

**Speech of Shri P.C. Zoram Sangliana, Hon'ble Minister for Art & Culture etc. Mizoram on the occasion of Mizoram State Day, 13th January,2009 at Spirit of the North East. New Delhi (10th-18th January,2009).**

It is a great privilege for me to be present in your midst and grace today's Mizoram Day function. I have learnt that Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) in collaboration with the North East States have very successfully organized Spirit of the North East here in Delhi and today is the fourth day. We all know that India has diverse culture, language and religion. As you have already seen in these past few days and will be seeing in the few more days to come, how rich and diverse are the traditions and cultures of the North East alone. How to bring about unity in diversity in a vast country like India? It is through knowledge, understanding and tolerance of each other's culture. One of the best ways to bring about that is organizing programmes such as what is being done here right now.

It has always been the feeling of the people of the North East that the rich cultural traditions do not get enough exposure nor are they understood enough by the rest of the country. Even in the capital city like Delhi there are still many people who do not know where Mizoram is. Though the Govt. of India has done a great deal to develop and promote the North East, there is so much more to be done especially in field of culture and traditions.

Culture and traditions can flourish and develop fully only in a state of peaceful condition, where there is a feeling of unity and acceptance by the rest of the country. We all know that in the year 1966 when the people of Mizoram had a feeling of isolation in different spheres including that of traditions and culture; insurgency broke out which lasted for long twenty years. During that time there was hardly any cultural expressions and cultural developments.

Today Mizoram is known to be the most peaceful State in the country. This is due to the fact that the erstwhile Chief Minister of Mizoram sacrificed his office of Chief Minister for the MNF leader Laldenga and peace accord was signed between the MNF and the Govt. of India. This accord has been the most successful accord ever signed in the country. In response to this act of sacrifice, Shri Lal Thanhawla is brought back to power for the fourth time by the people of Mizoram in the last general Assembly election.

Today under peaceful conditions the Mizo practice and express their culture, traditions freely. I invite all of you to come to the beautiful State of Mizoram feel and experience the rich cultural traditions of Mizoram.

I am happy that the IGNCA is organizing this programme to document, showcase, preserve and promote the cultural practices of the North East in its various facets.

Let us take this opportunity to see and taste North East in its miniature form. Let us not be engrained in our own small narrow minded world of language, culture or religion which are detrimental to unity.

I hope this will be just a beginning of many more such programmes. I would like IGNCA to make 'Spirit of the North East' here in Delhi a regular feature and also to have such programmes in the west and south viz Mumbai and Chennai.

I thank IGNCA, all the organizers, participating States, artists and craft persons for making the programme a success.

Thank you, Jai Hind.