



Click on Meghalaya, CM tells IT bosses

ROOPAK GOSWAMI



Trai chairman J.S. Shama and ambassador of Taiwan Philip Wen-chyi Ong (extreme right) present a memento to Meghalaya chief minister Mukul Sangma (centre) at the INFOCOM CMAI National Telecom Awards 2010 in New Delhi on Thursday. (PTI)

New Delhi, May 20: A month in power and Meghalaya chief minister Mukul Sangma is already impatient to see good things happening in his state.

Sangma today urged infotech honchos to invest in the northeastern state, dangling as a potential bait the large number of its English-speaking youths.

"If you have not seen Meghalaya, you are definitely missing something," Sangma said at the INFOCOM CMAI (Communications and Manufacturing Association of India) National Telecom Awards 2010 here today. In the audience were industry leaders from all parts of the country. INFOCOM, India's largest information and communication technology event, is an initiative of ABP

Pvt Ltd, which publishes The Telegraph.

The chief minister, speaking during a panel discussion titled Broadband Touching Billion Lives — Focus Northeast: Focus Meghalaya, said the Northeast was waiting to be explored and his state was the best to invest in.

"We have a population dominated by English-speaking youths who are the most sought-after in the country. Whenever I go to other places, I see students from Meghalaya working there. There should not be any doubt in anybody's mind about their capability to work in the IT sector," Sangma said, and outlined plans for an IT hub.

Signing off, he declared: "Once you are in Meghalaya you will remain there."

The serenade appeared to be working. Tanmoy Chakrabarty, vice-president and head, government solutions, at Tata Consultancy Services said Meghalaya had a young and dynamic chief minister in Sangma.

"The people of the state are educated and with a modern outlook, yet keep their traditions, which is great," Chakrabarty said.

Chakrabarty said information technology could play an effective role in governance in states such as Meghalaya, which had a hilly terrain and where it was difficult to reach many places.

Praveen Vishkantaiah, country president of Intel India, said there was pride, perseverance and passion in the youths of the region. "It is very important for the Northeast to take on the leadership role in broadband technology and it should not wait for the technology to come to it."

N.K. Goyal, president of the Communications and Manufacturing Association of India, said there was great potential in the Northeast for IT. The CMAI promotes the Indian IT and telecom sectors. It is the country's only association that brings together the two sectors.