

Address by Ambassador Kenji Hiramatsu
at the Inauguration Ceremony of the Imphal Peace Museum

Honorable Minister Shri Karam Shyam,
Sir Dominic Asquith, High Commissioner of the United Kingdom,
Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, Chairman of the Nippon Foundation,
Members of the Manipur Tourism Forum,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to extend my hearty congratulations to everyone upon the inauguration of the Imphal Peace Museum. This tranquil place at the foot of the Red Hill was once a fierce battleground, taking the toll of so many precious lives. There is no better place to reflect on the past and appreciate the peace we enjoy today.

I am grateful to Mr. Yohei Sasakawa as well as the Nippon Foundation and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation for their generous support to the Museum.

My special thanks go to the Manipur Tourism Forum and its committee members for devoting their time, energy and resources to create this quality Museum. I would also like to express our appreciation to the invaluable support by the State Government, including the provision of the land. The Battle of Imphal had devastating implications for the local people, who had to endure tremendous sufferings. This history makes me feel even more indebted to the people of Manipur for their warm support for this Museum.

I am also truly thankful to Sir Dominic Asquith, High Commissioner of the United Kingdom, for attending this ceremony. This morning, both of us visited the Imphal War Cemetery and the India Peace Memorial, and offered our heartfelt prayers to the fallen souls. I appreciate how the people in Manipur are working hard to well maintain these memorial places and ensure their dignity.

With this historical moment commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Imphal, we are now setting foot into the new chapter of our history. This new chapter will be bright, because of the valuable lessons we draw by solemnly reflecting on our past. This Museum will offer a place for such reflections for us and the later generations.

With my sincere wishes for the success of this Museum, I once again congratulate all of you who have rendered their invaluable support to this initiative.

Thank you very much.