

Capt. Ashim Kumar Bhattacharjee remembered

Youth must be ready to face challenges & work in tandem with Govt for taking Isles on the path of sustainable development: Shri Shakti Sinha

Port Blair, July 20: The 3rd. Capt. Ashim Kumar Bhattacharjee Memorial Lecture titled 'Andamans: Security & Development Challenges' was organized in the auditorium of JNRM here this morning. The Director, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, New Delhi and former Chief Secretary, A&N Administration, Shri Shakti Sinha was the chief guest on the occasion and delivered the 3rd Capt. Ashim Kumar Bhattacharjee Memorial Lecture. The Chief Secretary, A&N Administration, Shri Anindo Majumdar was the guest of honor of the function. The Secretary, Education, Ms. Tanvi Garg, Senior officers of the Administration, Retd. Defence personnel, prominent senior citizens, Principal, JNRM, Dr. Francis Xavier, lecturers and a good number of students were present on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, especially the students, Shri Sinha recalled his past association with A&N Islands and said that A&N Islands have made remarkable development over the past few years. He said, the future belongs to the students and they must be well prepared to face the challenges ahead by keeping abreast with technology advancement & knowledge on political development across the globe.

Referring to the security aspect of A&N Islands, Shri Sinha remarked that the A&N Islands are strategically located and the defence mechanism needs to be further strengthened. He threw light on the recent emerging activities of China, which is becoming a cause of concern for India in terms of development and security point of view as well. He said, besides the Govt. and the defence forces, the Islanders are also equally responsible for the Islands' security; hence, they should remain alert under this emerging scenario.

Speaking about the development challenges in A&N Islands, Shri Sinha said, over the years, the number of graduates has increased and the desire to get a Govt. job has also increased manifold. However, he said, the Islanders need to look beyond getting a job in the Govt. sector and must embark on self-employment ventures in a sustainable manner, keeping in mind the available resources, fragile ecosystem and the strategic location of the Islands. This way, he said, the Islands economy will progress and its security will improve simultaneously.

He stressed on the need for improving the Isles' economy by opening up opportunities for the Islanders by encouraging more tourism activities and employment in private sectors. He opined that the Nicobar group of Islands should be opened for group tourism activities, which

according to him, will provide the residents of Nicobars the opportunity to earn their livelihood, thus boosting their self confidence and improving their life style. Productive local activities are important to sustain the economy of the Islands, Shri Sinha added.

Shri Sinha also threw light on India's overseas trade link. He said, in order to develop its economy, India has to become a maritime power to improve its security. He remarked that improvement in linkages is equally important for the country, as this will further propel the development of the country and strengthen its security.

Mentioning about China's economic advancement in the maritime front, Shri Sinha emphasized the need to strengthen the A&N Command and the security measures of the Islands besides tapping of the available resources in the rightful manner for the benefit of the Islanders. He also emphasized on the need for development of ideal Transshipment Port here in India through which the economic development of the country can further be strengthened. This, he said will not only improve the national security but also create job opportunity for the citizens. He threw light on the Central Govt. Scheme called the 'Sagarmala Project' in which a number of ports are being developed in different parts of the country along with linkages of road and waterways.

Urging the youth of these Islands to embrace self-employment, Shri Sinha asked them to be alert, conscious and make use of the opportunity in taking the Isles' economy forward. He also exhorted the youth to draw inspiration from the life of Capt. Ashim Kumar Bhattacharjee and to come forward to serve the motherland as and when opportunity arises. He also cautioned them to be ready to face the challenges that lie ahead and to work in tandem with the Govt. in taking the Islands towards the path of sustainable development.

Responding to the request put forth by the Chief Secretary, Shri Sinha assured that Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, New Delhi in collaboration with the A&N Administration would organize intellectual talks and interaction sessions for the student and lecturers from time to time.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Secretary, Shri Anindo Majumdar recalled the life of Capt. Ashim Bhattacharjee, who made supreme sacrifice while fighting the militants at Uri Sector in 2000. The Chief Secretary remarked that the topic of the memorial lecture held in memory of Capt. Ashim is quite relevant in today's scenario and the concern for national security has grown over the years. He stated that the interest of the Islanders has to be taken into account by maintaining a harmonic balance between development and security of A&N Islands. He said, the memorial lecture is being organized to keep the memory of Capt. Ashim alive in each of us thereby becoming a source of inspiration

for other youth of these Islands to join the defence forces and serve the motherland. The Chief Secretary also expressed happiness that many of the Islanders have joined the defence forces and are serving under various capacities. He also outlined the illustrious career of Shri Sinha who served in two spells here in A&N Islands under the capacity of Deputy Commissioner and Chief Secretary as well.

Earlier, welcoming the gathering, the Secretary (Education), Ms. Tanvi Garg said that the memorial lecture titled - 'Andamans: Security and Development Challenges', organized in remembrance of late Capt. Ashim Bhattacharjee is quite relevant to the present scenario and expressed hope that the students and lectures would benefit from it.

The students of JNRM also presented patriotic songs on the occasion. The programme concluded with the vote of thanks proposed by the Principal, JNRM, Dr. Francis Xavier.

Earlier, a wreath was laid at Capt. Ashim Bhattacharjee's memorial in the premises of JNRM by Col. Cherian followed by floral tributes by the Principal, lectures, students and NCC Cadets. A two minutes silence was also observed to pay respect to the son of the soil, Capt. Ashim Bhattacharjee.



