



RAJ BHAVAN NAGALAND

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

**On the Occasion of
75th Independence Day of the Nation
on
15th August, 2021**

My dear Brothers and Sisters of Nagaland,

On the occasion of the 75th Independence Day of our nation, I extend my warmest greetings and best wishes to you all.

On this auspicious day, we pay homage to the countless heroes and martyrs whose sacrifices and sufferings brought us Independence. We express our gratitude to the members of the Armed Forces and Security Forces whose constant vigil and sacrifices keep our country secure and peaceful. We fondly remember those whose toils have made this Union great and glorious. We pay our heartfelt gratitude to the Doctors, Nurses and all the members of health services, and other frontline workers who risking their own lives have been relentlessly fighting the extraordinary menace of COVID-19 Pandemic and saving precious human lives. Our grass root organisations and civil societies including the Church and other faith based organisations have rendered commendable services.

We pay our heartfelt homage to those COVID warriors who made their ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. My deepest sympathies to the families who lost their dear ones due to this pandemic. Friends, by the time the First Wave of COVID-19 began receding, the Second Wave hit us harder. The unimaginable speed and ferocity of the Second Wave has taught us some valuable lessons and we are better prepared today.

The country, under the dynamic and visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra

Modi, has made quantum improvement in our capabilities to meet the challenges of COVID including its likely future waves with resolve and determination. We have made remarkable improvement in our health services and delivery systems. We have made significant accretions in hospital beds, medical oxygen, ventilators, essential medicines, and also improved our logistic capabilities. In record time we indigenously produced vaccines against COVID-19. Production of COVID vaccine is going on at unprecedented scale. There is a concern that our children might be more vulnerable in the Third Wave. Preparations including trial of vaccines for children under 18 is in progress.

I am happy that our State is better prepared today to meet the COVID-19 challenges. With the technical and financial assistance from the Government of India, our State Government has made significant capacity building in the health sector to combat COVID pandemic. The Indian diaspora abroad and voluntary organizations have also helped significantly by reaching out to our people in far flung areas with medical and humanitarian assistance. We have installed and commissioned several Oxygen Plants, added significant number of hospital beds and ensured no scarcity of essential medicines. Our District Task Forces are doing commendable job. Our doctors, nurses and other hospital staff both in Government and Private Sectors have risen upto the challenges and their services are worthy of appreciation.

Friends, it is scientifically established that,

as of now, vaccine is the only safeguard against severity of COVID-19. It has been amply proven that a vaccinated person is less likely to be infected and even if infected much less likely to need hospitalization. Mortality among vaccinated COVID patients is negligible.

Prime Minister Modi has launched Free Universal Vaccination programme in the Country for all those above 18 years to ensure that there is no discrimination between the rich and the poor, urban and rural or states with more resources than those with less.

Since COVID-19 is unlikely to go away anytime soon, we cannot let our life and livelihood suffer anymore. We have to bring the life back to near-normal observing COVID protocols. Vaccination will help our working age population to return to their livelihood occupations and also our students to return to the campus. I urge our people to shed vaccine hesitancy and come forward for vaccination.

Friends, the global pandemic has created a mood of despair. However, we cannot let it dampen our spirit. We have to defeat it and march ahead. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, our Country is marching forward towards Atmanirbhar, Swasth and Samridh Bharat - self-reliant, healthy and prosperous India.

This year, besides the COVID pandemic, the people of Nagaland are confronting a yet another serious challenge. Unusual rain deficit has seriously impacted our agriculture and adversely

affected the livelihood of our people. Given the unpredictable nature and its consequences of climate change, I think it is time we have to brace ourselves for the change and explore options in agriculture and allied economic activities.

Friends, India is celebrating the 75 Years of Independence due next year. The Hon'ble Prime Minister has flagged off the celebration on March 12, this year.

Let us celebrate Independence with focus on the five pillars for the celebration as desired by the Hon'ble Prime Minister Freedom struggle, Ideas at 75, Achievements at 75, Actions at 75 and Resolve at 75.

Like the rest of India, colonization had devastated the economy and socio-cultural lives of the people of the Naga Hills. In pursuance of their divide and rule policy, the colonisers planted seeds of mutual suspicion and hatred in the plural Naga society and also between the people of the Hills and the plains. For tea plantations and taxation, the British seized the large tracts of cultivable land known as Khats and fishing water bodies called Bheels at the foothills which were a rich source of food and economic resource for the people of Naga Hills. They killed the trade and commerce of the Naga Hills with the rest of the World that took place through the markets in the plains. Accounts of historians and the notes and writings of the travellers, traders and administrators abound in rich details of such trade and commerce until the British rule.

In the pre-colonial days, the Naga Hills produced and traded a range of goods. Cotton, silk, lac and Agar were among the most traded commodities. Silk products of Naga Hills found markets not only in the rest of India but also in China and Tibet. Kavoch Kapor, a kind of sophisticated embroidered silk of Naga Hills was considered so precious and auspicious that Ahom warriors never missed donning it before going to war.

Before the British came, the people of Naga Hills and the plains lived for centuries in symbiotic and harmonious co-existence. Socio-cultural exchanges including inter-marriages between the peoples of Hills and plains were commonplace. Families in the Hills had enduring generational relationship of friendship with families in the plains a system popularly called Mangai. Marriages including those between the Ahom Royals and the families of Naga Chiefs were not uncommon. Kan Seng born of an Ahom princess and a Naga Chief held the topmost position of Barpatra Gohain, popularly called Naga Gohain in Ahom Administration. Ahom King Gadadhar married Watlong, a Konyak princess. When the Mughal invaded Assam, several thousand Naga warriors fought and died to repel the invaders.

Misappropriation of Khats and Bheels at the foothills and closing of trade and commerce with the plains devastated the economy of the Naga Hills. Nagas made numerous attempts, including armed raids on the British Commercial establishments at the foothills to reclaim their prime source of economy and restore their

traditional socio-cultural kinship with the plains. The British, in furtherance of their divide and rule policy, mischievously used these raids to create a false narrative of perpetual conflict and warfare between the people of Naga Hills and Plains.

Evidence of centuries long harmonious socio-cultural co-existence and osmosis between the people of Naga Hills and those in the plains are loudly discernible today in various walks of life including language, traditional costumes, cuisines and elements of traditional village administration.

Deploying lies and half-truths the colonisers tried to colonise the minds of the people. They tried hard to emasculate the sense of self-respect and pride of the natives and inculcate in them a sense of shame in their past. They created an elaborate vocabulary of shame and self-humiliation. Attempts were made for the brave peace-loving Nagas living in their well-guarded, well-fed and well-led village republics for centuries and millennia to believe that their ancestors were uncivilised savages and their traditional war rituals of decapitation were disparagingly termed head-hunting.

Friends, Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, had cautioned us about far-reaching insidious consequences of a colonised mind. In Gandhi's assessment detoxification of a colonised mind would be a complex long drawn process.

Friends, Independence of India is the outcome of blood, sweat and sacrifices of millions

of Indians who resisted the British rule and paid their ultimate sacrifice while doing so. Our historic freedom campaign was a long drawn mass movement that began with the day one of the beginning of British colonisation of India in the middle of 18th Century. The extraordinary Movement was carried on by the millions of ordinary Indians from all across the country. Nagas made glorious contributions to this Movement. Thousands of Nagas were martyred and scores of villages suffered worst oppressions resisting the British colonization.

Beginning the early 19th century when the British entered North-East India and looked up the Naga Hills, Naga warriors fiercely fought and defended every inch of the territory. The British launched numerous military expeditions and inflicted massive devastations during the century old intrusions into and colonization of the Naga Hills to subdue the continuing resistance. Our brave warriors fought numerous battles all along Angami, Zeliangrong, Chakesang, Lotha, Ao, Phom, Sema and Konyak regions. Battles of Mizoma, Khonoma, Kikruma, Pangti, Merangkong, Ratami, Seromi, Tamlu, and Wakchin are to name a few. Thousands of patriotic Nagas laid their lives and many more suffered untold miseries in defence of the motherland.

When Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose leading the Indian National Army launched a military campaign to drive the British out of India, thousands of Nagas joined him. A large number of them suffered and many died fighting the British. Naga Peoples' love for Netaji and their immense

sacrifices for India's freedom lives today in the vibrant folk songs which have become a part of their tradition. Several monuments of Netaji's war against the British are preserved with pride by the Naga villages.

The Country is celebrating 125th Birth Anniversary of Netaji. On this occasion I pay special tribute to all those Naga warriors and their families who were part of Netaji's campaign for freedom of India.

In the autumn of their rule, when the British conspired to partition India and give away the North-East India to Pakistan, the leaders of Naga Hills stood in solidarity with the rest of the country and thwarted the diabolical colonial conspiracy. Naga leaders played significant roles in the constitutional evolution of India.

Our freedom is the outcome of the sum total of resistance and sacrifices of the people of all parts of India.

On the auspicious occasion of the 75th Anniversary of our Independence a grateful nation pays homage to all the martyrs and heroes of Nagaland who gave their utmost for the cause of India's freedom. Unfortunately, except a few like Rani Gaidinliu they are largely nameless. Their names and glories shall be pulled out of the forgotten pages of history and suitably installed to honour them and commemorate their immense sacrifices for the posterity to remember them with pride and also to appreciate the value of hard earned freedom.

Nagaland has been and shall ever remain an integral part of India.

My dear brothers and sisters of Nagaland, preserving our unique cultural identity, we must break the colonial miasma and march in step with the rest of the country in our journey of shared prosperity.

In the unfolding epochal story of India's resurgence, Nagaland cannot be left behind. Our State is rich in natural and human resources. Being at the gateway of the South-East Asia offers us unique geo-economic opportunities. In order to make a glorious Nagaland we must prioritise developing our most precious human resource which unfortunately has suffered a relative decline in recent decades. We have to build robust and equitable health and education sectors to ensure healthy, skilled and well educated citizenry. We have to ensure that the current low rate of enrolment in schools and unacceptably high rate of drop outs is reduced to zero. We have to build modern connectivity infrastructures both physical and digital. I am happy to inform you that some 1800 KMs of National Highways in the State are under construction and the State capital Kohima will be connected by Railway in the next two years. We have to build a healthy ecosystem of investment and entrepreneurship. We must eliminate illicit gangs and guns and institutionalised corruption from the State.

At the recently concluded Tokyo Olympics, our country has registered record achievements. Our sports men and women including those from

the North East have made us proud with their stellar performances and they are inspiration for our youth. On this occasion, we remember our legendary Dr. Talimeren Ao, who raised the Indian tricolour and led the Indian Football Contingent at the London Olympics in 1948. Our youths of Nagaland have enormous sports potential. Given the right environment they can do wonders and make the State and the Country proud.

My dear youths of Nagaland, you are the future of the State and the Country. The Country and the World is changing at an unprecedented fast pace. We are in the age of Artificial Intelligence where change is happening at an unimaginable speed. Your march into the future has to keep pace with the change around and it cannot be by looking into the rear-view mirror. Maintaining strong emotional and cultural bonds with your custom, tradition and identity and overcoming the narcissism of minor differences, you have to race ahead keeping pace with time, technology and contemporary realities.

Friends, a bright and beautiful dawn is beckoning at the horizon. We must welcome it with our unwavering commitment to the rule of law, hard work, truth, transparency and justice.

God Bless Nagaland !

Jai Hind !

