

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE INAUGURAL SHOW OF DANCE-DRAMA "KARNA BHARAM" ON 8TH DECEMBER, 2016 AT JNMDA OPEN AIR THEATRE, IMPHAL AT 1630 HRS.

Prof. H. Tombi Singh, Vice-Chairman, J.N. Manipur Dance Academy,

Shri L. Upendro Sharma, Director, J.N. Manipur Dance Academy,

Friends from the Media,

Respected Gurus,

My dear young Artistes and Students of the Academy,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is, indeed, a privilege for me to have this opportunity of witnessing the Dance-Drama "Karna Bharam" (the agony of Karna) directed and choreographed by Smt. N. Amusana Devi, Sangeet Natak Akademi Awardee, a renowned dancer. Congratulations Smt. Amusana Devi for your invaluable contribution in the field of dance.

The Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy, a National Institution, the first of its kind in India for Manipuri Dance, was established in the year 1954 under the patronage of late Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. When Pandit Nehru visited Manipur in 1952, he saw a presentation comprising of a number of Dances such as Manipuri, Naga and others. He observed, "The normal Dances that we see elsewhere in India (excepting, of course, the classical dances like Bharat Natyam) seemed pale and insipid in comparison with the show at Manipur". We all know that Manipur is today best introduced to the world through her rich performing arts and culture and not through her geographical position and size. It is through the Manipuri dance that the world knows the existence of such a tiny State in this far-flung North Eastern part of the country. Artistes from this State have given innumerable shows in our country and abroad and have brought commendation and recognition from various foreign countries. The grace

and power attracting the viewer's mind is superb in the elegant Manipuri dance which is a delicately sensitive type of classical dance. I would like to reiterate that Manipuri dance is not the art of Manipur alone, it is also an art of India as a whole. Hence, its development is as important as the development of other aspects of our total cultural heritage. It is, therefore, our bounden duty to preserve, nurture and enrich Manipuri culture so that it may continue to enrich the Indian culture. I feel proud to announce here that I belong to the family of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, my grand uncle who led the cultural movement in the country after independence. He established Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and many Cultural Centres in many countries like South Africa, Indonesia, etc along with Lalit Kala Akademi, Sangeet Natak Akademi and Sahitya Akademi After his death Maulana Azad Centre for Asian Studies in Calcutta was started and the Cultural Centre in Cairo was named after him.

I am happy to know that the Academy is at present conducting courses in Raas, Lai Haraoba, Nata-Sankirtana (Ishei), Nata-Sankirtana (Cholom), Nata-Sankirtana (Pung), Tribal Dance and Thang-ta. I have no doubt that the introduction of some other classical dances in this Academy with an objective for their dissemination among the artistes of the State will further enrich the Academy. I am told that Nata-Sankirtana is indispensable for any religious function of Hindus in Manipur, as they are part of the rituals of the celebration. The students of the Academy have excelled in their chosen field and they have spread Manipuri dance far and wide. Their contribution is immense in the preservation of the rich cultural heritage of the State.

I am happy that the J.N. Manipur Dance Academy, which was established 62 years ago with the sole objective of preserving and propagating Manipuri culture, particularly dance, has been devoting itself whole heartedly to this noble cause since then. I express my appreciation for the Gurus for their

dedication. I am also glad to know that the Academy's Production Unit has been bringing out various forms of Dance-Drama which have brought international fame. I congratulate the Artistes who are playing different roles in the Dance-Drama "Karna Bharam" which we will witness in a short while from now. Therefore, I do not intend to take much of your time as everybody must be eagerly waiting to see the beautiful Dance-Drama. My good wishes to all the Artistes, Gurus, particularly Smt. N. Amusana Devi who took pain to direct and choreograph this Dance-Drama "Karna Bharam".

Thank You,

Jai Hind.