

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT THE 144TH 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 31.10.2019 AT 6.00 P.M.**

Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam

Dr. N.R. Dave,

Chairman, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Memorial Trust

Thiru. N. Ravi,

Chairman, Bhavan's Chennai Kendra

Thiru. M.K. Narayanan,

Former Governor of West Bengal

Thiru. Gurumurthy,

Auditor

Thiru. K. N. Ramaswamy,

Director, Bhavan's Chennai Kendra

Thiru. K.J. Suriyanarayanan,

Honorary Secretary,

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Memorial Trust

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies & Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to be here today on the occasion of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's 144th birth anniversary celebrations being jointly organised by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Memorial Trust and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chennai Kendra. 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 Vallabhbhai Patel was born in 1875 in a peasant family, in Borsad, in rural Gujarat.

Courageous and resourceful, determined and disciplined, dedicated and diligent, realistic to his fingertips, devoid of hypocrisy and humbug, incredibly resolute, brave and fearless utterly

unselfish, free from preoccupation of popularity hunting and image building, he was the quiet and extraordinarily efficient “Executive Arm” of Mahatma Gandhi, in the ‘War without violence’ for India’s deliverance from foreign rule.

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

Similarly, he led a massive "No Tax Campaign" in Khera district at Gujarat that urged the farmers not to pay their taxes. This peaceful but powerful expression of protest was successful and made the British authorities to return the land taken away from the farmers.

Sardar Patel was undoubtedly one of the tallest leaders of our freedom movement. He was elected as the President of Indian National Congress in its Karachi session of 1931. Being a close lieutenant of Mahatma Gandhi he was actively associated in all the important decisions made by the Indian National Congress in the 1930s and 1940s.

At the penultimate stage of India's freedom struggle, the views of Mohammed Ali Jinnah were

gaining acceptance from the Cabinet Mission, 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.

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.

Patel brought the whole weight of his personality into the task of integrating the States with India.

The swift, skilful, thorough and non-violent manner in which the thorny, complex problem of the accession and integration of the hundreds of anachronistic Princely States, many with their own flags, currency, police, railways, posts and telegraphs and other insignia of Nation-States was accomplished is unparalleled in the annals of world history.

There can be no greater tribute to this great feat than the significant comments of Khrushchev during

his visit to India in 1956, as Chief of Communist Party of the Soviet Union, along with Russia's Prime Minister, Nikolai Bulganin. He exclaimed, "You Indians are a remarkable people. How did you manage to liquidate the Princely States without liquidating the Princes!"

Dr. K M Munshi in his book Pilgrimage to Freedom has stated how the Police Action in Hyderabad was repeatedly postponed for fear of prolonged fierce resistance in Hyderabad and widespread communal uprising all over India. When at long last, in September 1948, the Indian army marched in, the straw, stuffed edifice of power of the Nizam of Hyderabad, collapsed like a pack of cards, as the Sardar had visualized.

Sardar Patel was a strong proponent of the All India Services. His intervention was key to the inclusion of two Articles in the Constitution 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.

In his address to the Constituent Assembly he said and I quote, “The Union will go, you will not have a united India if you do not have good All-India Service which has the independence to speak out its mind, which has sense of security that you will stand by your work... If you do not adopt this

course, then do not follow the present Constitution. Substitute something else... these people are the instrument. Remove them and I see nothing but a picture of chaos all over the country”.

In his address to the probationers of these services, he asked them to be guided by the spirit of service in day-to-day administration. His exhortation to the probationers to maintain impartiality and incorruptibility of administration is as relevant today as it was then.

Every member of the I.C.S. in Delhi spontaneously gathered in solemn assembly to record their sense of grief and the feeling of being orphaned at Sardar's passing away. This is said to be the one and the only instance in the hundred

and odd years history of the Civil Service having collectively betrayed any deep emotion.

As India's first Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, Patel organised relief efforts for the refugees coming into Delhi and worked to restore peace in the strife torn areas. 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. Sardar 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.

Sardar Patel was undoubtedly a Karmayogi of the highest order.

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, succinctly summed up in the Indian Parliament about the Sardar with the following words,

“History will record his achievements in many pages and call him the builder and consolidator of the new India and say many other things about him. By many of us, he will perhaps be remembered as great captain of our forces in the struggle for freedom and as one who gave us sound advice both in times of trouble and in moments of victory, a friend and a colleague and comrade, on whom one

could invariably rely, as a tower of strength which revived wavering hearts when we were in trouble”.

A prince among patriots, a statesman among political personalities, a leader of leaders, the Sardar's motto was, “Let words pass, let deeds speak!” His Philosophy of Life was, In War: Resolution; in Defeat; Defiance; in Victory, Magnanimity and in Peace, Goodwill.

On the day of his 144th Birth Anniversary, India remembers the Sardar with affection and pride. The statue of Sardar Patel at Sadhu Bet, in Gujarat which is the tallest statue of the world has been aptly named as the “Statue of Unity”. The Sardar was indeed the unifier of India. While the Mahatma is the father of the Nation, the Sardar, the Iron Man

is the architect of modern 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 selflessness and devotion.

I extend my best wishes and greetings to the office bearers and members of the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Memorial Trust and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chennai Kendra who have taken special efforts to keep the banner of Sardar Patel flying high year after year. May they be greeted with success in all their endeavours.

Nandri Vanakkam....

Jai Tamil Nadu....

Jai Hind....