

Governor's Address in the Legislative Assembly on 23rd January 2008

Hon'ble Members of the Legislative Assembly,

Vanakkam. I take great pleasure in addressing you at the commencement of the seventh session of the Thirteenth Legislative Assembly in 2008. I convey my hearty new year greetings to all of you.

2. This Government, headed by the Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaignar M.Karunanidhi, considers the promotion of welfare of the people of Tamil Nadu as its foremost duty. Within one and half years of assuming office, fulfilling its promises, this Government continues to rise up to the expectations of the people. You are well aware of the fact that all policies and programmes of this Government are formulated and implemented only with the object of promoting the uplift of the poor, destitutes, Adidraavidars, Backward Classes, Most Backward Classes, Minorities and the disabled. I am proud of the tireless efforts taken by this Government to lead the State on the path of progress, adopting equity and social justice as its guiding vision.

3. Compared to the other states in the country, Tamil Nadu remains a peaceful state. This Government has been maintaining continuous vigil against any extremist activity. Efforts to spread extremism into Tamil Nadu from the neighbouring states have been successfully thwarted. The Government has also taken strict action against mercenary criminal gangs. This Government is of the firm conviction that equitable growth and elimination of poverty are the lasting solutions to extremism as well as caste conflicts.

4. This Government has always striven to realise federalism in its true spirit, as expounded by Arignar Anna's philosophy of State autonomy. In fact, even in 1969, when the Hon'ble Kalaignar assumed office as the Chief Minister for the first time, a Committee to study and give its

recommendation on Centre-State relations was constituted under the Chairmanship of Justice Rajamannar, with Dr.Lakhmanaswami Mudaliar and Justice Chandra Reddy as members and its report was obtained. This Government is happy to note that the Union Government has constituted a Commission on Centre – State relations, headed by Justice Madan Mohan Punchhi, former Chief Justice of India. We hope this Commission will make necessary recommendations paving the way for a truly federal governance in our country while at the same time preserving the unity and integrity of the nation.

5. Recommendations of successive Finance Commissions have not been favourable to Tamil Nadu. They have penalised performing States like Tamil Nadu, by repeatedly reducing their share in the devolution. We hope that the recently constituted 13th Finance Commission will correct this imbalance and provide adequate devolution, having regard to the exemplary performance of this State and its genuine development needs.

6 All of us are well aware of the strains in the inter-state relations due to inter-state river water disputes. Our nation has an established constitutional and legal framework for resolution of such disputes. Hence, in the interest of harmony among the States, this Government would urge that all such disputes are resolved through the existing laws of the land and all States honour and abide by the decisions of the competent authorities.

7. Linking our country's rivers is the only permanent solution to the problem of inter-state river water disputes. This Government has been repeatedly urging the Union Government for the expeditious implementation of this project and for taking up the inter-linking of the peninsular rivers in the first phase. However, no consensus has been arrived at among the states. It is for this reason that the Government of Tamil Nadu has requested the Union Government to provide financial assistance at least for the scheme of inter-linking of rivers within the State during the Eleventh Plan period. **In so far as Tamil Nadu is concerned, without any further loss of time, this Government will expeditiously take up the preliminary works for this project.**

Further, this Government will set up a committee of experts to explore the possibility of preventing the surplus surface water draining wastefully into the sea during the monsoons and using this water to recharge the underground aquifers, benefiting drought prone areas. **A major scheme will be implemented in the water deficit areas of our State from the ensuing financial year, for storing the unutilised water in rivers, rivulets and streams by means of check-dams and utilising it round the year for drinking water and agriculture.**

8. The Sethusamudram project, the longstanding dream of the Tamil people, has been studied since 1860 even during the British rule and found feasible by engineering stalwarts and considered desirable by scholars and eminent men. This project has the potential to contribute to the strength and development of our country by expanding international and maritime trade relations. This Government urges the Union Government not to go back from its endeavour to transform the future of the people of Tamil Nadu to one of progress and prosperity and to continue the implementation of this unique and constructive project, without paying heed to the untenable and contradictory arguments now raised by a few for political gains.

9. The heavy rain and floods witnessed by the State during the last month not only led to loss of lives but have also caused widespread damage to public properties like roads, tanks and buildings, and affected crops in several parts of the State. It is estimated that these damages are to the tune of Rs.1,510 crores. The Hon'ble Chief Minister and other Hon'ble Ministers have personally visited the affected areas and supervised the relief operations. This Government has allotted Rs.200 crores to undertake immediate flood relief works in these areas. A detailed memorandum regarding the flood damage has been submitted to the Union Government seeking financial assistance. The Central team deputed by the Union Government has visited the affected districts and assessed the flood damage. We urge the Union Government to immediately provide the required financial assistance to the State, based on the report of this team, so that comprehensive restoration works can be taken up in the affected areas.

10. By more than doubling the Tenth Plan outlay of Rs.40,000 crores, the State's outlay for the Eleventh plan has been approved for Rs.85,344 crores. During the Eleventh Plan period, developmental programmes will be implemented with the objectives of reviving the farm sector and ensuring social justice.

11 There is a need to entrust additional responsibilities and provide adequate powers to rural and urban local bodies in the State, to enable them to fulfill the needs of the public and to expeditiously implement development programmes. The High Level Committee under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Local Administration, constituted to make recommendations to the Government regarding additional powers and functions to the Local bodies, has submitted its report. The recommendation of this Committee will be examined and an Action Taken Report would be laid in this House during the ensuing Budget Session.

12. Thanks to the sustained efforts taken by this Government, the Union Government has not only accorded the status of classical language to Tamil but also is establishing a Central Institute of Classical Tamil at Chennai. By enacting a legislation making Tamil compulsory in schools in the State, this Government has ensured that all students will learn Tamil. This Government will leave no stone unturned for making Tamil one of the official languages of the Union Government and a language of transaction in the Madras High Court.

13. You are aware of this Government providing rice at a price of only Rs.2/- per kg., the lowest amongst all States in the country, in pursuance of its objective that all people must have access to good quality rice at a low price. In addition, with a view to containing prices of other essential commodities used by the public, like cooking oil and dhal, they are being provided through the fair price shops from last year. The fact that the prices of food commodities in our State have been contained by this measure is a major achievement of this Government.

14. This Government has been taking determined action to increase the income of farmers from agriculture and allied activities. This will be possible only by enhancing farm productivity and with supplemental income generation through animal husbandry and fisheries. The programmes of the Public Works, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Departments are being implemented in an integrated manner under the World Bank aided IAMWARM Project. By waiving cooperative farm loans, farmers in Tamil Nadu have been enabled to access fresh crop loans. With a view to ensuring a good price to paddy farmers commensurate with the increased cost of production, this Government has provided an additional incentive of Rs.50, over and above the incentive of Rs.100 announced by the Union Government, thus increasing the procurement price of fine variety of paddy to Rs.825 per quintal.

15. The National Agriculture Development Programme, launched by the Government of India, will be implemented in this financial year with an allocation of Rs.185 crores. Under this programme, precision farming is being extended to all districts in the State. Agriculture department has been restructured so that the field officers at the block level are able to carry out extension activities and serve farmers more effectively. Horticulture and Micro irrigation programmes have been accorded priority and are implemented vigorously.

16. Under the scheme for reclaiming waste lands and distributing them free to poor landless agricultural families, one lakh thirty eight thousand poor farmers have been provided with one lakh sixty one thousand acres of land, free of cost so far. **In addition, the Government had fixed a target of providing Three lakh free house site pattas to the landless poor and has granted Three lakh pattas. This Government has also further relaxed the minimum number of years one must have resided in houses on government lands to be eligible for house site pattas, from ten years to five years and has also removed the income limit, thereby facilitating all those persons residing for more than five years in Government lands to benefit from the scheme.**

17. Some difficulties arose in power supply recently, mainly due to shortfall in power supplied by the Central Power Stations. Neyveli Lignite Corporation was not able to supply the committed quantum of power due to shortage of lignite. Similarly, Kalpakkam and Kaiga Nuclear Power Stations have not been able to produce power at the rated capacity due to inadequate fuel. Government of Tamil Nadu has urged the concerned authorities to take immediate measures to improve the supply from Central Power Stations. **Co-generation units will be established in all co-operative and public sector sugar mills in the State at a cost of Rs.925 crores, so as to generate 185 MW of power. They will be operational within 18 months.** The Government has also taken several measures to increase the generation capacity of Tamil Nadu Electricity Board (TNEB). TNEB is in the process of establishing additional Thermal Power Stations in North Chennai, Mettur and Thoothukudi. In addition, accepting the request of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, the Union Government has been providing additional power to Tamil Nadu from the central pool.

18. After having successfully achieved universal primary education in our State, this Government will set Universal Secondary Education as the new goal so that every child will complete 10 years of schooling. We are happy to note that the Union Government has launched a new scheme for this purpose in the Eleventh Plan and this Government will extend its full support for its success.

19. It was during the previous tenure of the DMK government that computer education was introduced for the first time in Government Higher Secondary Schools in the year 1999-2000. During the past one and half years, 1,880 Government Higher Secondary Schools and 1,525 High Schools have been provided with computers. In the coming financial year, computers will be provided to the remaining 100 Government Higher Secondary Schools and 606 Government High schools. **Further, the Government will provide computers to 6,650 middle schools of the Government and Local bodies during the Eleventh Plan period. In addition, the Government will implement a scheme for**

providing computers as reward to 1,000 top ranking Tamil medium students in the Xth standard public examination.

20. The Government of Tamil Nadu has requested the Government of India to establish an Indian Institute of Management at Coimbatore, an Indian Institute of Technology at Madurai and an Indian Institute of Science Education and Research at Trichy. The Government of Tamil Nadu has also requested the Union Government to establish a Central University in Tamil Nadu having regard to the fact that Tamil Nadu does not have any Central University at present. The Hon'ble Chief Minister has also met the Hon'ble Union Minister for Human Resources Development in this regard who has responded positively to the request of the Chief Minister. **This Central University will be established in Tiruvarur district.**

21. It is only the Government Health Care Institutions, the common man can have access to. Hence, this Government has been taking all necessary steps to make them adequately staffed and well equipped. In the last two years, this Government has filled 2,167 vacant posts of doctors and 2,341 vacant posts of nurses. In addition, 468 new posts of doctors and 1,059 new posts of nurses have been created and are being filled up. Three nurses have been provided in each of the 1,000 Primary Health Centres in the State on 24 hour basis, thereby ensuring round the clock availability of maternal health services to rural women. Apart from this, under the Tamil Nadu Health Systems Project funded by the World Bank with an outlay of Rs.597 crores, this Government is executing various works to upgrade the infrastructure of all taluk and district hospitals in the State. It is a matter of great satisfaction that due to the various initiatives of this Government, deliveries in Government institutions have gone up with a fall in the number of deliveries in private hospitals. Under the Varumun Kappom Thittam, 4,872 Health Camps have been conducted so far, benefiting about 51 lakh persons.

22. After this Government assumed charge, 12 Memoranda of Understanding have been signed with major companies like Motorola, Dell Computers, Samsung and Renault-Nissan for investments in the

State to the tune of Rs.15,083 crores. Of them, four companies have already started their operations. These industries will create direct and indirect employment to 1,37,140 persons.

23. The new Industrial Policy announced by this Government recently, with a package of incentives for investors, has been widely welcomed by them. Thanks to this policy, about 20 lakh new employment opportunities will be generated in Tamil Nadu during the next four years.

24. Hyundai is in the process of expanding its existing production capacity to produce 6,30,000 cars annually, with an investment of Rs.4,000 crores. In addition, Ford has proposed to expand its present production facility to produce an additional two lakh cars per year with an investment of Rs.1,800 crores. The fact that these two existing car manufacturers in Tamil Nadu have again chosen to further expand their operations in our State itself, bears testimony to the success of the industrial policy of this Government.

25. As stated in the last Budget Speech, a shipyard will be established in Ennore near Chennai by Larsen and Toubro with an investment of Rs.3,068 crores. This will provide employment to about 10,000 persons. Preliminary works for the construction of another shipyard in Cuddalore district are underway.

26. Recognising the contribution of small industries in generating employment, this Government has decided to encourage small industries through various incentives. This package of incentives will be unveiled in the form of a Small Industries Policy shortly. This policy will provide special incentives to Agro Processing Industries. About 10 lakh persons will get employment from the large number of new small industrial units that are likely to be established due to this initiative.

27. As promised in the DMK election manifesto, the Government has been implementing the scheme for providing free colour televisions to all families who do not have them. As of now, 24,58,411 television sets have been distributed. In the third phase of this scheme, orders have

been issued for procuring thirty four lakh and twenty five thousand colour televisions. The process by which these colour televisions have been procured in a transparent manner through a global tender, after obtaining the approval of a committee consisting of representatives of legislative parties and distributed without any discrimination to poor families in all parts of the State through committees consisting of peoples' representatives has earned the appreciation from all quarters. We will continue to implement the scheme and will very soon achieve the distinction of Tamil Nadu being the only State in the country with colour televisions in all houses.

28. Chennai Metropolitan area is continuing to grow at a fast pace and its transportation issues require quick and lasting solutions. Recognising this important issue, this Government is in the process of implementing the Chennai Metro Rail Project at an estimated cost of Rs.9,757 crores. The Detailed Project Report for this project, prepared by Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, has been sent to the Government of India for getting financial assistance from Japan Bank for International Co-operation (JBIC).

The preliminary works for this project are currently underway.

29. In order to improve connectivity to the Chennai Port, an elevated express highway from Maduravoyal to Chennai Port at a cost of Rs.1,468 crores has been approved by Government of India and preliminary works are underway. With a view to reducing the traffic congestion in the city, this Government has decided to construct a circular high speed transportation corridor connecting the important roads in the city, as available in many cities abroad. A feasibility study is being undertaken for this project.

30. Tamil Nadu is the most urbanised state in the country. Therefore, improving basic infrastructure like roads and drinking water facilities in urban areas is vital for improving the living standards of a large section of the population in the State. To achieve this objective, various works being currently executed under Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal

Mission and Tamil Nadu Urban Development Project at an unprecedented outlay of Rs.6,700 crores, will be expedited.

31. This Government will accord priority for providing housing to low-income and middle class families in urban areas. One lakh new houses are being constructed in urban areas in the State under the various urban development schemes. **Having regard to the housing needs of people living in Municipal Corporations areas, housing schemes will be implemented in areas adjoining these Corporations through Public-Private Partnership. In addition, this Government will permit a higher floor space index (FSI) to builders who comply with the condition of earmarking a certain part of their housing projects for low-income groups.**

32. Hogenakkal Combined Water Supply Scheme is the only permanent solution for the drinking water problems of Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri districts which have a high level of flouride in the ground water. Thanks to the determined efforts of this Government, the Union Government recommended the scheme for financial assistance from Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC). A team from JBIC has visited these districts and conducted studies about this scheme. The approval for the scheme will be obtained based on the final negotiations likely to take place shortly.

33. Air traffic has witnessed a phenomenal growth in our State. Hence, it is essential to expand and modernise the existing airports at Chennai, Coimbatore, Trichy, Madurai and Thoothukudi and establish new airports at Vellore and Salem. This Government would continue to urge the Government of India to accord high priority for these airports.

34. Chennai - Madurai rail link is a vital train connectivity for the people of the southern districts of Tamil Nadu. Only by doubling the crucial Villupuram – Dindigul segment, it will be possible to operate more trains to southern districts. Therefore, in the interests of the people and the industrial development of the southern districts, this Government would

urge the Union Planning Commission and the Union Government to approve the doubling project at the earliest.

35. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, the flagship scheme of the Union Government, is currently being implemented in 10 districts of the State. The Social Audit Team, which has studied the implementation of this scheme in all states in the country, has concluded that the scheme is being admirably implemented in Tamil Nadu. The team has commended the facts that workers are getting a daily wage of Rs.80 and that unlike in any other State, 82% of the beneficiaries are women in Tamil Nadu. **In pursuance of the Union Government's decision to extend this scheme to all districts in the country, this scheme will be implemented in all districts of the State from the next financial year.**

36. The Leather and Textile industries in the State have sought central assistance to establish Zero Discharge Common Effluent Treatment Plants to prevent the pollution of rivers and water bodies. We request the Union Government for early sanction of central assistance for these schemes. The State Government will also extend necessary financial assistance for this scheme.

37. This Government is of the firm conviction that economic development of the southern districts alone can ease the social tensions in this region and has taken a number of initiatives for their industrial development. The hurdles in the establishment of a Special Economic Zone in Nanguneri have been overcome and a Multi Product Special Economic Zone will be established soon in an area of 2,500 acres. Similarly, an IT Special Economic Zone is being established by ELCOT at Gangaikondan. ELCOT is also developing IT Parks in and around Madurai. Land has already been allotted to IT Companies both in Gangaikondan and Madurai. It is expected that these initiatives will generate large scale employment to the unemployed educated youth in this region and will contribute to the economic development of the region.

38. This Government has always supported women to get their rights in full and play their rightful role in our society. All are aware that it was this Government that secured the rights of women by according them equal property rights and reservation in Government jobs and Local Bodies. We hope the UPA Government, led by Dr.Manmohan Singh under the able guidance of Tmt.Sonia Gandhi, will soon be able to enact the legislation giving reservation for women in State Legislatures and the Parliament.

39. This Government is proud of the fact that Tamil Nadu has become the pioneer in the country by implementing the scheme of providing maternity assistance of Rs.6,000/- for pregnant women to enable them to get the much needed nutrition and as a compensation for the loss of income during pregnancy. Five lakh women have availed this assistance to the tune of Rs.300 crores so far. In addition, with a view to addressing the malnutrition suffered by children, this Government is implementing the scheme of providing three eggs a week to about 70 lakhs children in the age group of 2 to 15 years. This Government would urge the Union Government to adopt these model schemes as Central Schemes and implement them in all states in the country.

40. The Self Help Group scheme initiated by this Government in 1989 in Dharmapuri district has now become a mass movement for the economic empowerment of women in our State. **For the first time, this Government has extended the Revolving Fund assistance, provided only to rural areas so far, to the Self Help Groups in urban areas also.** About 3.6 lakh Self Help Groups are operating in this State covering 58 lakh women. These Self Help Groups have availed credit of Rs.2,566 crores from banks, in addition to their combined savings of Rs.1,639 crores.

41. The scheme for providing monthly assistance to unemployed youth has so far benefited 3,53,448 persons. Recognising the fact that only skill development can enhance the employability of these youth, this Government has been implementing a variety of training programmes for them. **This Government will pay attention to improving their**

general knowledge, proficiency in computer and soft skills like spoken English and ability to face interviews. Taking into account the increasing need for trained heavy vehicle drivers, the Government will launch a massive programme for imparting training in heavy vehicle driving through the State Transport Undertakings.

42. In fulfillment of the promise made in the DMK manifesto, this Government had enhanced the monthly pension for the elderly, destitutes and widows from Rs.200/- to Rs.400/- during 2006-2007. Now the Government of India has launched the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme for all old aged persons below the poverty line. In our state, the Chief Minister launched this scheme on 19.11.2007, the birth anniversary of the former Prime Minister late Tmt.Indira Gandhi. Thanks to implementation of this scheme, about 10 lakh old aged persons above 65 years, living below the poverty line in our State will be benefited irrespective of whether they have support from male children or not.

43. During the previous year, this Government had increased the monthly assistance for disabled persons from Rs.200 to Rs.400 and from Rs.200 to Rs.500 in respect of severely disabled persons. In a gesture never done before, this Government had also sanctioned monthly assistance of Rs.500 for mentally challenged persons, who are not in a position to take care of themselves, without any restriction based on income limit or the number of beneficiaries. 30,000 such persons have benefited under this scheme so far. In addition, the Government has also taken necessary action to provide special education and vocational training to them.

44. This Government has always been concerned about the welfare of the **transgenders**, who have been shunned by the society and treated as a kind of handicapped. Recognising the various problems encountered by the transgenders, including that of social acceptance, this Government is implementing a number of beneficial measures like issue of ration cards and free surgeries in Government hospitals for them. **As**

an expression of this Government's empathy towards the transgenders, a separate welfare board will be established for them.

45. As never witnessed before in our State, or for that matter in the entire country, this Government has been providing marriage and maternity assistance to women from poor families. This Government will not tolerate the wrongful acts of middlemen and some officials trying to make gains while disbursing these benefits. The Government will take strict action against such persons.

46. This Government has always accorded priority to the welfare of the workers in the unorganised sector. During 1996-2001, it was this Government which had constituted various unorganised labour welfare boards and granted various benefits to workers in the unorganised sector. Though these boards were abolished subsequently, this Government has revived them. During the last one and half years, 2,20,043 workers in the unorganised sector have received various welfare benefits to the tune of Rs.56 crores through these boards.

47. This Government has formed a separate welfare board for the socio-economic development of folk artists. The Tamil Mayyam – 'Chennai Sangamam' arts festival has been conducted successfully throughout Chennai city during the last two years, receiving great appreciation from the public. With a view to giving fillip to our folk arts, encouraging the folk artists and nurturing their zeal, this Government will provide its co-operation for the conduct of this festival all over the State, in a phased manner during the coming years.

48. The number of people from Tamil Nadu who go abroad for work has witnessed a sharp increase in the past few years. **With a view to removing their hardships, a State High Level Advisory Committee chaired by the Hon'ble Chief Minister will be constituted.**

49. Considering the continuing misery of Srilankan Tamils, this Government urges the Union Government that an amicable political solution should be found at the earliest to this long standing problem.

50. This Government has implemented a number of welfare measures for weavers such as enhanced pension and free power supply. With a view to providing them regular employment, this Government will continue to implement the scheme of supply of free dhotis and sarees to poor people numbering 3.28 crores in the State at a cost of Rs.256 crores per year.

51. Welfare of fishermen has always been accorded high priority by this Government. A separate welfare board for fishermen has been established. This Government is also implementing a scheme to assist the families of fishermen who had gone into the sea for fishing and were found missing. This Government will continue to take all efforts to remove the difficulties faced by our fishermen while fishing in the sea.

52. This Government will extend its full support for the socio-economic development of sanitary workers and those who were engaged in the abhorrent practice of manual scavenging. It is only in this context that this Government has established a separate welfare board for them. This Government will continue to implement schemes for their rehabilitation and alternative livelihood.

53. There is a need to give special concessions to Arundhatiars, as they are still at the lowest rung in terms of socio-economic status. This Government proposes to consult all political parties and arrive at a decision on the possibility of providing special reservation for them within the quota of reservation for Scheduled Castes.

54. This Government recognises the fact that securing high end employment opportunities in all sectors by Adi Dravidars and Tribal Communities is vital for their socio-economic development. With a view to enabling Adi Dravidar and Tribal youth to benefit from the current employment boom in the economy, the Government has earmarked the entire Special State Assistance of Rs.25 crores during 2007-2008, exclusively for the training programmes of Adi Dravidar and Tribal youth.

55. Having regard to the educational and social backwardness of minorities, this Government has provided separate reservation for them

in education and employment. In addition, a separate Directorate has been created to pay special attention to welfare of minorities.

56. All policies and programmes of this Government are always centred around the objective of social justice. All are aware that the DMK Government, inheriting the great legacy of the Justice Party, has always been a champion of social justice. This Government would continue to strive for reservation in Central Government educational institutions and employment in private sector.

57. The Chief Minister has accepted the request of Thiru K.Veeramani, General Secretary, Dravidar Kazhagam that a 95 feet tall statue of Thanthai Periyar must be erected. **However, considering the fact that an even better way of spreading Thanthai Periyar's message of social equality would be to establish another 95 Samathuvapurams in his name, each having his statue at the entrance of the residential area where all communities live in unity and brotherhood, this Government has now decided to commence work for the same.** On completion, along with the 145 samathuvapurams already established by this Government, there will be 240 samathuvapurams with statues of Periyar in the State.

58. In 1921, over 500 scholars under the leadership of the great scholar and founder of 'Thani Tamil Iyakkam', Thiru Maraimalai Adigalar had met in Pachaiyappa's College at Chennai and had decided that Tamils need a separate calendar and a new calendar in the name of Saint Thiruvalluvar could be followed and this would constitute the 'Tamil Year'. They also determined that the birth year of Thiruvalluvar was 31 BC. This decision was accepted by Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaignar even as early as 37 years ago and it was ordered to be followed in the Government Diary from 1971 and the Government Gazette from 1972. **In view of the consensus amongst almost all Tamil Scholars that the first day of the month of Thai, is the first day of the Tamil year, this Government has decided to declare 1st Thai as the Tamil New Year day.** Therefore, the people of Tamil Nadu, who now celebrate Pongal as the festival of Tamils, can now celebrate it as Tamil New Year

day also with redoubled joy. On this day let the people of this State plant trees bearing the 'Mukkani' fruits of banana, mango and jackfruit; draw colourful Kolams; decorate their houses with array of lamps showing them in new splendour; wearing new clothes sing and dance in praise of Tamil pride and self respect; spread the message of equality and shower their love and joy.

59. I have elaborated the policies, endeavours, achievements and future plans of this Government before you. This Government headed by the Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaignar, is firmly determined to ensure that the fruits of the unprecedented growth witnessed by the state today reach all sections of the society and to promote the welfare of the marginalised, spread the spirit of democracy, strengthen communal harmony and secure social justice. I conclude this address, with the hope that you will extend your full co-operation in successfully achieving these goals.

Vanakkam

Jai Hind