

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT INAUGURATION OF VGP AQUARIUM ORGANISED BY VGP
GROUP AT VGP MARINE KINGDOM, EAST COAST ROAD, CHENNAI ON
21.04.2019 AT 6.00 P.M**

Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam

Thiru. D. Jayakumar,
Minister for Fisheries, Personnel & Administrative Reforms

Dr. V.G.Santhosam,
Chairman, VGP Groups

Thiru. V.G.P. Ravidas,
Managing Director

Thiru. V.G.P. Rajadas,
Senior Director

**Distinguished Invitees
Ladies and Gentlemen**

It gives me happiness to be here for the inauguration of the Marine Aquarium set up by the VGP group on the East Coast Road. I am informed that this Aquarium which is the first of its kind in India provides an unique underwater experience, with visitors coming face to face with a variety of creatures of the marine kingdom. I am also informed that the aquarium in the Sentosa Park of Singapore was the inspiration for setting up this aquarium in Chennai city.

The VGP group is not new to providing avenues for entertainment based on successful models being operated in other parts of the globe. They were pioneers in the setting up of amusement parks in India. Disney land the largest amusement park of the world located close to Los Angles in USA, was what spurred them on to set up the VGP Amusement Park in Chennai, decades back. The idea become so

attractive that many amusement parks were set up following this, in Chennai and in many other place in India.

Around the world, the amusement park industry's offerings range from large, worldwide type theme parks such as Walt Disney World, SeaWorld Orlando and Universal Studios Hollywood to smaller and medium-sized theme parks such as the Six Flags parks and Cedar Fair parks. We also have theme parks built around education, a classic example being Epcot, which was opened in 1982, in Disney land itself. Amusement parks, as you are all aware have many attractions. Mechanized thrill machines are a defining feature of all amusement parks. Early rides include the carousel, which originally developed from cavalry training methods first used in the Middle Ages. Another such ride which shaped the future of the amusement park experience was the roller coaster. The origins of roller coasters can be traced back to 17th century Russia, where gravity-driven attractions, such as individual sleighs or carts riding freely down chutes on top of specially constructed snow slopes with piles of sand at the bottom for braking, were used as winter leisure activities. Similarly we have boat rides, magic shows, robotic displays and other attractions of food and frolic which make a visit to an amusement park entertaining and memorable.

That this aquarium being set up next to the amusement park is modelled on the Sentosa Island experience of Singapore is nothing surprising.

There has always been a close ethnic connection and strong bonding between the Tamils of Singapore and the people of Tamil Nadu. Almost 60% of Singapore's Indian population owes its ethnic origins to Tamil Nadu.

The oceanarium at Sentosa was opened to the public in 1991 and it had more than 2,500 marine animals of 250 species from different

regions of the world. Those who have visited Singapore will recall that the traveller experience in the underwater tunnel of the aquarium at Sentosa among the many forms of marine life and the dolphin lagoon made the experience unforgettable. The submerged acrylic-windowed tunnel from which one can see an array of marine life including coral reefs, stingrays, eels, turtles, sharks and others has been replicated here. A variety of marine animals dot the aquarium landscape and these include a variety of crabs, turtles, fish, sharks and other sea water animals such as snakes, seahorses and starfish etc.

I am informed by the organisers that this aquarium has been built at a cost of Rs. 115 Crores and took around two and a half years to complete. It has been designed with five zones, viz Rainforest, Gorge, Mangrove, Coastal and the Deep ocean each with its characteristic varieties of marine life. The Life support systems for the fish have been designed in such a manner that the water quality is maintained to give a habitat equivalent to their natural habitat.

This most advanced aquarium in India is certain to serve as a significant tourist attraction. It is only appropriate that the State of Tamil Nadu which has a long coastline and a close affinity to marine species houses an aquarium of this kind. Our state is endowed with several outstanding features which serve as tourist attractions. It has the mountains of the Western Ghats, the verdant vegetation of the plains, the sandy beaches of the coast, the mammoth monuments put up by the Maharajahs, the timeless temples of old, fabulous wildlife, scintillating sculptures and a host of other inheritances that can boast of a priceless heritage, and a feast of cultural confluence and aesthetic magnificence. And among the places visited in the state, Chennai stands out as a place of prime importance. The location of this aquarium on the strategic

road leading to Mahabalipuram is I am sure bound to make every traveller, stop over for a visit to this world of marine life.

I have served as the Governor of Tamil Nadu for more than 18 months and have a reasonably good understanding of the various parts of the State and its people. Endowed with a friendly nature and an entrepreneurial spirit the people of the state have shown how progress can be achieved through hard work, dedication and team spirit. It is indeed a matter of pride for all of us that the state which leads in achievements in the fields of education, health care and tourism has the distinction of being 2nd in GDP, among the states of India. “Thirai Kadal Odiyum Thiraviam Thedu” is an old Tamil saying. The full import of that is seen in the widespread prevalence of the Tamil Diaspora all over the world. The people of Tamil Nadu have indeed spread out their wings far and wide to go out to every corner of the world in the pursuit of their professions and business. Today the state is also offering rich potential for sound investment with a promise of high economic returns on the capital put in. Hence millions of Indians are coming back to invest in India and find that to be a rewarding experience. They are also bringing with them the rich technological expertise that they have gained overseas to create an international flavour that makes our nation a window to the world. Experiencing the world, while residing in one’s own country has never been so easy as it is in the current times. Seen in that light, this international experience created in the form of an aquarium will be a source of delight. I congratulate the VGP group for having taken up this tourism initiative in Tamil Nadu. May they be greeted with success in all their endeavours.

Nandri Vanakkam....

Jai Hind....