



Department of Tourism

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Press Release

Week-long Nishagandhi Dance Fest begins on a high note

Health Minister Veena George presents Nishagandhi Puraskaram to Kathak maestro Rajendra Gangani

Thiruvananthapuram, Feb. 14: The week-long Nishagandhi Dance Festival, one of India's top-notch classical dance carnivals organised by Kerala Tourism, began on a high note at the verdant Kanakakunnu Palace Grounds here this evening.

Health, Women & Child Development Minister Smt. Veena George, who inaugurated the festival, presented the prestigious Nishagandhi Puraskaram to leading Kathak exponent Pandit Rajendra Gangani on the occasion, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to Indian classical dance at a ceremony at 6 pm.

The honour carries a prize money of Rs 1,50,000, citation and memento.

A Kathakali Mela featuring hundreds of Kathakali artistes also got under way along with the seven-day festival. Kathakali performances will be held at the venue inside Kanakakunnu palace every day from 5:30 pm.

In her inaugural address, Smt. Veena George said the Nishagandhi Dance Festival is an event that celebrates diversity. "Kerala Tourism deserves credit for providing a platform for where diversity of Indian arts and culture is celebrated," said Smt Veena George.

"The state's tourism sector rose like a phoenix after the downturn inflicted by the Covid-19 pandemic world over, thanks to the tireless efforts of the state Tourism Department and its innovative initiatives" she said.

"By promoting art we're promoting goodness of society and this is a time when conscious intervention through art is needed to make the society sensitive to diverse issues confronting humanity," she said.

"The Kathakali Mela organised along with the dance festival is also a creditable effort to promote Kerala's traditional art form," she added.

Shri AA Rahim MP presided over the inaugural ceremony. District Panchayat President Shri Suresh Kumar was also present.

"Events like Nishagandhi Dance Festival have become an integral component to attract tourists to the state, along with innovative products," Tourism Director Smt Sikha Surendran said.



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Tourism Additional Director (General) Vishnuraj P and dancer Rajashree Warriar were present. The inaugural ceremony was followed by a Bharatanatyam performance choreographed by Parshwanath S. Upadhye & Adithya P.V of Punyah Dance Company.

Pandit Rajendra Gangani & Group enthralled the audience with a Kathak performance later in the evening.

The festival has lined up India's leading classical dancers and upcoming stars to mesmerise the audience. The performers are drawn from diverse Indian classical dance including Bharata Natyam, Kuchipudi, Manipuri, Kathak, Sattriya and Odissi.

'Bali Vadham' (Feb 14), 'Kalayanasougandhikam' (Feb 15), 'Baka Vadham' (Feb 16), 'Nala Charitham Randam Divasam' (Feb 17), 'Kamsa Vadham' (Feb 18), 'Uthara Swayamvaram' (Feb 19), and 'Rukmangada Charitham' (Feb 20), will be performed as part of the Kathakali Mela.

Public entry to the festival is free.

The Nishagandhi Festival brings alive recent trends in Indian classical dance forms and sets a stage for upcoming artists to present their talents and artistic expressions.

On Saturday (Feb 15), Odissi dancers Bidya Das & Lucky Prajna Pratisthita Mohanty will grace the evening with their opening act followed by Amrita Lahiri's mesmerising Kuchipudi moves. Dr Methil Devika and her group will perform Mohiniyattam as the final act of the day.

Sunday (Feb 16) evening of the fest will start with Sandra Pisharody's Mohiniyattam at 6.15 pm followed by Vidhya Subramanian's Bharatanatyam performance at 6.45 pm. Vyjayanthi Kashi and Prateeksha Kashi's Kuchipudi will be the final act of the night starting at 8 pm.

On February 17, Monday, Lekshmi Reghunath's Kuchupudi will be the opening act at 6.15 pm followed by Dr Janaki Rangarajan's Bharatanatyam at 6.45 pm. Kathak dance duo Hari and Chethana's performance will be the last performance of the day.

February 18, Tuesday, features Amritha Jayakrishnan's Bharatanatyam followed by Anita Sharma's Sattriya performance at 6.45 pm. Kuchipudi performance of Sreelakshmi Govardhanan and group will be the final event of the day at 8 pm.

Aishwarya Meenakshi's Kuchipudi at 6.15 pm, Sujata Mohapatra's Odissi at 6.45 pm and Meera Das and Group's Odissi performance at 8, Sunitha Vimal's Bharatanatyam at 9 pm are the events on February 19 (Wednesday).



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On the concluding day, 20 February, Thursday, Arjun Subramanian will perform Bharatanatyam at 6.15 pm. Dr Neena Prasad's Mohiniyattam at 6.45 pm, followed by Thingom Brojen Kumar Singha & Group's Manipuri dance performance at 8 pm and Priya Acote's Bharatanatyam at 9 pm will be the final performances of the dance festival.

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