



सत्यमेव जयते

## **RAJ BHAVAN KOHIMA**

### **MESSAGE OF SHRI R. N. RAVI, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF NAGALAND ON THE OCCASION OF 74<sup>th</sup> INDEPENDENCE DAY.**

**My dear brothers and sisters of Nagaland,**

On the occasion of our 74<sup>th</sup> Independence Day, I extend my greetings and best wishes to you all.

On this day, we remember and pay homage to all the heroes and martyrs, millions of working men and women, whose sacrifices under the leadership of the Father of Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, wrought this freedom and the Union of Free India was born. We also pay respect to those heroes whose relentless vigil has kept this country secure and those whose contributions made this Union great and glorious!

Friends, we are in the midst of an unprecedented global crisis - COVID-19 pandemic. During the last few months we have witnessed heroes rising to the occasion to save our country from the invisible enemy. I pay my special heartfelt tribute to our COVID warriors who have demonstrated exemplary commitment and extraordinary courage to serve and save our people. I thank the family members of COVID warriors for their strength and support. My thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of COVID-19 victims.

At a time of great difficulty, our Civil Society and grass root organizations have been playing a crucial role. Their support to the State Health Sector and vulnerable communities is unparalleled. I thank the volunteers for their self-less services in this hour of need.

Friends, over the last few months, COVID-19 has disrupted our life and livelihood. It has compelled us to adjust our relationships to the constraints imposed by it. This ongoing pandemic has adversely affected the livelihood of our people and rendered several thousands of our young men and women jobless. The underprivileged and the unemployed are the worst hit.

The Government of India under the leadership of dynamic and visionary Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, took timely proactive and pre-emptive measures. Crucial decisions like stopping the International Flights from suspect countries, timely safe evacuation of several hundred thousands of our countrymen from COVID affected

countries, calibrated lockdowns, fast track capacity building of our health infrastructure and special economic stimulus helped us to meet the challenges of this unprecedented menace in a way that India's COVID-19 story has become a model for the world.

I am happy to note that today our State, Nagaland is certainly better prepared to save precious lives from this deadly virus. We have built our own BSL Laboratories in record time. Though we need to build more laboratories, we no longer depend on the neighboring States for testing suspected COVID-19 samples. Our doctors and lab-technicians are testing far more samples with far greater efficiency. Our frontline workers have better protective equipments, our hospitals have better treatment capacities with greater availability of life saving oxygen and ventilators. Our citizens are better aware of the COVID-19 preventive protocols and the State Government is better energized and synergized with the COVID War Room at the State level and the District Task Forces at the Districts.

Although the number of the COVID +ve cases are increasing, we are fortunate that the mortality has been low.

I appeal to our people not to panic and not to lower guards. The protocol of wearing face masks and maintaining 2 yards physical distance from each other must not be diluted.

Friends, alongwith saving lives, our priority is also securing livelihoods to our people.

Our dynamic and visionary Prime Minister Narendra Modi, true to his uncanny ability of thinking out of the box, looks upon this global pandemic as an opportunity for India. Turning a crisis into an opportunity for the good of the country is his forte. The Government of India has unveiled a slew of radically transformative policies and packages that will make India Atmanirbhar - self-reliant. Access to capital for self-employment and Micro, Small and Medium enterprises – which are the worst hit by the pandemic, has been made easy including access to collateral free loans. There is greater focus on energizing the rural sectors like agriculture, horticulture and allied. Special packages have been unveiled to mitigate the distress of rural and urban poor. There is unprecedented futuristic thrust on innovations, entrepreneurship and researches - both basic and applied. India has already emerged as the innovation hub of the world. The number of patents for new products and procedures in India is on the rise.

The New Education Policy, unveiled recently, is revolutionary and will lay the foundation for radically transforming and empowering our human resources and taking India to much greater heights of prosperity and World leadership. India is demographically young – and all endeavors are to unleash and harness the potential of our youth.

Due to radically bold policy initiatives and fast improving investment eco-system, India is emerging a preferred investment destination for the global multinational companies. Opening up the strategic sectors including Defence Manufacturing to private and foreign companies reflect the confidence and strategic foresight of our leadership. India is already the world leader in several fields including the climate preservation and solar energy.

The waves of positive transformation and growth is sweeping all parts of the Country. The North-East India, which was until some years back was known for endemic insurgencies, is fast transforming in incredible ways. North East is emerging as an economic hub and is bracing to play a pivotal role in India's Act East Policy. The region is emerging as a destination of choice by the investors from the rest of the country and the world who until recently were wary of even looking towards North East. The impressive changes for the better are quite visible in the neighboring States of the region.

Regrettably the waves of positive change and growth seem to have been bypassing our State, Nagaland.

Nagaland is the 16<sup>th</sup> State of the Indian Union, the second oldest State in the North East. It is endowed with one of the finest of human and natural resources. For quite some decades since its birth it raced ahead of several other States in the region despite odds. Unfortunately today it has the dubious distinction of the worst performing State in the Country including the North-East region on almost all the significant indicators of Human Development.

Our human resource, which is our most precious asset, crucial to fulfill the Naga dreams and aspirations is on steady decline. Some 25% of our Children are not enrolled in the Schools and 60% of our youth have not seen High School. Literacy in Nagaland may be technically over 80%, in reality, those who have not even been to High School cannot be called functionally literate. One wonders what positive contribution they can make to their family, their village, their community and the State. Despite the highest pupil-teacher ratio in the State as compared to the rest of the Country, the drop-out and failure rates in Government Schools are alarming. Absence of internet connectivity and Information Communication Technology facility in majority of our schools is holding back our youth in the global race for progress. It has made online teaching, specially in COVID-19 situation, impossible, pushing them further behind.

Investment climate in Nagaland is worrisome. We need to build investment friendly eco-system so as to encourage investors from outside and within the State to have sufficient confidence to set up enterprises. Unfortunately Government job is the main source of employment and economy is largely based on salaries of Government servants. Even our agriculture and horticulture sectors which are the mainstay of our State's economy are in distress. We have to encourage and incentivise entrepreneurship.

Ironically relative decline is more obvious during the recent decades. When the security forces and the Naga armed groups agreed to suspend operations against each other paving the way for political settlement, the legitimate expectation of the people of Nagaland was dividends of peace – freedom from fear of guns, better health, better education, better infrastructure, better livelihood opportunities, an atmosphere to dream and an eco-system to pursue their dreams.

Incongruously a deeply entrenched network of vested interests has emerged during the period which has misappropriated the dividends of Peace and did not allow them to reach the people. There is mass scale mayhem and miscarriage of dreams and expectations of the people of Nagaland. It is unendurable and unacceptable.

In India's grand march forward, Nagaland cannot be left behind. The people of Nagaland have their natural right of a dignified future. For this we will have to build and strengthen institutions of accountability, justice and fair play. We will have to break the vice – like grip of the vicious circle of the network of vested interests and make way for the virtuous circle of peace, prosperity and happiness for our people. This cannot be achieved by Government alone. In this endeavor, we need the co-operation of the two million people of Nagaland. I have deep and abiding faith in the inherent goodness and capability of our people.

Together we will do it.

God bless my people of Nagaland.

Kuknalim

Jai Hind.

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