

Regarding employment opportunities for youths in Meghalaya

SHRI VINCENT H. PALA (SHILLONG): Sir, in my state of Meghalaya, the banning of business in timber, the banning of coal mining business and the conversion of our limestones from minor minerals to major minerals by this Government has resulted in a greater compliance and loss of business, livelihood and jobs for the people of Meghalaya. These bans and regulations have disproportionately affected the vulnerable communities which were dependent on these activities for income, but no alternative livelihood options were adequately provided to them.

Meghalaya has the highest dependency ratio with 65.6 per cent of the population below 45 years. Thus, job creation is crucial to prevent poverty and social issues. Particularly among the youth, unemployment fuels frustration and can lead to an increase in crime which has already been seen there. There has been an increase of 24 per cent in the last decade and also drug abuse is on the rise.

Sir, through you, I would request the Government to introduce provisions for re-skilling and up-skilling programmes, aligned with industry needs with a focus on vocational training, soft skills development, and digital literacy. There should be collaboration between the Government, educational institutions, and the private sector to create a future where Meghalaya's population becomes an asset, not a burden to the country and the State.

Thank you, Sir.