

Welcome Address of V.Srinivas, IAS Secretary DARPG at the Regional Conference at Guwahati dt 9.1.2024

1. Respected H.E. Shri Gulab Chand Kataria ji, Hon'ble Governor of Assam,
2. Respected Dr Jitendra Singh ji, Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions
3. Shri Paban Borthakur ji, Chief Secretary, Government of Assam,
4. Dr. S.N.Tripathi ji, Director General IIPA
5. Shri N.B.S.Rajput ji, Shri Puneet Yadav ji, Joint Secretaries of DARPG
6. Shri Shantanu Gotmare ji, Secretary, Administrative Reforms, Government of Assam,
7. Additional Chief Secretaries/ Principal Secretaries/ Secretaries of Government of Assam, Distinguished Speakers and Delegates,

I extend a warm and hearty welcome to H.E. Shri Gulab Chand Kataria ji Hon'ble Governor of Assam to the two-day Regional Conference at Guwahati. As an Officer of Rajasthan cadre, I have known you sir, from my initial years in the IAS.

I extend a warm and hearty welcome to Dr. Jitendra Singh ji, Hon'ble Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions to the Regional Conference at Guwahati. In the 10-year history of Regional Conferences from 2014-2024, this is the 26th Regional Conference that Dr. Jitendra Singh ji is inaugurating which represents a significant milestone.

I extend a warm and hearty welcome to Shri Paban Borthakur ji, Chief Secretary of Assam and thank him for accepting DARPG's invitation to host the Regional Conference at Guwahati.

I extend a warm and hearty welcome to Director General IIPA Dr. S.N.Tripathi ji and thank him for his key note address, the Joint Secretaries of DARPG Shri N.B.S.Rajput and Shri Puneet Yadav, Secretary AR Govt of Assam Shri Shantanu Gotmare ji, and Director DARPG Shri S.K.Pandey whose dedicated hard work made the Regional Conference at Guwahati possible.

In his message dated 15 December 2023, on the occasion of Sushasan Saptah, the Hon'ble Prime Minister has said

“The most vital element of good governance is the simplification of procedures and practices within the government, to make them more citizen-centric and people-friendly. Such initiatives reflect the establishment of a transformative relationship between people and government.

India has taken significant strides in empowering people through digital transformation and timely policy interventions. We will soon become the world’s third largest economy and good governance is crucial to continue the journey towards a higher growth trajectory. ”

The best manifestation of “Maximum Governance – Minimum Government” policy is a “Digitally Empowered Citizen” and a “Digitally Transformed Institution”. Since 2014, the e-Governance landscape of India has radically changed in scale, scope and learning paradigms. e-Governance has simplified a citizen’s interface with Government, brought government and citizens closer and enabled benchmarking of service quality. New India’s strong institutions are best symbolized by adoption of e-governance practices.

Regional Conferences seek to disseminate and replicate the best Governance practices. This Regional Conference has 5 technical sessions and 2 key-note addresses in addition to the inaugural and valedictory sessions with 25 speakers. The technical sessions include Unified Service Delivery Portals, e-Governance Awarded Initiatives , Best Practices of Government of Assam, e-Office in North-East and District Level Initiatives in e-Governance. The Keynote addresses cover the Activities of IIPA in North Eastern States and the National e-Services Delivery Assessment. The Conference seeks to promote timely scaling-up of e-Services in NE States, deepen adoption of e-Office, promotion of faceless and entitlement based delivery of services. The Conference will also identify bottlenecks and disseminate best practices.

The Government of Assam has made significant efforts towards digital transformation of governance – Sewa Setu portal with 469 e-services functions at 100 percent saturation, e-Office has been widely adopted, CPGRAMS portal functions with efficiency, the ease of doing business portal maps 21 departments to avail services. Assam along with Meghalaya and Nagaland are the top performers in the National e-Services Delivery Assessment 2021.

The DARPG has had an extensive engagement with NE States. In 2019, DARPG convened the National e-Governance Conference at Shillong which adopted the Shillong Declaration focused on improving service delivery, adoption of e-Office and effective grievance redressal. This was followed by the workshop of Chief Ministers on adoption of e-Office. In the years 2020-2024, extensive adoption of e-Office in Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Tripura was seen. There has also been a significant increase in the number of mandatory e-services being provided in the States of Tripura, Assam and Meghalaya in this period.

In the years 2021-2024 DARPG held the Regional Conference at Itanagar, formulated the DGGI of Arunachal Pradesh, issued project sanctions under State Collaboration Initiative to the States of Sikkim, Nagaland, Meghalaya, issued sanctions under the SEVOTTAM for capacity building of grievance officers through ATI's of all NE States, recognized several administrative innovations under the schemes of PM's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration and National e-Governance Awards.

To conclude, I would urge the NE States to promote integrated service delivery portals, new-age technologies, backed by continuous monitoring and evaluation, cyber-security, e-literacy for creating a future-ready workforce in government. There is also a need to promote face authentication processes for simplification of service delivery, incorporation of Bhashini for language translation, adoption of e-Office analytics dashboard and usage of AI in grievance redressal. These subjects are being presented in the Regional Conference over the next 2 days.

With these thoughts I welcome HE Shri Gulab Chand Kataria ji, Dr. Jitendra Singh ji, Shri Paban Borthakur ji and all the distinguished delegates to the Regional Conference at Guwahati. I would also request the Chief Secretary to convey our sincere gratitude to Hon'ble Chief Minister of Assam for his support for the Regional Conference at Guwahati.

Jai Hind.