

**PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
GUWAHATI**

**Culture and Language of North East must be preserved along with Development:
Amit Shah**

**Modi government fully respect Art 371 and there will be no change in it: Home
Minister**

**NE zone has made noteworthy progress during last 5 years compare to the rest of
the country in the last 70 years of Independence: Shah**

No illegal immigrant will be allowed to stay back in India: Home Minister

**The 8 NE states are like Astalakhmi, in future they will play a vital role in the
development of the country**

30 percent NEC budget will be spent on development of backward regions

**There is the need to set targets to ascertain the law and order situation in Northeast
by 2022**

Date: 08th Sept, 2019

Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah today addressed the opening session of the 68th Plenary of the North Eastern Council in Guwahati today. Shri Shah began his address by paying tribute to Bharat Ratna Late Bhupen Hazarika. He said that this day also assumes importance for the fact that today is also the Birth Anniversary of the late Bhupen Hazarika who introduced to the world the entire Northeast through his art and music. He added that Bhupen Hazarika got ample opportunities to get himself settled in other parts of the country and even outside the country as he was a legend who expressed himself through music and songs in different languages. But he never left Northeast as he was of the view that if he will leave his native place the rich heritage, culture and unique tradition of the Northeast will fail to get a platform to be showcased before the entire world, he added. He added that throughout his life he remained as the ambassador of the culture of the Northeast, and that the present Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, as a respect for his contribution for the enrichment of the rich culture of the region, conferred him with Bharat Ratna.

Shri Shah referred to the PM's remark where he said that Northeast can be the new engine for India's Growth and the contribution from this region towards the progress and development of the country should be the highest among other states.

Northeast is a mini India in itself which consist of the mighty Himalaya range in one hand and on the other hand there is the most beautiful landscapes of the world - Barak, Brahmaputra and Imphal valley. Hinting on the immense potential of the region, Shri Shah said that Northeast comprises of around 9 percent of the total area of the country with a population of around 5 crore which comprises of 3.78 percent of the total population. The region also bears strategic importance for the fact that it shares International border for around 5300 km. referring to the diverse culture of the Northeast region, Shri Shah said that there are around 270 ethnic group and around 150 dialects in the region and all development activities and initiative should be directed towards preserving and enriching the rich heritage of this region. He said that the identity of India was never geo-political rather it was geo-cultural and if this principle is accepted by all India and Northeast will be never be treated separate. He said the cultural and linguistic identity of the North East Region should be preserved and maintained even as fast development is taking place under the leadership of Shri Narendra Modi.

Quoting substantially from the Mahabharata, the Home Minister said North East and rest of India are connected since mythological era and this will never be separated under the able leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. North East Region will develop, prosper and become a pride of India, Shri Shah asserted. He also said that the growth of Northeast during the last 5 years is much more in comparison to that of the 70 years after independence. The development process which was started in 2014 will be expected to be accomplished in 2022. Shri Shah said the 8 North Eastern states are like Astalakhmi and they will play a vital role in the development of the country.

Shri Shah announced that the North East Council will earmark 30 per cent of its fund for focussed funding of priority areas and deprived sections of society in the North East. Shri Shah said that every state will identify those villages or regions which are backward in various indicators and will work to bring those regions at par with the rest of the country. The growth story shall never be complete until the entire state progresses at par with the other part, he added.

The Minister said that the North Eastern Council have been the nodal agency since 1971 for planning and implementation towards economic and social development of the North Eastern Region and in 2022 NEC will be completing 50 years while India will be completing 75 years of its independence. He added that it is the time NEC should work on preparing the road map to ascertain the progress that Northeast will achieve by 2022. He opined that today we should set the targets to ascertain the law and order situation in Northeast by 2022 and to set the targets for enriching the culture, tradition and language of the Northeast. He said that that Northeast, as a region prior to the Independence, was the greatest contributor of GDP for the Nation and today we all should manifest our efforts and set targets to bring back those days. He also said that NEC should focus on afforestation, development of organic farming, measures to revive lost languages and measures to resolve inter-state

disputes between North Eastern states.

Speaking on the Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement, Shri Shah said that the landmark decision will enable the re-establishment of link between Kolkata and Dhaka Ports. Prior to independence these ports served as the gateway for trade and commerce of the Northeast region. With the opening of the trade through this route, considering the huge natural resources of the Northeast, this region can once again become the leading contributor of GDP for the country. He said that the present government has also set up targets to bring all the eight states in the railways and air map of the country by 2022.

Shri Shah said that after abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, there was some misinformation that there will be also changes to Article 371. He however asserted that the Centre respects Article 371 and it will not touch the Article which grants special provisions to the North East.

He explained the difference between Article 370 which was temporary in nature and Article 371 which is about special provisions in the North East. "I have clarified in Parliament that this is not going to happen and I am saying it again today in Assam in presence of the eight Chief Minister", Shah added.

Commenting on the commitment of the Central Government for the development of the Northeastern region, Shri Shah said that there has been a 1.5 time increase of budget of NEC from 13th Finance Commission to 14th Finance Commission from Rs 3376 crore to Rs 5053 crore. Enumerating the various development schemes directed towards the progress of the region Shri Shah listed some of the schemes and said that from the projected 558 projects 352 projects have been completed, construction of 997 km roads have been completed, 2480 km transmission lines have been completed, APJ Abdul Kamal Centre for Policy and Research has been set up, Bogibeel Bridge has been completed and Rs 1400 crore under the North East Road Sector Development scheme under DoNER has been sanctioned.

Speaking on the recent publication of NRC in Assam, Shri Shah expressed his satisfaction over the timely completion of the process and also added that the government will not allow a single illegal immigrant to stay back in the country.

Shri Shah said that the Northeast is progressing steadily on the road to development under the leadership of Shri Narendra Modi as a result of which Northeast which was identified with negative labels such as bandhs, blockades, extremism, arm trafficking and corruption is now known for infrastructure development, organic farming, sports, connectivity and Act East Policy.

Shri Shah concluded his address with an appeal to all the states to invest more on Bamboo Mission and added that if it is developed to its full potential it can restrict 1 lakh crore imports.

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for the Ministry of Development of

North Eastern Region and Minister of State for Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Department of Atomic Energy and Department of Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh while acknowledged the uniqueness of the Northeastern region, Dr Singh said that as far as the region is concerned there is much more to learn from Northeast for rest of India than Northeast has to learn from the rest of the country. In the last five years Northeast has come more into focus and that has been possible because the government is actually moving in that direction. He said that under the direction of the Prime Minister in every fortnight one Minister will be visiting a state of the Northeast to listen to people and ensure the region is developed in every sphere. Reiterating the commitment of the Government for the development of the Northeast, Dr Singh said that North East Council has been given its highest budgetary allotment of 1476 crore rupees for the year 2019-20.

Dr Singh said that one of the major achievements of the Government led by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi during the last five years has been that the students from Northeast have been provided the facility for cost-effective living through hostels and other means in different parts of the country. He informed that a Northeast Hostel for Girl Students has been completed within the campus of Bangalore University. Similarly, he said, an exclusive Northeast Hostel is under construction within the campus of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), where a very large number of youth are pursuing higher studies. A similar will come up at Rohini for Northeast students studying in Delhi University, he added.

Complementing the youth from North Eastern region for their diligence and aspirational focus, Dr Singh said, the "Start-up India, Stand-up India" programme initiated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been implemented in the North Eastern region, with an added incentive from the Ministry of DoNER in the form of "Venture Fund" to be provided to any young entrepreneur or Start-Up who wishes to pursue it in the region. The response to this, he said, has been very encouraging and in the years to come, Northeast may become a favourite destination for young Start-Ups from all over India.

For the youths of the Northeast, the minister added that they are at the one of the best times in the journey of India. Every youngster from across India will come forward to Northeast as his destination and that it is for people living in the Northeast to rise upto that occasion and to cultivate the capacity of being able to make the best use of these new opening of vistas of development that is happening rapidly, he added.

The NEC Plenary meeting is being attended by Governors, Chief Ministers, MPs of the Northeast and senior officers of the eight North-Eastern states and Union Ministry of DoNER.
