

**Honourable Members of the Legislative
Assembly,**

Vanakkam.

It is my honour to deliver the inaugural address for the year 2025 in this august house. I take this opportunity to extend my warm greetings to everyone for the New Year and Pongal Thiruvizha. I wish that this year brings more happiness and prosperity to everyone. I begin my address by recalling the timeless words of Ayyan Thiruvalluvar, which act as the guiding light for this Government.

உறுபசியும் ஓவாப் பிணியும் செறுபகையும்

சேரா தியல்வது நாடு

(Kural-734)

*(The country is that which
continues to be free from
excessive starvation, irremediable
epidemics and destructive foes)*

2. Today, Tamil Nadu stands as the second largest economy in our nation, propelled by robust infrastructure and progressive development policies. The State is seen as a symbol of progress and inclusivity, one that seamlessly blends tradition with modernity. It is a testament to the success of the ideals of Dravidian movement that our State's share in National GDP has increased from 5.40 per cent to 9.21 per cent in the last four decades. To further progress on this development, the State has embarked on an ambitious target of becoming a \$1 trillion economy by 2030.

3. The State's impressive performance in its economic indicators is also mirrored in its human development indicators. Thus, Tamil Nadu has emerged as a model for the nation in promoting health, education, and social welfare, while

maintaining economic growth. Building on the rich legacy of visionary leaders who made these possible, **our Hon'ble Chief Minister** has introduced many transformative and landmark schemes that will shape and secure the lives of future generations.

4. One of the flagship schemes of this Government – **the Kalaingar Mahalir Urimai Thittam** – stands as a hallmark of economic empowerment of women. This Government strongly believes that it is the duty of a State to ensure basic minimum income for all its citizens to lead a dignified life. Under **Kalaingar Mahalir Urimai Thittam**, the Government provides a monthly entitlement of Rs.1,000 to 1.15 crore families, significantly reducing poverty, enhancing the dignity and

empowerment of women, and strengthening their balance of power within the household.

5. Under the visionary leadership of our Hon'ble Chief Minister, this Government is also the forerunner in the country in introducing the **Mahalir Vidiyal Payanam Thittam**, a transformative initiative providing free bus travel to women for their daily needs. Since its inception, this scheme has facilitated over 571 crore trips, enhancing women's mobility across the State. This empowerment is evident in the substantial increase in daily female ridership, rising from 32 lakh in 2021 to 57 lakh at present. Further, this scheme has resulted in an average household saving of Rs.888 per month, and has further improved the workforce participation of women, as per the study commissioned by State Planning Commission.

6. The much celebrated and globally acclaimed Mid-Day Meal Scheme was introduced over a century ago by the Justice Party by providing meals to students of the then Madras Municipal Corporation-run School at Thousand Lights in Chennai. In 1962, this initiative was expanded statewide by Perunthalaivar Kamarajar, aiming to increase school enrolment and reduce dropout rates. Makkal Thilagam M.G. Ramachandran transformed it to the Nutritious Meal Programme in 1982 to combat malnutrition. In 1989, Muthamizh Arignar Kalaigarnar enhanced the scheme by introducing eggs along with meals, improving the nutritional value of the food provided to children.

7. Tamil Nadu has the distinguished legacy of pioneering initiatives that have set benchmarks for the nation. Adding glory

to this illustrious tradition, our Hon'ble Chief Minister has inscribed Tamil Nadu's name in golden letters in the annals of history by launching the '**Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme.**' This flagship initiative provides hot, nutritious breakfast to all Government primary school children, leading to a significant increase in attendance, and enhancing children's nutritional outcomes and attentiveness in class. Building on its success, the scheme has been extended to 3,995 Government-aided primary schools in rural areas in the previous year. In total, breakfast is served to 17.53 lakh students in 34,987 primary schools statewide, reflecting the Government's unwavering commitment and concern towards child welfare and education.

8. While the State Government thus remains fully committed to ensuring good

quality education for students, it has not received the requisite support from the Union Government for its endeavours. Despite our persistent appeals to release funds under the Samagraha Shiksha Scheme, the Union Government has not released any funds till date in the current year, citing the non-implementation of National Education Policy by the State. These funds, to the tune of Rs.2,152 crore, are critical for the functioning of schools including teachers' salaries, maintenance and upkeep of school buildings and reimbursement under the Right to Education Act. Due to lack of this fund release from the Union Government, the State Government has to bear the entire burden from its own resources, thereby severely affecting its finances. The future of 44 lakh students, 2.2 lakh teachers and 21,276 staff

members hinge on the timely disbursement of these funds and we hope that the Union Government will release these funds at the earliest.

9. In its commitment to providing equal access to higher educational opportunities, the Government of Tamil Nadu has implemented **7.5 per cent reservation for Government school students in all professional courses** including medical, engineering and agriculture. Under this initiative, the entire educational expense—including tuition, hostel, and transportation fees—for these students is borne by the Government. Over the past four years, a total of Rs.1,165 crore has been disbursed under this scheme, benefiting 35,530 students.

10. Another flagship scheme of the Government, the **Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Higher Education Assurance Scheme**, also known as the **Pudhumai Penn Thittam**, has been introduced to increase the enrolment of girls from poor families in higher education institutions. Under this scheme, girls who have studied from classes 6th to 12th in Government schools receive financial assistance of Rs.1,000 per month throughout their undergraduate education. Since its inception, the scheme has benefitted 4.25 lakh students and contributed significantly to improving the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education. This year, our Government has further extended this scheme to girl students who have studied in Government-aided schools in Tamil Medium. This expansion aims to continue the positive

trend of increasing female enrolment in higher education, thereby promoting gender parity and empowering women through education.

11. Recognizing the success of this scheme in promoting access to higher education, the Government has launched the '**Tamil Pudhalvan**' scheme to provide a monthly assistance of Rs.1,000 to all boy students pursuing higher education, who have studied in Government and Government-aided schools from Classes 6th to 12th in Tamil medium. This scheme has benefitted 3.52 lakh students in the current academic year alone.

12. The Government's '**Naan Mudhalvan**' scheme, which is the visionary initiative of our Hon'ble Chief Minister, stands as a transformative skilling initiative.

With the ambitious goal of nurturing over 10 lakh students annually and transforming them into an industry-ready talent pool, this initiative has positioned Tamil Nadu as the skill capital of India. In 2023-24, this scheme was extended to polytechnic colleges and Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), and is now covering 14.68 lakh students across 2,085 institutions. Under this widely appreciated initiative, around 2,58,597 students have secured job offers through campus placement drives, so far.

13. The State is also witnessing a remarkable revolution in its sporting culture under the leadership of our Hon'ble Chief Minister. The successful hosting of marquee sporting events such as the **International Chess Olympiad, distribution of sports kits in every village under Dr.Kalaignar Sports Kit**

Distribution scheme, unprecedented cash incentives to sportspersons, appointment of sportspersons under the 3 per cent reservation quota in Government jobs, among others, reflects our fullest commitment in fostering a vibrant environment for sportspersons. These initiatives not only improve health but also cultivate discipline and promote competitive spirit among youth. These continuous efforts are transforming Tamil Nadu into a formidable sporting force in the country, as exemplified by the remarkable success achieved by our sportspersons in various world championships.

14. Tamil Nadu has also emerged as a frontrunner in health and family welfare. Our state boasts of a robust public healthcare infrastructure, with over 36 Government medical colleges,

299 Government hospitals, 2,286 primary health centres and 8,713 health sub centres, reflecting the highest doctor-to-population ratio of 2.5:1000, comparable to that of many developed countries. In recent years, the Government has made substantial investments in healthcare infrastructure, enhancing service delivery and ensuring that quality medical care is accessible to all. These efforts have improved health indicators and positioned Tamil Nadu as the capital of medical tourism, reflecting its status as a hub for advanced medical care, thereby attracting over 15 lakh persons annually from around the world for medical diagnosis and treatment.

15. Recognizing the efforts of the Government, the United Nations has recently awarded the State with the 'United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force Award 2024' for its

initiative of '**Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam**' to provide free healthcare services to people at their doorsteps. Under this scheme, 2 crore people have benefitted so far. In another pioneering effort that stands as a model for the country, the State Government is implementing the '**Innuyir Kappom - Nammai Kakkum 48**' to provide free and assured treatment in the critical period of the first 48 hours after accident. So far, this scheme has saved over 3 lakh precious lives. Recently, the ceiling for cashless treatment per individual has been increased from Rs.1 lakh to Rs.2 lakh.

16. Following the ideals of Thanthai Periyar, our Government is unwavering in its commitment to uphold the dignity of every individual, particularly those from marginalized communities. We firmly believe that the upliftment of these

communities is not only a moral duty but also an enforceable right. In line with this conviction, we have enacted **the Tamil Nadu Development Action Plan for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Act, 2024**. This landmark legislation establishes a robust institutional framework for the preparation, approval, implementation, and monitoring of development plans for these communities. More importantly, it mandates the allocation and utilization of funds for their development in proportion to their population in Tamil Nadu.

17. The Government is making relentless efforts to improve the living standards and livelihoods of the Adi Dravidar and Tribal communities in Tamil Nadu. **The Iyothee Thass Pandithar Habitation Development Scheme** has been launched

to improve Adi Dravidar habitations by providing essential amenities such as drinking water supply, street lighting and road infrastructure. Similarly, the **Tholkudi Scheme** has been launched to provide basic amenities in tribal habitations.

18. To promote business and entrepreneurial initiatives among youth, particularly those belonging to the Adi Dravidar and Tribal communities, the **Annal Ambedkar Business Champions Scheme** has been launched to provide capital subsidy and interest subvention for starting businesses. In a transformative move to empower sanitary workers, our Hon'ble Chief Minister had launched a revolutionary scheme, allocating Rs.60 crore as subsidy to provide 213 advanced desilting vehicles to the legal heirs of deceased sanitary workers, their family members on a

priority basis. Further, the **Chief Minister's Adi Dravidar and Tribal Socio-Economic Development Scheme (CM-ARISE)** has been introduced to enhance the socio-economic and educational indicators of the Adi Dravidar and Tribal communities by providing loan assistance for entrepreneurial activities. These initiatives are a testament to our relentless pursuit to uplift and empower marginalized communities.

19. In the pursuit of an inclusive society, it is imperative to ensure that the benefits from Government reach those most in need. Accurate data on caste demographics and socio-economic indicators is needed for the formulation of targeted policies and programs to uplift such marginalized communities. Considering the need for such data for evidence based decision making, **the Tamil Nadu**

Legislative Assembly has unanimously adopted a resolution urging the Union Government to immediately commence the decadal census along with a caste-based national population census. We hope the Union Government will heed to this request without further delay.

20. This Government has doubled the scholarship provided to differently abled persons pursuing education till post-graduate level. Under the TN-RIGHTS project, the State has also ventured to set up **One-Stop Centres (OSC) for differently abled persons called 'Vizhuthugal'**. The first such centre was inaugurated at Sholinganallur and more such centres will be opened across the State to support differently abled people.

21. To promote traditional handicrafts and trades in the State, the Government has introduced the '**Kalaigñar Kaivinai Thittam**'. This initiative focuses on supporting 25 distinct artisanal trades and occupations by providing financial assistance through concessional loans with subsidy, ensuring easy access to capital for artisans and other service providers. With a modern approach, this progressive scheme has been designed to cater to the unique needs of local artisans, enabling them to benefit according to their specific requirements. Beyond supporting livelihoods, this scheme will eliminate social inequalities and support continuous educational opportunities to the younger generations, ensuring the benefits of this scheme are available to all.

22. The Government is taking various steps to promote and sustain the

handlooms sector. The Government has recently sanctioned the construction of **Unity Mall**, spanning 4.5 lakh sq.ft., in Egmore in Chennai at an estimated cost of Rs.227 crore. The Unity Mall seeks to preserve and promote the State's rich cultural history and legacy at the national level. To promote Tamil Nadu as a leading state in the spinning sector, the Government has sanctioned a pioneering scheme to provide Rs.500 crore with 6 per cent interest subvention over the next 10 years towards technological upgradation. These initiatives will drive in modernization and pave the way for the next phase of development in this sector.

23. The Government strongly believes that owning a home plays a crucial role in improving the quality of life for poor families and contributing to the

overall development of society. With this understanding, the Government has introduced the '**Kalaignarin Kanavu Illam**' in 2024-25 to provide 8 lakh concrete rural homes over a period of six years, with a unit cost of Rs.3.50 lakh per house. Tamil Nadu's journey toward creating a hut-free state began with the '**Kalaignar Veedu Vazhangum Thittam**' in 2010, which started with a modest cost of Rs.60,000 per unit. Over the past 14 years, this amount has increased six fold, now reaching Rs.3.50 lakh per unit, a reflection of the State's commitment to improving the lives of its poor. In contrast, the unit cost of Union Government's Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Grameen (PMAY-G) scheme, set at Rs.1.20 lakh in 2016, has not been revised in the past eight years, highlighting the difference in approach. Notably, Tamil Nadu

stands as the only State in the nation to provide PMAY-G beneficiaries with a unit cost of Rs.2.82 lakh, with the State contributing Rs.1.72 lakh, or 60 per cent of the total cost.

24. Rural connectivity plays a crucial role in providing access to essential services such as healthcare, education, agricultural marketing, and banking services, among others. To enhance this connectivity, the **'Mudhalvarin Grama Salaigal Membattu Thittam'** has been introduced. Over the past two years, this initiative has successfully strengthened and renewed 9,653 km of roads, with an investment of Rs.4,000 crore. The scheme has now been extended for a further period of two years to strengthen the road network by another 10,000 km in the rural areas.

25. The recent NITI Aayog's report on the Multi-dimensional Poverty Index based on NFHS-5 (2019-21) has identified only 2.2 per cent of the State's population as poor. This is far lower than the national average of 14.96 per cent. However, to launch a final assault on poverty over the next two years, the State has launched the '**Chief Minister's Thayumanavar Thittam**'. In its first phase, this scheme aims to uplift 5 lakh of the poorest families by providing integrated support in health, housing, and education. It will focus on the most vulnerable groups, including destitutes, the elderly, orphaned children, single-parent families, people with disabilities, mentally challenged persons, and families with children requiring special care.

26. Our Government is committed to protecting and conserving the agricultural

landscape of our State. To achieve this, we have taken pioneering steps, including introducing a separate budget for the Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department. Initiatives such as the **Kalaingar All Village Integrated Agriculture Development Program** have transformed fallow lands into cultivable fields, measures like incentives over and above Minimum Support Prices for paddy and sugarcane farmers and free electricity connections have significantly enhanced farmers' income. Further, in order to facilitate the farmers to sell their agricultural produce across the country, 157 Regulated Markets in the State have been integrated under **e National Agriculture Market (e-NAM)**. Since 2021, 19.60 lakh MT of other agricultural produce worth Rs.5,779 crore have been transacted in

e-NAM markets and e-payment to the tune of Rs.4,055 crore has been made through the portal, benefiting 16.13 lakh farmers in the State. This has made Tamil Nadu a frontrunner in the overall transactions under e-NAM across the country.

27. With a view to increasing the production of millets in the State, the Government has launched the **Tamil Nadu Millets Mission**. Further, several schemes are being implemented to encourage the cultivation of less water intensive crops such as millets, pulses and oilseeds as alternate crops in Kuruvai season. As a result of these initiatives aimed at promoting self-sufficiency and crop rotation, the area sown under pulses, oilseeds, millets and other small horticulture crops has almost tripled from 40,554 hectares in 2023 to 1.11 lakh hectares in 2024. To preserve soil

microbiome and fertility, our Hon'ble Chief Minister launched the '**Mannuyir Kaathu Mannuyir Kaapom Thittam**', with an allocation of Rs.206 crore.

28. With the objective of increasing the income of farmers and milk producers in the State, this Government has been providing an incentive of Rs.3 per litre of cow and buffalo milk procured from the farmers. Since 2021, the procurement price has been increased by six rupees benefitting approximately 4 lakh milk producers in the State without affecting the interest of consumers.

29. In order to increase the water resources available for farmers, the State has implemented several projects in the past three years. Most recently, the Athikadavu-Avinashi Scheme, with an investment of

Rs.1,916 crore, was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister. This project aims to benefit 24,468 acres of land by replenishing 1,045 tanks and ponds across the districts of Erode, Coimbatore and Tiruppur by diverting 1.5 TMC of surplus water from the Bhavani River. The Government is taking all necessary steps to get its rightful share of water in inter-state rivers and shall continuously take all measures to prevent the construction of Mokedatu dam on Cauvery.

30. The welfare of fishermen is of utmost importance to this Government and it is committed to safeguarding the rights of its fishermen in the traditional fishing grounds of the State. Since the year 2021, the Sri Lankan Navy has apprehended 1,219 fishermen along with their fishing crafts. As a result of the relentless efforts of

this Government, 1,106 fishermen have been released and repatriated to the State. The Government continues to urge the Union Government to take decisive action through diplomatic channels to ensure the immediate release of the remaining fishermen as well as to find a permanent solution to this issue.

31. With its extensive coastline and rich marine biodiversity, Tamil Nadu has a unique opportunity to harness the immense potential of the blue economy. Under the **'Tamil Nadu Sustainably Harnessing Ocean Resources and Blue Economy' (TN-SHORE) Project**, the Government has taken continuous efforts towards coastal biodiversity, coastal protection, livelihood improvement, pollution abatement at a cost of Rs.1,675 crore over the next five years. This project will yield significant results in

leveraging our blue economy and promoting sustainable development in coastal regions.

32. This Government accords foremost priority to grievance redressal in a bid to ensure an efficient and responsive administration. Towards this, the initiative of '**Makkaludan Mudhalvar**' was launched in 2023 with the aim to deliver essential Government services to the public at their doorstep within 30 days of receiving the petition. In the first phase, 2,058 camps were conducted in urban areas, during which 9.05 lakh petitions were received and addressed. Building on the overwhelming success of the scheme in urban areas, it was expanded to rural regions, covering 12,525 Village Panchayats through 2,344 camps. These camps integrated the services of 15 departments to deliver 44 essential public services such as

patta transfers, old age pensions, among others. As a result, 12.80 lakh petitions were resolved in record time, showcasing the Government's unwavering commitment to efficient service delivery.

33. Tamil Nadu is proud to be recognized as one of the best-managed states in terms of law and order. This Government continues to have a zero-tolerance approach towards drugs and narcotics. Through frequent raids, special anti-drug drives, awareness campaigns, and enhanced border checkpoints, the Government has been making all efforts to curb this menace. Furthermore, the Government has taken a proactive stance against cybercrimes, employing advanced technology and diligent investigative methods to trace and apprehend criminals. The Government's dedication to safety and

security has significantly contributed to increased employment opportunities for women. As a result, notably, 41 per cent of all working women in factories in India are employed in the State. Further, the peace and stability in our State have made it a preferred destination for industrial investments in the country.

34. Under the dynamic leadership of our Hon'ble Chief Minister, the State has made great strides in attracting investments. The recent investment promotion visit of the Hon'ble Chief Minister to the United States of America was a resounding success, attracting over Rs.7,500 crore of investments that will generate around 11,500 jobs, including Ford's commitment to resumption of manufacturing in Chennai. In total, since 2021, over Rs.10 lakh crore of private investment commitments have been

received in the State due to the untiring efforts of this Government.

35. Our Government has been steadfast in its efforts to attract investments across all regions of the State, ensuring balanced and inclusive development. Today, foreign investments in the employment-intensive footwear sector are transforming industrially backward districts like Perambalur, Ariyalur, Villupuram, Kallakurichi and Ranipet. In the South, Thoothukudi is fast becoming a hub for Green Hydrogen projects, while Tirunelveli is home to significant solar cell and module investments. The western region, particularly Coimbatore and Hosur, is emerging as a hub for IT, aerospace and defence, electronics, and electric vehicles. Meanwhile, the northern region continues its leadership position as the automobile manufacturing

capital of the country. This regional diversity of investments reflects our Government's vision for equitable and sustainable progress across the State.

36. To continue this momentum and give a further fillip to the industrial growth in the State, the Government has identified an additional 45,000 acres to create an industrial land bank, out of which an acquisition of 14,000 acres has been completed. New SIPCOT parks are being established in industrially backward regions such as Thanjavur, Perambalur, Dharmapuri, and Theni districts, promoting balanced industrial growth. To further support the workforce, the State has taken significant steps to provide accommodation for industrial workers. India's largest Government promoted industrial workers' housing project, featuring 18,720 beds

and built at a cost of Rs.706 crore in Vallam Vadagal in Kancheepuram district was recently inaugurated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister. Additionally, under the brand '**Thozhi**', the Tamil Nadu Working Women Hostels Corporation Limited is establishing new hostels for working women, ensuring safe and comfortable accomodation for women across the State.

37. It was the visionary initiative of Muthamizh Arignar Kalaignar to establish a Tidel Park in Rajiv Gandhi Salai in Chennai in the year 2000 that triggered the IT revolution in the State. Walking in those footsteps, our Hon'ble Chief Minister has inaugurated Tidel Parks at Pattabiram in Tiruvallur district, mini Tidel parks in Thanjavur, Salem, Villupuram and Thoothukkudi, and ELCOT IT Parks in Trichy and Coimbatore to spur such development

in Tier-II and Tier-III cities. These parks will go a long way in creating a vibrant ecosystem of IT and ITES industries, generating thousands of employment opportunities in the State.

38. The Government also intends to become a leader in the Artificial Intelligence space, which is fast revolutionizing lives and businesses across the world. In this regard, the Government has launched the **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Mission** with a focus on sectors like education, employment, industry, research and medicine. The mission will position the State as one of the leading AI hubs in the next five years.

39. This Government recognizes the vital role of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in driving employment in the state. To address the pressing needs

of this sector post-COVID, the government launched the '**Tamil Nadu Credit Guarantee Scheme**', providing financial institutions with guarantees to enhance credit flow. As a result, loan assistance of Rs.4,115 crore has been disbursed to MSMEs in FY 2023-24, marking a 100 per cent increase compared to the previous year.

40. The State's commitment to fostering a vibrant startup and innovation ecosystem has made the State the home to one of the largest number of startups in the country. This success highlights the Government's proactive initiatives, including the TANSEED Emerging Sector Seed Fund, the SC/ST Startup Fund, and the Tamil Nadu Startup and Innovation Policy.

41. Additionally, the Government has implemented several measures to improve

the welfare of unorganized workers across various sectors. Due to the relentless efforts of the Government, in the last year alone, 2.85 lakh new workers have been registered in 18 Unorganized Workers Welfare Boards, increasing the total membership to 46 lakh individuals. Through various welfare schemes, an amount of Rs.576 crore has been disbursed to 6.88 lakh beneficiaries of Unorganized Workers Welfare Boards, so far. This initiative underscores the Government's commitment to ensuring the welfare and upliftment of every section of the state's workforce.

42. An important aspect of investment promotion in the services sector is development of cities that act as engines of growth. In order to cater to the increasing needs of an aspiring urban population and to further propel economic growth in cities,

the Government is making substantial investments in urban development, faced with the highest rate of urbanization in the country. This is a steep task which the State has been ably handling with efforts in improving amenities, civic infrastructure and service delivery through the schemes of Kalaingar Nagarpura Membattu Thittam, Singara Chennai 2.0, Nagarpura Salai Membattu Thittam and Seawater Desalination Plant, among others.

43. To ensure balanced development across the Chennai city, the Government has launched the ambitious '**Vada Chennai Valarchi Thittam**'. This scheme seeks to develop the lesser developed regions with the aim of integrating them with the overall developmental trajectory of the city. Under this scheme, 252 works including schools, hospitals, court complexes, waterbodies,

parks, playgrounds, among others, have been taken up at an estimated cost of Rs.6,309 crore.

44. With the objective of improving the quality of urban environment and setting an example for other States, this Government has also invested in bio-mining projects in 18 Municipal Corporations and 93 Municipalities, whereby legacy wastes are cleared and the land is reclaimed to be developed into parks and green spaces. Further, 96 acres of land in Perungudi dump yard in Chennai has been reclaimed through the bio-mining process.

45. To facilitate significant investments in road infrastructure development through public-private partnership and to implement iconic world-class road infrastructure projects in

Tamil Nadu incorporating best management practices across the world, the State Government has notified the formation of the **Tamil Nadu State Highways Authority (TANSHA)**. These initiatives will help in safe and faster mobility across the State.

46. To ensure ease of doing business and reduce the compliance burden of regulations on public, the Government is bringing in major reforms through the **SimpleGov** initiative. Amongst others, the Government has recently launched the **Self-Certification Scheme** to facilitate fast and seamless approval of building plans. This has been widely welcomed and in the last 3 months alone, 36,134 beneficiaries have applied and obtained online building plan approvals without any manual intervention.

47. Acceding to the repeated requests of our Hon'ble Chief Minister to the Hon'ble Prime Minister in the last three years, the Union Government has approved the long-pending demand of providing 50:50 equity share in the **Chennai Metro Rail Phase – II**. This will allow the Government to complete the project as originally planned. Further, we urge the Union Government to approve the Madurai and Coimbatore Metro Rail projects, for which proposals have been sent from the State Government.

48. The Government of Tamil Nadu is committed to providing a robust and efficient public bus transportation system. The **Government has procured 2,578 new buses** and put them in operation, while procurement of 6,104 buses is underway. The Government is supporting

the State Transport Undertakings by providing Viability Gap Funding, while at the same time ensuring their operational efficiency and performance. With investments in buses, depots, bus stands and Intelligent Transport Management Systems (ITMS), the Government is taking all measures to provide its citizens with safe and reliable public transportation.

49. The Government has also undertaken historic reforms in the power sector in a short span of time to reduce the losses of its power utility and improve its operational performance. The Tamil Nadu Generation and Electricity Distribution Company (TANGEDCO) has been bifurcated into 2 companies, namely Tamil Nadu Power Generation Corporation Limited (TNPGL) and Tamil Nadu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (TNPDC) to improve the

operational and administrative efficiency. Additionally, with a view to promote renewable energy, the Government has formed the Tamil Nadu Green Energy Corporation Limited (TNGECL) to manage renewable energy operations. In order to expeditiously and effectively provide the necessary services to electricity consumers, the customer call centre '**Minnagam**' had been launched in 2021. Through this centre, around 31.41 lakh petitions for name change, new electricity connections and other complaints have been resolved satisfactorily, so far.

50. The challenge of providing the essential infrastructure and services in the State is exacerbated by the recurring natural disasters, including cyclones, torrential rains and unprecedented flooding. The intensity and frequency of these extreme weather

events have significantly increased, with some areas in the State receiving an entire year's cumulative rainfall within 24 hours. Despite the State's best efforts in mitigation, planning and preparation, these climatic anomalies are causing considerable damage to the livelihood of people and infrastructure of the State. Most recently, the State has been ravaged by Cyclone Fengal, which affected 14 districts, claiming 40 lives and causing widespread damage to the property and infrastructure in these areas. The State has provided a compensation of Rs.2,000 for families severely affected by the disaster. However, since more funds are required to meet the temporary and permanent relief and restoration needs in the aftermath of Cyclone Fengal, we urge the Union Government to release a sum

of Rs.6,675 crore from the National Disaster Response Fund.

51. The 16th Finance Commission, led by Dr.Arvind Panagariya, visited the state and was presented with a compelling case on our demands. These included increasing the vertical devolution to 50 per cent, adopting a more equitable formula for horizontal devolution that rewards states for their performance rather than penalizing them under the guise of redistribution and allocating resources to address specific challenges such as a rapidly growing urban population, frequent natural disasters, and an ageing demography. The Commission had expressed its appreciation on the State's Memorandum and we hope that the current Finance Commission adopts a progressive methodology as outlined by the Government.

52. Since this Government took office, 2,322 temples have been consecrated following extensive renovations. Additionally, 7,133 acres of temple lands, valued at Rs.6,882 crore, have been reclaimed from encroachments. Renovation work is currently underway in 9,681 temples totalling 21,908 works at a cost of Rs.5,486 crore. As part of the integrated master plan, additional infrastructure to provide better amenities is being created in 19 temple complexes with an investment of Rs.1,770 crore.

53. At the Centenary celebrations of Vaikom Satyagraha, our Hon'ble Chief Minister inaugurated the renovated **'Vaikom Veerar Thanthai Periyar Memorial and Library'** in Kottayam district in Kerala. Thanthai Periyar's pivotal role in the Satyagraha, particularly his leadership

in the temple entry movement laid the strong foundation for inclusivity and social justice in the country. Following the footsteps of Periyar and to correct historical injustices, the Government has introduced a progressive scheme, whereby any person belonging to any caste can become an Archaka in the State. So far, 286 persons have undergone training in Archaka schools at Palani, Madurai, Tiruchendur, Tiruvannamalai, Srirangam and Tiruvallikeni.

54. The Government is committed to the welfare and protection of minorities in the State. Addressing a long-pending demand of minority institutions, the State Government has introduced a system of permanent minorities status certificates for all minority educational institutions. Additionally, the Government has launched a web portal for such institutions in order to

simplify the procedure for the issuance of such certificates. Further, the Government has demonstrated its commitment to preserving the cultural and religious heritage of minority communities by allocating significant funds for the repair and renovation of places of worship.

55. The Keezhadi museum, inaugurated by our Hon'ble Chief Minister has received widespread acclaim and appreciation, attracting over 6 lakh visitors from across the globe to experience the cultural history of our State. Building on this success, it is planned to globally showcase the rich and timeless heritage of Tamil culture through the establishment of a world-class 'Porunai Museum' in Tirunelveli, featuring antiquities discovered during the Adichanallur, Sivagalai, and Korkai excavations.

A museum commemorating the indomitable Rajendra Cholan's conquests and international trade relations is also being set up at Gangaikondacholapuram. Currently, archaeological excavations are being conducted at eight sites, alongside offshore exploration in Korkai.

வள்ளுவன் தன்னை உலகினுக்கே தந்து
வாண்புகழ் கொண்டது தமிழ்நாடு - பாரதி.

56. As Mahakavi Bharathiyar aptly noted, "Tamil Nadu earned eternal glory, by dedicating Valluvar to the world, the embodiment of wisdom and Universal Brotherhood". This year marks the Silver Jubilee of the iconic Thiruvalluvar Statue which is also known as the '**Statue of Wisdom**' in Kanyakumari, established by Muthamizh Arignar Kalaigarnar. Through his 133 chapters, Thiruvalluvar emphasized

universal values such as comparison, virtue and equality. In commemoration of the silver jubilee year, as a first in the country, a glass bridge was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister connecting the Vivekananda rock with Thiruvalluvar Statue in the southern peninsular tip of Kanyakumari. This milestone year serves as a tribute to his remarkable legacy and an opportunity to promote the immortal teachings of Thirukkural among the younger generation.

57. This Government is committed to the principles of self-respect, social justice, equality, rational thinking, and empathy. Its path is guided by the thoughts and ideals of noble leaders like Thanthai Periyar, Annal Ambedkar, Perunthalaivar Kamarajar, Perarignar Anna, and Muthamizh Arignar Kalaighar.

58. Since this Government has assumed office, we have not only delivered on the promises made to the people but have surpassed their expectations. We stand before the people today proud of the feats we have accomplished and the progress we have achieved together in this short time. We remain dedicated to the well-being and prosperity of the people of Tamil Nadu and stand firm on the commitment to realize the grand Tamil dream. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the people of the State for reposing their unwavering trust in our Government during the recent Parliamentary elections and we will leave no stone unturned to fulfil these expectations in the coming days. This Government will ensure that Tamil Nadu remains the torchbearer of social justice, communal harmony, rational thinking and democratic ideals for the entire

nation. This Government will work tirelessly to make Tamil Nadu a role model not only to other states in the country but also to the entire South Asian region.

59. Once again, I wish everyone a very happy Pongal. I conclude my address with the immortal words of Mahakavi Bharathiyar.

Vazhiya Senthamizh!

Vazhga Natramizhar!

Vazhiya Bharatha Mani Thiru Nadu!