

**ADDRESS BY SHRI CH. VIDYASAGAR RAO. HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF TAMIL NADU AT
THE VALEDICTORY FUNCTION OF FLOWER SHOW 2017 AT GOVERNMENT
BOTANICAL GARDEN, UDHAGAI, AT 3.45 PM ON 21ST MAY 2017**

Thiru R. Doraikkannu, Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture, **Thiru K.R.Arjunan**, Member of Parliament, (Rajya Sabha), **Thiru C.Gopalakrishnan**, Member of Parliament, (Lok Sabha), **Thiru R.Ganesh**, MLA, Udhagamandalam, **Thiru R.Ramu**, MLA, Coonoor, **Thiru Dravida Mani**, MLA, Gudalur, **Thiru Gagandeep Singh Bedi**, IAS., Agricultural Production Commissioner and Principal Secretary to Government, Agriculture Department, **Dr. P. Shankar** IAS., Collector, Nilgiris District, **Tmt. Archana Patnaik**, IAS., Director, Horticulture & Plantation Crops, **Thiru A.Miller**, Chairman, Tamil Nadu Cooperative Milk Producers Federation, distinguished invitees, nature lovers, tourists, Friends from Media, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me immense pleasure to participate in the Valedictory Session of 121st Flower Show and address this gathering here today. I am mesmerized by the tantalizing beauty of the flowers displayed in an aesthetic manner. The Flower show is a major attraction and thousands of tourists from various parts of the country and abroad visit Ooty Botanical Garden to see the vibrant horticultural displays every year in the month of May.

These colourful flowers, in many ways, represent India in all its beauty and diversity. India is a mosaic of cultures where people of

various religions, castes, creeds and ethnicities speaking different language and dialect live in a perfect harmony. All the people of the country are bound together by the unseen thread of cultural ethos and shared values.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Nilgiris that is 'Blue Mountains of South India' are the nature's gift with nearly 24 of the Niligiri Mountain peaks above 2000 meters with Doddabetta being the highest at 2,637 meters.

The Ooty Flower show showcases the nature's beauty. Each garden of Nilgiris, whether it is the lower garden, new garden, Italian garden, Japanese garden or the sunken garden have their own elegance, fascinating the visitors.

Biodiversity plays an important role in nature. India has taken significant steps in safeguarding the vast and diverse biological heritage. Our country is one of the richest in terms of biodiversity in the world. Out of the 34 global biodiversity hotspots, four are present in India. It is heartening to learn that extensive studies to assess the extent of diversity and the changing trends across habitats are being carried out in our country.

Growing population, rapid industrialization and urbanization have led to deforestation causing global warming and drastic climatic changes. Preventing the loss of biodiversity is the need of

the hour. We should join hands to conserve and preserve the nature in its pristine form.

Recently we have opened the gates of Raj Bhavan, Chennai for the public so as to enable the people to visit Raj Bhavan and also to impress upon the need to preserve nature.

In order to promote green cover a massive tree plantation programme has been launched. I appeal to the students of Nilgiris District to participate in the 'One student-one tree' programme wholeheartedly and also to come forward to create gardens.

I am happy to learn that the Government Botanical Garden which is spread over an area of 22 hectares attracts about 27 lakh tourists and students every year and houses about 2,000 species of Flora and fauna.

The Ooty Raj Bhavan which is situated above the Government Botanical Garden on 87 acres is 2,303 metres above mean-sea level and enjoys a warm, temperate climate.

I directed the concerned authorities to conduct a tree census in Chennai and Ooty Raj Bhavans. As a result, we came to know the diverse species of plants available in the region. A coffee table book, 'Flora of Raj Bhavan Chennai & Ooty' was published. The book has wealth of information on both native and exotic species. The Ornamental gardens, rosaries, lily ponds, sunken garden, vegetable garden and the nursery add beauty to Raj Bhavan, Ooty.

The initiatives taken by the Department of Horticulture and Plantation Crops to conduct competitions for maintaining beautiful Gardens in their household area is commendable. I am pleased to learn that about 150 to 200 gardens are being judged and awarded every year. These competitions act as motivation for the general public to maintain their Gardens in a healthy way.

I congratulate the Agricultural Production Commissioner and Principal Secretary to Government, Agriculture Department, Collector Nilgiris, Director, Officers & staff of the Department of Horticulture and Plantation Crops and all those who are associated with organizing this show in a grand manner.

I convey my warm felicitations to the winners and thank the competitors, public and tourists for visiting and making the show a grand success.

Jai Hind ! Jai Tamil Nadu !