ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF TAMIL NADU AT THE ESTABLISHMENT CEREMONY OF NO.16 COAST GUARD DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS (TUTICORIN) AT TUTICORIN ON 22.02.2019 AT 4.15 P.M

Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam

S Paramesh,
Commander, Coast Guard Region (East), Chennai

Arvind Sharma,
Commander, Coast Guard District – 16 (Tuticorin)

AK Harbola,
Chief of Staff (Eastern Seaboard), Visakhapatnam

Thirumathi Savita Sharma,
President, Tatrakshika

Commandant M Venkatesan,
Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Station Mandapam

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a matter of delight for me to be participating in the function being organised for the establishment of Coast Guard District Headquarters at Tuticorin.

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) was created in 1978 to protect the maritime interests of the nation. It is today a vibrant force with state of the art platforms having cutting edge technology for meeting the maritime challenges of the future. In the last few years, the strengthening of the overall maritime security apparatus of the nation has been accorded great importance. The Indian Coast Guard has witnessed rapid expansion and modernization in its infrastructure and manpower.

The motto of the force is "वयम रक्षामः" (Vayam Rakshamah), which in Sanskrit means "We Protect".

It is indeed a matter of pride and honour that the Indian Coast Guard has been performing in an exemplary fashion to fulfill its responsibilities which include

- Protection of artificial islands, offshore terminals and other installations

- Preservation and protection of marine ecology and environment

- Assistance to the Department of Customs and other authorities in anti-smuggling operations

- Law enforcement in territorial as well as international waters

- Scientific data collection and support

- National defence during hostilities

India sits centrally at the crossroads of trans-Indian Ocean routes since most cargo ships that sail between East Asia, America, Europe and Africa have to pass through Indian waters. Further around 95% of India's trade is performed through maritime transport.

The Indian Coast Guard is the 4th largest Coast Guards of the World with a force level of 139 ships and 62 aircrafts, in its inventory. This dynamic force will be having 200 ships and 100 aircraft by 2023.

The state of Tamil Nadu accounts for about 13% of India's coastal length with a coastline of 967 km. There are 3 major ports at Chennai, Ennore and Tuticorin and a number of minor fishing harbours. The fishermen community constitute about 2% of the State's population.

The fishing community and other people engaged in maritime activities could potentially become the 'eyes' and 'ears' of the Indian maritime forces. During the Community Interaction Programmes the fishermen are therefore sensitised about the need to alert security agencies regarding any suspicious or foreign boats sighted by them at sea. I am impressed to learn that the Coast Guard in Tamil Nadu has

progressed from "Community Interaction" to "Community Integration".

The Coast Guard has always supported fishing communities to adopt technology driven instruments in order to enhance safety and security at sea. Accordingly, the Government of India has approved the upgradation of Maritime Rescue Sub Sub Centre (MRSSC) Tuticorin to Maritime Rescue Sub Centre (MRSC) Tuticorin for a more effective and robust search mechanism.

I firmly believe that the strength of the country is connected with the strength of our security forces and therefore, prioritising their requirements without delay is an absolute necessity. The vast sea area surrounding our country can be safe only

when, all stake holders synergise their efforts towards the ultimate objective of national security.

The Indian Coast Guard has earned accolades from all quarters for efficiently accomplishing all Coast Guard Charter of duties be it on the Eastern or the Western Sea Board. During the recent Cyclone "GAJA", Coast Guard deployed its various assets amounting to 74 ship days and 10 aircraft sorties for issuance of advisories and warnings in the local language to fishermen at sea for their safe return to ports. Special Community Integration Programmes were also conducted to alert the fishermen. All these proactive efforts have resulted in preventing the loss of fishermen lives at sea. Post cyclone, the Coast Guard personnel

carried out supportive tasks such as distributing various relief material to cyclone affected villages. I am also given to understand that Coast Guard's foresightedness and meticulous Operations Planning to meet the emergent challenges has resulted in saving of 9193 fishermen since its inception.

To promote closer cooperation between India and other maritime nations comprising the South Asian seas region namely Bangladesh, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka for protection and preservation of marine environment in the region, a decision was taken by the Government of India for effecting a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and South Asian

Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) for cooperation on the response to Oil and Chemical Pollution in the South Asian Seas Region. After the signing of the agreement, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has been designated as the Competent National Authority and National Operational Contact Point for implementation of "Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan" under the MoU and shall respond to oil and chemical spills on behalf of the Government of India.

I am confident that Indian Coast Guard will remain ever diligent in performing its noble duty of saving life and property in distress at sea and protecting the marine environment and leaving no stone unturned in protecting security interests in

the maritime zones of India. The Coast Guard men & women are rendering the invaluable and selfless service in the service of nation. Today a new history is being created with the establishment of CG DHQ -16.

I extend my best wishes and greetings to the Indian Coast Guard and wish them success in all their efforts.

Nandri Vanakkam….

Jai Hind….