

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE CLOSING FUNCTION OF THE STATE AGRICULTURE FAIR, 2018 ON MARCH 1, 2018 AT IBOYAIMA SHUMANG LILA SHANGLLEN, PALACE COMPOUND, IMPHAL

Shri Rajen Singh, Hon'ble MLA and Chairman, State Planning Board, Manipur,

Dr. Suhel Akhtar, Additional Chief Secretary (Agriculture), Government of Manipur,

Shri Ph. Rajendra Singh, Director of Agriculture, Manipur,

All the Participants,

Distinguished Invitees,

Friends from Media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to be here today on the occasion of the closing function of Agriculture Fair, 2018. The Fair is an annual mega event of the Agriculture Department, Manipur and this year, the State Agriculture Management & Extension Training Institute, Manipur is organizing it under the theme 'Soil Health for Sustainable Agriculture'.

This Agricultural Fair held every year provides an excellent opportunity for Agriculture and allied activities, organisations and farmers to showcase their products and services on agricultural development of the state, marketing facilities or to launch new products. More importantly, it serves as a forum to the Scientists, Agriculture Officers, Extension Officers and farmers to share their experiences among themselves and get scientific inputs to develop and improve agricultural technologies and also to get the feedback from farmers and address their problems. The theme of the Fair "Soil Health for Sustainable Agriculture" is really appropriate at this juncture when quality is being sacrificed for quantity in this madness of commercial pursuit.

Everybody will agree that the Department of Agriculture has a major responsibility in the fields of crop improvement, crop production, natural resource management, crop protection, post harvest technology and so on. From the scientists' point of view, it is important to see that technology reaches the end users in the right manner. The Agriculture Department should facilitate and initiate measures for effective implementation of such services. I am fully confident that the participants comprising of State Agriculture and Allied Departments including Horticulture, Fisheries, Sericulture, Veterinary & Animal Husbandry and Central Agricultural University, farmers, Farm Machinery dealers, Farmers' Clubs will remain committed to the cause of the farmers. It is also heartening that the products and service range exhibited in the Fair included not only the latest innovations in tractors, machine tools and equipments used for agricultural production but also seeds, pesticides, fertilizers and fodders. 'District Days' have also been organised in the Districts as a part of SAF, 2018 where distribution of different Agricultural inputs, Demonstration of new Technology adopted and so on have figured apart from Farmer-Scientist interaction programmes.

The aim of the agriculture researchers, extension workers and policy makers should be to stimulate attitudes and actions which would result in asserting agricultural progress in terms of improvement in the income of farm families, not only to meet their consumption requirements but also to enhance their capacity to invest in farm related activities. This can be achieved only when we make the provision of quality seeds, irrigation, power, machinery and implements, fertilizers and credit at affordable rates in adequate quantities for farmers and to provide appropriate price and trade policy mechanism to enhance farmers' income.

Today, farmers need to connect with agri-business, production systems, research institutions and public administration at both domestic and global market levels and other numerous partners. Knowledge empowerment

has become more and more important along with capital investment. The conventional mode of transfer of technology through personal contact by extension agencies is no longer the predominant mode of extension. There is more diverse need of information not only for production procedures, but also for quality certification and reporting, grading, packaging, storage, transportation and other requirements for both domestic and export market. The Agricultural-Fair is packaged for all these and it is a significant step in the quest of not only enhanced growth and productivity but also for improvement in sustainability, stability, equity that will elevate the quality and value addition for making agriculture more remunerative and improve the quality of life of the farmers.

It is my pleasure that I have distributed to 10 (ten) farmers State's Best Farmers Awards, who represented Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Sericulture and Fisheries in recognition of their commendable works done in agriculture and the allied activities. My hearty congratulations to all of them. In addition, I also congratulate the award winners for best performing Agriculture Technology Management Agency to the best performing ATMA districts in overall performance and activities for the year, 2017-18. The award winners for the Best Stalls category also deserve praise.

While extending my greetings to you all present here at the Agri Fair, 2018, I thank the organizers for inviting me to this function. I shall be glad if another chance of attending a function of this type comes my way in future. My best wishes to all the farmers.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.