

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE CELEBRATION OF 'GIRLS IN AVIATION DAY' ON 13TH JUNE, 2018 AT CLASSIC GRANDE, CHINGMEIRONG, IMPHAL

Mr. Phil Shaw, Chief Executive, Lockheed Martin India,

Mrs. Neelam Mathews, Senior Aviation Journalist & Founder Member, Women in Aviation International, India Chapter,

Shri S.K. Panigrahi, APD, Imphal Airport,

Mrs. Noopurr R Chablani, Secretary, Women in Aviation International, India Chapter,

All the participating students, teachers and parents,

Friends from Electronic and Print Media,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is, indeed, a great pleasure for me to be with you all here especially with the young girl students of Manipur. I feel proud of you all. I would also like to congratulate the Women in Aviation International, India Chapter for taking this initiative to celebrate the Girls in Aviation Day, 2018 for the first time in the NE at Imphal and to introduce the girls of the state to the wonderful careers and opportunities that aviation offers. The open house includes visit inside the airport and discover its various facets, introduction to the different aviation activities, talks with aviation professionals and more importantly, to learn more about the diverse job opportunities at the airport.

Women have been involved in aviation from the beginning - from the stage of lighter aircrafts, helicopters to the space travel of today. Earlier, women pilots were also called "aviatrices". Women have been flying powered aircraft since 1908, however prior to 1970, they were restricted to working privately or in support roles in the aviation industry. Women who have been successful in various aviation fields have served as mentors to younger women, helping them along in their careers.

Looking back at the involvement of women in aviation world, within the first two decades of powered flight, women on every continent except Antarctica had begun to fly, perform in aerial shows, parachute and even transport passengers. They were increasingly involved in establishing distance records, aerobatic records and pressing for airplanes to be used for disaster and public health services. During World War II, women from every continent helped with war efforts and though mostly restricted from military flight, many of the female pilots flew in auxiliary services. In 1950s and 1960s, women were primarily restricted to serving in support fields like flight simulation training, air traffic control and as flight attendants. Since 1970s, women have been allowed to participate in military service as well in most countries including India. Women flying commercial airlines in India also has been considerably increasing in comparison with the global number of women airline pilots.

It gives me great pride to say that the women and girls of Manipur are very brave and extremely talented. They have excelled in different spheres of life. We all know of their exploits in the field of sports and they have done equally well in the field of arts and culture. They are very much sought after in the hospitality sector everywhere. In the most recent remarkable achievement, the Manipuri girl, Lt. S. Vijaya Devi of the Indian Navy has been awarded the Nari Shakti Puraskar for sailing around the world in an all women's team. The Manipuri girls can do much more if given the opportunities. The educated youths of the state especially the girls are facing acute shortage of job opportunities. I am sure today's function will open a whole new world of opportunities for these girls in aviation. This is certainly in line with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of 'Beti Ki Udaan, Desh Ka Swabhimaan'.

With these few words, I, once again, thank the organizers for inviting me to this memorable function and looking forward to see you again.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.