

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
MANIPUR AT THE FUNCTION FOR RELEASING THE BOOK
'PEESHUMLEI' AUTHORED BY PROF. (L) N. TOMBI SINGH ON 27TH
APRIL, 2019 AT RAJ BHAVAN, IMPHAL

Padmashri Ksh. Thouranishabi Devi, renowned guru of Nata Sankirtan,

Dr. N. Tombi Singh, eminent scholar,

Shri E. Sonamani Singh, eminent writer,

The galaxy of writers, critics, thinkers and cultural activists who are present here,

Shrimati N. Chittamohini Devi, publisher of the Book and her entire family members.

Friends from the Media,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to be associated with this function to launch the book "Peeshumlei" authored by Prof. (L) N. Tombi Singh, an educationist, seasoned politician, writer, journalist and a very popular cultural activist of the state. It is my pleasure to congratulate Prof. Tombi Singh, though he is no longer with us, for his novel "Peeshumlei". I understand that this novel is the author's first novel written in Manipuri and although a work of fiction, an attempt has been made to describe the state of affairs in Manipur during the reign of Bhagyachandra Maharaj and several kings before him in the 18th century. I am fully confident that this book will certainly be a very popular novel and a socio-political narrative of immense historical and cultural value.

Prof. Tombi Singh had carved out a distinct identity for himself in public life and also in the literary sphere as a prolific writer. He strived to serve the people and enrich Manipuri literature simultaneously. Many of his students when he was a lecturer at the Imphal College and who have survived him still remember fondly his contribution as a writer and a social reformist. He experimented with many forms of writing novels, poems, essays and

plays. In his personal life, however, he struggled constantly against odds and overcame them to achieve success through perseverance and hard work. In a public life that spanned over more than five decades, Prof. Tombi Singh held several important posts in his political career - as Member, Legislative Assembly, Minister and Member of Parliament. In the field of education and literature, apart from serving as Lecturer, he was the founder President of Cultural Forum, Manipur; President, Naharol Sahitya Preme Samiti; President, Manipur Apunba Maiba Maibi Phurup; General Secretary, Manipur Natya Sabha and so on. In recognition of his valuable contribution in the field of literature of the state, he was awarded Gang Sharan Award and Sahitya Bhushan by Manipuri Sahitya Parishad in 2002, though posthumously. His contributions to the growth of Manipuri language and Art and Culture of the state have been widely acknowledged by the scholars of the state in their works.

It is a matter of great satisfaction to know that his three works in English namely, Khamba and Thoibi, Manipur A Study and Manipur and the Mainstream have earned wide acclaim not only in the state but outside the state also. During his younger days, he also played a pivotal role in publishing a journal under the name, Chitrabirentombichand which was a literary work of much contemporary relevance. It was a favourite of the generation and a much awaited publication. Prof. Tombi, as a writer, always displayed a deep concern for the marginalized classes and the disadvantaged population while a nationalist at heart. His writings have amply echoed his thoughts. "Peeshumlei", a novel is a praiseworthy endeavour on the part of the author as he presents before the readers a convincing picture relating to the cultural and social life of the people of that time. It underlines their hardship, exploitation and shows how they nurtured and cherished their identity in the face of daunting challenges.

We all know that literature has a major social responsibility. It can have an inspirational influence when it explores issues which are of great importance. It makes us conscious and aware of the plight of the people. Our aim is to build a strong nation and an enlightened society where all the people may enjoy their rights and live peacefully. Writers can address social issues by creating awareness amongst the people through their writings. Languages may vary but the process of creativity is one and universal. Human creativity is born out of anguish as it happened with Prof. Tombi but always topping with optimism in his case. I am sure, Prof. Tombi Singh will continue to be a source of inspiration to our young writers and poets who will build a just society with the richness of their ideas and the intensity of human emotions. Style and usage of language in the book will surely add yet another flavour and further enrich the Manipuri language.

With these few words, I, once again, express my happiness on being part of this occasion and pray to Almighty for his soul to rest in peace.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.