



SPEECH
OF
HIS EXCELLENCY
LT GENERAL NIRBHAY SHARMA,
PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM (RETD),
GOVERNOR,
ARUNACHAL PRADESH
ON THE OCCASION OF
CELEBRATION OF SI-DONYI FESTIVAL
AT
SI-DONYI GROUND
NAHARLAGUN
ON
06 JANUARY 2014

At the very outset, I extend warm greetings to all of you on this auspicious occasion of the Si Donyi. I hope and pray that this festivity will usher in happiness, universal peace, and prosperity for all. I also extend my New Year good wishes.

The enthusiastic participation of community members especially the youth has touched my heart. I am sure that like me, everyone present here will have wonderful memories of this festivity.

I thank the organizing committee of the festival for giving us a wonderful opportunity to experience the thrill and joy of being part of the celebration.

As you all know Si signifies the earth, while Donyi denotes the Sun. Si-Donyi festival is celebration of reverence to basic five elements, i.e. Agni-Sun, Vayu-Air, Jal-Water, Dharti-Earth and Aakash-Sky. These natural elements play an important role in day-to-day activities of our lives. Thus, by celebrating the festival, we express our reverence to the divinity of Mother Earth and Sun.

This festival showcases the rich cultural heritage of our Tagin brethren. It also plays a significant role in defining the true nature of customs, traditions and culture of the tribe.

The beliefs behind the festival are rooted deep in the indigenous religious and cultural ethos of our different tribes. It is an expression of respect of today's generations towards the wisdom of their founding fathers.

As I always say, that during celebration of our festivals, the communities not only worship the deities but also the nature for the wellbeing of mankind.

These festivals are part of traditions and practices of the tribal communities which has helped in continuation of the treasured cultural heritage and in the preservation of Mother Earth.

Arunachal Pradesh is an enchanting land blessed with many colourful and festivals. It forms an essential aspect of Socio-Cultural life of each tribe reflecting the aura of vibrating cultural life of the tribal people, their music, dances, customs, and traditions. In fact, the festivals are the mirror images of the people's culture and also form an integral part of our people. Festivals bring us closer to our rich cultural heritage.

The ultimate benefit of a festival is a shared experience for those who participate in it. This reinforces the social bonds between the people who celebrate the event and shows strength and solidarity to others.

I would like to urge upon the younger generations to take active part in the celebration of the festivals. Let us be proud of our rich customs and traditions and also be proud of our cultural diversity.

At the same time, I would also like to call upon the elders of the society and Learned Priests to provide proper guidance to our younger generations.

Arunachal Pradesh is a cultural mosaic of different indigenous faiths, practices, and different religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity. The State reflects true secular spirit. This is one State in India, where the spirit of religious tolerance and respect for other religions is immensely high. I would like appeal to all of you to continue to strengthen this unique feature of the State.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to advise the youth to realise that they are our future. Arunachal Pradesh is home for 26 different tribes and more than 110 sub-tribes. It is a treasure trove of unique traditional skills and craftsmanship. We need to explore the sector as an avenue for entrepreneurship. Look at entrepreneurship as a tool of self-empowerment and not necessarily a government job. So, sharpen your skills, explore the potential in tourism, horticulture, traditional handicrafts and seek opportunities in non-Government sectors and also seek self-employment. You have all that is required to reach on the top. Believe in yourself and think of the bright future lying ahead of you.

The State Government is going to conduct district level job melas in the District Headquarters, opening potential avenues of employment for our youth. I appeal to all of you to create awareness about the programme and ensure maximum numbers of youth participate in this programme. Similarly, now 2nd Battalion of Arunachal Scouts is sanctioned, we require large number of our sons of the soil in it. I am told that despite lowering the physical and educational standards for recruitment not many are meeting the mark. I appeal to community leaders to spread its awareness amongst the youth.

Dear friends, Arunachal Pradesh can forge ahead faster, if each one of you actively cooperates and participates in constructive development related activities. We can become one of the leading States in the country, if all of us contribute to the best of our ability and capacity towards the achievements of the aim. Therefore, let us strive as a team and go all out for the development and prosperity of our beloved State.

Before I conclude, I congratulate the Tagin Community of Itanagar for the magnificent and well harmonized celebration of the Si Donyi this year. I am very much impressed by this socio religious carnival.

Once again, I offer my prayers to Si Donyi for their choicest blessings for peace, prosperity, good health for all and of course, bountiful food grains.

Thank you very much.

God speed and good luck.

Jai Hind.