

SPEECH OF DR. NAJMA HEPTULLA, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF MANIPUR ON THE OBSERVANCE OF 36TH WORLD T.B. DAY AT CONFERENCE HALL, JNIMS, POROMPAT, IMPHAL EAST ON 24TH MARCH, 2017

Shri Y. Khemchand Singh, Hon'ble Speaker, Manipur Legislative Assembly,
Dr. L.Deven Singh, Director, Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences,
Members of the Media,

All Members from the Medical fraternity,

All participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very happy to be in your midst today on this occasion of the observance of 36th World TB Day. The purpose of the observance is well reflected in its theme 'Unite to end TB – Leave no one behind'.

We all know that prevalence of the disease 'Tuberculosis' among the people, particularly among the poor is always a matter of concern for the public health authorities. The public perception of the disease is such that it creates panic in the minds of the people. This disease is a curable disease and proper awareness drive needs to be taken up for disseminating this information. On the other hand, it is known as "King's Disease' and if the patient is economically sound, this disease can be easily cured without any complication with proper diet. World Tuberculosis Day, falling on March 24 each year, is thus designed to build public awareness about the global epidemic of tuberculosis and efforts to eliminate the disease.

In view of the risk potential of TB to public health, World TB Day is one of eight official global public health campaigns recognised by the World Health Organization (WHO), along with World Health Day, World Blood Donor Day, World Immunization Week, World Malaria Day, World No Tobacco Day, World Hepatitis Day and World AIDS Day. Though it is very

curable now, the stigma associated with the disease still persists and efforts need to be made to dispel any wrong notion about the disease. I have also come to know that the state has also been observing World TB Day every year in different parts of the state and I am hopeful that the concerned health authorities will continue to pursue vigorously to contain and eliminate this dreadful disease. It is also a matter of great satisfaction that the Government of India under World Health Organization (WHO) has been taking up various measures to eradicate TB disease from the country by 2030.

As treatment of Tuberculosis is a costly proposition, due heed should be paid to preventive measures. A well orchestrated awareness campaign and an informed public will help in effective application of the preventive measures. In India, in the rural areas especially, people are prone to the disease because of their lifestyle. One common cause of TB in the lungs has been the inhalation of smoke emanating from burning of firewood. This is most common among women who use firewood for cooking purpose. The disease is also common among those who smoke. Endeavour should be made to give up these harmful practices or habits. Sadly but true, the modern lifestyle in the metropolitan cities has also contributed to the spread of this disease. The increasing quantum of smoke spewed out by the vehicles in the metropolitan cities has reached menacing proportions. Such pollution poses strong potential for causing the disease. Realising the imminent danger, various Governments have been adopting out-of-the-box methods to keep the air pollution in check such as allowing vehicles bearing odd number Registration to ply on specific days only.

Only a few of you would know that I was also inclined to join the medical profession soon after finishing school. However, destiny decided otherwise as I was found underaged and too young to take up the MBBS course. I continued my education of Life Sciences on the advice of my grandfather Maulana Azad who was the 1st Minister of Education of free

India. After my post graduation in Zoology, I joined research on the development of the heart of birds, specially the conducting tissues of the avian heart. I submitted my dissertation and was awarded Ph.D. Degree when I was 22 years. Till today, I retain my deep interest in life sciences and Health is an area of keen interest and concern for me.

Various facilities have been put in place to combat the disease. A person can go for TB test in health centres at free of cost. Free medicines will be given if he is tested TB positive. Timely detection and medication can cure the disease without any problem. The disease was considered serious in earlier times and persons detected with the disease used to experience social stigma. The concept is gradually changing and the disease is now easily curable with proper medication. The World TB Day is a global effort to find, treat and cure the 3 million TB patients and accelerate progress towards zero TB death, infection, suffering and stigma. The observation will provide opportunity to raise awareness about the Global and national epidemic of tuberculosis and solutions to support, control and eliminate the disease. Many people are unaware of the TB facilities provided free of cost in the hospital and go outside the state for TB treatment which is not required at present.

I would like to appeal to the NGOs and the civil societies of the state to extend cooperation and support to the TB Control Programme for the welfare of the people of the state. In this important event I would like to reiterate that it is the duty and responsibility of every individual and not only the Health authorities to fight TB or any disease.

I thank the organizers and the participants for the warm and affectionate welcome accorded to me.

Thank you,

Jai Hind.