

**GOVERNOR'S SECRETARIAT
ARUNACHAL PRADESH
ITANAGAR**

PRESS RELEASE

Governor, First Lady graces Meder Nello Foundation Day

The Governor of Arunachal Pradesh Shri JP Rajkhowa along with the First Lady of the State, Smt Rita Rajkhowa graced the 12th Meder Nello Foundation Day celebration cum 4th General Conference of Meder Nello Council (MNC) at Ziro on 27th February 2016.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor conveyed his good wishes to the members of the Meder Nello and expressed hope that the movement will further evolve in the new age. He emphasised that new generations needs to imbibe the essence of customs and traditions of the tribes and the best place for them to socialise or learn is the Prayer Halls. Prayer Hall or Temple of Donyi Polo faith has different names, i.e. Meder Nello in Apatani Tribe, Kargu Gamgi in Galo Tribe, Gangging in Adi Tribe and Nyider Namlo in Nyishi to name a few.

Recalling 15th–16th century Assamese polymath, Srimanta Sankardev, a saint-scholar, poet, playwright, social-religious reformer and a figure per excellence in the cultural and religious history of Assam and his Sattras, which continue to be essential socio-religious institutions, the Governor stressed on the importance of such Prayer Halls, like Meder Nello, Kargu Gamgi, Gangging and Nyider Namlo for sustaining faith movement. He added that it can be a centre of education and art & culture. Moreover, it will be a place for discourses on traditional practices.

The Governor paid tributes to Golgi Bote Late Talom Rukbo, founder of the indigenous faith movement in the State and Late Nani Tachang and Late Tage Dibo for their pioneering contribution towards faith movement. He expressed hope that such movement will facilitate the people of the State to live in harmony and strengthen the spirit of 'Team Arunachal'.

The Governor also reiterated on promotion of indigenous language and development of scripts to preserve the cultural heritage. He also suggested for amendment of some archaic rituals and march forward with time.

The Governor said that literally, the word Donyi means the Sun and Polo means the Moon. Scientifically speaking, the Sun is the symbol of strength, nourishment and life giving force. Similarly, the moon also gives light, balance and harmony for the living beings. If these power elements were not there, there will be no life, plants or water. Therefore, it is a very significant religion. He added, all religion must be treated equally as it reinforces the distinctive Indian cultural characteristic which always has been 'Unity in Diversity' and 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' – the whole world is a family.

Special Guest and member, Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), Dr. Joram Begi, former Director, Higher & Technical Education said that all the Tani groups may differ in the rituals and traditions but core values remains the same. He advocated that with time this group also must change for inclusion of younger generation and also do away with public sacrifices as done by many other religions. Dr. Begi encouraging the indigenous faith movement said that to preserve our identity and ethos, we have to follow our faith. As one of the most progressive Tribes of the State, he expressed hope that Meder Nello of Apatanis will provide new direction for reinforcing the Apatani Culture and Donyi Polo faith.

Chief Patron of Meder Nello Council, Shri Hage Kojeen, Commissioner GA, DA said that Donyi Polo, which is the oldest faith tradition, is gradually diminishing with the emergence of modernity, due to lack of proper organisational support, State patronage, adequate resources and infrastructure such as organized prayer centre, documentation of rich oral heritage etc. Sharing his experience in Puducherry, where there is full-fledged dedicated official institution funded and promoted by the State Government for constructions and maintenance of religious centres and for religion celebration, Shri Kojeen called for State Assistance in the adopted line.

Chairman, Meder Nello Council Shri Bamin Hinda, in his welcome address briefed on the concept of Meder Nello Movement, which started on 27th February 2004. He said that it aims to create awareness amongst the Donyi Polo believers to keep practicing and to preserve, protect, promote and to document traditionally practiced rituals and rites, verse like chanting and preparation of alters.

A memorandum was submitted by Shri Bamin Hinda for grant of financial assistance for construction of traditional cultural hall at Danii-Pillo Ground, Hapoli.

Earlier, the Governor inaugurated the two-day celebration by unfurling the prayer flag, which was followed by mass prayer song led by Smt Koj Yakang and lighting of the inaugural lamp. Shri Mudang Elyu performed the purification rituals and sprinkling of holy water, while ladies tied the holy thread around the wrist of the guests and participants and distributed 'Yatang'-holy rice powder. A minute silence was observed in honour of pioneers of Meder Nello movement, late Nani Tachang and Late Tage Dibo.

Ziro MLA, Er. Tage Taki, who was the Guest of Honour, special invitee, Dr. Ligu Tacho, President, Indigenous Faith and Cultural Society of Arunachal Pradesh and MNC Chief Advisor Shri Lod Kojeen along with representatives of 13 (thirteen) Meder Nellos of Itanagar and Ziro, guests and invitees were present on the occasion.

Subey Salang Meder Nello performed 'Huru Khanung', while Hong Meder Nello presented famed Apatani dance 'Daminda'. Traditional cultural performances were presented by Hapoli Youth group, Itanagar Meder Nello, Kalung Meder Nello, Naharlagun Meder Nello and Itanagar Meder Nello.

On his arrival at Ziro in the morning, the local MLA Er. Tage Taki, Deputy Commissioner Shri Kangki Darang and SP Shri Tumme Amo along with Heads of Department received the Governor and the First Lady at the Ziro ALG.

Before leaving for Itanagar, the Governor saw the progress of the ALG and was briefed by the construction and district officials, wherein he advised them to expedite the project.

PRO to Governor
Arunachal Pradesh
ITANAGAR, February 27, 2016