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Governor flags off an awareness rally

Itanagar, December 12: The Governor of Arunachal Pradesh General (Retd) J.J. Singh flagged off an awareness rally against opium cultivation at Khonsa in Tirap District on December 11 last. The rally will transverse through five eastern districts of the State, i.e. Longding, Tirap, Changlang, Lohit and Anjaw Districts and culminate at Kibitho in Anjaw District on December 16 next, reports **PRO to Governor.**

The Governor also flagged off the 2nd Tirap half marathon, a run against opium menace with a theme, 'Yes to Health and no to Opium' on the occasion.

State First Lady Anupama Singh, Speaker of State Assembly Wanglin Lowangdong, Parliamentary Secretary Yumsen Matey, Commissioner Home Ramesh Negi, Secretary to Governor Ankur Garg, Secretary Finance Swati Sharma, Brig Rajinder Singh, 25 Sector of Army, Deputy Commissioners and Superintendents of Police of Tirap and Longding were present on the occasion along with government officials, public and panchayat leaders, goan buras, public and students of Khonsa.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor urged upon the people to stand against drug addiction and opium cultivation. He said that drug addiction not only damages a person physically and mentally but also damages his or her family and society. If a person is addicted to alcohol or drugs, the effects can negatively impact upon the marriage and relationships, home and family life, education, employment, health and well-being, personality, financial issues and law and order. He called upon the elders to provide proper guidance to the new generation.

The Governor suggested the people to go for alternative to opium cultivation such as tea and rubber cultivation, horticulture, fisheries, and animal husbandry. He also asked the officials of agriculture, horticulture, fisheries and animal husbandry to be proactive and reach out to the people.

The Governor made a special mention of villagers of Noglo and Lonliam villages for their decision to give up cultivation of opium.

The Governor appreciated the district administrations of Longding, Tirap, Changlang, Lohit and Anjaw and officials of Central Bureau of Narcotics for their initiative against opium cultivation. He expressed his confidence that the rally will carry the message against drug addiction to every corner of the five districts that it will transverse. The rally will definitely create awareness against opium cultivation and also provide ideas for alternative means of livelihood.

While commending the Speaker of State Assembly Wanglin Lowangdong for initiated steps against HIV AIDS, he expressed his hope that the Speaker along with other representatives

will take initiative with same passion and enthusiasm against opium cultivation and drug addiction.

Dwelling in length on the development progress of the State through the Prime Minister's special economic package and untiring efforts of the State Government, the Governor also spoke on tourism and famed wood crafts of Tirap as avenues for employment and entrepreneurship.

Recalling his early days in Tirap in early 1980s, the Governor expressed pain on the incidences of violence in the district. He called upon the opinion makers and community leaders to lead the misguided youth to mainstream.

As token of love for the people of Tirap, the Governor announced a sum of Rs. 5 (five) lakh for school furniture for the schools of the district, another amount of Rs. 5 (five) for De-Addiction campaign and activities and rs.2 (Two) lakh for a dental chair in the District Hospital. He also made a personal contribution of Rs. 1(One) lakh towards the Awareness Rally.

In his address Soeaker Lowangdong termed the drug addiction as social evil and called upon the people to fight against it. Local MLA Kamthok Lowang also joined the Speaker urging the people to get rid of the opium menace. Tirap District DRDA Project Director also spoke on the occasion.

Earlier, in his welcome address Tirap Deputy Commissioner Sachin Shinde read out the message of the Chief Minister Nabam Tuki's message for the rally. Tuki in his message congratulated the District Administration of Tirap and said such initiative will give a warning call to the opium cultivators to be aware on its consequences from legal, religious, and social perspective.

A colourful culture presentation was presented by Nocte, Tutasa and Wancho tribes. Local bank, 'Blue Ink' presented the theme song of the rally.

Later the Governor gave away certificate and cash award to Kanubari Women Welfare Association for its crusade against drug addiction in Kanubari area of Tirap district.

The Governor, joined by State First lady distributed relief to Ozakho Fire victims.

Giving details of the 2nd Half Marathon, District Sports Officer Roy Mihu informed that the half marathon has been conducted under four categories, i.e. armed force personnel, open for men, open for women, girls and boys. 131 personnel including 53 from CRPF, 25 each from Madras Regiment and Assam Rifles and 15 each from Rajput Regiment and IRBn took part in the run. 156 men, 90 women, 189 boys and 100 girls also participated in the marathon.

As part of the event the Madras Regiment installed an Army recruitment awareness stall at the rally ground.

Sd/- Keter Bagra, DIPRO