

Evening News Script

1920 hrs of

4th March, 2025.

THE HEADLINES :-

- Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio reaffirms Naga Political issue as top priority of state government
- Foothill road project dominates question hour in Assembly session
- 14th Nagaland Legislative Assembly introduces two government bills introduced
- And, MLA Dr. Tseilhoutuo Rhutso stresses need to recognize Nagaland's tribal languages to boost job opportunities

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Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio today reiterated Naga Political issue as the number one top priority agenda of the state government. Delivering the concluding remarks on the Motion of Thanks to the Governor's address, Mr Rio said, there is keen interest on the integration of Naga-contiguous areas and pending Naga political issue not being resolved. He maintained that it is a serious concern for the Naga people who are living in the state of Nagaland.

The Chief Minister also emphasized that the state should conduct the most accurate census when the next census takes place. Regarding reservation policy, he said that the state will not approach it piecemeal. Once the census is completed, the entire state will undertake a comprehensive review of the reservation policy, Mr Rio said.

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Roads and Bridges Minister, G. Kaito Aye, today stated that the overall physical progress of the Foothill Road project currently stands at 4.5 percent. However,

he noted that the financial progress of the project remains at zero percent. In a supplementary reply during the ongoing Assembly Session, Mr. Aye mentioned that despite internal challenges, the government is proceeding with the construction, which is in full swing. He also emphasized the need to build trust among stakeholders. The Minister clarified that the works were allotted to 17 registered firms, and expressed confidence that they will successfully complete the project. Stating that the Foothill Road is a Naga project, Mr. Aye said he is open to discussions in order to find an amicable solution for the welfare of the people. Describing the ongoing controversy surrounding the project as shameful, MLA Nuklutoshi said that the project has been neglected in favor of disputes over contracts. He also warned the government about whether they can handle the burden of multiple committees in the future. Extending his gratitude to all tribal hohos on the development of the state, Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio emphasized that any grievances should be addressed through the elected representatives. Highlighting the funding of the Foothill Road project, he stated that no funds had been received from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, and funding has solely been provided by the state government. Mr Rio informed that a total of 245.50 crore rupees have been sanctioned till date under the Special Plan Allocation and Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment scheme. He also expressed concern over the inability to utilize the sanctioned funds in the last financial years.

However, he assured that more funds would be expedited for the completion of the road. Mr. Rio also sought cooperation from the Nagaland Foothill Road Coordination Committee, hohos, and CSOs to support the government's project, which is intended for the welfare of the people.

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MLA Jwenga Seb today called for reassessment of Nagaland's reservation policy, stating that while it has supported competitive examinations, it has also created disparities among Naga tribes. The MLA proposed that reservation should be granted solely at the educational level, rather than extending indefinitely into the employment sector. Mr Seb recommended that the state government periodically review the reservation policy and consider reducing the percentage if it is not effectively reaching the intended beneficiaries. He also suggested a shift from tribe-based reservation to reservations based on economic conditions

of citizens, areas, regions, or villages, with percentage adjusted according to its actual impact on socially and economically disadvantaged groups.

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MLA Dr. Tseilhoutuo Rhutso today emphasized the need to recognize Nagaland's tribal languages to create better employment opportunities for youth of the state. Initiating a discussion during Zero Hour in Assembly today, he flagged concerns that Naga youths were losing out in the Postal Department, particularly in the lowest-grade service Gramin Dak Sevak (GDS), as the state does not have any designated common language, despite 17 recognized tribal languages. This is resulting in more than 90 percent of GDS vacancies being filled by non-indigenous candidates, he said.

Citing Arunachal Pradesh, which recently recognized all its 23 tribal languages to address a similar situation, the MLA urged the Nagaland government to pass a resolution recognizing tribal languages for recruitment, ensuring that GDS vacancies are reserved for indigenous Nagas. Dr. Rhutso also suggested that Deputy Commissioners should serve as certifying authorities for proficiency in local languages in their respective districts.

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On the second day of the sixth session of the 14th Nagaland Legislative Assembly (NLA), today, two government bills were introduced in the House. The Nagaland Town and Country Planning (Fourth Amendment) Bill, 2025 was moved by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, while The Investment and Development Authority of Nagaland (Validation) Bill, 2025 was introduced by Deputy Chief Minister T.R. Zeliang. Consideration of both the bills will be taken up on March 6. Also, the 19 annual administrative reports of different departments were laid by various ministers incharges.

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Governor of Nagaland, La Ganesan, has granted assent to several bills previously passed during the last Assembly sessions. The Secretary-in-Charge reported the Governor's assent to the House today. The bills that received assent are The Disqualification on Ground of Defection in Urban Local Bodies Bill, 2024; The Global Open University Nagaland (Second Amendment) Bill, 2024; The Nagaland Goods and Services Tax (Ninth Amendment) Bill, 2024; The Nagaland Municipal

(Amendment) Bill, 2024; The Nagaland Road Safety Authority (Second Amendment) Bill, 2024; and The Nagaland Work-Charged and Casual Employees Regulation (First Amendment) Bill, 2024.

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