

PM lauds coffee table book on “Assam”



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All the eleven members of “Project Assam” of Nanda Talukdar Foundation this morning met Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh at his 7 Race Course Road residence to ceremonially present “Assam” – the first-ever coffee table book highlighting the heritage of Assam.

Dr Singh, accepting the book, lauded the effort of the team and the foundation for coming out with such a “wonderful book” on Assam, a state which, he said, had “tremendous” potential to make big strides in different spheres provided lasting peace was restored there.

He appreciated the project members for pooling their resources, wisdom and skill to publish such an informative book on Assam and hoped it would become a role model for others in Assam willing to project the state in the right perspective.

He particularly appreciated the unique share-holders pattern formulated to bring out the book, as it has never been seen previously in the publication sector of Assam.

He also discussed some issues concerning Assam with members of the project and took their opinions on issues related to the problem of connectivity, role of self-help groups in the rural economy, gas cracker project, and progress so far made in East-West corridor of the National Highway Authority of India.

The Prime Minister received the book in the backdrop of the overwhelming response to the magnificent book. Priced at Rs 2,500, the first print run of 2,000 copies has been almost sold off within less than four months' time, and NTF is already going in for the second print run which is expected to come out in the market by around March, 2010. The book was formally launched about a month ago by Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi in Guwahati, but a huge chunk of copies were sold even before that.

Dr Singh said his government was trying to restore the pre-partition connectivity and logistics that were available to Assam and the North-East through negotiations with the government of Bangladesh.

Referring to the insurgency problem in Assam and with reference to issues related to the efforts for talks with the outlawed United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), he said the government was not intending to humiliate anyone, but wanted to restore peace in Assam.

“Though we tried to bring them to the negotiation table in 2006, they (ULFA) backed out. I hope this time good reason prevails. If Assam becomes peaceful, nothing can stop it from making rapid progress as the state has tremendous potential in all spheres.”

“We are also in touch with our neighbours so that insurgents from the North-East do not get shelter in their territories,” he said.

Utpal Borpujari, New Delhi

editor

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