

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE PRESENTATION CEREMONY OF USTAD BISMILLAH KHAN YUVA PURASKAR-2018 ON 19TH AUGUST, 2019 AT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU MANIPUR DANCE ACADEMY, IMPHAL

Shri Shekhar Sen, Chairman, Sangeet Natak Akademi,

Smt. Rita Swami Choudhary, Secretary, Sangeet Natak Akademi,

Friends from Media,

All the artistes present here,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to be with you all here at the Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar Ceremony, organized by Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi. At the very outset, I heartily congratulate the Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar Award-2018 winners.

As many of you would be aware, this prestigious "Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar" was instituted by the Sangeet Natak Akademi in the year, 2006 to be awarded annually to young and upcoming artistes who have demonstrated notable talent in the fields of music, dance and drama. The Award is conferred upon artistes below the age of 40 years with the objective of identifying and encouraging outstanding young talents in diverse fields of performing arts and giving them national recognition early in their life so that they may work with greater commitment and dedication in their chosen fields. I am happy to know that one artiste, namely Manju Elangbam has received this prestigious Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar, 2018 in the field of Manipuri Dance. Congratulations Manju Elangbam and well done. I would also like to convey my heartiest congratulations to A. Aneshori Devi who has received this Yuva Puraskar in the field of Traditional & Folk Dance. I am fully confident that many more young talented artistes from this

State will earn name and awards in different fields in the years to come. My best wishes will always be with them.

The Sangeet Natak Akademi needs no elaborate introduction. It is the premier institute of performing arts in the country founded by my great grand uncle Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who led the cultural movement in the country after independence. The Akademi's uniqueness lies in its all-India character, covering every form of performing art in every part of the country. It is not limited to classical music and dance and the urban theatre alone but also covers the folk and traditional arts of rural India in their multifarious forms. The Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy is a constituent unit of SNA and in its remarkable journey of 64 years since inception, it has come to be regarded as a premier Manipuri Dance Institute in the country as well as abroad. Under the patronage of SNA, the Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy is growing from strength to strength and it continues to draw its inspiration from the rich culture of the State. Till date, JNMDA has produced many eminent artistes who are counted amongst the 'Who's Who' in the world of Manipuri culture. It has been working alongwith the people, pursuing constantly the agenda for preservation and promotion of Manipuri Dance and Music.

Art forms and traditions have taken long years to evolve. Dance and music symbolizing joys and jublations of generations hold the imprints of their long social and cultural history and tradition. Artistes of every generation have interpreted them and further enriched the tradition. Without them and their dedication, probably we would have been at a loss, disconnected with our past and strong roots. Keeping them alive is, therefore, a magnificent form of paying homage to our artistes and to our heritage. There is no other better way to safeguard them than providing opportunities for performance and ensuring favourable conditions for the artistes who keep these traditions alive. In our march towards progress and prosperity, our

cultural riches are assets that make us proud, beautiful and relevant. 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. The Ustad Bismillah Khan Puraskar is such a step and the effort of SNA in this direction is commendable. I am sure, the audience must be eagerly waiting to witness the cultural programmes to be presented by the award winners and I do not intend to take much more of your time. My best wishes once again to the award winners and I thank the organisers for inviting me to this function.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.