

**Address by Thiru Banwarilal Purohit, Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu at the 142<sup>nd</sup> Birthday Celebration of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mylapore Chennai on 31/10/2017 at 06.00 PM**

Thiru N.Vittal, Thiru S.Gurumurthi, Thiru L.Sabaretnam, Dr.N.R.Dave, Thiru Ramaswamy, Thiru Suriyanarayanan, Office Bearers and Members of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Memorial Trust, Office Bearers and Members of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chennai Kendra, distinguished Invitees, Students, Ladies & Gentlemen.

It is a pleasure and honour to participate in the 142<sup>nd</sup> Birth Anniversary Celebrations of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the “Iron Man of India” and address this distinguished gathering and students here today.

The Celebrations of Birth Anniversaries of great personalities is not only to pay our rich tributes to those great leaders, but also to draw inspiration from them and follow their footsteps.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel championed for our national unity and integration. “EK Bharat” was his mantra. As citizens of this largest democratic country, we the 125 crore Indians should pledge to strengthen this unity and join hands to make our country the foremost nation and the leader in all spheres. Sardar Patel's farsighted vision, courage, determination and brilliant strategies united our leaders in the nation's freedom movement. He dedicated his life for the solidarity of our nation. For the first time in the Indian History stretched over ages and also in the history of the world, India became united and one without shedding even a drop of blood. Thanks to Sardar Patel the map of Independent India was redrawn with every Princely State, merging with the Union of India. Sardar's amazing leadership and diplomacy integrated more than 550 Princely States under the Indian Union. We owe a lot to this great leader, organizational genius, the architect of united India who weaved our nation into unity travelling the length and breadth after partition.

Every citizen of this great nation should shoulder the responsibility of safeguarding our national unity and its diverse culture. As said by our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji we should develop a sense of belonging and responsibility to make “One India, Great India”.

Sardar Patel said in his address on 21<sup>st</sup> January 1942 during the Quit India Movement, I quote “We have to shed mutual bickering, shed the differences of being high or low and develop the sense of equality and banish untouchability. We have to restore the conditions of swaraj prevalent prior to British rule. We have to live like the children of the same father.”

Let us resolve to shed ego, linguistic and communal differences and strengthen the bondage of unity and brotherhood to promote peace and dedicate ourselves for nation’s progress and prosperity.

Disciplined life is important for an individual. Some think that it is the education which makes one great. It is education coupled with good conduct, character and discipline that really makes one great. The youth of this nation should be made aware of Sardar Patel’s great patriotism and his quality of discipline, simple living and high thinking.

I appeal to all of you to draw inspiration from Sardar Patel. His life is a message. His devotion to duty, discipline, courage and preparedness to sacrifice his life for the cause of the nation, are the qualities which one has to learn and adopt in life to build a harmonious and prosperous India.

I commend the initiatives taken by the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Memorial Trust, Chennai to promote his message among the students. I congratulate all the students who have participated in various competitions held in connection with the Birth Anniversary of Sardar Patel.

The efforts taken by Bhavan’s Chennai Kendra, in organizing this function and the cultural programme on National Integration are laudable.

We have ahead of us great responsibilities and obligations. Let us pledge to preserve our national unity and join hands in the mission to make India a frontrunner in all spheres.

My Greetings to you all.

Jai Hind. Jai Tamil Nadu.