



SPEECH

OF

HIS EXCELLENCY

LT GENERAL NIRBHAY SHARMA,
PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM (RETD),

GOVERNOR,

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

ON THE OCCASION OF

CURTAIN RAISING FUNCTION OF

INTERNATIONAL TOURISM MART

AT

INDIRA GANDHI PARK,

ITANAGAR

ON

04 OCTOBER 2013

- Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Nabam Tuki,
- Hon'ble members of the State Cabinet,
- Miss Universe 2012 Miss Olivia Culpo,
- Participants of International Tourism Mart,
- Dignitaries and distinguish guests, invitees and tourists,

- Central and State Government officials
- Friends from media,
- Ladies and gentlemen

At the very outset, I extend my warm greetings to all participants of this curtain raising function for the International Tourism Mart to be held at Tawang from 18th October 2013. I am confident that this tourism and travel initiative will go a long way in reflecting the true cultural diversity of India and harness the tourism potential of North East region in general and Arunachal Pradesh in particular.

On this occasion I must congratulate Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Nabam Tuki, and his dynamic team member Tourism Minister Shri Pema Khandu for their persistent and tireless effort in getting this prestigious international event in the State. Alongside, main stay of the event, Shri Parvez Dewan, Union Tourism Secretary deserves to be specially commended for his vision and commitment. It is a wonderful occasion to showcase our treasured tourism sector. The Mart will definitely open doors to unlimited opportunities for everyone to explore this "Land of Rising Sun"- A beautiful region endowed with Nature's infinite bounty. Complimenting it this evening is the most beautiful woman in the world ie; Miss Olivia Culpo, Miss Universe 2012. It is a rare happening and augers well for the State and makes me happily join you all in extending a special welcome to her.

So, ladies and gentlemen, the beauty of a Miss Universe is more than skin deep and apart from promoting tourism, the lady is here on a noble mission with a very relevant message to us in Arunachal. Miss Olivia is in India to promote and propagate issues like celebrating the girl child, eradication of female feticide, women empowerment, and AIDS awareness in various States of the country.

Talking about beauty, many are still unaware of the cosmic beauty of Arunachal Pradesh. Our state is host to one of the twelve mega biodiversity hotspots in the world and has 80% of its land surface covered with greenery. We have rich flora and fauna, variety of species and large number of rare orchids, pristine beauty green pastures of dense forest add to its assets.

The State stretches from the snow-capped Himalayans in the north to the plains of Brahmaputra valley in Assam towards the south. It is unique geographically because it has alpine climate conditions and glaciers in the north and tropical evergreen rain forests on its southern border. It is an ideal ground for all adventure lovers, from mountaineers to white water rafters. The mighty rivers have not only hydro power potential, but can also be an ideal spot of global standards for adventure sports.

Like the rest of the country, Arunachal Pradesh is not only rich in biodiversity but also rich in ethnic and cultural diversity. It is a mini India and truly a mesmerizing cultural mosaic. Among all its 26 major tribes and more than 100 sub-tribes, Arunachal Pradesh has distinct and varied cultures with a strong tradition of art, music, dance, handicrafts and distinct socio cultural practice. Arunachal Pradesh is truly a mystical land to be explored, admired and enjoyed. Tourism in our State, can facilitate in discovering this land of 'Dawn lit Mountains'. I am certain that the presence of Miss Culpo will attract attention at the international arena and contribute in promoting tourism activities in this blessed part of our country.

With great pride I can say that Arunachal Pradesh has been chosen as the fourth best region amongst the top ten tourist destinations in the world for the year 2012 by one of the leading travelogues, Lonely Planet. To succeed other destinations, Coastal Wales, La Ruta Maya, Central America and Northern Kenya.

The State has added another feather to its wings after being voted the 'Favourite Upcoming Destination' by a travel magazine "Outlook Traveller."

The State Tourism department has prepared master plan for infrastructure development in the State. Projects have been prepared in unique and ethnic way to suit the world standard. In addition, to enhance skilled and standard service various capacity building training schemes have been launched. Code of safe and honourable tourism has been framed and being regulated through various stakeholders of the State. Campaign 'Clean India-Arunachal' has been launched in the districts. Arunachal has been adjusted as one of the best performing State for clean India campaign and has been awarded by the Government of India.

The State Government has increased Tourist Travel Circuits, infrastructure facilities are being created and issuing of Protected Area Permit (PAP) to foreign tourist has been relaxed. Due to consistent effort of the State Government, inflow of tourists has increased many folds in the last few years.

With an aim to enhance tourism activities in Arunachal Pradesh, the State Government has launched the Mukhya Mantri Paryatan Vikas Yojna (MMPVY). Vision of this scheme is to provide gainful employment to the educated unemployed youth. Chief Minister Nabam Tuki flagged off 20 subsidized taxicabs on 14th April 2013 promoting the tourism sector.

The Government however primarily plays the role of a facilitator, acting as a catalyst for development and promotion of tourism. The participation of stakeholders acts as a driving force. It is of paramount importance that we have proper coordination and collaboration with all stakeholders, such as tour operators, marketing agencies and other institutions involved in tourism. We need to effectively segment and target different groups of tourists, from religious to adventure. Widely advertise through media & through our action the differentiation and quality of service we offer. I hope that all the stakeholders will come together on platform of ITM and will help to promote tourism of our State.

As ingrained in our Indian Culture, 'Atithi Devo Bhava', we always revered our guests. We make elaborate arrangement for them. The tribal people are always renowned for their hospitality. We must maintain this magnificent tradition. I would like to remind our youth that your ignorance and impolite act with visiting tourist will adversely affect tourism. We need to exhibit the highest level of hospitality and courtesy.

Most of us must be well aware that recently Government of India has launched '777 Days of the Incredible Indian Himalayas' campaign to centre stage it on the World Tourism Map. Arunachal Pradesh is one of the major stakeholder in the campaign. This far-reaching initiative of Union Government will definitely help tourism related activities. I appeal to our youth, concerned departments and officials and people as a whole to roll up their sleeves and brace themselves to avail the maximum benefit out of the programme.

As I conclude, I would like to remind all that as we explore this beautiful land, we must respect its traditional values and culture. Let us preserve the serenity of this pristine land for the future generations. Let us reaffirm our commitment to protect and conserve our magnificent biodiversity for sustainable growth and development of all.

As British Statesman John Lubbock said, I quote 'Earth and sky, woods and fields, lakes and rivers, the mountain and the sea, are excellent schoolmasters, and teach some of us more than we can ever learn from books'. Unquote.

I convey my best wishes for the successful conduct of the ensuing International Tourism Mart at Tawang. I am certain that this event will definitely facilitate in re-establishing close links amongst North East States and with rest of India.

Jai Hind.