

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT THE 56TH NATIONAL MARITIME DAY ORGANISED BY
NATIONAL MARITIME DAY CELEBRATIONS COMMITTEE AT RAJAH
ANNAMALAI MANDRAM, CHENNAI ON 05.04.2019 AT 6.00 P.M**

Thiru Banwarilal Purohit, Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu participated as Chief Guest at the 56th National Maritime Day organised by National Maritime Day Celebrations Committee at Rajah Annamalai Mandram, Chennai on 05.04.2019 and addressed the gathering.

Hon'ble Governor said, "It gives me pleasure to take part in the 56th National Maritime Day Celebrations being held at Chennai today. The Maritime Day was first celebrated in 1964 and has been continued from then on. The Day celebrates the achievements of the Indian Maritime Sector and serves as an opportunity to pay our tributes to the merchant navy seafarers.

India sits centrally at the crossroads of trans-Indian Ocean routes since most cargo ships that sail between East Asia, America, Europe and Africa have to pass through Indian waters. Hence the merchant navy of India has a strategic role to play in world trade, with great possibilities being available for expansion.

Ships transport almost 90 percent of the world's goods trade. Commercial commodities such as general cargo, industrial goods, Crude Oil, Chemicals livestock and a host of other items are transported on International waters between various countries of the world.

There are therefore over 50,000 merchant ships registered in over 150 nations and manned by over a million seafarers of virtually every nationality.

According to recent figures, the number of Indian seafarers employed on Indian and foreign-flagged ships has crossed 1,50,000 for the first time, with 37,259 of them getting jobs in the last three years alone.

The Indian Maritime history has an ancient tradition. 'Thirai kadal odiyum thiraviam thedu' (Seek your fortune even by venturing overseas) is a saying of the

great Tamil poet Avvaiyar. Sangam literature is a rich repository of information on the ancient Tamil way of living. Amidst its chapters that vividly describe the beauty of nature, lifestyle and social structure of the old Tamil country, the Purananuru elaborates on the nature of the flourishing sea trade of those times. From ships, sea routes, daring maritime voyages to the merchandise that were traded and the experiences of the Tamil seafarers, it talks in detail of the mighty ocean and the strong bond the people shared with it.

It is therefore quite clear that the adventurous seafarers of the past maintained trade links with Europe in the west and upto the Far East”.

In fact, more than a 1000 years ago, the Tamil Chola empire possessed the largest naval force of the Indian subcontinent at that time and represented the zenith of ancient Indian sea power.

Rajendra Chola annexed during his overseas conquests Sri Lanka, Maldives, islands of Andaman and Nicobar, Lakshadweep, parts of the Malay peninsula and the Indonesian group of islands. By defeating the Srivijaya empire the Cholas also secured the sea trade route to China.

The Government has unveiled a host of initiatives aimed to develop and sustain the growth of the sector. As a part of the Governments push to fast-track investment in the maritime sector, a host of business-friendly policies have been introduced. These range from modernising existing port infrastructure and creating new ones, and linking up ports under the Sagar Mala Scheme. Skilling talent to sustain maritime operations is another area of focus for the Government of India. Development of Inland Waterways & Coastal Shipping development is also being focussed upon using the public-private partnership mode. All this provides vibrancy to the sector.

The ‘Make in India’ initiative offers tremendous opportunities in the maritime sector, particularly in shipbuilding and ship repair industry. The government has granted infrastructure status to shipyards. This will enable shipbuilders to avail themselves of cheaper long-term financing for Indian shipbuilding and ship repair.

India is already one of the top seafaring nations of the world. The share of India in global trade growing at a rapid pace every year. The stage is set for an expansion of employment opportunities for Indians in the maritime sector.

Modern safety management procedures, advanced emergency communications, and effective international rescue systems have placed modern mariners in a safer position, compared to earlier times. A seafarer's job also provides an opportunity to visit various countries of the world while on duty.

The award winners today are being recognized for their hard work and contribution. I wish them well and appreciate their services.

On this memorable occasion the most prestigious "Varuna Award" comprising a citation and the statue of Lord Varuna for outstanding contribution has been awarded to doyens of Indian Shipping.

The "NMD award of Excellence" has been awarded for exceptional and most distinguished achievement at the senior functional level in the Indian Maritime Sector.

Shrimati Sumathi Morarjee award has been given for exceptional bravery displayed at Sea, Best Indian employer of the year 2019, Life time achievement award for outstanding Master Mariner, Chief Engineer and crew have also been today on this special occasion.

The shipping industry has also been expanding to include more and more business functions. Besides offshore oil drilling, marine tourism, professional and recreational diving are among the numerous sea-based avenues of employment. Hence the demand for both navigating officers and marine engineers is growing. This trend is likely to continue. All this augers well for future growth of the maritime sector.

But there are still many challenges ahead. The occasion of National Maritime Day celebrations is an opportunity for us to look ahead and overcome these challenges. Encouraging investments in dry docking, may be an important

requirement for fuelling future growth. Similarly facilitating master vessels for smaller cargo may be another important area of focus.

The need of hour is therefore to focus on increasing Indian tonnage, the share of seafaring in the global scenario and to build ship repair yards and ship building Facilities with Research and Development.

Let this Maritime Day be the start of this trend of expansionism. I wish the members of the Merchant Navy and all those associated with the Maritime industry success in all their endeavours”.

On this occasion Thiru. S. Barik, Chairman, Thiru. Sanjeev. S. Vakil, Vice Chairman, I.G. S. Paramesh, Commander, Coast Guard Region, Dr. K. M. Sivakholundu, Vice Chancellor, IMU, Thiru. V. Mohanan, Convener, Thiru. Devotta Beno, Secretary and other dignitaries participated.

Raj Bhavan, Chennai -22

Sd/-

Date : 05.04.2019

Joint Director (PR)