

Arunachal Pradesh governor inaugurates project

Toy train chugs into park

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Itanagar, Feb. 24: The first train to Arunachal Pradesh may be still many years away but the state has already found one chugging along serpentine tracks in the idyllic settings of Nyokum Lapang village in Itanagar.

Thanks to the initiative of Governor J.J. Singh, the army today installed a toy train — the first of its kind in the Northeast — at a public amusement theme park in the village.

Muskan, a non-profit society, teamed up with Tezpur-based 4th Corps and contributed Rs 14 lakh for the toy-train project, where kids would be able to enjoy a journey through mountain, stream, tunnels and forests.

"We wanted to ensure the people of this remote state of the country can experience a train journey though the real train will take some more years to come," J.J. Singh said after inaugurating the project.



Governor J.J. Singh flags off the toy train on Tuesday.

A Telegraph picture

The governor also could not resist a "joyride" with the children on the train during its maiden journey.

A five-acre sprawling ground at Nyokum Lapang village has been used as a spot to develop the project.

The general officer com-

manding of Tezpur-based 4 Corps of army, Lt Gen. K.T. Parnaik, said soon after taking charge as the governor of Arunachal Pradesh, Gen. (retd) J.J. Singh, called in the "service" of his battalion to convert the rugged terrain into a plain ground.

"It took one year for us to complete the toy-train project, first ever in the Northeast, which was conceptualised by the Arunachal Pradesh Governor, General (retd), J.J. Singh, in February last year. We were entrusted with the task of building infrastructure and we did it. The flower garden, tunnels, solar lights and streams have added to the beauty," Parnaik said.

Children ranging from four-year-old to 12-year-old waved and yelled with enthusiasm as wisps of smoke billowed out as soon as the train started chugging along the track.

"We are delighted to have got an opportunity for a ride in the train along the dark tunnel, meandering tracks along the roads of our village. We never dreamt of it even in our wildest imaginations ever," 12-year-old Takar, who had a ride in the same segment with the governor, said with a twinkle in his eyes.