

**SPEECH OF HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF NAGALAND
SHRI R.N. RAVI AT THE 68TH PLENARY OF NORTH EAST
COUNCIL, GUWAHATI, 8TH SEPTEMBER 2019.**

- Hon'ble Chairman, North East Council, Amit Shahji,
- Hon'ble Vice Chairman, Dr Jitendra Singh ji,
- Hon'ble Governors and
- Hon'ble Chief Ministers of North Eastern States,
- Respected Members of the North East Council,
- Secretary, Ministry of Development of North East Region,
- Secretary and other Officers of NEC Secretariat,
- Senior Officers of Government of India and State Government and Distinguished participants.

I am happy to be in your midst at the 68th Plenary of the NEC being hosted at Guwahati, Assam. This is my first meeting as a member of the governing council of NEC and look forward to participation in the plenary which I am confident will be both meaningful and fruitful.

At the outset I would draw the attention of the Council to some of the issues specific to my State Nagaland.

Nagaland is an agrarian state. The future of the state lies in exploiting the opportunities in agriculture and allied activities. Commercial crops like coffee and rubber needs to given a big push. Horticulture is another area where the state has immense potential. Crops like orange, kiwi, passion fruit, cucumbers and pineapples are suited for

the soil and climatic conditions of the state. Spices like ginger and turmeric including the world renowned “ Naga King chilly” are grown in abundance. The need of the hour is to provide marketing linkages for these products. Value addition has to be created and organic certification is necessary to fetch good prices.

Power is critical for industrialisation and technological advancements. Therefore the power needs of the North East States should be seriously examined and fulfilled. Nagaland is facing serious power deficit; the State generates only 26.7 MW against the peak requirement of 165 MW. The region has immense potential for hydel power generation. Other renewable sources of energy like solar power should also be explored. It is expected that NEC will come forward to fund such projects.

Nagaland suffers huge connectivity deficit. The poor surface, air and digital connectivity and resultant relative isolation of the State inhibits its economic and emotional integration with rest of the country. NEC may help Nagaland with special assistance to overcome its connectivity deficit.

Now I would like to draw your attention to the fundamental issue of growing marginalisation of the NEC and its likely consequences.

The North East India, all through the centuries, has been the region of geo-cultural and geo-economic unity. It celebrated its rich cultural diversity through peaceful co-existence of innumerable ethnic

communities. The vibrant social interactions and rich economic interdependence of the ethnic communities including those among the hills and the plains were disrupted by the deliberate policies of the British Administration. The neighbours became strangers, mutually suspicious of each other.

The post colonial period witnessed aggressive ethnic assertions. More and more communities began to demand exclusive homeland for themselves. The post colonial North East witnessed multiple political fragmentation of the regions. The traditional forces of unity were weakened. Several economically unviable States were created to satisfy and appease the forces asserting mutual differences and exclusivity.

It was in such a back drop that the idea of North East Council was conceived. It was created as an institution to look at the region as one organic whole and keep it so through creation of shared institutions, infrastructures and interests.

Over the decades, unfortunately the NEC has been weakened. It has happened mainly due to inadequate appreciation of the underlying rationale for this unique institution. Its resources have dwindled and its capacity to be an unifier of the region has been severely eroded. It has been practically subsumed by the Ministry of DoNER. The States of the

region now look it at merely as a source for additional developmental resources.

I would, therefore urge the council especially the Hon'ble Chairman, Shri Amit Shah ji to take cognizance of the fundamental drift of NEC away from its core objective. The institution of NEC can be restructured in tune with the contemporary needs and realities while keeping its core objective of strengthening the underlying oneness of the region.

**Thank you.
Jai Hind.**
