

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR ON THE OCCASION OF PATRIOTS DAY, 2017 HELD AT BIRTIKENDRAJIT PARK, IMPHAL ON 13<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2017.

Shri N. Biren Singh ji, Hon'ble Chief Minister,  
Hon'ble Ministers and Members of the Manipur Legislative Assembly,  
Senior Officials of the State Government,  
Friends from media,  
Distinguished invitees,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we are gathered here to pay our respect to the souls of those who laid down their lives for their motherland against the British Empire in 1891. Even though Manipur lost the war and came under British rule, the series of battles in 1891 showed the courage of the Manipuris who fought against the strongest power of the then world; showing that freedom is more important than their own lives. Many perished during the battles. Twenty two of the leaders including Maharaja Kulachandra were exiled for life and five were hanged to death. While Yuvaraj Tikendrajit and Thangal General were hanged to death on this day in 1891, the other three Pukhrabam Kajao, Niranjan Subedar and Chirai Naga were hanged to death in the Central Jail Complex on 25<sup>th</sup> May, 1891, 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1891 and 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1891 respectively on the false charge of waging war against the British Empire. Today we are commemorating the sacrifices made by all those, both known and unknown, who sacrificed their lives for the cause of freedom of their motherland, showing indomitable and unconquerable spirit.

When we look back into history, it is clear that the British entered the fray because of the disunity among the princes of Manipur. History also tells us that foreign powers always took advantage of the disunity and factionalism prevailing in other countries to subjugate them. We cannot change history but

we can always learn from history that disunity among ourselves will bring downfall to our nation. The time has since moved on. After all of India came under British Rule with the conquest of Manipur, it was the sacrifice of innumerable number of people of India, including from Manipur, who brought back independence on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1947. Manipur was merged to the Union of India on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 1949 and since then is an important part of the country. Our hard won independence must be protected at all costs and we should now strive to bring up our nation as a leader among the comity of Nations. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is predicted as the century of the Asians, and we should strive to make this prediction come true.

Manipur has over the years been facing a series of problems and we are all aware of these problems. We have to tackle these issues and solve them together otherwise we will continue to dither on the road to development. Manipur continues to be one of the less developed States in the country, with many of our citizens suffering from wants. It is our duty to ensure that our citizens do not suffer from such wants and that our State becomes wealthy and prosperous for people of other States to aspire and follow the Manipuris. Manipur as all of you are aware is a cosmopolitan State where many communities reside following various faiths and religions. We should amicably resolve all our differences to make our State strong rather than harping on our differences. Manipur has to come up with its own solutions to address the problems it is facing and if we wait for others to intervene, then we may lose everything. The ethnic and social tensions which have been simmering for quite some time are like the festering wound of Manipur and will continue to adversely impact our beautiful State. We had seen communal violence in the nineties but now despite tension, people have become mature enough to ensure such violence does not recur. Bandh culture and calling of bandhs, economic blockades, etc at the drop of a hat, even for minor incidents has harmed the pace

of development in the State and such acts need to be avoided. The belief that the administration listens only when violence is resorted is misplaced and must be dispelled away. The administration should not only be responsive but should also be seen to be responsive. All such undesirable acts impact the lives of all the citizens with the marginalized sections getting worst hit. The administration and the population must go hand in hand to ensure that divisive forces do not have an upper hand and that peace is the hallmark of this State. All differences should be resolved through dialogue which is the only democratic means for resolving issues. Everybody should get a level playing field which will enable us to take the country forward. We should also resolve to safeguard our age old values of love, peace, tolerance and mutual understanding.

Once again, on this solemn occasion of Patriots' Day, while paying our homage to the martyrs of 1891, let us always strive for a better Manipur. Following the path they have shown for making the State a better place will indeed be a true homage to our brave patriots.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.