



**JANASANYOG, ASSAM
CHIEF MINISTER'S PUBLIC RELATIONS CELL, DISPUR**

PRESS RELEASE

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Sitharaman launches the 3rd phase of Chah Bagicha Dhan Puraskar Mela

The whole world wakes up with Assam tea but tea tribe remained neglected: Sitharaman

Tea community must motivate the children towards education: CM

Dispur, Feb 6: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman today launched the 3rd phase of Chah Bagicha Dhan Puraskar Mela while ceremonially distributing third tranche of financial assistance to tea garden area beneficiaries under the scheme at a programme held at Assam Veterinary College Playground at Khanapara in the city.

In the third phase of the scheme, launched for financial inclusion of tea tribe community through opening of bank accounts, an amount of Rs 3000 was transferred directly to 7, 46,667 bank accounts of beneficiaries in the garden areas. Notably, under this scheme started by the Assam Government in the year 2017- 18, Rs 2500 was provided to 6,33,411 bank accounts in the first phase while an additional amount of Rs 2500 was deposited to 7,15,979 bank accounts in the second tranche in 2018-19.

Speaking on the occasion, Union Finance Minister Sitharaman said that Assam is known world-over for its tea and while people start their mornings with a cup of Assam brew, the labourers who grow tea have been neglected for a long time making them live a disadvantaged life. Since Prime Minister Narendra Modi led Central Government assumed power in 2014, various measures for upliftment of the tea community have been taken as Prime Minister Modi has been sincerely making efforts for bringing change to the lives of people of all sections.

Crediting the bank officials and Assam Government employees for completing the task of opening of more than 8 lakh bank accounts in the tea garden areas after the demonization drive initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Sitharaman said that due to the inclusion of tea community people in the formal banking system has enabled direct transfer of benefits of government schemes to their bank accounts without any middlemen and leakage. An ambitious scheme like Ayushman Bharat has been launched to provide Rs 5 lakh to every family per year for enabling underprivileged section like tea community to avail paperless medical treatment, she added.

Saying that Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal works wholeheartedly and sincere intentions for equal development of all sections, the Union Finance Minister informed that the Central Government allocated Rs 1000 in the Union Budget 2021-22 for the empowerment of tea garden women of Assam and West Bengal acting on the plea of the Assam Government and as a commitment of the Central Government towards tea community people. ATMs, mobile banking etc facilities provided by the banks in the tea gardens have taken banking there to the level of metro cities of the country, she said.

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She also said that the under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Central Government has been working relentlessly for the development weakest sections of the society and no discrimination is done in the allocation of funds to any state. In future also, measures for upliftment of tea community would be taken, she added.

Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, addressing the huge gathering, termed the day as historic and recalled the feat of opening of more than 8 lakh bank accounts in the tea garden areas after the demonetization drive of Prime Minister Modi with the support of tea community people. He referred to Prime Minister's motto of 'sabka sath, sabka vikash, sabka viswas' as the guiding principle for the State Government to work for equal development of all sections and he also thanked the Prime Minister for conferring Padma Shri on artiste Dulal Manki and termed it as a gesture of respect towards the tea community.

He informed that the government has provided free text book, free uniform and free admission to children of tea garden people and urged them to motivate their children to strive for acquiring education to succeed in this age of competition. He also remarked that tea tribe youths have achieved success in all spheres and congratulated those from the community who got selected in APSC this year. He also called on the people of tea community to consider the amount provided under Chah Bagicha Dhan Puraskar Mela as a mark of respect.

Thanking the Central Government for selecting the life of Assam's tea community as the theme for the state's tableau in Republic Day Parade in New Delhi this year, Sonowal said that increased allocation to Assam in this year's union budget has sent a message of 'Ek Bharat Sresth Bharat' to the whole country and he also thanked Union Finance Minister Sitharaman for the same. He also termed that Nrimala Sitharaman as the brightest example of women empowerment in the country and said that under the BJP led governments at both centre and state women-folks have become empowered to contribute the country's economy and nation building process.

Speaking at the event Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Finance Minister of State, said that for development of the tea garden workers the government has always stood beside them in their time of needs. He informed that the government is working tirelessly for the upliftment of the Tea Garden workers and informed about plans to provide free breakfasts at the tea garden schools, introduction of 10% reservation in tea garden neighbouring colleges for the students of the community apart from the already implemented 10% reservation in medical and engineering colleges. He also promised that the State Government would soon announce increase in wages of the tea garden workers of the state and more good news would come.

Union Minister of State for Food Processing Rameswar Teli, Minister of State (Independent) Tea Tribe's Welfare Sanjay Kishan, Rajya Sabha MP Kamakhya Prasad Tasa, MP Pallab Lochan Das, MLAs Kripanath Malla, Nabanita Handique, Principal Secretary of Finance





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Department Samir Kumar Sinha, SBI CGM R.S.Ramesh were also present on the occasion among others.

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