

REPUBLIC DAY ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT,
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Sisters and Brothers of Tamil Nadu.

The Republic Day is a day of formal observance by the nation when, we recall to ourselves the supreme contribution of our freedom fighters and law makers who gave us our Constitution.

The Indian Constitution was derived from the useful aspects of many other national Constitutions, besides being coupled with the ideals and values that hold us aloft as a nation.

Under the Constitution the people of India have promised to give unto themselves the values of justice, liberty and equality while teaming together to form a fraternity, assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation.

The Indian Constituent Assembly which gave us the Constitution consisted of legal luminaries, thinkers, writers and freedom fighters who had risen above narrow sectarian tendencies such as discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, language, religion etc. The result of this unbiased outlook was the fundamental Rights and several other articles of the Constitution stated with precision, fairness and vision.

The principle of equality which is enshrined under Article 14 of our Constitution guarantees to every citizen equality of status and opportunity and equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.

Our Constitution is also endowed with the Directive Principles of State Policy. These Directive Principles set out the goals that a Welfare State should aspire to achieve.

In this way the Constitution sets out the road map which the Central and State Governments should follow in governance so as to ensure healthy, peaceful and prosperous living conditions for the people of India.

The making of our Constitution was the result of sustained consultation and profound decision making over a period of three years between 1946 and 1949 and it was on January 26, 1950 that India became a republic. We are all celebrating the 68th anniversary of our Republic, today. On this day let us resolve to be true to the ideals of the founding fathers of the Constitution who dedicated their lives for the nation.

Let us all take steps to develop the nation and its people to the maximum extent possible, utilising our resources optimally and in a manner that is guided by technology, fuelled by sincerity and driven by concern for the common people. India is the largest democracy in the world and general elections have been held here since 1952.

The democratic character of our national framework has made the common people, the masters of our destiny. India is one of the few countries where universal adult suffrage was guaranteed in the Constitution right from the beginning without any discrimination of education or gender.

This was not so in many of the nations where people had to struggle to obtain their voting rights. This vibrant democratic spirit of India has been acclaimed by the nations of the world and is a model for people to follow to ensure continuity in decision making and stability in governance.

The fact that the Constitution makers reposed complete faith in the common people for electing the governments at the Centre and the States speaks volumes of the future that was envisioned and the morality of our civilisation which has continued all through history for thousands of years.

I have been visiting various parts of Tamil Nadu since I joined. The State is home to a rich culture, an ancient language and friendly people who greet you with a smile, every step of the way.

The State is endowed with good infrastructure, an excellent climate and a work culture where people work hard and work with efficiency and sincerity.

The achievements of the state in the fields of the health and education have set an example for the whole nation. There have been a number of important governance measures in the past where Tamil Nadu has shown the way for other States in India.

Among these, special mention needs to be made of the Nutritious Midday Meal Scheme, the Old Age Pension Scheme, the Maternity Assistance Scheme and the Urban Canteen Scheme better known as Amma Unavagam. When meeting the people during the course of my tours, I have realised that there are a lot of people who have been requesting for issue of house pattas, and provision of civic amenities such as water supply. Applications for marriage assistance and for employment are also among the representations mentioned to me by the common people.

I am also able to see that the administration is toiling very hard to satisfy all these requirements promptly and in a people friendly manner. For these efforts to bear fruit fully, it is necessary to emphasise that we practise the qualities of honesty, efficiency and accountability in administration.

The Government is run for the people and it is important that every member of the Government looks at the benefit that the common people will receive by the work that he is performing. In this regard it would be useful to recall the famous quotation of Mahatma Gandhi which reads as follows – “Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man or woman whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him or her”. The true essence of freedom will have been realised when this expectation of Mahatma Gandhi is fully put into practice.

The last year has been a historic one for the nation. We have witnessed the introduction of Goods and Services Tax on first July 2017. The earnest steps taken by the Union and the State Governments have made the implementation of GST fairly smooth. The State Governments have also been protected from any revenue reduction risk by the effective compensation scheme put in place by the Government of India. I complement the State Government for reviving the practice of “Kudi Maramathu”

The scheme enables the storage of more water in tanks and reservoirs during the rainy season, while at the same time helping the farmers to get the benefit of silt from the tank-bed for agricultural purposes. The Government of India have brought in a number of useful initiatives for the people of India. These include Digital India, Skill India, Stand Up India, Start Up India, Make in India and Amruth Schemes, etc.

Implementation of these schemes with zeal and vigour by the State Government in coordination with the Government of India will enable the expansion of employment opportunities paving the way for economic development. Operating in the background of the initiatives taken in the last few years, India is on the threshold of becoming the Jagath Guru of the world.

Economic growth has been spectacular and governance aimed at elimination of corruption has been an important focal point of action by the national government. States like Tamil Nadu, which are among the most well developed States of the country, have contributed both in the public sector and in the private sector towards the economic development of the nation.

I urge the people of Tamil Nadu on the occasion of this Republic day to strain every nerve and muscle to make our nation great.

The Republic day is a day of rejoicing. We celebrate the sovereignty of our nation on this day and proclaim to the world that we are a self-reliant, self-respecting and self-governed nation. People all over the country celebrate the day with ceremonial splendour and cultural gaiety. The culturally vibrant State of Tamil Nadu, whose literature, music, dance and fine arts are internationally renowned, also plays

host to a variety of cultural programmes in every village, district and city on Republic Day.

March Pasts and Parades are conducted, to which the common public gather to watch and applaud. All this is meant to inspire and invigorate us and renew the spirit in us to work towards the common goals of ensuring the territorial integrity of the nation, economic upliftment of the people and preservation of our cultural freedom while celebrating the togetherness of our social communities.

On this joyous occasion, I extend my heartfelt greetings and best wishes to the people of Tamil Nadu. I am sure that this Republic Day is going to witness an outburst of increased national spirit and cultural devotion by the people, particularly the youth and a greater zeal to serve the cause of the nation and the State.

May freedom fill the air and sovereignty be the life breath that sustains and inspires us.

Nandri
Vanakkam
Jai Hind