

DoNER must for development of NE: Governor

■ LEP needs innovative foreign policy with a massive infrastructure

ITANAGAR, July 12: The Governor of Arunachal Pradesh General (Retd) J J Singh, categorically said that state government does not support the recommendation of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission regarding closure of Ministry of DoNER.

He expressed that the Ministry of DoNER is our friend, philosopher, guide and advocate in the corridors of powers in New Delhi. However, he also advised that the North Eastern States must think beyond NLCPR and consider Ministry of DoNER as their advocate in New Delhi. He was speaking on the occasion of release of Vision 2020 Document Prime Minister on July 2.

Developmental strategy adopted in Vision 2020 Document is similar to four-pronged strategy that has been chalked out by the Prime Minister during his visit to Arunachal Pradesh. Deviating from the normal course of discussion involving establishment of

mega-infrastructure project, governor said that the augmenting income generating capacity of the poorest of the poor in this region should be our foremost priority. The mega-infrastructure projects will come in due course, but certain sustained income generating activities for the common citizen should start immediately.

He also said that though the nature is very generous in North eastern region, we remained poor amongst plenty in this region because of ignorance and isolation. Some of the activities like fruit production and processing, growing orchids and flowers, organic farming, bee keeping, handloom and handicrafts, bamboo-based industries, tourism can generate lot of jobs and financial empowerment for the indigenous people.

As far as Look East Policy is concerned Singh said that 'we need a very strong and innovative foreign policy backed by a massive dose of infrastruc-

ture building, coupled with sound policies for defence, internal security and international trade'.

Framing a Vision 2020 document covering the aspirations of extremely diverse areas of Northeastern region has surely been a great effort, and deserves to be wholeheartedly appreciated and applauded by all of us. The process of evolution of this document has also not been very easy and on many occasions, it has gone through rough weather. However, the brains behind this document were always open for all kinds of constructive criticism and positive suggestions. The unique method of public hearing followed by discussions in the plenary sessions, small group sessions, participations of the civil society, NGOs, student groups makes the document a symbol of the people: the 'Peoples Document', he added.

The Vision document has made an excellent

analysis of the impact of the partition on NE region. Such kind of analysis is extremely useful as a backgrounder when we plan for the future.

In fact, augmenting the income generating capacity of the poorest of the poor in this region should be our foremost priority. The mega-infrastructure projects will come in due course, but certain sustained income generating activities for the common citizen should start immediately. And these activities do not have a long gestation period such as major projects like roads, railways and airports. However, one needs to have an innovative approach to create such income generating opportunities for the people of this area.

It is an undisputed fact that the Northeastern Region is important for its geographical location. It not only occupies a central position in East and South Asia, but is also a bridge connecting the subcontinent with east and South-

East Asia.

Though the term Look East was coined in early nineties, for centuries together the people of North-Eastern region had cultural and economic linkages with the neighbouring countries. Briefly, in order to make LEP successful, what we need today is a very strong and innovative foreign policy backed by a massive dose of infrastructure building, coupled with sound policies for defence, internal security and international trade.

He expressed the hope that Vision 2020 document will serve as a great planning tool for the present and future planners of this region. 'We understand that the resources required to convert this vision into a reality are running into thousands of crores, and are likely to be made available in phases. However, the document gives us a good road map on which we can charter our journey for various development projects spread out over the next 5-10 years' he said.