

SPEECH OF THE HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR, DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, AS CHIEF GUEST, ON THE OCCASION OF 45TH FOUNDATION DAY CELEBRATION OF RIMS ON SEPTEMBER 14, 2016 AT JUBILEE HALL, RIMS, IMPHAL.

Shri D. Korungthang, Hon'ble Minister, Health and Family Welfare,
Dr. N. Saratkumar Singh, Former Professor of Regional Institute of Medical Sciences, Imphal,
Faculty Members and Doctors,
Friends from the Media,
Distinguished Invitees,
Beloved Students,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a matter of immense happiness for me to be with you all here this afternoon on the occasion of the 45th Foundation Day Celebration of Regional Institute of Medical Sciences, Imphal. I extend a very warm greeting to you all on this occasion. It is also the first official function I am attending after I took over my gubernatorial assignment.

The Foundation Day is always a high point of an establishment and it is an occasion for celebration and introspection. It also provides an opportunity to all those associated with the establishment to be together, exchange ideas, reflect on the activities of the past and discuss the prospects and challenges to move forward.

The journey of RIMS, Imphal so far is that it was established on this day in the year, 1972. It was the same year Manipur attained Statehood. The Institute was initially named Regional Medical College as a joint venture of the North Eastern States and the Central Government. Later, the College was renamed as North Eastern Regional Medical College in 1976. It was upgraded as Regional Institute of Medical Sciences on 1st April, 1995 when the Institute was taken over by North Eastern Council. The Institute is now under the wing of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, having been transferred from the Ministry of DoNER w.e.f. 1st April, 2007.

This premier Institute in the North East was established with the primary objective of providing quality medical education while catering to the healthcare needs of the people of the North Eastern States, specially of the rural areas where adequate health and medicare facilities are either poor or not available. Though it incepted as an Institute for meeting the needs of the seven North Eastern States of India except Assam, I am glad

that today students from different parts of the country under All India quota are enrolled both for the Under Graduate and Post Graduate Medical Courses. The Institute has made tremendous progress over the years, both qualitatively and quantitatively. It measures up to all the statutory norms of the Medical Council of India and more than three thousand doctors have graduated and more than one thousand doctors have completed post graduate from the Institute. A new Nursing College was set up from December 2009 with an intake capacity of 50 students. Another high point of the Institute has been the opening of the Dental College, RIMS in 2012. Apart from several superspeciality courses in the Institute, a multi-disciplinary Research Unit has also been approved by the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India.

It is also very fulfilling that on the healthcare front also, the Institute has had a long innings of dedicated service to the people of the region. Having bed strength of over a thousand, more than 3 and a half lakh patients attended the OPD, almost 50 thousand were admitted in the wards, more than 5 thousand major operations were conducted in the year, 2015-16. The total number of PG and MBBS seats has also increased and the Institute is vibrant and growing.

We all know that Health is a priority of life. All social and economic activities of a country are closely interlinked with the health parameters of its people. Investment for eradication of diseases like malaria, tuberculosis, cholera, etc. and also for prevention and control of the HIV/AIDS and H1N1 is of great social value and makes good economic sense. The world has seen unprecedented advancement in the field of medical science and many diseases can now be prevented or cured. However, there is still a great deal to do as new challenges never stop coming. As for example, a number of diseases have been stamped out through immunization. Small pox has disappeared from the surface of the earth. In technologically advanced countries, childhood diseases such as poliomyelitis, measles, diphtheria today occur rarely. However, diseases like influenza and some others remain difficult to control because of the many varieties of the viruses and their capacities to mutate. A cure for HIV/AIDS remains elusive. Research to ascertain the immune system not only in the case of AIDS but also of other diseases such as rheumatic fever and rheumatoid arthritis goes on endlessly. But we cannot falter in our hope and we shall overcome such diseases one day.

As we are all aware, RIMS has been rendering humanitarian service to the people of North Eastern Region and also striving towards academic excellence and research activities. Here, I would like to appeal to all the medical professionals that they should always remember that their duty is a yeoman's service to mankind and they should serve the sick with all the care and ability they could muster. One should not expect profit while entering the room of a sick. Selfish motive should not mar the sanctity of this noble profession. Confidence in doctors goes a long way in effecting recovery. They must have the healing touch. There is a saying that doctors are next to God. Not many of you will know that I wanted to be a medical doctor but I was underaged to get an admission in the medical college. My grand uncle Maulana Azad who was the Union Minister of Education at that time advised me to study further as much as I liked and also advised me that whatever education I took up or profession I chose, I should try to excel in it so that people will know me for my expertise and not for the family I belong to and I have tried to follow his words of wisdom. But I am happy that 3 of my family members are medical doctors. My eldest daughter is head of Paediatrics, Endocrinology Department at Albert Einstein Institute at New York. Her husband is a Pathologist in the same Institute and my other son-in-law has done 2 boards and specialisation in Neurology and Geriatrics from US and has developed and patented a medicine Ausanil for migraine and cluster headache which is available on the counter and has no side effect as it is neither oral nor injectable. I would like to mention here that with my scientific background and research on heart, I have taken up burning health issues like HIV/AIDS. I did a study on it and have written a handbook on do's and don'ts to prevent spread of HIV/AIDS. I have also written a book on prevention of the spread of the disease. Further, I have arranged conferences and seminars for parliamentarians to sensitise them about the seriousness of AIDS as early as in the eighties after Rock Hudson declared that he had AIDS.

It really disturbs me to read in newspapers that patients are being referred to private hospitals from RIMS on account of some equipments malfunctioning or due to some reason or the other. RIMS being the number one Government hospital as it is, should ensure that no patient is referred to other hospitals and provide the best medical care possible. In some horrifying news, we have read that due to the non-availability of a stretcher, a child died on the shoulder of his father or a man had to carry the body of his wife himself. This not only saddens me but makes me feel ashamed that while we are sending satellites in the space, we are on the other hand having such incidents. We have to ponder on such issues seriously. Ours is a State with a large area in the hilly terrain where

communication is difficult. The task of providing medical aid to people in far flung areas of the State is challenging. I am exploring ways to overcome these shortcomings, through modern technology and means of communication. I have visited many countries and seen the healthcare system there. I think the best healthcare system is in Cuba, while in Australia they have 'flying doctor' by using small planes or helicopters for reaching far flung areas to regularly provide healthcare. We can try to have similar facility in Manipur and other States where rail and road communication is difficult.

I am confident that all concerned in the Institute will work as one and put in their best to make RIMS, Imphal, a centre of excellence for medical education, research, health and medicare not only in the region but also in the whole country. I will be very happy if I can be any help in this endeavour of yours.

I thank the organizers for inviting me to this function.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.