

Tawang put on world tourism map

PM gifts air link with Guwahati

TAWANG, June 29: The Tawang-Guwahati daily subsidized helicopter service—a part of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's massive package announced for Arunachal Pradesh on January 30 last—was flagged off by state Governor Gen (Retd) JJ Singh at Chongprong helipad here today, putting Tawang, known as the last Shangri La on Earth, in the tourism map of the world, reports PRO to CM.

In his address, the governor said this reflected the state and central government's commitment to make this beautiful state a tourist hub for nature and adventure tourists from within and outside the country.

This service will herald a new economic era for Arunachal, particularly Tawang and West Kameng districts,

as it will create lot of employment avenues for the local denizens, particularly for the unemployed youths.

Describing the handicraft and handloom of the state as unique, Singh called upon the people to improve their design and quality to make the products attractive for the visiting guests.

He said that the hospitality industry is the fastest growing sector worldwide, generating huge economy, and that the people should be mentally prepared to benefit from this development.

Some local youths and entrepreneurs will be sent to famous tourist destinations, like Ladakh, Manali and Bhutan to gain first hand knowledge of the hospitality industry, he said to the applause of the huge gathering.

As this sensitive border state is known



The maiden flight-DIPR

for its tribal culture and values, the people should not only design their houses traditionally but reflect their sense of hospitality to every visitor to give firsthand information about the rich cultural heritage of this tribal society, Singh advocated.

Pointing out that Tawang is a repository of nature, with a vast potential to produce the best quality honey, he advised the people to make the best use of the horticultural and agricultural potentials of the region.

It may be recalled here that the governor after visiting the forward area of Lumpo recently had visited Delhi where he had obtained sanction for introducing cable car from Union Tourism Minister Ambika Soni to promote tourism in the state.

The governor also disclosed about his last trip to Delhi when he called on the Prime Minister and apprised him of the implementation of the package announced by him. It was decided during the meeting that a trans-Arunachal Pradesh car rally

covering 4 to 5 districts will be conducted by October or November next to put the state in the adventure map of the world.

The implementation of numerous projects, like rail link, airports and the trans-Arunachal highway - the process of which has begun - would make Arunachal a front ranking state within few years, Singh said, and called upon the people to become willing partners in the development to achieve the goal.

While expressing his gratitude to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi, other central leaders and the governor, Chief Minister Dorjee Khandu said that this helicopter service has brought Tawang nearer to the national mainstream.

"This is dream come true as it will end the chronic isolation syndrome of the state," said Khandu, while disclosing his plan to link other tourist destinations, like Mechuka, Tuting, Hawai and Anini

through chopper service soon.

Khandu exhorted the hoteliers and cab operators to maintain a uniform tariff and treat the visitors with dignity, saying *atithi devo bhavo* (visitors are like god).

Expressing concern over the wanton killing of domestic animals like yak, sheep and goats, once considered valued tribal possessions, the chief minister announced evolving a scheme to provide incentive for encouraging animal rearing.

As lamas use green leaves for various rituals, Khandu advised them to stop such practices to protect the fragile environment. He also advised the locals to plant trees and to avoid hunting to protect the wildlife.

The chief minister announced the constitution of a committee which will give traditional names to various roads, lakes and other tourist attractions to protect the state's local identity.

Meanwhile, local MLAs T G Rinpoche and T Dohndup, zilla parishad chairperson Tsering Lhamu in a memorandum urged the governor to facilitate tourist permits through the local administrators for Bumla, presently under the control of the Army, the renovation of dilapidated Tawang-Bumla road and improving the BSNL service in the frontier district.

Rev T G Rinpoche also took part in the meeting. Beside the governor and chief minister, principal advisor to CM Tsering Gyurme, MLA Tsewang Dhondup, commissioner civil aviation Hage Khoda, director civil aviation G Padu, Pawan Hans CVO B K Singh, GM H S Sandhu and GMS Takru were present on the occasion.