



सत्यमेव जयते

RAJ BHAVAN KOHIMA

**Speech of
SHRI R.N. RAVI
Hon'ble Governor of Nagaland**

**On the occasion of
Unveiling the bust of Dr. Imkongliba Ao
(President, Naga Peoples' Convention)
on 1st December, 2020
at Raj Bhavan**

On the auspicious occasion of the 58th Statehood Day of Nagaland, I extend my warmest greetings and best wishes to all of you present here and to the people of Nagaland.

At the outset, I pay my heartfelt tribute to the Founding Fathers of Nagaland the leaders of the Naga Peoples' Convention and countless Nagas whose blood, sweat and sacrifices created this beautiful State. People of Nagaland shall always remember them with utmost gratitude.

We are fortunate to have amidst us one of the Founding Fathers, Padma Bhusan Dr. S.C. Jamir, a man who dedicated his life to the service of the people of this State and the Country. I, on behalf of the people of Nagaland and the entire Country, thank Dr. Jamir for his decisive role at a crucial time in shaping the State. May God bless him with long healthy life and he may continue guiding and mentoring the younger generations.

On behalf of the people of Nagaland, I convey a deep sense of gratitude to other members of the Naga Peoples' Convention who are unfortunately, no more with us. I tell their family members that your fathers and grand-fathers were the heroes and will always remain heroes for the people of Nagaland and the Country.

On this day we remember the bravery and sacrifices of the Naga leaders who fought through the darkest period of senseless bloodshed through peaceful democratic process to protect the rights and identity of the Naga people. They stood for true freedom of Nagas - freedom from interference in Nagas way of life.

From time immemorial, Nagas have been a freedom loving people. They have cherished through the centuries their freedom from interference in their way of life. They have fiercely resisted any encroachment on this freedom. For the Naga people, their traditions, cultures, customs and customary institutions have always been dear and close to their heart.

When the British were leaving and birth of free Union of India was imminent, Nagas raised their concerns and insisted for convincing safeguards against interference in their way of life. Thanks to the Naga leaders diligent pursuit of their freedom that most of the tribal areas in the North East region got their self-government through the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.

While majority Nagas continued to pursue political campaign for a more convincing

safeguards under the Constitution of India, some radical leaders articulated their position in extreme terms of independence and adopted violent means to achieve it which pushed Naga Hills into widespread bloodshed.

In the midst of such an unfortunate predicament, some bold, brave and farsighted Naga leaders formed the Naga Peoples' Convention under the Presidentship of Dr. ImkonglibaAo. They reached out to Nagas beyond the Naga Hills District and mobilized them to save the Nagas from senseless bloody violence and help them shape their political future. The NPC leaders facing extreme threats to their life took initiatives even to reach out to the radicals to shun the self-destructive path of violence and be a partner in the peaceful democratic enterprise to decide the future of Naga people. They initiated an intensely extensive socio-political churning in the Naga Society to crystallise their position on their collective political future.

Eventually after over three years of socio-political churning the free-will of the Naga Society emerged in the form of a 16 Point Memorandum which was the basis of their political negotiation with the Government of India on the political future of Nagas.

I salute the strategic foresight, political vision and extraordinary negotiating skills of the Naga leaders. They were not only successful in crystallising the free-will of the Naga people through wider democratic participation of all the tribes but also through their skilful political negotiation with Government of India they got what could have been otherwise unthinkable. They created a full-fledged State by uniting the Nagas of Assam and NEFA with extraordinary constitutional safeguards against any interference in their way of life, their customs, traditions, system of justice, their religion, their land and resources.

This freedom came at a heavy cost. Dr. Imkongliba Ao was soon assassinated. Many other Nagas made their ultimate sacrifice so that their successive generations could live in freedom. Their martyrdom and sacrifices did not go in vain. The birth of Nagaland State is triumph of the politics of peace over politics of violence. What the Naga leaders achieved through democratic process, violence could never and will never be able to do so. For far too long this glorious achievement of the Founding Fathers have been eclipsed.

Nagaland State born out of the sweat and blood of its Founding Fathers and sacrifices of countless freedom loving Nagas is and shall remain an integral part of the Union of India. Nagaland state is not a temporary arrangement. It is an enduring entity and Article 371-A of the Indian Constitution is a sacrosanct commitment to the people of Nagaland.

Unfortunately, the people of Nagaland have not been able to fully enjoy the fruits of Nagaland State and their full rights and privileges as citizens of the Union of India. Till today the dream of the Founding Fathers for enduring peace remains elusive to the people of Nagaland. Some people, mostly from outside the State, imbued with a perverse political ideology, have been peddling preposterous lies and are standing as a roadblock to the enduring peace in Nagaland.

Our befitting tribute to the Founding Fathers will be to liberate our State from the vice-like grips of those vested interests who have destroyed two generations of the people of Nagaland. For this, we must rise above divisive, violent politics and embrace unity, peace and prosperity for the better future of our children and generations to come.

Today as we unveil the bust of Dr.Imkongliba Ao in the majestic premises of Kohima Raj Bhavan, I urge the people of Nagaland to renew our sense of gratitude to the Founding Fathers and commit ourselves to building a Nagaland of their dreams where the genius of Naga people blossom to the fullest and the State joins the front-ranking States of the Indian Union.

I once again wish you all a very happy 58th Statehood Day.

God bless Nagaland!

Jai Hind.
