

Prime Minister's Office



English rendering of PM's speech at inauguration of Kashi Tamil Sangamam, in Varanasi

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Har Har Mahadev!

Vanakkam, Kashi!

Vanakkam, Tamil Nadu!

Present in the program is Governor of Uttar Pradesh Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Shri Yogi Adityanath ji, my colleagues in the Union Cabinet Shri Dharmendra Pradhan ji and Shri L. Murugan ji, former Union Minister Pon Radhakrishnan ji, world famous musician and member of Rajya Sabha Ilaiyaraaja ji, BHU Vice Chancellor Sudhir Jain, Director of IIT Madras Professor Kamakoti ji, all other dignitaries and all my honored guests from Kashi and Tamil Nadu, ladies and gentlemen.

I am very happy seeing all of you on the holy land of Kashi, the oldest living city of the world. I heartily welcome all of you to Kashi, the city of Mahadev, to Kashi-Tamil Sangamam. 'Sangams' (confluences) have always held great importance in our country. We have celebrated every confluence from the confluence of rivers and streams to thoughts-ideologies, knowledge-science and societies-cultures. This celebration is actually a celebration of India's diversity and specialties. And therefore, Kashi-Tamil Sangamam is special and unique in itself.

Today, on the one hand, we have our cultural capital Kashi, which encompasses the entire India, and on the other hand, there is Tamil Nadu and Tamil culture, the center of India's antiquity and pride. This confluence is also as holy as the confluence of Ganga and Yamuna. It contains infinite possibilities and potential as much as Ganga and Yamuna. I heartily congratulate all the people of Kashi and Tamil Nadu for this event. I also congratulate the country's Ministry of Education and the Government of Uttar Pradesh for realizing this month-long comprehensive program. Important educational institutions like BHU and IIT Madras are also cooperating in this program. In particular, I congratulate the scholars and students of Kashi and Tamil Nadu.

Friends,

Our sages have said - 'Eko aham bahu syam'! That is, the same consciousness is manifested in different forms. We can see this philosophy in the context of Kashi and Tamil Nadu. Both Kashi and Tamil Nadu are timeless centers of culture and civilization. Both regions are centers of the world's most ancient languages of Sanskrit and Tamil. If Baba Vishwanath is in Kashi, then Tamil Nadu is blessed by Lord Rameshwaram. Both Kashi and Tamil Nadu are 'Shivmay' (drenched in the devotion

of Lord Shiva) and 'Shaktimay' (drenched in the devotion of Goddess Shakti). There is Kashi in itself and there is Dakshin Kashi in Tamil Nadu. Both have their own importance in the form of 'Kashi-Kanchi' in the 'Sapta Puris' (seven holy pilgrimage sites in Hinduism).

Both Kashi and Tamil Nadu are also amazing sources of music, literature and art. 'Tabla' of Kashi and 'Tannumai' of Tamil Nadu! If Banarasi saree is available in Kashi, then Kanjeevaram silk of Tamil Nadu is famous all over the world. Both Kashi and Tamil Nadu are the birthplace and 'karma bhoomi' (workplace) of the greatest 'Acharyas' (masters) of Indian spirituality. Kashi is the land of devotees of Tulsi, while Tamil Nadu is the land of Saint Thiruvalluvar. You can find the same energy in different colors of Kashi and Tamil Nadu in every sphere and dimension of life. There is mention of Kashi Yatra in Tamil marriage tradition even today. In other words, Kashi Yatra is linked to the new journey of life of Tamil youth. This eternal love for Kashi is in the Tamil hearts, which never faded away in the past, nor will it ever fade away in the future. This is the tradition of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshth Bharat' which our forefathers lived by, and today this Kashi-Tamil Sangamam is once again carrying forward its glory.

Friends,

Tamil Nadu has made an unprecedented contribution in the construction and development of Kashi. Born in Tamil Nadu, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was the former Vice-Chancellor of BHU. BHU remembers his contribution even today. Famous Vedic scholars of Tamil origin like Shri Rajeshwar Shastri stayed in Kashi. He established the Sangveda School at Ramghat. Similarly, the people of Kashi also remember Shri Pattabhirama Sastri, who used to live in Hanuman Ghat. If you visit Kashi, you will find that there is "Kashi Kamkotishwar Panchayatana Temple" at Harishchandra Ghat, which is a Tamilian temple. There is also a 200-year old Kumaraswamy Mutt and Markandeya Ashram at Kedar Ghat. A large number of people from Tamil Nadu live around Hanuman Ghat and Kedar Ghat, who have made unprecedented contributions to Kashi over generations. Another great personality of Tamil Nadu, the great poet Shri Subramania Bharathi ji, who was also a great freedom fighter, also lived in Kashi for a very long. He studied at Mission College and Jai Narayan College here. He connected with Kashi in such a way that Kashi became a part of him. It is said that he also kept his popular mustache here. Many such personalities, traditions and faiths have linked Kashi and Tamil Nadu with the thread of national unity. Now BHU has added to its pride by establishing a chair named after Subramania Bharathi.

Friends,

This event of Kashi-Tamil Sangamam is taking place at a time when India has entered the 'Amrit Kaal' of its independence. Our resolutions in 'Amrit Kaal' will be fulfilled by the unity and collective efforts of the whole country. India is the nation which has lived a natural cultural unity for thousands of years by respecting the mantra of 'सं वो मनांसि जानताम्' (understanding each other's mind). In our country, there is a tradition of remembering 12 Jyotirlingas from 'Saurashtre Somanatham' to 'Setubandhe tu Ramesham' after waking up in the morning. We start our day by remembering the spiritual unity of the country. We recite mantras while taking bath and worshipping – 'Gange Cha Yamune Chaiv Godavari Saraswati, Narmade Sindhu Kaveri Jale Asmin Sannidhim Kuru. That is, may all the rivers from Ganga, Yamuna to Godavari and Kaveri reside in our waters! That is, we feel like bathing in all the rivers of India. We had to strengthen this tradition and heritage of thousands of

years after independence and make it the unity thread of the country. But, unfortunately, not many efforts were made in this regard. Kashi-Tamil Sangamam will become a platform for this resolution today. This will make us realize our duties and will energize us to strengthen national unity.

Friends,

A verse of Vishnu Purana tells us about the form and body of India. It says उत्तरं यत् समुद्रस्य हिमाद्रेश्चैव दक्षिणम्। वर्षं तद् भारतं नाम भारती यत्र सन्तति: i.e., India encompasses all the diversities and specialties from the Himalayas to the Indian Ocean. And every child of hers is an Indian. If we have to experience these roots of India, then we can see how close North and South are despite being thousands of kilometers apart. Sangam Tamil literature glorifies the Ganga flowing thousands of miles away and the people of Varanasi are praised in the Tamil text Kalittokai. Our forefathers praised the glory of Lord Muruga and Kashi together through Thiruppugal and established Tenkasi called the Kashi of the South.

Friends,

It was this affinity that broke the barriers of physical distance and languages and Swami Kumaragurupara came to Kashi from Tamil Nadu and made it his work place. Swami Kumaragurupara of Dharmapuram Adheenam had built the Kedareshwar Temple here at Kedar Ghat. Later, his disciples established the Kashi Vishwanath Temple on the banks of the Kaveri River in Thanjavur district. Manonmaniam Sundaranar ji has written the state song of Tamil Nadu 'Tamil Thai Valthu'. It is said that his guru Kodaganallur Sundara Swamigal ji spent a lot of time at Manikarnika Ghat in Kashi. Kashi also had a lot of influence on Manonmaniam Sundaranar ji. Saints like Ramanujacharya, who was born in Tamil Nadu, also used to travel thousands of miles from Kashi to Kashmir. Even today his knowledge is considered a proof.

Even today, the entire country from south to north takes inspiration from Ramayana and Mahabharata written by C. Rajagopalachari. I remember one of my teachers told me that 'you must have read Ramayana and Mahabharata, but if you want to understand it deeply then read the Ramayana and Mahabharata written by Rajaji, then you will understand something'. It is my experience that we cannot understand India without understanding the Indian philosophy of the scholars of South from Ramanujacharya and Shankaracharya to Rajaji and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. These are great men whom we have to understand.

Friends,

Today, India has put forward taking pride in our heritage through 'Paanch Pran' (five pledges). If any country in the world has any ancient heritage, then that country takes pride in it. It proudly promotes it to the world. We can see many such examples from the pyramids of Egypt to the Colosseum in Italy and the Leaning Tower of Pisa. We also have Tamil, the oldest language in the world. Till today, this language is as popular as it is alive. When people in the world come to know that the world's oldest language is in India, they are surprised. But we lag behind in glorifying it. It is the responsibility of the 130 crore countrymen that we have to preserve this Tamil heritage as well as enrich it. If we ignore Tamil, we do a great disservice to the nation and if we keep Tamil confined in restrictions, we will do great harm to it. We have to remember to remove linguistic differences and establish emotional unity.

Friends,

I believe Kashi-Tamil Sangamam is more a matter of experience than words. During this Kashi Yatra, you are going to connect with the memories, which will become the capital of your life. The people of Kashi will leave no stone unturned in your hospitality. I want such events to be held in Tamil Nadu and other southern states as well and people from other parts of the country should go there and know India. I wish the nectar that comes out of this Kashi-Tamil Sangamam should be taken forward through research for the youth. These seeds should further become the banyan tree of national unity. The mantra 'Nattu Nalne Namdu Nalan' (National interest is our interest) should become the life mantra of our countrymen. With this spirit, once again many best wishes to all of you.

Bharat Mata ki – Jai!

Bharat Mata ki – Jai!

Bharat Mata ki – Jai!

Thanks.

Vanakkam!

DISCLAIMER: This is the approximate translation of PM's speech. Original speech was delivered in Hindi.

DS/VJ/VK/AK

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