

**SPEECH OF**

**MR. S. K. SINGH**

**GOVERNOR OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE**

**STATEHOOD DAY**

**ON**

**FEBRUARY 20, 2005**

Smt Gandhi, Chief Minister Apang, Congress General Secretaries Ambika Soni and Ramesh Chenithala, Members of the Council of Ministers, MLAs, Fellow Arunachalees,

I congratulate everyone on this Eighteenth Anniversary of our Statehood Day. We recall with pride and gratitude this day, 17 years ago, when Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi announced the attainment by this Pradesh of Statehood thus becoming a full-fledged State of the Indian Union and Republic. We recall with emotion and nostalgia the many visits paid to this sacred soil by that gallant visionary who was our Prime Minister and unique national leader: Rajiv Gandhi. I cherish proudly my personal memories of the days and years I spent working closely with Rajivji and before that with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Panditji, Indiraji, Rajivji for all of whom I had the great good fortune to work, all admired and loved this region, especially Arunachal Pradesh; its simple and noble people; its flora and fauna; its high snow-clad mountains; its rainfed forests; and its flowers, fruits, medicinal plants; its rivers and valleys indeed its soil that was irrigated during the combat of 1962 by the blood and sacrifices of the members of the Indian Armed Forces backed by our entire nation.

Madam, this Pradesh has been an oasis of peace and calm, in the middle of a region of discord and violence. We are grateful to our Central Government which has been supportive of our needs and requirements, and mindful of Arunachal's interests. We stand today at the threshold of developing into the focal point for building commercial and economic commonality of interests, and land connectivity with the ASEAN and pacific regions. We need the wherewithal for structuring an infrastructure for promoting greater connectivity through a roads network, later also through railway lines, telecommunications, and greater access to Information Technology, also equipment for better sound receptivity; appropriate infrastructure for tourism, especially for Buddhists from the ASEAN region, much larger productivity of high value flowers, larger volume of fruits for export.

We do possess, in our State considerable mineral wealth but we have been shy and modest in advertising this, and even in acknowledging its presence. There is much to do, and a great deal to achieve so that we can ensure for the people of this State a higher and better quality of life.

Madam, as Chief Minister Apang said you have earned our lasting gratitude by sparing these hours to participate in our joy, celebrating this Anniversary. You have come to us many times in the past, many more times we beg you to come in future, both for rest and recreation, and to assist in advancing our interests. For this we pray that you have ever-increasing strength in your elbows.