

**HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF TAMIL NADU -**  
**THIRU. R.N.RAVI'S ADDRESS ON THE EVE OF**  
**79<sup>TH</sup> INDEPENDENCE DAY**

My dear brothers and sisters of Tamil Nadu,

Vanakkam,

On the auspicious occasion of the 79<sup>th</sup> Independence Day of our nation, I extend my warmest greetings and best wishes to you all.

At the outset, I offer my heartfelt tributes to all the freedom fighters and the martyrs including several thousands from Tamil Nadu whose sacrifices gave us the independence from the long oppressive colonial rule. On this occasion, I also pay tributes to the martyrs and personnel of the armed forces and security services who gave their ultimate sacrifice defending the unity and integrity of our nation from external aggressions and internal disturbances and safeguarded the plural and democratic values of our Constitution, Society and Polity.

Friends,

We are fortunate to be at an epochal moment in our national history and be a witness as well as active participants to the rise of a new Bharat – confidently writing her destiny with the enterprise of her people – the youths, the women, the farmers, the fishermen, the Vishwakarmas, the entrepreneurs, the men and women of Science and Technology, industry, medical & healthcare services, academia, art & culture, literature.

Friends,

Under the visionary and dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Bharat has been scripting ever new records of higher

achievements in all walks of our social and national life. Bharat continues setting new records of incredible achievements. In the last one year, 30 crores of our brothers and sisters have come out of poverty. It is unprecedented in the history of the world. Bharat is not only the fastest growing large economy but also has become the 4<sup>th</sup> largest economy of the world. A decade ago, we were the 10<sup>th</sup> economy. International Organisations including the World Bank have declared Bharat as one of the most equal societies – the 4<sup>th</sup> most equal in the world. The world is amazed at the Bharat's model of fast pace inclusive growth. It is truly Sabka-Saath and Sabka-Vikas. For the first time Bharat sent her astronaut to the International Space Station who stayed there for some 2 weeks and did experiments critical to our ongoing future space missions. Successful space mission and happy return home of our astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla filled the nation with joy and pride.

In response to brutal killings, after identifying their religion, of innocent tourists by Pakistani terrorists at Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir, Bharat launched Operation Sindoor and convincingly destroyed the terror infrastructures in Pakistan and Pak occupied Jammu & Kashmir and killed over 100 terrorists. When Pakistan, using the cover of nuclear threat, ventured retaliatory military strikes on Bharat, our military not only neutralised all their drones, missiles and airplanes in the sky itself, but also inflicted crippling blow to the Pak-military. Our military destroyed their critical assets including airbases compelling Pakistan to plead Bharat for urgent ceasefire. This decisive victory of Bharat in a short, swift and precise military operation will be remembered and studied for long in the military history of the world. Operation Sindoor demonstrated to the world the strength of Bharat's growing self-reliance in defence and defence technology. Through Operation Sindoor, Bharat also, for the

first time, explicitly stated her policy of Zero-Tolerance to terror attacks and set the new normal equating terror attack as an act of war which will invite appropriate punitive response on the enemy.

Operation Sindoor filled the heart of every Bharatiya with pride. Prime Minister Modi, a devout follower of our great poet-saint Thiruvalluvar knows the value of a well-equipped, well-armed and high morale military. The saint-poet taught us:

**உறுப்பமைந்து ஊறஞ்சா வெல்படை வேந்தன்  
வெறுக்கையு ளெல்லாம் தலை.**

**(குறள் 761)**

The Bharatiya military, in the last one decade, has undergone unprecedented transformations enhancing its structural integration and operational synergy. Creation of the Chief of Defence Staff led to an unprecedented synergy and operational jointness among all the wings of Military – Indian Army, Indian Airforce and Indian Navy. Restructuring and re-orienting the Ordnance Factories multiplied their innovative as well as productive capabilities leading to production of better quality weapons and defence wares. Opening up the Defence manufacturing to private sector has significantly augmented our self-reliance in defence. From the dubious distinction of Bharat being the largest arms buyer, today we are exporting military wares to several countries. Some of the public and private sector defence manufacturing industries are located in our own State-Tamil Nadu. Of the 2 Defence Manufacturing Corridors created by the Central Government, one is in our State Tamil Nadu. It is a significant boost to innovation and entrepreneurship in our State. It offers great employment opportunities to our Tamil Nadu youth.

Friends,

For decades, Tamil Nadu has been among the top six leading states of Bharat in economic development. Its industrial base is significant, its infrastructures – rail, road, airports, sea ports and digital are impressive. Its health and education infrastructures are envied by several other states. In our national journey to a Viksit Bharat 2047, Tamil Nadu has a leading role and responsibility. A developed Tamil Nadu is crucial to a developed Bharat. It is the duty of all of us to contribute our best towards making a developed Tamil Nadu. The Central Government has been supporting the development of Tamil Nadu in all possible ways including substantial funding to the State Government and also through numerous Central Government schemes in the State. Over Rs.3 lakh crores have been given as grants in aid besides usual Tax devolution to Tamil Nadu in recent years. In building and upgrading physical infrastructure – rail, road, ports and airports in Tamil Nadu, the Central Government has committed over 2 lakh crore rupees in recent years. All these have substantially augmented our State's infrastructure – rail, road, ports and airports; improved the ease of living of our people, given boost to our industries and trade and created employment opportunities for our youth. Besides, several thousand crores have also reached directly to the millions of beneficiaries of our State through numerous welfare schemes of the Central Government through their Bank Accounts.

In a boost to Medical education and health care, 11 new Government Medical Colleges have been built and inaugurated in the State with Central Government funding.

Friends,

Tamil language and cultural heritage is our nation's pride. It is our duty to preserve and promote them. Prime Minister Modi is a great admirer of Tamil language, Tamil culture and heritage. Under his leadership, the Central Government has taken numerous initiatives for preservation and promotion of Tamil language and culture. A State of the art building for the Central Institute of Classical Tamil has been built in Chennai, the great Thirukkural has been translated almost in all Bharatiya languages and also in several languages of the world, a Subramania Bharathi Chair in Banaras Hindu University has been established, a first of its kind Thiruvalluvar Cultural Centre is being built in Singapore, a Thiruvalluvar Chair has been established at the University of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, a Thiruvalluvar Chair of Tamil Studies has been established at the University of Houston, U.S.A., a beautiful Thiruvalluvar Statue has been built and installed at Cergy, France. An annual cultural festival – Kasi-Tamil Sangamam is rejuvenating the several thousand years cultural connect of the Tamil people with Kasi. The majestic Chola Sengol which witnessed the transfer of power from British to Independent Bharat has been ceremonially installed at the new Sansad Bhavan. On the occasion of 1000<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of the great Tamil King Rajendra Chola, the Ministry of Culture, Government of India organised a 5 days cultural festival at Gangai Konda Cholapuram which attracted enthusiastic public participation. The Hon'ble Prime Minister Modi also attended the festival, did the sacred puja at the Chola temple with the sacred Ganga water brought by him and announced his commitment to commemorate the legacy of Raja Raja Chola and Rajendra Chola and build their grand statues. In run up to the Ramanavami, a 10 days grand cultural festival

celebrating the great poet Kambar at his birthplace Therazendur was held by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. A grand cultural event was also organised celebrating Kambar at Nattarasankottai, the samadhi place of Kambar on his samadhi day.

Friends,

Our brothers and sisters engaged in farming, fishing and dairying are the bedrock of our nation. They are playing a vital role in our nation's development. As our great saint-poet Thiruvalluvar said:

**உமுவார் உலகத்தார்க்கு ஆணிஅஃ தாற்றாது  
எமுவாரை எல்லாம் பொறுத்து.**

**(குறள் 1032)**

Farmers are the linchpin of the society because it is they who support all others.

Given their crucial role and place in our nation's life and economy, protecting their interests is paramount. There are powerful external forces putting tremendous pressure on Bharat to open our Agri-market to cheap foreign imports which will hurt the interests of our farmers, fishermen and dairy producers. Hon'ble Prime Minister has made it abundantly clear that he would not allow it to happen. On behalf of farmers, fishermen and dairy producers of Tamil Nadu, I convey their heartfelt gratitude to Prime Minister Modi for his abiding commitment to protect and promote their interests.

My dear brothers and sisters of Tamil Nadu,

Our human resource is among the finest in the country. Our youth are aspirational and entrepreneurial. Our infrastructure is reasonably sound. We have enormous potential for faster and inclusive

development and be the engine of growth for Bharat. There is huge opportunity cost of a sub-optimal development. In order to unleash the energy of our youth and harness their optimum potential, we must whole heartedly address some of the very serious challenges facing our people. I would like to make special mention of four of them:

- (i) educational and social discrimination of the poor and marginalised;
- (ii) alarming rise in suicides;
- (iii) fast spreading drug abuse among our youth; and
- (iv) steep rise in rape and other sexual offences against women and girl children.

**(i) Educational and social discrimination of the poor and marginalised**

Friends,

Our state has one of the best education infrastructures in the country both in public and private sector. For obvious reasons, our public education infrastructure is the only hope for the poor and marginalised. About 60 percent of our youth study in Government run schools. They are mostly from poor and marginalised sections of society. Sadly, the standards of teaching and learning is sharply declining in these schools. Year on year the ASER (Annual Status of Education Report) reveal shocking reality that the learning outcome of our students in Government schools are far lower than the national average. More than 50% high school students cannot do simple two digits addition and subtraction, they cannot even read primary standards textbooks. The public education eco-system in Tamil Nadu is on steady decline. The learning gap between the socially and economically

marginalised and others is sharply widening. In a knowledge based competitive world and economy driven by AI and advanced new technologies, the future of our poor and marginalised is grossly compromised. They are merely passing out with certificates without job opportunities for them. In absence of quality education, they will never be able to overcome the social and economic discriminations and be able to live with dignity. For them living with social and economic discrimination is increasingly becoming their destiny. This is not acceptable and must be corrected.

Friends,

Every other day we read and see media reports of walls being built in villages and schools separating Dalits from others. Dalits are physically assaulted and at times even killed for their attempt to share the common public space. It is a matter of collective shame that even after 78 years of Independence, rampant humiliating social discrimination practices are prevalent in our State Tamil Nadu. I have been raising my voice against it from time to time. Once again, I urge you all specially my young friends – the students, the youth to take a pledge against social discrimination and remove this blot from our face.

## **(ii) Alarming rise in suicides**

Friends,

A disturbingly large number of our people especially the youth of Tamil Nadu are committing suicides. National Crime Records Bureau data shows that about 20 thousand of our people commit suicide every year it means – over 65 suicides every day. It is indeed shocking. It is the highest in the country. The national average is 12 suicides for one lakh population. In Tamil Nadu, it is over 26 – more than double the



national average. Not only large number of our people are committing suicides, our State stands out as the worst affected even in group suicides i.e. the number of families committing suicides. Friends, every suicide, more so of a youth, is not only a devastating family tragedy, but is also a national tragedy. It is a reflection of the prevailing acute social, psychological or economic distress in our society. Urgent remedial measures must be taken to mitigate the alarming situation.

### **(iii) Fast spreading drug abuse among our youth**

Friends,

Incidents of drug abuse especially among the youth, is on sharp increase. The noticeable trend is shift from ganja to synthetic drugs. Year on year sharp increase in seizure of such drugs reveal a very very disturbing scenario. While the rise in ganja consumption is marginal, there is steep increase in consumption of synthetic drugs which are far far more dangerous and damaging. You can imagine the scale of its prevalence by the quantity of such drugs seized. In 2024 it is last year seizure of synthetic drugs increased 14 times over the previous years. It is taking a heavy toll especially on our youth. According to the official data, over 2,000 people especially the youth of Tamil Nadu every year are committing suicide due to drug abuse. This deadly menace has to be tackled both on demand and supply side. Greater awareness and stricter enforcement is needed to curb the demand for drugs, however, tackling the supply side is more difficult because powerful syndicates with alleged patronage of the power-that-be are behind it.

I urge strict action against all those who are killing our youth and sinking the future of our people and the State for their personal profit.

**(iv) Steep rise in rape and other sexual offences against women and girl children**

Friends,

In recent years, there is sharp increase in the incidents of sexual offences specially POCSO rape cases in our State. According to the official data, there has been over 56% increase in POCSO rape cases in 2024. Incidents of molestation of women have jumped by over 33%. Our sisters and daughters are afraid and feel insecure in coming out of their house. We know that the nation is striving towards women-led development with increasing participation of women in all aspects of our national life. In our State Tamil Nadu our women are enterprising and aspirational. As a Chancellor of the State Universities, I am witness to the rise of women in education. In most Universities, women gold medallists far outnumber the men. However, if our sisters and daughters are scared to come out of their houses to pursue their dreams and enterprise, it will cast a dark shadow over our future. Unprecedented rise in sexual offences and violence against women is unacceptable, deplorable and must be curbed with heavy and harsh hand.

Friends,

Each of these is dragging us down and sabotaging our dream of a prosperous and developed state and nation. They must be addressed earnestly and immediately.

Friends,

The global geo-political scenario is in a flux. The global economy is facing huge uncertainty. War has spread to the larger part of the world. Naked power play is on display. A large part of humanity, especially the

global south whose voice has been ignored for long is restive to be heard. In such a challenging time, they are looking to Bharat with expectations to be their voice for a just, equitable and sustainable world order. Recent years regional and global initiatives taken by Bharat have inspired their confidence in us and raised their expectations. Bharat is striving hard to create an equitable, just and sustainable world order.

Friends,

A Viksit Bharat 2047 is not a mere dream; it is our necessity. It is a global necessity. On this auspicious day, let us take a pledge, wherever we are, whichever walk of life, we are in, to commit ourselves in faith and deed to the ideology of “Nation first” i.e. whatever we do, we do so keeping the national interest paramount.

I once again wish you all a very happy and fulfilling Independence Day.

Nandri,

Vaazhga Tamil!

Jai Bharat Mata!

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Raj Bhavan, Chennai-22

Date: 14.08.2025

Released by :-  
Public Relations Office