

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT THE 151st BIRTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF
MAHATMA GANDHI AT GANDHI MANDAPAM, CHENNAI
ON 02.10.2019 AT 5.00 P.M.**

Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam

Thiru. K.A. Sengottaiyan,
Minister for School Education, Youth Welfare
and Sports Development

Thiru. Kadambur Raju,
Minister for Information & Publicity

Thiru. Mahesan Kasirajan, I.A.S.,
Secretary,
Tamil Development and Information Department

Dr.P.Sankar, I.A.S.,
Director, Information and Public Relations Department

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies & Gentlemen

It gives me immense pleasure to be here today at the Gandhi Mandapam on the occasion of the 151st Birthday Celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi. As we celebrate his contributions, we recall with gratefulness his leadership in winning freedom for our nation.

We achieved Freedom more than 7 decades ago, after a huge struggle and enormous sacrifice. Many people sacrificed their education by boycotting the educational institutions under the British. Lakhs of people lost their lives in the freedom struggle. The British Govt. was merciless even against non-violent agitators and firing and merciless lathi-charging on the assembled public were common. Indians were treated as inferior

people and there was no system of having a say in the policy making process. It was a barrister gentleman endowed with exceptional charisma as astute brain and a spiritual approach who changed all this. His name was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

Gandhiji's contributions in the freedom struggle will always be remembered with pride. After spearheading the Champaran Satyagraha and the agitation against the Rowlatt Act, Gandhiji launched the Non Co-operation Movement in 1920 and the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930. The Dandi Yatra which he led from Ahmedabad instilled fresh vigour and spirit into the freedom movement.

There were several important developments in the decades of the 1930 and 1940s. Revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh had been convicted in an un-just manner and they died as Martyrs in the freedom struggle. The youth of the country were restless and people were looking for guidance from the Leaders, so that India may become free. Britain was caught up in the Second World War and Germany had already captured large parts of Europe. The entry of Japan into the Second World War strengthened Germany's position. Nethaji Subash Chandra Bose had started the Indian National Army in April 1942. Nethjaji advocated that armed rebellion against the British Government was the way to achieve

freedom and for this the people of India should not hesitate to side with the enemies of Britain in the Second World War. The Cripps Mission which was dispatched by the British Government to India in March 1942 was a failure. It was described by Gandhiji as a post-dated cheque on a crashing bank. The Muslim League was repeatedly petitioning the British Government for partitioning India and for creating a new entity called Pakistan.

It was in this complex scenario that the Congress passed the Quit India resolution. This met with a harsh response from the British Government. All the senior leaders of the Congress Party including Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel were imprisoned.

The British Government undertook highly repressive measures to suppress the movement. Many of the youth leaders went underground and continued to guide the freedom fighters. The torture and sufferings which the freedom fighters had to undergo in the hands of British Administration was severe. People like Jayaprakash Narayan, who had studied upto the Ph.D. level in American Universities were imprisoned and tortured mercilessly by laying them to blocks of ice. Firing was resorted to indiscriminately against non-violent freedom fighters. But the 'Do or Die' proclamation of Gandhiji won the day.

It read as follows “Every man and woman who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide. Every one of you should from this movement onwards, must consider yourself a freeman and woman. I am not going to be satisfied with anything short of complete freedom. We shall do it or die. We shall either free India or die in the attempt.”

Gandhiji the Father of the Nation who led the Indian people during the freedom struggle that resulted in the termination of British rule is an inspiration for all of us. Millions of peoples know him mainly as the person who brought freedom to

India. A greater number is aware that the path of truth and non-violence that he practised was unique. In world history this spiritual path of virtue was never traversed before. It was a path of goodness – a path to which the common people could easily relate – a path that ensured success and above all a path that shines as a beacon light for the whole world.

For Gandhiji, truth was God and his prayer meetings were meant to bring out the inner strength in an individual.

Gandhiji's contribution to India is immeasurable. Gandhiji's contribution to the world is also immeasurable, for leaders like Martin Luther King Jr and Nelson Mandela followed in the

footsteps of Gandhiji to bring emancipation to their followers who were otherwise oppressed and enslaved. Gandhiji's message of ahimsa is a powerful signal to mankind that stockpiling of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles will only lead to destruction.

Gandhiji brought about social cohesion among the people of India by vigorously working against untouchability. He gave an economic philosophy that focused on self-sufficiency at the village level. He propagated the concept of trusteeship and wanted people to abhor the accumulation of wealth for themselves and their families. All these were the outpourings of the wisdom of Gandhiji which went beyond the political spectrum.

Gandhiji often used to say “My life is my message”. Indeed it is the message that we should all respectfully followed propagate for the benefit of succeeding generations. It is important for us to try and practise the ideals of Gandhiji in our life.

Gandhiji’s life and message will be remembered and will serve as a guide for millions of people for several thousands of years in the future.

It is only the pursuit of Gandhian ideals that will guide our society towards peace progress and prosperity.

Albert Einstein the greatest scientist of the 20th Century had this to say about Gandhiji “Generations to come will scarce believe that such

a person in flesh and blood ever walked upon the earth”.

I congratulate the prize winners and all the students who took part in the competitions conducted to propagate the ideals of Gandhiji. The efforts taken by the various departments for organizing the cultural programmes and the exhibition deserve our tallest appreciation.

I extend my best wishes and greetings to the people of Tamil Nadu on the occasion of the 151st birthday celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi and conclude with a request to always keep in mind this famous quotation of Mahatma Gandhi,

“Your beliefs become your thoughts,

Your thoughts become your words,

Your words become your actions,
Your actions become your habits,
Your habits become your values,
Your values become your destiny.”

Let us all march together on the Gandhian
path towards a glorious destiny.

Nandri Vanakkam....

Jai Tamil Nadu....

Jai Hind....