



President of India inaugurates Hornbill Festival and State Formation Day celebrations of Nagaland

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The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the Hornbill Festival and State Formation Day celebrations of Nagaland today (December 1, 2017) in Kisama.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that the Hornbill Festival is the perfect showcase of rich Naga culture and traditions, preserved over the years in the form of music, dance and food. The Hornbill Festival at Kisama and the International Music Festival represent the diversity of Naga society.

The President said that the past half-century has been one of both achievements and difficulties for Nagaland. The people of the state have come through many trials, but their essential talent and wisdom, and their essential goodness, has been so apparent. Today Nagaland is at the edge of making history. After years of insurgency, there is hope. With the support of the people of the state, of civil society institutions and all stake-holders, there is an opportunity for lasting peace. He expressed confidence that a final agreement – one that is fair to all and meets the expectations and aspirations of all – will be reached soon.

The President said that the youth of Nagaland are the pride of the country. They are the true legatees of Dr T. Ao, the doctor-sportsperson who was the first captain of our national football team after Independence, leading the team in the London Olympics of 1948. Young people from Nagaland are role models for the rest of India. An illustrious daughter of this state, Temsutula Imsong has won the hearts of the nation for her remarkable work in cleaning the ghats of the river Ganga in Varanasi. Another Naga girl – Chiewelou Thele – was adjudged the best trainee commando in her batch of police officers of Delhi Police. And as Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, the President said he is immensely proud of our Naga soldiers and officers. They are among the best we have.

The President said that Nagaland has so much to offer. The strength of the state lies in its organic farm produce, flowers and fruits. Nagaland has rare medicinal plants and herbs that can help create jobs and boost the economy. He mentioned Naga jolokia, called King Chilli locally, one of the hottest chilli peppers of the world, and said we need to bottle it into one of the hottest selling sauces of the world. He stated that Nagaland has also the potential to be an attractive tourist destination, offering a unique blend of heritage and culture and spectacular natural beauty.

The President said that our country is making great strides and is among the world's fastest growing economies. We are also a diverse nation. Our linguistic, ethnic, religious and geographical variety makes India special – and this is our biggest strength. It is an exciting time to be an Indian. And it is an exciting time to be a Naga. Nagaland and the Northeast are central to the India story. Without the development of Nagaland, the development of India will be incomplete.

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