

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE CLOSING FUNCTION OF "THE GOVERNOR'S INITIATIVE FOR GREEN MANIPUR" 1ST PHASE ON 28TH JUNE, 2018 AT NONGMEIBUNG, IMPHAL EAST.

Shri Th. Shyamkumar Singh, Hon'ble Minister, Forest and MAHUD,
Shri O. Henry, Hon'ble MLA,
Brig. Amit Kabthiyal, DIG, 9 Sector, Assam Rifles,
Shri N. Indrajit Singh, President, Eastern Sporting Club,
Shri O. Priyokumar Singh, President, Citizens' Club,
Shri N. Babu Singh, President, Wal United Club,
Shri R.K. Priyobarta, President, Green Planters' Society,
Friends from Print and Electronic Media,
Distinguished Invitees,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very happy to be associated with the Green Planters' Society, Nongmeibung, Imphal East District in their endeavour for greening Manipur. The idea of establishing such a Society was conceived by a group of enthusiastic tree lovers in the year, 2003 and it is symptomatic of a fast growing realization for plantation of trees to save the world from drastic devastation. The Society deserves all praise for such a noble venture.

The predominant concern and awareness for environmental health and protection of the Earth is a defining characteristic of our age which can be attributed to a general human consciousness of an impending doom if we tinker much with nature. Cutting across social and political systems, religions, continents and nations, protection of the Earth and the Environment has now become the rallying point. If allowed to drift unchecked, the world is looking at a calamitous situation not so long away in the future. The growing concern today is how to live in harmony with our surroundings and nature in general. The adverse impact of the climatic change is happening all over the world and has been brought about mainly by wanton felling of trees, thereby disturbing the ecological balance of nature. Here, I must congratulate the Society for taking such an important initiative at this critical juncture.

Manipur is very rich in biodiversity and it is included in the first ten biodiversity hotspots in the world. It has been enjoying a salubrious climate

with a well-balanced eco-system full of flora and fauna. However, as seen in other parts of the world, erratic climate has come to be the order of the day. There are off-season dry spells and rain which have brought misery to the people in many ways. The temperature is rising every year and flood is occurring frequently. During the last rainy season, the state had seen not less than 4 (four) floods and this crippled the economy of the general public. The pollution level of the air and water grew and all these were directly attributable to the destruction of forest cover.

We have all been celebrating Save Our Planet Day, Earth Day and World Environment Day with the plantation of trees. There is a strong awakening among the people that plantation of trees holds the key to arrest further sliding of the environment. I have been encouraging plantation of trees on every occasion. During the observance of 'Swachh Bharat' a large number of trees were planted inside the Raj Bhavan complex and the Hon'ble Minister (Forest) here also joined me on that day. On 22nd May every year, which is observed as 'Guru Pujah' Day, plantation of trees is also taken up to develop green belts. Tree is a symbol for all of us. It reminds us of nature and the importance of environmental protection. We respect the rights of everyone, also nature and animals. Let's mark these trees as source of life and grow together with our trees towards better future.

I am really pleased to know that the target of the Society in the 2nd phase of the Governor's Initiative for Green Manipur is to plant one lakh new trees within a year and till date, the Society has planted and nurtured more than two thousand trees. Congratulations to you all and I am fully confident that the Society with the help of general public will certainly be able to plant more trees at various places of the State in the times to come.

Once again, I thank the organizers for inviting me to this important function.

Thank you,
Jai Hind.