

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR ON THE OCCASION OF SILVER JUBILEE CELEBRATION OF MEITEI TRADITIONAL DANCE TEACHING SCHOOL & PERFORMING CENTRE ON 18TH SEPTEMBER, 2017 AT MAHARAJ CHANDRAKIRTI AUDITORIUM, PALACE COMPOUND, IMPHAL.

Dr. Ratan Thiyam ji, Director, Chorus Repertory Theatre,

President and Artistes of Meitei Traditional Dance Teaching School & Performing Centre,

Eminent Gurus,

Friends from Media,

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be with you all this afternoon for the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of Meitei Traditional Dance Teaching School & Performing Centre. I congratulate the cultural centre on achieving this remarkable milestone in its journey for nurturing and promoting the Meitei traditional dances of Manipur.

Manipur is widely known not only in the country but across the world for its rich culture and tradition. This Manipuri Traditional Dance Institute which was established in 1993 is making valuable contribution to keeping this precious legacy alive and vibrant. The Institute is imparting teaching in the field of traditional dances such as the Lai-Haraoba. It is heartening to know that this Meitei Traditional Dance Teaching School has over the years produced outstanding Manipuri traditional dancers. I am also very happy to know that various renowned Gurus have been associated with the Institute and it is one among those institutes in the forefront imparting Manipuri traditional dances.

The Silver Jubilee Celebrations will feature various programmes over a period of six months phased out in monthly calendars. It will not only attempt

to bring out the best in Manipuri culture but will also discuss various issues relating to it in the present context of art and culture. I am sure the deliberations will include a global perspective also. I am hopeful that the celebrations will be a big boost to the preservation and enrichment of the traditional Meitei dances in the State.

It is certainly a matter of pride for the institution that since its establishment on 18th September, 1993, it has been playing a significant role in bringing up Manipuri culture. In addition, the Organization has also been promoting the rich cultural heritage of the State and contributing to the cultural integration amongst the people of the State.

It is also gratifying to note that the main motive behind organizing the Silver Jubilee Celebration is to promote the traditional art and culture of the State with the primary objective of ushering the culture into the mainstream and thus creating awareness about the rich cultural heritage of the state. All the North Eastern States have their own distinct cultures, traditions, fairs, festivals and numerous colourful celebrations, which reflect their lifestyles. To showcase this rich cultural heritage is another objective of the celebration.

Traditional Art forms and craft take ages to evolve retaining their vestigial characteristics. Similarly, dance and music symbolizing joys and jubilations of generations hold the imprints of their long social and cultural history and tradition. Artistes and Artisans of every generation have interpreted them and further enriched the tradition. Without them and their dedication, probably we would have been at a loss finding us disconnected with our past and strong roots. Keeping them alive is, therefore, a magnificent form of paying homage to our artistes and artisans 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 and craftsmen who keep these traditions alive. In that way this Celebration is a step in the right direction.

Our efforts should be to create a favourable environment for the cultural traditions and practices to flourish. In our march towards progress and prosperity, our cultural richness is our asset that makes us proud and keeps us connected. We must ensure the survival of our handicrafts, our traditional art, our dance forms and our music. We should encourage our youth to keep these skills and creativity alive and robust. I urge for collective commitment for preserving core cultural values and I shall be very happy when this commitment and effort will make a thousand orchids bloom in the valleys of the this fascinating State.

With these words, I thank the cultural Centre for inviting me to this function and wish the Silver Jubilee Celebration every success.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.