

INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS

Hon'ble Chief Minister's Speech

15th August 2011 - Uppalam Sports Complex, Pondicherry.

My Dear fellow citizens of Puducherry,

Today, we celebrate the 65th Independence of our motherland India. I am extremely happy to extend my heartfelt greetings and good wishes to all of you on this occasion of national celebration. The Country attained its freedom due to great and immense sacrifices of innumerable freedom fighters. It is our bounden duty to remember and pay homage to all the valiant men and women who took part in the freedom struggle. Independence Day is the most appropriate occasion to recall with pride their unparalleled sacrifices.

On the outset, I am privileged to have the honour of addressing the people of Puducherry as the Chief Minister for the third term. On this occasion, I sincerely thank the people of Puducherry for having faith on me and my Govt. I would commit at this point of time that my Govt. will take utmost efforts to fulfil the aspirations of people of the Union Territory keeping in mind our promises made during elections.

We are now reminded of the lines from one of the poems of poet Subramaniaya Bharathy,

“Paarukkulle nalla naadu

engal Bhaaratha naadu”

India, the 'Land of Unity' despite its diversities in culture, religion and language today marching ahead with remarkable progress in all spheres. Thanks to the wisdom and the vision of the founding fathers Mahatma Gandhiji and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I am proud to mention that Puducherry has emerged in first place in several aspects

among small States in the country. Now, I am pleased to present a brief picture of the progress in the State and lay down the priorities of my Government.

To achieve significant improvements in the socio-economic frontiers, Govt. of Puducherry has been consistently increasing the allocation under the Plan. The Planning Commission of India has approved a Plan size of ₹ 2750 crores for the Annual Plan 2011-2012 which is ₹ 250 crores more when compared to Annual Plan in 2010-11. The revenue generated locally through VAT and CST realised at ₹ 224.83 crores and ₹ 82.75 crores upto July 2011 contributes a major share in the Budget of the Union Territory. A substantial part of the Plan fund will be utilised for improving the socio-economic status of the people and for Infrastructure Developmental Projects

My Government, which always responds to the needs of the farmers, has paid special attention for the development of agriculture, irrigation and allied activities in the Union Territory. Varied schemes are being operated for the benefit of the farming community and to maintain the growth rate of agriculture. Under 'National Horticulture Mission', ₹ 150.00 lakhs have been approved for 2011-12 to promote horticulture crops. Efforts are being made to increase the cropping intensity by adopting Farm Mechanisation, Improved Marketing & Storage Facilities etc. Marketing infrastructure will also be strengthened by constructing additional godowns in the Marketing Committees.

The Union Territory has already achieved self-sustainability in paddy seed production. Now, the Govt. has proposed to further enhance this capacity on a commercial level. The agricultural labourers who play a vital role in the agricultural production are being taken care by 'Puducherry Agricultural Welfare Society' benefiting 35,242 members. Preparatory works to conduct 9th Agricultural Census in

the Union Territory has been undertaken to evaluate agricultural programmes in the Union Territory.

My Govt. is providing extensive and effective health coverage to livestock and pet animals through veterinary institutions. Main thrust is given for prevention of diseases in animals by vaccination and control measures. Milk production is encouraged by way of providing employment opportunity and to earn subsidiary income to farmers for which subsidies for purchasing of milch cows and procurement of feed for heifer calves and milch animals. Apart from all services and developmental activities, the latest developments in the Science and field of Animal Husbandry are being disseminated to farmer through Farmer's Meets.

Fisheries make a significant contribution in the process of improving food security in the Union Territory and the sector provides employment opportunities and income to major people directly and indirectly. To contribute towards Marine and Inland fish production and to uplift the socio economic status of fishermen, my Govt is successfully implementing various developmental schemes. Govt. will continue the welfare schemes of subsidies and grant-in aids. I am pleased to announce here that Old Age pension for fisherfolk will be enhanced to ₹ 1150 with effect from May 2011 benefiting 6626 persons. Govt has also proposed to equip fisherwomen in alternative livelihood with short term training on ornamental fish keeping, value added products etc. Ministry of Agriculture, Govt. of India has recently accorded approval of establishment of Puducherry Union Territory Fishers and Fishermen Development Corporation. The Corporation will be established during the current financial year as soon as the approval of Ministry of Home Affairs is obtained. Karaikal Fishing Harbour construction is nearing completion and will be inaugurated shortly.

Puducherry has a well developed Cooperative Movement that continues to play a vital role for the development of the Union Territory by generating self-employment opportunities and providing training and guidance to farmers, weavers and other sections of people. Financial assistances are being provided by the Govt. to Coop Societies to support around 6.00 lakh members enrolled with 523 societies. During financial year 2011-12, a sum of ₹ 180.00 lakhs has been provided for waiver of interest and penal interest on housing loans availed by members of Puducherry Cooperative Housing Societies.

Public Distribution System in the Union Territory has the distinction of functioning both in Urban and Rural areas. As a measure to improve Public Distribution System, action has been initiated to issue biometric 'Smart Card' during 2011. The biometric capture of data of individuals is being done in collaboration with Unique Identity Authority of India, whereby citizens will also receive a Unique Identification Number. The work is targeted to be completed in the current year itself.

With a view to provide food security to all, the existing Universal Public Distribution System has been modified from July 2011. Under this system, 35kgs of free rice is being distributed every month to all 'Antyodaya Anna Yojana' card holders. Identified 32,200 poorest of poor families are benefited. 25 kgs of free rice is distributed to all BPL card holders. Further, it is proposed to distribute 15 kgs of free rice to all APL card holders every month in the Union Territory.

In Health Care Delivery Services, Union Territory of Puducherry has been adjudged as the best in the Country. Effective implementation of Five Year Plans has ensured accessible medical care within an average distance of less than 1.18 kilometres. The overall health indicators in Puducherry have been far progressive when compared with the national indicators. Despite of low Infant Mortality Rate and

Maternal Mortality Rate in Puducherry, initiatives are being taken to further reduce IMR & MMR. To improve the overall health of adolescent girls in the Union Territory of Puducherry, 'Special School Health Programme' is also being implemented.

I have pleasure to announce that Maternity Hospital functioning near the coastal area in Pondicherry has started functioning at the newly built Rajiv Gandhi Govt. Women and Children Hospital at Ellapillaichavadi from June 2011. Puducherry Govt. has planned to start '108 Ambulance Service' in Pondicherry as operated in Karaikal region. A separate Out Patient Department for Master Health Check up will also be started at Indira Gandhi Govt. General Hospital and Post Graduate Institute, Pondicherry.

Education is the most important tool for empowering Human Resource in the Country. It is for this reason, my Govt. has always accorded top priority for Education. The Govt. has taken full efforts to build a strong infrastructure for education in the Union Territory and to bring qualitative changes in the curriculum. Here, I would commit that my Govt. will continue with its innovative educational welfare schemes, with thrust to minimise dropout rates. It is to be mentioned that the per capita expenditure incurred under Midday Meal Scheme in the Union Territory of Puducherry is the highest in the whole of India at ₹ 5.25 for Primary Classes, ₹ 5.90 for Upper Primary Classes and ₹ 7.80 for Higher Secondary Classes. Expenditure under Rajiv Gandhi Breakfast Scheme is also increased to ₹ 6.56. My Govt. has also taken measures to encourage Sports activities in the Union Territory along with co-curricular and curricular activities. Govt. is keen in providing adequate infrastructure for Sports activities in all the four regions of Puducherry.

Implementation of Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act in Puducherry has been speeded up. Puducherry Govt. has taken initiatives to constitute a Right to

Education Protection Authority. The Higher Education System in Puducherry has been a source of huge potential and promise for future. It has provided a highly educated work force and also has been a major centre of learning. With the starting of Govt. Medical College in Pondicherry, National institute of technology in Karaikal and with the prospect of starting State University in the current academic year itself, the Union Territory of Puducherry is all set to play as a 'Knowledge Hub' among the Southern States. The State University would provide extended higher educational opportunities especially to the students from middle and lower income groups, backward and under privileged sections of the people. Due importance will be given for improving the quality of education and for development of infrastructure facilities in the existing institutions. My Govt. will take initiatives to encourage the access to e-learning system to improve the quality of learning to compete in the international arena. During the current financial year 2011-12 an amount of ₹ 23.00 crores has been released for award of financial assistance under 'Perunthalaivar Kamarajar Financial Assistance Scheme' for CENTAC sponsored students studying in professional colleges. 5413 students will be benefited during the current year.

With a view to provide more emphasis to social justice, our Government has formulated a new scheme for students belonging to Scheduled Castes. 'Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Financial Assistance Scheme' is formulated with an objective of extending award of financial assistance to more number of Scheduled Caste students sponsored by CENTAC in professional courses. Under this scheme the tuition fees of maximum ₹ 1.75 lakhs fixed by Govt. would be refunded. Govt. has proposed to distribute Laptops free of cost to all Engineering and MCA students belonging to Scheduled Castes to equip them with professional educational aids and modern techniques. At least 175 students will be benefited every year under this scheme.

Comprehensive development of Puducherry is our primary objective. My Govt is actively working in this direction. My Government has already implemented various programmes for economic development and social welfare of Scheduled Castes, Most Backward and Backward Classes, Differently-abled, Minorities, Women, and senior citizens.

Development of socio-economic living conditions of Scheduled Caste families through housing facilities is an important strategy of my Govt. Speeding up of operating schemes under HUDCO loan schemes for construction of housing units and repairing of damaged houses are within the purview of my Govt. My Govt. has taken sincere efforts to implement 3% or reservation for Differently-abled persons in Govt. employment. Various welfare schemes are also implemented for the welfare of Ex-servicemen families. As a befitting incentive, Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme has been introduced in the Union Territory of Puducherry with effect from 21.07.2011 and Ex-servicemen/widows of Ex-servicemen utilise the medical services.

The Union Territory of Puducherry has achieved industrial progress over the years. Govt. is keen in generating employment opportunities for youth in the Union Territory. Mega Career Guidance Exhibitions, Job Fairs are regularly conducted to offer employment opportunities for unemployed youth in various private industrial units / organisations and more Job Fairs are proposed this year. Unemployed persons are motivated to start self employment enterprises under special schemes. Starting of skill development programme is under process to impart training to about 20200 persons in five years through skill schools.

My Govt. has taken all possible measures to protect the interest and livelihood of Labourers from all sectors through Welfare Societies. Govt. has also taken

initiatives to extend social, educational and health benefits to domestic servants through Puducherry Unorganised Labourer's Welfare Society. The proposal for formulation of Traders Welfare Board for the welfare of the business community in the Union Territory is under active processing of my Govt. The Board will undertake various welfare schemes benefiting the traders and their employees.

I am glad to mention that the Puducherry has touched a new height in successfully implementing various poverty alleviation and employment schemes as per the guidelines of the Govt. of India to extend livelihood support and ensure guaranteed employment to rural poor people of the Union Territory of Puducherry. As a part of implementing the e-Governance initiative, Govt. has successfully computerizing all activities of the Govt. The online payment of tax was also inaugurated by me at the Commercial Taxes Dept. on 01-07-2011.

Road connectivity and communication network is very much essential for the State's economic development. My Government has accorded the highest priority for the development of infrastructure in the Union Territory. Emphasis has been given to the development of rural roads. My Govt. through Public Works Department has proposed to undertake projects for construction of fly overs to improve road junctions at Indira Gandhi & Rajiv Gandhi Squares and maintenance of roads in the Union Territory. Construction of Multi-purpose Kamarajar Manimandapam will be taken up during this year. Phase II construction at Central Jail Complex, Kalapet, Phase II construction at the Integrated Court Complex, Construction of Judicial Officers Quatres at Lawspet are the projects within the active proposal of my Govt. Construction of bridge across Thirumalairajan River in Karaikal will be taken up this year. Augmented Drinking Water Project (UIDSSMT) on an estimation of ₹ 39.18

crores to supply drinking water from the reservoir of SAC barrage at Dowlaiswaram in Andhra Pradesh to Yanam region will also be taken up.

My Govt. has taken considerable measures to reduce shortages in the power sector. Considering the growing power demand of the Union Territory, an amount of ₹ 4693.00 lakhs has been allocated for 2011-12 to meet the demand for reliable and quality power supply. This includes ₹ 100.00 lakhs earmarked for Special Component Sub-Plan Schemes. Under Primary Distribution Scheme, Govt. has proposed to energise 40 new distribution transformers and to enhance 30 existing distribution transformers to higher capacities. Steps would be taken to put in function the Power Sub-station under construction at Thondamanatham before the end of 2011 and construction of Power Sub-station at Venkata Nagar will be speeded up. It is proposed to establish EHV Sub-stations at Lawspet, Thavalakuppam and Puranasingupalayam in Pondicherry and at Polagam in Karaikal region. Also, Kurumbapet 110/22 KV Sub-station will be strengthened with additional 25 MVA power transformers.

Puducherry has attained global fame by being a window of French Culture as the blend of French Culture obviously reflects in the day to day life. Puducherry is famous for eco-tourism and has almost become an ideal place for Tourists. My Govt. has implemented several environment-friendly programmes in all the four regions of Puducherry for the development of Tourism in the State. Govt. has taken keen initiatives to expand Tourism infrastructure in the Union Territory in order to develop Puducherry a dream destination for Tourists. Govt. has proposed to take up 13 new projects at an estimation of ₹ 45.11 crores during the current financial year.

I am glad to understand that Writers, litterateurs, artistes, thinkers and eminent people of Puducherry as well the public have endorsed the schemes of the

Government through the Art and Culture Dept for their support. My Govt. will commit to celebrate the Centenary of Mother Teresa, the icon of social service in a grand manner. My Govt. would strive to uphold the respect for the principles of selfless services to humanity advocated by Mother Teresa.

For an uninterrupted social and economic growth, secure environment is a pre-requisite. The Law and Order situation in the Union Territory has remained peaceful. Crimes have been considerably controlled. My Govt. is keen in bringing about Administrative reforms in the Police force. Police-public friendly milieu is developed to ensure peace.

I have given a bird's eye view of the path traversed by my Government over a short period after assumption of Office. Though we have been able to achieve, I am well aware of the fact that there is still a lot to cover. My Government is committed to the equal and balanced development of all sections of the society and all regions of the State. Whole hearted participation by the people themselves is the only key for effective implementation of programmes leading to a new height of achievement.

On this day, I appeal to every citizen of Puducherry to rededicate ourselves to protect the sovereignty of the Nation and to work selflessly in the task of nation building.

I once again offer my good wishes to the people of Puducherry on this occasion of Independence Day.

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