) has been created with connectivity upto Block level through OFC network. The OFC connectivity is being extended further upto Gram Panchayat level under the National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) Project. RailTel is implementing the Project in Tripura. Panisagar Block was selected as one of the three Blocks in the country for Pilot Project under NOFN. The work has been successfully completed in Panisagar Block and the same is now being extended to the rest of the State. The State Data Centre, for housing all e-Governance applications, is fully operational. For delivery of e-Services at village level, 145 Common Service Centres (CSCs) have been set up in the
State. CSCs are gradually becoming popular and have started providing services like computer training, PAN Cards, ticket booking, business correspondent, mobile top-up, etc. Currently, about 16,000 transactions are taking place through CSCs every month. Various Departments have started launching e-Services, some of which are e-Hospital, Vision Centres, Tele-medicine Centres, Energy Billing System, e-Pourasabha, Vahan Sarathi, e-Suvidha, e-Panchayat, Online Land Records Management and Registration System, e-Procurement, Computerisation of Tax Administration, Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS), etc.

53. Hon’ble Speaker and Hon’ble Members of this august House, I have briefly presented before you an outline of the Policies, Programmes and some significant achievements of my Government as also the plan of action for further development. I would like to conclude by reiterating that my Government remains fully committed to pursue a development strategy that focuses on ensuring gradual upgradation of standard of living, with peace and tranquility, for every citizen in Tripura. My Government is committed to conducting the affairs of the State an efficient and transparent manner for all-round development of the State and its people. I am confident that my Government will receive full cooperation of the people as well as all the Hon’ble Members of the House, in this endeavour.

54. With these words, I now seek your leave, with the hope that your deliberations will be fruitful for the people of the State.

Jai Hind