

SPEECH OF THE HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR, DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA ON THE OCCASION OF GANDHI JAYANTI ON 2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER, 2017 AT GANDHI MEMORIAL HALL, IMPHAL.

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Shri N. Biren ji,  
Hon'ble Council of Ministers,  
Hon'ble MLAs,  
Officers and Officials of the State Government,  
Friends from Print and Electronic Media,  
Distinguished Invitees,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, the 2<sup>nd</sup> October, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the Nation is observing the International Day of Non-violence and National Cleanliness Day all over the country. Mahatma Gandhi led the nation in its struggle for freedom from the British yoke using Non-violence or Ahimsa as his most powerful weapon. His philosophy and idea of Ahimsa led the country to freedom. The teachings of Gandhi say that Non-violence is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction.

The present Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi ji, also launched Swachh Bharat Mission on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2014 with a committed approach. He declared the day as a non-holiday for the Government workers and staffs and urged them to take up cleanliness drive in their respective workplaces on that day. Shri Modi ji also urged all the Indians to devote at least 2 hours per week to clean their surroundings. In addition, he has called upon the nation to begin a campaign, Swachhata Hi Seva, 'Cleanliness is Service' from 15<sup>th</sup> September 2017 to Gandhi Jayanti on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2017.

Mahatma Gandhi stands tall in the gallery of great world leaders and thinkers. He belongs to the whole world and to all generations. His profound humanism is his message. An apostle of truth and non-violence, a symbol of

indomitable human soul-power, Gandhiji firmly stood for the cause of the downtrodden and oppressed not only in India but also in other parts of the world. His philosophy of non-violent agitation and civil disobedience also influenced political activists throughout the world. His “novel mode of mass mobilization and non-violent action” brought down colonialism, strengthened the roots of popular sovereignty including civil, political and economic rights, and greatly influenced many a freedom struggle and inspired leaders far and wide. He won affection and love of millions of people all over the world and from both friends and foes alike and he became the Mahatma – the Great Soul – because of his doctrine – Ahimsa. He will be remembered as one of the greatest souls that ever walked on earth. The present generation should try to imbibe the virtues of tolerance and humanism from him for a better world order.

For Gandhiji, political independence of India was not the end. It was the beginning of real freedom – economic freedom of the country. He was the champion of “Swadeshi” or home economy. He wanted to work for an India in which the poorest should feel that it was their country. To him, the spirit and soul of India rested in the village communities. He also wanted an India in which all communities live in perfect harmony. There could be no room in India for the curse of untouchability or the curse of intoxicating drinks or drugs. Women should enjoy the same rights as men. This is the India of Gandhiji’s dreams.

Mahatma Gandhi always emphasized cleanliness for a healthy living. Healthy people make a healthy nation. He also believed in the spiritual purification of body, mind and soul. There is the old saying ‘cleanliness is next to godliness’ and Gandhiji wholeheartedly supported it. In his words, I quote: “When there is both inner and outer cleanliness, it approaches God” Unquote. I also quote the words of Lord Buddha: “To keep the body in good health is a duty otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and

clean”. A clean environment is essential for good health which will beget a pure mind. The “Swachh Bharat” initiative taken up by the Central Government is towards this end of keeping the environment clean. All should endeavour to make it a persevering campaign for a good health and mind.

The state of cleanliness which we maintain during the observance of the National Cleanliness Day should be made a regular feature – a way of life. It should not be just a normal observance but a wake-up call for all of us to maintain high standards of cleanliness in our homes, work places, roads, streets and public places.

While celebrating the National Cleanliness Day, we should all remember the lofty thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi and remind ourselves of the virtue of love, mercy and forgiveness. It would be paying true homage to the Father of the Nation if we strive to keep our body, mind and soul clean.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.