

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF  
MANIPUR AT THE OBSERVANCE OF NATIONAL CLEANLINESS  
DAY AT GANDHI MEMORIAL HALL, IMPHAL ON 2.10.2018

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Shri N. Biren Singh ji,

Hon'ble Members of the Council of Ministers,

Hon'ble MLAs,

Friends from Print and Electronic Media,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am privileged to be here today on the auspicious occasion of 2<sup>nd</sup> October, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation. This day is observed every year as National Cleanliness Day all over the country. This year, the observance carries more significance as it is the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of the Mahatma and plans are afoot to celebrate it for 24 months both at the national and state levels. Various activities pertaining to the thoughts and philosophy of Gandhiji are being lined up to reiterate their relevance today while paying rich tributes to this great soul.

All of us are aware that Gandhiji always followed the path of non-violence, truth and peace. He also guided his fellow citizens to follow Ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (truth) and Shanti (peace). He adopted the idea of Satyagraha for the Indian Independence Movements. He proved that non-violence is the most powerful sword. Gandhiji inspired people to make use of Swadeshi goods. He also emphasized on manual labour and motivated his people for being self-reliant for cotton and related goods. He started weaving cotton clothes using Charkha. Gandhi also received widespread participation of women in freedom movements.

Mahatma Gandhi stands tall in the gallery of great world leaders and thinkers. He belongs to the whole world and to all generations. His profound humanism is his message. An apostle of truth and non-violence, a symbol of indomitable human soul-power, Gandhiji resolutely stood for the cause of the

downtrodden and oppressed not only in India but also in other parts of the world. He lived and died for peace and welfare of mankind. His philosophy of non-violent agitation and civil disobedience not only led his own country to independence but also influenced political activists throughout the world. His ‘novel mode of mass mobilization and non-violent action’ brought down colonialism, strengthened the roots of popular sovereignty including civil, political and economic rights and greatly influenced many a freedom struggle and inspired leaders far and wide. He won affection and love of millions of people all over the world and from both friends and foes alike and he became the Mahatma – Great Soul – because of his doctrine – Ahimsa. He will be remembered as one of the greatest souls that ever walked on earth. The present generation should try to imbibe the virtues of tolerance and humanism from him for a better world order.

For Gandhiji, political independence of India was not the end. It was the beginning of a real freedom – economic freedom of the country. He was the champion of “Swadeshi” or home economy. He wanted to work for an India in which the poorest should feel that it was their country. To him, the spirit and soul of India rested in the village communities. He also wanted an India in which all communities live in perfect harmony. There could be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability or the curse of intoxicating drinks or drugs. Women should enjoy the same rights as men. This is the India of Gandhiji’s dreams.

Mahatma Gandhi always emphasized cleanliness for a healthy living. Healthy people make a healthy nation. He also believed in the spiritual purification of body, mind and soul. He said, I quote: “When there is both inner and outer cleanliness, it approaches God” Unquote. It reminds us of the words of Lord Buddha: “To keep the body in good health is a duty otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clean”. A clean environment is essential for good health which will beget a pure mind. The “Swachh

Bharat'' initiative taken up by the Central Government is towards this end of keeping the environment clean. All should endeavour to make it a persevering campaign for a good health and mind.

I am full of pride in the declaration of ODF Manipur and handing of the certificate to Hon'ble Chief Minister. I congratulate the Swachhagrahis and Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC) members who have won certificates today for their performance. I am fully confident that they will carry forward the teachings of Gandhiji in their true spirit.

While celebrating the National Cleanliness Day, we should all remember the lofty thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi and remind ourselves of the virtue of love, mercy and forgiveness. It would be paying true homage to the Father of the Nation if we strive to keep our body, mind and soul clean.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.