

August 27, 2015

**MESSAGE**

On the joyous occasion of Onam, the harvest festival of Kerala, I extend my heartiest greetings and best wishes to all the Malayalees living in Nagaland. Onam, the festival of Kerala which is celebrated with gaiety by the people irrespective of caste and creed is not just a festival to cherish but a moment to reincarnate a past of prosperity and goodness.

Onam is all about being happy and engaging in joy and happiness activities. From wearing traditional new attires, laying flower carpets (*Athapookalam*), performing *Thiruvathira* dance, having *Onasadya* (sumptuous feast) to *Onakalikal* (games), the 10-day-long festival promises a lot of happy moments.

Keralites enjoy a sumptuous meal served on a banana leaf on *Thiruvonam* (*Big Onam*). It is a multi variety dishes. The main dish is plain boiled rice, served along with other dishes collectively called *Kootan* which include curries like Parippu, Sambar, Rasam, Pulisseri and others like Kaalan, Avial, Thoran, Olan, Pachadi, Mango pickle, *Naranga curry*, as well as Papadum, Banana, plain Yogurt or Buttermilk, and plantain chips. The traditional dessert called Payasam (Ada Pradhaman) served at the end of the meal is of many kinds including preserved jack fruits and usually three or more are served. The 'Kootan' are made with different vegetables and have different flavours.

Malayalees in Nagaland have to be proud that they are in the forefront in many social services especially as teachers and nurses as well as Government employees. A good number of religious Priests & Nuns are also serving in Nagaland.

May this joyous occasion which symbolises our oneness and the linguistic and cultural harmony strengthen the bonds of unity and bring peace, progress and prosperity to all.

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