

SPEECH
OF
GENERAL (RETD.) J.J. SINGH
HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR ARUNACHAL PRADESH ON THE
OCCASION
OF
22ND STATEHOOD DAY

ITANAGAR
20TH FEBRUARY 2008

**Hon'ble Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh Shri Dorjee Khandu,
Hon'ble Member of the Planning Commission Shri B.K.Chaturvedi,
Distinguished guests and my dear brothers, sisters and children of
Arunachal Pradesh!**

It is indeed a proud moment for me to deliver this address on the occasion of the 22nd State-hood day of Arunachal Pradesh. My association with Arunachal Pradesh goes back to early eighties when I was posted as a Colonel in Tezu. My family and I still cherish the fond memories of extensive treks and adventures including crossing Digaru on elephant back. I consider myself very fortunate to get an opportunity again to serve the people of Arunachal Pradesh. The kind of affectionate reception and the warmth that I and my family received on my arrival here dissipated the long separation of 25 years in a moment, and we instantly got ourselves identified as members of the great Arunachalee family.

2. Today is a historical day for each and every citizen of this frontier state which borders Bhutan, China, and Myanmar. Every nook and corner of this 84000 sq km large state is in a jubilant and festive mood. We also take pride in having Shri B. K. Chaturvedi, Hon'ble Member of the Planning Commission amongst us to share our joy. We are aware about your love and affection for this land of rising sun and its people. Your contribution for the development of this state will always be remembered by each of us.

3. At the outset, I pay my tribute to our beloved former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who laid the foundation of Arunachal as a State within Indian

Union on 20th February 1987. Exactly 15 years before attaining the statehood, the then NEFA was converted into Union Territory and named as Arunachal Pradesh by our visionary former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The people of this tribal state still cherish the fond memories of visits by our former Prime Ministers Pandit Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. They all loved this state deeply and the tradition continues with the recent visit of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh.

4. Friends, I am happy to share with you that the State has successfully overcome two major crises that have been affecting the life of people adversely. It goes to the credit of Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Khandu that despite several odds he could manage to revive the Public Distribution System and the APEX Bank. In order to fulfill his commitment for improving the Public Distribution System, six Base Depots of Food Corporation of India have been opened at Ziro, Seppa, Tawang, Dapoprijo, Tezu and Anini, which have given a great amount of food security, and also arrested the misuse and diversion of the PDS items. As on today we have got more than 1500 MT of food grain stocks in these depots. The APEX bank, which was defunct for many years, is now revived and now functioning smoothly. This single step has benefited more than one lakh and forty thousand customers, majority of whom are poor and are from very remote areas. The Government has also taken a keen initiative to eliminate corruption. Sanctions have been obtained for the new Assembly and Secretariat buildings. Many of our infrastructure projects such as two lane highway connectivity for all the districts, safe drinking water supply for Itanagar, operationalisation of airports at Pasighat, Along, Daporijo, Ziro, Tezu, Tuting, Mechuka, Vijaynagar and Walong, one time grant for long term reconstruction of flood damaged assets, one time grant for completing long pending incomplete schemes,

initiating hydro-electric power development and so on, were sanctioned by the Central Government. Apart from these visible achievements there have been many tangible and intangible achievements of the Government for which it deserves appreciation.

5. The Hon'ble Prime Minister's recent visit is an event of historical significance. Various important developmental programmes of over ten thousand crores have been announced by the Prime Minister. Hence, we are confident that within a reasonable span of time, Arunachal Pradesh will catch up with other developed states of our country. The Hon'ble Prime Minister's initiatives such as Trans-Arunachal Highway, Border Village Illumination Programme, connection of 513 habitations by roads under PMGSY, green-field airport at Itanagar, rail connectivity for Itanagar are revolutionary as far as the betterment of socio-economic profile of this state is concerned. I must congratulate Shri Khandu for successfully convincing the Central Government about need for rapid socio-economic development of the state and also I must thank all those, including Shri Chaturvedi, who have contributed immensely towards the envisionment of the historical package announced by the Hon'ble Prime Minister.

6. However, I must tell my fellow arunachalees that the announcement of the package is just a beginning. A great amount of will-power and hard work will be required to convert this package into reality. We will have to undertake a complete Government Process Re-engineering to shift ourself from the programme mode to the project mode. Many reforms are required to be undertaken in the administrative, engineering and policing machinery to ensure that the process of development continues at the optimum speed reaching to the poorest of the poor of the state. We will have to overcome

the petty differences and also the localized development approach, and come up with a common pan-Arunachalee feeling. We have to come out of the 'bandh' and 'ultimatum' culture as frequent 'bandhs' and 'ultimatums' are not only detrimental for the developmental process but they also weaken the very basic fabric of the state.

7. The impact of the developmental projects can only be felt when its fruits reach to the lowest strata of the society. However, I am confident that the government under the leadership of Shri Khandu will continue to carry out the required reforms and will convert the Prime Minister's dream into reality in a time bound manner. Here, I appeal to each one of you to become a partner in the endeavor of the Government to achieve the overall target of development.

8. Arunachal is referred as an island of peace. Yes, it is the fact that the people of my state are peace loving and patriotic. But we can not underestimate the fact that we are surrounded by states which are prone to insurgency. Our districts in the eastern part have been increasingly feeling the heat of militancy for almost two decades. An urgent corrective action is the need of the hour. Development can not be achieved when there is an atmosphere of fear and insecurity. Yes, I am referring to the militancy problem in Tirap and Changlang districts. In fact, my first visit after being sworn-in as the Governor was to Tirap district which is most terrorism affected. Bringing back normalcy in these two districts is my fore-most priority and in this direction, necessary steps have already been initiated by both the State and the Central Governments. With the rapid urbanization of the Capital complex of Itanagar-Naharlagun, an urgent need is felt to strengthen the law and order and administrative machinery. Accordingly the

State Government has approved creation and establishment of separate offices of the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police by bifurcating the offices of the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police of Papum Pare district. This will ensure proper administration and policing of urban areas and consequently DC and SP of Papum Pare will concentrate on rural areas. Besides this, the Government has already initiated the necessary action for raising of third battalion of IRBn under which one thousand and five hundred posts of different categories have been created. On this auspicious day, I assure all of you that with your whole-hearted support, we will be able to get rid of this menace at the earliest.

9. Arunachal Pradesh, rightly called as Switzerland of East is going through a transition phase today. At this juncture I am reminded of Hon'ble Prime Minister's statement during the Combined Commander's Conference in October 2006. Quote. *'A critical aspect of our policy must be the rapid development of infrastructure in our border areas. This is now recognized to have major implications not only for our internal security but also as a force multiplier when it comes to our external security.'* Unquote.

10. And here I stand representing a state having the longest international borders of 1680 kms, and where most of the border areas are still in the vicious circle of poverty, under-development, separation and isolation. Here, even in this 21st century, survival is the only aim of life for the people! It is interesting to note that when the process of development in other states of our country started in 19th century, Arunachal Pradesh, the then NEFT (North East Frontier Tract), continued to be treated as an Excluded or Un-administered Area. Development is a recent phenomenon here, which

started only after our Independence and subsequently, gained some momentum after 1962. This was further strengthened on attainment of Statehood on this auspicious day in 1987. Hence, our State can not be compared with any other part of the country. Prior to Independence, erstwhile NEFA (Now Arunachal Pradesh), was steeped in poverty and illiteracy. At the dawn of independence we had only two schools with fifty students and almost zero levels of literacy, rudimentary health infrastructure, no electricity, no banks and mere 100 kms of dirt roads! Blessed with immense natural resources in the form of forests, hydro-power, horticulture, flora and fauna, mines and minerals we remained poor amidst plenty! Though, every day we receive the first sun rays in our country, we were the last to see the rays of development!

11. The planned economic development started with First Five Year Plan outlay of Rs 3.00 Cr and today for 11th five year plan our plan size is around 8000 Crores. During the last 45 years, we have progressed slowly and steadily. Today we have 18000 kms of road, around three thousand schools with more than 3 lakhs students, around 500 health institutions and so on! Of course, on national standards, we are still much behind and have a long way to go. Our road density at 21.9 Km per 100 sq kms is the least in the country, our index of social and economic infrastructure at 69.71 is also the least in the country, and our human development index is average.

12. Despite having tremendous potential in horticulture and medicinal and aromatic plants, we have not been able to achieve the desired progress in these sectors. One of the major stumbling blocks is the absence of proper marketing infrastructure. Unless growers are assured of reasonable returns, it would not be possible to develop horticulture on a commercial scale.

Therefore, the State Government has engaged itself to provide infrastructure like cold storage, go-downs, market sheds etc but there is an urgent need to establish the linkage with outside marketing agencies.

13. This region can offer tourists diverse and unparalleled experiences with regard to mountaineering, trekking, river rafting, hand gliding etc. The marvelous natural beauty, varied flora and fauna and tourism potential of our state have been untapped so far. We shall endeavor to rectify this and encourage tourism in a big way by allowing the private sector also to explore this dimension and help in creating the required infrastructure.

14. Ours is a land of phenomenal bio-diversity. The success of tourism sector much depends on proper conservation of our rich bio-resources that is forest and wild-life. I would appeal to everyone to contribute their bit in preserving and enriching the bounty of nature that we are bestowed with.

15. Very shortly the Government is going to enact the New Industrial Policy to encourage large scale investment in setting up various types of industries in the state. With the near saturation of absorption capacity of the Government sector, now the Private sector will be encouraged to become a bigger source of employment coupled with ancillary developments which accrue because of setting up of various industries in the private sector

16. Then Hon'ble Prime Minister had rightly said during the Independence Day speech on 15th August 2005 that *'we will ensure that these (border) regions are provided basic infrastructure such as roads, electricity and telephone connectivity in the next 3-4 years'*, we need to launch a special programme for bridging this infrastructure gap in Arunachal Pradesh. We are

confident that with the growing support from the Planning Commission of India, our long felt needs such as connectivity in the form of road, rail and air as well as tele-communication, electrification, water supply, health and education will be satisfied in a phased manner with maximum speed. The Chief Minister Shri Khandu has already projected our requirements to the Planning Commission of India through various meetings and very shortly he will have annual plan discussion at New Delhi and taking advantage of the kind presence of Shri Chaturvedi, I will request him to continue to be generous with grants for the development of Arunachal Pradesh.

17. Let me tell the planners that the money spent in this state is not expenditure, but investment. Therefore, please do not subject Arunachal Pradesh to the theoretical 'cost-benefit' analysis. Recently, both Hon'ble Minister for Defence Shri A. K. Antony and Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs Shri Pranab Mukharjee, had also expressed their views about rapid development of border areas. A pro-active, resource based and time bound strategy for the development of Arunachal Pradesh should be the foremost priority for the Government of India. And we do now realize the growing importance given by the Central Government to our state. We are confident that with the enhanced support of the Central Government this land of enchanting beauty will also become a land of prosperity

18. Many times, my state is being referred as the State dependent on central aid. But let me assure you that once we develop our 55000 MW hydro electric potential and other projects by the end of thirteenth five year plan, we will not only be self sufficient but will also contribute for rapid economic growth of the country. There is no second opinion about the fact that without sufficient electricity the country cannot grow and we are the

future power house of the country. Hence, we deserve preferential treatment in all the other dimensions of development.

19. Today, I take this opportunity to assure you all on behalf of my Government that whatever support we get from the central Government will be used in an innovative and productive manner. We will work hard in improving our administrative mechanism so that better quality of life is made available to the citizens in remote villages as early as possible. Though the Government has constraints of financial resources, the need of the social sector is receiving utmost priority. Recently, the State Government has released Rs 20 Cr for stipends, benefiting more than 60000 students. We have been working hard to implement all the flagship programmes like *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, National Rural Health Mission, *Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana*, Total Sanitation Campaign, *Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Vidyutikaran Yojana*, and to ensure that the benefits of these programmes reach the remotest corners of the state as well.

20. In one of the significant development, the Government will provide Television sets with DTH to 1730 number of villages covering all the 16 districts. This single step will reduce the isolation felt in these remote villages.

21. Of course, development does not mean only the infusion of funds and resources. As Pt Jawaharlal Nehru has once said, *'We should judge results not by the statistics or the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human character that is evolved.'* Our aim is to have a holistic development encompassing all the aspects of human life. In fact I will appeal to the senior

functionaries in the state that the time has come to review and re-orient the governing processes with a focus on the poorest of the poor in the state.

22. I also take this opportunity to convey to each of you that from Tawang to Tirap, we are united by the common thread of being part of the great Indian Nation. The world is watching us with great anxiety and let us show them that we are taking confident strides to achieve our aim of peace and prosperity. There is no doubt that the future of this mountain state is extremely bright and with support from all we will be able to achieve our goals. Once again, on behalf of the people of Arunachal Pradesh and my Government, I sincerely thank Shri Chaturvedi for his visit and wish to see him frequently in our mystic valleys.

23. At the end, I take this opportunity to appeal to each including the political leaders, government servants and the youth to join hands in the developmental process by working hard and with sincerity, to realize the dream of our Hon'ble Prime Minister which he shared with us on this same platform on 31st January, when he said that 'Arunachal Pradesh will rise from the East as a new star and become one of the best regions of our country!'

Jai Hind!

Jai Arunachal !!