

3rd North East connectivity summit Takeaways

Venue: Pragna Bhawan, Agartala, Tripura

Duration – 3 days (from 21 Sep 2016 – 23 Sep 2016)

Background

Third North East connectivity summit was held to discuss the opportunities and strengths that North East region offers to the business community for possible investments and trade promotion across NE states and border countries. This summit was jointly organised by FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of commerce and Industry), Ministry of North East (DoNER) council and Government of Tripura.

Introductory sessions on 21st Sept. 2016

Introduction

Connectivity in the region as a whole was discussed including Digital, Rail, Road, Waterways, People to People and Business to Business. Tripura has the advantage having human resource that is approximately 95% literate. In NACAER study on Investment Potential Index, Tripura has been ranked no. 1 in Governance and Political stability. The growth in Tripura can be achieved by connecting the state with its neighbouring countries and bordering states.

Dr Bibek Debroy, member NITI Ayog (National Institute for Transforming India), said that state should focus only on the service sector as the physical infrastructure is still considered as poor to support the manufacturing industries. The state should focus on Plantation with a view of Food Processing, Health or medical tourism, Biotechnology and Information technology. The state still needs four more years before it may be termed as a preferred destination for manufacturing industries.

Achievements and issues highlighted by Tripura Government departments and others

Various state departments emphasised upon that fact, what is available in the state and what it offers to the global investors. They presented growth figures in various sectors, e.g. road, education. health care and digital penetration into the citizens.

1. **Industries and Commerce** presented the opportunity that exist in the state in terms of availability of industrial parks for industrial sectors like Food processing, Information Technology, Rubber, Handloom and Bamboo. All these comes with a promise of a stable and long terms policies and incentivised schemes.
2. **PWD** department highlighted the department's achievements in last 5 years and with a boost in construction of physical infrastructure in last two years. The ongoing road projects covering the state and connectivity with the national highways was discussed.
3. **Transport** department highlighted the necessity to link the major cities in the region and exploit the opportunity to develop three other existing air airports at Kamalpur, Khowai and Kailasahar. In addition, existing helicopter services has to be strengthen to improve the people mobility in the state. The Broad Gauge rail connectivity up to Sabroom in South Tripura and thereafter link to Chittagong in Bangladesh, which is only 72 KM from Sabroom.
4. **Tourism** department, presented on possibilities to develop various tourist destinations in the state and the growth that has happened in the last few years in terms of number of tourists

and revenue to the state. Also some improvements were highlighted in order to enhance the facilities for the foreign tourists.

5. **IT Department** highlighted the state has high quality technical and educational institutions and ready for the IT investments. State offers 40,000 sqft of space to be utilised by IT companies in two IT parks in Agartala. Third international internet gateway has been setup in Agartala besides Mumbai and Chennai. Agartala has its own Fibre optic network connecting various government departments with the state network. State Government has a package of incentives that are available to new IT businesses and entrepreneurs.
6. **KPMG** representative presented on the concept of leveraging IT to boost development in Tripura. ICT requires creation, transmission, and dissemination of information, which in turn would translate into widening the access toward knowledge, enabling inclusive growth and equal prosperity for all segments of global society. On the other hand, ICT requires a highly advanced and robust infrastructures and latest technology, which is easily achievable by investing and focussing on ICT infrastructure.

Session on road and digital connectivity on 23rd September

Road and connectivity

Achievements

NHAI (National Highways Authority of India) has taken initiatives in developing new Highways and extend the existing National Highways to connect with new and existing state highways. The National highways are already connected to the state's district head-quarters.

PWD department also discussed need to connect the road that existed pre-partition of India and Bangladesh, to immediately revive road connectivity. This would trigger the economic activity in the region with least cost. The roads exist on both sides of the India-Bangladesh border, and it is just connectivity that needs to be done.

Few representatives from Bangladesh highlighted the progress made in their country with respect to the road network.

There is a motor vehicle agreement between member countries of UNESCAP and currently on the process of defining the standards for road signs.

India-Myanmar-Thailand highway is under construction.

Delhi Hanoi Rail Link is also being worked upon and there is a need to expedite the project

Issues and Risks

On Finance side main issues were highlighted that more fiscal autonomy should be given to the NE states and there should be an incentive structure to use the 100% allocated budget on the infrastructure development. Currently 90% of the GDP of the NE states is spend in Logistics sector and aim is to reduce this spend.

Risks related to Geo political and Geo Economics need to be addressed at international level.

Road safety and conditions should not be ignored while developing the road network. Last but not the least, environment ecosystem in NE is very fragile and while developing the region special attention should be given to protect the environment.

The work progress of construction in Myanmar and other neighbouring countries is very slow.

Digital Connectivity

Internet society representative view was to have Digital Connectivity supported by highly secured local infrastructure facilities like Internet exchange point, local content to support the local languages and websites should be hosted locally. This would improve throughput of the website and more users will be able to avail the digital infrastructure. This would further help in penetrating deep into the market by advertising the product in local market. Moreover, emphasis should be given to the network traffic engineering for better bandwidth management and capacity building to utilise the increased bandwidth.

KPMG emphasised on the need to leverage the digital infrastructure for eLearning and G2C services. Government may introduce more citizen centric services and increase the usage of the existing services. Governments may leverage the each other SDC (State Data Centres) to improve their utilization. There has to be a coordinated approach rather than isolated effort. Mobile penetration in the market can be increased by inviting more ISPs (Internet Service Providers) to the region.

IT Department of Tripura has already a host of G2C, G2B, B2B services with a State data centre where webhosting is available. The availability of digital infrastructure including Tripura State Data Centre (TSDC) was highlighted which is ready to be leveraged by the neighbouring countries like Bangladesh and other NE states of India. Fibre optic connectivity has reached Tripura up to Block level and by year end 2016, all the remaining Gram Panchayats would be connected. All offices up to block level have IP phone connectivity.

Government of Tripura is working on to increase the reach of horizontal connectivity in the state so that the G2C and B2C services can be further enhanced. Also the state offers immense opportunity for the entrepreneurs and investors to utilize the newly constructed IT parks that are available on lease. Tripura Government's 10 GB State Wide Area Network (SWAN) may be leveraged Internet Service providers (ISP) to place an exchange point and root instance at Agartala.

In order to make the digital connectivity more robust in the state, railways, road and other construction departments to protect the fibre optic cable while carrying out the construction activities. The unavailability of the network can cause unnecessary delays in the service delivery to the citizens and hamper G2G activities which may be serious in nature.

Issues and Risks

In India, the average Broadband speed is only 512 KBPS, where as in the rest of the Asian Countries average is 5MBPS. This bandwidth capacity needs to be build up in order to cater to larger population in the NE Region.

Annexure - A

List of Presenters in IT Sessions

Name	Organization and Designation	Contact Details
Dr. Suryanil Ghosh	Chairman, Total Start	Tel: 03325735562 & 9830663576 Email: shurjo.ghosh@totalstart.org
Khondoker Rashidul Huq	Chief Advisor, Getco Group of Companies.	Tel: 880258151790 & 01713082408 Email: kh.rashidul.haq@gmail.com
Anupam Agarawal	Internet Society, Kolkata	Tel: 9903992838 Email: anupam@isokolkata.in
Partha Roy	Invest India, National Investment Promotion Agency,	Tel: 9205192109 & 01123487245 Email: partha.roy@investindia.org.in
Pawan K Kaushik	Regional Director, Centre for Forest Based Livelihoods & Extension (CFLE	Tel: 9402140021 & 03812397079 Email: rd_clec@gmail.com & pawan.kaushik@gmail.com

Annexure - B

List of people shown Interest

Name	Organization and Designation	Contact Details	Action on DIT
Imran A Hassan	KDS Group, Bangladesh	Tel:1755639141 email: himuhassan@gmail.com	Share the details with STPI officer
Sujon Krishna Roy	Pran Group	Tel: 8413069347, email:gmpbil@prangroup.com	Share the details with STPI officer
Mr S B Laloo	AGM., MIDC Ltd. Meghalaya, Shillong	Tel: 9485191046	Share the details with STPI officer
Prof. Narasimha Kishore Koko	CEO, Lamda Power Geenco Private Ltd.	Tel:9008850033/ 9611910778 Email:prokoka@gmail.com	Share the details with STPI officer
Dr. Surjonil Ghosh	Chairman, Total Start Entrepreneurship eco-system Developer	Tel: 8017292817 Email:surjo.ghosh@totalstart.org	Share the details with STPI officer
Sunit KP		Tel:8013812012 Email:	Share the details with STPI officer
Kiran Kumar	Hembro Infotech Pvt Ltd. Sreenagar Lane 4 Milanchakra TV Tower, Agartala www.hembroinfotech.com	Tel:9856022030 Email:info@hembroinfotech.com	Share the details with STPI officer

Annexure - C

Action Items on DIT from the 3rd connectivity summit

Action	Action Owner	Target Date
Devise a policy on sharing of server space	Kapil Kaushik to Work with JD (U)to understand the cloud contract	TBD
Work with Internet Society to setup a 'Exchange Point' and 'Root Instance' at Agartala	Kapil Kaushik	TBD
Update the website in local languages	Kapil Kaushik	TBD
Internet Society is willing to partner for capacity building in the State to take these suggestions forward	Kapil Kaushik	TBD
Right of Way along NH and Rail lines for ducts carrying fibre optics - policy and practice	Kapil Kaushik and JD (U)	TBD
Horizontal connectivity at all levels: scope for ISP 3	Debashish and JD(B)	TBD
Inviting entrepreneurs to IT park – Getting the details from organizers and working with STPI to follow up JD(S)	JD(S)	TBD
Devise more B2C, G2C services – JDs to work with the line departments to identify more services. – All JDs	All JDs	TBD