



Authors and speakers will have to discuss how to bring about change in every sphere of India: Vice President Inaugurates Times Lit Fest Delhi – 2017

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The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that authors and speakers will not only dwell on the past but also discuss how to bring about change in every sphere of India. He was addressing the gathering after inaugurating Times Lit Fest Delhi - 2017, here today. The CEO, Raj Group, Shri Raj Jain and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

The Vice President said that literature is the lifeblood of a society, mirroring its inner workings, its triumphs and challenges, its anxieties and its possibilities. He further said that it is a reflection of its trials and tribulations. It provides an insight into the happenings of a society and captures its culture, traditions, ethos and all that is good and bad, he added.

The Vice President said that from Kalidasa to Premchand, from Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore to the present day, India has always been blessed with a strong literary lineage of writers, poets, intellectuals and thinkers. They have chronicled the times, exemplified our open traditions and enriched the intellectual traditions of India with some of the finest works, he added.

The Vice President said that the country has emerged as one of the large economic powers in the world and is increasingly becoming the favourite destination for foreign investors. He further said that India is at a historic juncture and at the cusp of a major transformation—not only in terms of economic growth, but also because it is one of the oldest civilisations with a young population. Blessed with an educated, talented and skilled young work force, India has all the potential to become a leading player in digital technologies and global knowledge hub, he added.

The Vice President said that India always believed in pluralistic traditions and ethos and never allowed narrow and bigoted views or practices to rear their ugly heads. Dissent is agreeable but disintegration is not acceptable, he added.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

" I am delighted to inaugurate the Times Lit Fest Delhi- 2017. Such events not only serve to bring together leading personalities from different walks of life but more importantly provide a platform for generating and exchanging new ideas on a host of issues, both past and present.

Literature is the lifeblood of a society, mirroring its inner workings, its triumphs and challenges, its anxieties and its possibilities. It is a reflection of its trials and tribulations. It provides an insight into the happenings of a society and captures its culture, traditions, ethos and all that is good and bad.

Literature and its celebration are also intrinsically woven into the essential fabric of an open society and the culture of our democracy.

From Kalidasa to Premchand, from Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore to the present day, India has always been blessed with a strong literary lineage of writers, poets, intellectuals and thinkers, who have chronicled the times, exemplified our open traditions and enriched the intellectual traditions of India with some of the finest works. Works of many Indian writers were translated into several languages because of their universal appeal. Good books like great men are immortal.

I compliment the organizers of the Times Lit Fest Delhi, now in its third edition, for bringing to the national capital a unique Literary Festival.

Quite appropriately, Times Lit Fest-Delhi 2017 is a celebration of New India. Today, the country has emerged as one of the large economic powers in the world and is increasingly becoming the favourite destination for foreign investors. The recent upgrading of India's sovereign rating by the Moody's Investors Service, India's jump by 30 places in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings to be ranked 100 among 190 countries, the decision of the government to infuse Rs.2,11 lakh crore into public sector banks, demonetization and introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST) augur well for Indian economy with the GDP growth likely to touch 7.5 per cent in the coming months.

India is at a historic juncture and at the cusp of a major transformation—not only in terms of economic growth, but also because it is one of the oldest civilisations with a young population. This young population will be the driver of the transformation that the country will witness in the coming years. Blessed with an educated, talented and skilled young work force, India has all the potential to become a leading player in digital technologies and global knowledge hub.

India always believed in pluralistic traditions and ethos and never allowed narrow and bigoted views or practices to rear their ugly heads. In this context, I would like to once again reiterate that while the freedom of speech is a fundamental pillar of our free society, it is not absolute and is circumscribed by reasonable restrictions. Dissent is agreeable but disintegration is not acceptable. That is the bottom line and any attempt to undermine the integrity and unity of India by forces inimical to the growth of India must be nipped in the bud.

I am happy to see that you are celebrating the power of the written word, a celebration that has been a constant through the ages in Bharat. I am told that some of India's brightest minds and writers will be discussing a host of issues at the Delhi Lit Fest such as how can 21st century children relate to our ancient epics? Should the secular state also appreciate Indian dharma? Is politics lagging behind social change and does India need a new political and economic blueprint?

Since we are celebrating new India, I hope your authors and speakers will not only dwell on the past but also discuss how to bring about change in every sphere of India: how can we move beyond the shibboleths of the past and embrace change, how do we create a society where change is positive, robust and moves us along towards an open, welcoming society in the magnificent tradition of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam?

I am very glad that the festival is open to the public and will be engaging with the the entire spectrum of ideas from social media to scholarship, from high art to street expressions, from budding novelists, films and sport to the man on the street.

Whether in the attitudes of the youth, the energy of civil society, fast-paced technological breakthroughs or in the dynamic interaction of the generations, there is no doubt that we are seeing a New India. We are the world's youngest country of its size, and the new intellectual churning and questioning, new ideas about society, politics, citizens' activism and youth power are exciting new features. I hope you will showcase these at Times Lit Fest Delhi 2017.

A society must always be in conversation with itself and I hope the writers and thinkers gathered here will discuss about bringing a positive change in every sphere and make India stronger.

Thank you. Jai Hind!"

