

**Thiru. Banwarilal Purohit, Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu
Celebrated Pongal festival at Raj Bhavan**

The Pongal festival was celebrated at Raj Bhavan, Chennai with gaiety and joy on 15th January 2019. In the Raj Bhavan Pongal Peru Vizha was celebrated second time and variety of cultural programmes were performed by leading artists that delicious South Indian fare for the palate.

On this occasion Hon'ble Governor in his address said that, It gives me great happiness to be celebrating the Pongal Festival with all of you here at Raj Bhavan today. As you are all aware the Pongal Festival was celebrated as a public event at Raj Bhavan for the first time last year. This year we are doing it on a grander scale with greater participation from all of you.

Pongal is Unique to Tamil Nadu. All over India this day is being celebrated as Makar Sankranti ie the commencement of the Uttarayana when the days will get longer and the nights shorter. It is a celebration in honour of the Sun God as it signifies the movement of the Sun God to the house of Makar or Capricorn in the Zodiac.

The Pongal festival which coincides with Sankranti gains special prominence as the harvest festival of Tamil Nadu since the State receives the bulk of its rainfall from the North East Monsoon unlike the rest of the country which mainly depends on the South West Monsoon. The Pongal festival is a celebration for the harvest, and a thanks giving to the Sun God for having providing the energy vitality and life for day to day living. It is therefore no wonder that on this day the first grains of paddy harvested and the pulses produced are mixed together with the sweetens of Jaggery and the taste and aroma of spices, cashew nuts and dry grapes to be cooked and offered to the Sun God as Sweet Pongal or Sakkarai Pongal.

The festival Pongal encompasses within itself the concepts of festivity, equality and fraternity. The day is marked by kolams, floral decorations, songs, dances, merriment and joy. The sweet Pongal which is cooked in earthen pots and offered to the Sun God brings everybody out of their houses into the open without any distinction of poor or rich. The Mattu Pongal and Kaanum Pongal which follow the day of Pongal demonstrate our feeling of oneness with the cows and bulls that assist in agriculture and are celebrated with relatives and friends in a convivial spirit of good will and harmony. Pongal sees no distinctions of caste, creed or religion and is universal in character.

On this auspicious occasion I extend my best wishes and greetings to all of you and through you to the people of Tamil Nadu. May the onset of Pongal bring with it greater happiness and prosperity in all our families.

Additional Chief Secretary to Governor Thiru. Rajagopal, I.A.S., welcomed the august gathering.

The cultural programmes that followed including performances by notable personalities such as leading playback singer Padma Bhushan Smt. Sudha Ragunathan, Nagaswaram Shri. Desur Selvarathanam, Padmashri Smt. Vijayalakshmi Navaneethakrishnan, Voilinst Smt. Viji Krishnan, and Bharathanatyam Padmashri Smt. Chitra Visweswaran. The cultural programme was received with rapt attention by the distinguished and discerning audience who appreciated the range of cultural offerings that the artists provided.

On this occasion, Hon'ble Speaker of Legislative Assembly Thiru. P. Dhanapal, K. Pandiarajan, Minister for Tamil Official Language and Tamil Culture and other dignitaries participated.

Raj Bhavan, Chennai -22

Date :15.01.2019

Sd/-

Joint Director (PR)