

Union Budget 2020 Expectation – Mr. M.K.Saharia.

A) INFRASTRUCTURE: Major hurdle in the growth of North East is the absence of Infrastructure. For long NE development was ignored and the Govt has to appreciate that major investment is required for the past continued lapses. The connectivity factor is for Road, Rail, River, Air as well as Communication.

Several part of the NE is yet to receive Mobile connectivity. Proper High Speed bandwidth can provide tremendous opportunity of Job creation and employment to the Educated English Speaking Youths of NE.

While it is acknowledged that many of the long pending projects have been completed recently bringing in lot of relief, several other projects are having slow movements due to dearth of funds or awaiting approvals..

Disadvantageous Location of North East being cut off with the Rest of Country except 26 kms long Chicken neck can be easily converted into Advantage utilising the 96% International Border with focus on International connectivity.

North East is the connecting factor of Act East Policy of the Government of India. However the Infrastructure continues to be very poor. Northeastern Region of India shares it's border with as many as five neighboring countries Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Myanmar and Nepal .North East India is in fact gateway to the South East Asia and with the development of Trilateral Highway connecting India to the South East Asia bilateral trade is expected to grow manifold. The international trade infrastructure like land custom stations, roads, and airways with these countries needs special allocation from the new budget.

A study to extend Rail Line to Moreh border and a Mega logistic cum Industrial Park at Moreh-Tamu Border should be conducted.

Large Allocation on Connectivity and Infrastructure for North East in Road, Rail, River, Air and Communication is anticipated from the Budget

B) Brahmaputra River and its tributaries cause major floods and erosion bringing hardships and acts as an annual curse. With proper utilization of the River, it can act as Blessing. It will contribute by way of inexpensive transport, power, tourism, agriculture etc and can transform the economy of the region. This sector too has not received importance from GOI and has been constantly ignored.

Bangladesh is already ready with River transport. Development of River navigation shall partly offset locational disadvantage and will add immensely for rapid development.

Large Allocation for making Brahmaputra River navigable upto Sadia is anticipated from the Budget

C) Industrialisation:

Various matters related to North East Industrial Development Scheme (NEIDS), modifications suggested from time to time needs to be addressed to promote industrialization in North East.

Primary funds and resources are basic for entrepreneurship. North East as yet does not have any culture, facility of accessing Funds through the means of Public Offerings for medium to large projects. The only source of financing is Banks. The culture of Development Bank in India like then IDBI, ICICI are over. RBI should designate few Banks which should have Development Managers with specific work to promote funding of Industry and should do hand holding for Medium and Small Enterprises with a clear cut Policy of improving Debt:Credit Ratio in North East Region. Necessity of collateral securities should be dispensed away/liberalized and ways found to finance Units in Tribal areas where Land laws are different in terms of Mortgage of Immovable properties. Financial Powers of the Regional Offices in North East should be increased for early approval of the proposals.

Correction of NEIDS Policy and Policy of Easy Financing & Promotion of Industrial Units is anticipated from the Budget.

D) Tea Industry: Tea Industry is the major Employer in NE and contributes significantly to the

GDP and economy of the Region and has impact on Lives of large numbers of people. Tea Industry is going through a major re-structuring in recent years. Industry is not in a position to take the burden of Several Social Obligations which the industry undertook for so long. Besides when the other citizen are able to take benefits of Government Schemes, Tea gardens workers are deprived due to inadequate capacity of the Tea Plantation Companies including education & medical facilities.

Despite Tea having been proclaimed as Health Drink, consumption growth is minimum and far less than the exponential growth in production.

Major investment is required for promoting of Tea consumption- a health drink.

Specialized Teas and Orthodox Teas have wide Export market but has strong international competition and much higher cost of production. Present subsidy is quite inadequate and needs to be substantially increased.

Tea is a Health Drink and India is second largest producer and consumer. Tea should be declared as the National Drink.

Large allocation for boosting domestic Tea consumption, promote Exports and direct adoption of Social schemes for Tea Garden workers are anticipated from the Budget.

Declaration of 'Tea' as National Drink is expected from the Budget.