



“Modi Ji Is the Grand Architect of the New and Resurgent North East”: Sarbananda Sonowal

“Rail, Road, Air and Waterways Turn ‘Ashtalakshmi’ Region into a New Engine of India’s Growth”: Sarbananda Sonowal

**“Modi Decade of Connectivity, Capital Investment and Cultural Renaissance Reshapes the Northeast, as Northeast witnessed a historic reversal of decades of neglect”:
Sarbananda Sonowal**

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The Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emerged as “the grand architect of a new and resurgent Northeast,” transforming a region once neglected for decades into a major driver of India’s growth, connectivity and national pride.

Speaking on the development outcomes achieved over the last decade, Sonowal said the Northeast has transitioned “from the margins of policymaking to the mainstream of national priorities,” reflecting the prime minister’s commitment to infrastructure expansion, economic reform, cultural revival and long-term peace-building.

“The Northeast suffered seven decades of under-representation and underinvestment,” Sarbananda Sonowal said. “Under Modi ji, the region is recognized as the Ashtalakshmi of India — not just a border region but a new engine of national growth. From railway capital connectivity and airports to highways, power, digital networks and inland waterways, the transformation has been historic.”

The Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said connectivity has been the cornerstone of the prime minister’s roadmap. All major gauge conversion work in the region has been completed, with Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Manipur and Mizoram connected to the broad gauge network and goods and passenger trains reaching the region’s interiors for the first time. The Bogibeel rail-cum-road bridge — completed in 2018 — and the commissioning of the Bhairabi–Sairang link in June 2025 have expanded access across Assam and Mizoram.

Four capital connectivity rail projects — Nagaland, Manipur, Sikkim and Meghalaya — are underway, while the India–Bangladesh Agartala–Akhaura rail link was inaugurated jointly by the prime ministers of both nations in November 2023.

On roads, more than 11,000 km of upgraded national and strategic highways have been taken up in the last decade. Major corridors include the Shillong–Nongstoin–Tura section, the Nechipu–Hoj NH–13 project, and the capital connectivity highways to Kohima, Itanagar and Gangtok, several of which are nearing completion in 2025.

Air connectivity has undergone what Sarbananda Sonowal described as “a revolution.” From nine airports in 2014, the Northeast now has 19 operational airports. Greenfield airports at Pakyong and Hollongi, along with the upgraded Tezu, Rupsi and Agartala terminals, were operationalized under the UDAN scheme. A network of heliports and water aerodromes has been added to extend links to remote districts.

Economic and Industrial Infrastructure.

"Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji, the Northeast has witnessed a historic reversal of decades of neglect. From rail connectivity reaching state capitals to world-class highways, airports and waterways, the region has emerged as a new engine driving India's growth. The completion of landmark projects like Bogibeel, the expansion of AIIMS Guwahati, and the rapid pace of road and airport infrastructure demonstrate the scale of transformation underway," said Sarbananda Sonowal

Sonowal said the Prime Minister Modi's vision has attracted historic investment to the Northeast. The bio-refinery at Numaligarh, India's first bamboo-based ethanol plant, has created new income streams for farmers. The Numaligarh Refinery Expansion, costing ₹22,594 crore, has tripled its capacity, positioning the region as a strategic energy hub. The semiconductor assembly and test facility at Jagiroad — a ₹27,000 crore investment — will produce 15 billion chips annually and generate 27,000 jobs, placing the Northeast on the global technology map. Agriculture and organics are central to the region's development. The Northeast now leads India's organic value chain, supported by farmer-producer organisations, bamboo industry deregulation and dedicated missions.

The Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said stability in the Northeast has improved due to peace accords with Bodo, Karbi, Bru and other groups, while AFSPA has been reduced by 75 percent since 2014. "A cultural renaissance is underway," Sarbananda Sonowal said, noting national recognition for icons such as Bharat Ratna Dr Bhupen Hazarika, the commemoration of Lachit Barphukon, and the inscription of Assam's Maidams on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

"The Modi decade has unlocked unprecedented economic potential for the Northeast — from the bamboo-based bio-refinery at Numaligarh to the first semiconductor plant at Jagiroad. These are not isolated projects; they reflect a renewed national confidence in our region. Alongside peace accords, cultural revival, and global recognition of icons like Lachit Barphukon and Bhupen Hazarika, we are witnessing a renaissance of identity, pride, opportunity and investment in our land," said Sarbananda Sonowal

Sonowal said the Prime Minister Modi's more than 70 visits to the region and consistent ministerial review reflect "governance that shows up where people live."

Gateway to Southeast Asia

Under the Act East Policy, Sonowal said, the Northeast is becoming a logistics and cultural gateway to Southeast Asia, through integrated check posts, border infrastructure and multimodal connectivity linking waterways, highways and rail.

"The story of the Northeast today is the story of a resurgent India," Sonowal said. "This transformation carries the signature of Prime Minister Modi — a leader who placed faith, focus and future in the hands of the Northeast's people."



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