

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE 64TH FOUNDATION DAY OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU MANIPUR DANCE ACADEMY (JNMDA) ON 1ST APRIL, 2018 AT THE AUDITORIUM OF THE JNMDA, IMPHAL

Prof. N. Tombi Singh ji, Vice-Chairman, J.N. Manipur Dance Academy,

Shri L. Upendro Sharma, Director, JNMDA,

All the Gurus, Artistes, Staffs and Students of the Academy,

Members from Media,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Being the Chairperson of the Academy, I am delighted to participate in the 64th Foundation Day Celebration of Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy. On this joyous occasion, I congratulate all the Gurus, entire staff and artistes of J.N. Manipur Dance Academy and all others associated with it in various capacities.

The Academy was established in 1954 as Manipur Dance College and received a major contribution from the Prime Minister's Fund when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the Prime Minister. Subsequently, it was renamed to its present name in his memory after his demise in 1964. In its remarkable journey of 64 years, the Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy has come to be regarded as a premier Manipuri Dance Institute in the country as well as abroad. Till date, the Academy has produced many eminent artistes who are counted amongst 'Who's Who' in the world of Manipuri culture. The Academy has been working alongwith the people, pursuing constantly the agenda for preservation and promotion of Manipuri dance and music.

I am, indeed, very happy to know that this Academy is imparting different courses in various dance forms of Manipur and its Production Unit established in 1976 has produced outstanding dance dramas acclaimed widely not only in the country but internationally also. Various renowned Gurus

have been associated with the Academy and it stands tall among the institutes imparting Manipuri dances.

It is heartening to note that the Academy is growing from strength to strength under the wing of the Sangeet Natak Akademi and it continues to draw its inspiration from the rich culture of the state. I am fully confident that all its endeavour will not only highlight the best in Manipuri culture but will also pursue various issues relating to it in the world of modern art and culture. While maintaining the original form and ethos of our cultural traditions, I would urge not to stop experimenting so that the Academy retains its contemporary relevance.

Art forms and craft traditions have taken long years to evolve. Similarly, dance and music symbolizing joys and jubilations of generations hold the imprints of their long social and cultural history and tradition. Artistes and artisans of every generation have interpreted them and further enriched the tradition. Without them and their dedication, probably we would have been at a loss finding us disconnected with our past and strong roots. Keeping them alive is, therefore, a magnificent form of paying homage to our artistes and artisans and to our heritage. There is no other better way to safeguard them than providing opportunities for performance and ensuring favourable conditions for the artistes and craftsmen who keep these traditions alive. The effort of JNMDA in this direction is commendable and we should extend our wholehearted support.

Manipur is widely known for its rich traditions and culture and I would say that JNMDA's role in popularising them is quite substantial. Our efforts should be to create a favourable environment for the cultural traditions and practices to flourish. In our march towards progress and prosperity, our cultural riches are assets that make us proud, beautiful and connected. We must ensure the survival of our handicrafts, our traditional art, our dance forms and our music. We should encourage our youth to keep these skills and

creativity alive and robust. I would encourage collective commitment for preserving core cultural values and I shall be very happy when this commitment and efforts will make a thousand orchids of Manipuri culture bloom in the valleys of this fascinating state.

I do not intend to dilate as the audience must be eagerly waiting to witness the various beautiful and mesmerising cultural programmes to be staged by the outstanding students of this Academy. I hope the people gathered here will experience the vibrancy of this state's art, culture and craft which manifest in the presentations today and wish the Foundation Day celebrations all success.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.