

Hon'ble Speaker sir,

With your permission, I rise to present the Budget for the financial year 2024-25.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Sir, today I stand before you with a sense of confidence and optimism to present the annual budget for 2024-25. One year ago, the citizens of Meghalaya reaffirmed their trust in the MDA Government. This renewed and stronger mandate fuels our commitment to further prosperity and progress.

1.2. Sir, I would like to begin by highlighting the key achievements of the Government over the last six years.

a. Government expenditure has more than doubled from ₹ 12,159 crore in 2018-19 to ₹ 25,052 crore in the current financial year. This was achieved through better performance on centrally sponsored schemes, attracting investments through externally aided projects, improving State's own revenues and careful management of State Finances. In program after program, we have been able to leverage additional funding based on our excellent performance and timely completion of projects. Today, Meghalaya is one of the few States that gets bonus instalments under schemes like Jal Jeevan Mission and National Health Mission. Agencies like IFAD and World Bank are providing additional allocations to expand our ongoing projects in Agriculture and Road infrastructure. Under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investments, our allocations have been increasing exponentially. For 2023-24, the budget estimates for the scheme were ₹ 1,003 crore. I am pleased to inform this august House that we have already got approvals for ₹ 1,987 crore, close to double the budgeted amount.

b. We have now completely streamlined the payment of salaries, pensions, and other benefits to the 52,829 government employees, 35,403 pensioners, more than 21,000 personnel drawing grant-in-aid salaries, 24,039 SSA and other

teachers, 28,450 wage employees, 7,051 ASHA workers and 12,324 Anganwadi workers and helpers.

- c. The increased government expenditure has enabled us to complete and initiate several capital projects in the sectors of Roads and Bridges, Water Supply, Power, Sports, Information Technology, Tourism and Urban Development. Social infrastructure like schools and hospitals are being comprehensively renovated and upgraded. Administrative infrastructure like Block Offices and Police Stations are being renovated and reconstructed for the first time at scale. Development is reaching every village and locality in the State in the form of new roads, piped water connections, food processing units, community halls, water harvesting structures, and play fields. For the first time in the history of the State, a range of beneficiary-oriented programs that directly benefit our farmers, women and youth are being universalized. Programs like PRIME, FOCUS, CM-CARE, YESS Meghalaya, Green Meghalaya and Skills Meghalaya have become household names. The State's new umbrella program for employment generation, CM-ELEVATE, has garnered unprecedented response. Against a program target of setting up 20,000 enterprises in the sectors of Agro-logistics, Tourism homestays, Livestock and Sericulture, 29,000 applications have been received in just two months. This is an example of the new Meghalaya - a State of aspiration, opportunity and enterprise. This new energy and commitment of the State is acknowledged nationally and globally through multiple awards and recognitions.

- 1.3. Sir, another remarkable achievement of the last six years has been the maintenance of peace and order. The challenge of the COVID pandemic has been overcome through collaborative working with the communities and all sections of the society. Sporadic episodes of law and order have been dealt with in an effective manner. Long standing issues like the inter-State boundary dispute are being resolved through a consultative and systematic approach, keeping the interests of the State and our people paramount.

- 1.4. On the basis of the last six years work and successes, Meghalaya today has the momentum. We can aspire for and achieve greater goals, individually and collectively. The recent past gives us all the reasons to be optimistic and move forward with confidence and pride. Our target to be amongst the top ten States of the country in per capita GDP and SDG goals by 2032 is ambitious, but possible. My Government will make every effort to make it possible. As an intermediate goal, Meghalaya will contribute to the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' by increasing its GDP to 10 billion US Dollar by 2028. This is the commitment I made to Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi ji, an year ago. I reiterate the commitment today in this august House.
- 1.5. The last budget outlined the foundational plan for the 10 billion US Dollar economy and 5 lakh employment opportunities by 2028. This budget further elaborates that plan and provides the funding required for its implementation. We will achieve a 10 billion US Dollar economy through focussing on 10 opportunities. I would also like to commit to 10 guarantees which will ensure that every Meghalayan benefits from the growth story and that our development over the next four years is equitable, sustainable and just.

2. STATE FINANCES

- 2.1. Sir, continuing the tradition of improving the budgetary practices, the Finance Department has prepared revised estimates for the current financial year in January. This exercise enables realigning expenditures to be in line with the receipts. The Revised Estimates for 2023-24 are being presented before this august House along with the Budget Estimates of 2024-25.
- 2.2. The vision of doubling the State GSDP and making Meghalaya a 10- billion US Dollar economy was set with GSDP of 2022-23 as the benchmark, when the State's GSDP was INR 42,697 Cr or 5.3 billion US Dollar. The GSDP for 2024-25 is projected at ₹ 52,973 crore or 6.6 billion US Dollar. The annual growth rate for the period 2023-25

has been a reassuring 11.4%. These numbers are encouraging and demonstrate the State is on track to achieve the 10 billion US Dollar economy target.

- 2.3. Sir, during the current year, the total estimated transfers from the Centre, which includes the share of central taxes, Fifteenth Finance Commission grants and centre's share of centrally sponsored schemes is expected to increase to ₹ 18,168 crore from the budget estimates of ₹ 15,467 crore. The strong performance of the Indian economy provides the much-required impetus to accelerate the growth of Meghalaya. The share of central taxes is expected to increase to ₹ 9,355 crore for FY 2024-25 from the revised estimates of ₹ 8,471 crore for the current year, registering a growth of 10%.
- 2.4. State's own Tax revenue during the current year is ₹ 3,262 crore, an increase of 23% over the previous year. With the setting up of the State Economic Analysis Team and various reforms including the end-to-end computerization in the Excise Department, the State's own tax revenue is estimated at ₹ 4,041 crore in 2024-25, of which GST is ₹ 1,995 crore, Taxes on sales and trade is ₹ 1,156 crore and excise is ₹ 661 crore.
- 2.5. The State's own non-tax revenue was ₹ 457 crore in 2022-23. With the increase in prospecting licenses approval by the Government of India and the expected resumption of scientific coal mining, the non-tax revenue is estimated at ₹ 747 crore in 2024-25.
- 2.6. Considering the overall anticipated transfers from the Centre and the projected State's own receipts, I am estimating the total expenditure for 2024-25 at ₹ 27,072 crore, of which Revenue expenditure is ₹ 19,653 crore and capital expenditure is ₹ 7,419 crore. The projected capital expenditure is almost four times higher than the value in 2018-19. The annual growth rate during the 7-year period 2018-25 for capital expenditure is a staggering 26%, compared to an 11% growth on the revenue expenditure.

2.7. I will move to the second part of my speech deliberating on the Ten Opportunities and the Ten Guarantees.

3. TEN OPPORTUNITIES FOR ‘MISSION 10’

3.1. George Bernard Shaw famously said- *“Don’t wait for the right opportunity: create it.”* My Government has created those right opportunities through leveraging Meghalaya’s unique strengths. The ten opportunity sectors have been identified based on their potential either to be drivers of growth or employment or both.

3.2. INVESTMENT PROMOTION AND PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

3.2.1. Sir, private investment is one of the key ingredients for economic growth. Private investments have not been forthcoming in Meghalaya due to challenges of the difficult terrain and the distance from markets. However, the improvements in infrastructure over the last six years and the inauguration of long pending PPP projects like Vivanta Shillong and Courtyard Marriot has created a positive environment for private sector investments in the sectors of Tourism, Information Technology and Information Technology Enabled Services, Health Care, Power and Food Processing.

3.2.2. Achieving a GDP of 10 billion US Dollar in the next four years requires substantial private sector investments to the tune of at least 1 billion US Dollar or ₹ 8,000 crore. Toward this end, we are creating the region’s best investment promotion ecosystem.

3.2.3. The Meghalaya Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy has been formulated and is in the public domain for comments and suggestions. Under the policy, a range of subsidies will be provided to investors and sectors like Tourism and IT and ITES are being given industry status. Patent based industries in green sectors will be given special preference. I am also optimistic that the Government of India’s new Industrial policy for the North-eastern region will be announced soon. The

combined incentives of the National and State's industrial policies will definitely make Meghalaya a preferred investment destination.

3.2.4 Promoting ease of doing business is fundamental to investment promotion along with providing incentives. The Meghalaya State Investment Promotion and Facilitation Bill, 2024 has been approved by the Cabinet and is being paced before this august House for enactment. The bill provides for the creation of an Invest Meghalaya Authority which will be the single empowered agency for undertaking all investment promotion and facilitation activities. The Single window system is being streamlined and a unified application form and portal will be made applicable for investors. All this will decrease the regulatory burden and increase the ease of doing business.

3.2.5 I am allocating an amount of ₹ 20 crore for the setting up and functioning of the all-important Invest Meghalaya Authority.

3.3. REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY AND BORDER TRADE

3.3.1. Meghalaya has a lot to gain from improved regional connectivity and the Bangladesh Bhutan India Nepal (BBIN) corridor. Strengthening this through improving infrastructure and easing the movement of goods has the potential to raise India's income by 10% and North Eastern Region's income by 45%. I would like to inform this august House that Meghalaya is taking the lead in bringing together the varied stakeholders to promote multimodal connectivity in the BBIN countries. Projects like the Dhubri- Phulbari bridge and the proposed Mahendraganj- Hili Road will transform the economy of Meghalaya.

3.3.2. The 443 kilometres of international border that Meghalaya shares with Bangladesh presents several opportunities. To unlock these, the first international exporter-importer meet was held at the Integrated Check Point at Dawki. MoUs were signed between the business delegations on both sides and road map for improving logistics and reducing barriers to trade has been finalised. There is huge potential

to diversify Meghalaya's exports to Bangladesh in fruits, vegetables, spices and other horticultural products.

- 3.3.3. The State currently has 7 functional Land Custom Stations, and five functional border haats. A proposal for setting up a new Land Custom Station at Umkiang in East Jaintia Hills district is being pursued with the Government of India.
- 3.3.4. Support infrastructure like road and internet connectivity, warehousing and cold storages are required to further promote trade. While we engage with the Government of India for building this infrastructure, the State Government will make immediate investments to facilitate border trade. For this I am allocating an amount of ₹ 25 crore for 2024-25.

3.4. URBAN TRANSFORMATION

- 3.4.1. The urban centres of Meghalaya contribute more than 40% of the State's GDP, playing a pivotal role in driving the State's economic growth. We are making strong progress in the development of New Shillong Township. Land measuring 232 acres has been allocated for building of the New Shillong Administrative City, which will have a large administrative complex to house a Secretariat building and all the directorates. This integrated administrative complex is expected to cost ₹ 550 crore. A unity mall will be built at an estimated cost of ₹ 220 crore. Administrative and police housing will also be built, along with sports infrastructure, and other urban amenities, taking the total investment to ₹ 1,200 crore.
- 3.4.2. While the administrative city will be the hub of Government, a knowledge city will be built at Mawkhanu-Mawpdang in the 808 acres of land procured by the Government. The New Shillong Knowledge city will focus on Sports, IT, Tourism and agro-logistics. The DPR for this city at a cost of ₹ 5,400 crore has already been submitted to Government of India. The construction of the various projects in the city will be funded by State Government, Government of India and through private

investments. It is expected that these two new cities will create 50,000 well-paying jobs.

- 3.4.3. Road network between Shillong and the Administrative City at Umsawli and between the Administrative city and the Knowledge city at Mawkhanu are being taken up at an estimated cost of ₹ 520 crore. For 2024-25, I am allocating an amount of ₹ 365 crore for taking up various infrastructure projects at the Administrative city and Knowledge city.
- 3.4.4. As the new cities substantially decongest Shillong, projects will be taken up to improve the overall ease of living. The Wah Umkhrah riverfront will be developed into a central hub for recreational, cultural, and social activities at an estimated cost of ₹ 40 crore. A comprehensive street rejuvenation project of a 10-kilometre stretch in the heart of Shillong and the redevelopment of 20 junctions is being undertaken with an investment of more than ₹ 50 crore. The cultural and commercial centre of the city, lewduh, will be redeveloped to become a modern market and a tourist hub with an investment of ₹ 50 crore. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 70 crore for starting these iconic projects in 2024-25.
- 3.4.5. A Comprehensive Mobility Plan for Shillong and Tura is currently under preparation. The 'Shillong Urban Mobility Policy' with a broad framework to address its mobility issues have already been approved. To transition to green mobility and in line with the State's Electric Vehicle Policy 2021, 100 electric buses will be deployed in Shillong and Tura.
- 3.4.6. To address the pressing issue of on-street parking, the State is creating 1,250 parking spaces in Shillong, 150 in Tura, and 100 in Jowai with a total cost of ₹ 150 crore.
- 3.4.7. Various projects under Shillong Smart City are nearing completion. The Integrated Command and Control Centre and the Shopping complex at Polo being built at a cost of ₹ 214 crore and ₹ 100 crore respectively will be completed in the next year.

For the completion of all Smart City projects, I am allocating an amount of ₹ 122 crore.

- 3.4.8. To improve waste management, the landfill site at Marten will be cleaned by employing biomining technology at a cost of ₹ 20 crore. The identification of a new integrated waste management site for the Shillong urban area is underway. A new site for waste management at Tura has been finalised. Similar efforts are on in the other urban areas.
- 3.4.9. To foster community involvement in urban rejuvenation efforts, the Government has rolled out 'My City Campaign' under which direct funding of up to ₹ 10 lakh per locality will be provided to *Dorbars*, localities and community institutions to take up beautification and rejuvenation activities. I am optimistic that one of Meghalaya's urban centres can become the cleanest cities of the country adding to the Cleanest village and Cleanest river epithets.
- 3.4.10. For the year 2024-25, I am allocating an amount of ₹ 934 crore for the Urban Sector of which ₹ 764 crore will be from State schemes.

3.5. IT AND ITeS: MEGHALAYA AS A TECH HUB

- 3.5.1. IT and ITeS is a priority sector for our Government. On the strength of our temperate climate, sizable youth population and the sufficiency of technical skills, we aspire to make Meghalaya the tech hub of North East India.
- 3.5.2. We commemorated the 50th anniversary of statehood with the inauguration of the Shillong Tech Park. The Second Phase of the Park is currently being developed in New Shillong Township with an investment of ₹ 121 crore. These two projects will create 20,000 jobs.
- 3.5.3. The Tura Tech Park has been sanctioned with a cost ₹ 127 crore. This project will spread Meghalaya's IT boom to the Garo Hills. The State's draft IT policy is in the

public domain. The policy provides a range of incentives to encourage private investments in new tech parks. For the year 2024-25, I am allocating ₹ 149 crore for the IT sector.

3.6. MORE THAN DOUBLING FARMERS' INCOME

- 3.6.1. The Government's interventions and mission mode programs in the agriculture sector over the last six years have provided support to farmer groups engaged in horticulture and plantation crops for procuring better inputs, training on package of practices, transportation, aggregation, value addition and marketing of produce.
- 3.6.2. In the last three years, 166 processing units, 154 warehousing facilities and 34 cold storages has been set up covering even the remotest locations in the State. A hub and spoke model of PRIME Hubs as the large processing units and Collective Marketing centres as primary processing units are being set up. These facilities are owned and managed by Integrated Village Cooperatives, Farmer Producer Organizations and Women's collectives. Some of our processing facilities are the first and the finest in the North-eastern region. I am happy to inform this House that the first orange waxing unit in the Northeast is set up at Jirang, Ri Bhoi district; a bio-curcumin extraction unit is set up at Laskien, West Jaintia Hills; the regions most advanced jack fruit processing unit at Rongara, South Garo Hills; the largest cooperative owned fruit and spice processing unit at Tikrikilla, West Garo Hills.
- 3.6.3. In the horticulture sector alone, an amount of ₹ 102 crore was spent on mission mode projects, ₹ 118 crore of grants were provided for setting of PRIME Hubs and processing units and ₹ 37 crore of interest free loans are provided as working capital. Another ₹ 100 crore was spent on providing first tranche of the FOCUS program to support farmer producer groups. The cumulative expenditure on value chain development work in the sector stands at ₹ 357 crore.

- 3.6.4. The government will strengthen all existing interventions and invest in new interventions to achieve the goal of more than doubling the income of the 4.5 lakh farming households of the State.
- 3.6.5. Every block will have a PRIME hub to act as a food processing fulcrum for the area by 2028. To complete the construction of the on-going 18 PRIME Hubs and build new PRIME Hubs and collective marketing centre, I am allocating ₹ 100 crore for 2024-25.
- 3.6.6. The Floriculture Mission will be implemented to make Meghalaya the national leader in Orchid production with an investment of ₹ 250 crore over the next four years. Support to the tune of ₹ 5-7 lakh per household will be provided in select clusters. For 2024-25, I am allocating ₹ 40 crore for this mission.
- 3.6.7. The recently launched Meghalaya State Organic Mission aims at bringing 1 lakh hectares under organic cultivation by 2028 making us the frontrunners in Organic production. For 2024-25, I am allocating ₹ 30 crore for this mission.
- 3.6.8. The area under horticulture and plantation crops will be greatly expanded to provide long-term income security to our farmers. An additional 5,000 hectares of area expansion of pepper, coffee, cocoa and cinnamon is planned for the next two years. The total investments towards these interventions will be ₹ 70 crore and for the financial year 2024-25, I am allocating an amount of ₹ 35 crore.
- 3.6.9. The second tranche of FOCUS is already being released to eligible producer groups. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 100 crore to provide the third tranche in 2024-25.
- 3.6.10. To increase farm productivity, the irrigation network of the State is being expanded by an additional 18,400 hectares. To achieve this, I am allocating an amount of ₹ 119 crore.

- 3.6.11. The overall allocation for the agriculture and horticulture sector in 2024-25 stands at ₹ 427 crore, an increase of 16% from the last years allocation of ₹ 368 crore.
- 3.6.12. Animal Husbandry and livestock rearing sectors are important both for providing nutritional security and additional income for rural households. Under the Piggery Mission, 367 cooperatives have been supported, and more than ₹ 63 crore has been disbursed as interest-free loans benefitting 27,150 rearers. Close to 50% of the funds provided under the FOCUS program has been invested by the producer groups in the piggery sector. There are 100 dairy cooperative societies in the State involving almost 1,032 members.
- 3.6.13. Realising the immense potential of the sector, the State Piggery, Dairy, Goatery and Poultry schemes have been made part of the CM-ELEVATE program. 50% subsidy is provided to set up 15,000 new units for individuals and groups. All departmental farms are being strengthened to provide support services to the farmers. A new veterinary hospital will be set up at Upper Shillong with an investment of ₹ 30 crore. The overall allocation for the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Sector for 2024-25 is ₹ 183 crore.
- 3.6.14. The Textiles sector is one of the primary employment generators for women in rural areas. Under the CM-ELEVATE program, 75% subsidy is being provided for the different sericulture activities including reeling, spinning, weaving and grainage units.
- 3.6.15. The next phase of the Aquaculture interventions will be taken up as part of the New Meghalaya State Aquaculture Mission 3.0. The mission will focus on creating additional assets, exploring emerging opportunities and capacity building. The total allocation for the mission over the next four years will be ₹ 150 crore.
- 3.6.16. The overall allocation for the 2024-25 for the primary sector activities is ₹ 1,670 crore.

3.7. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AND ENGAGEMENT OF WOMEN

- 3.7.1. Meghalaya is a uniquely matrilineal society where women have historically worked shoulder-to-shoulder with their male counterparts in contributing towards our economic growth and social progress. That women are at the forefront of generating prosperity in Meghalaya's countryside is evident from the sharp increase in the number of self-help groups in last the last 5 years. From just 60,000 women in 2018, the State's SHG network today comprises of 4.37 lakh members. The women's groups collectively have an accumulated corpus of more than ₹ 700 crore. Over the next four years, our objective is to create women's enterprises with a total valuation of 1 billion US Dollar. I am allocating ₹ 389 crore for 2024-25 for continued implementation of the SHG program.
- 3.7.2. Women, both as individuals and groups, have taken up successful enterprises in the primary and the service sectors. Women entrepreneurs have been at the forefront of providing banking services in the rural areas as banking correspondents and Bank Sakhis. About 60% of the FOCUS beneficiaries and CM-ELEVATE applicants are women. With structured support and handholding, the existing women's networks of the State can generate about 1 lakh job opportunities.
- 3.7.3. Traditional women networks like 'Seng Kynthei' organizations from the Khasi Hills and women's groups from the Garo Hills have always been active segments of Meghalaya's civil society. They have worked relentlessly to raise awareness on issues of women and child health, alcoholism and substance abuse and rural development. I am launching a new program for providing funding support and for structured engagement with traditional and new women's networks.
- 3.7.4. The overall allocation for 2024-25 for empowerment of women as presented in the gender budget is ₹ 5,271 crore.

3.8. ENGAGING AND EMPLOYING YOUTH

- 3.8.1. Sir, Meghalaya is at the zenith of a demographic dividend with more than 72% of its population below the age of 35. The young men and women will both drive the State's growth and be the beneficiaries of it.
- 3.8.2. Sports provides the arena for young people to excel and to be engaged in the most constructive manner. A never before push has been given to the Sports sector over the last few years. The Meghalaya games have been revived and institutionalised into an annual event.
- 3.8.3. Sports infrastructure costing about ₹ 400 crore are under construction and about ₹ 200 crore worth of projects have been completed in the last two years. The renovation of the JN Stadium at Polo grounds Shillong at a cost of ₹ 59 crore will be completed soon. Construction of Iconic new projects like the Integrated Hospitality and Sports complex at Shillong and the Indoor halls at the PA Sangma Integrated Sports complex at Tura are progressing well. This year saw the inauguration of the Wahiajer Multi-Sports Complex built at a cost of ₹ 64 crore and the Pa Togan Nengminja Sangma Athletic Stadium built at a cost ₹ 16 crore.
- 3.8.4. As promised in the last budget, new grassroots infrastructure in the form of artificial turfs, synthetic tracks, indoor halls and natural grounds will be developed across the State. Construction of the first set of projects costing ₹ 108 crore, including the Kynshi Stadium, West Khasi Hills and the Wahlyngkhat Stadium, Pynursla subdivision will begin soon. Another ₹ 200 crore worth of projects are being finalized. Meghalaya's biggest Stadium along with a world class aquatics and swimming complex will be built at New Shillong Knowledge city at Mawkhanu at an estimated cost of ₹ 350 crore. For 2024-25, I am allocating an amount of ₹ 120 crore for sports infrastructure.
- 3.8.5. The YESS Meghalaya program was launched with the aim of encouraging the youth groups to take up various grassroot-level activities like sports, healthcare, arts and culture, entertainment, and environmental action. Till date 1,430 youth groups have

been supported with ₹ 5 crore under the program. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 20 crore for 2024-25.

3.8.6. The overall allocation for the sports and youth sector for 2024-25 is ₹ 246 crore, an increase of 15% over last year.

3.8.7. Skilling young Meghalayans in locally relevant trades like integrated farming and hospitality to cutting edge trades like machine learning, 3D printing, robotics is key priority for the Government. Over the next four years, we have an ambitious target of skilling 1.2 lakh youngsters in marketable skills under the 'Skills Meghalaya' program with an investment of ₹ 360 crore. A world-class Skills and Innovation Hub will be built at New Shillong with a cost of ₹ 82 crore.

3.8.8. The PRIME program was launched with the aim of fostering an entrepreneurial spirit amongst the State's youth and for creating an entrepreneurial ecosystem. The program is currently supporting more than 5,500 entrepreneurs and more than 210 startups. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 100 crore for the implementation of PRIME and CM-ELEVATE for 2024-25.

3.8.9. The size of the youth budget that encompasses all the activities undertaken for youth stands at ₹ 2,853 crore in 2024-25.

3.9. COUNTRY'S BEST SUSTAINABLE ECOTOURISM DESTINATION

3.9.1. Both nature and culture has blessed Meghalaya with their choicest bounties. Tourism is therefore a default sector in Meghalaya's economic growth plan. I am glad to inform this House that the sector has steadily revived from the disruptions caused by the COVID pandemic. The current annual tourist footfall is 13.81 lakh, which is 1.1 lakh more than the pre-pandemic levels.

3.9.2. Tourism infrastructure development is being prioritized. The construction of the iconic projects like the Shillong Peak Ropeway and Mawkdok Skywalk will be

started in the next financial year. The construction of the State of art Tura convention centre and the accommodation complex at Thadlaskein in West Jaitia Hills, is progressing well.

- 3.9.3. With growing numbers of tourists, nearly 3,000 new high-value rooms are required, translating into a requirement of several five-star hotels and other premium properties. It is expected that these new hotels will be built at Shillong, New Shillong, Umiam, Sohra and Tura with private sector investment of approximately ₹ 1,000 crore. Additionally, projects such as convention centres aimed at promoting wedding tourism, MICE tourism and a new golf course are under planning stage. Land bank of nearly 400 acres has been earmarked for developing such infrastructure.
- 3.9.4. The State's resources will be invested in building accommodation and tourism amenities in the less developed circuits. I am committing an investment of ₹ 200 crore for new circuits with bases at Umling in Ri Bhoi, Mawsynram in East Khasi Hills, Doldegre in West Garo Hills, Sohiong in East Khasi Hills, Syntung in East Khasi Hills, Mairang in Eastern West Khasi Hills, Resubelpara in North Garo Hills, Wari Chora in South Garo Hills, Umden in Ri Bhoi, Nongstoin and Mawphanlur in West Khasi Hills.
- 3.9.5. An additional ₹ 150 crore of new investment will be made in unique tourism projects such as the Meghalayan Age experiential Centre at Mawmluh in East Khasi Hills, Development of Tribal heritage centre in Mandalgre in East Garo Hills, Geology-museum at Nongnah in South West Khasi Hills and Riverfront development of Umngot at Shnongpdeng, Darrang and Dawki, in West Jaintia Hills. These projects are aimed making tourism more experiential and to increase the duration of stay of tourists.
- 3.9.6. Meghalaya aims to be the country's best and most sustainably managed tourism destination. To achieve this, there is a need to restrict the number of tourists visiting sites following the global best practices. We are working on a framework

for notifying eco-tourism zones with defined carrying capacities and for charging a higher green fee from visitors. The revenues thus earned will be disbursed equitably among all the communities involved. For the creation of infrastructure at notified eco-tourism zones, I am allocating an amount of ₹ 50 crore for 2024-25.

3.9.7. The home stay scheme, providing up to 70% subsidy for building new homestays costing about ₹ 10 lakh, is a resounding success. About 550 projects have been sanctioned in the last two years. We target to build another 2,000 homestays by 2028. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 5 crore for the Meghalaya Homestay Scheme for 2024-25. Construction of Tourism Villas is also being subsidized at 35% under the CM-ELEVATE program.

3.9.8. A new scheme for development of infrastructure at all Tourism spots will be launched. Communities managing tourist sites will be provided grants of up to ₹ 25 lakh for infrastructure development and management of sites.

3.9.9. Air Connectivity to the State is essential for growth of Tourism. We have been successful in establishing direct flight connectivity from markets such as Delhi and Kolkata. We are further aiming to establish direct flight connectivity from Bangalore, Mumbai and Chennai through providing viability gap funding to airlines.

3.10. CLIMATE RESILIENT GREEN ECONOMY

3.10.1. Meghalaya is in a unique position to bring the nexus of climate-resilient agriculture, eco-tourism and sustainability, thereby propelling Green growth.

3.10.2. Over the last 6 years, investments have been made in sustainability focussed projects. More than 50% of the ₹ 7,300 crore of investments in externally aided projects in Meghalaya are focussed on natural resources management.

3.10.3. I am glad to inform this august House, that a new project for protection of vulnerable catchment areas in Meghalaya, MegARISE, has recently been launched.

The ₹ 353 crore project focuses on safeguarding the critical Umiew catchment in East Khasi Hills and the essential Ganol catchment in West Garo Hills. These catchment areas serve as lifelines for Shillong and Tura respectively.

3.10.4. I am allocating ₹ 246 crore for 2024-25 for the implantation of the various sustainability focussed externally aided projects.

3.10.5. Amongst all the programs of the Government, the one I am most proud of is the Green Meghalaya- the country's largest Payment for Ecosystem services program. In less than two years of its launch, the program is a resounding success. An amount of ₹ 44 crore has been released to 3,403 individual and community beneficiaries to bring over 54,000 hectares of forests under conservation.

3.10.6. From the year 2024-25, the Green Meghalaya program will be expanded to target conservation of 1 lakh hectares of forest area. This will entail an annual expenditure of ₹ 100 crore over the next five years and will ensure the protection of these forests for the next 30 years.

3.10.7. A second ambitious plan in this area is to connect Meghalaya's farmers to international carbon markets which pay for carbon sequestered in new plantations through agroforestry. The process of connecting the farmers to international networks is initiated. It is expected that an additional 1 lakh hectares of agroforestry areas can be conserved through this initiative.

3.10.8. Significant progress was made this year under the Climate Adaptive Community Based Water Harvesting Project being implemented at a total cost of ₹ 515 crore. In the next financial year, 382 reservoirs with a total pondage area of 323 hectares and an impounding capacity of 9 million cubic meters will be constructed.

3.10.9. Sir, we are all aware of the importance of mining industry to the State. The government is taking steps to retain the fine balance between protecting

livelihoods and promoting sustainability. I expect that 2024-25 will see the start of scientific mining of coal.

3.10.10. Meghalaya's initiatives in climate action in the sectors of Agriculture, Water Conservation, Renewable Energy and Afforestation are being recognised globally. In line with our climate resilient growth agenda, the budget allocated for climate action for the FY 2024-25 is ₹ 4,501 crore.

3.11. POWER GENERATION

3.11.1. The Government is in the process of formulating a New Power Policy that will provide the framework for developing the power sector. The Generation capacity of the third stage of Umiam-Umtru Hydroelectric Station is being augmented from 60 to 99 megawatts with support from Japan International Cooperation Agency. The 22.5 megawatts Ganol Hydroelectric Project has been fully operationalized this year. The Umiam Dam is being strengthened under the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project.

3.11.2. Meghalaya has more than 4,750 kilometres of rivers with a potential to generate 3,000 megawatts of power, whereas our current installed capacity is only 367 megawatts. Plans are being drawn to double this capacity by 2030 through government funding and private sector participation. Another great opportunity in the power generation sector is the potential to create 3,000 megawatts of Pumped Storage Hydropower Projects by 2030. This will be achieved in coordination with Central PSUs, State PSUs and joint ventures with the private sector.

3.11.3. To balance the State's heavy dependence on hydroelectric power, the government plans to set up thermal and solar power plants. All these generation initiatives will make Meghalaya a power surplus State by 2032.

4. TEN GUARANTEES OF ‘MISSION 10’

4.1. Every Meghalayan and every region of our beautiful State should benefit from higher economic growth. To quote Joseph Stiglitz, “*Development is about transforming the lives of people, not just transforming economies*”. The Government’s ten guarantees are a commitment for the creation of physical and social infrastructure for human development. They will also ensure that our growth journey is balanced and equitable.

4.2. IMPROVED PHYSICAL CONNECTIVITY AND SEAMLESS MOBILITY

4.2.1. Physical connectivity in the form of roads and bridges is necessary for movement of goods and people. However, the difficult terrain and remoteness of habitations pose a serious challenge towards maintaining and extending the road network.

4.2.2. The last six years has seen a sustained push to build new roads, upgrade existing ones and connect habitations. The expenditure on this sector has increased from ₹ 1,108 crore in 2018-19 to ₹ 1,788 crore in the current financial year.

4.2.3. The Government is working on a comprehensive roadmap for rehabilitating 5,909 kilometres of all-weather roads and converting 1,634 kilometres of fair-weather road to all weather roads by 2032. Almost 7.3 kilometres of timber bridges will also be converted to permanent bridges. A systematic program for maintenance of the existing road network is also being finalised by putting in place a Road Asset Management system.

4.2.4. Under the Chief Minister’s Rural Connectivity program, all unconnected villages will be covered progressively. Suspension foot bridges will be built to enable people to cross streams in a safe and comfortable manner. For 2024-25, the target is to cover 100 unconnected villages and build 100 suspension foot bridges. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 150 crore to achieve this.

4.2.5. New road projects with an investment of ₹ 1,500 crore will be initiated in the next financial year. These include the rehabilitation and strengthening of the Chokpot to Karukol road at about ₹ 156 crore, widening of Mawphlang Balat road at ₹ 87 crore and construction of major bridge over river Umngot on Jongksha-Moodymmai-Wahiajer Road at ₹ 25 crore. The second phase of the very successful Meghalaya integrated transport project is being designed with a planned investment of ₹ 2,400 crore with support from the World Bank. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 2,709 crore for the Roads and Building sector for 2024-25.

4.2.6. Another aspect of improving connectivity is to provide public transportation between different regions of the State. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 10 crore for the procurement of additional buses that will ease intra-state mobility.

4.3. PIPED DRINKING WATER TO ALL

4.3.1 Meghalaya's rural drinking water sector has been transformed in the recent past. We will consolidate the transformation and focus on sustainability of sources in the immediate future. Under Jal Jeevan Mission, 4.8 lakh households are now provided with piped drinking water. The target is to cover all 6.5 lakh rural Households in the next year. The expenditure under this program in the current financial year is expected to be around ₹ 1,363 crore.

4.3.2 A number of large urban water supply projects are currently in various stages of completion. The long-pending Greater Ampati Water Supply Project, worth ₹ 200 crore and the Nongstoin Water Supply Scheme costing ₹ 134 crore will be completed in 2024-25. The new Tura combined water supply scheme will be taken up at a cost of ₹ 98 crore.

4.3.3 One of the most ambitious and iconic projects of this government will be the New Shillong Water supply scheme which is estimated to cost ₹ 1,650 crore. The scheme is designed as a two-stage pumping system from the Umkhen river and will provide

safe water supply to the residents of the Shillong and New Shillong. Work on first phase of the project costing ₹ 538 crore will begin in the next financial year.

4.3.4 I am allocating an amount of ₹ 905 crore for the drinking water sector for 2024-25.

4.4. HIGH SPEED INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

4.4.1. Today the world has become a global village sustained by digital communication and connectivity. We will ensure that even the remotest habitations in our State have high-speed reliable internet and can reap the benefits of accessing better services, information and entertainment.

4.4.2. The government is working towards improving Meghalaya's current tele density of 76%, which is below the national average. Basic Telecom penetration of 2G or 3G is at 82% and the fiberized Base Transceiver Stations rate is only 39%. 4G towers are being set up in villages not covered with internet in collaboration with BSNL and Airtel.

4.4.3. Sir, to provide last mile connectivity we are leveraging the 665 kilometres of already deployed Optical Ground Wire, which is laid on the transmission lines of the Meghalaya Energy Corporation Ltd.

4.5. HOUSING FOR ALL ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES

4.5.1. This has been a landmark year in the rural housing sector- 1.6 lakh new houses are being constructed with an allocation ₹ 1,794 crore. Continuing the momentum into 2024-25, the government is targeting universal coverage of all the remaining eligible beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Grameen) program. I am allocating ₹ 423 crore for this program for 2024-25.

4.5.2. A new State Government scheme for Urban Housing will be launched in the next financial year. Under this scheme, new projects for providing affordable dwelling

units to urban poor will be taken up. The balance works under the Nongmynsong Housing project at Shillong and projects in other urban areas will also be taken up in 2024-25.

4.6. RELIABLE AND QUALITY POWER SUPPLY

- 4.6.1. Sir, some of the toughest and boldest decisions of my government were taken to reform the power distribution sector. Legacy issues plaguing the State for more than a decade are being resolved.
- 4.6.2. This year, the Government arrived at an amicable settlement of the longstanding payments owed to National Thermal Power Corporation. Following this, NTPC has started providing 53 megawatts of electricity daily to State which has helped in alleviating the loadshedding challenge during the winter months.
- 4.6.3. Under the Meghalaya Power Distribution Sector Improvement Project, 24 new substations are being set up and 48 existing substations are being renovated. The distribution architecture is undergoing upgradation under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme being implemented at a cost of ₹ 1,092 crore.
- 4.6.4. The Government is infusing substantial equity into the Meghalaya Energy Corporation Limited and is taking over the losses of the distribution company. An amount of ₹ 950 crore has been spent this year. The high quantum of government support is expected to give the power corporation time to resolve complex issues and to transition towards loss reduction and improved efficiency. I am budgeting an amount of ₹ 850 crore for supporting the power corporation in 2024-25.
- 4.6.5. I launched the CM Solar Mission this year under which up to 90% subsidy is provided for setting up of solar power systems at rural households and enterprises. This program has an outlay of ₹ 145 crore over a three-year period.

4.6.6. The overall investment in the power sector including capital investments in transmission, distribution and generation for 2024-25 is ₹ 1,558 crore.

4.7. AFFORDABLE AND QUALITY HEALTHCARE FOR ALL

4.7.1. Meghalaya's healthcare sector has witnessed a remarkable transformation in recent years. The MOTHER program has become a beacon of hope for over 3 lakh pregnant and lactating mothers. Under the Chief Minister's Safe Motherhood Scheme, we have operationalized 140 transit homes and vehicles, ensuring accessible and quality care during childbirth. The two schemes together have reduced maternal mortality by 50% and infant mortality by 30%.

4.7.2. Health Infrastructure has been a key focus area of the State Government. 96 health facilities have been upgraded, 377 subcentres have been solarized and twenty Community Health Centres are being converted to First Referral Units with a capability of conducting Emergency Caesarean sections.

4.7.3. Continuing the infrastructure development efforts, a comprehensive 3-year mission to revamp all health facilities in the State will be launched from 2024-25 with an investment of ₹ 500 crore. In the first phase, the Civil Hospitals in all the district quarters and 100 other facilities will be prioritized.

4.7.4. Adequate Human resources are the second critical ingredient for improving health care. The government has empowered the Health Department to flexibly recruit about 300 nurses and technicians. This will ensure that critical health services like ICUs and blood storage units can be operationalized.

4.7.5. Radical reforms have been undertaken to streamline the procurement and delivery of drugs and medical equipment through the setting up of Meghalaya Medical Drugs and Services Ltd. The overall drug procurement cost of the State is expected to come down by 45% this year due to improved efficiency and transparency. I am allocating ₹ 100 crore for procurement of drugs, equipment, and services in 2024-

25. Essential drugs list will be notified at the facility level and the information will be made available to citizens online.

4.7.6. One of the most important diseases that continues to trouble us is cancer. To deal with this challenge, we launched the Megh Can Care program in East Khasi Hills to screen every individual who is 30 years and above for various types of cancer. Over 50,000 people have been screened last year alone and we aim to cover about 1,00,000 people this year. To take this initiative to other districts, I am allocating a budget of ₹ 10 crore.

4.7.7. For the overall strengthening of health systems, I am allocating an amount of ₹ 1,970 crore for 2024-25, including an allocation of ₹ 173 crore for the MHIS program.

4.8. JOYFUL AND QUALITY LEARNING AT ALL LEVELS

4.8.1. Sir, Meghalaya is one of the few States in the country that has adopted a life cycle approach to dealing with its citizens. The State's support will begin from birth and continues through early childhood, schooling and college.

4.8.2. Under the Early Childhood Development Mission, the government plans to upgrade 2,148 existing Anganwadi centres and expand the network to cover all villages by opening new centres in 1,500 uncovered villages. An investment of ₹ 500 crore will be made over the next five years, with next year's allocation at ₹ 47 crore.

4.8.3. My Government has undertaken a phased upgradation of infrastructure in all the 2,044 Government schools under the umbrella of Mission education at a cost of ₹ 326 crore. Major renovation and reconstruction works has been completed in 220 Secondary and Higher Secondary Schools and works are on-going in about 100 schools. Another 1,725 schools are at different stages of renovation. It is a matter of great satisfaction that by the end of next year, all government schools will have dignified learning environments. Mission Education 2.0 will be launched in 2024-25

to provide assured minimum facilities- power, clean drinking water, toilets, and basic furniture- at all government schools. I am allocating ₹ 100 crore for Mission Education for 2024-25.

4.8.4. To engage adolescents and youth at the community level, the government has sanctioned an ambitious project for the setting up of Libraries for Children and Adolescents in 750 villages of the State at an estimated cost of ₹ 162 crore.

4.8.5. I am announcing a new scheme for supporting the higher secondary students. The Chief Minister's Scholarship Scheme will be provided in 2024-25 to the meritorious students in class XI and XII. The government will also be launching a new program for promoting the comprehensive well-being of adolescents called MPOWER with an investment of ₹ 380 crore.

4.8.6. I am allocating ₹ 3,539 crore to strengthen all the interventions in the education sector, including ₹ 1,335 crore as grants-in-aid salaries.

4.9. EASING SERVICE DELIVERY AND GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL

4.1.1. Sir, our State has more than 7,000 villages and accessing government services in remote villages has always been a challenge. People have to forgo their daily earnings to travel to block and district headquarters to access government services. To address this issue comprehensively, I have launched the CM-CONNECT program under which citizens can directly connect with the Government using multiple channels- physical, telephonic, and digital.

4.1.2. The physical representatives of the CM-CONNECT program will be a cadre of more than 10,000 Village Data Volunteers who will be available in every village to register any grievance or service request of citizens and get it resolved. The CM-CONNECT helpline number of 1971 is now functional, and citizens are already actively registering their service requests on a daily basis. The CM-CONNECT multi-lingual portal with Khasi and Garo language recognition features will be launched in the

next 6 months. With this architecture, Meghalaya will transition into an era of quick resolution of citizen grievances and efficient door-step delivery of services. My objective is that no citizen will have to wait in a queue for any government service.

4.1.3. The government is also working on the Family ID program, which will empower the citizens to avail the services as an entitlement. This will also enable government to plan and monitor the last mile delivery of the benefits.

4.1.4. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 30 crore for the implementation of the CM-CONNECT, Family ID and other citizen service delivery programs in 2024-25.

4.1.5. Another dimension of enhancing service delivery is to improve the quality of Governance infrastructure. Integrated administrative complexes will be created in all the districts and subdivisions over the next four years. These complexes are already under construction at Jowai and Pynursla. The Tura Integrated Administrative Complex at a cost of ₹ 100 crore will be started in 2024-25. New office buildings are being constructed at 46 blocks at a cost of ₹ 135 crore and most of these buildings will be completed in the next financial year. Administrative buildings at 9 new blocks will be taken up in 2024-25. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 30 crore for improving block infrastructure. Infrastructure at police stations and other police buildings are also being upgraded at scale for the first time. I am certain that all these investments will motivate our government employees to work with higher commitment and improve citizen service delivery.

4.2. CARING AND EMPOWERING STATE

4.2.1. Sir, economic growth and prosperity can only be meaningful when the most vulnerable sections of the society are respected and supported. One of the first tasks that the MDA Government had undertaken six years ago was the streamlining of pensions for senior citizens, single mothers and differently abled persons. The CM CARE program was launched in 2022 by enhancing the benefits provided to

66,000 senior citizens, 36,000 single mothers and 14,000 differently abled persons. For 2024-25, I am allocating an amount of ₹ 100 crore for this important program.

4.3. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ENGAGEMENT AND WELLBEING

- 4.3.1. Sir, different types of infrastructure are needed at the community level for promoting greater citizen engagement and well-being. There are genuine demands for community halls, playfields and recreational spaces, which are being fulfilled through different Government programs.
- 4.3.2. Under the Chief Minister's Special Development Fund, an amount of ₹ 51 crore was spent in the last two years to build various community infrastructure. I am allocating an amount of ₹ 40 crore for 2024-25 for this program.
- 4.3.3. Infrastructure like gyms, football grounds, cinemas and cultural spaces that have a revenue potential can be taken up under CM-ELEVATE with government subsidy of 35%.
- 4.3.4. Community halls are being taken up in 450 remote villages under the Meg-LIFE project with an estimated cost of ₹ 108 crore. In the next four years the Government will build auditoria in all the districts.

5. BUDGET ESTIMATES: 2024-25

- 5.1. Sir, for 2024-25, I have estimated the total receipts at ₹ 27,072 crore, of which the revenue receipts are estimated at ₹ 23,515 crore and capital receipts at ₹ 3,557 crore. Excluding borrowings of ₹ 3,527 crore, the total receipts are estimated to be ₹ 23,545 crore.
- 5.2. On the expenditure side, I have estimated the total expenditure at ₹ 27,072 crore, of which the revenue expenditure is estimated at ₹ 19,653 crore and Capital

expenditure at ₹ 7,419 crore. Excluding repayment of loans of ₹ 1,498 crore, the estimated total expenditure is ₹ 25,574 crore.

5.3. Interest payments for 2024-25 are estimated at ₹ 1,236 crore and pension payments at ₹ 1,865 crore.

5.4. I am, therefore, presenting the budget for 2024-25 with a fiscal deficit of ₹ 2,029 crore, which is around 3.83% of the GSDP.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1. Sir, I would like all the members of this august House and every citizen to remember this budget as 'Mission 10'- an action plan for building a 10 billion US Dollar economy through leveraging 10 opportunities and providing 10 guarantees. The accomplishment of 'Mission 10' in 2028 will coincide with 10 years of the MDA Government.

6.2. Mr. Speaker Sir, with these words, I now commend the Budget to this august House.

KHUBLEI! MITELA! JAI HIND!