NORTHEAST NEWS BULLETIN
DATED: 17.05.2012

HEADLINES

1. **Bill to set up separate High Courts in Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura gets Parliament nod.**
2. **Assam to undertake second phase of power sector reforms.**
3. **Arunachal Pradesh acts against black marketeers of domestic cooking gas**
4. **Mizoram tops all Northeastern states in utilisation of fund under Rashatriya Madhayamic Shikasha Abhiyan.**
5. **Two Special Economic Zones approved in Nagaland**
6. **Sikkim celebrates 37th Statehood Day.**

NEWS IN ORDER

BILL-HIGH COURT

A bill seeking to set up separate High Courts in Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura was passed by Parliament yesterday. The North-Eastern Areas (Reorganization) and Other Related Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2012, was passed by Rajya Sabha. The Bill will pave way for creation of High Courts in the three north-eastern states by amending the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganization) Act, 1971. As of now, all the seven Northeastern states come under the jurisdiction of the Gauhati High Court with separate benches in Tripura, Meghalaya and Manipur. Once the new High Courts are established, the number of High Courts in the country will go up from 21 to 24. According to the Financial Memorandum of the Bill, the expenditure on establishment of the three courts, including recurring expenditure, has been and will be borne by the respective state governments. Home Minister P Chidambaram said, the total approved strength of judges in the 21 High Courts is 895 with 260 posts lying vacant meaning that there was less than one judge for every one million people.

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SEZs

Two Special Economic Zones have been formally approved in Nagaland out of which, one has been notified. The SEZ has not become operational. The validity of approval is for a period of three years within which, time effective steps are to be taken by the developer to implement the approved proposal. The SEZs are under obligation to achieve positive Net Foreign Exchange earnings to be calculated cumulatively for a period of 5 years from the commencement of production, failing which the units shall be liable for penal action under the provisions of the Foreign Trade (Development and Regulation) Act, 1992. The information was given by Minister of State for

Commerce and Industry, Jyotiraditya M Scindia in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha yesterday.

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FUND-RMSA

Mizoram has topped not only all other Northeastern states, but most of the other Indian states in utilisation of fund sanctioned under Rashatriya Madhayamic Shikasha Abhiyan or RMSA, a centrally-sponsored scheme aimed at achieving universal access and quality secondary education. According to an official statement, Mizoram was next only to Haryana in terms of utilisation of RMSA fund sanctioned during the period of 2009 to 2011. During this period, Mizoram received a total of Rs 71.72 crore of which, 63 percent was utilised. Among the NE states, Mizoram was at the third position in terms of fund received under the mission, next to Manipur and Assam which received Rs 81.03 crore and Rs 109.16 crore respectively. Meghalaya received Rs 13.45 crore, Nagaland Rs 44.44 crore, Tripura Rs 42.07 crore, Arunachal Pradesh Rs 47.51. While Manipur utilised 22 per cent of the fund it received, Nagaland utilised 2 per cent, Sikkim utilised 25 per cent, Arunachal Pradesh utilised 22 per cent. Assam and Meghalaya's utilisation was zero per cent.

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SIKKIM

In Sikkim, the people rededicated themselves to the nation’s unity and progress on the 37th State Day yesterday. The 16th May 1975 was the day when Sikkim acquired the status of a full democracy by joining the Indian Union, giving up the three hundred years old monarchy. The tricolour replaced the flag of the erstwhile Chogyal regime. A function was held at the Chintan Bhavan in capital Gangtok to mark the day. In his address, the Governor Balmiki Prasasd Singh asserted that Sikkim has progressed by leaps and bounds after joining the Indian Union and has, now, risen to such a height that no one could have ever thought of. Chief Minister Pawan Chamling congratulated the people for their contribution towards transformation of Sikkim to a democracy. Twenty nine persons were conferred upon State Civiian Awards of Sikkim Sewa Ratna, Sikkim Khel Ratna and Sikkim Sewa Samman to mark the day.

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POWER

Assam is set to undertake the second phase of power sector reforms, which is expected to see major initiatives to boost generation and greater efforts for privatisation. Minister for Power, Commerce and Industries

Pradyut Bordoloi said, in 2005, the first phase of reforms started which saw restructuring of the then power behemoth Assam State Electricity Board. Now they are poised to undertake the second phase of reforms where focus would on increasing generation and improving transmission and distribution. The minister said, they would like to strengthen the public sector units but if the work cultures in the companies do not change, then they may look at privatisation also. Assam has a peak demand of 720MW to 780 MW. Of this, only 130 MW-150 MW of power is being generated from its own power stations, while around 400 MW is being imported from central sectors generating stations in the North Eastern region and remaining from other sources like private producers and power trading agencies.

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LPG-CRISIS

Acting tough against black marketers of domestic cooking gas, the Arunachal Pradesh Food and Civil Supplies department has seized a large consignment of LPG cylinders from several restaurants and hotels of the Capital Complex. Altogether, three trucks of LPG cylinders were recovered during a raid conducted by three teams of officials and police personnel, official sources said in Itanagar yesterday. The present LPG crisis was due to insufficient feeding of LPG bullet tankers from Numaligarh and Lakhwa in Assam to IOC bottling plant located at Kimin, besides illegal use of domestic LPG cylinders in commercial activities. Raids would be conducted at regular intervals and no black marketeers would be spared.

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