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CM interacts with economists of the state in view of COVID-19

Time bound roadmap for reviving economy must: CM

Dispur, April 28: As part of his efforts to reach out to various sections of the society, Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal today held an interactive session with the leading economists of the state at the Assam Administrative Staff College in the country for seeking their suggestion to revive Assam's economy in the post COVID-19 scenario. During the deliberations, the participants offered their suggestions and feedbacks while the urging the government to take innovative and strong measures to overcome this challenge and bring the state's economy back on track.

Welcoming the suggestion of setting up economic task forces in the State till block level for taking specific revival measures for the State's economy, the Chief Minister highlighted the need to prepare a time-bound roadmap for achieving short and long term goals to rejuvenate the economy which has been hit by COVID-19 pandemic.

Saying that every crisis presents an opportunity, the Chief Minister called for unified approach to tackle the economic slowdown while discovering Assam's inherent strengths to make it a self-reliant economy which can bear the brunt of future situations. Underlining the importance of a 100 days action plan for restructuring the economic system, Sonowal said that prioritizing expenditures and streamlining various sectors such agriculture, livestock etc to overcome the situation through planned interventions are the focus points of the government.

He also stressed on the need to plug the loopholes in the system while cutting out unnecessary expenditures. "Utilising natural soil fertility and climatic advantage for agricultural resurgence in the State are the keys and we must use this opportunity to make the state self reliant and production surplus in sectors such as fisheries, agriculture, livestock, horticulture etc to generate employment opportunities" he asserted.

Referring to the nearly 10 lakh youths returning to State from various parts of the country in view of COVID-19 pandemic, Sonowal said that returning manpower should be viewed as an asset instead of a burden. He opined that the skill sets and experiences acquired by the returning youths working outside could be utilised to propel Assam towards economic resurgence and opportunities must be created within the State to absorb these youths productively.

He also called for inter department coordination to overcome the economic challenge while equally taking care of weavers, farmers, daily wage, a earners etc through government

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interventions and also harnessing the potential of the State through labour intensive agri-based industries.

While opening the session, Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma remarked in his address that Assam had a buoyant economy before the COVID-19 pandemic as the State clocked impressive GDP growth of 12-16 percent in the last three financial years as against national average of 6 percent. Assam's devolution of Rs 24 thousand crore per year from Central Government's pool of funds sustained the economy along with nearly Rs 13 thousand crore state's own earnings and in view of financial slowdown, innovative measures must be devised to overcome this crisis, he said.

As many as 29 economists and economic experts of the State took part in today's interactive session and offered their suggestions for formulating revival plan of Assam's economy in the post COVID-19 scenario.

Agriculture Minister Atul Bora, Social Welfare Minister Pramila Rani Brahma, Media Adviser to the Chief Minister Hrishikesh Goswami, Legal Adviser to the Chief Minister Shantanu Bharali, MLA Rituparna Barua, Principal Secretary of Finance Department Samir Kumar Sinha were present in the meeting among others.

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