

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
MANIPUR ON THE OCCASION OF THE STATE LEVEL
CELEBRATION OF 'KUT FESTIVAL, 2019' ON 1ST NOVEMBER, 2019
AT 1ST BN. MANIPUR RIFLES GROUND, IMPHAL

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

Shri L. Dikho ji, Hon'ble Minister, PHED,

Shri V. Hangkhanlian ji, Hon'ble Minister, Agriculture,

All the distinguished Special Guests,

Friends from Media,

All the participants,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be with you all, especially the Kuki-Mizo-Chin brethren here today in this State Level Celebration of the joyous and auspicious occasion of "Kut Festival, 2019" - a festival of thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest and one of the most important festivals of not only the Kuki-Mizo-Chin groups but of the entire State. The Kut Festival is celebrated in Manipur every year on the 1st of November.

Manipur is a land of festivities, fun and frolic which goes on throughout the year. Manipur is always bustling with the cycle of numerous festivals. The festivals of Manipur project their cultural, social and religious aspirations. These festivals are perfect for removing the monotony of life and help the people lead a fuller and better life.

The Kut Festival is also one of the greatest festivals in Manipur and an autumn festival of the different tribes of Kuki-Chin-Mizo groups of people in Manipur. The festival has been variously described at different places amongst different tribes as Chavang-Kut or Khodou. It is a happy occasion for the villagers whose stock of food is plentiful after a year of tremendous hard labour. The Kut Festival is a thanks giving festival which includes songs

and dances along with marry making. The festival is observed every year in the honor of the giver of an abundant harvest.

The Kuki-Mizo-Chin groups have their own unique and distinct cultural heritage and this is reflected in their various festivals. Kut is one such festival held during autumn and this festival provides an opportunity to not only make merry but to introspect on our past and plan for the future. This festival which includes songs and dances is now participated in not only by the Kuki-Mizo-Chin groups but by other communities also thereby strengthening the bonds of friendship and is a harbinger of peace, harmony and progress.

I am hopeful that the celebration of “Kut” this year will not only help in promoting collective identity of our Kuki-Mizo-Chin brethren but will spread the message of peace, love, communal harmony, friendship and brotherhood amongst the different communities in the north-east and especially in Manipur. Manipur as everyone knows is full of problems and rifts are being created between communities challenging the age-old tradition of peaceful co-existence. These gulfs rather than being narrowed are being widened. In such an environment, the growth curve is stymied, even though the State has huge potential. With increase in population, pressure on land is bound to increase thereby creating new conflicts. We have seen this in the past not only in Manipur but elsewhere also and this will rear its ugly head in the future also. We, the citizens of Manipur as responsible people and should ensure that we settle our differences through talks and negotiations and not to resort to violence, including bandhs and blockades. Let us set aside our differences and resolve not to resort to bandhs and blockades as it severely impacts the poorer section of the society more. Let us cast aside our self centered egos and policies of the various ethnic groups and work for the overall welfare of the State. Kut is the time to do this as this festival exemplifies gratefulness, compassion and gaiety. Emotional integration

cannot be achieved in a single day but a start needs to be made so that we can build on it. Let this traditional festival spread the message of peaceful co-existence for a better Manipur.

I thank the organizers for inviting me to this State Level Kut Celebration, 2019 and wish you all a happy celebration.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.