

THE NEW MEGHALAYA



Special Focus

Mesmerising Meghalaya



The incredible story of a turnaround

Meghalaya, blessed with immense natural beauty and resources, is one of India's smallest states—22nd in terms of area and 24th in population. Yet, the north-eastern state, which shares international border with Bangladesh, is unique in many ways. With an average annual rainfall of 1,150 cm, Meghalaya, which literally means abode of cloud, receives the highest amount of rainfall in the country. Recognised as a state of Indian Union, it may be just 50-year-old, but in 2018, the International Commission on Stratigraphy, which has divided the Holocene epoch into three subdivisions, named the late Holocene as the Meghalayan age. A speleothem in Mawmluh cave, which indicates, a dramatic worldwide climate event around 2250 BCE, has been chosen as the boundary stratotype.

The year 2018 also saw another change in Meghalaya—Conrad K. Sangma, only 40-year-old then, took charge of the state. It was a baptism by fire for the son of former Lok Sabha speaker PA Sangma, the most illustrious political leader from the north-east. The state was reeling under economic distress, corruption, socio-political frictions, and a collective sense of despair. Armed with a management degree from the prestigious Imperial College in United Kingdom, Chief Minister Conrad Sangma hit the ground running and set his priorities—sector-specific policies for economic development and ensuring their speedy execution.

Chief Minister Conrad Sangma created task forces for formulating policies on education, telecom, youth, and sports. The objective was to frame policies considering the concerns of all stakeholders. Several policies, including on industries and tourism, were revisited. Every area of growth was spotted and encouraged. The microscopic focus was evident from the beginning.

To fundamentally transform the agriculture sector, his government launched a scheme termed FOCUS (Farmers Collectivization for Upscaling Production and Marketing System). This flagship initiative for the state's producers envisages the bottom-up collectivization of producers into groups. The producer groups are provided an amount of Rs 5,000 per producer as a group corpus for increasing production and productivity. This programme is a firm step to empower the farmers of Meghalaya so that they can come together and solve their immediate problems. Within a year, the programme has been a grand success. It currently covers almost 19,000 producer groups comprising 2,50,000 families, 330 cooperative societies and about 80 aggregation and

processing centres. Hundreds of success stories are emerging from the FOCUS program.

Taking inspiration from the success and demand of the FOCUS programme, CM Sangma's government recently launched the FOCUS+ programme. Under this, an unconditional and untied annual cash benefit of R. 5,000 is being provided to each producer household to take any farm production-related activity. With the FOCUS and the FOCUS+ programmes, each rural household will receive a cash benefit of Rs 10,000 per annum.

Another focus is on horticulture. Even though Meghalaya is known for its horticulture, the state never had a food processing directorate. Sangma created one and sanctioned Rs 80 crore for our first project the Jackfruit Mission.

The administration, from top to bottom, was given categorical objectives—ensuring livelihoods for all, building infrastructure for growth, nurturing the youth and children, empowering women, providing good governance and welfare to all, and making Meghalaya one of the top 10 states in the country in next 10 years, in in GSDP per capita and SDG ranking. Several departments were restructured to create synergy and ensure faster delivery. But more importantly, what Chief Minister Conrad Sangma wanted to achieve first was taking the fruits of development to every citizen of Meghalaya. *"Development has no meaning if it is not inclusive. Every citizen must be equal stakeholder in the process. In these last four years, we haven't left any section of the society behind. We are committed to include all the sections of the society and facilitate in their physical and social well-being,"* says Conrad Sangma.

It was a highly challenging journey, made even more difficult by Covid pandemic which hit the state, along with the rest of the world, in 2020. The flight to growth, prosperity and social justice came to a grinding halt as mankind began fighting back the onslaught of an invisible virus. But there was no scope to pause for long.

Meghalaya followed a unique collaborative approach in dealing with the Covid challenges, by involving the community leaders, localities, religious institutions and above all the people of the state. While the state government upgraded the infrastructure of several health facilities on war-footing, it fundamentally introduced a new model—"Behaviour Change Model for living with COVID-19"—which involves treating every resident

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Conrad K. Sangma

Chief Minister, Meghalaya

as an asymptomatic carrier of the virus. An order was issued to treat everyone in the state as "Category A" patients unless they are tested on a continuous basis. The 'Category A' patient had to follow three non-negotiable practices: compulsory mask-wearing, hand hygiene and social distancing. This practice involved vigilant de-centralized monitoring by the communities. Hence, people in the state could perform their usual livelihood activities. In the pandemic year alone, Meghalaya witnessed a never seen before growth in rural roads—2.2 km roads were constructed every day.

Even as the collective battle against the lethal virus continues, Meghalaya and the world limped back to what can be called "normal". The "engine" for development was re-ignited and the programmes and policies to resolve the various unmet needs of the different sections of the society were put on fast track.

This year, as the state celebrates 50 years of statehood, the momentous occasion provides an opportunity to showcase the unprecedented socio-economic development Meghalaya witnessed in last four years under the leadership of Chief Minister Conrad Sangma. And the backbone of this developmental journey has been good governance. *"We are building a brand Meghalaya on which every citizen can capitalize and benefit. Together, we have taken significant strides in the development of the state through collaborative governance, decisive leadership, and determination,"* says Conrad Sangma.

And the results are showing. The government has provided rural employment to a greater number of people and financially empowered more women than ever before. It has provided improved and innovative health care, ensured safe and uninterrupted supply of water and electricity, and implemented specific programmes for prosperity and welfare of our farmers. The youth in Meghalaya now have more facilities and opportunities. Efforts were made to decentralise the power structure so that people could participate in the process of development at the grassroots level. The change is visible across all categories—infrastructure development, healthcare, education, power generation, job creation, women empowerment,

MEGHALAYA ENTERPRISE ARCHITECTURE



Meghalaya's Planning Department's key initiative of e-Proposal System, part of Meghalaya Enterprise Architecture (MeghEA) won the coveted UN Award World Summit on the Information Society Forum (WSIS) Prizes 2022.

50 DEPARTMENTS
70 DIRECTORATES
1,100 DOOS
are party of MeghEA

prosperity of farmers, skill development, youth and child welfare, connectivity, tourism, and hospitality.

The decisive leadership of the chief minister left a mark in every domain—from generating external financial assistance to solving border disputes with neighbouring states. Multiple external agencies showed faith in Chief Minister Conrad Sangma's vision for Meghalaya and consequently the state witnessed a three-fold increase in external financing touching Rs 7,886.5 crore. He also did not hesitate to sit for candid and transparent dialogue with Assam Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma over six out of 12 disputed border areas. These initiatives are bound to bring results sooner than expected.

Following the historic 2019 judgement by Supreme Court upholding the rights of tribal people over the land and minerals, mining has once again resumed in the state, bringing back livelihood opportunities to many in Meghalaya. The state government is taking all possible measures to encourage and ensure scientific mining.

The good news did not end there. Conrad Sangma genuinely believes that there is a huge potential for international trade between Meghalaya and neighbouring country Bangladesh. As a leader who steers clear of rhetoric and believe in walking the talk, he became the first Meghalaya chief minister to visit Jaintapur, an ancient kingdom, now a sub-division in Bangladesh. During his four-day-long tour to Bangladesh in 2019, Conrad Sangma also called on Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka and talked at length on several issues concerning Meghalaya and Bangladesh.

While Conrad Sangma-led Meghalaya Democratic Alliance has completed four years in power, the chief minister has no time to celebrate and pause. The road is long, and the state is burdened with a legacy of historical underperformance and political mismanagement. That makes the accomplishments of last four years even more significant.

But Conrad Sangma is in no mood to claim credit yet. He sees this spike in the developmental curve of the state as a collective achievement of the people of Meghalaya. "I want to thank all our citizens for their support and contributions in building Meghalaya. I feel proud to be leading this amazing journey of building Meghalaya as a vibrant, caring, robust economy and society," he says. ■

The Big Spend

Conrad Sangma's government has increased the average state expenditure by 48.7 per cent in last four years compared to the period between 2014 and 2018

Infrastructure

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF GROWTH

The MDA government has kick started several key infrastructural projects aimed at multi-dimensional development in the state

Long Pending Hospitality Projects Courtyard by Marriott

PROJECT COST ₹ 200 crore

STATUS Expected to be completed by August 2022

Vivanta by Taj (Crowborough)

PROJECT COST ₹ 75 crore

STATUS Completed

With the decisive leadership of the government, Courtyard by Marriott and Vivanta by Taj (Crowborough) Hotels have been revived and brought close to completion. These two hotels will add about 300 high value rooms, which would provide immense boost to the tourism industry in the state.

Shillong IT Park

PROJECT COST ₹ 40 crore

STATUS Completed

Shillong IT Park will fulfil the aspirations of the youth graduating from the state. It has already generated 1,500 jobs and has the capacity to generate 3,000 more jobs, thereby curbing the migration of the skilled youth in search of employment from Meghalaya.

Tribal Research Institute, West Garo Hills

PROJECT COST ₹ 42 crore

STATUS Expected to be completed by June 2023

A vibrant centre for research and documentation of different tribal cultures of not just Meghalaya but the entire north-east region. This centre was envisioned by the former chief minister of Meghalaya and Lok Sabha speaker Late PA Sangma.

Tura Incubation and Youth Centre

PROJECT COST ₹ 23 crore

STATUS Expected to be completed by May 2023

Tura Incubation and Youth Centre aims to promote regional start-ups and provide employment opportunities.

Shillong Business cum Tourism and Cultural Centre

PROJECT COST ₹ 216 crore

STATUS Under construction

Developed on a land of 1.76 acre at Police Bazaar Road, Shillong, it is expected to resolve many challenges of the state capital and play a multi-faceted role.

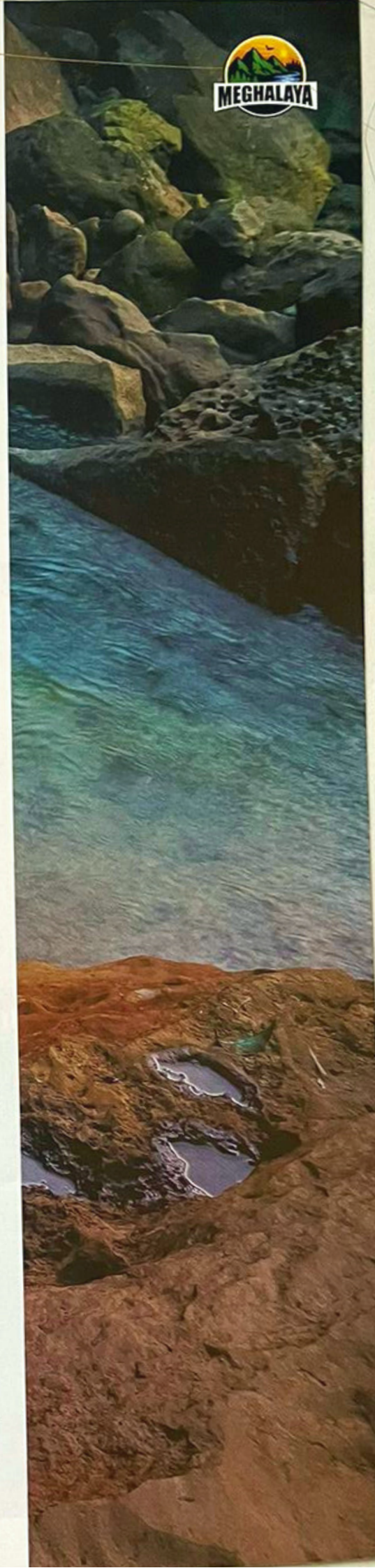
PA Sangma Integrated Sports Complex, Tura

PROJECT COST ₹ 128 crore

STATUS Expected to be completed by December 2022

It will be a world class sports infrastructure for hosting national & international tournaments, with a sitting capacity of 10,000.

Sector	Increase in spending
Healthcare	70.9%
Education	64.3%
Agriculture and allied fields	45.2%
Social welfare	103%
Water Supply and Sanitation	80.9%
Road connectivity	62.5%



Other key infra initiatives

- Shillong New Administrative City in Mawpdang has been planned to decongest the city and ease the governance.
- Eastern West Khasi Hills with its headquarters in Mairang has been created as the 12th district of Meghalaya. Mairang is one of the oldest civil sub-divisions in the state
- Mini secretariat offices at Tura and Jowai are being constructed to decentralize the governance and reduce the gap between citizen and the state

government.

- Rs 1,040 crore for Shillong Smart City Project; Rs 700 crore for Tura Smart Town
- Community led town beautification in Shillong, Tura, and Jowai; Rs 5.5 crore allotted for town beautification

Other sports arenas

- JN Sports Complex and Indoor Stadium, Shillong at a cost of Rs 97 crore; expected to be completed by December 2023
- JN Sports Complex and Outdoor Stadium,

Shillong at a cost of Rs 40 crore; expected to be completed by December 2022

- Wahiajer Multi Sports Complex, West Jaintia Hills, at a cost of Rs 25 crore; expected to be completed by December 2022. Seating capacity 3000.

Rs 410.5 crore investment in sports infrastructure in last four years, 2.5 times more than the preceding four years

Skilling and employment generation

Learn a skill, earn a job

The government launched the Youth Policy with nine thrust areas and 55 performance monitoring indicators

- More than 20,000 youth have been trained on personal growth, leadership development, digital literacy, communication, career preparedness, talent and aspiration development

- 6,576 youth were employed in sectors such as tourism and hospitality, IT-TES, retail, automotive, electronics and hardware
- 104 School Dropouts trained in construction

The Start-up push

- State-of-the-art PRIME Hubs at Shillong and Tura
- 10 More PRIME Hubs by September 2022
- 422 start-ups have been supported with funding, mentoring and incubation help

- Rs 5 lakh kick start grant
- Rs 25 lakh scale-up innovation loan
- Rs 5 lakh interest-free loan
- Rs 1 lakh grant to top 25 start-ups
- Rs 50,000 grant to top 50 start-ups

Healthcare

Rs 350 crore for health infrastructure improvement—four new primary health centres and three 100-bedded hospitals

4.7 lakh households enrolled under Megha Health Insurance Scheme (MHIS) given one-time cash grant of Rs 5,000; Rs 7,206 average insurance benefit to every patient

21 per cent reduction in infant mortality in 2020-21

9 per cent reduction in maternal mortality in 2020-21

13 per cent increase in institutional

delivery between 2018 and 2020

More than 1.95 lakh mothers registered on Meghalaya's Outcomes oriented Transformation in Health, nutrition, Education and Rural development (MOTHER) Programme app.

91 per cent children received complete immunization in 2020-21

5.18 lakh beneficiaries under Poshan Abhiyan in 2021-22

Home cooked meal every month to 35,600 children aged between 3 and 6

Education

208 schools at a cost of Rs 109 crore will be completed by December 2022

510 additional classrooms constructed at a cost of Rs 29 crore

Rs 920 crore sanctioned for 39 Eklavya Model Residential Schools

25,989 digital tabs with interactive e-content as per MBOSE syllabus for Class XI & XII and study materials for JEE and NEET distributed to students in 2021-22

Higher educational institutes, in every district soon to become areality, at an investment of Rs 97 crore

Nine peoples colleges sanctioned across the state, to make quality higher education available to the rural people



Rural development

Rural records

- 500 more people in the villages got work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in last four years than between 2014 and 2018.
- Meghalaya was one of the top 3 performers among states in terms of giving work under MGNREGS

Smart Village Movement

The Conrad Sangma government aspires to build smart villages with innovative solution and foster sustainable rural development. Here are some of the key initiatives.

- Gramin Healthcare Polyclinic
- Apollo Meghalaya Digital Dispensary
- Drone Pilot for Medicine Delivery
- Salesforce Trailblazer Lab
- Farmer Development Centres
- Spatial Imagery Pilot to empower farmers with Technology Smart and Clean Energy with Hygge
- Tata Swachh Water purification Systems
- Watsan Clean Water Solutions

	2014-18	2018-22	Growth
Expenditure	Rs 2,574 crore	Rs 5,056 crore	96%
Amount transferred per year per household	Rs 9,901	Rs 16659	68%
Average days of employment per year per household	59.59	73.71	24%
Women Employed	10,29,052	15,35,948	49%
Assets Created	57,880	75,121	30%



Women empowerment

Unleashing the potential

Rs 97 crore were disbursed to 38114 women self-help groups (SHG) impacting 3,37,622 households.

	2014-18	2018-22	Increase
No of SHGs	5,782	34,422	6 times
Households engaged	59,873	3,37,622	6 times
Disbursement to SHGs	Rs 5.7 crore	Rs 243 crore	43 times
Disbursement to village organisations (VO)	Rs 3.96 crore	Rs 137.4 crore	35 times

50 per cent reservation for women in village employment councils

Functional Working Women's Hostel at Shillong and Tura, at a cost of Rs 9 crore



Agriculture

Focus on farmers

- Rs 5,000 transferred annually to 4,50,000 farming households
- 86,000 Kisan Credit Card holders received interest free loans
- 40,000 women farmers benefited
- 185 Collective Marketing Centres (CMC) created
- 325 new Integrated Village Cooperative Societies (IVCS) created connecting 34,500 households
- 30 farmers market being created, each of these equipped with cold storage
- 31 CMCs created for food processing; 19 CMCs for ginger and pepper processing
- Mushroom Development Centre at a cost of Rs 5 crore completed; Integrated Bee Development Centre at a cost of Rs 10 crore sanctioned.
- 59,440 Ha of irrigation potential generated through 1,131 irrigation projects
- 40,000 beneficiaries strengthened through irrigation projects

Meghalaya in Mission Mode

Multiple projects with specific thrust areas were taken up on mission mode, yielding incredible results

- **Mission Lakdong:** 15 CMCs and two processing units set up. 12,998 farmers benefitted. Turmeric production reached 11,832 MT showing 66 per cent growth
- **Megh-Aroma Mission:** 235 Ha area under plantation with a budget of Rs 19 crore, covering 1,600 farmers, 6 IVCS, 9 VECs, 52 SHGs, 9 cooperative societies, and 4 farmers group. Annual oil production touched 3.5 tonnes.
- **Meghalaya State Aquaculture Mission:** Investment of Rs 378 crore; additional water area of 1,400 Ha for fish production, 7,000 fish farmers benefitted. Fish production touched 16,123 MT in 2020-21, 30 per cent increase
- **Piggery Mission:** Rs 44.8 crore disbursed to 253 co-operatives
- **Mushroom Mission:** Rs 62 Cr amount earmarked; 3,000 farmers to benefit from shiitake mushroom cultivation. Production of mushroom increased from 27 MT to 287.44 MT in past two years. Annual Spawn production doubled from 5.86 MT in 2015-18 to 11.80 MT in 2018-21.



Connectivity

Connecting the dots

The state government has massively increased investment in improving connectivity by road and air

	2014-18	2018-22	Growth
Rural road constructed	208	1644.90	8 times
Expenditure	₹ 53,584.37 crore	₹ 1,01,285.33 crore	2 times
Habitations connected	430	556	29%

2.2 km road were constructed daily in 2020-21

Meghalaya is now connected to 8 cities by air; 250+ aircrafts carry 10,000 passengers per month

Social Welfare

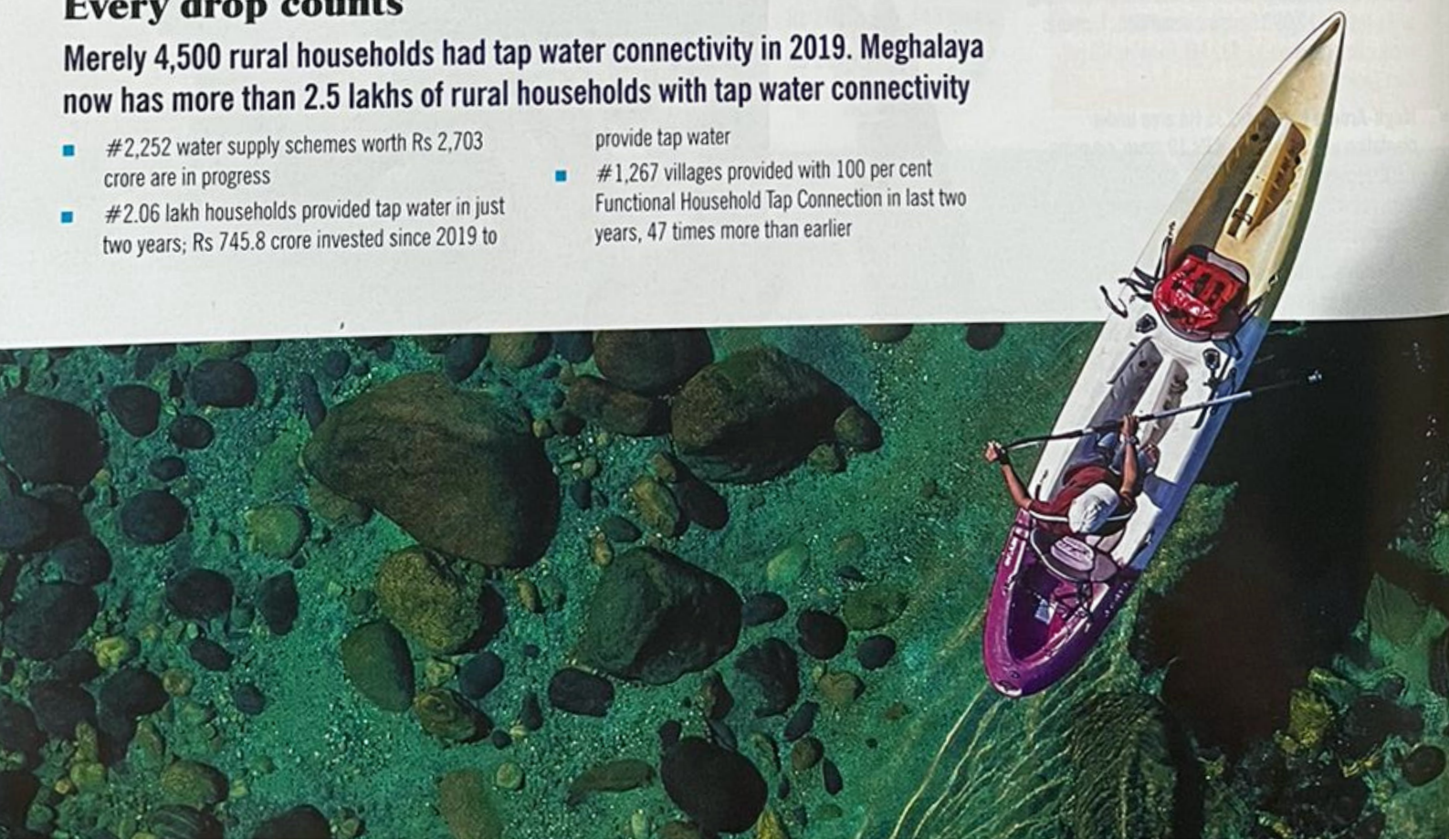
The road to inclusive development

- To increase financial inclusion, more than 1,000 banking correspondents (BCs) have been deployed in 4,578 villages to provide doorstep banking services
- 400 new micro-ATMs at a cost of Rs 1.26 crore have been distributed
- 4,467 fair price shops have been provided with ePoS devices and mobile internet connectivity
- North-east region's first ever de-addiction centre for juveniles has been set up
- Investment of Rs 25.3 crore for construction of 37 Anganwadi Buildings, six girls and women hostels, Integrated Social Facilitation Centre, school and vocational centre for Juvenile Inmates
- Assistance of Rs 6,000 annually to 1.77 lakh citizens of Meghalaya; pension amount has been increased from Rs 500 per month to Rs 750 per month

Every drop counts

Merely 4,500 rural households had tap water connectivity in 2019. Meghalaya now has more than 2.5 lakhs of rural households with tap water connectivity

- #2,252 water supply schemes worth Rs 2,703 crore are in progress
- #2.06 lakh households provided tap water in just two years; Rs 745.8 crore invested since 2019 to provide tap water
- #1,267 villages provided with 100 per cent Functional Household Tap Connection in last two years, 47 times more than earlier





Energy

Lighting up the state

The Meghalaya Government has taken bold steps to reform power sector by clearing all long pending liabilities.

- In the process of clearing decade-long outstanding liability of Rs 1,345 crore to various CPSUs/power generation companies
- Ganol Hydro Electric Project, with a capacity of 22.5 MW and built at a cost of Rs 508 crore, is nearing completion
- Steps taken for improvement of 37 new sub-stations
- 37 augmented sub-stations of 33/11kV capacity are being installed 1.8 lakh new smart meters are being installed
- 2,382 ckm power lines of 33 and 11kV capacity are being laid 10 sub-stations extended to 33kV Bay,
- New and centralized UGO utility billing software has been initiated

Environment

Restoration of abandoned coal mines — 9 lakh seedlings raised

Inauguration of Sohra Eco-restoration project

Launch of One Citizen One Tree Initiative

18,157 Ha of land area covered under Community Led Landscape Management Project

Launched the Payment for Ecosystem Services scheme to help the community in protecting the natural environment and to provide assistance to the farmers

Tourism

A home in the clouds

Tourism has been one of the biggest thrust areas for the Conrad Sangma government

- Rs 1,600 crore earmarked to boost tourism.
- Accommodation and Hospitality complexes at seven locations
- Rural tourism infrastructure at multiple villages at a cost of Rs 5 crore each
- Rs 85 crore sanctioned under Swadesh Darshan
- scheme to promote, develop, and harness the tourism potential
- Launched the Meghalaya Grassroots Music project to recognise and promote musical talents as well as provide support to artistes for events outside the state

Upcoming Key Projects

Integrated Hospitality & Sports Complex, Shillong

Shillong Ropeway

Convention Centre and hospitality complex, Orchid Lake

Uiam Water Sports Complex

Integrated Hospitality & Convention Centre, Tura

Hospitality Complex and heritage village, Sohra

Hospitality Complex and tourism infrastructure at Nongmahir,

Thadlaskein, Nonkhnum River island, Mawlyndep Village





EXPLORE MEGHALAYA

Meghalaya

TOURISM