

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR  
OF TAMIL NADU AT THE THAMIRAPARANI PUSHKARAM 2018 INAUGURATION  
EVENT AT SENAI THALAIVAR SAMUTHAYA KOODAM, PAPANASAM,  
TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT ON 11.10.2018 AT 11.45 A.M**

**Anaivarukkum Vanakkam**

**Swami Santhalinga Marudhachala Adigalar,**

President of Akila Bharata Sanyasi Sangam and Head of Perur Adheenam, Coimbatore

**Swami Ramananda,**

President of Thamiraparani Pushkaram 2018 Committee, Secretary, Akila Bharata Sanyasi Sangam

**Sri Vishni Sadasiv Kokje,**

Former Governor of Himachal Pradesh,  
VHP World President

**Sri La Sri Bhramanandha Saraswathy,**

Sankara Madam, Alwarkurichi,  
Representative of Sringeri Sri Saradha Peedam

**Yogini Sambavi Vidyamba Saraswati,**

Secretary, Sri Lalitha Mahila Samajam

**Sri Mad. Sadagopan Ramanuja Jeeyar Swamigal,**

24<sup>th</sup> Jeeyar Sri Manavala Mamuni mada, Srivilliputtur.

**Distinguished Invitees**

**Ladies & Gentlemen**

I feel honoured and privileged to inaugurate the cultural and historical event of Thamirabharani Mahapushkaram which occurs once in 144 years.

Tamirabharani River is inextricably linked with the history of Tamil Language, Tamilian Culture and the History of Indian sub continent from time immemorial.

Throughout the history of mankind, rivers have played the central role in sustenance. And particularly in our Culture, we see the rivers not only as a source of water but revere them as Gods. The celebration of Pushkarams covers the holy rivers of Sindhu and Saraswati in Western India to Brahmaputra in Eastern India to Ganges and Yamuna in Northern India to Narmada, Godavari and Tunga-Badra in Central India and

to Kaveri and Tamirabharani in South India. These pushkarams have been happening from time immemorial stressing the cultural unity of our country over thousands of years.

Like most Hindu festivals, the Pushkaram, which is a great festival of sacred rivers all over the country, has astronomical roots, being connected to the transit of the planet Guru to various Rasis. The Pushkaram festival takes place on 12 major holy rivers, corresponding to the Hindu zodiac signs, during the transit of Guru Bhagavan from one Rasi to another, every year.

In this way, when Guru entered the Thulaa Rasis last year, the Kaaveri Mahaapushkaram was celebrated with great devotional feeling. More than a crore people had a sacred dip along the banks of the Kaaveri. The Godavari Mahapushkaram was earlier celebrated in 2015 when Guru entered the raashi, Simha or Leo, and the Krishna Pushkaram was celebrated in 2016 when Guru entered the sign Kanya, or Virgo.

Guru Bhagavan's transit to Vrischika or Scorpio is celebrated as ताम्रपरिणि (ThaamraparaNi) Pushkaram. With the recurrence of Guru Bhagavan to Vrischika for the 12<sup>th</sup> time, the ताम्रपरिणि (ThaamraparaNi) Mahaapushkaram is celebrated.

The history of Tamirabharani is interesting. Our puranas mention that the river was named by sage Agastya, who was one of the sapta rishis. The legend has it that a visit to this temple and holy dip in Tamirabharani will remove all the sins. Tamirabharani is so powerful in removing sins that the legend has it that even Maa Ganga takes a dip to remove all the sins of millions who take dip there.

The start of Dakshinaayana signals the coming of the rainy season. The beginning of Utharaayana marks the starting of summer. At the onset of these two main periods of the year, which are called punya kaalas, it has been the practice of people all over India from ancient times to have a dip in rivers, tanks, and the seas. They then engage in rituals to propitiate the spirits of their ancestors. Inspired by holiness of both the juncture and location, hundreds of thousands of people offer their libations to the spirits of their forefathers on the banks of the ताम्रपरिणि (Thaamraparani), on the occasion of the Mahapushkaram.

Tamil God Lord Muruga and Thamirabharani share the same birth day of Vaikasi Visagam showing the close link between Tamil and Thamirabharani. Sage Agasthya was the first one to create grammar for Tamil followed by his disciple Tholkappiar. So it may be apt to describe the age of Tamil is same as that of the age of Thamiraparani. We also find references of Thamirabharani in Ramayana, Mahabharata, Kalidasa's Raghuvamsa, works of Varahamihira and in sangam Tamil Literature.

The Thamirabarani River originates from the peak of the Pothigai hills on the eastern slopes of the Western Ghats at an elevation of 1,725 metres above sea-level. The river descends down the mountains near Papanasam, where it forms the Kalyanatheertham falls and Agasthiar falls. The river drains in to the Gulf of Mannar near Punnaikayal in Tuticorin district.

The numerous waterfalls and cascades of Tamirabarani forms Kutralam falls, located at an elevation of about 550 feet in the Western Ghats attracts tourists from all over the world. These falls are not only a tourists spot, but also known for its medicinal properties. The water here passes over a lot of medicinal herbs of Western Ghats, and therefore has the capacity to cure a number of ailments. Because of its medicinal properties, these falls are also popularly called as the "Spa of the South India".

As most of its extensive catchment areas lie in the Western Ghats, the river enjoys the full benefit of both the monsoons, which make the river perennial. The river with its tributaries drains an area of about 4,400 square kilometres. Thamirabarani is the life line of South Tamil Nadu. There are many dams and reservoirs on the Thamirabarani river which provide a large proportion of the water for irrigation and power generation for Tirunelveli district. Agriculture flourishes along the banks of the river in Tirunelveli and Tuticorin Districts and it supplies drinking water to Virudhunagar District.

Pushkaram festivals were originally designed to clean the rivers and their banks to conserve and preserve them for a long life of people depending on them. Probably the Pushkarams are the pioneering concept for Swachch Bharat or Clean India Mission in general and Namami Ganga or Clean River Mission in particular.

On this day of the inauguration of Mahapushkaram, let us resolve to keep the rivers clean and to pass the lineage of our culture to the future generations intact.

With a feeling of reverence and devotion, I feel immensely happy to take part in the inauguration of this Thamiraparani Mahapuskaram. I appreciate the efforts of Thamiraparani Pushkaram 2018 Committee, my best wishes will always be with them and the devotees who come to worship at this Maha Pushkaram. May God bless them with success in all their endeavors.

Nandri Vanakkam

Jai Hind