



English rendering of the text of PM's address on the occasion of the 5th International Convention of SPIC MACAY at New Delhi – via video conferencing

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Governor of Tripura Mr. Tathagata Roy, Governor of Haryana, Prof. Captain Singh Solanki, my colleague in the Cabinet Mr. Suresh Prabhu, Chairman of Spic Macay's Advisory Board Dr. Karan Singh Ji, Chairman Mr. Arun Sahay Ji, other dignitaries present in the programme and my young friends!

Congratulations to all of you on the 5th International Convention being organised on the 40th anniversary of the establishment of "Spic Macay". This institution has played a very important role in nurturing Indian heritage through classical music, art, literature, folk culture. Lakhs of youngsters have been inspired and made aware of the country's culture by this institution.

I congratulate Professor Kiran Sethji for organising this event. Professor Kiran Sethji has been deftly leading this cultural movement for the past 40 years. He is such a seeker whose years of perseverance have kept Indian music and culture alive in the youth.

Friends, true seekers have mystical line of renunciation and are above all these mundane temptations. I had read an anecdote in which once a musician was asked by the former President Dr. Rajendra Prasad that what kind of support he wanted from the government. The musician, taking the name of a particular raga, said that many artists do not sing it properly, and distort it; can the government stop it? Upon hearing this reply, Dr. Rajendra Prasad bowed his head with a smile.

In the field of music, it is not governance, only discipline rules. In the last 40 years, the work which your society has done with immense discipline and single minded focus by going to schools and colleges in every corner of the country to link the students in villages and cities to this programme; getting artists to work with them at a very low fees; mobilizing the resources; is really unique and commendable.

This organization has created a family through its supporters who have played a major role in breaking the geographical boundaries to spread awareness about the Indian culture throughout the world.

Today, on this occasion of the International Convention, I congratulate you and all those great artists who have been supporting it for the last 40 years. I want to congratulate all those individuals and organizations who have been supporting this cultural movement for a long time.

Students from our country and abroad, who are participating in this programme, are very fortunate that they have the opportunity to attend not one but several concerts of India's most respectable performers. I believe, you will get the feel of the country's cultural diversity, its splendour, beauty, discipline, humility, kindness in these concerts. These are the symbols of our great nation, symbols of our Motherland.

Friends, the music from the soil of our country, the music that took its birth here, not only give us happiness, but it reaches the heart and the mind. The Indian music influences a person's thought process, his mind and his mind-set.

Whenever we listen to classical music, irrespective of the style, we may not understand it, but if we listen to it carefully, we experience absolute peace. Music is very much a part of our daily life. For the world music is an art; it is a source of livelihood for many people, but in India music is perseverance - a way of living life.

'Majesty, Magic and Mystic' are the three qualities of Indian music. The height of the Himalayas, the depth of the mother Ganga, the beauty of Ajanta-Ellora, the vastness of the Brahmaputra, the pattern of the waves of the sea, and the intrinsic spiritual life of the Indian society - music is an amalgamation of all these. That is why people spend their entire life in understanding and explaining the power of music.

Indian music, be it folk music, classical music, or film music, has always connected the nation and the society. Music gives out a message to all to remain united by breaking the social barriers pertaining to religion and caste. Hindustani Music of the North, Carnatic Music of the South, and Rabindra Songeet of Bengal, Jyoti Music of Assam and Sufi Music of Jammu and Kashmir, form the base of our Ganga-Yamuna civilization.

When someone from abroad comes to India to learn Indian music and dance, he is astonished to know that there are so many dance styles based on the feet, hands, head and body postures and that these dance styles have been evolved in different periods of history.

Another specialty is our folk music which has been developed by our tribal people through the ages. In order to break the social order of that time, they developed their style, presentation method and the way of telling the story. Folk singers and dancers have developed their own style by using the language of the local people. This style did not require any rigorous training and general public could participate in it.

Most of you understand these nuances of our culture, and its expanses. But today's younger generation is probably not aware of it. Because of this apathy, many musical instruments and styles are on the verge of extinction. Many children might know about different types of guitars, but they would hardly know the difference between Sarod and Sarangi. Such a situation is not desirable.

Indian music, this heritage of our country, is a blessing to all of us. This heritage has its own power and energy. It is said in our scriptures that "Rashtrayam Jagrayam Vyam": 'eternal vigilance is the price of liberty'. We should be alert every moment. We must work every moment for our heritage.

We should not be careless about our heritage. Our culture, art, music, literature, our different languages and our nature - all form part of our precious heritage. No country has been able to move ahead by forgetting its heritage and culture. We all have this duty to protect this heritage and to strengthen it further.

Friends, today is World Environment Day and our music, our art gives us a constant message to save our nature.

Today, climate change remains a burning issue throughout the world. We have to save our environment for the coming generations. In the last three years, the steps that India took to save the environment are being discussed throughout the world. The world is looking towards India and therefore it is imperative that the youth of the country be made aware of environmental protection, to protect their heritage.

You organise seven to eight thousand programmes in a year, and communicate directly to millions of people in villages and towns and especially to the youth. If you also give priority to raising environmental awareness in your programmes, it will be a great service to humanity.

All of you can play an important role in strengthening the government's 'Ek-Bharat-Shreshtha-Bharat Mission'. The mission is an attempt to make the citizens aware of India's different traditions, languages; and methods of eating and living in order to strengthen the cultural diversity of the country.

Under this, two different states are placed together on a platform and are paired. After the pairing, people of one state are being familiarized with the traditions of the other state. Quiz competitions, dance competitions, food competitions etc are being organized on the basis of the language of another state.

Organizations such as this can also help us in taking forward this mission. Since you visit schools of different states, you can form similar pairs of schools and allow them to interact among themselves for cultural exchange.

For the past 40 years you have been trying to give a direction to young energy. Now our country is the youngest country in the world and is full of youthful zeal. Institutes like this can do a lot to channelize this energy for nation building. History is a witness to the fact that a country where its youth progresses towards nation building is ought to reach new heights of development.

Friends, in 2022 our country will be celebrating the 75th year of its independence. By that time, we have to pull the country out of its weaknesses and take it forward to make a 'New India'. This resolution of New India is the resolution of every person, every family, every home, every institution, every organization, every city and every village of the country. To fulfil this resolve, we all have to work together.

I urge you all to fix for yourself some goals, keeping in mind the year 2022.

Friends, cultures keep alive when there is a dialogue process between the 'tradition' and the 'present' age. "Spic Macay" is precisely doing that. Each of your representatives is a flag-bearer of the country's culture and civilization. May these flags remain in the same fashion and you brim with new energy. I conclude with my good wishes. Congratulations to everyone once again for this event. Thank you!!!

AKT/SS/RSB/AK

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