

THIRU. R.N. RAVI, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF TAMIL NADU'S
ARMED FORCES FLAG DAY MESSAGE - 2024

Dear brothers and sisters of Tamil Nadu,
Vanakkam,

Every year, on 7th December, we observe the Armed Forces Flag Day. On this day, we pay tribute to the indomitable courage, sacrifice, and patriotism of our armed forces, who stand as the unwavering pillars of our nation's security and sovereignty.

Since its inception in 1949, Armed Forces Flag Day has been a significant reminder of our collective responsibility to honour and support the brave men and women in uniform, as well as their families, who have selflessly dedicated their lives to the service of our motherland.

The Armed forces of India have always displayed extraordinary valour and resilience in safeguarding our borders, responding to emergencies, and contributing to peacekeeping missions worldwide. They inspire us with their unwavering commitment to duty and their readiness to make the ultimate sacrifice.

On this day, we must also remember the families of our brave soldiers. They endure immense challenges and bear the pain of separation with grace and fortitude. Their sacrifices are no less important in the service of our nation.

The Government of India gives utmost priority for the welfare of the uniformed service personnel. Our Hon'ble Prime Minister and the Hon'ble Defence Minister celebrate major festivals with our Defence personnel serving in difficult areas. The Government of India offers a number of welfare schemes for the welfare of ex-servicemen namely, reservation in Government jobs and in educational institutions, sanction of ex-gratia amounts to the next of kin of our martyrs, travel concessions, priority in allotment of gas agency and petrol vending

stations, Prime Minister's Scholarship Scheme, Raksha Mantri Ex-Servicemen Welfare Fund, Resettlement training, Sainik Rest Houses, etc. The latest welfare initiatives of the Government of India, are as follows:-

- **Vocational Training Grant** has been increased from ₹20,000 to ₹50,000 for widows of ex-servicemen up to Havildar rank.
- **Medical Grant has been** raised from ₹30,000 to ₹50,000 for non-pensioner ex-servicemen and widows.
- **Grant for medical treatment for serious diseases has been increased** from ₹1.25 lakh to ₹1.50 lakh for non-pensioner ex-servicemen and widows of all ranks.
- **E-SeHAT Tele consultation Project has been** launched in July 2024 as a pilot in 12 Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme polyclinics, with plans for a nationwide rollout. This facility offers video-based clinical consultations and e-prescription services integrated with Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme databases, promoting access to healthcare from home.
- **Project Naman is** aimed at establishing facilitation and grievance redressal centres for veterans and the families of martyrs. Centres will provide government-to-customer services and assist with pension updates via the SPARSH portal. The first centre is being set up in Delhi Cantonment, with 13 more planned across India.

Apart from the above, The Ministry of Defence has launched robust awareness campaigns on social media to encourage citizens to contribute to the Armed Forces Flag Day Fund (AFFDF), they have also established easier online donation methods to make contributing more accessible for individuals and organizations.

These initiatives reflect the government's commitment to improving the quality of life for ex-servicemen and their dependents through financial, medical, and administrative support.

Whenever I go on official tours, I try to meet the Ex-Servicemen Associations interact with them and hear their grievances. Recently, in Raj Bhavan, we have organised a programme viz. "Think to Dare – Interaction with War Veterans, Veer Naris, Gallantry Awardees of Armed Forces" in which War veterans, Veer Naris and Gallantry awardees were felicitated and honoured. The Annual meeting of State Managing Committee of Amalgamated Fund are being held regularly under my Chairmanship and I monitor and ensure the prompt disbursal of various grants/benefits out of Amalgamated / Benevolent fund to our ex-servicemen and their families.

Tamil Nadu has consistently been a leader in the country for its Armed Forces Flag Day Fund (AFFDF) collections. The State Government also provides concessions, exemptions and reservations for Ex-Servicemen and their family members in education, jobs, etc.

As we observe Armed Forces Flag Day, let us reaffirm our commitment to supporting our defence personnel, veterans, and their dependents.

I urge every citizen of Tamil Nadu to come forward and contribute generously to the Armed Forces Flag Day Fund. Let us extend our gratitude not only in words but in actions that reflect our deep respect and appreciation.

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Raj Bhavan, Chennai - 22.
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