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Sonowal performs *Bhumi Pujan* to mark inauguration of six lane bridge over Brahmaputra

Dispur, March 1: Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal performed *bhumi puja*n to mark the auspicious inauguration of the construction of the six lane extra dosed bridge over river Brahmaputra connecting Guwahati and North Guwahati at Bharalumukh here today.

The extra dosed bridge will be the first of its kind in North East with a project cost of Rs. 2608 crore, will be implemented by Assam Public Works Department with consultancy services from Systra Engenharia Consultoria Ltd, Brazil, contractor services from M/s S.P. Singla Construction Pvt. Limited and funding agency New Development Bank. However, 20 per cent the total project cost will be borne by Government of Assam.

The foundation stone of the bridge was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 9 February, 2019, as the length of the six lane project will be 8.4 km with approach road on both sides of the Brahmaputra as the length of the actual bridge over the river will be 1.24 km. The project is estimated to be completed within four years.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Sonowal termed the day as a momentous occasion for the state, as the proposed bridge will revolutionize the connectivity across the Brahmaputra. He said that without good connectivity no region can progress and with this bridge which will be unique in every aspect will take a giant step towards making Assam one of the top performing states in the country.

Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Smart City project, Chief Minister Sonowal said that the new bridge over the Brahmaputra is a step towards Smart Guwahati which will facilitate an integrated ICT application for an intelligent traffic system leading to decongestion of city traffic. He also said that Guwahati is no longer a gateway to North East India merely, it is also tipped to be the gateway to South East Asian Countries. In this backdrop the new extra dosed PSC (pre stressed concrete) bridge over the Brahmaputra apart from delving a facelift to Guwahati, will transform the connectivity of the capital city in particular and the entire state in general.

Chief Minister Sonowal also said that the new development will throw open new opportunities to the youths of the state and urged them upon to empower themselves and reap dividends from these transformations. He, at the same time called upon the youths of the state not to become victims of the menace of drugs and abuse of internet especially social media.

He asked them to work hard and increase their resilience and become ambassadors of peace and development. He also thanked the people of Assam for their cooperation that they rendered from time to time towards the endeavour of the government and hoped that the same cooperation would be continued in the coming days also to help the state to set the new level of development benchmark.

PWD, Finance etc Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sharma while speaking on the occasion gave a brief description about different development initiatives State government has been taking for the welfare of all sections of the people of the state. He also said that State government is all set to establish new medical and engineering colleges in Biswanath, Goalpara, Karimganj and Dhemaji, Behali, Bongaigaon, Sulakuchi etc. He also said that the State government would also build an iconic building in the birthplace of Srimanta Sankaradeva at Botodroba acknowledging the greater identity the *prabhujona* has given to the people of Assam in social, cultural, spiritual aspects.

Guwahati Development Minister Siddhartha Bhattacharya, MP Guwahati Queen Oja also spoke on the occasion. Minister of State PWD Jogen Mohan, Minister of State Tea Tribe Welfare Sanjay Kisan, MLA Numal Momin, Commissioner and Special Secretary PWD Rajesh Kemprai and Raj Chakrabarty and a host of dignitaries were present on the occasion.

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