

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE INAUGURAL FUNCTION OF THE MANIPUR INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON DANCE & MUSIC ON 28TH MARCH, 2019 AT MANIPUR UNIVERSITY, CANCHIPUR, IMPHAL.

Shri Jarnail Singh, Administrator, Manipur University,

Shri M. Lakshmikumar Singh, Vice-Chancellor, Manipur University of Culture,

Shri N. Munish Singh, Regional Director, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, NE Region,

Prof. Ch. Yashwanta Singh, Dean, School of Humanities, Manipur University,

All the participants,

Friends from Media,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a matter of great pleasure for me to inaugurate this 'Manipur International Symposium of Dance and Music: Traditional Art Forms and World Today' organized by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, North-Eastern Region in collaboration with Manipur University and Manipur University of Culture. As Governor of the host State in the North-Eastern region, I would like to thank the organizers for holding such an International Symposium at Imphal. Additionally, it is gratifying to know that eminent artistes of Indian classical dance forms including a few foreign artistes will be joining the Symposium in panel discussion, lecture-cum-demonstration and performances. This will create an interdisciplinary cultural exchange and mutual understanding amongst the artistes belonging to the fraternity. I also strongly believe that this Symposium will be of great help to the local students in gaining knowledge and sharing of ideas with artistes from other States and abroad.

Indian culture and traditions are something which have now become renowned all across the world. Manipuri Dance is again amongst the few of

the recognized classical dance forms of India. The State has a rich cultural heritage and its traditional art forms are widely acclaimed. The topic of today's symposium is of much contemporary relevance especially in the context of Manipur as its rich and variegated traditional art forms need to be invigorated and kept in proper perspective. The symposium is also unique in the sense that through it an effort is being made for cultural ties with our neighbouring countries Myanmar, Bangladesh and Bhutan. I extend a warm welcome to all the participating artistes from the neighbouring countries and other parts of India. I am hopeful that the symposium will go a long way in bringing about overall personality development of our local artistes, enabling them to connect around the globe to promote the rich cultural heritage of Manipur and India as a whole.

Many of you here would know that ICCR was founded in the year, 1950 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first Education Minister of Independent India and my great grand uncle. It was created with a clear mandate to promote cultural exchanges with other countries and people, to establish and develop relations with National and International organizations in the field of culture. I had an opportunity of associating with this iconic cultural Institution in the capacity of its President during 2002 to 2005 and I am familiar with its various initiatives for the development of cultural ties with other countries. I have no doubt that the present symposium will become an important and prestigious event in the cultural calendar of the region.

The North-Eastern region has fascinating natural beauty and to add to that the ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity of the region is awesome. The rich tapestry of cultures of the North-East, whether it is the highly developed classical dance forms and visual arts or the vibrant and rhythmic folk dances and songs of the hills of the entire region or the crafts of artisans showing rich creative expressions has been marvellous with its unique identity. However, owing to its long isolation till the recent past, the region's culture has not received its due exposure or recognition that it truly deserves. This

International Symposium is significant not only because it will focus on the vibrant culture of a very beautiful part of our country but because it will also bring out the beauty of our unity in diversity.

This platform for holding discourses on Dance and Music of the North-Eastern Region will serve for the study, practice, documentation, preservation, and dissemination of the traditional music and dance of all North-Eastern States and their people. The symposium will encourage both archival research and fieldwork, seeking for advantages from different methodological approaches and using diverse source materials such as written chronicles, daily reports, letters, treatises on music, transcriptions, sound recordings and films that will contribute to the understanding of traditional Dance and Music of the North-Eastern Region people. The region has been and is still going through social, cultural and political transitions which are reflected in its music and dance traditions. The demographic structure of its population provokes an interest to research not only by scholars within the region, but also by scholars from other parts of the country. The symposium, I am sure, will see brain storming sessions for achieving the set goals in the field of arts and culture. In our march towards progress and prosperity, our cultural riches are our assets that make us proud and beautiful and to remain connected with our glorious past. We must ensure the survival of our traditional art, our dance forms and our Music. We should encourage our youth to keep these skills and creativity alive and robust.

With these words, I am hopeful that people assembled here from the North-East and various parts of the country and overseas will experience the vibrancy in the different forms of art and culture in the region and I wish the Symposium all success. I once again compliment the organizers for this initiative.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.