

Religion occupied key place in India's tradition, politics since time immemorial: Prez

BHOPAL, Mar 3:

President Droupadi Murmu on Friday said the entire humanity rests on the foundation stone of religion and it was a matter of pride that religion occupied a central place in India's tradition, social system and political activities since time immemorial.

The great banyan tree of Indian spirituality has its roots in the country with its branches spread all over the world. Many spiritual traditions originated in India and have been flourishing across the world, she said. Realising the cause of human suffering and showing the way to get rid of that suffering is the characteristic of eastern humanism, which has become more important in today's era, the president said.

She was speaking after inaugurating the 7th International Dharma-Dhamma Conference, organised here by the India Foundation in collaboration with the Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies.

"The concept of dharma-dhamma has been the basic voice of Indian consciousness. In our tradition it is said - 'Dharyate anena iti dharmah' - that which sustains is dharma.

The entire humanity rests on the foundation stone of religion. Progress of individuals and society with the spirit of friendship, compassion and non-violence as well as free from attachment and hatred, has been the main message of eastern humanism," she said.

The personal conduct and social order based on morality is the practical form of eastern humanism. It has been considered the duty of every person to preserve and strengthen such a system based on morality, she said.

"It is a matter of pride that religion has occupied a central place in our country's tradition, social system and political activities since time immemorial.



President Droupadi Murmu addressing at the 7th International Dharma Dhamma Conference, organised by the India Foundation in collaboration with the Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies, in Bhopal on Friday. (UNI)

ities since time immemorial.

The deep impact of dharma-dhamma is clearly visible on the democratic system we adopted after independence," the president said. "Our national emblem is from the Ashoka pillar at Sarnath.

The wheel of dharma is adorned in our national flag. Mahatma Gandhi spread the message of non-violence and compassion of Lord Buddha through his values and actions," she added.

President Murmu said that for scholars, there are different schools of philosophy, but mystics of the world speak the same

language. "When realised souls decided to become compassionate teachers or gurus, their traditions came into existence.

Many such traditions originated in India and have been flourishing across the world," she said. Eastern humanism looks at the universe as a moral stage and not as a material battle-ground.

In the building and sustaining of this moral order, every individual has to be action-oriented and not rely on fate. The eastern humanism believes that blind impulses lead to individual fights and even wars between countries, Murmu added.

When India proclaims on the global stage that the entire world is one family - 'Vasudhaiva kutumbakam', it proclaims its commitment to eastern humanism, she said.

"Realising the cause of human suffering and showing the way to get rid of that suffering is the characteristic of eastern humanism, which has become more important in today's era.

In our tradition of dharma-dhamma, the prayers for welfare of all have been a part of our lives. This is the essence of Eastern humanism," she added. Madhya Pradesh Governor Mangubhai Patel and Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan also spoke on the occasion.

The three-day conference with the theme 'Eastern Humanism for the New Era' aims to bring together religious, political and thought leaders from Dharma-Dhamma traditions to ponder over building a philosophical framework for the emerging new world order.

Fifteen countries are participating in the conference. The conference will have 45 speakers in the inaugural session, a ministers' session, a keynote session and five plenary sessions to discuss various sub-themes, along with 115 paper presentations by experts from India and abroad, an official said. (PTI)

Reverting to OPS will privilege Govt servants : D Subbarao

NEW DELHI, Mar 3:



The decision of some states to restart Old Pension Scheme will be decided a regressive move and will provide more privilege to Government servants at the cost of larger public, majority of which has no social safety net, former RBI Governor D Subbarao has said.

Under Old Pension Scheme (OPS), employees get a defined pension. An employee is entitled for a 50 per cent amount of the last drawn salary as pension. OPS was discontinued by the NDA Government in 2003 with effect from April 1, 2004. "That will be a decidedly regressive move both for our commitment to fiscal responsibility, and more broadly for the credibility of our reforms," Subbarao told.

Under the new pension scheme (NPS), employees contribute 10 per cent of their basic salary towards pension while the Government contributes 14 per cent.

"In a country where the large majority of the people have no social safety net, government servants with an assured pension are a privileged lot. "Privileging them even further at the cost of the larger public will be morally wrong and fiscally detrimental," he said. According to Subbarao, if State Governments revert to a 'pay as you go' pension scheme, the burden of pensions will fall on current revenues which in turn means foregoing schools, hospitals, roads and irrigation.

Governments of Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand have informed the central government Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFDA) about their decision to restart OPS for their employees. The Government of Punjab on November 18, 2022 issued a notification regarding implementation of OPS for the state government employees who are being covered under NPS. Jharkhand too has decided to revert to OPS.

Replying to a question on India's rising current account deficit (CAD), Subbarao noted that at the beginning of this year, there were concerns that CAD will rise to as high as 4 per cent of GDP because of high commodity prices and slackening exports.(PTI)

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