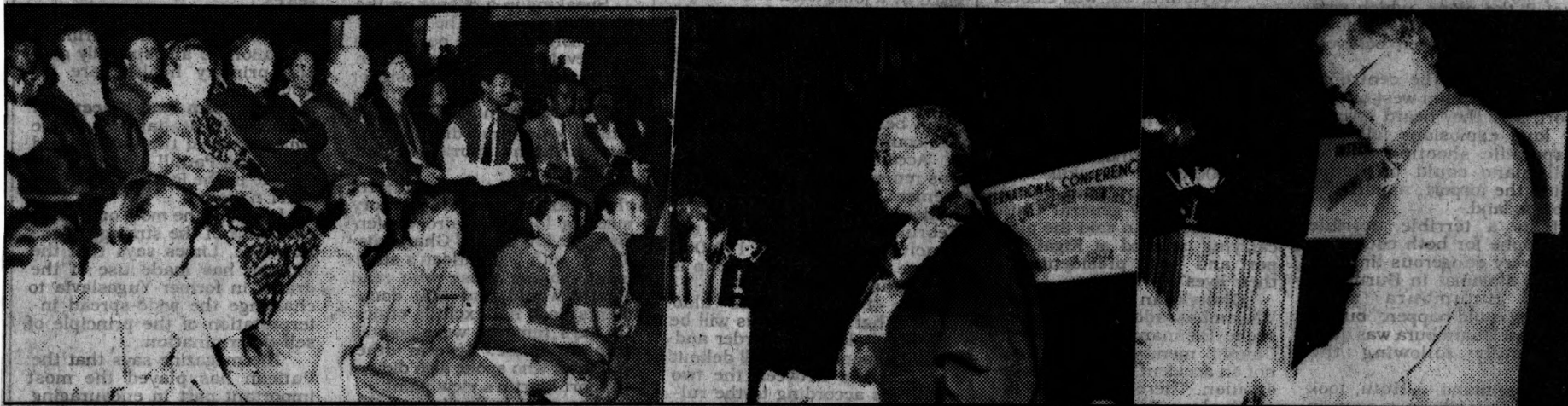


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SHILLONG: Mr Rajmohan Gandhi (extreme right) and Mr Audrey Burton (centre) addressing the conference on Thursday. A section of the audience. MG Photo.

## Dighe pleads for closer ties

**By a Staff Reporter**  
**SHILLONG, APR. 7:** "At the beginning of the 20th century, a famous Russian thinker and revolutionary declared, "If any one born in this century thinks he has come to relax, he should know he has come in the wrong century," exhorted the governor of Meghalaya Mr Madhukar Dighe today.  
 Mr Dighe said this while inaugurating the week-long international conference titled *learning to live together: frontiers of hope*, which began here at the State Central Library auditorium on Thursday.  
 A jampacked hall watched as the delegates from seven different countries over the world prepared themselves to work for a better future for mankind over the next few days. Opening songs from non-governmental organisations marked in opening ceremony.  
 Appreciating the invitation committee for organising the conference in the north-eastern region, Mr Dighe said that it was very appropriate to have it

here as the region is going through a period of uninterrupted disturbance. He said that the theme of the conference has been aptly selected which would certainly bring closer ties between people to people. "It is recognised by every one of us and the whole mankind that there is no alternative to "learning to live together", Mr Dighe added.  
 Recalling the two World Wars Mr Dighe said that in between these wars there has been efforts for mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence. "The League of Nations and United Nations Organisation came into existence for that purpose," he added.  
 While reiterating the mounting problems that confront the people of the north-east, Mr Dighe said that crux of the whole problem in this region is the lack of infrastructural and industrial development together with the communication back-log. Its geographical isolation and historical reasons has created an un-

easiness.  
 Therefore, Mr Dighe felt, the conference is most timely as this international meet has been called "to consider mankind's deepest concerns, aspirations and challenges and to share experiences of change and hope in difficult situations," as is stated in the invitation.  
 "If mankind has learnt a lesson from the costly mistakes of this century, it is perhaps this -- that grand ideas for peace and equitable progress and clever plans to achieve them are by themselves were inadequate to produce the desired result," Mr Dighe said. Quoting Abraham Lincoln, Mr Dighe said "God must love the ordinary people. He made so many of them." If this is true, God must be expecting the ordinary people to think and give much more to play their crucial role to create the society they deserve and should have. The refusal or failure by the ordinary millions to be responsible and the unscrupulous abuse of power and

position by the educated people, politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen is defeating all plans for progress," Mr Dighe said.  
 He appealed to the people to get rid of the prevailing vague belief that by some magic of politics and statecraft, our accumulated problems will be solved without efforts and without a price being paid by everyone.  
 Mr Dighe said that although official policies and political approaches are vital to solve problems, the bridges of understanding that people build between themselves across barriers when they decide to face their common problems together are more important. He also felt that the spiritual factor plays a vital role in the breaking down of barriers.  
 Mr Dighe called upon the young people to prepare themselves to face the challenges that will usher in with the beginning of the 21st century. He

cautioned that in a few years from now the curtain on this turbulent century is about to be drawn but this observation is going to hold true for the 21st century also.  
 The governor congratulated the tribal communities of the region initiating the process of change and healing in themselves without stopping to analyse the wrongs of others or waiting for others to bring the cure.  
 Earlier, while welcoming the delegates as patron of the organising committee, Mr Dighe said that it was a privilege to have people from other nations of the world who have come a long way to share vital lessons drawn from their difficult experiences and that would be relevant on the people here.  
 The inaugural function also included a captivating key-note address from Mr Raj Mohan Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, an ex-parliamentarian and now a professor on policy research in New Delhi.



One of the foreign delegates seen addressing 'Learn to live together - frontiers of hope' meet at State Central Library on Thursday. The state Governor, Mr Madhukar Dighe and the Chief Minister also seen in the picture.