

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE
GOVERNOR OF TAMIL NADU AT THE INAUGURATION OF
COMMEMORATION OF 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE
AT GANDHI MANDAPAM CAMPUS, GUINDY, CHENNAI ON
12.03.2021 AT 11.00 A.M**

Anaivarukkum Kaalai Vanakkam

Thiru. Vikram Kapur, I.A.S.,
Additional Chief Secretary to Government,
Tourism, Culture and Religious Endowments Department

Thiru. Anandrao V. Patil, I.A.S.,
Secretary to Governor

Thiru. Mahesan Kasirajan, I.A.S.,
Secretary to Government,
Tamil Development and Information Department

Thiru. M.S. Shanmugam, I.A.S.,
Commissioner, Museums

Tmt. R. Seethalakshmi, I.A.S.,
District Collector, Chennai

Thiru. D. Baskara Pandian, I.A.S.,
Director,
Information and Public Relations Department

Distinguished Invitees,

Ladies & Gentlemen

It gives me immense pleasure to be here today at the Gandhi Mandapam to inaugurate the commemoration of 75th Anniversary of Independence day, Photo Exhibition on Freedom Fighters, honouring the Freedom Fighters, and listening the Bhajans. I am happy to note that the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India is launching the opening ceremony of "Azadi ka Amrut Mahtosav" at Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad in commemoration of the 91st Anniversary of the historic Salt Satyagraha led by Mahatma Gandhi.

The India of today is on a proud forward march in the comity of nations. We are the fastest growing emerging economy of the world. We are on the cusp of reaping the benefits of the demographic dividend. India is self-reliant and is respected all over the world not only for its political and economic stability but also for its deep cultural roots and social cohesion. We owe all this in substantial measure to the freedom fighters of yester years who silently underwent suffering in the long struggle that involved enormous sacrifices and hardships. I firmly believe that this commemoration spread over 75 weeks

should combine the glory of our rich culture and heritage, freedom struggle, sacrifices by the freedom fighters and the strength of our various achievements in the field of Science and Technology, Education, Health and Information & Technology.

Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of "Satyagraha," which sought to reveal truth and confront injustice through nonviolence, had made him the most polarizing figure in the subcontinent. Mahatma Gandhi proposed to frame his protest around salt. On March 12, 1930, Mahatma Gandhi embarked on a historic Salt March from Sabarmati Ashram in Gujarat's Ahmedabad to the village of Dandi in the state's coastal area to protest against the steep tax the British levied on salt. The significant march came to be known as Dandi March or Salt March, also referred to as the Dandi Satyagraha. The Salt March was a 24 day March, which was non-violent in nature and historically significant as it led to the mass Civil Disobedience Movement.

Inspired by the Dandi March led by Mahatma Gandhiji during March to April, 1930, his close associate, Thiru C.

Rajagopalachariar, undertook a similar march from Tiruchirapalli to Vedaranyam on the shores of Bay of Bengal located at a distance of 240 Kilometres. I am happy that to celebrate that occasion, the Salt Sathyagraha will be re-enacted today at Old Post Office near Tiruchirappalli Railway junction where Rajaji's Salt March started.

A similar celebration is being organized in the Vellore Fort in order to re-enact and recall the first ever revolt by Indian Soldiers against the British rulers and sacrifices made by the Indian Sepoys against the British oppression in the year 1806. I appreciate the thoughtfulness of these initiatives of Government of Tamil Nadu.

Tamil Nadu has its share in the glorious freedom movement of the country. Subramania Bharathi, Tirupur Kumaran, Veera Mangai Velu Nachiyar, Vanchinathan, Veerapandia Kattabomman, V.O.Chidambaram Pillai, Dheeran Chinnamalai, Marudu Pandiyar, Subramanian Siva, Pooli Theevan are some of the greatest freedom fighters produced by this part of the country. We all are very proud of the

spectacular contributions made by Tamil Nadu towards the freedom struggle. I salute all those great freedom fighters.

Tamil Nadu was always close to Gandhiji's heart. It is important to recall that when Gandhiji started the Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, in which there were initially 25 inmates, 13 of them were Tamilians. People in the audience may know that Mahatma Gandhi visited Tamil Nadu 20 times between 1896 and 1946. During his first visit in 1896 he tried to learn Tamil and bought 9 Tamil books for the purpose. During a subsequent visit in 1921, when in Madurai, Gandhiji made a change from donning the typical elaborate attire to wearing the simple dhoti and upper cloth that clothed him for the remaining years of his life. About this he himself has written and I quote,

“All the alterations I have made in the course of my life have been effected by momentous occasions. Such a radical alteration in my dress I effected in Madurai.”

The true essence of democracy should be understood in the sense that the common people are the masters of the nation. Mahatma Gandhiji wrote an Article in young India on

22nd October 1925 and cautioned against seven deadly sins that can destroy a Nation. They are:-

1. Wealth without work,
2. Pleasure without conscience,
3. Knowledge without character,
4. Commerce without morality,
5. Science without humanity,
6. Religion without sacrifice and
7. Politics without principle.

It is important for us to identify the people who practice these sins in our midst and reform them without any further delay.

I am very happy to participate in this function and inaugurate the 75 week long celebrations to commemorate our 75th Independence.

I conclude with the quote of Gandhiji. I quote “Strength does not come from physical capacity alone, it comes from indomitable will”. I appeal to the youth of this Nation, youth of our beloved Tamil Nadu to imbibe the values that adorned our

freedom movement, the values and principles taught to us by Father of Nation and with strong will make sterling contribution in Nation Building to take India still forward in the comity of nations.

Nandri Vanakkam...

Jai Hind....

Jai Tamil Nadu....