

GOVERNOR'S SECRETARIAT

MEGHALAYA, SHILLONG

Press Communiqué

Shillong, May 19, 2025: A group of postgraduate students pursuing their Master's in Architecture at the University of Michigan, USA, visited Raj Bhavan, Shillong, today as part of their academic journey under the *India Craft Futures Studio Program*.

The Hon'ble Governor of Meghalaya, Shri C.H. Vijayashankar, warmly welcomed the students and interacted with them during a meeting held at Raj Bhavan. The students introduced themselves and shared details about their ongoing field visits across northeastern India, including their exploration of cultural and architectural heritage sites in Assam and Meghalaya. Their itinerary in Meghalaya includes visits to the Living Root Bridges, Mawphlang Sacred Grove, Cherrapunjee (Sohra), the caves of Mawsynram, and Mawlynnong—the cleanest village in Asia.

During the interaction, Dr. B.D.R. Tiwari, IAS, Commissioner & Secretary to the Governor, gave a historical overview of Northeast India, highlighting the region's strategic and cultural past, including the Anglo-Burmese conflicts. He also briefed the students on the architectural evolution of the Raj Bhavan building, from its destruction in the 1897 earthquake to its present status.

The students were fascinated to learn about the historical evolution of the structure, which was once known as the "Bivar House." Originally serving as the residence of the Chief Commissioner, it later became the official residence of the Lieutenant Governor before being designated as Raj Bhavan—first for Assam and now for Meghalaya in post-Independence India. The educational visit was guided by members of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) along with technical experts and designers from Meghalayan Age Limited, who are working to document and preserve the architectural legacy of the state.

The visit offered the students a rare opportunity to witness firsthand the grandeur and preservation of one of the region's most iconic heritage structures. Officials from the Architecture Department and maintenance teams at Raj Bhavan provided a detailed briefing on the building's architectural elements, traditional craftsmanship, and the methods adopted for its upkeep and conservation.

The Hon'ble Governor presented traditional Ryndia and souvenirs to all the visiting students. A lunch was also organised for the students and visiting faculties in prestigious Dining Hall of Raj Bhavan.