

## North Eastern Council to finalise 'Vision 2020'

The much awaited 'Vision 2020' document, an ambitious poverty alleviation programme for the northeast, would be finalised in the plenary session of the North Eastern Council (NEC), officials said here Sunday.

The governors, chief ministers, and senior officials of the region would be present in the two-day session, beginning here Monday, to be chaired by Union Minister for Development of the North-Eastern Region (DoNER) Mani Shankar Aiyar.

'The chief ministers of the eight north-eastern states would sign the 'Vision 2020' document aimed at preparing a road map for development of the region,' said S.K. Panda, principal secretary of the Tripura government.

He said: 'The major thrust sectors highlighted in the document are connectivity (road, rail, air, inland waterways and telecommunications), agriculture and allied sectors, power, health, education, information technology, human resource development and tourism.'

He said the plenary session would also finalise a poverty alleviation programme for the region and NEC's annual plan for the 2008-09 fiscal.

NEC, a 37-year-old regional planning body for the northeast, had earlier entrusted the task of preparing a draft of the document to the New Delhi-based National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP).

Vision 2020, as the name implies, will have a time frame covering the 11th and 12th Five Year Plans and the first three years of the 13th Plan.

'The objective of the document was to ensure that people receive adequate food, clothing, and shelter and that every family is free from hunger, leads a healthy life and participates productively in the growth process and to achieve a high level of human development, particularly education and health,' said M. Govinda Rao, director of NIPFP.

'Now separatist outfits are mobilising much more money than the revenue generated by the state governments of the northeastern region,' Rao, a member of the economic advisory council to the prime minister, told IANS.

The document is based on surveys conducted by NEC, the ministry of DoNER, interactions with the stake-holders and contributions by the planning commission's steering committees, besides NIPFP's own research.

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