

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR ON THE OCCASION OF PATRIOTS' DAY ON 13<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2019 AT BIR TIKENDRAJIT PARK, IMPHAL.

Shri N. Biren Singh ji, Hon'ble Chief Minister,  
Shri Y. Joykumar Singh ji, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister,  
Hon'ble Ministers, Members of Parliament and Members of the Manipur Legislative Assembly,  
Senior Officials of the State Government,  
Friends from Electronic and Print Media,  
Distinguished invitees,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Khurumjari,

The 13<sup>th</sup> day of August is of great historical significance for the State of Manipur as it was on this fateful day in 1891 that the brave prince of Manipur, Bir Tikendrajit and General Thangal were hanged at this very spot in Imphal by the British before thousands of Manipuris for revolting against them. On the same day, Niranjana Subedar, Kajao and Chirai Naga were hanged till death inside the Manipur jail. The British deported Maharaj Kulachandra and 21 others to Kalapani, the present day Andaman and Nicobar Islands. These Manipuri freedom fighters sent on exile were no less patriots than those who fought in India's freedom struggle whose names are recorded in the Memorial for the detainees at Andaman and Nicobar Islands. I have been urging the Central Government to engrave the names of these brave Manipuris also in the Memorial to give their rightful place. I am privileged to join the people of the State in paying homage and tribute to the brave sons of Manipur, who made supreme sacrifices for the cause of their motherland. The Manipuris showed to the world their unflinching patriotic courage and spirit of sacrifice to challenge the then mighty British Empire.

The Day reminds us of the heroic acts of the Manipuris – both known and unknown – on different war fronts of the Anglo-Manipur War, 1891. They proved that freedom can neither be traded away nor ceded at any cost under any circumstances. They were instead willing to sacrifice their lives for the sake of freedom of their motherland. Their lives will always inspire us with their sense of sacrifice, patriotism and bravery. The unconquerable spirit of the Manipuris and their classic example of patriotism will remain not only as a part of our glorious history but also a unique example of patriotism in the world history. While celebrating the Day and paying homage and tribute to those heroic sons of Manipur who suffered and perished in the hands of the colonial forces for their motherland, we should renew our pledge to work with dedication for the cause of our motherland.

When we look back into history, it is clear that the British entered the fray because of the disunity among the princes of Manipur. History also tells us that foreign powers always took advantage of the prevailing disunity and factionalism in other countries to subjugate them. We cannot change history but we can always learn from history that disunity among ourselves will bring downfall to our nation. After sacrificing innumerable people of India, including from Manipur, we, again, brought back our hard won independence on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1947. We have come a long way since then. We are all citizens of free India and it is our bounden duty to make the country strong and prosperous. Its prosperity and development depends upon the prosperity and development of the States. Manipur too should gear up the speed of development for prosperity and welfare of its people. The wheels of development can move faster when there is an atmosphere of peace and economic prosperity. Peace and development are inter-dependent and this has to be remembered always and pursued. Our hard won independence must be protected at all costs and we should now strive to bring up our nation as a leader among the comity of Nations. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is predicted as the century of the Asians and we should strive to make this prediction come true.

Manipur has over the years been facing a series of problems and we are all aware of these problems. We have to tackle these issues and solve them together otherwise we will continue to dither on the road to development. Manipur continues to be one of the less developed States in the country, with many of our citizens suffering from lack of a decent living. It is our duty to ensure that our citizens have a decent living and our State becomes wealthy and prosperous. Manipur, as all of you are aware, is a cosmopolitan State where many communities reside following various faiths or religions. We should amicably resolve all differences to make our State strong rather than harping on our differences. Manipur has to come up with its own solutions to its problems and if we wait for others to intervene, then we may lose everything. The phenomenon of calling bandhs or economic blockades at the drop of the hat, even for minor incidents has harmed the pace of development in the State and such acts need to be avoided. The belief that the administration listens only when violence is resorted to is misplaced and must be dispelled. But at the same time, the administration should not only be responsive but should also seem to be responsive. The administration and the population must go hand in hand to ensure that divisive forces do not have an upper hand and that peace is the hallmark of this State. We should also resolve to safeguard our age old values of love, peace, tolerance and mutual understanding. I am happy that the State is steadily progressing and frequent economic blockade along the National Highways of the State which hampered progress is a thing of the past now. I am fully confident that this will continue in the times to come.

Once again, on this solemn occasion of Patriots' Day, while paying our homage and tributes to the martyrs of 1891, let us strive for a better Manipur.

Thagatchari,

Jai Hind.