

[Speech of H.E. Gen \(Retd.\) J.J. Singh on the occasion of Poy Pee Mau Festival at Namsai on 27.02.08](#)

My dear Brothers, sisters and dear children.

It is indeed a pleasure for me to be with you all here on the occasion of the first ever ceremonial celebration of Poy Pee Mau, the New Year festival of Khampti tribe at Namsai in the Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh. My association with Arunachal Pradesh in general and Lohit district in particular 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 and to associate myself with this festival. The kind of affectionate reception and the warmth that I received on my arrival here dissipated the long separation of 25 years in a moment, and I instantly got myself identified as a member of the great Arunachalee family.

2. Today is a memorable day for each and every member of the Khampti society. Everyone residing in Lohit district in general and member of the Khampti tribe in particular is in a jubilant and festive mood. I extend my warm greetings and best wishes on such a joyous occasion.

3. If we look back to the history of festivals among various tribes, may it be in any corner of the world, we find that all the tribes have their own distinguished cultural heritage, customs. Religious beliefs and rituals which are pre-dominantly to pray to the Almighty to grant them peace, a good harvesting and sound health to entire community. They also pray to keep the evils away from their society.

4. It is indeed heartening to know that the Khampti society is one of the most advanced one having a very rich cultural heritage and its own written script. They have hundreds of volumes of manuscripts of multiple subjects preserved in Buddhist monasteries. Besides these, the traditional medication system of Khamptis and their beautiful dances, handicrafts and costumes are really attractive. The Tai cuisine is also famous for its delicacies.

5. Friends, Lohit district has a very beautiful landscape. It is also the abode of Parshuram kund, a historical and religious place. Presence of many Buddhist monasteries constructed in typical Thai style here converts the environment into a philosophical one. The mighty Lohit river with its tributaries and abundance of Tea gardens and orange gardens in the area have provided everything required to tap its tourism potential.

6. This region can offer tourists diverse and unparalleled experiences with regard to mountaineering, trekking, river rafting, sight seeing and pilgrimage. The marvelous natural beauty, varied flora and fauna and tourism potential of this area 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.

7. The Khamptis are well known for their hospitality. We must remember that hospitality is a core requirement to attract tourists. We should try to develop our inborn quality of hospitality in such a way that it could be employed in tourism sector and become a sustainable means of earning livelihood.

8. I understand that most of the festivals celebrated by Khamptis so far are religious in nature and it is only because of the timely thought of the entire society as a whole that the concept of a new festival, Poy Pee Mau has been evolved. This festival is aimed at promoting and preserving the age old rich cultural heritage, traditional games and sports of the Khamptis and making it a tourism festival. I express happiness on such endeavor of the people of this area.

9. Friends, both the central and state governments are working hard for the overall development of our state. Recently Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh visited our state and announced various important developmental programmes of over ten thousand crores. 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 the state government headed by Shri Dorjee Khandu, his cabinet and team of legislators for successfully convincing the Central Government about the need for rapid socio-economic development of the state.

10. 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.

11. Arunachal is referred as an island of peace. Yea, it is the fact that the people of my state are peace loving and patriotic. But we cannot 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 cannot be achieved when there is an atmosphere of fear and insecurity. Yes, I am referring to the militancy problem in Tirap and Changlang districts which may also affect Lohit district. 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. 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.

12. Friends, one very dangerous and deadly evil is also extending its jaws into the Lohit district. The menace of Drugs and Opium is increasingly reported from this area. Many of our youths have fallen prey to this menace. It is not only harmful but it may destroy the entire future generation. This is the high time that the entire society, government and NGOs should come together and join hands in hand to fight with such deadly menace. I have laid foundation stone of Drugs De Addiction Centre at Lathao today just before attending this festival. I hope that this centre will be a complete Addiction cum Rehabilitation Centre for the addicts.

13. 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 Khampti cultural heritage and to eradicate the drug menace prevailing in the area.

14. At the end I extend my thanks to the organizers, all the cultural troupes and all those who are here to participate in the Poy Pee Mau.

Jai Hind!

Jai Arunachal !!