

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SMT DROUPADI MURMU AT THE CIVIC RECEPTION AND
INAUGURATION / FOUNDATION STONE LAYING OF VARIOUS
PROJECTS AT KOHIMA, NAGALAND**

Kohima, November 2, 2022

It is a great privilege to visit your beautiful state. I am deeply touched by the warm reception accorded to me by the Government and people of Nagaland. I thank you all for your love and affection.

This is my second visit to the North-East in less than a month. This highlights the new national commitment to the people of the region. I am happy that my visit to Nagaland has coincided with the inauguration of various projects related to education, road infrastructure and finance in the state. I am confident that these projects will improve literacy and ease of living, and boost tourism and the economy of the state. I congratulate Governor Professor Jagdish Mukhi Ji, Chief Minister Shri Neiphui Rio Ji and his entire team for the successful completion of these projects.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In a few weeks, Nagaland will be celebrating sixty years of statehood. While inaugurating the new state of Nagaland on First December 1963, my illustrious predecessor, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan had praised the Naga people. I quote, "You have not only the qualities of loyalty, valour and discipline but also the habits of industry, an innate sense of beauty and artistic skill... I do hope that all the Naga people will take the fullest advantage of the fresh opportunities afforded to them and share in the building up of prosperity and progress in the country." [Unquote]

I am happy to note that Nagaland has made significant progress on various development parameters. I congratulate all successive governments and the people of Nagaland on this occasion. As Nagaland completes 60 years of statehood, I urge you all to rededicate

yourselves towards the goal of a more prosperous and developed Nagaland.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is a tremendous potential of tourism in Nagaland. The Naga tribes are known for their vibrant culture and rich heritage that exemplifies our motto of 'Unity in Diversity'. Songs and dances, feasts and festivals are an intrinsic part of Naga life. The Hornbill Festival has become a popular platform for capturing and showcasing the colourful and beautiful culture of the state. I convey my best wishes for the success of the upcoming Hornbill Festival.

The development of infrastructure is a key parameter for the growth of a state. The 'Act East Policy' of the Government of India focuses on the overall development of the North-East Region. The inauguration of several roads and bridges under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana today will give a new boost to the connectivity in the region. I congratulate the Union Minister of Road, Transport & Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari Ji and his team for the completion of these projects.

The dynamic youth of Nagaland is immensely talented and creative. With a literacy rate of over 80 per cent, the skilled young men and women of Nagaland, well-versed in the English language, are working in the IT, hospitality and other sectors across India. Providing the youth a holistic education remains the key to help them achieve their true potential. I am happy to inaugurate several schools and hostels for girl-children, lay the foundation stone for Eklavya Model Residential Schools, and launch the 'smart classrooms' project that will give further impetus to education in the state. I congratulate Union Minister of Education, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan Ji, Minister of Tribal Affairs, Shri Arjun Munda Ji, the Government of Nagaland and everyone associated with this initiative for the successful completion of these projects.

I am confident that the new Treasury Building at the Capital Complex will increase the convenience for carrying out government transactions and will provide better service to the people of Nagaland.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nagaland is a land of brave warriors. The indomitable spirit and courage of the Naga soldiers has long been recognised as exemplary. The nation is proud of the brave men and women of Nagaland serving the Indian armed forces. Captain Neikezhakuo Kenguruse and Sepoy Imliakum Ao, two great sons of Nagaland, displayed exceptional valour and fierce determination in fighting the enemy during the Kargil War. I look forward to visiting Kohima War Cemetery tomorrow and pay homage to the brave soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice while defending the nation.

Nagaland could be truly proud of institutionalising its traditional mode of local self-governance through the Nagaland Village and Tribal Councils Act of 1978. I have been told that today the Village Councils and Village Development Boards are established modes of decentralised governance all over Nagaland. When I visit Kigwema village tomorrow, I am sure there will be a lot to learn from the interaction with the Village Council members and the Self-Help Groups there.

I am also happy to note that Nagaland has introduced the pioneering concept of Communitisation with the aim of building a partnership between the government and the community for the effective management of the public sector institutions to improve service delivery.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nagaland has much to offer in agriculture and farm produce. I am told that about 70 per cent of the agricultural practice in Nagaland is traditional and organic. Indeed, the whole North-East has the potential to become the organic food basket of the country. The good quality agro and horticultural produce of Nagaland has great demand in the market. I am happy to know that three agro products – Naga tree tomato, Naga cucumber and Naga Mircha –are G.I. tagged. The opening of ‘Naturally Nagaland’ outlets by the state government has

provided a new platform to local entrepreneurs, farmers and weavers to sell traditional handicrafts and handlooms, the beautiful Naga shawls and varieties of organic products.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am told that the literacy rate among women in the state is higher than the national average and Nagaland is the safest place for women in the country. This demonstrates the high respect given to the women in the Naga society. I congratulate Smt Phangnon Konyak on becoming the first woman to be elected to the Rajya Sabha from Nagaland. I would urge women of Nagaland to come forward and get more involved in public life. If women are empowered, there is more development in society. Women lead with empathy, with care and they will give a new dimension to the development journey of Nagaland.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to note that the people of Nagaland today stand for peace and prosperity, dialogue and development.

In the end, I thank you again for the warm reception, which has really touched my heart. I would like to thank the Chief Minister, Shri Neiphui Rio Ji and the Government of Nagaland – and above all, the people of Nagaland – for your warmth and hospitality. I will always remember it with affection.

Thank you,
Jai Hind!
Jai Bharat!