

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR ON THE OCCASION OF FLAG OFF FUNCTION (IMPHAL PART) OF COIMBATORE TO LONDON ROAD TRIP 2017 AT HOTEL IMPHAL, NORTH AOC, IMPHAL ON APRIL 4, 2017

Presidents and Members of Rotary Club of Imphal and Rotary Club of Polo City, Imphal,

All the participants in the Rally,

Friends from Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a matter of immense pride for me, specially being a woman, to be associated with this function of Flagging Off the all women longest Literacy Charity Drive from Coimbatore to London to promote literacy and women's empowerment. The trip will also showcase and honour high-achiever Indian women in varietal fields such as literacy, business, arts, politics, healthcare, sports and so on and so forth and indeed, it is for a worthy cause. My heartiest greetings and best wishes to all the participants and the Rotary fraternity who have powered this bold initiative.

It is understood that this 70-day road journey covering 24 countries including India and United Kingdom was flagged off from Coimbatore on the 26th of last month and will culminate at London after about 2 months on the 2nd of June. The road trip is for the brave hearts as it means traversing over a distance of 24000 km, 8 time-zones, unheard of villages and towns, forests, deserts, mountains, rivers, high altitudes, remote terrains and so on. The rally is being organised to coincide with the commemoration of 70 years of Independence of India and it is certainly a befitting celebration for the occasion. I am also glad to learn that the team is attempting to enter the Guinness Book of World Records. My blessings are always with you all.

During my long tenure as a Parliamentarian and also as President of the International Parliamentary Union, known as IPU in short, I had travelled far

and wide across the globe. My duties also took me invariably to some of the remotest areas falling along the route of your road trip through the Asian and European countries. One thing I can definitely guarantee you from my first hand experience of those places is that you cannot help but fall in love with the pristine beauty of these places and the hospitality of the local people. You will easily be charmed. I am a travel buff myself and I am in full empathy with your passion and yearning for adventure on the road. Roadaholics that you are, I for one fully know the thrill, challenges, sights, excitement of meeting new people that always fuel your dreams. You are at one with nature and the elements. However, one word of caution to keep your journey trouble free is to keep the authorities of the countries you are passing through well informed of your travel plan.

I am happy that apart from raising charity fund for literacy, the drive is aimed at spreading the message that Rotary India is promoting through its Literacy Mission. After the success of eradication of polio, Rotary in India has taken up the challenge of eradicating illiteracy for taking India towards Total Literacy and Quality Education. As we all are aware, literacy is not a local problem but a global one. Though the literacy issues of the South Asian countries are being proactively engaged, the problem needs worldwide attention and support. The road trip will contribute handsomely to reaching the Rotary India Literacy Mission message to maximum possible places and communities for making the dream of India cent percent literate a reality. I am confident that the Rotary India Literacy Mission will continue to contribute their best for the welfare of the people of this country.

While thanking the Organizers for inviting me to this function, I once again, offer my best wishes to the participants of this epic Car Rally.

Thank you all,

Jai Hind.