

RAJ BHAVAN, TAMIL NADU - PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

**HON'BLE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS AT THE VALEDICTORY
FUNCTION OF "VITASTA FESTIVAL" AT SRINAGAR
ON (25.06.2023)**

Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu in his presidential address said :-

I am feeling extremely happy to participate in this programme of Vitasta. There are many reasons for this; one of them is, I participated in the inauguration function of this festival in Chennai on January 27, 2023. After moving through the length and breadth of the country, it is concluding today in Srinagar. Vitasta is the historically original name of the Jhelum River and is the mother of all rivers in Kashmir. It is a Holy River with a rich civilizational history of Bharath. Kashmir has been associated with my life for 40 years. In the 1980s, we used to come here as tourists, and at that time, we used to enjoy Kashmir and its Kashmiriyat. What a sight it was! At that time, no one could have imagined that in a few years this beautiful state would be turned into the centre of terrorism. During that time in the 1990s, the Home Ministry sent me to Srinagar to serve the people here. Those were the days when smiles vanished from people's faces. The mourning of a death, the horror of violence. Many times, I had a close call with death. It was with the blessing of Maa Vitasta that I survived. It was the worst time of terror, with the incident at Hazratbal Dargah and the burning down of Charar-e-Sharief by the terrorists. It seemed that there was a well-crafted conspiracy to make Kashmir bleed and suffer, to erase its soul and its identity. When I came here in 2018 as the Deputy National Security Advisor, there was a significant decline in violence, and as a

result, tourists started coming here again. Even then, there was an atmosphere of tension, with an apprehension that the period of violence might return again.

How many people, including lakhs of Kashmiri Pandits, were forcefully driven out of here. Whenever I used to meet those displaced people, I was deeply anguished to see the pain on their faces. It seemed that Kashmir had been completely destroyed. When I came today, I met many people, including my old colleagues. They said that peace and tranquilly have returned. With more gusto than ever, Kashmir and its Kashmiriyat are resurging with new energy. For the magical transformation that happened in the last 4-5 years, on behalf of the people of Kashmir and the whole of India, I congratulate and express my gratitude to Hon'ble Prime Minister Thiru. Narendra Modi ji.

Almost all countries in the world are made up of military forces by conquering territories. Contrary to that, Bharat was formed by the Rishis and Munis and their thousands-year-old Darshan and legacy, based on which Bharat came into existence. In the awakening of this civilization and in furtherance of its culture, Kashmir has contributed a lot. Buddhism has a deeper connection with Kashmir. We have forgotten that the Fourth Buddhist Council was held in Kashmir. It was an important centre of spiritualism. When the Bactrian king Menander (2nd century BC) invaded and conquered the territory, he got curious to understand the Darshan of this place. In his pursuit, he called Yogi Siddhar Nagsen, the great sage and Buddhist scholar, and had a long discussion with him. Menander accepted Buddhism and became Milind. Their dialogue in the form of questions and answers was compiled into a Buddhist scripture called **Milinda-panha**. The invaders kept coming. It is because of the uniqueness of this sacred land that those invaders,

overwhelmed by the Darshan and philosophy, became a part of this land. This went on for thousands of years, until such faiths came to this land that believed that theirs was the only true faith and all other faiths were unacceptable. From then on, about a thousand years ago, our problems also began.

Today, we are in a new era. A new India is emerging. India is the rising and shining sun on the horizon of the world. Earlier, India was on the margins of the world. Today, when our Prime Minister speaks, the whole world listens carefully. Today, the world is witnessing the dynamic and positive emergence of India with great hope and expectations. In the next 25 years, that is, the Amrit Kaal, India has to become Atmanirbhar and also achieve its destiny of Vishwaguru, which is necessary for the welfare of the world. And in this resurgence of the new India, its culture is playing a significant role. Our diversity is our innate strength; there are so many variations in languages, dialects, costumes, cuisines, and geography. All these diversities that we see, if we go deep into them, have an underlying unity of India. This unity binds India together by this thread. We have to nourish and further strengthen it. I heartily welcome and congratulate the efforts being made by the Ministry of Culture in this direction. I heartily thank all the artists as well. Although today is the closing ceremony of Vitasta, I firmly believe that a new festival will start very soon, which will further strengthen the awakening cultural consciousness of the Nation.

When I invited Kashmiri artists who participated in the Vitasta event in Chennai to the Raj Bhavan, I mentioned to them one thing: how the whole of Chennai becomes vibrant, vivid, and radiant with art, music, and drama performances that run in the month of December, known as Margazhi month. Participants from different parts of the world come and

perform in the various events in Chennai during that eventful month. In the month of Margazhi, I invite Kashmiri artists to Chennai.

The kind of love and appreciation the artists received in Chennai is typical of Tamil Nadu, they wholeheartedly appreciate and celebrate any cultural art of India with the same warmth and zeal.

In this function, Thiru. Banwarilal Purohiit, Hon'ble Governor of Punjab and Administrator, UT Chandigarh, Thiru. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary, UT J&K, Tmt. Uma Nanduri, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India, Sri Siddharath Kak, Knowledge Partner for Vitasta Kashmir Festival and Thiru. Furkan Khan, Director, NZCC, Patiala were present.

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