

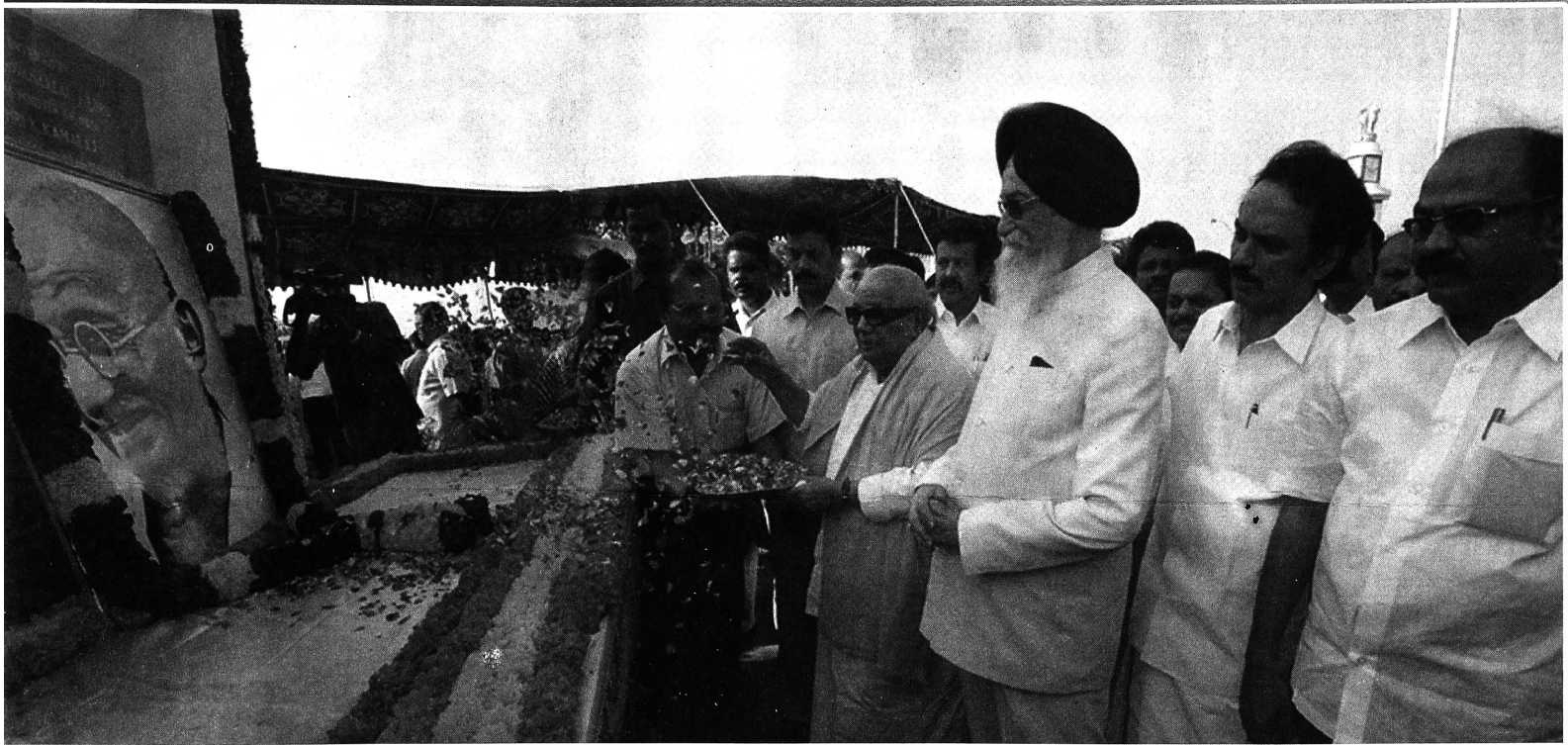
Tamil Arasu

Publication of Information & Public Relations Department

October-November-December 2008

Rs.15/-





On the 140th Birthday of Uthamar Gandhi on 2.10.2008, floral tributes were paid to his portrait by His Excellency the Governor Thiru Surjit Singh Barnala, Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi and Hon'ble Ministers.

Tamil Arasu

Publication of Information &
Public Relations Department

Quarterly Magazine
Thiruvalluvar Year 2039
October - November -
December 2008

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எல்லா விளக்கும் விளக்கு அல்ல சான்றோர்க்குப்
பொய்யா விளக்கே விளக்கு.

Truth is a powerful light, like the Sun,
banishing dark ignorance from the mind.

Thirukkural : 299

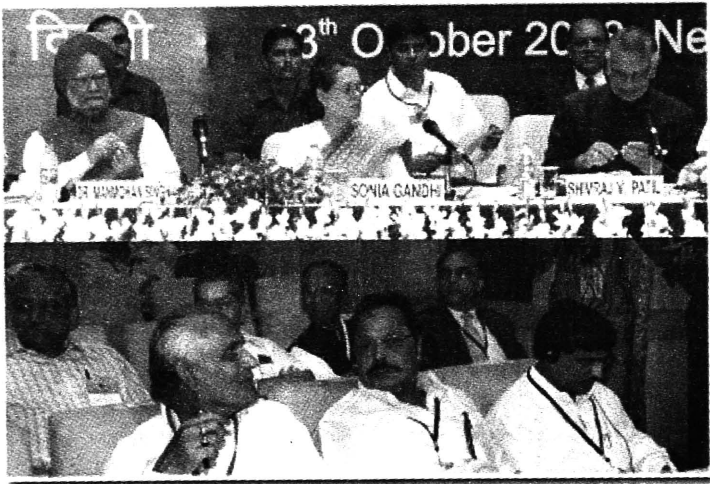
*First Wrapper : Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaignar
M. Karunanidhi unveiled the statue of Thiruvalluvar
at the campus of Delhi Tamil Sangam on 4.12.2008.*

*Third Wrapper : Hon'ble Chief Minister presented the
Uthamar Gandhi Awards to
15 Village Panchayat Chairmen on 19.12.2008.*

*Fourth Wrapper : Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi
inaugurated sale of 10 items of spices and condiments
at a subsidised rate of Rs.50 per pack through
Fair Price Shops on 2.10.2008 at Chennai.*

“Let us create a collective resolve to face and overcome any threat to our National Integrity”

Address of Chief Minister **Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi** at the
National Integration Council Meeting on 13.10.2008 at New Delhi



Hon'ble Prime Minister of India,

Hon'ble Union Home Minister,

Hon'ble Union Ministers,

Hon'ble Chief Ministers of all States and
Union Territories,

Leaders of National Political Parties and

Distinguished Members of the National
Integration Council,

At the outset, I would like to thank the Prime Minister for having convened the meeting of the reconstituted National Integration Council at this crucial juncture. In the wake of communal disturbances reported in different

parts of the country posing a threat to our secular fabric and solidarity, convening the reconstituted National Integration Council has assumed greater significance. The motivated and instigated incidents of communal violence not only pose a serious threat to communal peace and amity, but also hamper the momentum of social and economic development of the country. I am confident that our deliberations today will certainly result in positive decisions leading to strengthening of our institutional response both at Central and State level to effectively meet the challenges facing this great nation.

Tamil Nadu is always keen in maintaining communal harmony in the State by

taking pro-active measures in fulfilling the demands of minorities and downtrodden. Our State Government has constituted an independent Directorate for minorities which exclusively formulates and supervises implementation of various welfare schemes for upliftment of the minorities. Introduction of scholarships and educational loan schemes, imparting skill development training for creating self-employment, sanctioning of loans with reduced interest through Minorities Economic Development Corporation etc., are some of the measures introduced by the State Government for the welfare of minorities in the State. We have introduced a separate quota for backward class candidates belonging to Muslim and Christian communities. We have also constituted Minorities Commission to address the grievances of the minority communities and advise the Government on their issues.

To ensure backward and minority communities occupying a level playing field, it is imperative that reservation to other backward classes must be enforced in the Central services, Central educational institutions without any exclusion of the so called 'creamy layer'.

The recently announced Industrial Policy and MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) Policy of our Government have laid emphasis on the balanced development and industrialisation of all the regions, particularly the 251 backward blocks of the State, by offering attractive packages including capital subsidy, employment subsidy and power tariff subsidy. In the MSME sector, special

capital subsidy has been extended to Women entrepreneurs and also to underprivileged sections of the society including the disabled.

The State Government is taking steps to start industrial parks and special economic zones in different regions of the State to create employment opportunities. Besides this, by implementing special schemes such as, supply of rice at Re.1 per kg., provision of grocery items at subsidised price through fair price shops, distribution of free television sets and gas stoves to the poor family cardholders, implementation of Anna Village Renaissance Scheme, sanctioning loans to self-help groups and by the introduction of exclusive schemes to uplift the minorities and downtrodden, the State Government is ensuring equitable development of all classes of the people.

The activities of fundamental and casteist organisations are being monitored closely by activating the State police and the intelligence machinery and action including detention under the National Security Act is being taken wherever necessary to maintain communal harmony in the State. Peace committees have been formed in sensitive areas in all the districts and the services of these committees are being utilised to defuse any friction between people belonging to different religions and castes. An Amendment has been made to the preventive detention Act in the State enabling detention of persons who desecrate or denigrate the statues of caste leaders and thereby incite caste conflicts.

The extremist forces in certain parts of the country are posing threat to maintenance of the public order, challenging the writs of constitutionally elected governments. Strengthening the Central and State Intelligence networks, ensuring effective co-ordination with State police forces, formation of elite police groups exclusively for tackling extremists and terrorist elements in the affected States, provision of modern weapon systems, protective gear and required logistics to those groups, creation of inter-state joint task forces to conduct joint operations, provision of training to the State police at the training centres of Central police forces and Armed forces including foreign training centres to adopt latest techniques are some of the enforcement oriented measures to be implemented.

Extensive steps have been taken along the coastline of more than thousand kilometers to prevent intrusion, smuggling by nefarious elements and also to deny Tamil Nadu coast being used as a base for carrying out their activities. A chain of check posts have been created along the coastline by diverting one battalion of Armed Police to take care of the coast line. Our requests for reimbursement of these expenditures which otherwise should have been incurred by the Central Government which is in charge of protecting the international border has not been adequately responded to by the authorities concerned. This assistance is crucial to the State Government for it is safeguarding the national interest and is defending the international borderline.

Implementing developmental schemes in the extremist prone districts to create employment opportunities, eradication of illiteracy in backward districts, improving co-ordination between various agencies of the government in implementing the existing welfare schemes vigorously, strengthening village vigilance system are some of the measures to be focused by the District Administration. Socio-Economic Development Programmes specifically suited to these districts are being implemented and is continued without any central assistance. Furthermore, Special Task Force (STF) has been deployed in the vulnerable sectors to prevent intrusion and any extremism related activities in those regions.

In spite of assurances, attacks on fishermen from Tamil Nadu is on the increase. This has become a cause for anguish and agitation by the fishermen community across the Tamil Nadu coast bordering Srilanka.

The unresolved inter-state river water disputes, parochial tendencies and agitations in some parts of the country are acting against the solidarity and integration of the nation. If urgent steps are not taken at the national level to find amicable solutions to these vexed problems, these disputes will be detrimental to the interests of the nation in the long run. Nationalization of inter-state rivers, linking of inter-state rivers by constituting National River Water Authority, amicable settlement of outstanding disputes between States by appointing inter-state committees are some of the remedial measures that the National

Integration Council should ponder to maintain good relationship between the States.

It is our hope and desire that the National Integration Council must become an effective forum in securing public order and internal security, by ensuring communal harmony and balanced Sectoral and Regional Development.

Our nation is endowed with an amalgamation of different races, religions, cultures and languages. This diversity is our strength and not a weakness. We need to support the quest of the various demographic groups to flourish and prosper. At this crucial hour I assure our support and commitment to create a collective resolve to face and overcome any threat to our national integrity. *

Anna Speaks....

“Our religion has degenerated into rituals, our society which was once classless and casteless has degenerated into water-tight compartments of caste and creed, and, all the while, we have kept either silent or have been supplying defence to superstition and orthodoxy by offering liberal interpretations in a scholarly way. Unwittingly we have been allowing this state of affairs to exist, despite condemnation and protest. And, more than that, whenever a doughty warrior comes forth to fight against the evils prevalent, we decry and denounce him as an annihilator of noble values and hoary systems. Periyar Ramasami represents and symbolises the fury and frustration in a sizable section of society at this state of affairs. To allow systems to degenerate and at the same time denounce those who champion the cause of Rationalism is but to perpetuate superstition and orthodoxy and allow this society of ours to get decomposed.

Universities offer the proper forum for a free and full discussion of these intricate problems and graduates are to go forth as emissaries that social reconstruction which is long over due. The country looks to centres of learning to enable the people to pursue the path of progress, braving difficulties and, if need be, courting danger.

Let me call upon students to carry on the crusade against caste which cannot co-exist with ‘democracy, against superstition which cannot co-exist with science and against tyranny of various dimensions which cannot co exist with liberty, equality and fraternity.

Pursuing vocations for you and your family’s well - being, you have to perform your duty towards society. You are to become torch - bearers of Rationalism and Rationalism does not mean repudiation of basic and fundamental truths and maxims, but the annihilation of dubious modes of thought and action. You have to work hard and with daring and dash, for we have to clear cob webs which are centuries old and let reason reign supreme.” ★

"ALL-PARTY MEETING CALLED TO SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE"

Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaingar M.Karunanidhi on October 14, 2008 said the purpose of the all-party meeting was to speak with one voice against the killing of Sri Lankan Tamils.

Recalling the agitations and public meetings organised independently by various political parties in support of the Sri Lankan Tamils and to condemn the Indian government's assistance to the Sri Lankan Navy, the Chief Minister in his introductory remarks said there was nothing wrong in such independent actions by political parties.

He said the all-party meeting had been convened to show the combined strength of the political parties, because the Tamils here were pained by the treatment meted out to Sri Lankan Tamils. The meeting, he said, would help channelise the views of all political parties and find lasting solutions. He called upon leaders of the political parties to give their views "to liberate the Tamils from the marauding Sinhalese officials and the Army."

Hon'ble Chief Minister pointed out that sibling rivalry among the Tamil groups in Sri Lanka, had largely weakened their fight in realising their goal.

He said former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi helped the LTTE by forming more than 100 training camps in India despite opposition from various global organisations. "Despite this enormous help, we have failed to win the struggle just because the sibling rivalry that claimed the lives of many," the Chief Minister said.

Recalling the TESO conference held in Madurai in 1986, he said that he had got information that

TELO leader Sabarathinam would be killed on May 6, 1986. "I pleaded with representatives of a movement not to kill Sabarathinam, but the next day he was murdered," he said, adding that only because of such killings "our struggle had weakened". The TESO conference at Madurai was attended by leaders such as Thiru. Bahuguna, Thiru. Ramoowalia, Thiru. R.Upendra and Thiru. Jaswant Singh Thiru. Thilagar (LTTE), Thiru. Mathi (TELO), Thiru. Chandrahasan (PROTEG), Thiru. Rathnasabapathi (EROS), Thiru. Ealavendran (TELF), Thiru. Varadaraja perumal (EPRLF) and Thiru. Vanidevan (PLOT) and Thiru. A.Amirthalingam (TULF).

Recalling the murder of another Sri Lankan Tamil leader, Thiru. Padmanabha, and 10 others in 1990, Hon'ble Chief Minister said, "We should learn a lesson from these sibling rivalries. The need of the hour is unity."



On the day of Padmanabha's killing on 18.6.1990 a meeting was held at the residence of the then Hon'ble Prime Minister V.P.Singh on Sri Lankan issue and was attended by the Chief Ministers Thiru. Jothi Basu (West Bengal), Thiru. E.K.Nayanar (Kerala), Thiru. Biju Patnaik (Orissa), Thiru. Bhairon Singh Shekawat (Rajasthan), Thiru. Laloo Prasad Yadav (Bihar), Thiru. Ram Prasad Gupta (Uttar Pradesh), Thiru. Shantakumar (Himachal Pradesh), Thiru. Nar Bahadur Bhandari (Sikkim) and Thiru. D.Ramachandran (Pondicherry), Union Ministers Thiru. Arun Nehru, Thiru. Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, Thiru. Murasoli Maran, Thiru. Gurupadasamy, Thiru. Dinesh Goswami, Thiru. P.Upendra, Thiru. Unnikrishanan and political leaders Thiru. A.B.Vajpayee, Thiru. LK.Advani, Thiru. E.M.S.Namboodriabad, Thiru. Farooqi, Thiru. Jaswant Singh, Thiru.Chittabasu, Thiru. Samar Mukherjee and Dr. Nagendra Sakaria.

The issue was discussed for over four hours then and all of them has rallied together at the all India level for Eelam Tamils cause.

★ ★ ★

No differences with Centre in bringing about peace in Lanka



There is no place for difference of opinion with the Union Government in extending cooperation to bring about peace in Sri Lanka, Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaigamar M. Karunanidhi said October 29, 2008.

Reiterating the position of his government, he said that Sri Lankan Tamils should be safeguarded. Peace should be established in the island nation.

Those who were creating such a scenario should be supported. "This has been our position. There is no change in our policy," he

said, dedicating the 20-km-long Rajiv Gandhi Salai (from Madhya Kailash temple in Taramani to Siruseri) at a function at Sholinganallur.

Citing newspaper reports published in 1989 wherein former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was quoted as having appreciated the DMK government for its cooperation with the Centre on the Sri Lankan Tamils issue, Hon'ble Chief Minister said he referred to them only to show that his government working together with the Centre was not new. His government has always honoured those who sacrificed their lives for the cause of the nation's welfare.

He recalled his government's decision to enact a law to commemorate birth anniversary of former Chief Minister Perunthalaivar Kamarajar in recognition of the leader's contributions to the spread of education in the State.

He referred to the move of his government [during the previous tenure] to name the Government Estate in the city after another former Chief Minister Omandur P. Ramasamy Reddiar.

It was in this backdrop that the Old Mamallapuram Road was renamed as Rajiv Gandhi Salai, he added. "We never believed in gun for gun, blood policy to find a solution to the issue.

The Indian government should make efforts to initiate the dialogue process between the warring parties and the Tamil Nadu Government would extend its support," he said.

Hon'ble Chief Minister said his party always stood for the protection of the ethnic Tamils. "We want the ongoing war to end and peace to prevail there," he said.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister, quoted the Indian Express edition of April 6, 1989, which

carried former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's speech, which had firmly acknowledged the DMK's stand on the Sri Lankan issue.

He also recalled his meeting with late Rajiv Gandhi, despite his political rivalry at that point of time, and how he insisted on discussing the issue with him.

Reiterating his appeal for a peaceful solution to the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka, Hon'ble Chief Minister said that the Governments of India and Tamil Nadu were ready to facilitate the return of the Lankan government and the LTTE to the negotiating table.

"Our concern is for the welfare of innocent Tamils. Our stand on the issue is explicit. The ethnic crisis should be solved only the Gandhian way and both (the groups) should sit and hammer out a peaceful solution. India and Tamil Nadu governments are prepared to support the resumption of peace talks," he said arguing that negotiations were the only way out to ensure peace in the strife-torn country.

His only wish was that peace should return to Lanka. He for one would consider the ethnic problem as resolved only when the "tears of the Tamils are wiped. That time is not far off," he said.

★

SRILANKAN TAMILS ISSUE :

CHIEF MINISTER LEADS ALL - PARTY DELEGATION



On the request made by Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaingar M.Karunanidhi on behalf of the leaders of all political parties who called on him on December 4, 2008, Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh agreed to send Hon'ble External Affairs Minister Thiru Pranab Mukherjee to Sri Lanka for talks with authorities there for bringing about a truce and arrange for peace talks.

Talking to newspersons in New Delhi after meeting with the Prime Minister, the Chief Minister further stated that the latter had assured to send the External Affairs Minister at the earlier possible time. He said after presenting a memorandum on behalf of all parties, himself and leaders of many parties spoke pressing for the contents of the memorandum. The leaders pressed for immediate cessation of the on-going war in Sri Lanka. After the Prime Minister and the

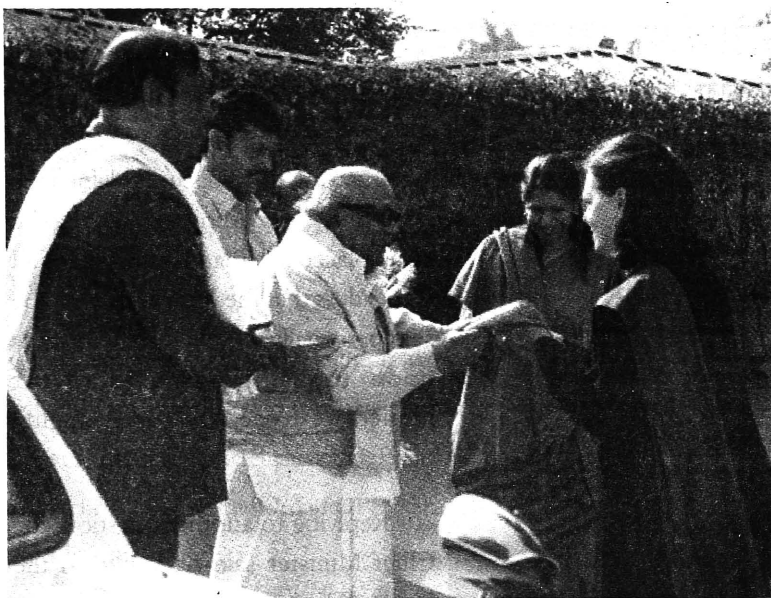
External Affairs Minister explained the positions, Chief Minister said, that he again placed a demand on behalf of all the leaders that the Minister should be sent personally to Sri Lanka to impress upon the authorities there for immediate truce and for arranging peace talks.

Replying to another question, the Chief Minister said he spoke to the Prime Minister on the need for financial assistance for flood relief measures in the State.

The Chief Minister said he had asked the Prime Minister to allocate Rs.708 crore for the State to take up linking of the three rivers flowing inside Tamil Nadu and assistance for preventing sea erosion. 'We have explained that the Centre should meet the entire cost of railway projects in the State.'

The Chief Minister said he also met UPA Chairperson Tmt. Sonia Gandhi accompanied by Hon'ble Union Minister Thiru T.R.Baalu and Rajya Sabha member Poet Kanimozhi. He handed over to her a copy of the memorandum presented to the Prime Minister and explained the details and asked her also to do the needful.

Asked about recent floods in State, the Chief Minister said 177 had lost their lives and over 25 lakh people had been affected and sheltered in over 4000 relief camps. They were



Thakur and Union Power Secretary Thiru. Anil Razdan. They had assured to supply the full or half the quota of power from the Central grid by December 2008 after consultations with the Union Minister and other officials.

The Chief Minister said he, as all other fair minded people, wished that the visit of Thiru Pranab Mukherjee to

provided with food packets everyday. About 4.47 lakh huts were damaged and about crops over eight lakh hectares had been damaged. Over 13,000 km long roads had been damaged. Hence he had demanded the Centre to immediately release an interim relief of Rs. 1,000 crores. Besides, he also asked for immediate release of the Central compensation on implementation of VAT in the State. He also reminded the Prime Minister of the State's demand for reimbursement of Rs.7,000 crore being the amount of farm loans written off by the State Government prior to the Centre's announcement. He also asked for sufficient funds for the two desalination projects in the State.

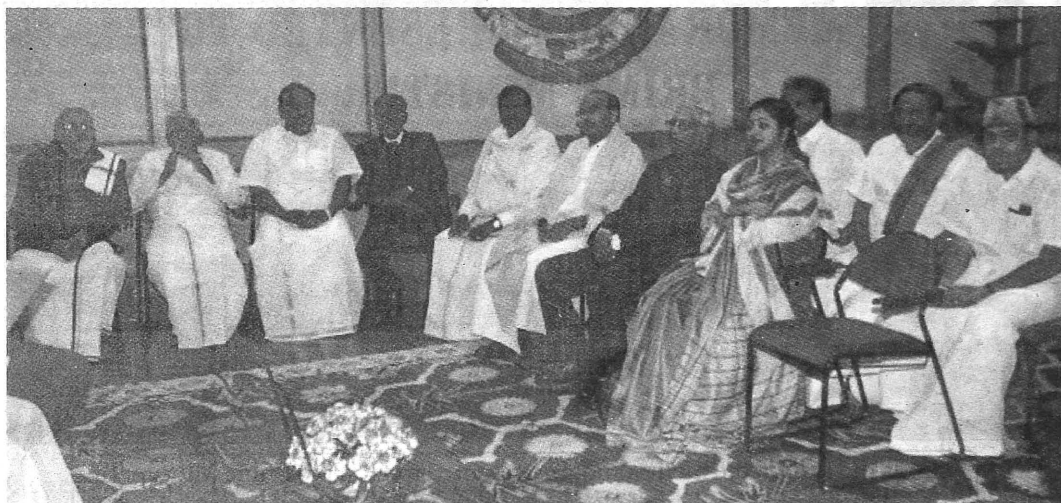
Hon'ble Minister for Electricity Thiru Arcot N. Veeraswami and Hon'ble Union Minister Thiru T.R.Baalu met and discussed about it with Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Power Thiru Jairam Ramesh, Power Trading Corporation Chairman Thiru

Lanka should produce positive result. The Centre denied arms assistance to Sri Lanka. Precautionary measures in all places including Chennai airport had been taken in the aftermath of Mumbai incident.

To a question on inclusion of Tamil representatives while Thiru Pranab visits Lanka, the Chief Minister said the Centre would contact and speak about details when the visit fructified. He also said that he believed in unity of all on Lankan issue and hence he did not want to spoil the spirit by answering such questions by critics.

Asked about the boycott of opposition parties he replied that it showed their consciousness. On Lankan President Rajapaksa's statement that there was no scope for ceasefire he said, "I expect such a scope would come."

The Chief Minister said he had asked the



Home Minister Thiru P.Chidambaram to set up in Chennai one of the proposed four NSG camps to suppress terrorism. He had also spoken about it to the Prime Minister.

On redeeming Katchatheevu, he said the people of Tamil Nadu were aware of the tall talk of Opposition Leader Selvi J.Jayalithaa to that effect every time she hoisted tricolour on Independence day at Fort St. George. In such issues, problems of withdrawal from an agreement already signed and changing it were subjected to international laws.

Asked about the criticism that External Affairs Department Secretary Thiru Shiv Shankar Menon and National Security Advisor Thiru M.K.Narayanan were instrumental in taking wrong decisions on Lankan matters, the Chief Minister said 'If it is so, let us hope the Prime Minister would take suitable steps.'

On Hogenakkal project, the project was worked out several years back as per the agreement between the States of Tamil Nadu

and Karnataka. It was not proper to claim rights and prevent its execution. It was not proper morally and legally, he said.

The Chief Minister led the All-Party delegation which consisted of Dravidar Kazhagam President Thiru K.Veeramani, PMK founder leader Dr. S.Ramadoss and its President Thiru G.K.Mani, M.G.R. Kazhagam leader Thiru R.M.Veerappan, Tamil Nadu Congress Committee President Thiru K.V.Thangabalu, Congress Legislature party leader Thiru D.Sudarssanam, CPI State Secretary Thiru D.Pandian, Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi President Thiru Thol Thirumavalavan, Puthiya Thamizhagam President Dr. K. Krishnasamy, Bishop Esra Sargunam, Lakshiya Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam leader Thiru Vijaya T.Rajendhar and actress Thiru Radhika Sarathkumar on behalf of Samathuva Makhal Katchi. ★

MEMORANDUM PRESENTED TO PRIME MINISTER



(This is the text of the memorandum presented to Hon'ble Prime Minister by delegation from Tamil Nadu led by Hon'ble Chief Minister on 4.12.2008)

The People of Tamil Nadu and the Tamils across the world are deeply agitated over the continuing genocide of Sri Lankan Civilian Tamils in Sri Lanka and the unabated abuse of their Human Rights. We, the leaders of political parties and social organisations in Tamil Nadu, are also deeply pained and concerned about the ongoing disaster in Sri Lanka and have come here to submit this memorandum to the Prime Minister.

The deep anguish of the Tamils across the world about the untold sufferings being faced by the Sri Lankan Civilian Tamils in Sri Lanka can be gauged from the fact that the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly passed resolutions on two occasions viz. 23.4.2008 and 12.11.2008 urging the Government of India to put an end to the raining atrocities on the hapless Sri Lankan Civilian Tamils and to take immediate action to alleviate their plight besides arranging purposeful dialogue between the two parties to find a sustainable peaceful political solution to the Sri Lankan crisis. Similarly, two meetings were conducted with all political parties and other organisations in Tamil Nadu under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu on 14.10.2008 and 25.11.2008 respectively to debate on the crisis devouring the Sri Lankan Civilian Tamils and decide further course of

action to resolve the crisis. All the above resolutions have been brought to the notice of the Hon'ble Prime Minister.

People from all walks of life in Tamil Nadu have been spontaneously organising various demonstrations like rallies, road blockades, rail roko etc., across the state to express their anguish against the continued violence perpetrated on the Sri Lankan Civilian Tamils. Even a massive human chain unheard of in the recent history was organised on 24.10.2008 to highlight the distress of Sri Lankan Civilian Tamils. Pursuant to the appeal made by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, people of Tamil Nadu have generously contributed to the Relief Fund for the Sri Lankan Civilian Tamils and within a short period of one month more than Rs.37 Crores have been collected and 80,000 family packs consisting of grocery, clothes and other daily use items have been shipped to Sri Lanka as relief material and handed over to the International Committee of Red Cross for distribution to the Sri Lankan Civilian Tamils.

Government of India have also taken sincere efforts to prevail upon Sri Lankan Government to resolve the crisis in Sri Lanka and arrive at long lasting political solution to the Sri Lankan Civilian Tamil crisis. However, without showing due regard to the efforts of the Government of India and the sentiments



of Tamils across the world, the Sri Lankan Government continues its fierce onslaught against Sri Lankan Civilian Tamils. Hence, we believe that the Indians in general and Tamils in particular cannot be mute spectators to the genocide of Civilian Tamils in Sri Lanka and violation of basic human rights.

Therefore, the leaders of all political parties and organisations from Tamil Nadu under the leadership of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, have come to Delhi to meet the Hon'ble Prime Minister and personally appeal to him to make immediate and more effective initiatives to put an end to the conflict in Sri Lanka by prevailing upon the Sri Lankan Government and impressing on them the utmost urgency for ceasefire.

At this juncture, we also wish to highlight the reports appearing in the press about the adamant attitude of the Sri Lankan Government to exterminate Civilian Tamils from Sri Lanka by continuing the war against the innocent Sri Lankan Civilian Tamils despite the reported readiness of the other party to cooperate to find a and peaceful political solution to the problem.

We, therefore, request the Hon'ble Prime Minister to take firm and forceful measures to ensure the following in order to provide for peaceful co-existence of the Civilian Tamils

in Sri Lanka and to safe guard the future of their younger generation who rather than attending schools have now taken refuge in the jungle and hills to save their lives:-

- a) Issue strong warning to the Sri Lankan Government to announce immediate ceasefire;
- b) Arrange for political dialogue between the two parties to arrive at a peaceful political solution to the Sri Lankan crisis;
- c) Urge Sri Lankan Government to ensure proper relief and rehabilitation measures for the war-affected Sri Lankan Civilian Tamils by providing food, shelter, medicines etc. and also cooperate in proper distribution of relief materials by the International Community in the war affected areas;
- d) Immediately stop the harassment of Indian Fishermen at the hands of Sri Lankan Navy, who continue to indulge in acts of violence and indiscriminate firing on Indian Fishermen in spite of repeated promises and announcements from Sri Lankan Government.

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Rs.100 CRORE ALLOTTED FOR RAIN RELIEF WORKS



The 33rd meeting of the Tamil Nadu Cabinet which met on November 27, 2008 decided to allocate Rs. 100 crore at the first stage for immediate relief works to be carried out for the torrential rain affected people in the State.

Announcing this, Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaigñar M.Karunanidhi said that an assistance of Rs.2000 each for the partially and fully damaged huts and Rupees One lakh each to the families of those who had lost lives, would be given.

The Chief Secretary explained that according to reports received till then 55 taluks, in particular 1380 revenue villages and 1,35,094 persons were affected. 54,525 persons had been sheltered elsewhere and 51 had lost their lives.

The Cabinet decided that Ministers of the respective districts should carry out relief works. For the most affected districts, Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development Local Administration Thiru M.K.Stalin would visit Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam and Cuddalore districts. Hon'ble Minister for Law Thiru Duraimurugan to Thiruchi and Thanjavur districts

and Hon'ble Minister for Revenue Thiru I.Periasamy to Thirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts.

The report of Justice Janardhanan committee on exclusive reservation for Arunthathiyar community was discussed and accepted in principle. The implementation of the reservation would be studied by a Cabinet committee to be formed. Justice Janardhanan was invited to the meeting and he explained about the salient features of the report.

The Cabinet congratulated and thanked the Chief Minister for evincing interest on the community's progress and also Justice Janardhanan, who in turn thanked Chief Minister for giving him the opportunity.

Earlier, the Cabinet condoled the death of over 100 persons killed in the terrorist strikes in Mumbai on 26th November 2008. The Cabinet passed a resolution moved by the Chief Minister. The Cabinet observed one minute silence as a mark of respect to those who lost their lives in the attacks. The Cabinet also condoled the death of the rain victims in Tamil Nadu.

★

CHIEF MINISTER ON WHIRLWIND TOUR OF RAIN AFFECTED AREAS



Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaaignar M. Karunanidhi made a whirlwind tour of Chennai city on 28.11.2008 to get a first hand account of the ravages caused by the rain and to offer solace to the affected.

The Chief Minister's day began at 4 a.m. He read the reports that were faxed to his residence from the district headquarters and the affected areas. He then telephoned the Collectors of all the coastal districts for an update and then followed this up with a call to the Ministers in charge of the affected districts.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister went around Kotturpuram, Saidapet, Gandhi Mandapam, Kilpauk and Perambur which are the worst affected by the rains.

After assessing the situation, he said that he decided to tour Chennai because of the excess draining of water from Chembarambakkam and the flooding in north Chennai.

Hon'ble Chief Minister said that people in Kotturpuram, Saidapet and Perambur had expressed their happiness over the arrangements made. Many in Gandhi Mandapam - which was converted into a makeshift relief camp - said that they were pleased with the fact that the Chief Minister himself had come to make enquiries. The Hon'ble Chief Minister distributed relief material and food to the affected people.

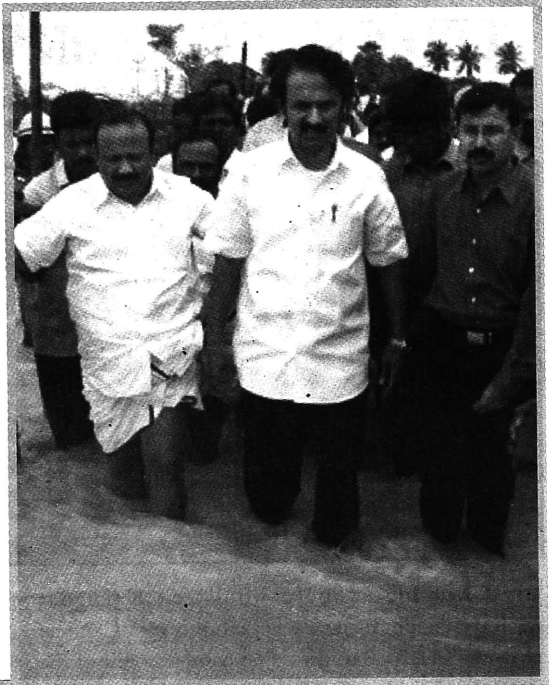


Later in the afternoon, the Chief Minister's office was collecting information of the damage across the State. Hon'ble Chief Minister said that the worst affected districts were Nagapattinam, Cuddalore,

Tiruvarur, Thanjavur and Villupuram. Chennai, Kancheepuram, Tiruvallur, Tirunelveli, Kanyakumari and Tiruchi were affected partly.

Hon'ble Local Administration Minister Thiru M.K. Stalin, directed relief efforts in Tiruvarur and Nagapattinam on November 29. The Minister said that the estimated loss of crops and property were Rs 685 crore and Rs 368 crore respectively.

He also said that Nagapattinam, which had received 855 mm rain this November, has claimed 11 human lives and 178 livestock, apart from causing extensive damage to crops and roads. The Minister said that 1.34 lakh hectares of samba and thaladi crops were submerged in Tiruvarur district. The damage to crops was estimated at Rs 456 crore. More than 3.63 lakh persons evacuated from low-lying areas are now sheltered at 717 feeding



centres across the district. Earlier, he visited the feeding centre at Saliyamangalam village in Thanjavur where 3,084 evacuated persons are sheltered.

Hon'ble Finance Minister Prof. K Anbazhagan, Hon'ble Electricity Minister Thiru Arcot N.Veeraswami and Hon'ble Information Minister Thiru. Parithi Ellamvazhuthi also visited several areas in the Chennai city and speeded up relief works. They visited a couple of temporary shelters and inspected preparation of food for the affected

people. The heavy rain that lashed the State for four days has left standing crops in 12.27 lakh acres across various districts, particularly in delta areas, under water even as rain-related deaths mounted to 86 till November 29, 2008.

Revenue department officials said in many places, the flood water was receding only in the evening as rains continued to lash even after cyclone Nisha crossed Tamil Nadu coast. They said a clear picture on infrastructure damages like on roads and bridges would emerge only on November 29, 2008.

Apart from districts in Cauvery delta (Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Tiruchy and Nagapattinam), Cuddalore and Ramnad also faced the wrath of heavy rains. In the first spell of rain, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari districts were affected.

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CHIEF MINISTER CALLS FOR LASTING SOLUTION TO RECURRENT FLOODS



Hon'ble Chief Minister K. J. Somasundaram called for schemes that would offer a lasting solution to the problems posed by recurrent floods in the State.

Addressing a conference of District Collectors, on December 7, 2008 he regretted that those who run the government and officials forget the calamities caused by the floods and droughts, once the disaster was behind them.

He said that such an attitude could not be allowed this time.

"Based on experience gained during the flood, you should evolve schemes in consultation with various departments to find a lasting solution," he said.

Pointing out that a team of Ministers headed by Local Administration Minister Thiru M.K. Stalin was moving in that direction, he told the Collectors and officials to speed up work so that some announcements could be made before the budget.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister also increased to Rs. 2 lakh the solatium given to the next of kin of those who were killed in the floods. "The task of distributing financial assistance to these families and those who lost cattle should be completed by December 10," he said. The responsibility of giving compensation to the cattle had been transferred to the Revenue Divisional Officers (RDOs) from Collectors to speed up the process. As regards houses damaged in the flood, financial assistance would be given by December 12, 2008 he said, adding that the assistance should be given in cash.

Stating that the survey for assessing crop damage and distribution of compensation should be completed by December 31, he directed the Collectors to directly monitor the desilting works in rivers, ponds and lakes to ensure quality.

Hon'ble Chief Minister said that all members of a family should be given dhotis and saris immediately though the government

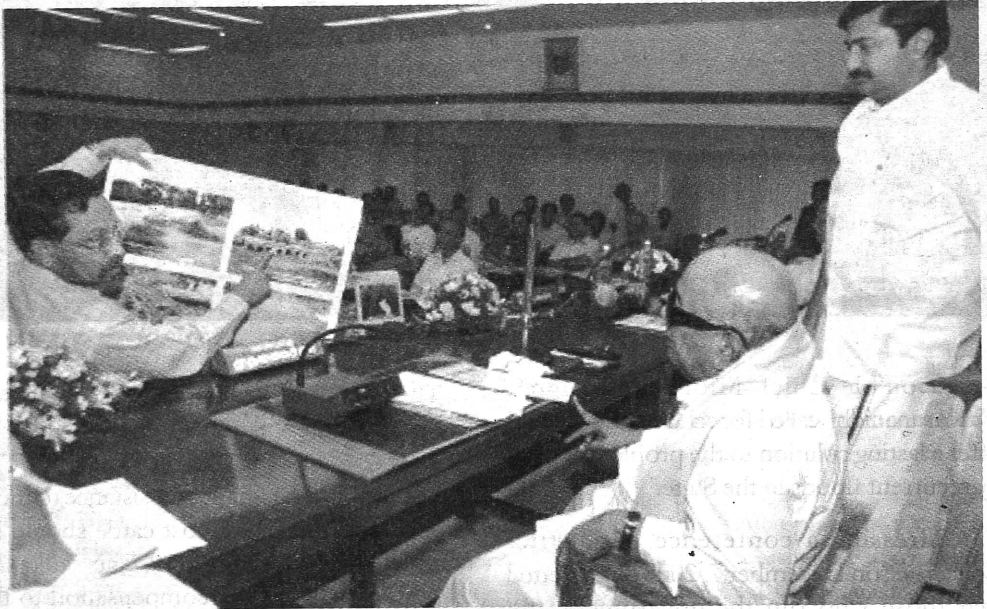
would distribute free dhotis and saris during 'Pongal.'

The government also decided to distribute uniforms and textbooks to students.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister on December 5, 2008 sanctioned Rs.500 crore to carry out

the hope and belief that the Centre would come to the State's aid in a significant way.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister will again meet collectors of the affected districts on December 8, 2008 in Chennai to discuss the relief and rehabilitation needs at length.



immediate relief work in the flood affected districts.

People in Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, Tiruvarur, Thanjavur, Pudukottai, Ariyalur, Tiruchi, Ramanathapuram, Tiruvallur, Kancheepuram and Chennai districts had been affected to a large extent and the need was to provide immediate relief, he said.

There was a need for relaying roads and repairing bridges and causeways, rebuilding bridges and causeways, rebuilding homes and huts, and also helping farmers. The money would be used towards meeting these and other needs projected by District Collectors, he said, adding that the money was being released in

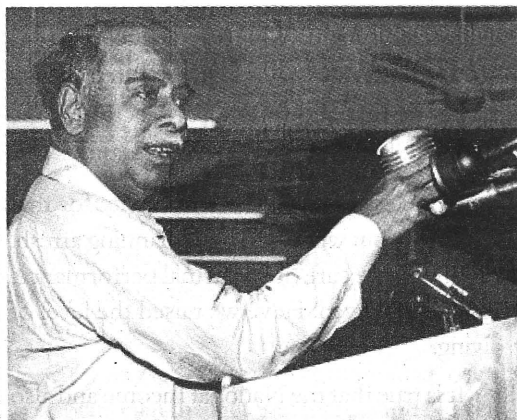
The meeting would take stock of the operations carried out so far and discuss timelines for the implementation of the rehabilitation measures. It would also discuss the permanent mechanisms that need to be installed/built in some place along rivers/sea to ensure that floodwater did not enter habitations after the first few showers.

Meanwhile, the second meeting of the Cabinet Sub-Committee constituted by the Hon'ble Chief Minister to oversee the relief operations will meet on 6th December, 2008.





ANNA ON THIRD PLAN FOR TAMIL NADU



*We present here excerpts from
a speech by*

Perarignar Anna

delivered on 10.01.1960.

*This is published as a tribute to
Perarignar Anna.*

*The speech seems eternally
relevant.*

The kind invitation extended to all political parties, for participation in the Planning Committee, is a welcome gesture from the ruling party. The spirit behind the invitation is to be appreciated and no party would fail to reciprocate the feeling.

Planning has assumed an overwhelming importance in the present political set up, and as the dimension grows more and more, hopes are naturally raised higher. Hence there is every need for a careful and continuous appraisal. Rigidity is to be avoided as far as possible, and the plan frame should be of such a nature that alterations, additions and reshaping should be made possible, at all stages.

Even at the outset, I wish to state on behalf of the D.M.K., that if by cooperating with ruling party in this sphere, is meant active and sympathetic participation in the formulation

and implementation of the plan, my party offers its willing cooperation.

But it should be remembered that there are certain basic and fundamental differences, in the political ideologies of different parties and all that we, as distinct political parties could do, is to express our suggestions within the frame-work which is the creation of the ruling party.

To cite but an instance the whole economic set up ushered in by the ruling party, is what is termed as Mixed Economy, and the politico-economic philosophy that forms the bed-rock for the plan, is what is called as 'socialistic pattern'.

The scope of this Committee does not extend to the sphere of discussion and re-shaping of such theories, political, economic and social.



What all we can do is, to offer a helping hand, to make the machinery move smoothly, yielding maximum result. But the Machinery is entirely built up by the ruling party.

So the remarks to be made or suggestions to be offered, by political parties, are by their very nature, handicapped by the lack of a spirit that the ruling party has got, for such principles as Mixed Economy the only common ground is perhaps, the realisation of the necessity for planning the future and prosperity of the masses in an organized way.

Another point not to be forgotten is this, anyone attempting to formulate a plan is aware of and depressed by the fact, that State Plans lack the 'life-force' - and what little it gets, is supplied by and through the Planning Commission constituted by the Central Government.

True, some amount of initiative is vested with the State, but schemes of big dimensions, are thought of as the preserves of the Centre, and due to a variety of reasons, States find it convenient to invoke the aid of the Centre, for taking over such schemes.

Hence, the 'State Plan' becomes a sort of enlarged administrative blueprint, important in its own way.

The ruling party having had a hand in two previous plans, is naturally confident, in its ability to deal with a Third Plan. And the 'achievements' are presented with an understandable enthusiasm.

Balanced Regional Development Essential

But, other political parties, cannot and would not forget the fact that the two plans

have not yielded, the expected results - and it is necessary to urge the ruling party also to take this fact into consideration, for, only when we are aware of the shortcomings, could we better our efforts.

A sizable increase in national income so as to raise the level of living in the country is stated to be the first and foremost objective of the Second Plan, now nearing completion.

None could dispute the necessity for that objective, but when we begin planning afresh, we should be sure of the actual performance, already achieved. Have we raised the level of living?

It is true that the National Income and also the per capita income has shown an upward march, but when the cost of living has gone up steeply, the advantage accruing from the increase in per capita income, is almost nullified.

Bearing this in mind, it should be our endeavour to formulate and handle the Third Plan, in such a way as to keep the price-line under control and regulate the cost of living correspondingly.

Inflation, deficit financing are pointed out by expert economists as danger spots. The Foreign Exchange problem bristles with difficulties.

But it is beyond our province to control or correct these aspects as it is the prerogative of the Centre; what all perhaps we are asked to do, is to share the strain and shock as and when they arise.

Hence, the State plan is formulated on a foundation, the strength or otherwise of which, is left in the hands of the Central Government.



Rapid industrialization with particular emphasis on basic and heavy industries are of utmost importance, as they are the 'feeders' for a variety of industries, and economic activities. They do not absorb much manpower, but need huge amounts of capital.

During both the plans, ample attention has been paid to this and what has been termed as 'gigantism' by Prime Minister Nehru, has been built up, in a particular region, to the detriment of other regions.

Under the item 'Major industries', our State has got a provision of 76 lakhs, during the Second Plan.

Of course, we take refuge and seek consolation in the fact that there is the Neiveli project sponsored by the Centre at a cost of more than fifty crores.

But the potentialities for basic and heavy industries remains to this day, untapped, in spite of repeated pleadings from all political parties.

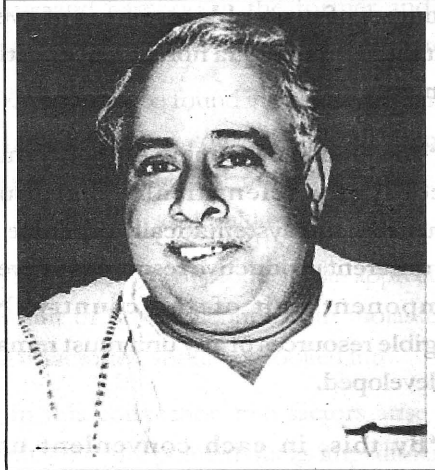
So, we would request the planners, to make amends, by paying sympathetic and active attention towards building up basic and heavy industries in this State, by allotting increased amounts.

It is now being realized that the disparity in the industrial growth in different regions, has caused a bitterness, in the minds of the masses. Even party considerations are set aside, when demands are put forward for correcting the unbalance.

Inflation and Deficit Finance -

The danger spots

So this State should with a stout heart and determined effort, put forth a strong plea, before the Centre.



The need for a proper dispersal of industry in an attempt to ensure a more balanced regional development of the country should be realized and acted upon.

Lack of coal has been cited as the reason for the non-industrialization of this State. The argument has neither strength nor flavour.

In this connection we want to point out that Planning in a bold and imaginative way does not consist in merely seeking the bounties of nature but in overcoming and coaxing nature to yield, richer and better results.

Countries that lack rich natural resources have been industrialized in an amazing way - Japan is an illustration.

Pointing out certain disabilities as reason for inaction is not excusable at a time when there is an attempt at all round reconstruction.

Prof. K.T. Shah has pointed out,

"From the national standpoint, the fullest development of all available



resources of every able resources of every unit must be sine qua non of real effective planning.

“The National Planning Authority must accordingly scientifically distribute industries and systematically organize all the different productive resources in every component unit of the country. No tangible resources of any unit must remain undeveloped.

“By this, in each convenient unit adequate employment will also be found for local labour. The working population in each unit has a primary claim for employment in the development of local resources.

“By carefully planning the effective organisation and intensive exploitation of local resources, local requirements and local opportunities, the Planning authorities will be able to clearly ascertain which province or State or regional unit should be considered to be “deficit” unit and which “surplus” ones.

“After such ascertainment, ways and means must be devised to make good the deficit from the common fund; or to bring about the most profitable disposal of the surplus, for the common good in each case”.

If this advice is applied, this State which has been kept as a ‘deficit’ State industrially, is entitled to get more amount from the common fund, than what the industrially advanced States get.

Hence, the steel and Aluminium industry in Salem should be started in the public sector.

There are ample possibilities for starting other and allied industries.

For instance, we should pay our deepest consideration to the fact whether we should not attempt at utilizing the immense amount of Mangese instead of exporting the whole lot.

There is an apprehension in the minds of many, that the contemplated steel plant at Salem would be of a diminutive size - a sort of token or caricature of full-fledged steel plants as are located at other regions. This apprehension should be dispelled and the State should plan in a big way, keeping in view that Steel should be produced in such an amount that would feed other industries.

Railway goods wagons could be manufactured here, utilizing Salem Steel.

Possibilities of oil, are held forth, and it is stated that there has been a survey of the Cauvery Basin.

Though, schemes such as this, take time, a beginning in right earnest should be made, and a good amount should be utilized for a thorough and systematic geological survey of this State.

Road Transport is fast increasing and ‘body-building Units’ could be organized at least in half-a-dozen centers in the State.

Industries founded on the bye-products of the cattle life of the country i.e. meat, hides and skins, leather goods, articles made out of hair, wool, bones, teeth, tissues, guts or hoover



of animals - must be organized on a large scale, motivated by power driven machinery and conducted as public enterprises.

Watch-making, precision and scientific instruments, sports goods, sewing machines, electric goods and such other small-scale industries ought to be planned out.

A study team should be sent to Switzerland and Japan, by this State, to get the 'know-how' of these small-scale industries.

Industrial Potentialities of the State analysed

Possibilities of utilizing the by-products from cashew plantations for plastic industry, should be looked into and built up.

Drug production centres should be organized at centres, where there are possibilities for getting medicinal herbs.

In the draft proposal for the Second Plan, the urgent need for starting a Paper Mill is stressed. But the scheme has borne no fruit. There are possibilities for starting paper Mills at the Nilgris and also at Tanjore, utilizing

wattle and bamboo in the former and the by-product from the sugar mills at the later.

Gypsum to be found in very large quantity notably in Tanjore could be utilized properly and profitably, and a plant for the production of Sulphuric Acid should be built up.

The possibility of producing an appreciable amount of power alcohol from molasses in sugar factories, should be looked into.

In this connection two factors arise and usually they are pointed out as impediments - one being the difficulty in importing machinery and another being the lack of technical skill commensurate with the need.

But if we are unable to solve this difficulty quickly this State is bound to lag behind other States, already well advanced in the industrial sphere. So the State Government should not rest content with registering the replies received from the Centre but should urge it to liberalize its import cut policy as far as the need of this State is concerned. We should not fight shy of utilising the services of foreign technical experts, especially from Japan and industrially advanced European States.

To wait for the long and laborious process of building up a battalion of our own technicians - however laudable it is - will be a sore of blasting the hopes and prospects of rapidly industrializing our State.

The various friendly countries should be approached by those in the Ambassadorial and Consular services for this purpose.



Our Handloom Industry absorbs a good portion of the man-power in this State and yet it is allowed to languish.

Doles, aids, rebates and the like are but gestures. What is needed is to make this industry stable. Handloom clothes should be assured of a dependable strong and expanding market. Our export is not up to the mark. We depend upon freaks and the industry is being damaged by the jolts and shocks that arise from time to time.

The prospects of an American Market for the Handloom, it is stated, are bright and since the demand from that country is bound to be of a mass scale, it is but natural that, only when the industry is organized on a state level could there be a bright future.

Though production can be entrusted to individual weavers or societies, the export side of it should become the main concern of the State.

Handloom clothes should be purchased in bulk by the Government and exported.

Export should not be left to the whims and fancies of private dealers.

To keep many lakhs of people employed, in a useful vocation, the State should become the custodian of the interests of the Handloom weavers.

Organizing Cooperative Societies, building colonies, and such other works, offer but the philanthropic aspect. What is needed is, the Handloom Industry should be made stable and profitable. This could be best achieved only

when the export side become the concern of the State.

The prospects for building up export of salt, table-salt and other varieties are bright. Besides Tuticorin, the possibilities at Vedaranyam, Chunambedu and such other places are stated to be rich. This industry absorbs also much man-power and the State could bring large farms under the public sector.

Various kinds of oils, vegetable and herbal, should be produced and where already started, production should be increased with a view to capture foreign markets.

Even the Beedi Industry, now in private hands, could be brought in the public sector.

Hopes for starting a Raw film factory at Ootacamund are held before the people, but the achievement is yet to be seen.

The film industry is assuming an importance which cannot be overlooked.

Entertainment is big business, besides being cultural and artistic.

Crores of rupees are locked up in this field and tens of thousands of people are employed.

Slowly but steadily the film industry is finding foreign markets and it should be the duty of the State to use its good offices to get the market expanded. The State should also appoint observers in countries well advanced in the film industry, to gather and impart technical knowledge and devices.

The State should step in, to take an increasing share in the profits that this industry yields, by nationalizing the cinema house, or even by



running studios. Ceylon Government has organized a studio.

Besides raw film, there are many instruments used in the industry, and the State should begin producing them, here, saving many crores of rupees now being spent in foreign markets.

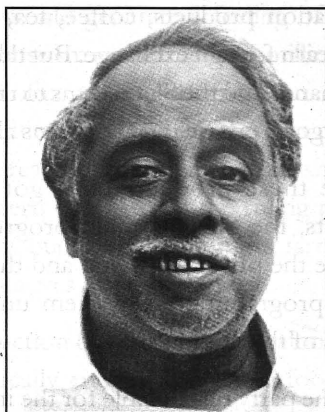
The quality of the films could be considerably raised, if, besides advising on standard and morality, the State takes up the job of getting the latest machinery for this industry.

Our artists, if not handicapped by the lack of such latest, highly scientific machinery, would and could successfully compete with artistes of any foreign country, and we could building up a World Market for our pictures.

Madras occupies a high position in respect of leather industry, but if there is an organized effort, much of the hides now exported could be utilized here, resulting in higher incomes, and much man-power could be absorbed in this.

Export of wool is another item that needs special attention. Now left in the hands of people who know only antiquated methods, the wood industry is poor and clumsy. Expert advice, it is stated, is being imparted to them. But there is no perceptible change. Since this is an exportable item, more and intimate attention should be paid.

These and other similar industries are no doubt being offered assistance by the State, but if we want increased and rich results, the



measures ought to be full, effort whole-hearted and the funds made available are not to be in the nature of mere tokens. We should plan it in such a way as to make it yield rich revenue, in five or ten years.

We should aim at something of everything and everything for something.

An expert Committee should go into the whole question and find out, how best to find out some one industry, that could become the speciality of this State and having selected such an industry, the State should place adequate funds and its disposal.

What seems to be the order of the day is to tackle all the problems - but only up to the fringe.

Small countries elsewhere, have built up industrials, for which they are peculiarly suited, besides the ordinary and routine list. And because of that, those countries find prosperity. The Watch industry of Switzerland, the Dairy products of Denmark, are but well-known examples, of small but sturdy nations capturing the world market by the giants of their industry.



Plantation products, coffee, tea, rubber, spices - earn foreign exchange. But they are in private hands and the State seems to think that they are good tax-yielding concerns alone.

Since these products have got export prospects, the States should progressively, eliminate the private element, and through a phased programme bring them under the agencies of the State.

But the party responsible for the initiation and execution of the plan, has got an abiding faith in the efficacy of and necessity for the private sector, this view is not shared by other political parties.

The heed for rapidly industrializing the State arises because of the fact, that today much dependence is placed on Agriculture. No country could advance - in the modern sense of the term - unless the dependence on Agriculture is progressively minimized and the industrial plane is expanded.

But, for a long time to come, the economic system is bound to revolve on the Agriculture axis.

And Agriculture itself has been raised to the level of an industry in advanced countries while for all practical purposes, here it remains a traditional occupation.

Much thought has been spent over the sector, but since conflicting and contradictory thoughts are generated the pace of progress has become hectic.

The two plans aimed at making the country self-sufficient in food. Much money has been

spent, many schemes were launched, but after ten years, the food front is beset with the same old difficulties and dangers.

This State has taken earnest attempts to increase food production and has announced a success. But as regards the fundamentals connected with Agriculture, the State has not taken consistent and bold steps.

The most elementary reform - ceiling on land - has been on the anvils of the political forum all these years. Experts and moralists alike have pointed out that is the barest minimum of economic justice. And yet, legislation for ceiling on land has not become an accomplished fact.

There are strong indications to show that, that piece of legislation by such inordinate delay, has become a mere caricature of the original proposal.

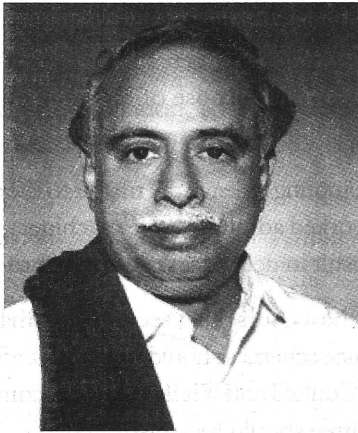
Hopes of finding a revolutionary change has been blasted.

Minimise the Dependence on Agriculture

Though its strength and splendour has been shorn of the legislation even its present form becomes necessary for formulating a plan for the reorganization of the Agricultural sector.

'Land to the Tiller' is now being relegated to the background and instead of being hailed as a rational method of distribution, stress is being laid on production.

Production depends upon fertility and effort; and effort itself is bound to yield different results as methods differ.



Mechanized agriculture, though spoken of as the best means of increased production, will not find favour here, where there is plentiful supply of farmers and unskilled labours. But those engaged in Agriculture are being kept on the subsistence level, for decades.

“It has been estimated that in this State, most of the agricultural labourers are without work in 115 days in a year, and that the average income of an agricultural family is among the lowest in India”.

So the problem has got two aspects.

Production should be increased and the income of the agriculturists should also be raised.

And this should be done without hitting the consumer. The problem is complicated but complacency is unwanted and confused thinking is worse still.

The various pronouncements made from time to time by the V.I.P.s go to show, what a amount of confusion exists.

The beginning of the Third Plan should be preceded by the ceiling on land.

That would generate a feeling of at least mild enthusiasm in the minds of millions. The problem of correlating the prices of different commodities, so as to keep the cost of living with the reach of the average man, should be the concern of not only the ruling party, of politicians; but that of economists, farmers and representatives of consumers.

Production has increased and along with it paradoxically enough, prices of food stuffs have also increased.

This phenomenon is not only strange but dangerous.

How far the policy of the Central Government is responsible for this sorry state of affairs, needs to be found out.

The State should assert its right to manage the food front, having for its guidance the real state of affairs here.

The state should be free to choose methods for combating the rise in price, without waiting for guidance or control from the Centre.

The Centre should as the Supreme Council vested with vast resources and powers, step in, only on application, and that too to the limited sphere of procuring food stuffs when asked for.

There should thus be maximum autonomy at any rate on the food front.

Production since it depends on fertility, factors that go to make up fertility should be carefully watched and regulated.

Irrigation, fertilizers, seeds and the like are the necessities - but even in all these things the



State is not empowered to act, or is handicapped.

Major irrigation works, though executed by the State, needs Central sanction and succour, even during the initial stage.

It is in the field of minor irrigation that an amount of free action is being shown by the State.

Since our dependence on the large number of tanks is much, the amount spent on repairing and depending of these tanks needs to be increased and there is every need for speeding up the work.

The time taken for sanctioning, estimate, and final execution is in the nature of taxing the patience of the villagers. The State should quicken the pace and tempo.

Out of about of 23,000 tanks in the State, about 4,000 tanks have been attended to.

Much therefore remains to be done, and the work in this line should be taken up not in the routine way, but one on emergency basis.

Not only tanks, but also supply channels need immediate attention.

The services of the army personnel should be invoked for this work, the special machinery like dredgers should be pressed into service.

But however much we could achieve through minor irrigation, we cannot escape the fact that unless the inter-state schemes, like the Krishna Godavari, Krishna-Pennar and the tapping of the rivers in Kerala, are carried out, we might be left in the lurch.

A special Expert Committee, consisting of technically qualified men, should be constituted for the special purpose of planning out these schemes.

Attempting to leave the matter to the already over-worked administrative machinery, would only result in delay, that cannot be brooked.

The best course that seems to be, that these inter-state schemes should be placed before the Zonal Council and if it is feasible, a composite committee should be constituted.

This should be given top priority in the Third Plan.

The Chiefs of the neighbouring States having already expressed their willingness to help, there should be no delay in planning out the scheme.

The State should stress this point and see to it that amounts are set apart for this.

When we find countries attempting to import fertility in even sandy and desert regions with scientific help, we should not think it beyond our capacity to divert the copious flow of water, now running into waste as is the case with the rivers Godavairi and Krishna.

Implement Sethusamudram Scheme- Develop Tuticorin into a Major port

These schemes are to be considered on par with the gigantic dam works, already undertaken, elsewhere.

Along with this, the long-felt and much stressed water ways scheme should be implemented.

The technical and administrative difficulties, natural in such undertakings, should not deter



us from launching forth such schemes, as we have already exhausted all possible sources.

Just as in Irrigation, so in power, we are faced with a stark reality - we have reached the end of our sources.

The achievement it is stated is admirable but the need for power is increasing and is bound to increase as the tempo of industrialization grows.

So unless we are assured of an Atomic Power Plant we may be left in the corner.

Of course the State authorities have been pressing the Centre, and seem to be hopeful.

But we should see to it that the Centre not only assures, but begins in right earnest, even during the first stage in the Third Plan.

The necessity for expanding our Transport facilities has become acute.

Inland waterways assume hence an importance.

And to ensure the steady and quick movement of goods, railway facilities should be increased. It is now meagre, and the planners do not seem to have bestowed much thought about this region, when they think in terms of opening new lines.

As we envisage a brisk activity from and through the lignite works at Neiveli, there is the need for, double tracking the railway line, and electrification.

And as the Sethusamudram Scheme and development of Tuticorin port, have to be implemented, the entire route, from Madras

to Tuticorin has got to be buzzing with activity and hence double tracking upto Tuticorin should be planned out and included in the Third Plan.

The demand for implementing the Sethu Samudram Scheme and the scheme for development of Tuticorin as a major port, has had a long history behind it, and it is imperative that no further delay is allowed.

Find out the Feasibility of coastal Shipping Trade

These schemes should become accomplished facts, work should be begun, even during the first years of the Third Plan.

The development of the Minor ports should be given due attention to. Cuddalore, Pondy, Point. Calimere and other ports need attention.

The State should find out the feasibility of organizing coastal shipping trade.

The vast coast-line that this State has to its credit, is not being taken advantage of.

Fishing ought to have been developed into a major industry.

The State authorities exhibit the picture of their attempts and the most that could be said about it is that we have done some work, more in the nature of humanitarian service.

When we find that many countries are getting rich revenue by organizing fishing as a major industry, one is constrained to state that we have missed a lot by not organizing this industry.

It can never develop into a revenue-yielding industry if it is allowed to be handled by the



poor, ill-organised folks now carrying on fishing as their vocation.

They should be recruited by the State, and it should be the concern of the State to set apart an amount commensurate with the magnitude of the industry. It should be considered from the point of view of not merely of lending a helping hand to the poor folks now in the vocation, but as an attempt to build up a new and expanding industry.

Deep sea fishing should be developed along scientific lines. Experts tell us that from this source alone, this State could get rich earnings.

There are possibilities also for organizing associate and subsidiary industry - when once fishing as a major industry is built up. The sea is as rich as the land, if not richer.

To make the land richer there is need for infusing new enthusiasm in the minds of those engaged in this, and also in imparting fertility through fertilizers. Soil conservation should be systematized and schemes for the same expanded.

Members in the Legislature who belong to the ruling party have pointed out times with out number, that schemes for land reclamation and bringing into life culturable waste land should be implemented. It properly tackled, the increased in food production would many assure, be such as to enable us to export food stuffed.

The shortage in the supply of fertilizer, is regretted and the State assures the people that the fertilizer plant at Neiveli would augment the supply.

Besides Neiveli, other place for starting fertilizer plants - plant of medium size - should be explored.

Methods for economizing the use of water for the field should be studied and the people should be educated.

Organise Land Army for Road - Building and Land Reclamation.

The problem of evaporation is now and then talked of, but there seems to be no systematic attempt at checking this evil.

But control has become a sort of departmental exercise.

Problems such as these and other problems like village reconstruction, cottage industry and social uplift have become the preserves of the Block Development Department and the results are not proportionate to the amounts spent. That this department savours on party politics cannot be denied.

It ought to be the endeavour of the planning body, to find out means for mobilizing public support and enthusiasm for this project, which is day by day assuming big and bigger dimensions.

The question as to the desirability and effectiveness in organizing a Land Army charged with the task of road-building, reclamation, bringing wasteland under cultivation and other connected work should be examined.

Of course, it is not to be in the nature of conscription nor should it be left to what is called as free and voluntary effort. The State should organize camps and centres, or even mobile units, for this purpose, and should bear the cost.

This would not only decrease the growing unemployment problem but would be hailed as a systematic attempt at changing the face of the land and hastening the pace of the progress.



One fact needs to be explained here and now the suggestions offered are not supported by data, not because, we think that no data is necessary but simply because, data are best obtained by those in power and not by others.

And even those in possession of data should utilize them not for the gleeful purpose of phoo-phooing suggestions offered in good faith, but with a view to launch forth schemes, even though there might be certain initial difficulties.

For this, if some sort of consultative committees are constituted for the purpose of examining specific proposals, wherein administrators and experts could sit and discuss, much could be achieved.

The archives and pigeon holes of the Government department are not, and cannot be thrown open to all parties - but that does not mean that parties should be handicapped for want of data.

Consultative Committee should be constituted and there should be periodical meetings - for discussion and comparing notes. Two other major factors ought not to be forgotten. There should be the much dependence upon these factors.

Production in any field of activity, would be viewed with enthusiasm, only within the public feel confident, that the 'total good' is the aim.

The unbridled play of the profit-motive acts as a deterrent and certainly damps the enthusiasm of the labouring class and the general public.

So a sort of profit-sharing scheme should be chalked out and worked out, at least in certain select fields.

Justifiable and equitable distribution accelerates production.

The sponsors of the plan, expressed their intention of reducing the inequalities in wealth, power and income, but, so far there has been no solid success.

Another factor of equal importance, is this: By what method are we going to find the resources for the huge plan? Already the burden of taxation especially the indirect form, has hit hard the people, and any further attempt to raise the level or the items of taxation would not be conducive.

Hence methods for harnessing the money-power locked up with the higher strata of society, should be formulated. Only when there is the realization on the part of the masses, that this is the people's plan, could mass enthusiasm be generated and their realization could never be achieved by sermons and seminars. The people should feel the touch of progress in a hundred small ways around them, in their fields, their abodes, and in departments.

Implement the Master plan for Madras City

Enough attention should be paid to the special problem of the Metropolitan City of Madras and the 'Master Plan' prepared by cities should be analysed and implemented.

Slum Clearance Schemes should be taken up, during the Third Plan keeping the aim of solving it, once and for all.

Generation of mass enthusiasm is of prime importance, for, it should not be forgotten that the base for any scheme is the individual.

Besides adopting conventional methods, bold and new methods ought to be adopted. For instance, we should not allow the abundance of solar energy to be wasted.

Those who have studied this problem point out various uses which solar energy could be harnessed.



Solar cooker alone has been the accomplishment so far. The possibility does not end there.

An expert committee should study this problem and formulate schemes for utilizing solar energy.

Schemes for increasing the irrigation facilities, by construction of small dams, reservoirs and the like, do not receive due attention.

Almost in every district, there is the possibility of such schemes. They may not be spectacular but they are certainly helpful involving the problem of irrigation.

The Palar Scheme pending with Government for a long number of years, should be taken up and executed in the Third Plan.

Tapping of sub-soil water, utilizing drilling machinery, tube wells, artisan wells and the like, are to be more extensively taken up.

To cite but a few cases, the Cheyyar Scheme in the North Arcot District, the Vegavathi Scheme in the Chinglepet District, Alangulam Scheme in the Thirunelveli District, a tunnel near Rajapalayam with a view to divert the water flowing westward for more useful purpose, Kudaganar Scheme, Keeriyas Scheme, are being spoken of for a long number of years.

The Third Plan should devise ways and means for tapping and conserving such sources, with a view to augment the irrigation facilities.

But, whatever might be the attempts and achievements at the State level, unless the Centre is liberal and responsive, big but essential schemes like basic and heavy industries, development of ports, coastal trading, atomic plant and the like could not be realized.



So it should be the duty of the State Government, to argue, the case for, fair and equitable treatment for this State, which has been neglected and accorded a step motherly treatment and take up on itself the responsibility of getting these basic needs accomplished.

It will not be out of place to point out in this connection that unless those in power are zealously keen on making this State prosperous, they cannot make their voice felt. Pleading before the Centre in a faltering voice will not help us. Demands ought to be pressed forward. Mendicancy never succeeds.

Taking into view the basic industries, major ports and atomic plant into consideration, the amount to be set apart ought to be of good size.

The amount needed for accomplishing items that come under the State sector too will not be small.

So the amount asked for, as we understand it from reports, is meagre.

I would like to request the State Government to formulate plans and schemes, on both the Central and State levels, keeping



Rs.1000 crore announced as flood relief

Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaingar M. Karunanidhi announced a relief of Rs.1,000 for houses located in waterlogged areas. Such houses in Chennai and surrounding areas would be entitled for a relief Rs.2,000.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister made this announcement at the first meeting (2.12.08) of a cabinet subcommittee constituted to oversee flood relief operations. Hon'ble Local Administration Minister Thiru M.K. Stalin heads the committee. The meeting was informed that 177 persons had died in floods from November 19 to December 2008. As many as 2,782 heads of cattle perished 61,216 huts were damaged fully and 1.57 lakhs partially.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister ordered immediate payment of relief to the affected.

Each Minister will have to submit a progress report at the next meeting of the committee on December 6, 2008.

The fresh guidelines given to access rain affected homes and huts need to be followed and the final numbers shall be arrived at soon, he said flood affected huts would be eligible for Rs.2,000 and 10 kg rice.

Tamil Nadu Government has sought Rs.1,963 crore from the centre for taking up relief measures in areas affected by the latest spell of rain.

On December 1, 2008 the Government submitted a memorandum to the Centre. A supplementary memorandum is also under preparation, according to an official in the Revenue Department. ★

view that at least a thousand crores should be the amount to be spent to both these sectors during the Third Plan.

Considering the previous neglect and the consequent industrial backwardness, the amount thought of, is not over-ambitious or unjustifiable.

The Planning body itself cannot decide issues at two or three sittings.

There is so much necessity for a series of sittings -consultative conferences and the like, wherein, expert opinion should be asked for, discussed and new drafts made.

I conclude with the hope that, that is the aim of the party in power.

Planning is a continuous process, and consultation and mutual understanding as

between the different parties add strength and spirit.

It may not be possible for any one party to present an all-inclusive plan.

Besides asking for suggestions, all those interested could be brought together from time to time, reassess, evaluate and offer if necessary comments on the way in which schemes are implemented. For, the drafting of a plan is in the nature of a birth - it is but the beginning - much depends upon the hand that rocks the cradle and nurtures the new-born.

(10-01-1960)

Courtesy :

Arignar Anna's

Essays, Editorials, Epistles & Satires



Incentives to job-intensive industries offered

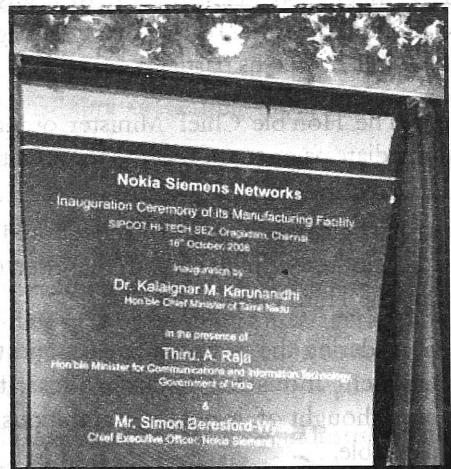


Tamil Nadu will unveil a policy to provide a special package of incentives to employment-intensive industries without putting any condition on investment, Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaigñar M. Karunanidhi announced on October 16, 2008. He hoped that this initiative will lead to creation of more jobs for our youth."

Inaugurating a manufacturing facility for Nokia Siemens Networks (NSN) near Chennai, the Hon'ble Chief Minister said:

"Motorola and Nokia who are the leaders in the manufacture of mobile handsets, have already set up their facilities in Tamil Nadu. With the establishment of Nokia-Siemens plant here, the telecom equipments manufacturing industry is getting integrated in our State.

Tamil Nadu provides a very conducive atmosphere for setting up Technology based industries. A large pool of skilled manpower provides the base for the development of such industries. The network of the technical educational institutions throughout the State provides the quality manpower.



The seeds of industrial development in Sriperumbudur were sown by our Government about 10 years ago. Today Sriperumbudur Cluster has emerged as a world leader in the manufacture of automotives and electronic hardware. This region of our state has been totally transformed.

Now our Government is taking the industrialisation process to other parts of the State and specially to the southern parts of our State.

Towards this, we have brought out a new Policy, to give special package of incentives for the industries being set up in the Southern Districts. This new policy will go a long way in boosting industrial growth in the southern districts.

Apart from Chennai region and Coimbatore-Erode belt, the new investment proposals show that Cuddalore, Tiruchirapalli and Tirunelveli-Thoothukkudi are emerging as new growth centres in our State.

These growth centres would have ripple effects in the surrounding districts and thus the whole State of Tamil Nadu would benefit from the fruits of industrialisation.

Generation of employment is one of the important benefits of industrialisation. In view of this fact, our Government is now encouraging investments in Employment-Intensive industries. To fulfill this goal, we are bringing out a policy to provide a special package of incentives to employment-intensive industries without putting any condition on the investment. I hope that this initiative will lead to creation of more jobs for our youth.

Due to the investor-friendly approach and the transparent functioning of our

Government, several investment proposals are being attracted to Tamil Nadu. Our Government has entered into 21 MoUs since May 2006 for setting up new projects. The total investment in those projects will be Rs. 31,300 cr. and they are likely to provide jobs to about 1.93 lakh persons.

I am never satisfied with mere signing of MoUs. Often, I enquire with the Industries Secretary about the progress of these projects. I feel happy only when he says that the project is ready for inauguration.

I am happy, today, because Nokia Siemens is ready to start its production within a short period and will provide employment to nearly 500 persons. I hope that the management of Nokia-Siemens will give priority to the local people in employment" the Chief Minister concluded.

Hon'ble Union Minister for Communications and Information Technology Thiru A. Raja said technology SEZs had demanded extension of the sunset clause for one more year. The issue would be taken up with the Prime Minister and the Union Finance Minister, he said.

★ ★ ★

STATE ADVISORY PRICE FOR SUGARCANE

The Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaaignar M. Karunanidhi on October 20, 2008 announced Rs. 1050 as state advisory price (SAP) per tonne of sugar cane with 9 per cent recovery.

Though the Centre has fixed Rs.811.80 as statutory minimum price (SMP) per tonne of sugarcane, the State government has come forward

to give an additional amount of Rs.238.20, following requests from sugar cane farmers, a Government release stated. The announcement is with retrospective effect from October 1 and will be applicable to sugar cane already procured. Besides Rs.1050 per tonne, an additional rate of Rs.9 per 0.1 per cent of excess recovery per tonne will also be given as incentive. ♦

Self Help Groups for Development

**Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development
& Local Administration
Thiru M.K. STALIN**

of it is inherited and followed as family activity. All members of the family together produce, save and consume. The same is true in a complex global society of today, except that the number of persons in the cycle of economic activities is counted in not millions, but in billions of people inhabiting all parts of the far flung globe. Production, Saving,



The young and growing children need help from infancy which mothers provide. In the schools they are taught to know the elements of numbers and language in which there is the key to know the world around. In the ancient peasant societies, agriculture primarily sustained the life cycle, and the art

Distribution and Consumption nevertheless are the basic economic function even to day.

The National Crime \Research Bureau (NCRB) started collecting data on farmer's suicide since 1995. Over the last 14 years, nearly 40,000 deaths of farmers devastated a north



Indian states in India. This is the most inhuman Chapter in the Indian Agricultural History. A country known to have begun the settled agricultural civilization when the rest of the world was nomadic should take this statistics seriously. Farmers may not be literate. They are not like the literate, but greedy business men or corporate leaders who default the government to the tune of over Rs. 10,000 crores, annually and still remain merry. In contrast, the peasant farmers, depending mainly on small bits of land, are self respecting and sensitive to public opinion and family dignity. When they are driven to extremes of poverty, they would rather die than suffer humiliation of indebtedness, beyond recovery. The league of five states in India, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka,

Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh together accounted for 11,026 suicides in 2007. Between 1996-2001 average suicides per year is 15,747. (The Hindu, 12 Dec, 2008) The sadness is heightened when we recall Maharashtra has high per capita income, and houses the commercial capital of India- Mumbai; Andhra Pradesh prides in having the great rivers of Krishna and Godavari; Karnataka uses much of the waters of Cauvery River, and is home to the IT capital in Bangaluru. It is the task of Human Rights commission to initiate this study. The conscience of the Indians/ NRIs should be awakened.

Kural insists on correction of dangers/ distress in anticipation : In chapter 44 of Kural from 431 to 440, Tiruvalluvar gives the anatomy

of emerging dangers in general; at individual and in larger national contexts. Arrogance, Pride, Avarice are qualities which cause damage to an individual.(431,432, and 433).Kural 435 states: The prosperity of a person who does not anticipate the likely damage, insult, injury,and other faults, will perish like straw before fire. “Varumunnar kavathan vazhkkai erimunnar, vaithuru polk kedum”(435)

Anticipation and Expectations in Economics: Floods damage to roads to the tune of over Rs.300 crores each year in Chennai; water logged houses from which residents depart after each monsoon floods, are within the range of expectation. Government of Tamil Nadu, has opted for cement roads. The houses in lake areas, which should not have been constructed there, are being removed by Court Order.

Self Help Groups and timely relief to farmers in Tamil Nadu: Food and shelter, these two rights, the modern welfare state ought to deliver. Each individual has to develop the capability to take care of oneself. This is the basic economic philosophy of Self Help Groups. This is part of micro family economics. Hours of idleness, in between agricultural occupations can be fruitfully used by women (i) to save and invest, (ii) to borrow

and productively use it, (iii) to give guarantee to the bankers to honour the debt commitment, and in brief (iv) to make the economic cycle function and deliver increasing standard of life. This is the basic theory of development through self help and self respect. Self Help groups are formed largely by the initiative of Local Administration Minister M.K. Stalin who has covered all the districts repeatedly for this purpose, to improve livelihood and built new Tamil Nadu of self reliant people...

Sharing of wealth and knowledge: The wealth in the coffers of bank or Treasury of the government without being spent for welfare of the people and timely help, amounts to greedy hoarding and will affect the state as well as the people(Kural 437). The funds invested in self help groups are wise investments. Similarly, the recent timely announcement that all would get a full package of provisions sugar to cashew nuts, to celebrate Pongal, the harvest festival, is a matter for rejoice, even for Economists, who otherwise think only in terms bank of deposits and narrow rates of interest and stock exchange gains, devoid of human sympathy for the near starving poor, who in many states commit suicide. Narrow economic reasoning should yield place to humanitarian welfare economics. ❖

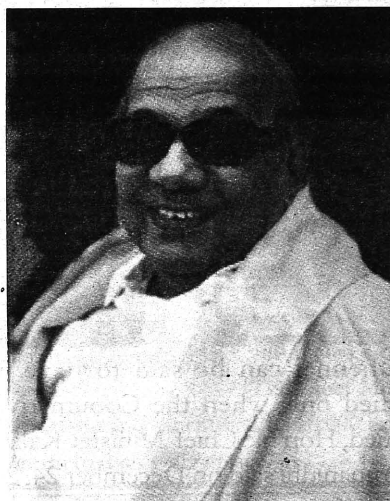
Small Airports to be developed in Tamil Nadu

The foundation stone for the Rs. 1,808-crore project for the development and modernisation of the Chennai airport was laid on October 20, 2008 by Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalam M. Karunanidhi in the presence of Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation Praful Patel.

Referring to a number of incentives given by the State government in attracting industrial investment, the Union Minister wanted the government to give an incentive to the airlines industry too.

"This extension is part of assurance given in the manifesto in 2006. We gave an assurance to the people of Tamil Nadu that this Chennai International Airport will be expanded while also improving the status of the airports at Madurai, Coimbatore and Tiruchirapalli. We have long range plans to improve the airports in Thoothukudi and Salem with all modern facilities strengthening the runways and providing amenities and requirements. We are therefore very much interested in fulfilling our promises to the people" said the Chief Minister and also added that the government has plans to bring into use the abandoned Military Air Strip at Thanjavur and making it available for public transport.

Going down the memory lane he recalled the days when he shuttled between Tiruchirapalli and Chennai for addressing political meeting in that area.

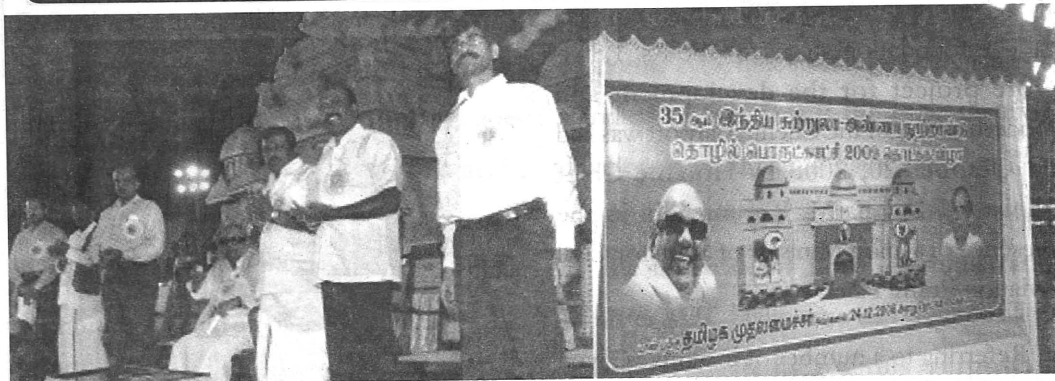


The Chief Minister wanted the Union Minister to use his good offices in expediting the implementation of upgrading of projects of other airports in the State.

On tackling the issue of rising prices of essential commodities, the Hon'ble Chief Minister said the purchasing power of people should be improved. Citing his administration's scheme of selling spices/ condiments at Rs.50 a packet through fair price shops, he said he had already briefed Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh of the scheme and suggested to him that this might be adopted in other States too.

Thiru G.K. Vasan, Hon'ble Union Minister of State, Thiru K.N. Nehru, Hon'ble Transport Minister and Hon'ble Thiru T.R. Baalu, Hon'ble Union Minister for Shipping and Road Transport and Highways, took part in the function. ★

Clean-up of Cooum - Key to beautification of Chennai



Chennai can be said to have been beautified only when the Cooum river is beautified, Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi said on December 24, 2008.

Regretting that the previous efforts to clean the river went waste, he said the Cooum should become the Thames of Tamil Nadu and steps should be taken to beautify it.

He was inaugurating the 35th Tourism and Trade Fair organised by the Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC). This time, the fair is being held as part of the centenary celebrations of Arignar Anna.

Narrating the steps taken by his government in removing hoardings in the city despite several hurdles, the Hon'ble Chief Minister said they were part of enabling people to relish the natural landscape of the city. He exhorted the Chennai Mayor and other government officials to strive hard to make the city beautiful. In spite of numerous measures of the government, including the scheme of rice at Re.1 a kg, not many were praising the administration. Regardless of this, steps were being taken by the government to win the acclaim of the poor and the common man. Hon'ble Chief Minister explained how the literary classics such as Silapadhikaram covered

a number of places of tourism importance in the State. "If the mayor and officials make an attempt, there won't be any necessity for us to organise a separate fair for the benefit of tourists. The city should be developed in such a way that once they enter Chennai, the whole city appears like a vast exhibition," Hon'ble Chief Minister said. He said that even though the metropolis now sports an entirely different look to what it was a few decades ago, elements of the old Chennai were refusing to go away. "We must change this," he added. Hon'ble Thiru. N. Suresh Rajan, Tourism and Registration Minister, said 20 lakh tourists were expected to visit the fair this time. Last year, the number was 15 lakhs. So far, a revenue of Rs.2.2 crore had been netted by organising the event.

Thiru M. Subramanian, Chennai Mayor, said arrangements had been made at the stall of the civic body for taking printouts of death and birth certificates. Thiru C. Kuppusamy, Member of Parliament (North Chennai), Chief Secretary Thiru K.S. Sripathi, Tourism Secretary Thiru V. Irai Anbu, Chairman of the TTDC Thiru Sanwat Ram, and Managing Director Thiru M. Rajaram participated in the function. ❖



21 workers of Tamil Nadu who were stranded in Malaysia by bogus agents of getting

consoled them and sanctioned Rs.10,000 each for their return to their native place. ❖

Chief Minister promises more bridges

Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaigñar M. Karunanidhi on October 26, 2008 said completion of various projects, including the Sethusamudram project, would be possible if the present combine won the Lok Sabha polls.

Inaugurating the grade separator at the Kathipara Junction at Chennai the Chief Minister recalled the problems faced by Union Minister of Shipping Road Transport and Highways Minister Thiru. T.R. Baalu while implementing various project. He also referred to the Sethusamudram project pending in the Supreme Court.

Expressing concern over road accidents Thiru Baalu said that in Tamil Nadu the fatality rate was 8.9 per lakh.

He said his ministry had decided to set up National Road Safety and Traffic Management Board to bring down the accident rate in the

country. The board would be set up in all the States and at the Centre. Thiru Baalu said already his ministry had set up driving institutes in 13 states to provide better training.

The total cost of the grade separator is Rs.260 crore and the civil work cost Rs.83.50 crore. The length of the main arm is 1,411 metre and the total length of the main arm with four loops is 2,745 metre.

Honble Union Minister of Parliament Affairs Thiru Vayalar Ravi, Honble Union Minister of State for Statistics and programme implementation Thiru G.K. Vasan and Hon'ble Union Minister of State for Shipping, Road Transport and Highways Thiru. K.H. Muniyappa and State Labour Minister Thiru T.M. Anbarasan participated in the function. ❖

Pongal gift to People of Tamil Nadu



Pongal 2009 will literally be very sweet for the Tamils - for the family ration cardholders. The State government on December 15, 2008 announced that ingredients for preparing the sweet Pongal free to the cardholders from January 1 to 14 in celebration of the Tamil New Year and the harvest festival Pongal.

“The family cardholders will be provided a special bag containing the ingredients to celebrate the birth of the Tamil New Year on Thai 1 (January 14) and our harvest festival Pongal,” a government release said.

After coming to power in 2006, Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaaignar M. Karunanidhi had

announced that the Tamil New Year would be celebrated from 1st day of Thai month.

The announcement follows an appeal by the DMK's high-level committee, urging the State government to provide the ingredients for making sweet Pongal to all the family cardholders. There are over 1.80 crore family cardholders in the state.

A bag packed with about 500 grams of rice, 500 grams jaggery, 100 grams split green gram and 20 grams of cashew, raisins and cardamom required to prepare Pongal would be distributed through all the Fair Price Shops across the state. ❖

Honble chief Minister Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi unveiled a statue of Tamil savant Thiruvalluvar at the Delhi Tamil Sangam in R.K. Puram in New Delhi on December 4, 2008.

The statue was originally installed in 1975 in a corner of open land. After a compound wall was erected around the West Block, it went out of public view and remained uncared for. The statue was shifted to the Sangam premises recently.

In recognition of his outstanding contribution to the cause of Tamil, especially his efforts at getting the classical language status for Tamil, Sangam President Thiru M.N. Krishnamani and secretary Thiru R. Mukunthan honoured the Chief Minister with the title 'Chemmozhi Chemmal'.

The Chief Minister, who also laid the foundation for an arch in front of the premises, adjacent to the statue, described the unveiling of the statue as the happiest moment.

Referring to the classical status given to Tamil, he recalled the initiative taken by Suryanarayana Sastri alias Parithimar Kalaignar more than a century ago. The credit for conferring the status on Tamil should go to the Centre and Tmt. Sonia Gandhi.

Hence instead of hailing him for the achievement, the Chief Minister asked the organizers to hail and greet the Centre for the achievement. He arranged for the government take over of Parithimar Kalaignar's house at Vilachery near Madurai and converted it into a memorial. The scholar's works were also nationalized.

The Chief Minister said he preserved as a medal, a letter written by Tmt. Sonia Gandhi in which she had said although many had strived for getting classical stature for Tamil his (Kalaignar's) name would go down in history as one who fought for and won it.

He regretted that a statue of Thiruvalluvar, installed on the Bangalore Tamil Sangam premises two decades ago, could not be unveiled owing to the agitation launched by a section of people.

Describing it as the greatest insult to the savant, he urged Union Home Minister Thiru P. Chidambaram to use his good offices to

Chief Minister pleads for Thiruvalluvar statue in Bangalore

ensure that the statue was unveiled at the earliest.

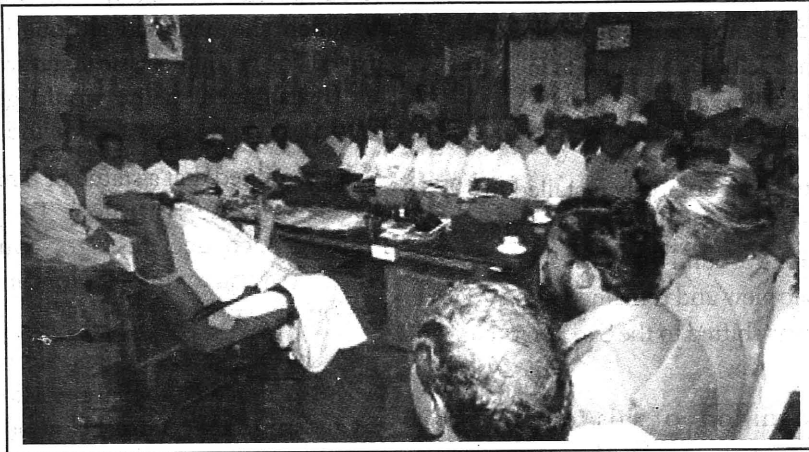
The Central government as well as State governments in Karnataka were aware of his vow that he would not participate in any functions in Bangalore until the statue was unveiled.

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Delhi Tmt. Sheila Dikshit said: "The capital feels richer today with the presence of the Thiruvalluvar statue, and it makes us proud."

Hon'ble Union Minister Thiru Chidambaram and Thiru T.R. Baalu also spoke.

Poet Vairamuthu said that while Thiruvalluvar gave identity to Tamil with his 'Tirukkural,' Chief Minister Kalaignar gave identity to the poet by erecting a 133-feet statue for him at Kanyakumari. He urged the Centre to declare 'Tirukkural' as a piece of national literature.

NO MORE NEW LIQUOR SHOPS : HON'BLE CHIEF MINISTER



The State will not open any new retail liquor vending shops from now on, Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaighnar M. Karunanidhi announced in Chennai on December 23, 2008. Also, the shops, which open at 10 a.m., will close an hour early from January 1, 2009 - 10 p.m. instead of 11 p.m.

This follows a meeting the Hon'ble Chief Minister had with the representatives of various pro-prohibition outfits led by Pattali Makkal Katchi founder Thiru. S.Ramadoss.

Dr.Ramadoss, Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi president Thiru. Thol. Thirumavalavan and the other leaders had pressed for total prohibition in the State. They told the Chief Minister that they had passed a resolution at a meeting last month that organisations favouring prohibition would launch an agitation if their demand was not met within a reasonable period.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister told the group that prohibition was a desirable policy but there were practical difficulties. He said that this could not be implemented at once and

at best, could only be done in stages. He had given a commitment that he would take measures towards this end.

He pointed out that all over the State as many as 1,300 bars had been closed down and 128 retail liquor shops had downed shutters. A majority of these shops were closed this year. In 2007, as many 37 shops were closed following complaints from the people and in 2006, five were closed down. Soon after the meeting with the pro-prohibition leaders, the Chief Minister convened a meeting of top officials to consider the demands. At the meeting, it was decided that the government would take immediate practicable steps so that its commitment to the ideal of prohibition was made clear. Accordingly, the government took the first steps in that direction, one official said. More steps would be taken in a phased manner.

Pattali Makkal Katchi founder Dr. S. Ramadoss on December 24, 2008 commended Chief Minister Kalaighnar M. Karunanidhi for reducing the working hours of retail liquor outlets and deciding against opening any new ones. ★

'TAMIL NADU - A DEFENDER OF PRESS FREEDOM'

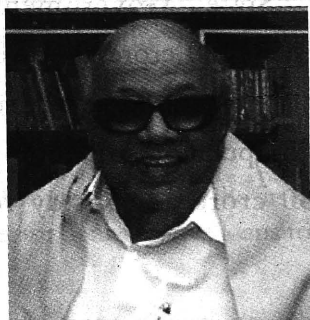
Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaingar M.Karunanidhi said that Tamil Nadu had the distinction of defending press freedom, besides promoting the welfare of journalists by extending various types of schemes to them from time to time.

Speaking at a function held on 14.12.2008 in honour of the visiting Press Council of India Chairman, Thiru G N Ray, and PCI council secretary, Tmt.Bhargav, the Hon'ble Chief Minister claimed that his government had never interfered in the functioning of the media in the State and there was no complaint of any kind on this count till date. He also recalled the letter of appreciation for the state government from the PCI chairman for solving a dispute in an English daily published from Chennai, last October.

"Freedom carried with it the responsibility to be objective and balanced in reporting events without taking sides," he said, and added that freedom should not become a licence to deviate from the avowed principles of responsible journalism.

While lauding the role of the PCI in upholding press freedom and coming to the rescue of journalists in times of distress, the Hon'ble Chief Minister said that the PCI enjoyed the powers of a civil court. He said that his government had increased the pension amount for indigent journalists, besides extending death relief for journalists who died in harness.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister pride in calling himself a seasoned journalist because of his association with his party organ Murasoli for



close to seven decades. He expressed his willingness to lend support for a proposed conference in Chennai. Chief Minister said that the State government was ready to conduct an all India seminar in Chennai as requested by the Press Council of India.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister said that the general public also should be allowed to participate in the seminar to express their views about the media.

He also recalled his letter to Justice Ray in October explaining the steps taken by the government against those who attacked "The Hindu" vendors in a few places in the State. The Chief Minister said that the pension for the journalists had been hiked to Rs.4,000 per month from Rs.1000 in 2006.

Thanking the Hon'ble Chief Minister for his willingness to conduct the seminar and appreciating the measures taken by the government for the welfare of the journalists, Justice Ray expressed hope that other states would follow Tamil Nadu. About the steps taken by the State Government to address the problems faced by The Hindu, Justice Ray said it went to show its interest in protecting the freedom of the media.



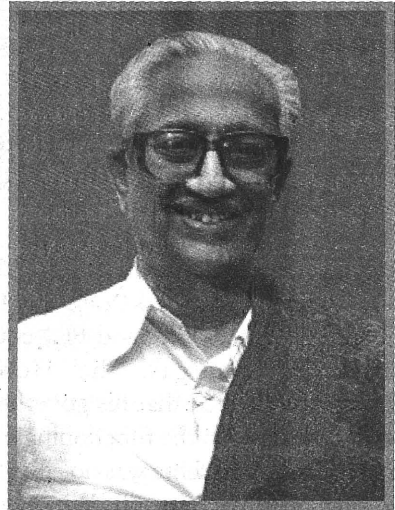
First Supplementary Estimates Presented

The State Government has sanctioned Rs.100 crore as subsidy for provision of grocery items to be supplied through the public distribution system and Rs.80 crore as subsidy for gas cylinders.

Presenting the first supplementary estimates for Rs.3,035.37 crore for 2008-09 in the Assembly on November 11, 2008, Hon'ble Minister for Finance Prof. K. Anbazhagan said the Government sanctioned an additional Rs.110.52 crore towards the State's share of crop insurance compensation paid to farmers, who had insured their crops in the previous year.

With a view to avoiding sanitary workers from entering and working in sewerage lines, Rs.3 crore had been sanctioned as grant to the Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board to purchase machinery.

Other sanctions included Rs.570.50 crore as additional share capital assistance to the Tamil Nadu Electricity



Board, Rs.593.68 crore to the Tamil Nadu Cooperative Housing Federation towards waiver of housing loans availed by economically weaker sections, Rs.414.58 crore for improvement of roads in villages covered under "Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam", Rs.410.74 crore for constructing new buildings for Government high / higher secondary schools with NABARD assistance and Rs.10 crore for providing 25 percent subsidy to micro, small and medium industries for purchasing generator of capacity up to 125 KV subject to a ceiling of Rs.1.5 lakh.



HOGENAKKAL SCHEME ON SCHEDULE

Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development & Local Administration Thiru **M.K.STALIN**

Works on the Hogenakkal Drinking Water Project will go as per schedule and the scheme will be extended to Hosur in the second phase, said Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Local Administration Thiru M.K. Stalin in Krishnagiri on November 1, 2008.

He said that the Hogenakkal project for Dharmapuri district would also meet the drinking water requirement of Hosur in Krishnagiri district. But that would be in the second phase of the project. He accused Karnataka of trying to gain political mileage by opposing the Hogenakkal project, which will draw water from the river Cauvery.

Tamil Nadu, he said, was ready to overcome any obstacles created by Karnataka to disrupt the project.

The work on the Hogenakkal project was inaugurated a few months ago by the Chief Minister and had commenced as per schedule with the support of the Japanese government.

The Japanese government had released Rs 782.50 crores out of Rs 1,334 crores as loan for the project on October 3.

The Hon'ble Minister laid the foundation for new Government buildings for Krishnagiri district and distributed financial assistance to selfhelp groups.

The Minister distributed pass books with credit entries of Rs. 50,000 as loan and Rs. 10,000 in the revolving fund to the tune of Rs. 18 crore to 3,000 self-help groups.

Inaugurating the Local Bodies Day celebrations, the Local Administration Minister listed the schemes being implemented in the State for the welfare of women.

He said Indian Bank was the first among the public sector banks to give loans to SHGs in Thali.

Later, speaking at a function in Dharmapuri, the Minister alleged that some political parties "in our neighbouring State" are politicising the Hogenakkal project for personal gains.

"But I do not want to politicise the issue" he said. The main motto of the Government is to bring the scheme to Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri districts, he added.

The Minister handed over pass books with a credit entry of Rs. 20 crore as revolving fund to 3,333 women self-help groups. He also inaugurated 83 new schemes worth Rs. 11.33 crore and laid foundation for 31 schemes worth Rs. 11.92 crore including Periyar Samathuvapuram in Paruvadhanapalli panchayat in Pennagaram block at Rs. 1.50 crore. He also laid the foundation for Harur and Marandahalli Town Panchayats' drinking water project at Rs. 3.24 crore. The Minister said that Indian Bank had proposed to open an exclusive branch for the self-help group in Dharmapuri by November 15, 2008.



TAMIL NADU SETTING EXAMPLE TO NATION IN SHG SCHEME

Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development & Local Administration Thiru M.K. STALIN



Hon'ble Local Administration Minister Thiru M.K. Stalin distributed revolving fund of Rs.50,000 each to 2,507 self-help groups in the district at a function in Tiruvannamalai on October 19, 2008.

Distributing bank pass books for the amount credited to representatives of the 2507 SHGs, the Minister said Tamil Nadu was setting an example to the nation in the SHG programme.

To support his point, the Minister cited a report from Indian Bank which showed that the bank had disbursed loans to 2.57 lakh SHGs to the tune of Rs.1,827 crore throughout the nation until June 2008. Of this, 1.46 lakh SHGs, which received a total loan of Rs.1058 crore, were operating in Tamil Nadu, he said.

"We do all this not for self promotion but for achieving self reliance of women. To achieve self reliance, women need to take

small and tiny ventures in their areas. The capital is being provided as loan by nationalised banks through SHGs, Bankers say that repayment rate of loans by SHGs is good," the Minister said.

Out of Rs.50,000 revolving fund, Rs.10,000 has been given as government subsidy and the remaining as bank loan. Hon'ble Food minister Thiru E.V. Velu presided over the function.

The Minister also declared open 178 buildings and other works worth over Rs.40 crore in different parts of the district.

On his whirlwind tours of the state, the Local Administration Minister has been at pains to reach out to the SHGs in every district. At Thiruvannamalai, he inaugurated new classrooms and laboratories in schools under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, buildings under Anaithu Grama Anna Marumazharchi Thittam, new revenue buildings in various parts of the district and a free service station in Aarani.

Hundreds of Sri Lankan Tamils lined up at over 20 distribution centers close to the battle zones of Vanni in the north to receive food supplies sent by Tamil Nadu early December 4, 2008 reports reaching Chennai said.

With babes in arms and old relatives in tow, residents of the temporary IDP (internally displaced people) shelters queued up before the relief centers even before sunrise after news went around that the Lankan government had allowed Red Cross trucks carrying the Tamil Nadu relief into the Killinochchi district in December 4, 2008.

The distribution of rice, lentils and other provisions began shortly after 8 a.m. in 23 branches of the Multipurpose Cooperative Society (MPCS) in Kandaavalai assistant government agent division in Killinochchi district. In spite of acute shortages and dire needs for food articles, the beneficiaries behaved with great restraint and self-

regulation to receive the packets against their ID cards, reports said.

Representatives of the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) visited the MPCS distribution centers to ensure orderly distribution of the limited relief materials permitted by the Lankan government to reach Killinochchi. The allowed supplies would meet the immediate requirements of only one-fifth of the IDP

It also quoted several beneficiaries at the distribution centers expressing gratitude to the people of Tamil Nadu, particularly Chief Minister Kalaingar M. Karunanidhi, for sending the much-needed relief items to the Lankan Tamil population caught in the war between the LTTE and the government troops.

“The food package from there (Tamil Nadu) sent on 15 November, 2008 have

Lankan Tamils receive aid from Tamil Nadu

population in Vanni, according to reporters who visited the distributed centers and spoke to the beneficiaries. “The officials were forced to prioritise families with children on December 4, 2008. At least 51,200 families comprising more than 230,000 individual, are in need of urgent aid,” the report said, quoting officials.

reached us only now. The clothes sent by the people of Tamil Nadu are yet to reach us. The few clothes that we had were washed away in the recent rain-floods. We hope that the clothes from Tamil Nadu will reach us soon,” said Kamlahasan, presently living in Kaddaikkadu after being displaced from Mallavi.

CHEMMOZHI

Though the appeal for the recognition of Tamil as a classical language first came from Paritimarkalainar more than a hundred years ago, it materialised largely through the ceaseless efforts of Kalainar M. Karunanidhi.

Defining a classical language as one that possesses the potential to function without the help of other languages that are found in the nation where it is spoken, can be understood by the listener without being hindered by any verbal or semantic obscurities, has the capacity to shed what is antiquated and to absorb what is new and an ever-growing vocabulary, its own words far outnumbering the words borrowed from other languages, Paritimarkalainar contended as early as 1887 that Tamil fulfills these requirements.

Another native scholar, Devaneyappavanar, could adduce some convincing evidences of the primary classicality of Tamil such as its primitiveness, originality and natural development, and extraordinary copiousness.

That Tamil is one of the most ancient languages of the world has been testified by more than one Western linguist. Calldwell, for instance,

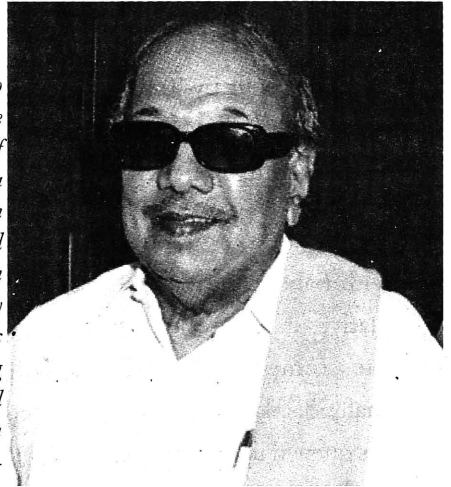
observes:

Does there not seem to be reason for regarding the Dravidian family of languages, not only as a link of connection between the Indo-European and Scythian groups but - in some particulars, especially in relation to the pronouns - as the best surviving representative of a period in the history of human speech older than the Indo-European stage, older than the Scythian and older than the separation of the one from the other?



(Quoted in Devaneyappavanar 2001:30)

About the ancientness of Tamil and its contribution to world civilization, no testimony other than the following by Swami Vivekananda is required:



The Madras Presidency is the habitat of the Tamil race, whose civilization was the most ancient and a branch of whom called the Sumerians spread a vast civilization on the banks of the Euphrates, in very ancient times whose astrology, religious lore, morals and rites etc., furnished the foundation for the Assyrian and Babylonian civilizations and whose mythology was the source of the Christian Bible. Another branch of these Tamilians spread from the Malabar Coast and gave rise to the wonderful Egyptian civilization and the Aryans also are indebted to this race in many respects. (Quoted in Mahalingam 1998:120)

A.K.Ramanujan could easily comprehend the real strength of Sangam poetry which entitles it to a secure place in world literature and his assessment of it is just and insightful:

In their antiquity and in their contemporaneity, there is not much else in any Indian literature equal to these quiet and dramatic Tamil poems. In their values and stances, they represent a mature classical poetry: passion is balanced by courtesy, transparency by ironies and nuances of design, impersonality by vivid detail and leanness of line by richness of implication(Ramannujam 2000:64)

Professor George Hart, who is well-acquainted with many classical and modern languages, states that to qualify as a classical tradition, a language should be ancient, should possess an independent tradition and a large and extremely rich body of ancient literature and that these criteria are met by Tamil. Indicating that the word "Classical", ultimately derived from the Latin *classicus*, which means "of the highest class", Hart has listed his arguments in support of his firm belief that Tamil is a true classical language:

It is almost as old as Latin: it possesses a vital and rich literature that is peculiar to itself and is not borrowed; it was standardized at a very early time; it was used in subsequent periods as a language of literature and discourse, and it exerted considerable influence on the traditions of other languages. There are very few world languages that have these characteristics. Other Indian Languages are like the non-classical languages of Europe; they did not become productive literary languages until after 1000 AD,

they did not produce their own peculiar grammar, and they did not produce any great body of literature that was entirely their own, without any significant influence from the outside....

It has its own poetic theory, its own grammatical tradition, its own aesthetic and above all, a large body of literature that is quite unique. It shows a sort of Indian sensibility that is quite different from anything in Sanskrit or other Indian languages, and it contains its own extremely rich and intellectual tradition.

Sangam literature is one of the great literary treasures of the world. Its works provide a Tamil perspective on life and on human experience that is quite different from anything found in Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, or any other language. Its meters, its language, its conventions, and its spirit are all purely Tamil. Its scope is so large that it can easily be compared to any of the other classical languages.

The fact is, many Indian literatures have been influenced directly or indirectly by the Tamil tradition.

Everyone knows the Tirukkural, one of the world's greatest works on ethics; but this is merely one of a myriad of major and extremely varied works that comprise the Tamil classical tradition. There is not a facet of human existence that is not explored and illuminated by this great literature.

([http://tamil.berkeley.edu/Tamil%20Chair/Tamil Classical](http://tamil.berkeley.edu/Tamil%20Chair/Tamil%20Classical)

[Language/Tamil Classical Lge Ltr.html](#))

Strongly recommending that Tamil be accorded global recognition as a classical language on the basis of its possession of Sangam poetry, Kamil V. Zvelebil writes:

Sangam Poetry is the expression of a linguistic, prosodic and stylistic perfection; it is a finished, consummate and inimitable literary expression of an entire culture and of the best in that culture; in this sense, it is truly a "classical" product, a classical literature ... Those 26,350 lines of poetry promote Tamil to the rank of one of the great classical languages of the world. (Zvelebil 1973:1-2)

Tamil aesthetics, ancient as well as profound, has now been gaining the global recognition that it richly deserves. The theory of poetry as described in Tolkappiyar's "Porulatikaram" and as exemplified in Sangam poetry makes it clear that even more than two thousand years ago, the Tamils had a rich and highly sophisticated set of notions of poetry which the West could arrive at only after several centuries of experiments and prolonged discussions and debates. The classical concept of poetry, showing great intellectual depth and understanding, was born of and shaped by remarkable powers of observation and meditation.

The Tamils' exhaustive description of the name and nature of poetry appears to be almost the final statement on it. Martin Seymour Smith, in his *A Guide to Twentieth Century World Literature*, a close study of contemporary trends in about four hundred leading literatures of the world, has the highest praise for Tamil aesthetics. The Western aestheticians who stumble upon it, he says, will find it a shockingly pleasing treasure with its divisions of Akam and Puram and its strategic use of landscapes and a symbolic key. He avers that the classical Tamil theory is of greater practical value today than any of the bogus experiments conducted by a majority of bogus poets of the West and that it can serve as an effective antidote to the dry philosophy of life advocated by them. The Akam poems, in his view, function within a psychologically based framework that is flawless and appropriate.

The uniqueness of *Tolkappiyam* as an ancient grammatical treatise and as the achievement of a linguist par excellence has been acknowledged by some leading Western authorities on the subject concerned. Daniel Jones, the British specialist in phonetics, having scrutinized the Tamil language as presented in *Tolkappiyam*, praises it as a

that illustrates particularly well the grouping of several distinct sounds into single phonemes... those who originally invented this orthography must have had a clear conception of the phoneme idea, though the theory had never been formulated. (Quoted in Sankaran's article on Tolkappiyam)

He marvels at Tolkappiyar's accurate description of the Tamil phonemes at a time when there was no recourse to any of the scientific instruments which phoneticians could acquire only more than twenty centuries later.

More recently, in an interview in which A.L. Becker, Professor Emeritus of Linguistics, University of Michigan, Keith Taylor of the same university and A.K. Ramanujan participated, the suggestion came from Becker that

Tolkappiyar was some one whose bust they should be putting in American university libraries "because he opened up that Tamil world with a kind of care and thoughtfulness and imagination that is certainly comparable to Plato or Aristotle in the Western world. The way that he look the least part of things we do with language and subjected to careful analysis ... not so much to make the rules as to describe it. ... Tolkappiyar is important because here we have someone describing the equipment to grasp art, describing the conventions, describing in such detail everything

that is taken for granted by the people. (Ramanujan 2000:68-69)

Paying his share of the tribute, the Indian linguist added,

Yes, the man who wrote the poetics. He was also a grammarian. He does it all for Tamill! Rhetoric, prosody and poetics. He's very close to what you would call a linguistics' ultimate guru. He does everything. He takes all of language, from the most ordinary banal language to the most poetic, as the subject of his linguistics. (Ibid.)

Over an incredibly long period of its existence Tamil has naturally gathered a cornucopia of words, phrases, idioms, proverbs and sayings enriching and enabling it to become a marvellous medium of expression. The wealth of Tamil vocabulary and the subtleties and nuances of meanings of Tamil words have been admired by the right group of competent authorities such as the Western translators of Tamil classics. G.U.Pope, for example, in the very learned introduction to his translation of *Tirukkural*, telling his contemporaries that Tamil is an independent language with a copious and original vocabulary, concedes that in English it may not be easy to achieve the economy of diction that is possible in Tamil, which exploits the provision of ellipsis in all its variety. Having in mind the Tamils' advantage of the use

of *vinaitlokai*, *panpultokai*, *uvamailtokai*, *ummaittokai*, *verrumaitokai*, and *anmolinoikai*, Pope admits that ellipsis, though difficult to master, is one of the great beauties of Tamil.

What he says about the originality of *Tirukkural* and other didactic writings in Tamil should be borne in mind by literary historians and critics:

It would be possible, indeed, to find a close Sanskrit parallel to nearly every gnomic verse in Tamil poetry, but in many cases the beauty, spontaneity and terseness of the Tamil stanza seem to prove its originality. (Pope 1984:6)

Francis Whyte Ellis, who first proposed the idea of a Dravidian language family in 1816, forty years prior to Caldwell, convincingly argued that the four south Indian languages were not derivations from Sanskrit, that it was not necessary for their existence and that they form a distinct family with which Sanskrit has, in later times especially, intermixed, but with which it has no radical connection. Extremely impressed with Tamil literatures concern for life here and now, he pointed out that

among the various and excellent works in which the Tamil language abounds to a degree excelled by no Asiatic and by few European languages none are more remarkable than what may be described, as

treating on human existence ...the various natural forms and conditions of this life. (Ellis 1812: 218)

It is in the course of his celebrated commentary of *Tirukkural* that he pays glowing tributes to the language and culture of the Tamils. Explaining that “the genius of Tamil is to hint rather than to define the signification of its words” he wonders



*why so opulent a language as Greek has no term for “*iniyavai kural*”, which, in Valluvar’s usage, would include the several modifications of the primary notion conveyed by affability, courtesy or similar terms. In the absence of an equivalent to this, Aristotle was forced to describe the nameless virtue as the intermediate habit between flattery and moroseness, between that disposition which inclines the feeble minded in all cases to sacrifice their own opinions in deference to others and that by which men are excited to contend for the mere sake of contention. (Ibid.)*

Ellis rightly chides certain European writers who have said that the Indian languages

have no word corresponding to ‘gratitude’, the inference being that the very concept of gratitude is unknown to the Indians:

To this calumny let this chapter of Tinivalluvar (the one on Ceynanriyapal) and the accomplishments to it be the answer, as in it the idea will be found to be expressed in many varying modes. (Ibid: 230)

After translating and elaborately commenting on a particular Kural of this chapter, Ellis observes:

Both the translation and explanation very inadequately convey the strength and vivid expression of the original.

This is an able polyglot’s sincere, unalloyed expression of admiration for *Tirukkural*, the language in which it is written and for the culture it embodies.

In his articles, poems and lectures in Tamil and English, V.C. Kulandai Swamy (2005) used to frequently discuss the status of Tamil as a classical language and the need for its inclusion by the Government in the list of ancient/ classical languages. After the October 2004 Notification of the Government of India, he wrote two books, one in Tamil (*Ulakat Cewiyal Molikajin Varicaiyil Tamit*) and the other in English (*Tamil Among the Classical Languages of the World*),

providing valuable information on the issues involved in the notification,

the consequential task that emerges and the development that must take place in order that the full benefit of the Notification accrues to the nation. (p.xviii)

In his recent speeches and writings, he has been emphasising that

while the Sanskrit contribution has been well understood, well researched and accepted all over the world, somehow the equal contribution made by the Dravidian civilization and culture has remained in the background and now this recognition gives us an opportunity to bring to the fore a vital fact which has not been given proper importance in the past. It is a matter of satisfaction for the Dravidian family as a whole and not for the Tamils alone. (Ibid. p. xviii)

The Tamil lovers of the present era are not the first ones to speak about the great antiquity of Tamil. There is plenty of literary evidence to show that the Tamils have been cherishing the notion from time immemorial. The thirty fourth stanza of *Purapporuf Venpamlai* claims that "the old clan, armed with words, came into being, before soil evolved out of rocks." One of the soberest of Tamil poets, *Itanko Afikal*, singing the glory of a Pandiya king, speaks of the distant past of the Tamil land:

*Hail to the southern king!
He ruled the south having
conquered*

*the northern Ganges and the
Himalayas*

*after the cruel sea had swallowed
the Pabrali with the multi-ranged
Kumari mountain.*

Kamban's *Ramayanam* says that the saint Agasthya won enormous fame by learning "the ever-living Tamil." Ni. Kandasamippillai proudly declares that Tamil was the tongue that moved the first manis tongue:

*Let us prostrate ourselves
placing our heads
at the feet of
the foremost lady
ever-fresh Tamil
who gently moved man's tongue
as the time when
the primordial people
the world had yielded
were revealing their hearts
through hand-gestures
came to an end.*

The Tamil mother, as presented by Bharati in one of his poems, bemoaning her present misfortune, says that she owes her birth to no less a person than the ancient Siva. Bharatidasan always goes into raptures over the antiquity of Tamil:

*We were born with Tamil
which was born with
the moon, the great sun,*

*the sky, the stars and the
sea.*

But, as the numerous statements by a galaxy of linguists, literary theorists, scholars, critics and translators would attest, the plea for the national and international recognition of Tamil as a classical language is not to be dismissed as a simple case of megalomania involving fantasies of past glory or as an intellectual exercise in futility. It should be evident to the just and the discerning that the claim for the classical status is well grounded.

Phoenix is a mythological bird reported to consume itself by fire after 500 years and to rise renewed from its ashes and has, therefore, come to mean, a person or thing that has been restored to a new existence from destruction for which reason it is praised by poets as a symbol of immortality.

Tamil has had a chequered history with periods of eminence and glory as well as times when it faced humiliation and even the threat of extinction. And it has managed to survive "the slings and arrows of the outrageous fortune" on at least three or four occasions.

Source : *Chemmozhi*,
Oct-Dec 2006

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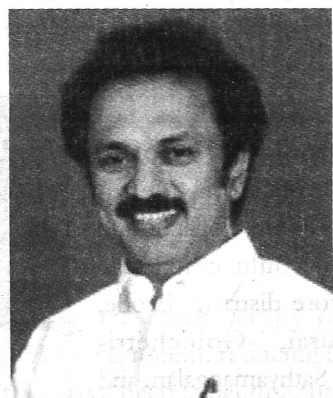
"I deem it as my life-time achievement" was the reaction of the Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Local Administration, Thiru M.K. Stalin, after handing over an appointment order to a physically challenged girl, M. Nageswari (25), who is 90% disabled. Normally the Government would not appoint a person with 90% disability.

The Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Local Administration, Thiru M.K. Stalin said that though he had travelled across the State and distributed assistance to many, helping this girl get the job of an office assistant was indeed an achievement. "I cannot forget it all through my life," he said. The Minister drove to the girl's house at Chatrareddiypatti to hand over the appointment order.

Daughter of a retired junior assistant with the State Government, the girl had handed over a petition during one of his visits here in September this year.

The Hon'ble Minister was pained at seeing the girl crawling her way to the dais. Immediately, he asked the officials to rush towards her and help her to move to the dais, recalled the Hon'ble Minister for School Education, Thiru Thangam Thennarasu. The Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Local Administration, Thiru M.K. Stalin was very particular that she got a job at any cost,

Minister's compassion to Disabled Girl



Within a few days, the district administration gave her a temporary job. But the Hon'ble Minister would not stop at that. "He took up her case with the Hon'ble Chief Minister and requested him to treat it as a special one and got her a job on time-scale. He wanted to hand it over at her residence," the School Education Minister.

The girl is now appointed as an office assistant at the Government Higher Secondary School at Chatrareddiypatti. The girl, who passed her 10th standard from the school, would be drawing her first monthly salary of over Rs. 6,000.

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NEW TIRUPUR DISTRICT FORMED

The State government has issued the notification regarding the formation of the new Tirupur district.

As per the notification, Coimbatore and Erode districts would be divided into three districts-Coimbatore district with headquarters at Coimbatore; Erode district headquartered at Erode and Tirupur district with headquarters at Tirupur.

The six taluks of Coimbatore North, Coimbatore South, Mettupalayam, Sulur, Pollachi and Valparai would constitute Coimbatore district. Erode, Perundurai, Gobichettipalayam, Sathyamangalam and Bhavani taluks would form Erode district. Thirupur, Avanashi, Palladam, Dharampuram, Kangeyam and Udumalpet would constitute Tirupur district.

As per the order, the Special Officer would take charge of the administration of the new district immediately. Tirupur since it has been notified as the 32nd revenue district of the State.

Tirupur MLA Thiru C. Govindasamy, who requested Minister for Local Administration Thiru M.K. Stalin to expedite the formation of the district during his recent visit here, termed the announcement a "Deepavali gift" to the residents.

Thanking Hon'ble Chief Minister for his "nice gesture," Thiru A. Sakthivel, President, Tirupur Exporters Association, felt that the formation of the district would act as a catalyst for the growth of the textile industry.

"Infrastructure such as roads heading to ports is going to improve, and more power stations are bound to come up once district-specific allocation of funds starts pouring in," he said.

Another advantage cited by the industrial fraternity was the proximity to the Collectorate.

The city is the nerve-centre of knitwear production in the State, yet the entrepreneurs till now were forced to frequently travel 60 km

to complete even smallest of the business formalities at various district-level offices in Coimbatore. The public, comprising mainly migrant workers, are by and large ecstatic. Now, more buses will be allocated to the district, providing better connectivity to our native towns, they said. Thiru Govindasamy said life in the city suburbs and mofussils would witness a significant improvement, as more funds would be allocated for rural development and agriculture. "Till now, only a small share from the total allocation to Coimbatore and Erode districts are spent for Tirupur," he said.



Chief Minister suggests cut in LPG Price

Welcoming the UPA government's move to slash the prices of petrol and diesel, Hon'ble Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi suggested that the price of cooking gas also be brought down.

"People were anticipating the reduction in the petrol prices for quite some time and the announcement will benefit a large section of people," he said in a letter on 6.12.2008 to Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, UPA Chairperson Tmt. Sonia Gandhi and Hon'ble Petroleum Minister Thiru Murli Deora, with a copy to Hon'ble Union Shipping Minister Thiru T.R. Baalu on 6.12.2008.

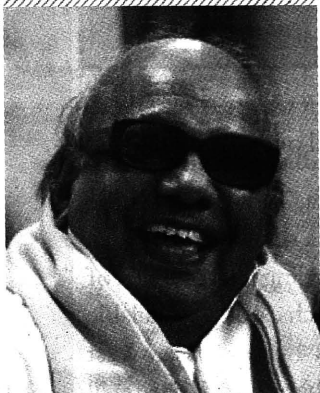
The letter said:

"People of our country are really happy over the announcement of the UPA Government, reducing the price of petrol and diesel, as they have been expecting this cut for quite some time now. I am thankful for the announcement which will benefit a large section of our people.

The D.M.K. Government, in 2006-07 has introduced a scheme of distribution of free Gas Stoves along with Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) connection to benefit the women-folk. This scheme was implemented on an expenditure of Rs.60.crores benefiting 3 lakhs poor families. In 2007-08, 7.52 lakhs gas stoves with gas connections worth Rs.160 crores were distributed free of cost. So far, 10.52 lakhs poor families have been benefited from this scheme. This scheme is being continued in 2008-09 also to benefit another 8 lakhs poor families with a budget allocation of Rs.160 crores.

The women-folk expect reduction of price of LPG also. I suggest that the price of LPG may be restored to its earlier price before increase. I kindly request you to consider this suggestion and make a suitable announcement.

I will be grateful for an early announcement."



SMART CARDS FOR VEHICLE OWNERS



Hereafter, “smart cards,” which resemble credit cards, will be issued to those who obtain driving licences. Similar cards will also be given to vehicle owners at the time of registration.

On a pilot basis, the scheme of smart cards was inaugurated at the Regional Transport Office (Chennai-South), Thiruvannamipur on November 10, 2008.

Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaingar M. Karunanidhi launched it in the presence of Hon'ble Minister for Transport Thiru K.N. Nehru, Home Secretary Tmt. S. Malathi and Transport Commissioner Thiru C.P. Singh, at a function 10.11.2008.

The scheme of smart cards is part of the State Transport department's measures to simplify procedures concerning the issuance of driving licence and vehicle registration books. In

a phased manner, it will be extended to about 60 RTOs all over the State.

In South India, Tamil Nadu is the first to have such a scheme, an official release said. According to an official of the department, such cards are available in Delhi, Maharashtra, Orissa, West Bengal and Jharkhand. Each card will have two features - visual inspection and machine readability. The embedded micro chip on each card can store electronic data and execute commands which can be read and updated, using terminals and devices.

The press release said the reader equipment would be given to all law-enforcing officials of the department to enable them read the data entered in the cards. The official said the details would be provided to holders of the driving licences in the form of a hard copy.

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Prevention of Infectious Diseases

in your home

Things to Do to Prevent Infectious Diseases in your home

Keep immunizations up to date for children and adults alike. Follow recommended immunizations for children and adults. And don't forget your pets.

Wash your hands often, especially during cold and flu season. Be sure to wash hands:

- After using the bathroom
- Before preparing or eating food
- After changing a diaper
- After blowing your nose or sneezing or coughing
- After caring for a sick person
- After playing with a pet

Be aware of what you eat, and be careful how you prepare it.

- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold until eaten or cooked
- Be sure temperature controls in refrigerators and freezers are working properly
- Wash counters, cutting boards, and utensils frequently with soap and hot

water, especially after preparing poultry and other meats

- Wash fresh fruits and vegetables before eating

Use antibiotics exactly as prescribed. Take them for the full course prescribed by your doctor,



but not for colds or other nonbacterial illnesses. Never self-medicate with antibiotics or share them with family or friends.

Report to your doctor any quickly worsening infection or any infection that does not get better after you take a prescribed antibiotic.

Be cautious around all wild and domestic animals that are not familiar to you.

- After any animal bite, clean the skin with soap and water, and seek medical care immediately

Avoid areas of insect infestation. Use insect repellents on skin and clothing when in areas

where ticks or mosquitoes are common. If you have visited wooded or wilderness areas and are now sick, your doctor needs all the details to diagnose both rare and common illnesses quickly.

Stay alert to disease threats when you travel or visit undeveloped areas. Get all recommended immunizations, and use protective medications for travel, especially to areas with malaria. Don't drink untreated water while hiking or camping. If you become ill when you return home, tell your doctor where you've been.

When sick, allow yourself time to heal and recover. Be courteous to others: wash your hands frequently, and cover your mouth when you sneeze or cough.

Why is Hand Washing Important?

Unwashed or poorly washed hands are a very common way of spreading many diseases, such as: colds, flu, ear infections, strep throat, diarrhoea, and other intestinal problems.

Germs and viruses causing these diseases, are passed by such routine things as handling food, touching door knobs, shaking hands, and putting your mouth on a telephone receiver. The spread of many germs and viruses can be reduced by hand washing with soap and water.

When should I wash my hands?

- After using bathroom
- After blowing nose, sneezing, or coughing
- Before eating or handling food
- After handling uncooked meat

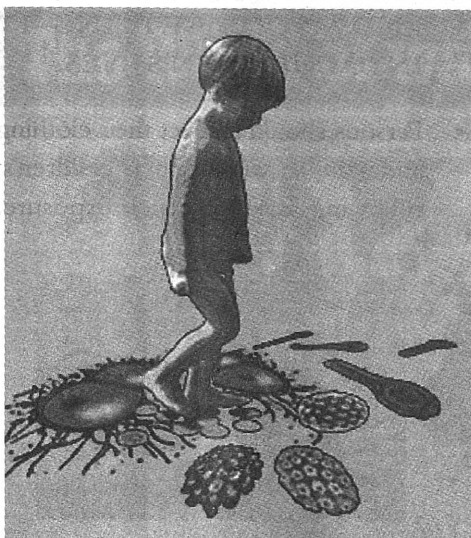
- After taking out the trash
- After changing a diaper
- After handling money
- After playing with a pet, especially reptiles, iguanas, turtles, snakes
- Also, try not to touch your mouth, eyes, or ears when hands are unwashed.

How do I properly wash my hands?

- Use hot or warm running water.
- Lather hands with soap (any kind).
- Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds.
- Wash the back of hands, between fingers, and under fingernails.
- Rinse with warm water
- Pat hands dry, beginning at the wrist and moving down.
- Turn off water, using a paper towel.

How can hand washing help protect MY FAMILY AND I?

Food-borne illness outbreaks often are caused by poor hygiene, usually unwashed or poorly washed hands on the part of the food handler. Many diarrhoeal illnesses (salmonellosis, hepatitis A, shigellosis) can be passed from person to person when someone doesn't wash his hands after using the bathroom and then passes it along to someone else by handling food, shaking hands, or touching something. The organism gets into the other person's



mouth and the person becomes sick. Unwashed or poorly washed hands are responsible for 1 in 4 foodborne illnesses.

Hand washing is the single most important way of preventing the spread of infections, according to the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Hand washing is the most available "low-tech" prevention of illnesses.

People must take personal responsibility for developing the hand washing habit. Parents should teach their children the proper way to wash their hands. Children should see their parents and other caregivers washing their hands frequently. Consumers need to let restaurants, day cares, doctors, hospitals, and nursing homes know they are concerned about personal hygiene and infection control in their facilities.

Food Safety Tips

Some suggestions from the International Food Safety Council for combating bacteria and foodborne illness at home:

- Wash hands with soap under hot running water for at least 20 seconds; dry with paper towels. Wash hands before and after handling food, especially raw meat, poultry or seafood.
- Clean in-between: wash cutting boards, knives and kitchen utensils with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before going on to the next.
- Sanitize cutting boards, utensils and surfaces after washing by using a sanitizing solution of water and bleach; let air dry (Read bleach label directions).
- Use paper towels to clean kitchen surfaces. If you use cloth towels, wash often in the hot cycle of a washing machine.
- Refrigerate or freeze leftovers and prepared food within two hours.
- Reheat take-out meals and leftovers to a minimum of 165 degrees; stir to cook evenly.
- Eat, freeze or discard refrigerated leftovers within 3 to 4 days.
- Keep raw meat, poultry, eggs and seafood and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods; never place cooked food on an unwashed plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, eggs or seafood.
- Always wash hands after using the bathroom, changing diapers, handling

pets, coughing, sneezing or touching hair and clothing.

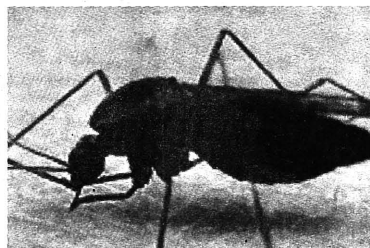
- Avoid handling food when ill or if you have cuts or sores on your hands.
- Do not wipe your hands on clothing or an apron.
- Clean and sanitize handles on your refrigerator, dishwasher, faucets, drawers and cabinets.
- Dispose of trash frequently and always wash your hands afterward.

Important steps to help avoid ticks are:

- To control rodents around your home; to prevent contact with infected rodents.
- Wear light colored clothing, including long sleeve shirts and pants when outside. Light colored clothing will make ticks more easily seen on clothing before they have a chance to attach to the skin.
- Tuck pants into socks and shirts into pants to cover skin as much as possible.
- Use tick repellents containing **DEET** before entering areas where ticks are potentially found. Repellents containing more than 30% **DEET** are unnecessary. Using repellent is especially important during the summer months when ticks are more active. **NEVER USE REPELLENTS ON INFANTS**

AND AVOID GETTING IT INTO CHILDREN'S EYES.

- Persons should inspect their clothing and skin, as well as their children's, following a possible tick exposure.



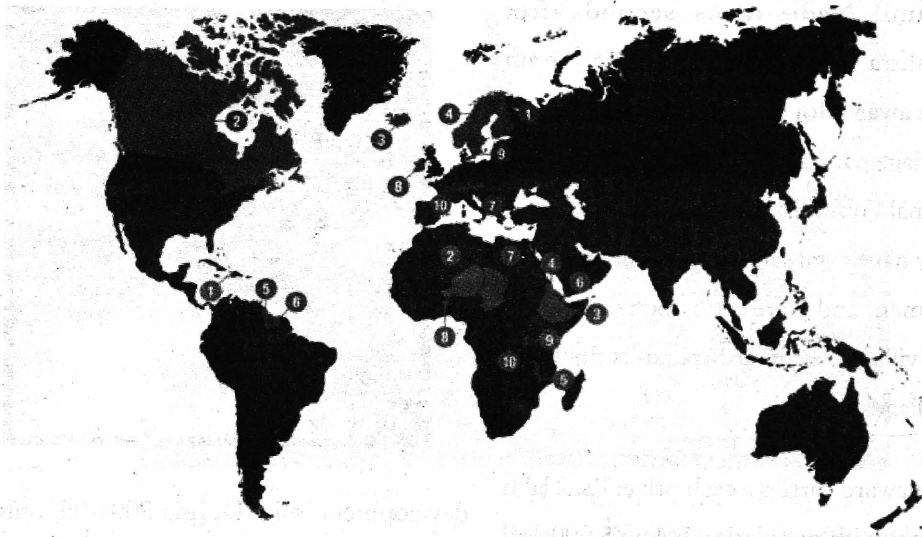
Ticks often attach to exposed hairy regions of the body (e.g. head and neck), therefore special attention should be given to these areas when inspecting for ticks.

- Anyone spending a prolonged amount of time outdoors or in the woods should perform tick inspections at periodic intervals more frequently.
- If a tick is found on the body, prompt **tick removal** is important.
- Pets should be inspected for ticks daily, and if a tick is found it should be removed promptly as well.

PREVENT mosquito bites. Use bug spray containing **DEET**. Use protective netting for infants. Wear long-sleeved tops and pants. Repair your screens. **PREVENT** breeding grounds. Empty items around your yard that collect water. Keep gutters clean. Help your neighbors do the same.



The World of water



There are millions of people around the world who are poverty - stricken due to their lack of access to water.

- ❑ 1.4 trillion (1.4 billion km³) is the total volume of water on earth.
- ❑ 119 million litres of surface water vanish every year.
- ❑ 74,200,000 litres evaporate in the atmosphere.
- ❑ 97.5% of the earth's water is salt water, only 2.5% is freshwater.
- ❑ 70% of all water is polar ice.
- ❑ 1% of fresh water (0.007% of water on earth) is suitable for human consumption.
- ❑ 667 litres is the amount of water used in the average American household per day.
- ❑ 140 litres is the European average per person per day.

- ❑ 14 litres is the African and Asian average per household.
- ❑ 19 litres is the minimum amount of water needed to meet a person's daily needs (source : WHO)
- ❑ The three largest water users are :
Agriculture 67%, Industry 19% and Municipal or Residential 9%.
- ❑ 5,000 deaths a day are caused by lack of clean drinking water.
- ❑ According to the charity Water Aid, an estimated 1.1 billion people do not have access to safe water, with the result being that one child dies of a water-related disease every 15 seconds.
- ❑ Humans can live for weeks without food, but only days without water.
- ❑ All any given time, half of the world's hospital beds are occupied by patients who are suffering from a water-related disease.

Source : Holland Herald



TN RANKS 2ND IN CLEAN VILLAGES LIST

Tamil Nadu ranks second after Maharashtra in winning the Nirmal Gram Puraskar awards for clean villages. As many as 1,474 village panchayats in the state have won the Nirmal Gram Puraskar Awards for 2007-08. They have total sanitation coverage, clean environment and there is no open defecation in these villages. Maharashtra ranks first with 2,551 villages.

The award carries a cash prize: Rs. 2 lakh for villages with population below 5,000 and Rs.4 lakh for villages with population above 5,000. The village panchayat is free to utilise the money for any scheme it has drawn up.

This is the highest number of awards won by the Rural Development Department since the inception of this award in 2002. The award carries a monetary incentive of Rs 2 lakh to Rs 4 lakh.

"Villages in the state compete with one another to ensure 100 percent sanitation, maintenance of cleanliness and complete toilet facilities to win this award. The emphasis given to these aspects by our Minister Thiru M.K. Stalin has worked positively," Thiru Ashok Vardhan Shetty, Secretary, Rural



development, said. During 2004-05, only 12 villages from Tamil Nadu were selected for this award. During 2005-06, the number rose to 119 and in 2006-07, as many as 296 villages were chosen.

"The urge for cleanliness is human; sometimes, you need some motivation," the healthy competition between villages in achieving three basic criteria for clean environment worked this wonder." Mudichur village in Kancheepuram district is one of those that have received the Nirmal Gram Puraskar award. A walk through its streets will help people understand how cleanliness is maintained in the village despite many odds. "We don't allow any rubbish to lie scattered on the road," said Murugesan, a resident. ★

Benefits to Disabled distributed



The Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Local Administration Thiru M.K. Stalin distributed Rs. 60 lakh in rehabilitation benefits to persons with disabilities on the occasion of the World Disability Day 3.12.2008.

The assistance included hearing aids, dark glasses and white sticks, adapted bikes, wheelchairs, Braille watches, crutches, educational aid, prosthetic limbs; and grants for self-employment. A total of 986 beneficiaries received the assistance from the Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Local Administration Thiru M.K.Stalin. He listed the progressive schemes launched by the DMK government. Some of them were forerunners to the national laws and policies evolved for the welfare of persons with disabilities.

The Central Government had recognised Tamil Nadu's work in providing ID cards to persons with disabilities by conferring on it a certificate of appreciation, the Hon'ble Minister.

He also gave away awards to individuals and institutions for exemplary service to persons with disabilities. Hon'ble Social Welfare Minister Tmt. Geetha Jeevan said 31 early intervention centres had been started in the districts, and they would benefit children with disabilities up to the age of 5. The idea was to start intervention early in order to limit the debility. Furthermore, the government was providing free bus passes to children and their escorts to help them access the services.

Though the designated World Disability Day proceedings had to be suspended following the death of former Prime Minister V.P. Singh, the re-scheduled function was held on December 8, 2008 as grandly and with as much involvement of different segments of the disabled community. A cultural show was put up by children of special schools. Prizes were awarded to some of the best performers.

Thiru N.S.Palaniappan, Principal Secretary, Social Welfare Department, and State Commissioner for the Disabled Tmt. Meenakshi Rajagopal also spoke. ★

TAMIL GIRL IS WORLD'S YOUNGEST MICROSOFT PRO

When Munisamy took his eight-year-old daughter Lavinashree to a software learning centre for Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP) examination preparation course in May 2008, they denied admission. But the affectionate father persisted and convinced them to try her out for four days. Today, Lavinashree is the youngest person in the world to become a Microsoft Certified Professional.

Nine-year-old Arfa Karim Randhawa of Pakistan became the youngest in the world to achieve this honour in 2005. Madurai based

Lavinashree created a record of sorts when she took the exam after two months of coaching in August 2008. She scored 842 for 1000 marks in the online test. Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaighnar M. Karunanidhi congratulated the wonder kid on December 14, 2008 at the Secretariat. "He patted me on the shoulders and said very good, when I showed him the certificate," said a cheerful Lavinashree. She has another feat of getting entry into the Limca Book of Records by reciting all the 1,330 couplets of 'Thirukkural' in shortest time. ❖

Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Thiru Anil Kakodkar called on Chief Minister Kalaighnar M. Karunanidhi on December 18, 2008 to discuss the setting up of a Neutrino observatory in the State.

"I came here to seek the consent and approval from the Hon'ble Chief Minister for setting up the India-based Neutrino Observatory," Thiru Kakodkar told reporters after the meeting.

Appreciating the need for the project, the Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaighnar felt that people living around the forest should be taken into confidence and made aware of the purpose of the project. Their consent was what mattered most.

More Power from Atomic Units Soon

Thiru Kakodkar assured top officials of the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board (TNEB) that all efforts were being taken to increase power production from atomic units, which would help the State get its due share of power.

The first reactor of the Koodankulam project is expected to be operational by the middle of 2009, Thiru Kakodkar said. The second plant is expected to be ready by the end of 2009. ❖

*We present in the following pages,
some lesser known Tourist spots which have begun to
captivate people especially Travellers.*



Pulicat Lake

The Dutch cemetery at Pulicat is 400 years old. The inscriptions in Dutch on the graves are still intact. And one of the graves contains a sketch of the local area!



An ecologically sensitive region that acts as a breeding ground for rare birds, the Pulicat lake is India's second largest brackish water lagoon. It supports a wide variety of fish, prawns, crustaceans and plankton. The lake invites all nature enthusiasts to witness the most unique and beautiful birds of the world.

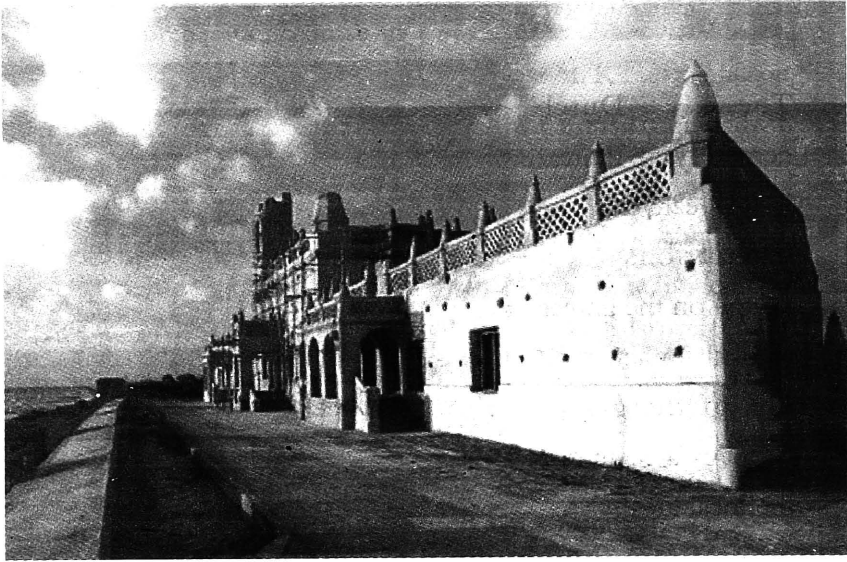
Some other places of interest at Pulicat are the Samayaeswarar Temple (13th Century), Mosques, Madha Church, St. Antony's Church (16th Century)

Location : 60 kms North of Chennai

Best season : December - April



Tranquebar



Tranquebar is a small town on the shores of Bay of Bengal, which was founded by Danish settlers in 1620 A.D. The town consists of the Dansburg fort built in 1620 which houses an archaeological museum, Zion Church constructed in 1701, Governor's Bungalow built in 1784, Collector's Bungalow built during British Rule and a majestic Entrance Arch built in 1792. There is also an old temple built in 1305 by a Pandian King.

Location : 50 kms from Chidambaram and
32 kms from Nagapattinam.

Best season : All year around

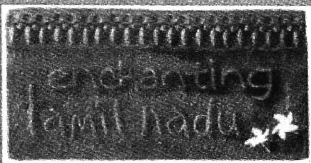


Valparai

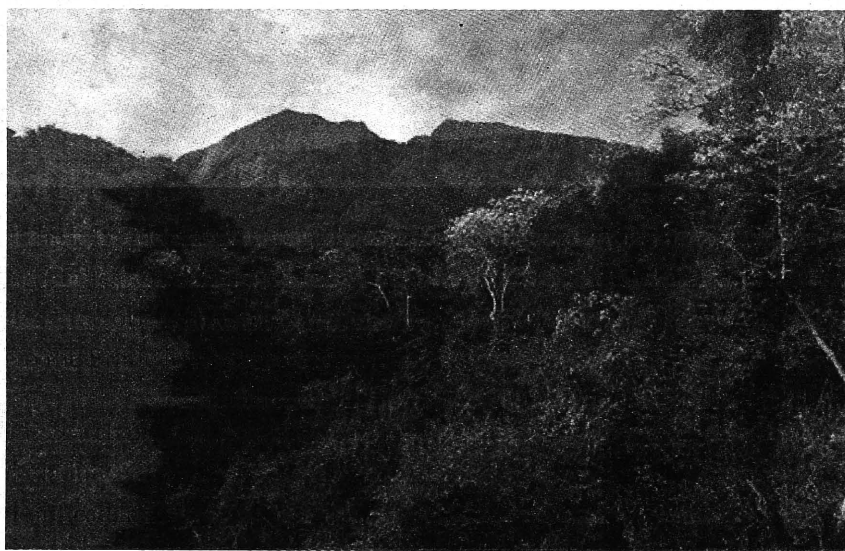


They're green. They're inviting. They're aromatic. They're Valparai's tea estates. Though Valparai caters to the tea drinkers of the world, coffee is also a hot favourite from this spot located near Pollachi. The small roads that swirl around the estates provide a refreshing drive for the soul. The estates are very close to Top Slip and the Aliyar dam. The estates, the mills, the workers and the cool climate are yet again a peaceful experience for the traveller.

Location : 102 kms from Coimbatore



Kalakkad



A little squirrel nibbling in a corner. A tiger yawning sleepily. A baby elephant following in its mother's wake. All sights that you cannot miss in Kalakkad. The sanctuary transforms itself magically - from the tropical wet evergreen to the tropical dry deciduous and thorn forests. If you are upto the challenge, the 223 sq.kms of the tropical forest can be discovered by trekking - and it is sure to be a voyage of discovery!

Location : 47 kms from Thirunelveli

Best season : September - March



Top Slip



A hill station that's too beautiful for words. In this picturesque locale of Anamalai hills, you may be welcomed by a cheerful langur or herds of impassive bison. A docile deer or - if he so deings - the lord of the jungle himself. Be charmed by the unision of nature and these species. A world that exists peacefully with minimum human intervention. A time to witness the beauty that nature provides when left alone.

Location : 37 kms drive from Pollachi (near Coimbatore)

Best season : Whenever you wish to see beauty

A SOCIAL audit of the NREGA in Villupuram district in Tamil Nadu in July 2007 and a field survey in Surguja district in Chhattisgarh in June 2008, conducted as part of the six-States survey, brought out to this writer the contrasts between Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu.

In Chhattisgarh there were many lapses in implementation, including the involvement of contractors, the fudging of muster rolls, corruption in material usage, low scale of work, and delays in wage payment.

Tamil Nadu, on the other hand, has taken measures to address these problems. It has

A SCENE FROM THE SOUTH

(Courtesy : The Frontline magazine dated :16.1.2009)

successfully kept out machines and contractors through close monitoring and strict action against any breach of the ban on both under the NREGA.

Another reason for Tamil Nadu's success is the stipulation (under Tamil Nadu's "employment guarantee scheme") that only works devoid of any material component be taken up. (The Act allows up to 40 percent expenditure on material costs.) The material component tends to give private contractors a foothold as they provide engineering expertise the gram panchayats may not have. The

possibility of doing away with the material component arises partly from the fact that Tamil Nadu has a vast network of canals and other traditional water-harvesting structures. The repair and maintenance of these structures is a vast source of useful, labour-intensive work.

If the Act requires that at least 50 per cent of the works be taken up by gram panchayats, the Tamil Nadu scheme stresses that all NREGA works be managed by gram panchayats. In Chhattisgarh, there is more reliance on the line departments (for example, the Irrigation Department or the Forest Department), which tend to be less accountable than grama panchayats. Tamil Nadu also avoids delays in wage payment by a well-rehearsed routine of payment on a fixed day every week. In Chhattisgarh, by contrast, delays in wage payments cause great hardship to workers, to the extent that some of them have given up NREGA work. In one work implemented by the Forest Department in Udaipur block, people had not been paid for almost a year.

Tamil Nadu has a well-rehearsed routine of wage payment on a fixed day every week

Tamil Nadu has put in place a good monitoring system. For instance, every worker is required to put his signature or thumb impression on the muster roll every day (by way of marking attendance), making it difficult to fudge muster rolls. The employment guarantee assistant ("Makkal Nalla Panniyalar") in each grama panchayat is expected to phone the block office every day before 10 a.m. to report worksite attendance figures. This information is immediately collated at the district level and officials from different departments do random checks the same day to verify these reports.



In Chhattisgarh, there was no regular monitoring of muster rolls or worksite attendance. At many work-sites, the official muster rolls were not available. In Kedma panchayat of Udaipur block, our survey found that more than half of all entries in one set of muster rolls of a completed worksite were fake.

Most importantly, in Tamil Nadu a strong message has been sent from the top that NREGA works are unlike other schemes and that corruption will not be tolerated. This has been done by taking strict action against panchayat presidents, employment guarantee assistants and block development officers who have been found guilty of major fraud. The seeds of such a change could be seen in Chhattisgarh: on the basis of a social audit in Mareya panchayat (Udaipur block) in June 2008, a complaint was lodged with the district authorities and strict action was taken.

To be sure, Tamil Nadu has its own set of problems, including politicisation and some

corruption in NREGA works, conflicts over non-payment of minimum wages, low worker productivity, lack of worksite facilities, unmet demand for work and lack of community monitoring. Nevertheless, Tamil Nadu has achieved some success in providing employment on a large scale, paying wages on time and avoiding mass corruption.

Another special feature of the NREGA in Tamil Nadu is that an overwhelming majority (about 80 per cent) of NREGA workers are women. Most of them have no comparable work opportunities in the private sector.

Indeed, Tamil Nadu's strong tradition of active involvement in the social sector is finding a new expression through the NREGA. There is much to learn from this experience, just as Tamil Nadu itself has much to learn from pioneering experiences elsewhere.

- Karuna Mutkiab

WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE

IT was a proud moment for Hon'ble Chief Minister M Karunanidhi when he went down the memory lane and recalled his clarion call he had made to Indira Gandhi, who was the Prime Minister of India in 1969, on the issue of nationalisation of banks in the country while attending the Chief Ministers' meet in Delhi at that time.

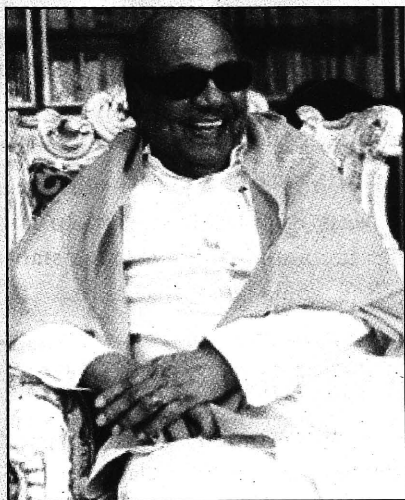
He also recounted with justifiable pride that he was the one who had prevailed upon Indira Gandhi on the bank nationalisation issue though Morarji Desai, who was the Deputy Prime Minister of India at that time, had objected to such a proposal made by him as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu after the death of Anna.

After presenting Manimegalai Awards to five best women self-help groups coming under the federation of panchayats and 10 SHGs at the district level in the State at a glittering function here on 25-11-2008, the Chief Minister said that only after his proposal on the nationalisation of banks, West Bengal's Deputy Chief Minister Jyoti Basu had followed suit and raised a similar demand. Finally, Indira Gandhi had to relent and announce the nationalisation of 14 banks in India.

"All the newspapers in India carried my speech the next day on the bank nationalisation demand made at the CMs' meet in Delhi as the lead item on page 1," he said.

The Chief Minister said the nationalisation of banks had helped the common man reap the benefits of a regime which showed interest in the welfare of the neglected sections in society. The women SHGs were first started by his Government in 1989 in a back-ward district like Dharmapuri, he remarked.

Hon'ble Local Administration Minister Thiru. M.K.Stalin, who presided, said that the Government, led by Hon'ble Chief Minister had started and nourished the SHG movement in the State not for making any political gains. But the whole movement was directed at the economic development of the women in the State, he added.



Tamil Nadu - best in e- governance

Tamil Nadu is the best State in terms of e-governance practices and the satisfaction of its citizens, according to a survey conducted across India for the current year.

The report card, emerging from the study by IDC and Dataquest magazine, places Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana and Andhra Pradesh in the next four positions, taking into account each State's e-Governance vision, allocation and implementation and feedback from citizens as well as businesses. The full report will form part of the December 15, 2008 issue of Dataquest. Interestingly, the top five States are also the ones where citizen satisfaction is at its highest: lay Indians can appreciate the difference if they are e-governed well.

The highlight of the survey is that Karnataka, a leader in the information technology industry, is a laggard while passing on the benefits of such a high-tech environment to its citizens. It is ranked 15, down from 9 last year. The report suggests that changing political dynamics swiftly might have affected the performance of States such as Karnataka and Goa.

Kerala ranks low (18) in citizen satisfaction across multiple parameters this year, a sharp fall from last year. The bottom three States among the 21 fated are West Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar.

CHENNAI METRO RAIL TO COVER NEW SECRETARIAT TOO

The alignment of the first corridor of the Chennai Metro Rail is to be modified slightly to accommodate the new Secretariat complex, coming up on the Government Estate on the Anna Salai opposite the Periyar statue.

The present alignment is from Washermenpet to Chennai Airport via Broadway (Prakasam Road), Chennai Central Station, Ripon Building along the Cooum river, Tarapore Towers, Spencers, Gemini, Anna Salai, Saidapet, and Guindy. In the modified alignment, after Ripon building, the course will

touch Chintadripet, EVR Statue, new Secretariat building, Anna Statue, Shanthi Theatre and Tarapore Towers.

According to a Metro Rail Company official, the inclusion of the new Secretariat complex is necessitated as hundreds of people will be visiting the Secretariat every day.

For them, the present Chintadripet station in the Mass Rapid Transit System and the Secretariat complex (underground station) in Metro Rail would be ideal stations. ❖

CENTRE TO CLEAR METRO RAIL PROJECT SOON

The Union Cabinet will clear the Chennai Metro Rail project and the Nemmeli water desalination plant within the next two weeks, said Union Minister for Urban Development Thiru S. Jaipal Reddy in Chennai on December 19, 2008.

Addressing the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) conference on 'Urbanisation - Providing Affordable Housing to All,' he said foundation stone for these projects would be laid within a month or two.

The cost of the 46-km Chennai Metro Rail project has been estimated at Rs. 14,600 crore. The Japan International Co-operation Agency will finance 60 per cent of the "project with the rest being shared by State and Central governments. The project was earlier cleared by the Projects Implementation Board of the Centre".

On the Nemmeli water desalination plant, the Minister said that the Centre would provide Rs.870 crore for the Rs.900-crore project. The plant aimed at providing 100 mld of drinking water from seawater every day.

The government will establish Samathuvapurams in 95 villages in the State under Periyar Ninaivu Samathuvapuram scheme, said Hon'ble Minister for Information, Urban Development and CMDA Chairman Thiru Parithi Ellamvazhuthi. In his address, he said so far 145 Samthuvapuram villages with all basic facilities such as lights, drinking water, roads and public distribution shops had been built all over the State.

Conceived by the government in 1997, the scheme not only fulfilled the dreams of economically weaker sections of society, but was also hailed as a great effort to promote social equality, the Minister said.

Hon'ble Minister Thiru Parithi Ellamvazhuthi said during the current year, the State government planned to build 22,000 houses for low-income, middle income groups and government servants.

Despite increase in construction costs and price of raw materials, the State was committed to providing quality housing at affordable costs to financially weaker sections of society. ❖

News in pictures



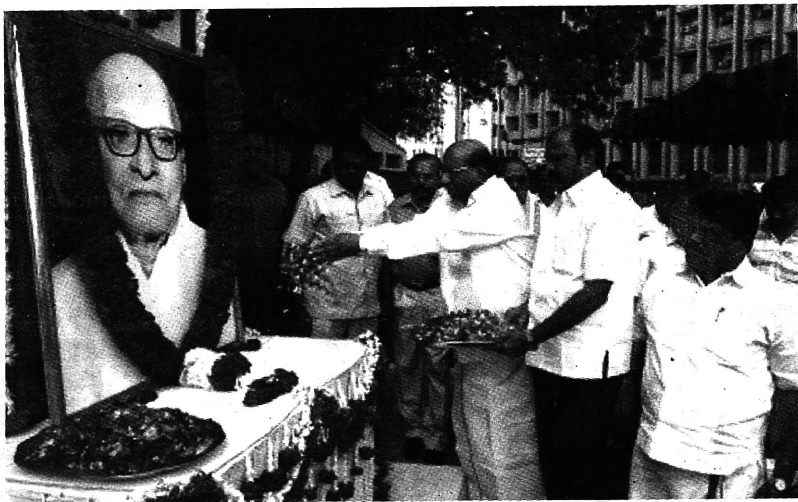
Hon'ble Chief Minister K. J. Somasundaram inaugurated the scheme of selling 10 spices/condiments items at subsidised rate of Rupees fifty in fair price shops on 02.10.2008.



Hon'ble Chief Minister K. J. Somasundaram inaugurated a new over bridge constructed near the Chennai Airport on 19.10.2008.



Hon'ble Chief Minister Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi flagged off 100 ambulances meant for Rural Health Care on 24.12.2008.



On the occasion of the 130th Birthday of Mootharignar Rajaji floral tributes were paid to the leader on 10.12.2008 at Chennai.

Hon'ble Ministers Thiru. Arcot N. Veerasamy,
Thiru. Parithi Ellamvazhuthi and Thiru. K.P.P. Samy paid tributes.



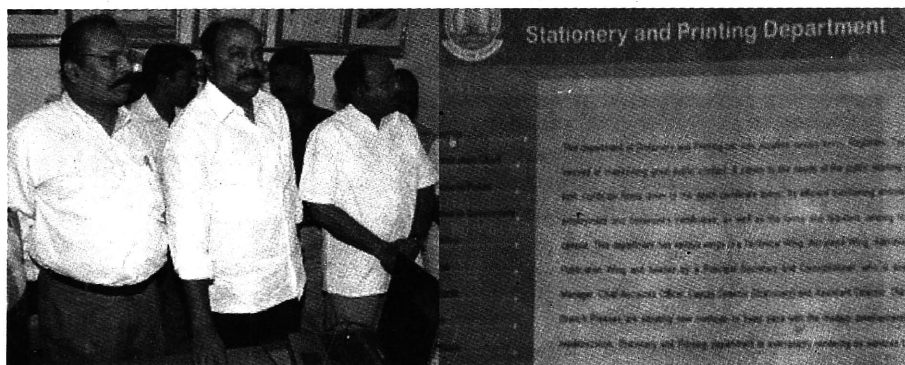
Hon'ble Minister for Local Administration and Rural Development Thiru.M.K. Stalin inspected the flood affected areas in Cuddalore and Thiruvavarur districts on 28 & 29.11.2008. The Minister distributed relief to the flood affected and directed speedy relief measures.





On the occasion of the 127th Birthday of Mahakavi Bharathiyar, floral tributes were paid to the poet's statue in Chennai.

Hon'ble Speaker of the Assembly Thiru. R. Avudaiyappan, Hon'ble Ministers Thiru. Parithi Ellamvazhuthi, Tmt. Geetha Jeevan and Thiru. K. Ramachandran paid floral tributes.



Hon'ble Minister for Information Thiru. Parithi Ellamvazhuthi launched the exclusive website of the Stationery and Printing Department on 20.11.2008.



