

Excerpts from 'Agriculture and Related Announcements' by His Excellency Governor of Tamil Nadu on 7th January, 2011

Hon'ble Members of the Legislative Assembly,

Vanakkam.

01. It is indeed a great pleasure to address the first session of the year 2011 and fifteenth session of thirteenth Assembly of Tamil Nadu. I feel greatly honoured by this opportunity given by the people of Tamil Nadu to address this House for the ninth time.
02. The proposed **Genetic Heritage Gardens** at a cost of Rs. 32 crores to preserve the bio-diversity of the ancient Tamil lands, namely, Kurinji, Mullai, Marudham, Neidhal and Paalai are some such efforts. These are great efforts taken by this government to preserve Tamil cultural heritage on a permanent basis.
03. The entire State received good rains this year. The average rainfall this year during north-east monsoon has been 1169 mm till date as against the normal average of 945 mm. The coastal districts suffered flood damages owing to this.
04. On behalf of the members of this Assembly, I extend my deep condolences to the bereaved families of 203 persons who lost their lives in the heavy rains. This Government have undertaken relief measures on war footing after quickly assessing the damages caused to the life, property, crop, roads, ponds, and so on. Ministers and senior officers are continuously inspecting and monitoring the work of providing relief and restoration works. Chief Minister has conducted regular reviews and sanctioned a sum of Rs. 500 crores for immediate relief measures.
05. Apart from this, another Rs. 500 crores have been sanctioned for permanent restoration measures and works are under progress. Following the appeal to the Central Government for an assistance of Rs. 1,832 crores from the National Disaster Response Fund, a central team promptly visited Tamil Nadu and inspected the affected areas.
06. I hope that Central Government will provide this assistance at the earliest. Relief for the partially damaged huts has been stepped up from Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 2,500 and for the fully damaged huts from Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 5,000. Houses other than huts have also been provided with a relief of Rs. 1,500 for partial damage and Rs. 5,000 for severe damage. As against the earlier provision of only Rs. 1 lakh per person to the family whose member has lost life due to floods, an assistance of Rs. 2 lakhs per person has been provided now by

giving an additional amount of Rs. 1 lakh from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. Since paddy crop has been severely damaged by the floods in various places, compensation for damage to paddy crop has been increased to Rs. 8,000 per hectare from Rs. 7,500. Considering the request of farmers that it is not adequate, the Chief Minister has ordered to increase the compensation to Rs. 10,000 per hectare for the damaged paddy crop.

07. Similarly, the compensation has been increased for un-irrigated dry crops from Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 4,000 per hectare and for irrigated crops other than paddy at Rs. 7,500 per hectare. **This Government is formulating a special scheme for preventing damages caused by floods on account of inadequate drainage capacity in Nagapattinam, Thiruvarur and Thanjavur districts by establishing a proper drainage system to control the floods on a permanent basis as these districts frequently face such damages.**
08. **Heavy rains during north-east monsoon cause floods in Sarabanga river, Thirumanimutharu and Ayyaru. An investigation will be undertaken to study the possibilities of designing a special scheme to benefit agriculture by interlinking these three rivers through a channel and diverting flood water to the ponds and lakes in the dry areas of Salem, Namakkal and Trichy districts through which these rivers flow. This will also recharge the ground water.**
09. I appreciate the efforts of Hon'ble Chief Minister in announcing and popularising 'Rajarajan 1,000' a System of Rice Intensification (SRI) over a substantial area in order to increase the yield of paddy which is the staple food of Tamil Nadu. Special efforts are being taken to increase production as well as productivity of pulses.
10. Similarly, **efforts like precision farming, drip irrigation and farm mechanization under National Agriculture Development Programme implemented with the Central assistance, have resulted in reduced expenditure with enhanced productivity and income besides extensive adoption of better technology by farmers.** As a result of these excellent measures, food production has reached 84 lakh tonnes in the year 2009-2010 as against 71 lakh tonnes during 2008-2009. Compared to last year, total area under cultivation has also gone up by 13.80 percent and touched 60.19 lakh hectares during the current year.
11. Area under pulses has also gone up by 36.70 percent over the previous year. Despite the damages caused by floods in certain districts, food production in the State is expected to go up this year.
12. The rate of interest for crop loans has been gradually reduced from 7 percent for those who repaid the loan on time and interest free crop loan scheme was

launched during 2008-2009 for the first time in the country by this Government.

13. As a result of this, disbursement of crop loans by co-operative banks has increased substantially every year and crop loans to the tune of Rs. 2,092 crores have been disbursed till date this year as against the target of Rs. 2,500 crores. The new scheme of 'Joint Liability Groups of farmers' launched with a view to enabling small and marginal farmers to adapt to higher technology and increase productivity has shown good results. In future, this scheme will emerge as a movement similar to women's Self Help Group bringing a great change in agricultural production.
14. Accepting the request of the coconut farmers, this Government have also established Coconut Farmers Welfare Board recently. **With a view to fulfilling long pending demand of the palm and coconut farmers, processed palm juice and preserved tender coconut water will be sold through the outlets of Khadi & Village Industries Board. This Government will take appropriate steps for procuring coconut and making copra through Coconut Farmers Welfare Board. The coconut oil so produced by the Board will be supplied for the purpose of cooking under noon meal scheme by replacing palm oil and will also be sold through co-operative stores.**
15. This Government is according importance to the implementation of crop insurance scheme for enabling the farmers to recover from the crop loss due to natural calamities. As a result of this, 9,01,643 farmers have been paid compensation of Rs. 974 crores during last four years of this Government as against just 2,38,036 farmers receiving the compensation of Rs. 145 crores during 2001-2006.
16. Considering the importance of conserving ground water, Government of Tamil Nadu is implementing a massive scheme of construction of check dams over three years starting from 2008 at an estimate of Rs. 550 crores. Irrigated Agriculture Modernisation and Water-bodies Restoration and Management (IAMWARM) scheme benefiting 6.17 lakh hectares of land is under implementation since 2007 at an estimated cost of Rs. 2,547 crores with the assistance from World Bank. With an objective of making use of flood waters, schemes like construction of Kattalai barrage at Mayanur across the river Cauvery at a cost of Rs. 189 crores and interlinking of Thamiraparani river from Kannadian canal with Nambiyaru at a cost of Rs. 369 crores are being implemented. Besides preventing floods in these areas, these schemes will lead to proper storage and usage of water for agriculture which is otherwise getting discharged into the sea.

17. **To protect the forest wealth of Tamil Nadu, 'The Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Conservation and Greening Project' will be implemented at an estimated cost of Rs. 686 crores with the financial assistance from Japan International Co-operation Agency.**
18. The Thoothukudi Unit of SPIC had stopped production of urea and ammonia based fertilizers in 2007. Due to the relentless efforts taken by the Hon'ble Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers, SPIC industry has resumed production of urea from the first week of November 2010. As a result of implementation of such innumerable projects for industrial promotion by this Government, employment opportunities have increased significantly in Tamil Nadu.
19. **To largely benefit the students in districts like Thanjavur, Thiruvarur and Nagapattinam, which are predominantly agrarian in nature, a new agricultural college will be established at Kivelur in Nagapattinam district.**
20. **As announced by Chief Minister in the agricultural officers conference recently, I have great pleasure in informing you that this Government which has the unique distinction of starting the first Veterinary University in the country and also for starting Agricultural University at Coimbatore, will establish this year a separate University at Krishnagiri for Horticulture, which has a promising future within agricultural sector.**
21. The scheme of providing financial assistance to the old aged persons, widows, destitute women, agricultural labourers and differently abled persons is very important amongst all social security schemes. The monthly assistance of Rs. 200 provided to all these persons was enhanced to Rs. 400 from September 2006, and further enhanced to Rs. 500 per month from December 2010 by this Government as announced by Chief Minister Kalaignar on 24th November last year in the State Agriculture Officers Conference. At present, overall 22,26,850 persons are receiving assistance under this scheme.
22. Including Agricultural Labour Welfare Board, Construction Workers Welfare Board and Welfare Board for Fishermen, 37 Welfare Boards have been established for the workers in unorganised sector and 2.11 crore persons have been enrolled as members in these Boards so far. The Government have enhanced the old age pension for the eligible members of these boards to Rs. 500 per month from Rs. 400 per month. After this Government assumed charge, welfare assistance of Rs. 876 crores has been disbursed through these boards.
23. Ensuring food security through Public Distribution System is yet another outstanding social security scheme. Tamil Nadu is the only state in India that

implements this scheme as Universal Public Distribution System besides providing rice at one rupee per kilogram. This has ensured food security for all sections of society. Over and above this, Tamil Nadu also stands out as a state providing tur dhal, urad dhal, palm oil, wheat flour and packets containing ten spices and condiments at subsidised rate through Public Distribution System. Through this, the Government is insulating the poor and middle class people from the adverse impact of rising prices in an effective manner.

24. This Government have increased the number of eggs provided to children through noon meal centres from three per week to five per week. The children who do not eat eggs are provided with banana on these days. The financial allocation this year under the noon meal scheme has also been increased to supply additional quantity of rice, oil and vegetables. As a result of such initiatives, the children are able to get adequate nutrition and develop their intellectual abilities with good education, thereby creating an atmosphere to enable the growth of healthy future generation in Tamil Nadu.
25. Keeping in mind the verse of Vadalur Vallalar that “I wither on seeing the wilted crop”, this Government upholds the humanitarian value that life of people should not wither away like the wilted crop. This Government works resolutely on the principle of “service to people is service to god” bestowing undivided attention on providing amenities, namely, shelter to live, food to ward off hunger and clothing to enable decent living for the downtrodden people who live in the bottom rungs of the society. Thus, even foreigners wonder at our welfare schemes.
26. This Government is working with the commitment that the service to people is even above the service to God and is fulfilling its responsibilities with righteousness towards our motherland Tamil Nadu which is the pride of our glorious nation. With the firm faith that people will continue to support this regime in future as on today, I conclude my speech by once again conveying my sincere Pongal Greetings for Tamil New Year.

Nandri

Vanakkam