

Hon'ble Union Minister of DoNER, Shri Mani Shankar Aiyerjee, Hon'ble Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, Dr Montek Singh Ahluwaliajee, Hon'ble Union Minister of Commerce, Shri Jai Ram Rameshjee. Hon'ble Union Minister of Culture, Smt Ambika Sonijee, esteemed Chief Ministers of NE States of India, representatives of Indian Industry, Officers of both Central and State Govt, distinguished friends.

It is indeed heartening that the Ministry of DoNER, Govt of India in association with Confederation of Indian Industry is jointly organizing the "North East India Investment Conference" in New York today the 26th September, 2007. I congratulate the Government of India and Confederation of Indian Industries for their initiative in organizing this important event in New York with an effort to attract private investors in the North Eastern Region. It is important for us from the point of view of employment generation, sustainable development, raising incomes, and promotion of varieties of enterprises in different sectors.

2. Manipur has a good agro climatic condition, rich bio-diversity—herbal & medicinal plants, high horticultural potential, rich forest and water resources. Moreover, the State has a high literacy rate. Manipur is the gateway to South East Asia. It has a large potential of sports talents with rich cultural heritage. It has also excellent air connectivity with the rest of the country.

3. Manipur is rich in natural resources which have, however, been grossly underutilized. Its resources need to be suitably harnessed to raise the living standards and the quality of life of its people. The State now requires a massive development thrust from both within and outside the country.

4. Considering the development potential of the State, the State Government have identified a few priority sectors in Horticulture, Agro & Food Processing, Power, IT and Tourism for attracting private investment in Manipur.

On Development of Horticulture:

5. Manipur has very good agro climatic conditions for growing various food and cash crops. It has vast potential for commercial plantation of fruits like lemon, lime, orange, pineapple, passion fruits, amla, olive, figs, Orange, etc. Vegetables like cabbage, tomato, pea, french bean, bamboo shoot etc and spices like turmeric, ginger and chillie. Quality of pineapple, both Queen and Kew varieties, is of distinct taste and flavour. So far, identified potential area for cultivation of various horticultural crops is estimated at 0.28 million hectares. Of this, only about 0.05 million hectre is covered under different crops. Most of these crops when processed have a big promise of export. Processing for extracts of spices, medicinal and herbal plants is another area of focus for agro-based industry.

6. The State also has a huge potential for floriculture development. Endowed with the ideal climatic condition, Anthurium and orchid can be grown abundantly. Orchids are accepted to be the world's most exotic and fascinating flower. There are about 150 species of orchids preserved in the orchid preservation centres in the State.

On development of Power:

7. Energy is a thrust area of development in Manipur not only to meet the local requirement for domestic and industrial uses but also for marketing outside Manipur as the State has considerable hydro power potential. A dozen of hydro power potential sites have been identified in

Manipur. The total potential so far assessed is 1784 MW as against which only 105 MW has been harnessed.

On development of Tourism:

8. Gifted with wonderful scenic beauty, glorious cultural heritage, mosaic of tribal and non-tribal culture, bio and ethno-diversity, pleasant climate, pollution free environment, exquisite handloom & handicrafts, and many others which matter, Manipur has large scope for development of tourism. The major tourist attraction in the State among others are fascinating Loktak lake, breath taking green hills and landscape, historic monuments, unique arts forms of various culture and tradition and indigenous sports of the land. The World War-II cemetery at Imphal with little markers and bronze plaques, Loktak Lake largest fresh water in the North East at Moirang with surrounding green hills and blissful landscape leaves an everlasting impression on the visitors. Keibul Lamjao the only floating national Park of its kind in the world is the last habitat of the marsh friendly brow antlered deer, the Sangai. INA memorial is at Moirang where Indian National Army first hoisted the tricolour flag. Over 150 varieties of orchids are available in Orchidarium.

9. Adventure Tourism facilities are also available at Lamdan near the Loktak Hydro-Electric power project under the aegis of Manipur Mountaineering and Trekking Association (MMTA). This Association conducts training and treks for tourist with an adventurous streak. It also offers opportunities for jungle exploration, mountaineering, rock climbing etc. Apart from these one can experience the adventure of river rafting in the Barak.

On development of IT:

10. Information Technology and IT enabled services in Manipur have not only transformed the functioning of

the Government and industry leading to improved citizen services, but also brought about better employment opportunities to the educated youths in the state like never before. The State Government is setting up the necessary infrastructure of IT enabled services industries. One IT Park is coming up at Imphal, the State Capital. The State has a number of institutions producing large number of IT manpower. We invite private participation in the development of IT enabled services in the State.

On development of Food Processing:

11. To facilitate setting up of various food processing units, a Food Park Project is coming up nearby Imphal to provide various common facilities to the private investors. Considering the potential available in the state, there is still a need for establishing a mega food park in the State where private investors are invited to participate in a big way.

12. Sharing 25% of the total growing stock of bamboo of the North East, or 14% of that of the whole country, Manipur invites investment in the bamboo processing area. A bamboo technology park is on the anvil. The national Mission on bamboo application is supporting this project. We invite private participation in this Mission. Government of Manipur will make all out efforts to secure support for the Mission.

13. It is my hope that the joint effort made by the Ministry of DoNER and CII in attracting the businessmen for investment in the North Eastern Region will pay rich dividends in putting the entire North Eastern Region on the path of progress and prosperity.

Thank you