

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
MANIPUR ON THE OCCASION OF PATRIOTS' DAY ON 13th AUGUST,
2018 AT B.T. PARK, IMPHAL

Shri N. Biren Singh ji, Hon'ble Chief Minister,
Shri Y. Joykumar Singh ji, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister,
Shri Y. Kemchand Singh ji, Hon'ble Speaker,
Hon'ble Ministers and
Members of the Manipur Legislative Assembly,
Senior Officials of the State Government,
Friends from Print and Electronic Media,
Distinguished Invitees,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am privileged to be with you all here today at this solemn celebration of Patriots' Day and to pay homage and tribute to the brave sons of Manipur, who made supreme sacrifices on the gallows for the cause of their motherland. It was on this day in 1891 here at this place, Pheidabung, now called Bir Tikendrajit Park, Imphal that the freedom fighters met their end. After a nominal trial, Yubraj Tikendrajit and Thangal General were hanged till death. On the same day, Niranjan Subedar, Kajao and Chirai Naga were hanged till death inside the Manipur Jail. Maharaj Kulachandra and 21 others were deported to Kalapani, the present Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

The Day reminds us of the heroic acts of the Manipuris – both known and unknown – on different war fronts of the Anglo-Manipur War, 1891. They showed to the world that the Manipuris had the unflinching courage to challenge the then mightiest world power, the British for the sake of their motherland. They also proved that freedom can neither be traded away nor conceded at any cost under any circumstances. They were instead willing to sacrifice their lives for the sake of freedom of their motherland. Their lives will always inspire us with their sense of sacrifice, patriotism and bravery.

The unconquerable spirit of the Manipuris and their classic example of patriotism will remain not only as a part of our glorious history but also a unique example of patriotism in the world history. This love of freedom and spirit of anti-colonialism of the people of Manipur was also seen during India's freedom struggle when freedom fighters like Rani Gaidinliu fought against the British. While celebrating the Day and paying homage and tribute to those heroic sons of Manipur who perished for their motherland, we should renew our pledge to work with dedication for the cause of our motherland.

Today, we all are the citizens of free India. It is our bounden duty to make the country strong and prosperous. India is a vast country comprising many States and Union Territories. Its prosperity and development depends upon the prosperity and development of these States and Union Territories. It is in this context that Manipur too should gear up the speed of development for prosperity and welfare of its people. The wheels of development can move faster only when there is an atmosphere of peace which is also inextricably linked to economic prosperity. There is a symbiotic relationship between peace and development and this has to be remembered and always pursued. We should guard against disruptive forces. The Manipuri princess fell prey to the 'Divide and Rule' policy of the British and Manipur was conquered. Let us not allow disunity to breed amongst us again.

The spectre of bandhs and strikes which seemed to have been a thing of the past till recently has raised its head again. It has become a matter of serious concern. The ultimate sufferers of all these aberrations are the common people. The culture of bandhs and strikes has to be avoided in the interest of the common man. In a democratic system, we must try to resolve all issues through dialogue. I am confident that the general people will extend their fullest cooperation in the efforts of the Government to resolve any outstanding public issues peacefully and to maintain harmony in the State. Taking advantage of speaking on this occasion, I would like to appeal to all

the communities of Manipur to shun violence and hatred among themselves and bring about an atmosphere of love and mutual understanding so that Manipur can move forward on a par with other sister-States in the race for development.

Once again, I pay my respectful homage to those brave souls who laid down their lives for their motherland and let us all work together for peace and harmony in the State.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.