

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
MANIPUR AT THE CLOSING FUNCTION OF THE 13TH MANIPUR
POLO INTERNATIONAL 2019 ON 29TH NOVEMBER 2019 AT MAPAL
KANGJEIBUNG, IMPHAL

Shri Losii Dikho ji, Hon'ble Minister, PHED,

Shri Th. Radheshyam Singh ji, Hon'ble Minister, Education,

All the participants from different countries and States,

Friends from Media,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am deeply honoured to be invited to the Closing Function of the 13th Manipur Polo International 2019 which is organized as part of the Sangai Tourism Festival 2019. I feel humbled to walk on the hallowed pologround of Mapal Kangjeibung which is said to be the oldest polo ground in use in the world.

Modern Polo had its birth from Manipur through Lt Joseph Sherer who first saw the game in Cachar in 1854 and he played his first match in Manipur in 1856. Thereafter it travelled to different parts of the country and the globe. Polo as per historical records indicates that it was played in different parts of the world at different time but it was lost in antiquity except in Manipur where it was a popular game.

With time, the game was in a wane as it becomes costly to maintain a pony and with dwindling pasture it was all the more difficult. The Manipuri pony which is one of the five recognized breeds of ponies and horses in India is under threat as their numbers are slowly decreasing. The initiative already taken up by the State Government to establish a Pony Sanctuary at Heingang is a very positive step in preserving this breed. I request all pony owners to keep their ponies in the sanctuary and not allow them to roam here and there

in the road. Preserving and protecting our pony is the responsibility of all citizens of the State and they should be cared for properly.

I congratulate the Manipur Horse Riding and Polo Association for their initiative in organizing this International event, inviting teams from other parts of the globe. This will place Manipur in the Polo map of the world, which is richly deserves. I hope that the participants will take back happy memories and spread the message of the culture of horses and polo in Manipur. I also hope that they had a memorable outing and had a good time during their short stay at Manipur.

I congratulate the winning team and all other participating teams and hope that the international team will come again in the future.

Once again, I convey my best wishes to all of you for success in your future endeavours.

Thank you,

Jai Hind