

Press Release- Assam

NEC Secretariat welcomes New Secretary



Shri Satinder Kumar Bhalla, a senior officer of the Indian Telecommunication Service (ITS), 1992 batch, has been appointed as the new Secretary of the North Eastern Council (NEC), effective April 1, 2025.

With over 30 years of rich experience in telecommunications and public administration, Shri Bhalla has held several key positions in the Department of Telecommunications and other central government bodies, including the Ministry of Home Affairs. His career has encompassed strategic planning, policy development, project execution, and regulatory oversight—playing a pivotal role in advancing India's telecom sector.

As he takes charge as Secretary of the NEC, Shri Bhalla aims to enhance the Council's mandate as the central agency for the economic and social progress of the North Eastern Region. His leadership is expected to drive renewed emphasis on regional connectivity, infrastructure development, and inclusive growth.

Recommended project

In April, 2025, a key educational infrastructure development project- *Construction of Academic cum Multipurpose building at Hemo Prova Borbora Girls College, Golaghat, Assam*” was recommended at an estimated cost of ₹5.99 crore. The recommended project is envisioned as a modern hub for both academic and cultural activities. It will host seminars, classes, conferences, workshops, exhibitions, vocational training programs, incubation centers, and cultural events. The project is expected to be completed within **three years** from the date of sanction, and is expected to greatly enhance the academic environment and promote holistic development for students.

Completed project

The road infrastructure project titled “Widening and Strengthening of Nalbari Palla Road from Solmara to Bangaon Jagra Road via Billeswar Devalaya (8 KM)” in Nalbari District, Assam—sanctioned under the NESIDS (Roads) scheme on April 20, 2022, at a total cost of ₹21.1479 crore—was successfully completed on April 16, 2025. This upgraded roadway, which passes through agriculturally rich areas known for cultivating paddy, mustard, jute, and vegetables, has significantly benefited local farmers by facilitating smoother and more efficient transportation of produce to markets. Beyond agriculture, the improved connectivity has enhanced access to educational institutions, financial services, government offices, and local markets, contributing meaningfully to the overall socio-economic development of the region.



North East Students' Programme for Awareness, Reach, and Knowledge on Space (NE-SPARKS)

This idea was conceptualized by the Hon'ble Home Minister. This pioneering initiative aims to spark curiosity and raise awareness about space science and technology by organizing a visit for 800 bright science students—100 from each of the eight North Eastern states—to Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), Bengaluru. So far, 100 students have visited the center. Over the coming months, up to November 2025, additional student batches from each state will participate, culminating in a landmark initiative to engage the North East's most promising students in the fields of space science.

This is a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER), the North Eastern Council (NEC), ISRO, North Eastern Space Applications Centre (NESAC), and the respective State Governments of the North Eastern States. The total sanctioned budget is ₹3.83 crore, funded in a 60:40 ratio—₹2.3 crore from NEC and ₹1.53 crore collectively from the State Governments (₹19.18 lakh per state).



Group photo of students with Dr. V. Narayanan, Secretary, Department of Space/Chairman, ISRO, taken during their visit to ISRO, Bengaluru from April 21 to 24, 2025.

North Eastern Region Agri-Commodity e-Connect (NERACE) portal

This was launched on 12 July 2024 by Shri Jyotiraditya M Scindia, Hon'ble Union Minister of DoNER. NERACE is expected to significantly enhance the Agro-horti landscape of our region by leveraging technology to connect producers, buyers, and service providers. It facilitates seamless transactions and fostering mutual growth, empowering our farmers by addressing the most vertical aspect of market linkage and supply chain management.

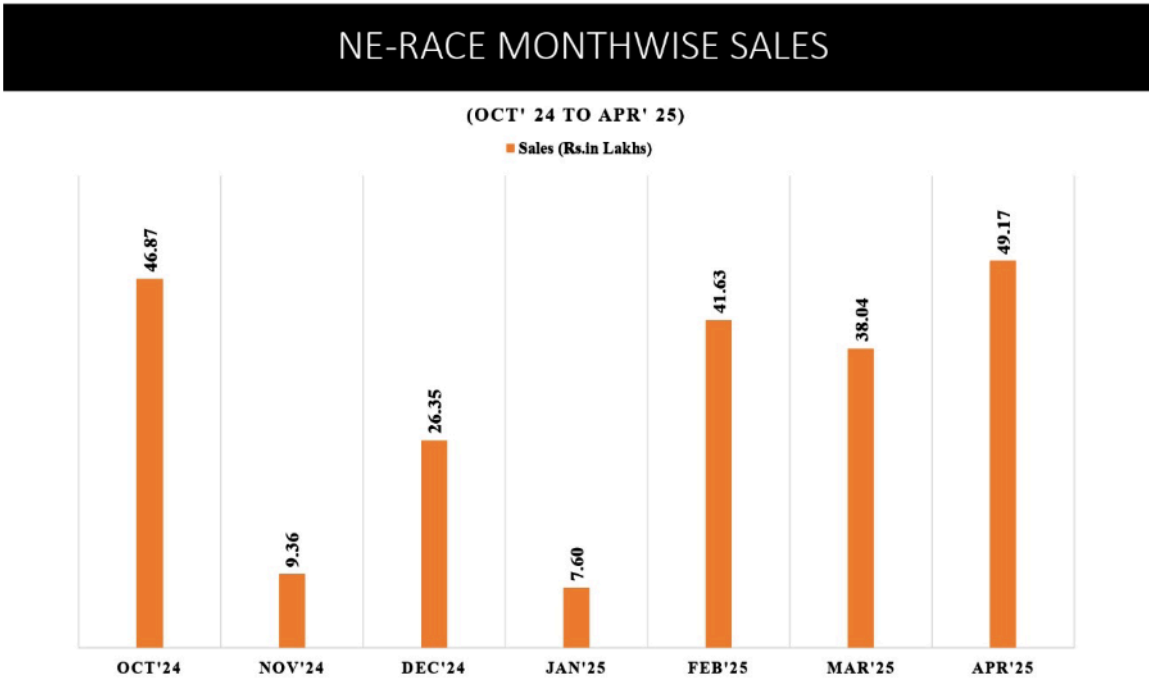
The month of April 2025 witnessed robust Agri-trade activity across the North-Eastern states of India, with a total transaction value of ₹49 Lakhs and cumulative trade volume of 188 MT. This reflects the growing momentum of inter-state agricultural marketing and the strengthening of farmer-to-buyer digital trade linkages in the region.

Key highlights of the April, 2025 sales data include:

- Ginger remained the most traded commodity, with varieties like Local and Nadia contributing significantly. Over 184.5 MT of ginger were sold, amounting to ₹47.57 lakhs and Sikkim emerged as the major supplier.
- King Chilli, a premium product from Nagaland and Assam, fetched the highest price per kg (up to ₹3,000), with small yet high-value trades totaling ₹53 Thousands.
- Other traded commodities included Turmeric, Maize Paddy, Black Rice, and Birds Eye Chilli, sourced from states like Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Assam, and Manipur.
- Assam emerged as a major buyer state, while Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Sikkim served as key seller states.

The NERACE Month-Wise sales (Rs. in Lakhs) from October, 2024 to

April, 2025.



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Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region,
North Eastern Council Secretariat, Nongrim Hills,
Shillong-793003,
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