



# English rendering of PM's address at the ceremony to dedicate the Tuirial Hydro Electric Power Project to the Nation in Aizawl, Mizoram

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Friends,

*Chibai Vek Ule*

*Iin Dam Em*

*This is for the first time that I have got the opportunity to visit Mizoram as Prime Minister. This was the only state among the North-Eastern states that we call the Eight Sisters which I was not able to visit. So first of all I seek your forgiveness. However, I had visited Mizoram before becoming Prime Minister. I'm very well familiar with the serene and beautiful atmosphere of this place. I have spent good time with friendly people of this place. It's very natural that those old memories have been refreshed once again when I have come amongst you.*

My visit to your beautiful State today, brings back fond memories, of good times spent with the friendly people of Mizoram. Let me begin by wishing you, and indeed, all the people of Mizoram, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

May the New Year bring happiness and prosperity to all.

As I arrived in Aizawl a short while ago, I was thrilled to witness once again, the enchanting beauty of Mizoram: the "Land of the Hill People."

A land of peace and calm.

A people so warm and hospitable.

A State with one of the highest literacy rates in India.

*Serious attempts had been made for the development of north-eastern states during the tenure of Atal Ji. Atal Ji used to say that a big objective of economic development was to completely eliminate the regional disparities. And he took a lot of steps in that direction.*

*When we formed the government in 2014 than once again we brought back the focus on this region in the decisions and policies of the government. I had made a rule that at least one cabinet minister would visit the North-Eastern states every fortnight. And the visit will not be like this that a minister would come here in the morning, participate in the event and goes back in the evening. I wanted that my colleagues in the cabinet should understand your problems by staying with you people and then formulate the policies of their ministries.*

Friends,

*I am told that in the last three years my colleague in the council of ministers have made more than 150 visits to the North-Eastern states. We have been working with this vision that you people do not need to come to Delhi, you do not need to send messages to Delhi to inform us about your problems and Delhi should come to you instead.*

*We call this policy - Ministry of DoNER At Your Door-step. In addition to ministers, even the secretary of ministry of Development of North East Region visits some or some other state of North-East every month and stays here along with his officers. And as a result of all these efforts made by the government the schemes related to North-Eastern states have picked up the pace and those projects which have been stuck for years today these same projects have been moving forward with a fast pace.*

As a result of the efforts of the Union Government, schemes for the benefit of the North-Eastern region have been gained momentum. Projects stuck for years, are now progressing.

I just had a glimpse of the impressive exhibition set up here by Self Help Groups, comprising produce from all the eight North-Eastern States. I congratulate the members of these Self Help Groups, for their immense talent and potential. It is a potential that the Union Government is committed to hone, and develop. This is one of the key objectives of the Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana.

Self Help Groups are also benefiting through credit linkages provided by the North Eastern Development Finance Corporation, with interest subsidy being provided by the Union Government.

I am told, the Ministry for Development of the North-East Region is also supporting the activities of the North Eastern Handicrafts and Handloom Development Corporation; and the North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation.

These Public Sector Under-takings are engaged in training and hand holding artisans, weavers and farmers, for marketing and food processing.

Technologies and products developed by Institutions such as CSIR, ICAR and the IITs should be studied for possible adoption in the North-East, to enable value addition of local produce.

Friends! Today we gather here to celebrate a significant mile-stone in the history of Mizoram:

The completion and dedication of the 60 Mega-Watt Tuirial Hydro-power Project. This comes 13 years after the last major central sector hydro-power project in the North-Eastern Region--the Kopili Stage-II.

Tuirial Hydro-power project is the first major Central Sector Project to be successfully commissioned in Mizoram. It is the first large hydro-power project in the State. It will produce 251 Million Units of electrical energy every year, and boost the socio-economic development of the State.

With the commissioning of this project, Mizoram becomes the third power-surplus State in the North-East, after Sikkim and Tripura.

The project was first declared and cleared by the Union Government of Prime Minister Vajpayee ji, way back in 1998, but got delayed.

The completion of this project is a reflection of our commitment to complete on-going projects and usher in a new era of development in the North Eastern region.

Besides generating electricity, the reservoir water will also open new avenues for navigation. This will provide connectivity to remote villages. The huge reservoir, spread over an area of 45 square kilometers, can also be used for development of fisheries.

This project will boost eco-tourism, and provide a source of assured drinking water supply. I am informed that the State has a hydro-power potential of 2100 Mega-Watts, of which we have so far tapped only a fraction.

I see no reason why Mizoram cannot become a net-power exporter. Our aim is not just to make the North Eastern States power surplus. We also aim to develop a state-of-art transmission system which ensures that surplus power is transferred to other power deficient parts of the country.

My Government is investing close to Rupees 10,000 crores for a comprehensive improvement in the power transmission system in the North Eastern States.

*Friends,*

*In our country, even after 70 years after independence, there are 4 crores such households in our country which do not have an electricity connection. You can imagine how these people have been compelled to lead the life of the 18th century. There are thousands of households here in Mizoram that have been constrained to live the life without electricity. In order to provide electricity to such households, the government has recently launched a scheme - Pradhanmantri Sahaj Bijli - Har Ghar Yojana - or SAUBHAGYA. Our objective is to provide electricity to every household of the country as soon as possible.*

*More than Rs. 16,000 crore will be spent under this scheme. The government will not charge any money from those households which will be given connection under this scheme. We want to see the light in the lives of poor people, we want to brighten their lives.*

*Friends,*

*If we compare with the other parts of the country then it can be seen that the number of entrepreneurs in the North-East has not gone up to the extent that it should have been. A big reason for this thing was that our youths were not able to raise the necessary capital for starting their own business. The government has started schemes like Pradhanmantri Mudra Yojana, Start-up India and Stand-up India by taking into account this requirement of youths. The ministry of DONER has created a venture capital fund of Rs. 100 crores while giving special attention to the North-East. I call upon the youth of Mizoram to take maximum advantage of these central government schemes. Youth of this region has the capability and courage to do wonders in the world of Start-ups. Government of India is committed to hold the hands of these youth.*

We are betting on the skills and strengths of India's youth. We believe in 'empower through enterprise' - which is creating the right eco-system for innovation and enterprise to flourish so that our land is home to the next big ideas that can transform humanity.

In 2022, India will complete 75 years of independence, the next five years provide an opportunity to plan and build on our achievements, to make a quantum leap in all spheres of development.

Building a New India by 2022 requires us to work towards the twin goals of increasing economic growth as well as ensuring that the fruits of growth are shared by all. *In the spirit of Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas (Government for all, development of all)*, every Indian, irrespective of caste, gender, religion, class must have equal opportunities to partake in the new prosperity.

My Government believes in competitive and cooperative federalism, where there is healthy competition between States. I am convinced that States are the main drivers of change.

We have taken a number of initiatives to infuse healthy competition among States. A Committee of Chief Ministers made recommendations to rationalize Centrally Sponsored Schemes. We duly accepted the recommendations.

Despite fiscal constraints, the sharing pattern of core centrally sponsored schemes for North Eastern States has been continued at 90-10. For other schemes, it stands at 80-20.

Friends, The vision of New India can be realized only if the fruits of development reach all.

The Union Government has plans to focus on around 115 districts which are relatively backward when evaluated on various social indicators. This will also benefit the backward districts of North Eastern States including Mizoram.

Just yesterday, we approved a new Central Sector Scheme. The North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme will fill the gaps in creation of infrastructure in two sectors.

One sector is physical infrastructure relating to water supply, power, connectivity and especially projects promoting tourism.

The other is social sector projects of education and health. The new scheme has been designed after due consultations with State Governments. However, to ensure continuity, all ongoing projects under NLCPR will be provided funds for completion by March 2022.

The new Scheme will be 100 percent centrally funded as against the NLCPR, where 10 percent contribution had to come from the State Governments.

The Central Government will be providing Rupees 5300 Crore to North Eastern States under the Scheme over the next three years.

Lack of connectivity is one of the biggest hurdles in the path of development of the North Eastern Region. We aim for a Transformation by Transportation through investment in infrastructure in the region.

The Union Government has sanctioned over 3800 kilometers of National Highway with an investment of Rupees 32000 crore during last three years, out of which nearly 1200 kilometers of road has already been constructed.

The Union Government will be investing another Rupees 60,000 crore under Special Accelerated Road Development Programme in the North-East and Rs. 30,000 crore under Bharatmala in the next two to three years to build a network of high-ways and roads in the North East Region. We are committed to bring all the State Capitals of North East Region on the Rail map.

The Government of India is executing 15 New Rail Line projects of 1385 kilometers length, at a cost of over Rs.47,000 crore.

The railways reached Mizoram last year, with the inauguration of the rail line connecting Bhairabi in Mizoram with Silchar in Assam.

I had laid the foundation for a new line to take rail connectivity to Aizawl in 2014.

With the support of the State Government, we shall connect the State Capital Aizawl with broad gauge rail line.

The Union Government has been proactively following the 'Act East Policy'. As a gate-way to South East Asia, Mizoram stands to gain immensely from this. It can emerge as a key transit point for trade with Myanmar and Bangladesh.

Various bilateral projects are at various stages of completion. Some of the major initiatives include the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project, the Rih-Tedim Road Project and Border Haats.

All these will increase the scope for economic linkages, and contribute to the overall economic growth and development of the North-Eastern Region.

Friends, The high literacy rate, scenic beauty and availability of large English speaking population in Mizoram make for a perfect blend to develop the State as a model tourist destination.

The State offers significant scope for adventure tourism, cultural tourism, eco-tourism, wild-life tourism, and community-based rural tourism. If developed well, tourism can emerge as the biggest employer in the state. The Union Government has sanctioned two tourism projects worth 194 crore rupees for Mizoram in the last 2 years, to promote eco-tourism and adventure tourism. The Central Government has already released 115 crore rupees for implementation of these projects.

The Government is also committed to provide assistance for maintenance and up-keep of various wild-life sanctuaries and national parks in Mizoram with a view to attract tourists. Let us work together to make Mizoram one of the top tourism destinations in India.

*Friends,*

*This part of our country can easily declare itself Carbon Negative. Our friend Bhutan has done that. If the state governments intensify their efforts then all the eight states of North-East can become Carbon Negative. The recognition of states as Carbon Negative can establish this part of the country as a big brand in world map. Other states of North-East can intensify their efforts to get themselves declared as 100% organic states on the lines of Sikkim.*

*Central government has started Traditional Agriculture Development Scheme in order to encourage organic farming.*

*The government has been developing 10,000 organic clusters across the country under this scheme. Hundred Farmer Producers Organisations have been set up in the north-east too. More than 50,000 farmers have been connected with them. Also, arrangements have been made so that the farmers of this place can sell their organic produce in Delhi.*

*Friends,*

*Our country will celebrate 75 years of its independence in 2022. And Mizoram can make a pledge that by 2022 it will be able to develop itself as a 100% organic and carbon negative state. I would like to assure the people of Mizoram that the central government is fully with them for realization of this pledge. We have been solving your smallest problems by understanding them. I would like to give you an example of Bamboo.*

The Bamboo which is a source of livelihood for lakhs of people of North East, has been under a very restrictive regulatory regime. You could not transport or sell the Bamboo produced in your own field without a permit. Our Government with an aim to reduce this pain, has changed the regulatory regime. Now there will be no requirement of any permit or permission for producing, transporting and selling Bamboo and its products produced by farmers in their own fields. This will benefit lakhs of farmers and will add to the efforts to double farmers' income by 2022.

*It's not possible that I come to Mizoram and do not talk about football. Mizoram's player Jeje Lalpekhlua has attracted the attention of the entire country towards him. And in a way football is a part of every household in Mizoram. I have been told that a pilot project by FIFA and Aizwal Football Club are further strengthening the local talent.*

*Football fans of the entire country had clapped for Mizoram when in 2014 it had won Santosh Trophy for the first time. I congratulate the people of Mizoram for their achievements in the field of sports. Football is such a soft power through which Mizoram can get worldwide recognition.*

The soft power of football can become Mizoram's global identity. There are many other prominent sports persons from Mizoram who have brought glory to the State and the country. These include the Olympian Archer C. Lalremnung, boxer Ms. Jenny Lalremliani, weight lifter Ms. Lalchhahimi, and hockey player Ms. Lalruatfeli.

I am sure, Mizoram shall continue to provide sportspersons who shall excel on the world stage.

*Friends,*

*The economies of some countries in the world are dependent only and only on sports. This kind of countries attract people from all over the world by creating necessary atmosphere for the sports. Given the immense potential of sports in the North-East the central government has been setting up a Sports University in this region in Imphal.*

It will become easier for the youth of this region to obtain every kind of training related to sports after the establishment of this Sports University. Also, we are preparing for this thing as well that after establishment of the university its campuses should be opened not only across the country but in other countries as well so that a sportsperson of this region can obtain training of sports by visiting other countries as well.

I see Aizawl wearing a colorful and festive look, and fully geared up for celebrating Christmas. I once again wish you all and the people of Mizoram a Merry Christmas.

Thank you.

*Ein Vaya Choonga Ka-Lom Ei Mangachcha.*

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