

PRESS RELEASE

Date : 31.10.2018

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR
OF TAMIL NADU AT THE 143RD BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION OF SARDAR
VALLABHBHAI PATEL ORGANISED BY SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL
MEMORIAL TRUST AND BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, CHENNAI KENDRA
AT BHAVAN'S MAIN AUDITORIUM, MYLAPORE, CHENNAI
ON 31.10.2018 AT 6.00 P.M**

Thiru. Banwarilal Purohit, Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu participated in the 143rd Birthday Celebration of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and addressed the gathering.

Hon'ble Governor said "It gives me great pleasure to be here today on the occasion of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's 143rd birth anniversary celebrations. It is not only a matter of joy and happiness to be recounting to you the greatness of the Sardar. It is also my duty to do that and I consider that to be a great privilege.

Sardar Patel is the Iron Man of India. Where others wavered he stood like a rock. Where others faltered he led the way. And where others made compromises he upheld the national interest as paramount and successfully steered India, towards the dawn of political freedom.

Vallabhbhai Patel was by qualification an accomplished lawyer. He completed his law degree in England in 1913 and came back to India to start his law practice in Godhra, Gujarat.

His meeting with Mahatma Gandhi in September 1917 changed the course of his life and he decided to devote himself to the freedom movement. In course of time he became the Secretary of the Gujarat wing of the Indian National Congress. In 1918, he led a massive "No Tax Campaign" in Khera district at Gujarat, that urged the farmers not to pay taxes to the British. This peaceful movement forced the British authorities to return the land taken away from the farmers.

Similarly, the farmers of Bardoli faced a problem of "tax-hike". When the farmers refused to pay the higher tax, the government seized their lands in retaliation. The farmers agitation against this went on for more than six months. After several rounds of negotiations by Patel, the lands were returned to the farmers. The successful practice of Sathyagraha against the British earned him the title of Sardar.

In 1930, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was among the leaders imprisoned for participating in the Salt Satyagraha movement led by Mahatma Gandhi.

Sardar Patel was freed in 1931 and in the same year, he was elected as the President of Indian National Congress in its Karachi session. Being a close lieutenant of Mahatma Gandhi he was actively associated in all the important decisions made by the Indian National Congress till the dawn of freedom on 15th August 1947.

Patel was a senior leader in the Constituent Assembly of India and was responsible in large measure for shaping India's constitution. Patel was a key force behind the appointment of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar as the Chairman of the drafting committee, and the inclusion of leaders from a diverse political spectrum in the process of writing the constitution.

His intervention was key to the passage of two articles that protected civil servants from political interference and guaranteed their terms and privileges. He was also instrumental in the founding of the Indian Administrative Service and the Indian Police Service and hence he is known as the "patron saint" of India's civil services.

At the penultimate stage of India's freedom struggle the views of Mohammed Ali Jinnah that were gaining acceptance from the Cabinet Mission were not acceptable to Gandhiji, Patel deftly maneuvered the stance of the Indian National Congress so as to defeat Jinnah's Strategy resulting in the first interim Cabinet being formed exclusively by the Indian National Congress. The Muslim League could also not gain control over the crucial Home portfolio that they demanded as a condition to join the Government.

As the first Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of India, Patel organised relief efforts for the refugees coming into Delhi and worked to restore peace in the strife torn areas. His commitment to national integration in the newly independent country was total and uncompromising, earning him the sobriquet "Iron Man of India".

When a delegation of Gujarati farmers came to him citing their inability to send their milk production to the markets without being fleeced by intermediaries. Patel exhorted them to organise the processing and sale of milk by themselves, and guided them to create the Kaira District co-operative Milk Producers' Union Limited which preceded the Amul Milk products brand. After Independence Patel also pledged himself to the task of reconstruction of the famous Somnath Temple in Saurashtra which he saw as a mark of national honour.

At the dawn of Independence there were more than five hundred princely states, which were not directly under the control of British India. These princely states comprised two-fifths of the land-area of undivided India. There were big states like Hyderabad, Mysore, Jammu and Kashmir, but the overwhelming number of these states were "small states".

Many observers of the Indian political scenario were afraid that the nation-building process in India was doomed. In this historical context India was fortunate in having Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel by his intelligent handling of the challenges thrown by many princes and also by Jinnah and other leaders of the Muslim League proved to be the savior of the 'new' Indian nation.

The masterly handling of the rulers by Sardar Patel was the foremost factor in the success of the accession policy. His unfailing politeness, viewed against his reputation as the "Iron Man of India", endeared him to the princes who accepted his advice without demur. Patel brought the whole weight of his personality into the task of integrating the States with India. He, on his part, recognized the princes as the co-architects of a free and united India.

The “police action” in Hyderabad was masterminded by Sardar Patel and this was the most glorious feather in his cap as India’s Home Minister in charge of the princely States.

His exhortation to the young probationers of the civil services to maintain utmost impartiality and incorruptibility of administration is as relevant today as it was then. “A civil servant cannot afford to, and must not, take part in politics. Nor must he involve himself in communal wrangles. To depart from the path of rectitude in either of these respects is to debase public service and to lower its dignity”, he had cautioned them on 21 April 1947.

Sardar Patel was a mass leader, politician, administrator and astute diplomat. A man of sharp intellect and character, a patriot to the core, imbued with practical sagacity, Sardar Patel ranks among the greater statesmen of all times.

The life of Patel was one of long struggle which ended in victory towards the end. He did not live for many years after India won freedom to taste the benefits of political power. At the same time the contribution made by him towards establishing the foundations of India’s political structure continue to be firm and strong. The integration of the princely states and other territories into one nation and the streamlining of the civil services of India to address the Central requirement of promoting the welfare of the common people bear the skill of a craftsman who could in advance envision the final product of his hard labour. There was never a doubt or hesitation in the path he charted out for free India in its political and economic journeys. The Clarity he brought into decision making made him the icon of the masses and the altar of worship for civil servants. The nation indeed owes him a huge debt.

I am thankful to the organizers for having given me the opportunity to address such a distinguished gathering on such an important occasion as the birth anniversary celebrations of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. I am sure that the movement to celebrate the memory of the Sardar will only get stronger as years roll by. The Mahatma is the father of the Nation. Similarly the Sardar, the Iron Man is the architect if modern India.

We have witnessed a historic moment in Indian history today, when the Hon’ble Prime Minister of India has unveiled the statue of Sardar Patel at Sadhu Bet, in Gujarat. It is the tallest statue of the world and has been aptly named as the “**Statue of Unity**”. The Sardar was indeed the unifier of India. Let us follow in his footsteps and propagate the message of his life far and wide so as to inspire millions of young men and women to join us on the noble journey of serving the nation with selfishness and devotion”.

On this occasion Thiru. N.R. Dave, Chairman, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Memorial Trust, Thiru. N. Ravi, Chairman, Bhavan’s Chennai Kendra, Dr. K.V.S. Gopalakrishnan, IPS (Retd), Thiru. K.N. Ramaswamy, Director, Bhavan’s Chennai Kendra, Thiru. N. Sugachand Jain, Managing Trustee, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Memorial Trust and Thiru. K.J. Suriyanarayanan, Honorary Secretary, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Memorial Trust participated.

Raj Bhavan, Chennai -22

Sd/-

Joint Director (PR)