

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE 2ND GOVERNOR'S TROPHY, 2019 (STATE LEVEL MUKNA KANGJEI TOURNAMENT) ON 29TH MARCH, 2019 AT IMPHAL POLOGROUND, IMPHAL

Mrs. B. Bimola Devi, Vice-president, Kreedha Bharati, Manipur,

Shri A. Brajakumar Sharma, President, Seva Bharati, Manipur,

All members of the participating teams,

Friends from Media,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to have this opportunity of closing the 2nd Governor's Trophy – State Level Mukna Kangjei Tournament, 2019. I am thankful to the organisers for making me a part of this State level tournament.

Mukna Kangjei, a traditional game of Manipur, still retains its charm despite the popularity of other modern games. The game is a combination of Kangjei (hockey) and Mukna (a form of Manipuri traditional wrestling). I must admit that when I first heard of the game, I was full of curiosity. At that time, it was beyond my comprehension as to how the divergent games of hockey and wrestling could be played together as a game. Mukna Kangjei is indeed a very interesting indigenous game of the State. It is akin to modern day hockey mixed with wrestling and Manipuris have been playing it from time immemorial. The sport has been in existence since the time of our ancestors. The sport requires a lot of stamina, knowledge, physical strength and intense practice as well.

The tiny State of Manipur in the North Eastern corner of India had a glorious past in the field of sports and martial arts. It is no wonder that the inborn creativity and the spirit of competitiveness powered by the martial characteristic of the people of Manipur manifest in this popular game of

Mukna Kangjei. It is the ultimate test of brain and brawn of the players against each other with agility making the difference. At present, Manipur is widely known as the power house of sports of the country. The State has proved time and again its mettle in sports and games at National as well as International levels. Notable sporting events in which our boys and girls have excelled are hockey, swimming, archery, football, cycling and martial arts. Players from Manipur are now very popular in the sporting world and wherever and whatever they play, they have left their foot prints. Certainly, the boys and girls of the State have the ability and will power to reach more lofty heights.

All these days, I have been saying that though small in size, our State has carved out a very special place in the world because of the inborn talents of its artistes in the field of art and culture and its young boys and girls in the field of sports. We also see a sublime intermingling of culture and sports in the State. Many of the indigenous games have grown as a part of our culture and tradition. Many of them again have carried forward religious connotations down the ages and an integral part of our life. We should preserve this rich legacy which is representative of our identity and our unique place in history. But we must provide necessary infrastructural facilities for all round development of sports in the State. In recognition of the performance of our players in National and International arenas, Government of India has established a Sports University in the State, first of its kind in the North Eastern Region. I am fully confident that Manipur will be able to produce many more world class players in every sports discipline and I am also hopeful that our indigenous games including Mukna Kengjei will get their due attention and recognition.

It is also heartening to note that various organizations and clubs in Manipur have started organising tournaments and championships of traditional indigenous games. The basic objective of these initiatives is to

develop, preserve and promote these dying indigenous games. I am very happy to know that in the Sangai Festival, 2018, Kang, another very popular indigenous game was played in which even Manipuri players from other countries like Myanmar and Bangladesh participated.

To conclude, I would like to congratulate the winners and appeal to the losers not to be disheartened as this is not the last. They should aim higher to be winners next time. I compliment Kreedha Bharati for their endeavour to preserve and promote the indigenous games of Manipur. With these few words, it gives me immense pleasure to close the tournament.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.