

**Hon'ble Members of the Legislative
Assembly,**

Vanakkam.

It gives me immense pleasure to address the Assembly for the first time after taking over as the Governor of Tamil Nadu. At the outset I wish to convey my New Year and Pongal greetings to all members. The State has witnessed a stupendous performance of the new Government with the launching of a multitude of schemes and programmes aimed at the welfare and development of the State under the able leadership of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Selvi **J Jayalithaa**, who is always decisive in her deeds. The resolve and commitment of our Hon'ble Chief Minister in implementing the greater part of her electoral promises in such a short period, even in the face of a crippling financial crisis, is commendable. I am glad to note that these

programmes have started showing results on the ground by improving the life of the common people.

2. Let me congratulate the people of Tamil Nadu for demonstrating their political wisdom and once again reposing their unshakable faith in the leadership of the Hon'ble Chief Minister in the recently held Local Body elections. The political maturity displayed by the electorate and the commitment shown by the Government in conducting this election in a most fair and peaceful manner will further strengthen the grass root democratic institutions. The vibrant functioning of this tier will nurture the young and committed elected representatives of these institutions to emerge as the leaders of the future. **This Government will take further steps to strengthen the Local Bodies based on the recommendations of the Fourth State Finance Commission and**

an Action Taken Report will be tabled in the Assembly in the next session.

3. This Government is leaving no stone unturned to make Tamil Nadu the *numero uno* State in India in all facets of socio economic development. The strategy has been to revitalize the development process to create a conducive environment for higher growth and to implement welfare schemes to bring in the element of equity in economic wellbeing for the poor and downtrodden. As you know, this Government has substantially increased benefits under various welfare schemes and has provided rice, free of cost, for the first time in the country to ensure food and social security to the needy. Besides this, several flagship programmes like distribution of milch cows, sheep and goats to poor households, and mixies, grinders and fans to all families eligible to draw rice from the Public Distribution System and laptop

computers to students have been launched. In fact, I am proud to state that this Government has been able to allocate an unprecedented additional outlay of around Rs.8,000 crores for these schemes in spite of the gloomy financial situation faced by the present Government while taking charge.

4. We are fully aware that governmental support and subsidies are no substitute for an inclusive and sustainable growth process. In this regard, our Government is assiduously working to break the present impasse and stagnation in the Primary Sector, which continues to be the prime source of livelihood for the majority of the poor. In addition, the focused mission mode approach for improving urban infrastructure and strengthening the economic infrastructure to address the critical gaps in achieving higher growth will continue as a thrust area in our future strategy. Now that

numerous welfare and developmental schemes have been launched and targets set, the focus of this Government will shift to effective implementation of the plethora of schemes in order to get better results and deliver better services to the people of the State and to exemplify transparent and efficient administration in the Country.

5. This Government is committed to maintaining cordial relationships with all our neighbouring States. Unfortunately, being a lower riparian State, Tamil Nadu has often been the victim of false and parochial campaigns launched with short sighted political interests and the persistent indifference of the Union Government. Our State has shown utmost restraint and ably handled the recent incidents relating to the Mullai Periyar Dam. The attempts on the part of the Kerala State to whip up mass fear and insecurity through false propaganda have been the primary cause of

these incidents. Tamil Nadu is all for ensuring the safety of the dam and I earnestly appeal to the people of Kerala not to succumb to such malicious campaigns. I want to categorically state that this Government would never compromise on the rights of our State and the livelihood of our farmers and will defend our rights in all appropriate fora and courts of law. We also urge the Government of India to direct the Government of Kerala to abide by the decision of the Supreme Court. As several inter-state river water disputes remain unresolved for many years, the time has come for a rethink on the present institutional framework. At this crucial juncture, we urge the Central Government that the proposed Dam Safety Bill, 2010, should ensure for entrusting the safety of dams to the Dam Safety Cell of the State owning the dam, instead of the State where it is situated.

6. The fire accident that occurred on the midnight of 15th January, 2012 in the Chepauk building complex has led to the death of a fireman and resulted in grievous injury to officers who gallantly fought the fire. I express my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family of the fireman and wish the injured officers a speedy recovery. I appreciate the Government for awarding these three officers with Anna Medal for Gallantry 2012. An expert committee has been constituted to study all the heritage buildings housing Government offices and assess the structural stability of such buildings to avert such disasters in future and ensure safety of the persons working in such premises.

7. From the day of assuming office, this Government has taken firm action against anti-social elements. Its resolve to show zero tolerance to law and order problems has helped the State to restore peace and tranquillity

again after a gap of five years. The peaceful conduct of the Local Body elections has been acclaimed by all sections of Society and the media. Many festivals which were considered sensitive have passed off peacefully. The Anti Land Grabbing Cells established in every district by this Government have benefited innumerable poor innocent people who were coerced into selling their lands and their lands have been restored to them. I reassert this Government's continued commitment to bringing such land grabbers exploiting the poor and gullible to justice.

8. The impact of the prolonged spell of global economic slowdown poses a real threat to fiscal stability and the Government's ability to spend more. Slow growth, persistently high inflation, depreciating rupee value and soaring interest rates have made it difficult for achieving our higher growth targets. As a result, investments are slowing

down and the growth projections for 2011-2012 have been considerably scaled down at the national level. The negative impact of such economic slow down on the State's economy is inescapable. Notwithstanding these negativities, this Government is determined to ensure that spending by Government towards infrastructure and social security is not compromised in any manner. **For the ensuing Twelfth Plan, this Government plans an ambitious outlay of Rs.1,85,000 crores for plan schemes, more than double the size of the Eleventh Plan outlay of Rs.85,000 crores. This would put Tamil Nadu back on the path of accelerated growth.**

9. The continued attempts by the Union Government to push through legislations encroaching upon State powers and the adoption of a one-size-fits-all approach in

designing schemes do not augur well for a healthy Centre-State relationship. Also, this Government urges the Union Government to adopt a flexible approach in formulating and implementing national schemes by fixing only the broad objectives and framework, while allowing the State Governments to have the freedom of designing the schemes to meet the State's specific needs by dovetailing Central funds with the State's resources providing better synergy and focusing on achieving intended goals. We would continue to impress upon the Union Government the need to adequately address the issues pointed out by our State regarding the implementation of Goods and Services Tax.

10. This Government is taking all efforts for the promotion of the Tamil language and to preserve the cultural heritage of Tamils. We will continue to insist that the Union Government should recognise Tamil as one of

the Official Languages of the Central Government. The pension for aged Tamil Scholars has been doubled from Rs.1,000/- to Rs.2,000/- per month by the Hon'ble Chief Minister. As already promised in the earlier Governor's address, Thirukkural and selected works of Bharathiyar and Bharathidasan are being translated into Mandarin and Arabic. This Government has uploaded 1,472 nationalised books of eminent Tamil Scholars in the website of the Tamil Virtual University to preserve and promote their literary works.

11. Hon'ble Members may recall the announcement made on the preparation of the 'Vision 2025' document when this Government assumed charge last year. Now, I am glad to inform you that this Vision 2025 document will be released shortly by our Hon'ble Chief Minister, setting the tone for this Government's vision for the State and the plan

of action towards achieving it. **A Bill will be introduced during the coming Budget Session for the formation of the Tamil Nadu Infrastructure Development Board, which will serve as an institutional framework for conceptualisation, prioritisation, sanction and speedy implementation of critical infrastructure projects. A separate Infrastructure Development Fund will be constituted by this Government to give a fillip to implementation of critical projects. In this direction, this Government will also come out with a new Public Private Partnership Policy to synergise the resources of the Government and the Private Sector in project implementation.**

12. This Government has taken all steps to mitigate the sufferings of the people due to the devastating impact of the cyclone 'Thane' and the prolonged spell of rain in

November 2011. Unfortunately, during the recent North-East monsoon, 177 lives have been lost. I convey my condolences to these families. The Hon'ble Chief Minister had ordered in November, 2011 a release of Rs.150 crores for immediate restoration of the damaged roads affected by the floods. As the damage caused by cyclone 'Thane' to the crops, huts, boats and other infrastructure in districts like Cuddalore and Villupuram was very extensive, the Hon'ble Chief Minister sanctioned an amount of Rs.850 crores to carry out relief measures, disburse compensation and restore the damaged infrastructure including power, drinking water and roads. I appreciate the State Government for using the early warning systems to initiate preventive measures and for taking timely action for providing relief. It may not be out of place to mention here that, due to sustained intensive relief work, normalcy could be restored to a very large extent in a month's time, whereas it

would normally take several months to achieve such results.

13. As the livelihood of the farmers has been totally destroyed due to complete damage of perennial crops like cashew, jackfruit, coconut etc., now the Government is also focusing on permanent rehabilitation measures. As a special gesture, apart from extending immediate relief for crop loss, **the Hon'ble Chief Minister has ordered taking up of the replantation of perennial crops particularly cashew-nut crop with grafted seedlings under high density planting by meeting the entire cost of planting and maintenance for one year, and distribution of mini-kits with seeds and other essential inputs for taking up recultivation of annual crops in the affected fields. I am also glad to announce that this Government will take up the construction of one lakh concrete houses immediately at a cost of Rs.1,000 crores specially to replace the**

damaged huts in the cyclone affected districts like Cuddalore and Villupuram, to provide safe shelter to the affected families. A detailed memorandum spelling out the quantum of damage and requesting a special package of assistance for Rs.5,248 crores from the National Disaster Response Fund has been submitted to the Union Government and I thank the Central Government for releasing Rs.500 crores as interim relief. The Central team had also visited the affected areas and I hope, the Government of India will respond positively to our Memorandum with adequate financial support.

14. Poverty and unemployment are the twin challenges to our Society. Decades of efforts in implementing several anti-poverty programmes have not yielded the desired results. Though there has been some reduction in rural poverty, the solution to urban poverty still remains elusive. Hence a

paradigm shift is needed in our approach towards poverty reduction, incorporating innovative family based intervention. Our efforts to mitigate rural poverty through dovetailing of various schemes like the National Rural Livelihood Mission and Pudhu Vazhvu project with State sector schemes will continue. **Considering the high incidence of urban poverty, a comprehensive programme will be launched to deal with it in the forthcoming Budget as it did not get adequate attention in the past.**

15. The issue of poverty is intricately linked to unemployment. This Government has already spelt out a two pronged strategy of imparting skills to make youth employable, while simultaneously focusing on entrepreneurship development to promote new ventures to generate employment. **To ensure the effectiveness of the Skill Development Mission, this Government has decided to integrate various skill building**

programmes implemented by different departments. We will bring in a centralized system of selecting and monitoring skill upgradation courses and institutions besides tracking the trainees till they get employed. The Tamil Nadu State Skill Development Mission Society under the guidance of the State Skill Development Mission will be the nodal agency for this purpose. This would ensure a common standard framework of programmes and fee structures, which the beneficiary departments can utilize without any overlapping or duplication of efforts or wastage of resources.

16. Inclusive growth is possible only if growth in the Primary Sector is achieved. Keeping this in mind, this Government is taking all efforts to usher in a **Second Green Revolution** for improving farm productivity and farmers income. This requires sustained investment in the Farm Sector for better capital

formation. Convergence of the National Agriculture Development Programme with State sponsored programmes for farm mechanisation, 100% subsidy to small and marginal farmers for adopting micro irrigation, strengthening the network of godowns and warehouses and focusing on the market infrastructure have given a new lease of life to the Farm Sector. **Due to the decision taken by the Hon'ble Chief Minister to release water from Mettur Dam early, the State has had a bountiful kuruvai crop. As a result, food grain production this year is likely to surpass the level of 100 lakh metric tonnes for the first time as against 75.95 lakh tonnes in 2010-2011.** This Government's flagship scheme of free distribution of milch cows, sheep and goats has received a remarkable response from the rural poor. During 2011-2012, about 1.12 lakh families would benefit from these schemes. This Government has simultaneously strengthened the extension services and the

veterinary infrastructure to support growth in the Animal Husbandry Sector.

17. In the Fisheries Sector also, many path breaking initiatives have been taken to promote deep sea fishing and improve infrastructure. I am sure all these initiatives will give a substantial boost to the Primary Sector. This Government is deeply concerned about the continuing attacks on and harassment of fishermen of Tamil Nadu by the Sri Lankan Navy. Despite our protests, such incidents are being repeated. I urge the Government of India to take up this issue strongly with Sri Lanka. All efforts must be taken to protect the traditional fishing rights of our Tamil Nadu fishermen in the Palk Bay area and ensure their safety and security. I also take this opportunity to reiterate this Government's clear resolve to regain Katcha Theevu so as to restore the lost rights of our fishermen.

18. Tamil Nadu has the best functioning universal Public Distribution System in the country. This Government has further strengthened it by providing rice free of cost to all the rice card holders and by supplying pulses, edible oil and fortified atta at subsidised rates. The Union Government's Food Security Bill compromises universal access and deprives the State Government of the present allotment of food grains from the Central Pool. Hence, we will voice our opposition to the Food Security Bill in its present form as proposed by the Union Government. This Bill, primarily aimed at States where the Public Distribution system is non-functional, would have a definite negative impact on Tamil Nadu's Universal Public Distribution System. Hence, this Government insists that the Food Security Bill proposed by the Central Government needs drastic modifications, incorporating provisions for providing flexibility to the State Governments or for exempting those States

which already have a well functioning system from the application of the Act.

19. This Government is in the process of formulating a comprehensive new Industrial Policy and sector specific policies on the key and emerging sectors to promote industrial growth. We will strengthen the infrastructure along the potential industrial corridors to promote the speedy growth of industrial clusters and achieve a balanced industrial development. In the fast growing Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) sector also, Tamil Nadu needs to reinforce its dominant position in software exports by taking the lead as India's hardware hub. In this regard, **we will constitute an Expert Committee with representatives from Industry, to evaluate the potential and advise the Government on the way forward to attract more investments in hardware manufacturing.**

20. As assured by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, this Government is taking all efforts to revive Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETP) so as to solve the issue of effluents discharge into the Noyyal River. Based on the trial studies taken up to introduce an alternative Nano Filtration Technology to achieve zero liquid discharge in the Arulpuram CETP, **this Government has already sanctioned Rs.179 crores as interest free loan to restart these closed CETPs. In addition, Rs.75 crores has also been provided as loan to the Pollution Control Board for settling the compensation to the farmers in the Noyyal Ayacut pending determination of compensation by the Court.** The intervention of the Hon'ble Chief Minister in this regard has been well appreciated by all the concerned industrialists as well as farmers and has given them the confidence that this vexed problem has come to an end leading to a new lease of life for thousands of workers.

21. In spite of the best efforts of this Government, the power scenario in the State continues to be a matter of concern. The non-addition of generating capacity by the previous government and the lackadaisical response from the Centre to our request for additional allotment of power from the Central Pool have put the people of Tamil Nadu in a state of fix. In order to revive the sinking power utilities from the financial mess, this Government has provided Rs.2,600 crores as share capital support and Rs.955 crores as loan. This Government is making all out efforts to improve the energy availability and reduce the power shortage. Since this Government assumed charge, a capacity addition of 30 Megawatts under State Sector and a share of 113 Megawatts from Central Generating Stations have been made in the State in addition to 556 Megawatts of wind energy. New projects with a total capacity of

4,704 Megawatts are to be commissioned in the next two years.

22. Quality road infrastructure is essential for ensuring balanced development. This Government will give priority to upgrading the quality of the core road network, creation of bypasses and widening and strengthening of State Highways, Major District Roads and Other District Roads to improve transportation efficiency. **A Land Pooling System will be followed in green field road projects to enhance the benefits to land owners. As already assured in the Budget 2011-2012, a Performance Based Maintenance Contract System will be put in place on a pilot basis in Coimbatore Circle shortly and it will be scaled up throughout the State in due course.**

23. This Government has notified the rules for implementing the Right To Education Act, and is committed to ensuring its

implementation. Since this Government's assumption of office, schools in the State have been provided with additional infrastructure such as new classrooms and laboratory buildings. To address the problem of inadequacy of teaching staff, 33,681 posts of teachers along with 16,549 part-time teachers and 5,000 posts of non teaching staff have been sanctioned during the current year. To reduce the burden of students and to ease the process of learning, it has been decided to introduce the Trimester system upto 8th Standard in all schools from the academic year 2012-2013. I hope this Government's all out efforts will improve the quality of education, usher in universal access to secondary education, imparting higher levels of competency and skills to the students.

24. A number of initiatives have been taken by this Government to provide world class higher education and to make it accessible to all. Eleven Arts and Science

colleges have been opened in a short span of time. New courses are being started in 34 Government colleges. The unviable Anna Universities of Technology which were created in various places by the previous Government have again been brought under a single entity, making Anna University the largest Technical University in the country. We have embarked on a massive programme to scale up the computing skills of the students through distribution of free laptop computers. I am confident that this much acclaimed programme will add to the quality of human resources of our State. On the issue of Common Entrance Examination for professional courses like engineering and medicine, we will continue to oppose this move by the Centre as it will be detrimental to the interests of our students.

25. A new Comprehensive Health Insurance Programme covering over 1.34 crore families in the State has been launched by the Hon'ble Chief Minister on

11th January 2012. This scheme, with an enhanced coverage, will provide the much needed support to the poor for getting specialised treatment. With the objective of further reducing Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric Care has been strengthened and 41 Neonatal Intensive Care Units have been established. In addition, this Government has enhanced the maternity benefit to poor mothers to Rs.12,000/-, the highest in the country. Tamil Nadu is undertaking a comprehensive drive to build awareness about the increasing threat of non-communicable diseases and also to screen and diagnose them at early stages. We expect that these measures will ensure that this Government achieves its objective of universal health care in the State effectively.

26. This Government has taken several initiatives for improving public transportation facilities. During 2011-2012, 3,000 new buses

are being purchased at a total cost of Rs.539.83 crores. Further, for the first time ever, Rs.97.58 crores has been sanctioned for rebuilding 1,432 old buses, in which the engines and chassis are in good condition. I hope these new initiatives will improve the performance of the Transport Corporations and help them deliver better service to the people. Towards the goal of achieving an Integrated Multi-Modal Urban Transportation System in Chennai, I am happy to note that the process of tendering to establish a **Monorail system** is progressing well.

27. The District Innovation Fund will be used in all districts for making the Government's service delivery more citizen centric by dovetailing the efforts and contributions of the Private Sector. The scheme of fast track patta transfer launched by this Government has yielded significant results. Patta transfers have gone up by 50% compared to the previous year.

The Chief Minister's '**Uzhavar Paadhukaappu Thittam**' was launched on 10th September, 2011. This provides comprehensive social security to the families of farmers and agricultural labourers from birth to death.

28. This Government had announced in the last Budget a sum of Rs.5 crores for undertaking a mass campaign for clearing the accumulated plastic waste throughout the State and another Rs.50 crores for laying Black Topped roads using plastic waste on an experimental basis. It is heartening to note that about 146 kms of roads are being taken up using plastic waste at an estimated cost of Rs.50 crores. **We will come out with a detailed programme for laying such durable roads on a large scale, thereby arresting environmental degradation due to the accumulation of plastic waste.**

29. Tamil Nadu is endowed with diverse resources for attracting multi destination

tourists. This Government will endeavour to provide world class services to domestic and international tourists. In this direction, the Inclusive Tourism Infrastructure Project funded by the Asian Development Bank will be launched shortly. The policy of promoting tourism in the State under Public Private Partnership (PPP) will gain momentum in the coming years.

30. Tamil Nadu, being a highly urbanised State, needs substantial improvement in planning and investment to improve urban infrastructure. The existing infrastructure is very inadequate and already under severe stress due to heavy migration. This is being addressed through the convergence of various programmes like Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) and Tamil Nadu Urban Development Project-III (TNUDP III). Chennai Corporation has been expanded by merging the adjoining suburban areas. Similarly, the

boundaries of seven other Corporations and eight Municipalities have also undergone changes. This Government has also launched the Chennai Mega City Development Mission and Integrated Urban Development Mission to provide additional resources for implementing urban infrastructure projects. We will continue to focus on Solid Waste Management in an integrated manner besides improving other public amenities like roads, streets and parks. The preparation of master plans in the expanded municipal corporations and municipalities where such plans are not available will be carried out to ensure balanced and sustainable growth in our urban areas.

31. This Government is adopting a habitation based approach for providing basic amenities and infrastructure facilities in the rural areas. As you are all aware, the Tamil Nadu Village Habitation Improvement (THAI) Scheme has been launched in the State. This scheme will cover all the habitations in five

years. During the year 2011-2012, 2,020 village panchayats with 25,335 habitations are being covered wherein the basic amenities like roads, drinking water, street lights, etc., will be provided. Under the direction of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, a massive campaign was launched to revive all the Sanitary Complexes constructed in the past by refurbishing the facilities. In rural housing, besides IAY, the Chief Minister's Solar Powered Green House Scheme to construct 60,000 new houses per year is also under progress. Through these schemes, this Government is confident of providing adequate basic amenities and safe housing to all the rural poor.

32. This Government has taken several pioneering initiatives for the welfare of the weaker sections of our Society - women, children, aged, destitute and differently abled persons. The path breaking move to enhance the assistance and to distribute gold coins to make *Thali* for the marriage of poor girls;

infusing life back into the Girl Child Protection Scheme and the Cradle Baby Scheme; doubling the Social Security Pension taking it to the highest level in the country; opening of Integrated Homes for orphans and the aged in all districts stand testimony to the care and compassion shown by our Hon'ble Chief Minister towards the weak and vulnerable. As never done before in the history of any State, sanction has been accorded for bringing 5 lakh new beneficiaries under the social security net and the distribution is also being streamlined through direct transfer to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries, thereby plugging the leakages. I am sure that these efforts will ensure that our State has the best and most comprehensive Social Security Support System for the disadvantaged and marginalised.

33. Several programmes are being implemented for the welfare of the socially and economically backward classes like

Adi-Dravidars, Backward Classes, Most Backward Classes, Denotified communities and the Tribals. The historic efforts of the Hon'ble Chief Minister to establish social justice by enacting an Act 45 of 1994 and getting it included in the 9th Schedule of the Constitution in 1994 by a Constitutional Amendment passed by both Houses of Parliament, and issuance of a Government Order in the year 2011 to protect the reservation for the backward and most backward classes will be cherished by all. A substantial increase has been given to the feeding charges for students belonging to socially and economically disadvantaged groups staying in Government hostels. The Hon'ble Chief Minister also took a characteristically bold decision to construct own buildings for all the hostels which are at present housed in rented premises. The welfare of the poor and downtrodden will occupy continued primacy in the agenda of this Government.

34. This Government is fully aware of the immense responsibility placed on its shoulders by the people of Tamil Nadu, through their sweeping mandate in the Assembly election. The yearning of the people for a changeover from a legacy of corruption and inefficiency to one with transparency and efficiency has been further demonstrated in the Local Body elections. Our Hon'ble Chief Minister has, in this short period, amply demonstrated that the faith the people of Tamil Nadu have in her and her Government stand vindicated. Against all odds - a precarious fiscal situation, a gloomy economic environment and an unhelpful Union Government - this Government will continue to march on its way towards the goal of uplifting the State and its people. In this, I seek co-operation from all of you and the people of Tamil Nadu in our efforts to put the State back on the road to prosperity. With the Hon'ble Chief Minister at the helm, I have no doubt that

these efforts will definitely fructify and Tamil Nadu will usher in a new era of transparency, efficiency and prosperity.

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Jai Hind