

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF  
TAMIL NADU AT ISWOT – 19 FELICITATION CEREMONY AND ISWOT –  
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD 2019 ORGANISED BY INDIAN SEAFEARERS  
WELFARE ORGANIZATION AT LE ROYAL MERIDIAN, CHENNAI  
ON 12.05.2019 AT 6.00 P.M**

**Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam**

**Thiru. M.M.Rajendran,**  
Former Governor of Odisha

**Thiru. K.Pandiarajan,**  
Minister for Tamil Official Language,  
Tamil Culture and Archaeology

**Thiru. Cyril C. George,**  
Deputy Chairman,  
Chennai Port Trust

**Dr.A.Babu Mailan,**  
Chairman,  
Indian Seafarers Welfare Organisation Trust

**Distinguished Invitees  
Ladies and Gentlemen**

It gives me great happiness to be here today at this function organised by Indian Seafarers Welfare Organization to felicitate Gomathi Marimuthu the athlete who has brought glory to India by winning the gold medal at the 2019 Asian Athletics Championships held at Doha, Qatar in April 2019.

A farmer's daughter, Gomathi, began her athletics career rather late at the age of 20 years. Born in Tiruchirappalli, she did her schooling in the city and went on to complete her BA (Economics) from the Holy Cross College.

It was her friend Shruthi who first inspired Gomathi to develop her natural talent in sports. Until then, for Gomathi, life was all about getting a job and supporting her family as she was the only one among the

three children of the family to attend college. After she started training with her coach Thiru. Gandhi, she discovered her natural talent in athletics.

But at one point of time when her coach passed away and her mother went into depression, she felt lonely and wanted to quit athletics.

It was after two years of agony and mental stress that she could start running practice again. In the meantime, she had missed out on major events like the Asian Games and Common Wealth Games. But by the start of 2019, she began participating in national events again and qualified for the Asian Athletics Championships with a stunning performance in March at the 2019 Federation Cup in Patiala, where her timing was better than the gold winning record registered at the 2017 Asian Championship held in Bhubaneswar where she had not participated. This gave her confidence and strength to perform even better.

However, this wasn't enough for the authorities to select her for the upcoming championship. They asked her to appear for another trial, where she once again proved that her run at Patiala wasn't a flash in the pan. The run at Doha bettered her previous best at the Federation Cup at Patiala.

In a classic comeback, Gomathi Marimuthu emerged from the back of the pack and stormed her way, past the tape, to clinch the gold medal with a personal best of 2m 02.70 seconds. This victory which will be remembered for all times to come was indeed a treat to watch.

The word "athletics" is derived from the Ancient Greek word *athlos* meaning "contest".

The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) is the international governing body for the sport of athletics. It was founded on 17 July 1912 as the International Amateur Athletic Federation by

representatives from 17 national athletics federations at the organization's first congress in Stockholm, Sweden. In 2001 the organization changed its name to the International Association of Athletics Federations.

The Asian Athletics Championships is an event organized by the Asian Athletics Association. The 2019 Asian Athletics Championships was the 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Asian Athletics Championships and was held from 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> April 2019 at the Khalifa International Stadium in Doha.

As you are all aware the Olympic Games were held in Greece in 1896. Female athletes started participating in the Olympic Games from the second Olympic Games held in Paris, France in 1900. Over the years the competition has grown in size and several new events have been thrown open for women making the participation on par with men.

- In 1987, the 10,000 m race and 10 km walk were added.
- In 1993, the triple jump was added.
- In 1995, the 3,000 m race was replaced by the 5000 m.
- In 1999, the pole vault and hammer throw were added and the women's 20 km walk replaced the 10 km walk.
- In 2005, the women's 3000 m steeplechase was added.

By then, the only major difference between the men's competitions and the competitions for women in the Olympics was only the 50 km walk. This has also been subsequently added in 2017 making the two competitions similar.

Athletes like Gomathy have emerged thanks to the spirit of gender equality that is now being actively promoted in sports in India.

Saina Nehwal, P.V.Sindhu, Sania Mirza, Malleswari, Mary Kom, Geeta Phogat, Dipa Karmakar, Mithali Dorai Raj are some of the outstanding women sports persons who have done us proud in the field of sports in recent years.

Tamil Nadu which was the first state in India to set up an exclusive Sports University leads in this effort. The University is engaged in creating an ideal academic environment for fostering Excellence in sports using High-Tech research facilities. The appointment of a lady Vice-Chancellor to the University in 2018 will I am sure, spur on greater participation of Women in Sports in the State.

I am happy to see that P.M.Thabitha is one more budding athlete who has been felicitated today. I am sure that she will also follow in the footsteps of Gomathy Marimuthu.

Fr. B.Antony who has been felicitated today has been engaged in promoting the welfare of seafarers deserves for more than 25 years. He deserves our appreciation for that.

Before I conclude, let me say that encouragement for sports is growing today.

The presence of a large number of participants in sports events is indicative of the enthusiasm and the sense of togetherness that sports has been able to generate among the youth of today. The useful role that sports plays in building up friendship and camaraderie in society is being increasingly recognized.

Athletes like Gomathi Marimuthu will certainly inspire many more youth to not only participate in sports and games, but also excel in them to bring laurels to the state and the nation.

I extend my best wishes to the Indian Seafarers Welfare Organization who have taken painstaking efforts to organize the function. I extend my greetings to them and wish that they succeed in all their endeavours.

Nandri Vanakkam....

Jai Hind....