

Press Release No.187

Statehood Day celebrated with great joy with “Festival of Arunachal”

Centre aware of the challenges faced by people in border areas- Antony

Naharlagun, Feb.20- The State hood Day of Arunachal Pradesh to celebrate the completion of the 25years of the Frontier state as its stepped into its 26th year on 20th February 2012, was celebrated in a befitting manner at I. G. Park, Itanagar.

Union Minister for Defence, Shri A.K. Antony graced as the Chief Guest on the joyous occasion.

The Chief Guest Union Defence Minister, A.K. Antony addressing a huge gathering said that the Centre is aware of the challenges faced by the people living in border areas of the frontier state adding that it is our collective responsibility to ensure that the state's border areas are developed like that of other parts of the country.

“We need to focus on areas like infrastructure development, tourism, agriculture, & horticulture and police modernization” the Defence Minister said, while speaking on the development needs of the state.

On the occasion, he also gave the assurance to operationalize eight advanced landing ground(ALGs) in the state soon adding that centre has cleared the raising of the second battalion of Arunachal Scouts and setting up of the National Institute of Mountaineering and Adventure Sports at Dirang and

The Defence Minister further said that the Centre was committed to peace and stability in Arunachal Pradesh. The massive PM Package including the Tans-Arunachal Highway Project announced by Prime Minister Dr. ManMohan Singh in January 2008 will help develop and modernize the state in moving forward as a developed state.

The strategically located border state shares international boundary with Bhutan, China and Myanmar, he said that it is necessary to have a secure and non-porous international boundary to thwart movement or entry of any disruptive forces.

Responding to the memorandum submitted by Chief Minister Nabam Tuki, he said that proposals submitted by the State Govt. to the Centre to provide road connectivity to 22 unconnected administrative centres, construction of foot suspension bridges, log bridges and porter track roads, providing of drinking water facilities in border areas are highly relevant and will be given a serious consideration by the Centre.

Later, the Chief Guest also declared the five-day “Festival of Arunachal” open by releasing the festival balloons. He also inaugurated the Exhibition stalls.

Greeting the people of the state on the joyous occasion, Governor Gen. JJ Singh said that “We share a collective vision of making Arunachal Pradesh, the most prosperous state of the Country adding that “we are all witnessing the historic phase of development that is taking place in AP.”

On the occasion he called for the need for development of border area both from the strategic point of view and for improving the quality of life of people living in border areas “While the State has made significant developments in several fields, the effective management of International Border continues to be an area which requires high priority. Pointing to hardships faced by people living in border areas, he said that during his visits he has himself seen during his visits, the difficulty and hardships in which the people are living in border areas due to rough terrain and remoteness.

Gen Singh said that it is our moral duty to provide the basic necessities of life to our brothers and sisters living in such difficult areas, such as roads, electricity, water supply, schools and medical facilities. “I have always maintained that while strategic objectives are important, the real reason for developing our border areas is to provide better quality of life to our citizens. Infact, both the issues are complimentary.”

He apprised the Union Defence Minister that the State Govt. is paying focused attention to the development of border areas and that the State Govt. has submitted three projects to the Central Govt. for addressing the most critical needs of Border Areas – providing connectivity to unconnected administrative centers, water supply facilities and foot suspension bridges and porter tracks. He urged the Union Minister to help us in getting these vital projects sanctioned.

“The youth is looking forward to the expansion and greater presence of NCC Units such as a Naval Wing at Itanagar, A Battalion of Army wing enhanced from the Company at present at Tezu, and a Company at Pasighat or Deomali where we could have an air wing.”

Chief Minister, Nabam Tuki, in his address said that the State has made strides in the field of development, while particularly referring to the mega infrastructural development projects under PM Package, however, he added that the frontier state has still a long way to go to reach the developmental level at par with other states and also in terms of economic progress. Tuki sought the support of the centre in the march of Arunachal towards the path of progress and prosperity to realise the aim of becoming a front ranking state of the country..

He said that we should proudly maintain our image as the island of peace among the NE states, as peace and prevalence of law and order is necessary for any state to develop. He further expressed his concern over the Bandh culture that the state is presently witnessing and called upon the people to stand united against such challenges and asked administration to deal such situation firmly & tactfully as per rule of law. Necessary steps are being taken to strengthen the law enforcing machineries in the State, Tuki said.

Highlighting the priorities of the Government, the Chief Minister said that they were issues of livelihood, food security, and employment generation, effective Border Mangment, improving connectivity, inclusive development of Agriculture and allied

activities including the Power sector. Stating creating of job opportunities as his topmost priority, Govt. plans to constitute Arunachal Employment Generation Council & AP Skills Development Council, he informed.

He also informed the Govt.'s decision for formulating new Sports Policy adding that Govt. is planning to bring out CM's Youth Development Scheme to channelise energy & talents of youth for constructive work. Govt. is also considering Chief Minister's Personal Insurance Scheme to cover death or injury, Tuki informed.

For promoting the rich culture, he said Govt. will introduce a "Living Heritage" scheme to encourage folk artistes, artisans & exponents of traditional art forms and establishing the Culture Village.

On the occasion, he also drew the attention of the Union Defence Minister, A.K. Antony for developing the interior and remote border areas of the state, as the state share long international border with three countries. He expressed concern that lack of development will force the people to migrate from these strategic centres, leaving these unpopulated. He submitted a memorandum containing proposals for addressing the development needs of the border areas of the state.

The Minister Planning & Finance, Chowna mein gave the vote of thanks. Former CM Gegong Apang, Speaker Wanglin Lowandong, Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries, MLAs were among others on the occasion. Lt Gen Bikram Singh, GOC-in - C of Eastern Command, Air Marshall S Varthaman, AOC-in-C of Eastern Air Command, Lt Gen Dalbir Singh, GOC 3 Corps, Lt Gen Shakti Gurung, GOC 4 Corps, officers of Central and State Govts, Army, Air Force and para-military forces were also present.

The Governor inaugurated the Food Village displaying the culinary variety of the state. Food stalls were set up by the Army and Police.

The Major attractions of the statehood day celebrations were Fly Past by 3 Sukhoi 30 Fighter Planes of Indian Air Force, motorcycle display by Indian Army, a colourful cultural programme and March Past by Army and Air Force Bands.

Sd/ D.Dodum, PRO