

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR
OF TAMIL NADU AT THE NATIONAL MARITIME DAY CELEBRATIONS AT
RAJA ANNAMALAI MANDRAM, CHENNAI ON 05/04/2018 18.00 AM**

ANAIVARUKKUM MAALAI VANAKKAM

Thiru S. Barik

Capt. K. Vivekanand

Thiru Rinkesh Roy,

Dr. K.M. Sivakholundu,

Thiru. Devotta Beno

Thiru. V. Mohanan

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me pleasure to take part in the 55th National Maritime Day Celebrations being held at Chennai today.

We are now at a time when the Indian maritime sector is on the cusp of a major revolution. To trace the history let me take you to the turn of the last century, when Thiru V.O.Chidambaram Pillai or Kappalotiya Tamizhar as he was called started the Swadeshi Steam Navigation Company in 1906. His company owned two ships which operated between Tuticorin and Colombo.

The British India Steam Navigation Company first tried to drive him out of business. When that bid failed, Thiru V.O.Chidambaram was imprisoned on charges of sedition. He was yoked to the oil press and suffered this cruel punishment day after day for 4 years. His company was liquidated and his ships auctioned off. Though the British Government suppressed the Indian Maritime initiative at that time the fortunes of the industry flowered after India became Independent. Being richly endowed with the natural advantages to be a great

maritime nation, the Indian maritime sector has grown manifold and today we have one of the largest merchant shipping fleets and 95 per cent of our trade is conducted by sea.

India also has an impressive record in conducting formal training for Merchant Navy personnel since 1927. Indian seafarers have been accepted world-wide as competent, efficient and cost-effective. The country has now positioned itself as a major manpower provider to the world's maritime industry.

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 just a few of 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.

The Government has also launched a number of major initiatives such as the Sagarmala project, the ports modernization project and the project for development of Inland Waterways & Coastal Shipping.

The increasing public-private partnership in response to these initiatives adds to the vibrancy of the sector and is a clear sign of resurgent interest in its potential. Public and private players are now more eager than ever to play a bigger role.

The Sagarmala coastal connectivity project is centred on the modernisation of ports and the development of infrastructure. This is considered to be one of the best initiatives to increase the competitiveness of the Indian maritime sector. Under this project, the Government plans to develop 12 coastal economic regions with an estimated investment of Rs 12 Lakh crores. These will lead to tremendous employment opportunities, estimated at four million direct and six million indirect jobs, and empowerment of coastal communities through skill development programmes.

The Government has also recently brought in legislation for Major Ports to provide greater autonomy to port boards. By this, decision-making will become quick and transparent.

Additional incentives such as Income tax exemption for infrastructure development in ports and a 10-year tax holiday for enterprises engaged in developing ports have also been introduced.

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's share in the global ship-building industry is thus expected to go up from one percent to five percent by 2020.

The Government has specially identified two major maritime clusters in Tamil Nadu & Gujarat. These clusters will focus on developing ship building & ancillary services, maritime services, promoting maritime tourism and marine products. These are opportunities to transform the shipping sector into an engine of growth for India and particularly Tamil Nadu.

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.

I call upon the organizers of Maritime Day celebrations to examine issues such as these and provide their detailed inputs for these will help to spur on the growth of the Maritime industry in India.

Addressing all of you on this special day has given me great satisfaction. I shall be happy to associate with any of the initiatives that you may like to focus upon Tamil Nadu has always been a seafaring State. History tells us that the

even more than 1000 years back Chola Empire in Tamil Nadu rapidly expanded in the direction of Sri Lanka and Indonesia on the strength of its navy. Some of the names of the combat vessels in the Chola navy were Dharani, Vajra, Thirisadai. Tamil literature also speaks about royal yachts such as Neela Mandham, Sarpa Mugam, etc. I am sure that with the growth of Naval architecture as a department of engineering education in India, many more innovations are going to see the light of the day spurring on the growth of ship building. Training of maritime personnel will acquire a fillip and Indian officers and men will increasingly man the merchant ships that will sail the high seas. Port development and trade expansion will see the growth of the coastal towns and the hinterland with an explosion of employment opportunities. These and many more benefits will flow from increased domestic growth of the maritime sector.

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.

Nandri Vanakkam Jai Hind Jai Tamil Nadu