

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
MANIPUR AT THE NATIONAL CLEANLINESS DAY FUNCTION ON
2ND OCTOBER, 2019 AT GANDHI MEMORIAL HALL, IMPHAL

Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Shri Y. Joykumar Singh ji,

Hon'ble Council of Ministers,

Hon'ble MLAs,

Friends from Print and Electronic Media,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Every year, the 2nd of October is observed as National Cleanliness Day to commemorate the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The observance assumes greater significance this year because it is the 150th Birth Anniversary of the Father of the Nation. Gandhiji was an apostle of peace and he led India's freedom struggle against the British by using 'Ahimsa' as his most powerful weapon. He was an equally strong advocate of the cleanliness of mind and body or the environment.

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. A symbol of indomitable human soul-power, Gandhiji firmly 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. He will be remembered as one of the greatest souls that ever walked on earth.

Gandhiji was vehemently against hatred between man and man. He once observed that he could not live when the atmosphere was marred with violence and hatred. What he wanted was the bridge that connects and not walls that divide man from man. Transcending the social barriers of caste, creed, colour, language and religion, Gandhiji preached universal peace, brotherhood and friendship. Peaceful co-existence was his perennial message. For Gandhiji, political independence of India was not the end. It was the beginning of 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. 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. The state of cleanliness which we maintain during the observance of the National Cleanliness Day should be made a regular way of life. It should not be just a normal observance but a wake-up call for all of us to maintain high standards of cleanliness in our homes, work places, roads, streets and public places.

Our present Prime Minister has added a new vigour to the cleanliness drive and made it more impactful and meaningful when he launched the Swachh Bharat Mission on 2nd October, 2014. He declared the day as a non-holiday to the Government workers and staffs and urged them to take cleanliness to their offices and work places. He also urged all the Indians to devote at least 2 hours per week to clean their surroundings. In the 2-year long celebrations of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, new schemes have been launched and awareness campaigns have been intensified to promote a clean and healthy environment all around. Such a step is the development of Swachh Campus and Jal Shakti Campus and Jal Shakti Gram under Higher Education as initiated by the Mahatma Gandhi National Council of Rural Education in areas of sanitation, hygiene and water conservation. In this connection, I have just had the pleasure of launching two Manuals on Swachh Campus and Jal Shakti Campus and Jal Shakti Gram as a part of this State Level Programme. I am fully confident that these manuals will certainly help the Higher Educational Institutions including Universities, Colleges and Polytechnics in keeping the campus clean and in developing strategies, action plans and implementation plans for water conservation within the campus and in the villages.

While celebrating the National Cleanliness Day, we should all remember the lofty thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi and it would, indeed, 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.