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Press Release

Art and culture play an important role in rebuilding Kerala: Governor

Seven-day-long Nishagandhi Dance Festival kicks off in Kerala's capital

Thiruvananthapuram, Jan 20: The annual tradition of enlivening the sprawling spread of Kanakakkunnu with the rhythmic chime of the anklets to the accompaniment of mellifluous music has kicked off in style here today.

In a beautiful and symbolic twist, His Excellency the Governor of Kerala Justice (Retd) Shri P Sathasivam inaugurated the festival by lighting the traditional lamps carried by seven dancers on a platter.

Inaugurating the seven-day-long Nishagandhi Dance Festival, which will lay feast some of the best and brightest dance forms from across the country, the Governor said, "Art and culture have a major role to play in the rebuilding of Kerala," and called upon stakeholders to leverage them.

Due weightage has to be given to folk and indigenous forms, along with classical dance, the Governor added.

He gave away the prestigious Nishagandhi Puraskaram to Mohiniyattam exponent Kalamandalam Kshemavathi on the occasion. The coveted honour, bestowed on top-notch choreographers in recognition of their life-long contributions, carries a purse of Rs 1.5 lakh, a bronze statuette of sage Bharathamuni and citation.

The Governor also distributed awards to the best performers of the recently concluded 'Vasanthotsavam' Flower Show 2019.

Tourism Minister Shri Kadakampally Surendran who presided over the function announced that Monsoon Rag Awards to celebrate outstanding performance in music will be given away from this year.

"This is in keeping with the current practice of holding the Nishagandhi Music Festival and Dance Festival as two separate events," the Minister said.

Shri K Muraleedharan MLA, Shri VK Madhu, District Panchayat President; Shri V K Prasanth, Mayor, Shri M Vijayakumar, Chairman, KTDC, Smt Rani George IAS,



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Secretary Tourism and Culture, and Shri P BalaKiran IAS, Director, Tourism also spoke at the event.

After the opening ceremony and a choreographed curtain-raiser, a Mohiniyattam performance by eminent choreographer Dr Neena Prasad followed.

The cultural extravaganza will see the staging of a wide variety of genres of Indian dance including Odissi, Kathak, Bharatanatyam, Manipuri, Mohiniyattam and Kuchipudi.

In the subsequent days, the festival will have performances of RashmiMenon (Mohiniyattam), Christopher Gurusamy, Aditya PV (Bharatanatyam), VyjayanthiKashi (Kuchipudi), Manjushree Panda (Odissi), T Reddi Lakshi (Kuchipudi), Sudip Kumar Ghosh& group (Manipuri), Namrrata Raai (Kathak), NrutyaNaivedya troupe (Gottipuva) Raminder Khurana (Odissi) and Monisa Nayak& group (Kathak).

This time, the festival will also feature a Bharatanatyam performance by transgender artist Dr NarthakiNataraj, in tune with the state government's policy of promoting aspirations of artists without any gender bias.

The Nishagandhi Dance Festival, considered a premium tourism product, is being conducted with the support of sponsorships, minimising the outgo from the state exchequer.

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