



सत्यमेव जयते

**SPEECH
OF**

SHRI GEGONG APANG
CHIEF MINISTER ARUNACHAL PRADESH

51ST MEETING
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

VIGYAN BHAWAN, NEW DELHI
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**Hon'ble Prime Minister, Hon'ble Union Ministers,
Hon'ble Deputy Chairman Planning Commission,
Hon'ble Chief Ministers and Lt. Governors,
Hon'ble Members of Planning Commission and other dignitaries.**

At the outset, I must express my gratitude to Hon'ble Prime Minister for giving me an opportunity to express my views on the Plan Schemes and to highlight the problems of our people. I must personally thank Hon'ble Prime Minister for sending the Foreign Secretary Sri Shyam Sharan to visit the border areas in Arunachal Pradesh. Subsequent meeting taken by Principal Secretary to Hon'ble Prime Minister, to act on the recommendations made by the Foreign Secretary, has raised a lot of hope and expectation among my people. I am sure, with blessings of Hon'ble Prime Minister, Arunachal Pradesh can come at par with the rest of the country, in development in certain time frame.

Before I focus on the specific issues flagged for discussion by Hon'ble Prime Minister in his letter dated 18th June, 2005. I seek your indulgence to submit a few basic facts about Arunachal Pradesh.

1. Ours is the largest State in the region, sharing its borders with three foreign countries namely China, Myanmar and Bhutan. Unlike other States, Arunachal Pradesh did not receive fruits of development either during colonial British rule or after Independence. After the Indo-China war in 1962 a view was taken that any development activity here, particularly road construction in border areas is "an avoidable risk". As a result, till today, while average road density is 85 Km per every 100 square kilometer in the rest of the country, for Arunachal Pradesh it is only 18 KM. We have 34 administrative centers which are not connected by motorable road. There are four district headquarters which do not have all-weather roads. The 'East-West corridor', starting from Gujrat reaches upto Assam, but unfortunately after that, like 'an estranged lover' it turns its face away from Arunachal. Ideally it should go right upto Nampong through Banderdewa, Pasighat, Roing, Tezu and Miao. Roads are like arteries through which the blood of development flows. Due to lack of roads our schools are without teachers, our hospitals are without doctors and our ration shops are without food-grains. The dream of our beloved Prime Minister to guarantee elementary education, basic health facilities, drinking water, electricity remains unfulfilled, due to lack of adequate road network.

2. Even air-connectivity, which was given to us through Vayudoot services, as conceptualized by our late leader Rajiv Gandhi, has been discontinued. Arunachal Pradesh does not have an airport or any major rail link. We do not have a permanent Legislative Assembly or a Secretariat building. Although, we have 50,000 MW of hydropower potential, but our villages are dark since we do not have a state transmission grid. Nature has bestowed us picturesque, scenic beauty and one of world's twelve hot spots (biosphere reserves). But, due to lack of infrastructure, the tourists can not reach there or enjoy the same. We have also huge mineral deposits like crude oil, natural gas, coal, iron, limestone, dolomite, graphite, granite and many precious and semi-precious stones, but all remain unexploited due to lack of proper infrastructure and resources. Our forest revenues have disappeared after the ban by Hon'ble Supreme Court but we are yet to get any compensation for maintaining the 'lungs' of the country.

3. The problem is that on the other side of the border, our people see dazzling lights, excellent roads, housing, shining colorful Gompas (Buddhist monasteries) while on our side, and they face isolation and deprivation of all kinds. Let us be clear that the present policy of fund allocation, based on population can not bring any satisfactory solution. The Arunachalee boys and girls defended the frontiers valiantly during Indo-China war. They stood like sentinels against enemy attack. A strong sense of Patriotism runs in their blood. Even today, Arunachal Pradesh is an island of peace in the turbulent North East.

4. Let there be a national consensus to build up Arunachal Pradesh, so that it becomes 'neighbour's envy and owners' pride'. Let peace and patriotism be rewarded. Therefore any investment in Arunachal Pradesh should be treated as a national investment to promote unity and integrity of the country. I assure this august House that the returns on investment, especially in power, tourism, mining, and horticulture and road sector will be far beyond anyone's imagination.

5. Chairman Sir, let me now address the specific issues flagged by your goodself. Regarding encouraging Agricultural diversification and rejuvenation of support systems for agricultural extension, credit and delivery of inputs, all these activities are essential for development of the largely rural economy of Arunachal Pradesh. Nearly one third of our work force is employed in Agriculture. We realize that for increasing incomes and improving the standard of living of our people we have to diversify in the field of Agriculture and replace the low yielding, low value

crops by high yielding, high value crops. What are the difficulties? Increasing agricultural production and marketable surplus is of interest, where the surplus can be disposed of at a profit. The size of the market in Arunachal Pradesh is very limited. Per force, our surplus has to be sold in the neighbouring states. This requires better storage, marketing and transportation facilities. We do not have any rail network and essentially the burden of transport would be on the road network. Improving the road network is absolutely critical for development of Arunachal Pradesh. This will obviously help the Agriculture sector also. We would also like that initiative is taken by the private sector for setting up food processing units in our state. Unfortunately, private sector investment in my State is still shy. We therefore need to make special efforts in this direction. Support from the Union Food Ministry would also have a wholesome input. We could also think of models of public private partnership for agriculture development. In-so-far-as, the credit facilities are concerned, the percentage of Agriculture advances to total advances remains low at 22%. And the percentage itself is deceptive as the total quantum of advances is barely Rs. 108 crores as on 31-03-2005. What I am emphasizing is that the Nationalized Banks must become more active in Arunachal Pradesh and the credit flow to the Agricultural sector must increase substantially. Bankable projects should be identified and encouraged and the trained Bank managers and field staff along with our State Government officers should become catalyst in the development of Agriculture. While we are blessed with abundant rainfall, yet, we need to strengthen our irrigation facilities to ensure that the short gestation food crops, fruits and horticultural crops, all of which we would like to popularize, get inputs of sufficient water in time. For the existing irrigation network we are facing a tremendous fund constraint for maintaining the channels. While for expansion of irrigation network there are schemes already in operation, these also need to be strengthened and the loan component of the schemes converted into grants.

6. As regards price fixation for power and water, I feel that it is alright to get it determined by an independent Regulator, but the "capacity to pay", particularly for backward regions should be vital factor for consideration.

7. We are very concerned about the social sectors of education and health. - Specifically, for improving the teaching quality we would like that each district in our State should have a Navodaya Vidyalaya. We would also like that Sainik Schools are established by the Central Government in Arunachal Pradesh while the State

Government is taking all steps to ensure that teachers posted for remote areas attend schools regularly so that the education, specially for the primary school children, does not suffer. We also realize that the working conditions in such areas need to be improved, we must construct adequate number of teacher quarters. More investment is required for maintaining the school buildings. Improvement of working conditions is also directly related to the improvement of the road network, as accessibility is a major deterrent for the teachers to go to remote areas. We welcome the suggestion of more investment of private sector for promoting secondary education. We are willing to extend all help for such private sector initiatives.

8. One of the major achievements in the last one year has been the launching of the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM). Increased allocations for the health sector, made by the Central Government, would certainly go a long way in helping up in improving the health status of our citizens. Under NRHM we must make sure that the field health workers get adequate monetary compensation and this should be inbuilt in the scheme itself. We will need a special dispensation for maintaining the Mobile Units provided under the NRHM. We are also proposing to actively pursue the Public Private Partnership model in the health delivery system. As a beginning, we propose to identify one Primary Health Centre in each of the 16 districts of the State to be handed over to a voluntary agency or to, a noncommercial organization for day-to-day management. We wanted to enter into a MoU with the Voluntary Agency through which we can monitor performance on pre-decided parameters. These parameters would include not only clinical aspects such as patient care but also Public Health aspects such as immunization. We are taking up this matter with the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare for adequate funding and detailed modalities of the scheme are being worked out. The National Rural Health Mission can succeed only with a holistic approach which integrate the various systems of medicines as also the various National Programmes which at present run in parallel. In Arunachal Pradesh we already have an Integrated Health & Family Welfare Department and we intend to strengthen this further at all levels.

9. In the area of empowerment of Panchayats the State Government has already initiated the necessary steps for devolution of powers and functions. The Panchayat Raj system is relatively new in Arunachal Pradesh, and not as vibrant as in some other states. Till today, we are facing initial teething problems. We are committed to a bottom-up approach of Governance with active people's participation.

We intend to encourage Local Self Government and to strengthen these institutions alongwith the physical infrastructure.

10. My government supports the concept of a Civil Service Board to ensure security of tenure to Civil Servants. But, I must stress that the Union government should send only willing, All India Service Officers, having a sensitivity to tribal society and culture, to serve in our areas.

11. We have already signed MoU with Ministry of Power for reforms in Power sector including corporatisation. We do not have any Electricity Board but our Power Department will be soon converted into a corporation with separate wings for generation, transmission and distribution.

12. We heartily welcome the Bharat Nirman scheme initiated by our dynamic Prime Minister where all villages with the population of 1000 or more are to be connected by road by 2009. This august gathering would know that Arunachal Pradesh has a population density of 13 per sq km and many villages consist of only a few houses. The yardstick of 1000 or more of population will have to be relaxed for our State. In fact we would request that the Central Government should immediately fund the road network which at least connects our various administrative circles i.e. equivalent of Tehsils. This by itself would go a long way in contributing to the economic development of our tribal State. We can envisage linking of all Circles in the next 2 years and linkage of villages in the 2 years thereafter.

13. The last issue which is flagged by Hon'ble Prime Minister relates to Food-for-Work Programme and National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. The problem being faced by us relates to transport of the food grains as part of the remuneration to the beneficiaries. Movement of food grains stocked in Assam to the work sites in Arunachal Pradesh is a costly proposition. We would suggest that for Arunachal Pradesh the entire remuneration components should be in cash. Bringing rice all the way from Punjab and Haryana to Arunachal Pradesh is too expensive and avoidable. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act would be a bold initiative towards providing social security to our people. Nevertheless, such schemes have a huge financial impact which the State Government can not bear at present. Such schemes should, therefore, be made applicable along with 100% funding from the Central Government.

I thank you for giving me a patient hearing. I hope the deliberations of this

august Council would result in larger gains for the entire country and would also accelerate the pace of development in each State.

JAI HIND