

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR AT THE INAUGURAL SESSION OF THE 1ST NORTH-EAST DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT ON 21ST NOVEMBER, 2017 AT CITY CONVENTION CENTRE, PALACE COMPOUND, IMPHAL.

Hon'ble President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind ji,
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Manipur, Shri N. Biren Singh,
Hon'ble Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Shri Suresh Prabhu,
Hon'ble Chief Ministers of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland & Assam,
Hon'ble Union State Ministers, Shri Jayant Sinha and Shri KJ Alphons,
All the distinguished participants,

At the outset, I, on behalf of the Government of Manipur and people of this State and on my own behalf extend my heartiest welcome to Hon'ble President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind ji for his kind presence at today's North-East Development Summit. I also thank the India Foundation and Manipur Infrastructure Development Agency for organizing such an important summit for the first time in this State.

When I took over charge here, one of my priorities was to provide health care in far-flung areas of the State and I requested the Hon'ble Prime Minister for Flying Doctors or Flying Dispensary for the people who are living in far-flung remote areas of both Valley and Hills Districts and the same could also be applied to all North Eastern States. I was elated to see the recent announcement by DoNER Ministry for starting such a medical outreach service. I am thankful to Hon'ble Prime Minister for speedy implementation on the first suggestion made by me as Governor. The Hon'ble Prime Minister is very much concerned about the development of North East Region and at his kind instance, senior Union Cabinet Ministers are here today to participate in this Summit.

We are closer to South East Asian Countries and the Trans-Asian Highways connecting Myanmar, Thailand and beyond will bring opportunity for export and better connectivity with these countries. I also thank the Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways for boosting State's connectivity with South East Asian Countries via Myanmar. I would also request him to build high standard roads within our State. The grand vision of the Hon'ble Prime Minister for digitizing India will solve the problem of digital

connectivity of the State also and in the coming days we are going to use digital connectivity for virtual class rooms covering every District Headquarters of the State. This will ensure high quality education in the Schools.

Manipur is far away from the capital of the country and is a land-locked State. Therefore, I would like to emphasize on the connectivity, viz, road, air, digital and also the railways. I thank Shri Suresh Prabhu earlier Union Minister of Railways who laid the foundation stone of one of the World's highest railway bridges in Noney District of the State to connect Imphal, our Capital.

I also requested Civil Aviation Minister, Shri Jayant Sinha about providing helicopter service specially in the hilly terrain of the State, which has poor connectivity and I am happy to know that now they have identified five helipads in Manipur and a few others in the North Eastern Region for commencement of the service. Further, I requested him that Manipur should be directly connected by Air from not only the capital Delhi but also from Mumbai, Bangaluru and Chennai to increase tourism and business opportunities so as to enhance investment in the State. With the increase of connectivity, tourism will also increase as Manipur is unexplored paradise.

Manipur is rich in bio-diversity, within the top ten in the world and there are more than 400 medicinal plants found in the North East Region. Today, the world is looking for Ayurved and I am happy that Acharya Balakrishna of Patanjali Ayurved is present here today. I have requested a few other Pharmaceutical Industries who are in herbal medicine to explore the possibilities to establish an Ayurved centre at Imphal. We have great potential in floriculture, ayurved and organic food and in this summit today, North East region should find a common policy for marketing and export.

I have prepared a plan of livelihood mission for Skill Development in Manipur to solve unemployment problem and I thank the State Government for approving the plan and with the help of the Union Skill Development Ministry, we are planning to train young people in various areas like tourism, hospitality, sports, textiles, pottery, cane and bamboo crafts, stone carving block printing, hand embroidery, tribal arts and crafts and others very soon. We are going to launch the programme and it is our earnest desire to train thousands of youths in one year which is quite possible. During my term as Union Minister of Minority Affairs, I did the same for the youths belonging

to minority communities and in two years trained hundred thousands of youths all over the country. I am hopeful that with the enthusiasm of the Chief Minister, we can achieve these targets in Manipur also.

It is highly satisfying that apart from providing an opportunity for the NE Region to showcase its economic potential, the summit is also aimed at providing opportunity to engage with other Govt agencies, Embassies of various countries and investors to enhance the growth of the region and its neighbourhood which will contribute significantly to the development of the entire North East Region. I am happy to learn that the Manipur Govt is making efforts to attract investors from inside and outside the country which is an encouraging step.

With these few words, I feel honoured to be with you all at the inaugural function of North East Development Summit and wish the deliberations of the Summit a grand success. I end with prayer for peace and development of entire beautiful North East region.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.