

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE VALEDICTORY FUNCTION OF THE 105<sup>TH</sup> INDIAN SCIENCE CONGRESS ON 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2018 AT MANIPUR UNIVERSITY, CANCHIPUR, IMPHAL

Prof. Adya Prasad Pandey ji, Vice-Chancellor, Manipur University,

Prof. D. Narayana Rao ji, Immediate Past General President, ISC,

Prof. Manoj Kumar Chakrabarti ji, General President Elect,

Prof. Ashok K. Saxena ji, Former General President, ISC,

Dr. A. Samanta ji, General President, ISC,

Distinguished Scientists, Experts, Researchers from different Universities and Institutions of the country,

All the participants,

Friends from the Media,

All the distinguished invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to be associated with this valedictory function of the 105<sup>th</sup> Indian Science Congress hosted by Manipur University. It was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on the 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2018 and today's function brings down the curtain on the 5-day mega event of science and scientists. It has seen the congregation of eminent scientists from across the country and scientific discourses of the highest order.

The 105<sup>th</sup> Indian Science Congress has come to Manipur by chance but I would attribute to the destiny of the state that such a scientific activity of much beneficial consequence is happening here. An event of this magnitude takes several gruelling months in preparation and for a small state like Manipur with intimidating logistic challenges, the task was ever daunting. Manipur University with hardly four months in hand remained undeterred and rose to the occasion to successfully organise this function. I had also extended my support, moral and otherwise and encouraged them at every step. My heartiest congratulations to the Vice-Chancellor of Manipur

University and his dedicated team for a job well done and also the Indian Science Congress authorities who supported them all the way.

As you all are well aware, India is becoming one of the world's powerhouses for scientific research. The country has seen steady increases in Government spending on research and development and has a critical mass of well-educated professionals and a vast pool of scientists and technologists. Even the private sector is stepping up and providing an increasing proportion of funding. In recent years, Government announced plans to build many new Universities, Technology Institutes, new Institutes of Science Education and Research, hundreds of Polytechnic and Vocational Schools and thousands of Skills Development Centres. The long-standing question of whether India will ever emerge on the world stage has largely been answered. But whether that future will be inclusive of all its citizens remains an open question. Our endeavour should be to spread the wing of knowledge and development to every nook and corner of the country touching the life of every citizen through science and technology. In this, the Scientists and Research Scholars have a well chalked out role to play.

Being the Governor of Manipur, I would like to put into context the relevance of Indian Science Congress in the state with a little more emphasis. Manipur is rich in bio-diversity, within the top ten hotspots in the world with a wealth of flora and fauna. New species are being discovered day after day and most recently also there have been reports of finding new varieties of fishes and orchids. It is perceived and rightly so that there is a lot more species waiting to be discovered in Manipur and a wide scope for scientific application for taking the state forward. The Hon'ble Prime Minister in his inaugural speech of this Science Congress had urged the scientists to undertake research in the health sector such as on the wild herbs in the North-East, which have unique medicinal and aromatic properties. Manipur possesses unexplored potential in the field of agriculture. It also produces

marketable surplus in a number of perishable commodities such as banana, pine-apple, orange and tomato. One solution is the food processing sector and the state holds a lot of potential for food processing as the natural attributes including weather are conducive. Science and Technology can unlock these potentialities of the state and it is in resonance with the theme of this edition of the Science Congress that is 'Reaching the unreached through Science and Technology'.

A major source of revenue for the state is handloom and handicraft. Manipur has the highest number of handicrafts units as well as the highest number of craft persons comprising skilled and semi-skilled artisans in the entire North Eastern Region. Handloom is the largest cottage industry in Manipur and the state ranks among the top five in terms of the number of looms in the country. Science and Technology could bring about a substantial change and mainstream this industry. Entrepreneurship is another vital part which is not only about setting up one's own enterprises but also giving employment to many people, thereby contributing significantly to the growth and development of the country. Considering constraints at the Government level on providing jobs to all, self-employment must be promoted. Instead of job seekers one should be encouraged to become job providers. Science and Technology can provide the wherewithal. It is strongly believed that the MSME sector is the nursery of entrepreneurship, often driven by individual creativity and innovation. I, therefore, encourage MSMEs to look at themselves as not only producers but also innovators.

I would urge the scientific community at large that research work should not be rendered a one time exercise for a limited purpose. The scientific temperament should be sustained and there should be continuity in their quest to better the condition of the people. Oftentimes, it has happened that research is done and the result consigned to oblivion. The findings should be disseminated and put to proper use. I would even suggest setting up

of a Research Centre of a national level in the state so that research work goes on with focus on practical applicability of science. A suggestion that may merit active consideration is for a group of scientists to adopt a district and involve themselves in the planning process of the district. Such planning at the grass root level based on available resources will be pragmatic with rich dividends in the long run.

With these words, I wish for the continued and collective efforts of the Indian Science Congress Association in making successful in the coming Science Congress as a step towards a great journey and a great mission.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.