

Speech of His Excellency General (Retd) J. J. Singh,
PVSM, AVSM, VSM, Governor of Arunachal Pradesh on
occasion of Mopin Festival
on 5th April, 2008 at Pasighat.

The members of the organizing committee of the Mopin Festival, Shri Bosiram Siram, Hon'ble MLA of Pasighat, other public leaders, senior citizens and dear friends,

It is indeed a proud privilege for me to be with you all here on the occasion of the celebration of Mopin Festival. I extend my warm greetings and best wishes to the people of Arunachal Pradesh on this occasion. Mopin is a festival celebrated to solicit blessings of the Deities through various rituals, sacrifices, colorful dances and songs in a festive gaiety.

Mopin is a socio-religious and agricultural festival of the Adi Galos of Arunachal Pradesh. Culturally they all share a common ethnic identity and spiritual belief of almighty Donyi Polo, meaning Sun and Moon Gods symbolizing universal origin of all living beings. Mopin is celebrated to propitiate the supreme divine power symbolizing the bounteous Goddess primarily linked with crop cultivation. The Mopin Goddess of prosperity is invoked for her benediction so that there may be more and more production of food grains in the next harvesting season, that the visit of famine may be warded off, and that drought or flood may not hamper cultivation, nor should any insect or animal destroy plants or crops. The Goddess is invoked so that the human race may be strengthened and regenerated. All should be free from unnatural death due to accident, war and epidemic. So, it is a festival associated with the worship of the Gods for peace, prosperity and happiness for all.

On this occasion I would like to express my hearty feelings about Pasighat and the people of this historic place, which was considered as the gateway of Arunachal Pradesh since pre-independence era. Kekar Monying is a mythological name amongst the people of Arunachal Pradesh today for heroic deeds and activities by the Adis of Siang valley who fought the battle against British colonial power in 1911-12 Anglo-Adi War. Prior to this also, our history tells that the Adis, while showing absolute bravery and patriotism for freedom and self-governance, fought with the British Forces during their expedition in 1894 at Silluk village and at the bank of river Yamne near Damroh village. Being freedom loving indigenous people the Adis fought against Britishers several times in several places to uphold sovereignty and resisted the British policy of expansion.

The modernization of Arunachal Pradesh was started from Pasighat town. The first college, the first bank branch and so many other firsts are to the credit of the Pasighat. Today, when the State is going through a rapid socio-economic development, Pasighat will continue to flourish further. You all must be aware of the fact of the recent visit of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singhji and announcement of the historic package for the socio-economic development of the State. The projects such as Trans-Arunachal Highway, Railway and Air Connectivity, Village Illumination Programme, Hydro-power development are extremely promising and each one of us should work hard to convert the dream of developed Arunachal Pradesh into a reality.

In order to ensure the speedy implementation of the PM's package, till date I have conducted meetings with Hon'ble Union Ministers for Home, Defence, Surface Transport, DoNER, Tourism, Railways, Civil Aviation, Rural Development, Non-Conventional Energy, Communication and Information Technology. All the Ministries have expressed their full support in the

development of Arunachal Pradesh. I also called on Hon'ble Prime Minister and apprised him of various developments. During my discussion with the Railway Minister, I pointed out importance of the Bogibeel Rail Project and further extension of railway line to Pasighat, Rangiya-Murkongselek gauge conversion and such other railway projects. During the meeting with Civil Aviation Minister I have put great emphasis on re-activating the Pasighat air-strip.

Today I feel that there are three areas which have potential to change the complete profile of the State. These are Tourism, Hydro-power and Organic farming including Horticulture and Medicinal and aromatic plants. If we harness these three areas, we will be one the most developed states in the country. Let me assure you that both the Government of Arunachal Pradesh and Government of India are committed for all round development of the state.

The socio-religious and cultural festivals like Mopin will surely spread the message of peace, love, tranquility and prosperity throughout the State in true indigenous tradition. I am quite optimistic that the tourism sector here would grow within next few years. We should adopt traditional and local designs in constructing eco-friendly, hygienic and clean houses instead of concrete buildings as foreign tourists mostly prefer traditional things. I would also suggest that the Inner Line Permit system be made easy and simple and communication network be improved. The tourism is one such sector in Arunachal Pradesh, which can generate better employment avenues for the local unemployed youths. We should preserve our forest and wildlife in the interest of our future prospect and mass benefit. The power policy framed by our State is a landmark step and I am confident that Arunachal Pradesh would be a leading State in the country with its enormous resources. We should also stress on the development of educational facilities in the State, especially vocational and higher education. As regards the mega hydel projects plan in the State, concerned authorities have studied all

aspects of their affect on human habitation and ecology of the State and as such the ill-affects will be very minimal.

I recall Honorable Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh, while addressing the people of Arunachal Pradesh, during his recent visit to our state, has expressed his heartfelt concern by saying quote '*I believe that the progress and development of States like Arunachal Pradesh is a measure of the progress and development of the nation as a whole. Your progress will strengthen the nation.*'-unquote-.

The vision of the Government under the dynamic leadership of our Chief Minister Shri Dorjee Khandu is to elevate Arunachal Pradesh as one of the most developed States of the union of India in a short period. However, the prosperity of the State cannot be achieved without peace. Therefore, I call upon all the young people who took the path of extremism to come back to the mainstream.

I hope the people and the Government of Arunachal Pradesh will make sincere efforts for documentation of all religious and sacred places in Arunachal Pradesh for protection of their rich cultural heritage for posterity. Today, it should not merely be a festival of feasting and dancing. It should be made a common platform for the younger generation, the students and youth, to expose their hidden talents in the field of literature, games and sports, songs and drama etc. Unless children and youth are involved in such festivals and social activities, it would not be possible to disseminate the valuable teachings of indigenous beliefs, ritualistic practices originating from the ancient tribal life and rich cultural heritage among them. It is believed that festivals are the very soul and essence of socio-cultural identity of a man and therefore, festivals must be essential parts of a life of a man for no man can live without social identity. Friends, therefore, let us continue to strive ahead relentlessly for protection and

preservation of our rich cultural heritage and identity. Let us take the advantage of modern education, science and technology from other advanced people, but not at the cost of our precious identity. I am happy to note that the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh have adopted a motto 'Acceptance of modernity with adherence to traditions!'

I also appeal to the people of Pasighat to start a revolution to make Arunachal as the plastic free area and also to start a movement against drug-addiction, to create mass awareness on health, hygiene and sanitation and such other issues. I am confident that if the elders of the community as well as the younger generation join this movement, it will be really successful.

Today on this festive occasion I could observe how the dream of our first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru taking shape. I would like to recall one of his important remarks, aptly relevant to this celebration – *quote-People should develop along the lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture-unquote*

Friends, I and my wife are overwhelmed by the hospitality extended by the people of Pasighat. We will cherish the fond memories of our first visit to this place. I hope that before our next visit the bridge on river Siang will be complete and work on Pasighat air-strip begins.

It is my sincere belief that the festival being celebrated today will certainly be able to create a congenial atmosphere for unity, integrity, promotion and preservation of rich indigenous cultural heritage and to eradicate negative forces and social evils. At the end I extend my thanks to the organizers, all the cultural

troops and all those who are here to participate in the Mopin festival. My best wishes to all of you and love to the kids!!

on the occasion of Mopin Festival
on 5th April, 2008 at Pasighat.

Jai Hind

Jai Arunachal.

*For members of the organizing committee of the Mopin Festival, Shri. D. S. Deka
Member, Council of Pasighat, Assam State, Pasighat, Assam and their*