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50th Year of Statehood for Meghalaya

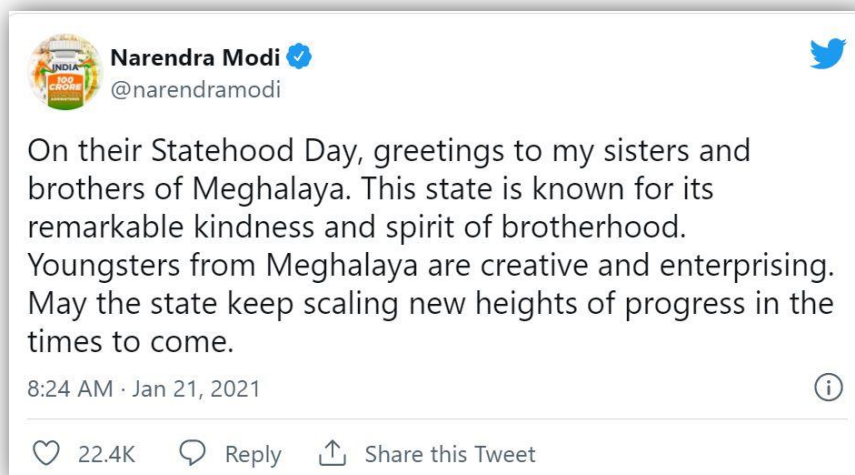
Road to Progress in New India

(Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region)

January 21, 2022

“I will always cherish the affection of the people of Meghalaya. The state’s natural beauty is enchanting. I pray for good health and wellbeing of the people of Meghalaya”,

Prime Minister Narendra Modi¹



Tweet [Source: PIB](#)

The State of Meghalaya is situated in the north east of India. It extends for about 300 kilometres in length and about 100 kilometres in breadth. Earlier, Meghalaya was a part of Assam. Meghalaya Statehood Day is observed annually on 21st January. On 21st January, 1972, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura became full-fledged states under the [North Eastern Region \(Reorganisation\) Act, 1971²](#).

Meghalaya became an Autonomous State on 2nd April 1970 and a full-fledged State on 21st January 1972. Meghalaya was formed from two districts of Assam i.e the United Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills, and the Garo Hills, on this date. It marked the triumph of peaceful democratic negotiations, mutual understanding and victory over violence and intrigue.

¹ [PM greets people of Meghalaya on their Statehood Day \(pib.gov.in\)](#)

² <https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/1534/1/197181.pdf>

Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya, is located at an altitude of 1496 metres above sea level. Shillong, which was made Assam's capital in 1874, remained so till January 1972, following the formation of Meghalaya. The capital city derives its name from the manifestation of the creator called Shyllong.³



On the occasion of the 50th Statehood Day of Meghalaya, Prime Minister Narendra Modi referred to the traditions of ‘Whistling Village’ and choirs in every village, saluting the contribution of the state in the fields of art and music. He said that this land is filled with talented artists and Shillong Chamber Choir has taken it to new heights. He noted that the country has high hopes from the rich sports culture of Meghalaya. The Prime Minister also noted the growing fame of the state in the field of organic farming. “Sisters of Meghalaya have revived the art of bamboo weaving and its hard-working farmers are strengthening Meghalaya’s identity as organic state”, he said.⁴

Economy of Meghalaya

Meghalaya is essentially an agricultural state in which about 80 per cent of the total population is dependent primarily on agriculture for livelihood.

The state has a vast potential for developing horticulture due to agro-climatic variations, which offer much scope for the cultivation of temperate, sub-tropical and tropical fruits and vegetables. Besides the major food crops of rice and maize, Meghalaya is known for its oranges (Khasi Mandarin), pineapple, banana, jackfruits, temperate fruits like plums, peaches and pears etc. The popular cash crops, which are traditionally cultivated, include turmeric, ginger, black pepper, arecanut, Betelvine, tapioca, short staple cotton, jute and mesta, mustard and rapeseed. Special emphasis is being laid on non-traditional crops like oil seeds, cashewnut, tea and coffee, orchids and commercial flowers. The rich mineral deposits including mica, gypsum and coal are yet to be utilised to their full potential.⁵

Meghalaya has an ideal location advantage for the South East Asia Market. The neighbouring countries of India viz Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar has been involved with the state for business and commerce. It has a huge potential to reach other South Asian countries as well. Meghalaya is also geographically rich in minerals and has the potential for industrial setups based on these mineral resources. Above all, the Meghalaya Industrial Policy is framed for the ease of doing business and increase trade and commerce. An added advantage is that the climate in Meghalaya is good for the development of electronics chips.⁶

Types of industry that can be ideally setup in the state are mineral-based industry, horticulture and agro-based industry, Electronics and Information Technology, Export

³ <https://meghalaya.gov.in/about>

⁴ [Press Information Bureau \(pib.gov.in\)](https://pib.gov.in/Press-Information-Bureau)

⁵ <https://ignca.gov.in/divisions/janapada-sampada/northeastern-regional-centre/introduction-meghalaya/>

⁶ <https://investmeghalaya.gov.in/resources/homePage/17/megeodb/invest-megh.html>

Oriented Units, tourism etc. Besides these, a recent development in the state has seen the rise of many upcoming service sectors such as customer service and real estate, among others.

The Department of Commerce and Industries provides various types of State Incentives for the established Industrial Setup.

To summarize the strengths of Meghalaya:

- Stable political environment.
- Strong GSDP growth in last few years.
- Availability of literate and trainable human resources.
- Large English-speaking population.
- The region has a very well performing gender development index
- Several tourist attractions.
- Presence of an ethnic tribal culture with unique customs and traditions, which can attract tourists.
- Rich bamboo and forest reserves.
- Extensive mineral resources including coal and limestone.
- Abundant Agriculture and horticulture resources.
- Handloom and weaving skills acquired by the local community
- High Hydro-power availability.
- Ideal climate conditions.
- Safe and clean, pollution-free environment
- Reasonably good existing base of micro enterprises in traditional handicraft, handloom, agricultural and horticultural units.
- Well-connected to other parts of India through Roads, Railway and Airways

Some facts about Meghalaya⁷:

- Largest producer of coal and limestone in North-East India.
- Producer of one of the finest varieties of turmeric, the Lakadong turmeric.
- Leading producer of strawberry in India.
- Shillong: 'Rock capital of India' has received visits from world famous rock bands.
- Of the 6000 medicinal plants in India, 834 plants including the famous Himalayan Yew, are found in Meghalaya.
- The state is home to eight of the top 20 medicinal plants that are traded in India and are in high demand.
- Meghalaya has an installed hydroelectric power capacity of 401 MW as of July 2020. The total potential for hydropower is estimated to be approximately 3000 MW.
- Meghalaya recorded over \$53.8 million worth of exports in 2018-19.
- About 55 per cent of Meghalaya's population is in the working age group of 15-59 years.

Development in Meghalaya

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has reiterated the government's commitment for better roads, rail and air connectivity during his address to the people of the state on the occasion of its 50th Statehood Day. He said that measures have been taken to ensure new domestic and

⁷ <https://www.investindia.gov.in/state/meghalaya>

global markets for the organic products of the state. The state government is making all the efforts to take schemes and initiatives of the Government of India to the people. Schemes like Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana and National Rural Livelihood Mission have benefitted Meghalaya. Today, Jal Jeevan Mission has taken piped water to 33 per cent households from just one per cent households in 2019. Meghalaya is among the first states to use drones for vaccine delivery.

Below is a snapshot of Infrastructure development in the state⁸:



1. Strengthening health systems in Meghalaya⁹

Government of India, the Government of Meghalaya and the World Bank signed a \$40 million health project for the state of Meghalaya on 28th October 2021. The project will improve the quality of health services and strengthen the state's capacity to handle future health emergencies, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Meghalaya Health Systems Strengthening Project will enhance the management and governance capabilities of the state and its health facilities; expand the design and coverage of the state's health insurance program; improve the quality of health services through certification and better human resource systems; and enable efficient access to medicines and diagnostics.

All 11 districts of the state will benefit from the project. It will also benefit health sector staff at the primary and secondary levels by strengthening their planning and management capabilities and building their clinical skills. The project will enable women to better utilize healthcare services at the community level.

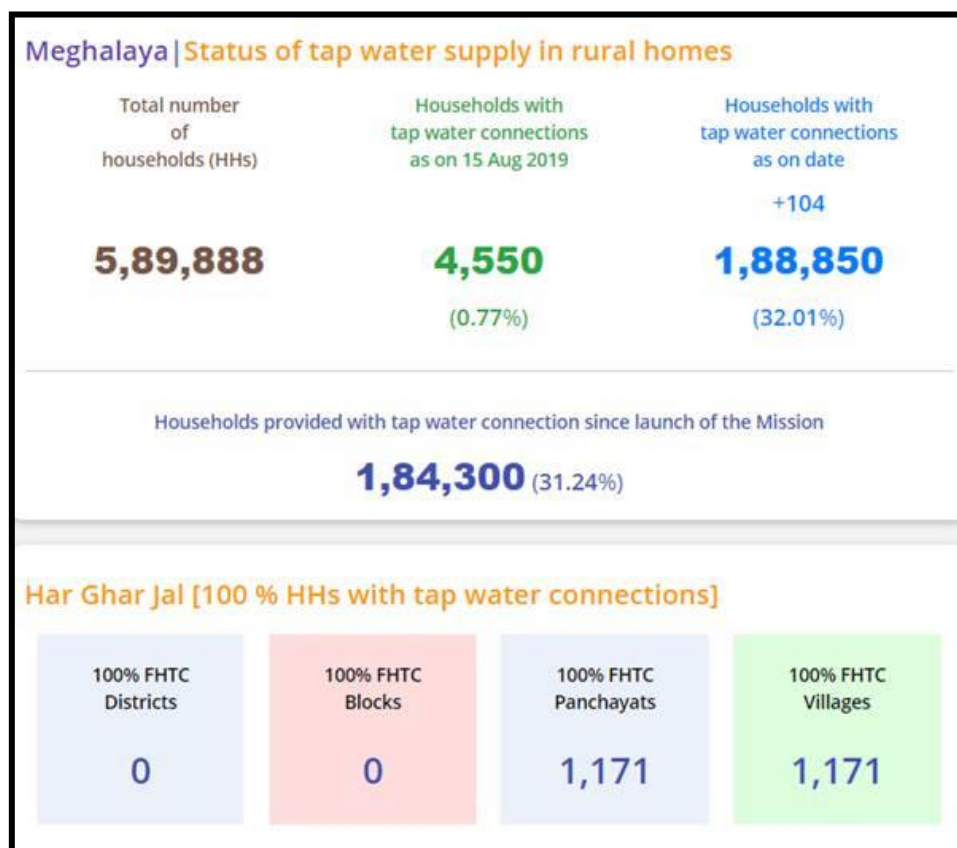
The Department of Economic Affairs, [Ministry of Finance](#) stated that “Strengthening and expanding health care systems is a priority for the Government of India. The Project will enhance the management and quality of health services in the state. It will also help expand the coverage of health services and make it accessible and affordable to the poor and vulnerable in the state.”

⁸ [Investment & Business Opportunities in Meghalaya | Invest India](#)

⁹ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1768403>

2. Central grant of ₹170 Crore released to Meghalaya under Jal Jeevan Mission

In 2021-22, the State plans to provide tap water connections to 3.39 lakh rural households. Union Government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi accords top priority to make provision of tap water connection in every rural household across the country. With a focus on expediting the implementation of [Jal Jeevan Mission](#) in Meghalaya, the Government of India released Rs. 169.60 Crore to the State. Central fund of ₹678.39 Crore has been allocated to the State for 2021-22 for the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission, which is nearly four times the allocation for 2020-21. There are 5.90 lakh rural households in the State, out of which 1.88 lakh households (31.94%) have tap water connection. In 2021-22, the State plans to provide tap water connections to 3.39 lakh rural households.¹⁰



3. Improving flight connectivity under UDAN¹¹

The first direct flight on the Shillong – Dibrugarh route under the Regional Connectivity Scheme – [Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik](#)¹² (RCS-UDAN) of the Government of India, was virtually flagged off on 26th October 2021.



¹⁰ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseFramePage.aspx?PRID=1778743>

¹¹ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1766522>

¹² <https://www.civilaviation.gov.in/en/pressrelease/udan-ude-desh-ka-aam-naagrik-intro>

The Union Minister for Civil Aviation Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia said, “Shillong is one of the highest & wettest places in the world. The place is important not only for the country but for the entire world. Shillong has always been known as Scotland of East due to the presence of rolling hills, caves, tallest waterfalls, beautiful landscapes and its rich heritage and culture. There’s nothing that Meghalaya does not have to offer. The place attracts tourists from all over the world.”

4. Other Projects: inauguration of newly constructed building of Kendriya Hindi Sansthan in Meghalaya¹³

Union Minister for Education and Skill Development Shri Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the newly constructed building of Kendriya Hindi Sansthan at Mawdiangdiang, East Khasi Hills on 21st November 2021. This Institute will work for the benefit of teachers of Hindi and people eager to learn and do research in the language. It will cater to states of Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.



5. Exhibition/Trade fairs¹⁴

The Commerce & Industries Department of the Meghalaya Government conducts Exhibitions at District level once a year for the entrepreneurs to showcase and demonstrate their latest products, service, and examine recent trends and opportunities. Besides District Level Exhibitions, the Department also participates in Trade Fairs in the State level/National Level/ International Level Exhibition. Exhibitions/Trade Fairs enables the entrepreneurs to market their products as well as to create market linkages and provides them an exposure of the market.

6. Developmental activities in Garo hills

The Government is committed to overall development of the North Eastern Region (NER) including Garo hills region in the State of Meghalaya. Out of total 11 districts in Meghalaya, five districts fall under Garo hills region. In Garo hills regions, 13 projects are under implementation for construction/widening/reconstruction of roads/bridges for 133.8 km length.¹⁵

Meghalaya & Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The SDG India Index 2018 was the first effort by the Government of India to rank sub-national governments by computing composite index on SDGs. The third and latest edition of the SDG India Index (2020-21) consists of 115 Indicators, 75 of which are common to Index 2.0. In the SDG India Index 3.0, Meghalaya has seen an advancement in their ranking from the 25th position in the NITI Aayog SDG India Index 2019-20, to the **23rd** with an improvement in its composite score, from 54 to 60 indicating that the state has improved in

¹³ <https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1773796>

¹⁴ <https://megindustry.gov.in/activities.html>

¹⁵ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1707467>

its performance towards achieving the SDGs. The state came out as the top performer in SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality) with an index score of 88 among the states.¹⁶

Performance of Meghalaya- SDG India Index

Sustainable Development Goal	Index score		Growth	Rank
	2020- 21	2019- 20		
1: No Poverty	77	68	9	9
2: Zero Hunger	37	35	2	25
3: Good Health & Well Being	70	53	17	15
4: Quality Education	48	55	-7	20
5: Gender Equality	51	34	17	11
6: Clean Water & Sanitation	75	70	5	24
7: Affordable & Clean Energy	50	52	-2	28
8: Decent Work & Economic Growth	63	65	-2	10
9: Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure	25	22	3	27
10: Reduced Inequality	88	76	12	1
11: Sustainable Cities & Communities	51	22	29	25
12: Responsible Production & Consumption	73	60	13	18
13: Climate Action	62	36	26	8
15: Life on Land	64	99	-35	14
16: Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions	72	59	13	15
Overall Performance	60	54	6	
Rank of the State	23	25		
Aspirants- 0 to 49				
Performer- 50 to 64				
Front Runner- 65 to 99				

Festivals of Meghalaya:¹⁷

- A five day long religious festival of the Khasis, **Ka Pemplang Nongrem** dance- popularly known as Nongrem dance- is held annually at village, Smit, 11 km from Shillong.
- **Shad Sukmysi**, another festival of the Khasis, is held in Shillong during the second week of April.
- **Behdiengkhlam**, the most important and colourful festival of the Jaintias is celebrated annually at Jowai in Jaintia hills in July.
- **Wangla** festival is observed for a week to honour Saljong (Sun-god) of the Garos during October-November.
- **Christmas** is celebrated in the month of December by the large Christian population of the state.



¹⁶ Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) | Meghalaya Government Portal

¹⁷ <https://ignca.gov.in/divisionss/janapada-sampada/northeastern-regional-centre/introduction-meghalaya/>

Boost to Tourism

Meghalaya, the “*Abode of the Clouds*” with its picturesque landscape of rolling hills, meandering rivers, cascading waterfalls, lush forests, diverse flora and fauna and unique culture and tradition has great potential for development of tourism. The first Tourism Policy was framed in the year 2001 which was published vide Government Notification No. Tourism.136/96/264 dated 15th February 2001.

With the evolving role of the tourism sector as a major engine of economic growth, it was felt necessary to revamp the existing tourism policy and come up with a [new policy](#)¹⁸ within which the Government helps to create the basic infrastructure for tourism development, while the private sector helps to provide quality products and offer active support services.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also [tweeted](#)¹⁹ that “The Government of India is fully committed to boosting the tourism potential of Meghalaya.”

Following are a few important places of interest in Meghalaya:

- [Shillong](#)²⁰ - Founded in the second half of the nineteenth century by the British, Shillong town has enjoyed a cosmopolitan core since its beginnings. This reflects in the unique culture of Meghalaya’s scenic capital – a place where every festival is celebrated with zest and travellers will stumble across cuisines from across the country and the world. Shillong’s modern reputation is built on its love for music and there have been many legendary musicians who call this home. There are many faces to Shillong – the quiet neighbourhoods with whistling pine still thrive but there is also a vibrant downtown area.



- [Sohra](#)²¹ - The region around Sohra is synonymous with waterfalls – the plunging Nohkalikai and the thunderous Dainthlen are settings for immortal Khasi folktales while the three-tiered Wei Saw Dong is tucked away in a verdant forest.
- [Tura](#)²² - At close to 900 metres above sea level, Tura Peak is a haven for nature lovers and those interested in bird watching and photography.

¹⁸ [The Tourism Policy of Meghalaya \(investindia.gov.in\)](#)

¹⁹ <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseFramePage.aspx?PRID=1775789>

²⁰ <https://www.meghalayatourism.in/destinations/shillong/>

²¹ <https://www.meghalayatourism.in/destinations/sohra/>



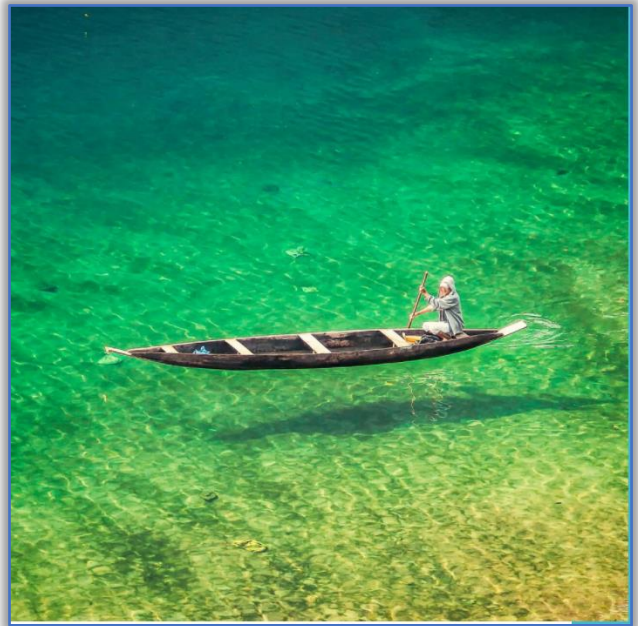
- [Jowai](#)²³ - Jowai town is a cultural and commercial pivot of the Jaintia Hills region and its history goes back to the times when the Pnar kings were the dominant force in the region. Nearby Syntu Ksiar which is located at the basin of the winding Myntdu River is an important historical spot. It has a monument dedicated to the most famous Jaintia freedom fighter – Kiang Nong Bah.

- [Mawsynram](#)²⁴ - The Mawsynram plateau region has received enough attention for its world-record rainfall but there are many more unique sights here. Krem Puri is the longest sandstone cave in the world. Phlangwanbroi

village is known for its protected populations of the Hoolock Gibbon. Krem Dam, a large cave with an underground waterway and beaches is another famous site.

- [Mawphlang Sacred Groves](#)²⁵ - Khasi customs and traditions have been woven into the land and the forests like the Sacred Groves of Mawphlang. Visitors are not allowed to take anything away from this hallowed forest, not even a pebble or a twig. Apart from rare plants, mushrooms, and trees, the forest is also home to old coronation and sacrificial sites. This was where Khasi kings and ceremonial leaders (Ki Lyngdoh) had their meetings and new chiefs were anointed here.

- [DAWKI - SHNONGDENG](#)²⁶ - Dawki is a border town in the south of Meghalaya and a great base to explore nearby Shnongpdeng and Darrang – famous riverside camps. Waters so clear, one can peer into the bottom and count the stones – that is how the Umngot River can be described during the peak pre-monsoon, autumn, and winter seasons.



²² <https://www.meghalayatourism.in/destinations/tura/>

²³ <https://www.meghalayatourism.in/destinations/jowai/>

²⁴ <https://www.meghalayatourism.in/destinations/mawsynram/>

²⁵ <https://www.meghalayatourism.in/destinations/mawphlang-sacred-groves/>

²⁶ [Dawki – Shnongpdeng – Meghalaya Tourism](#)

Policy Papers on Meghalaya

- [Meghalaya Electric Vehicle Policy - 2021](#)
- [THE MEGHALAYA MINES AND MINERALS POLICY, 2012](#)
- [Meghalaya Telecom Infrastructure Policy, 2018](#)
- [Meghalaya Industrial and Investment Promotion Policy, 2012](#)
- [Draft MEGHALAYA STARTUP POLICY, 2018](#)
- [MEGHALAYA TOURISM POLICY – 2011](#)

Other References:

- [PIB Shillong Organizes Webinar on ‘Unsung Heroes of Meghalaya’ to Commemorate Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav](#)
- [VP stresses the importance of better road connectivity in the North Eastern region for overall development](#)

Video References:

- [Adventure Awaits You in Meghalaya | Meghalaya Tourism Official](#)

AG/HP/RC/PPD/SS