

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> MANIPUR STATEHOOD DAY WOMEN'S POLO TOURNAMENT ON 21<sup>ST</sup> JANUARY, 2020 AT MAPAL KANGJEIBUNG, IMPHAL.

Dr. K. Saratchandra Singh, President, All Manipur Polo Association,  
Participants from different places of the State,  
Friends from Media,  
Distinguished Invitees,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am deeply honoured to be invited to the closing function of the 5<sup>th</sup> Manipur Statehood Day Women's Polo Tournament which is organized by the Tourism Department. I also feel privileged to know that today is the day Manipur attained Statehood.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that the Tourism Department has been organizing this Manipur Statehood Day Women's Polo Tournament for the last few years successfully. Since Polo is the heritage of Manipur, its revival in this State is not only a necessity but also the duty of every Manipuri. The revival of Polo in Manipur depends on the success with which it can meet the contemporary needs. The role of dedicated voluntary organizations and their tireless efforts to revive and invigorate this game in its birth place is indeed tremendous.

However, I have been given to understand that good ponies are becoming rare. Since ponies are equal partner with player in this peculiar game, their upkeep and proper maintenance need not be reiterated. I am aware that due to the pressing needs of food, most of the grazing grounds in rural areas have been converted into paddy fields and consequently, fodder has become scarce and the maintenance of ponies has become prohibitive. Grounds where Polo can be played comfortably have also become rare. Nevertheless, I am happy to state that the Government has already

established a Pony Sanctuary at Heingang in Imphal East District. This is indeed a very good step taken up by the State Government to preserve this rare pony. Therefore, I request all pony owners to keep their ponies in the sanctuary and not allow them to roam here and there in the road as preserving and protecting our pony is the responsibility of all citizens of the State and they should be cared for properly.

I am also very happy to know that Manipur has also produced many women polo players who have excelled in this discipline in the country. I am also fully confident that Manipur's Women polo players will be able to bring many laurels for the State in National and International Tournaments in future. As you all are well aware, polo is associated with the history and culture of Manipur and, therefore, this has to be nurtured and developed in the world. Sincere efforts from all concerned are indispensable at this juncture.

I congratulate the Tourism Department of Manipur for their initiative in organizing this Tournament, inviting teams from India as well as from abroad. I also congratulate the winning team and all other participating teams for the success of the Tournament and hope they will come again in the next tournament. I also hope that the international teams had a pleasant stay in Manipur.

Once again, I wish all the Polo players success in their future endeavours.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.