

**Honourable Members of the Legislative
Assembly,**

Vanakkam.

It is my immense pleasure to address the first session of the Legislative Assembly for the calendar year 2023 in this August House. I extend my warm greetings for the New Year and Tamil festival of Pongal to the people of Tamil Nadu and to all members of this House. I wholeheartedly wish that this year brings greater happiness, prosperity and growth to our State.

2. In the last 50 years, Tamil Nadu has grown significantly in multiple sectors to become a pioneering State in the country. During the 1960s, Tamil Nadu was lagging behind in social, economic, educational and health indicators when compared to other big

States. However, today, it stands tall as a leader among all States. This is primarily due to the model of good governance built on the pillars of social justice, equality, self-respect and rational thinking. As a result of the development model aimed at inclusive growth, Tamil Nadu has scored 63.3 marks and ranks first among the large States in the 'Social Progress Index' recently released by the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council based on the study of development status of States. This Government will continue to march with vigour on the path of this Dravidian model of development which has ensured the welfare and empowerment of suppressed, marginalized and backward sections of the society.

3. In the last year and a half, our Hon'ble Chief Minister has led the Government on

this development path through his untiring efforts and diligence. As a result, Tamil Nadu has been adjudged the best performing big State in India Today's recent 'State of the States' survey. This award is a testimony to the dynamic leadership of our Hon'ble Chief Minister and the Dravidian model of development, which is founded on the tenets of social justice and inclusive growth.

4. For people of Tamil Nadu to celebrate Pongal in a festive manner, the Hon'ble Chief Minister has ordered the distribution of Rs.1,000 as cash assistance, 1 kg raw rice, 1 kg sugar and 1 sugarcane to each of the 2.19 crore rice card holders in the State at a total cost of Rs.2,429 crore. The distribution has been inaugurated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister today. I am confident that this will help the people of the State to

celebrate Pongal, which is an integral part of Tamil society, with joy and gaiety.

5. This Government's deft management of Mandous cyclone and north-east monsoon minimized damages in Chennai city to a great extent. In particular, construction of stormwater drains for a length of 261 km and other flood mitigation projects worth Rs.1,335 crore in Chennai city and peri-urban areas were sanctioned by this Government, and of these, 209 km of drain works were completed well before the onset of monsoon. Further, construction of 360 km of high-priority drains in Kosasthalaiyar basin was completed on a war footing. As a result, major areas of the core city which were severely flooded last year witnessed minimal stagnation during this monsoon. The traffic disruption caused by heavy rains was largely

controlled and the city was quickly restored to normalcy. I convey my appreciation to this Government for its exemplary and effective management of the Mandous cyclone and north-east monsoon rains.

6. This Government, which functions on Muthamizh Arignar Kalaignar's philosophy of **"Though we may fall, Tamil should flourish"**, is taking all steps to protect the rightful place of Tamil language.

7. Regarding the use of official language, this House has already passed a resolution against steps that are detrimental to the interests of all State languages including Tamil. This Government will continue to urge that all State languages should be accorded the official language status.

8. Several States including Tamil Nadu had joined the GST regime, foregoing their fiscal autonomy on the assurance that their revenues will be protected. However, the anticipated revenues were not realized due to the drastic fall in revenues during the Covid pandemic. In such a scenario, the GST compensation regime has come to an end on 30.06.2022. Since the revenues of States are yet to fully recover from the impact of pandemic, this Government urges the Union Government to further extend the GST compensation period by at least two more years.

9. This Government gives utmost importance to the prompt redressal of public grievances, in line with its commitment to providing good governance. In the current year, under the '**Mudhalvarin Mugavari**'

scheme, out of 17.70 lakh petitions received so far, more than 16.28 lakh petitions have been disposed. In order to ensure satisfactory resolution of these petitions, a monitoring unit has been established.

10. In order to provide opportunities to the global Tamil diaspora to learn Tamil language and preserve Tamil culture, the Government has established '**Tamil Parappurai Kazhagam**'. The Non-Resident Tamils Welfare Board has been set up to act as a bridge between Non-Resident Tamils and their motherland, and to protect their interests. As a part of these initiatives, this Government has declared January 12 as '**Non-Resident Tamils Day**', which is being celebrated every year.

11. Due to the economic crisis and resultant food shortage in Sri Lanka, the Government of Tamil Nadu extended humanitarian assistance to Sri Lankans and sent rice, milk powder and life-saving medicines worth Rs.174 crore. The aid extended by Government of Tamil Nadu in these trying times has been widely appreciated. Due to the economic crisis, 216 Sri Lankan Tamils have come to Tamil Nadu and have been accommodated in camps, where they are being provided with food, clothing and basic amenities.

12. This Government accords highest priority to maintenance of law and order in the State and is taking all necessary measures to ensure that the State continues to be a haven of peace and tranquility, free from any form of violence. With utmost

concern for the future of our youth, the Hon'ble Chief Minister is determined to crack down on the distribution and consumption of drugs and narcotic substances with an iron hand. This Government is continuously taking measures to prevent drug smuggling including stringent enforcement of law and awareness creation among people.

13. To provide people with qualitative and consistent service delivery, this Government has embarked on an initiative '**Namma Pagudhi Namma Nyaya Vilai Kadai**' to modernize Public Distribution shops. So far, 4,455 shops have been given a facelift.

14. As a result of this Government's proactive planning and efforts in desilting waterways and canals, coupled with

a favourable monsoon, Mettur dam was opened 19 days ahead of the scheduled time for Kuruvai cultivation. Further, this Government has provided Kuruvai package worth Rs.61.12 crore to farmers. As a result, a record 5.28 lakh acres was brought under Kuruvai paddy cultivation in the Cauvery delta region, and so far, 36.20 lakh acres have been brought under Samba cultivation throughout the State.

15. This Government has announced an increase in procurement price of cow and buffalo milk by Rs.3 per litre without affecting the interests of the consumers. This has benefitted 4.20 lakh milk producers in the State.

16. This Government accords highest priority for the welfare of fishermen and is proactively undertaking several development schemes. Construction of 5 new fishing harbours and improvement works in existing 3 fishing harbours at a total cost of Rs.982.30 crore are in progress. This Government is committed to protect the fishing rights of Tamil Nadu fishermen in its traditional waters. In this year alone, 232 Tamil Nadu fishermen apprehended by the Sri Lankan Navy were released after unstinting efforts of this Government. Till date, 10 fishermen have not been released and 106 fishing boats continue to be under the custody of the Sri Lankan Government. This Government will continue to urge that necessary steps be taken to restrain Sri Lankan Navy from apprehending

our fishermen and to ensure early release of fishing boats and to find a permanent solution to these issues.

17. Tamil Nadu has emerged as the forerunner in climate change mitigation in the Country. In order to provide suitable policy directives on issues related to climate change, the Tamil Nadu Governing Council on Climate Change has been constituted with international experts, under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble Chief Minister. Further, to strengthen the State's efforts in climate change adaptation and mitigation, a Climate Summit was conducted by this Government in Chennai on 8th and 9th December, 2022. In a pioneering effort, this Government set up a '**Green Climate Fund**' with a fund size of Rs.1,000 crore to

support large projects to tackle climate change.

18. Not limiting itself to only welfare of human beings, this Government upholds the age old Tamil culture of caring and living in harmony with nature and all living beings. In this regard, this Government has notified two bird sanctuaries at Kazhuveli and Nanjarayankulam and an elephant reserve at Agathiyarmalai. In an exemplary initiative, the Government has notified India's first ever Slender Loris Sanctuary in Dindigul and Karur districts and Dugong Conservation Reserve in Palk Bay. The Government is taking steps to protect the critically endangered State animal Nilgiri Tahr and has sanctioned '**Project Nilgiri Tahr**', at a cost of Rs.25.14 crore. Under the Wetland Mission, Tamil Nadu has successfully

obtained accreditation for 13 new Ramsar sites, the highest in the country.

19. This Government is committed to strongly asserting its rights on inter-State river disputes, while maintaining friendly relations with neighbouring States. This Government will not permit any act that would be detrimental to the farmers of Tamil Nadu. The Government is taking all necessary steps to prevent the construction of Mekadatu dam. The reservoir level in Mullai Periyar dam is presently at 142 feet and the Government is taking all efforts to further increase it. This Government urges that a Water Disputes Tribunal may be constituted at the earliest as per the orders of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, on the issue of unauthorized diversion of water from Pennaiyar river by Karnataka.

20. With the objective of ensuring water security in the State, this Government has been expeditiously implementing 6 large schemes at a total cost of Rs.1,334.10 crore. As a result, 2.59 Tmcft of storage capacity will be added and 6.92 Tmcft of storage will be reclaimed. Due to constant monitoring by this Government, the long pending projects, Thamirabarani – Karumeniyar -Nambiyar and Athikadavu - Avinashi, are nearing completion.

21. Tamil Nadu continues to be a top performer in various health indicators in the country. It has substantially reduced the Infant Mortality Rate and Maternal Mortality Ratio, and has already achieved the Sustainable Development Goals for the year 2030 in this respect.

22. To address the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases, '**Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam**' scheme was launched by this Government to provide free home-based health care services at people's doorsteps. So far, 1.01 crore people have availed services in the comfort of their homes, under this programme.

23. This Government had launched a noble scheme '**Innuyir Kaapom Nammal Kaakum 48**', a first-of-its-kind initiative in the country, to provide free emergency medical care to all during the first 48 hours of an accident occurring in Tamil Nadu. Under this scheme, so far, 1.35 lakh accident victims have availed free-of-cost treatment worth Rs.120.58 crore in 679 hospitals across the State. As a result, countless precious lives have been saved.

24. Recently, few countries have witnessed a spurt in Covid cases due to a new variant of Omicron virus. This Government which successfully handled the second and third waves of COVID pandemic, has set up adequate health infrastructure in the State and has taken all precautionary measures to tackle future challenges.

25. Considering that the NEET exam system is highly disadvantageous to poor rural students and infringes on the rights of State Governments, a committee headed by Justice A.K. Rajan was constituted to study the issue. Based on the recommendations of the committee, a draft Bill to exempt medical students in Tamil Nadu from NEET exam was passed in the Assembly and sent for presidential assent. Since all clarifications

requested regarding the Bill have been provided, this Government seeks expeditious approval of the same.

26. To bridge learning losses that occurred due to COVID, this Government is implementing one of the largest learning outreach programmes '**Illam Thedi Kalvi**', a path breaking initiative in the country. With the help of 2 lakh volunteers, this programme has benefitted over 34 lakh students of classes 1 to 8. A study conducted by the world renowned research organization J-PAL has observed that Illam Thedi Kalvi has significantly contributed towards recovery of learning losses of up to 25 per cent in a span of 6 months. I am happy to inform that these results were presented at the 'Transforming Education Summit' held alongside the United Nations

General Assembly meetings and were widely appreciated. To ensure that all primary school children are able to read with comprehension and perform basic arithmetic operations by 2025, this Government is implementing the '**Ennum Ezhuthum**' programme.

27. It is the avowed objective of this Government to ensure holistic development of every student through quality education. To achieve this objective, '**Perasiriyar Anbazhagan School Development Scheme**' has been launched to modernize Government schools and upgrade infrastructure over the next five years with an allocation of Rs.1,430 crore in the current year. In addition, the Hon'ble Chief Minister has announced that 7,200 new classrooms

will be constructed with an outlay of Rs.1,050 crore.

28. This Government has planned to upgrade the 45-year old Chennai Book fair to global standards, and will organize the Chennai International Book Fair for the first time from 16th to 18th January 2023 with participation from more than 25 countries. The objective of the book fair is to facilitate knowledge and copyright exchange between Tamil publishers and the global publishing industry. To realize Paavendhar's dream **"When shall we herald the day, when the people of thousand languages will see the beauty of our mother Tamil, and the poems of my Tamil people"**, the Government of Tamil Nadu will provide a special grant to translate acclaimed Tamil

literary works into international and other Indian languages.

29. This Government is taking steps to provide quality higher education and create a highly qualified and skilled human resource that would fulfill the needs of a fast-growing nation. To encourage girl students to pursue higher education, this Government has launched a landmark scheme, **'Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiya Ninaivu Pudhumai Pen Thittam'**. Under this scheme, Rs.1,000 is provided every month as cash assistance to all girl students pursuing higher education, who have studied in Government schools from 6th to 12th standard. In the current academic year, 1,28,780 girl students have benefitted through this scheme and this number is expected to cross 2 lakh before

the end of this financial year. As a result of this scheme, the enrolment of girl students from Government schools in colleges has increased considerably during the current academic year as compared to the previous academic year.

30. To meet the needs of industry, new courses have been introduced in polytechnic colleges. Further, this Government has begun women-friendly diploma courses to increase their employment opportunities. Civil and Mechanical engineering diploma courses are being imparted in Tamil medium from the current academic year.

31. For the first time in the country, this Government has successfully conducted the International

Chess Olympiad in Chennai, which was attended by around 1,800 sportspersons and delegates from over 180 nations. The event was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister. The meticulous and efficient organization of the event by the Government was lauded by one and all. I appreciate the Government of Tamil Nadu for having spectacularly conducted this international event in such a short span of time, much to the acclaim and admiration of the world.

32. The '**Chief Minister's Cup**' has been announced by the Government to promote sporting events across the State. In these competitions, school and college students, differently-abled persons, Government servants and public in 5 categories, comprising both men and

women, will take part in various sports competitions including Athletics, Football, Kabaddi and Silambam. These competitions will be held throughout the State.

33. A global technology and innovation summit, '**UMAGINE**' will be held for the first time in Chennai in March 2023. It will bring together tech companies, investors, academia and policy makers on a single platform, and will provide new vigour and fillip to the technology industry.

34. The Noon Meal Scheme which was introduced by the Justice Party in 1920 in Chennai Corporation has been expanded over a period of time and has today become a model for the entire country. It has been instrumental in ensuring enrolment and retention of large number of students in

schools. Despite having aspirations to learn, many students are unable to concentrate in studies as they come hungry to schools in the morning without eating breakfast. To address this problem, the '**Chief Minister's Breakfast Scheme**' has been launched, which adds a new dimension to the Noon Meal Scheme. In the first phase, this scheme is being implemented in 1,545 Government primary schools benefitting 1.14 lakh students daily. I firmly believe that this scheme will also be a model for the entire nation, similar to the Noon Meal Scheme.

35. The Hon'ble Chief Minister has set the goal of a 1 trillion dollar economy by the year 2030 with the objective of bringing living standards of people on par with developed countries and making Tamil Nadu the best State across sectors. As a result of

several investment conclaves and global outreach activities undertaken by this Government since July 2021, 207 MoUs have been signed with a cumulative investment commitment of Rs.2,23,210 crore and employment opportunities to 3,44,150 persons. It is notable that Tamil Nadu has attracted Foreign Direct Investment worth Rs.28,232 crore during this period.

36. This Government has released several sectoral policies such as the Tamil Nadu Life Sciences Promotion Policy, Tamil Nadu Research and Development Policy, Tamil Nadu Footwear and Leather Policy and Tamil Nadu Aerospace and Defence Industrial Policy in 2022. Further, policies to promote Ethanol blending, Green Hydrogen and E-vehicles will be released shortly.

37. For creating an enabling ecosystem for IT companies to set up in towns other than Chennai, mini TIDEL parks are being established in 7 locations. Further, the State's third TIDEL park will be constructed in Madurai at an estimated cost of Rs.600 crore.

38. The State Government has begun preparatory works for setting up a greenfield international airport at Parandur in Kancheepuram District. This will help cater to the growing demand of air traffic, improve livelihood of the locals and further economic development of the State.

39. The MSME Sector, which had been severely affected during Covid has seen a remarkable recovery owing to the multipronged interventions of the

Government. There has been an increase in bank credit to MSMEs by 20 per cent and in the number of loan accounts by over 19 per cent in the first half of this financial year. After this Government assumed office, over 16,000 self-employment projects worth Rs.2,344 crore have been provided assistance. In addition, the Government has opened 5 new industrial estates for MSMEs in the current year.

40. The Tamil Nadu Startup and Innovation Mission (StartupTN) has created a conducive ecosystem for startups in the State. The number of registered startups in the State has doubled since May 2021. Further, as a first in the country, **a special fund of Rs.30 crore has been sanctioned to support SC/ST startups** and this has

ensured inclusivity in the State's startup ecosystem.

41. With a view to upgrade skills and qualifications of our youth to international standards, this Government has launched the '**Naan Mudhalvan**' initiative. To bridge the gap in academia-industry linkage, students are being offered industry relevant employability-oriented courses and internship programs. As part of this unique initiative, so far 3 lakh students from engineering colleges have undergone these courses and another 4.5 lakh students from Arts & Science colleges will also be benefitted. The Scheme aims to ensure that students secure employment commensurate with their educational qualifications and are

industry ready by the time they complete their studies.

42. This Government is fully committed to deliver all basic amenities, improve infrastructure and alleviate poverty through livelihood promotion schemes in rural areas. The '**Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam**' (AGAMT) has been re-launched by this Government to ensure equitable and holistic development of all rural habitations. In 2022-23, works are being undertaken in 2,544 panchayats at a total cost of Rs.1,155 crore.

43. This Government has undertaken works to renovate **Periyar Ninaivu Samathuvapurams**, which were established by Muthamizh Arignar Kalaigarnar with a lofty vision of fostering communities to live

together in unity and brotherhood. In the first phase, 149 Samathuvapurams have been taken up for renovation at a cost of Rs.190 crore and the works will be completed shortly.

44. Similarly, to upgrade infrastructural amenities in urban areas, the Hon'ble Chief Minister had announced in the previous assembly session that a length of 20,990 km of urban roads will be developed at a cost of Rs.9,588 crore in the next four years. These works are in progress and will be completed at the earliest. The Government has sanctioned Rs.122 crore to dispose legacy waste through bio-mining, in an environment-friendly manner, and steps are being taken to reclaim waste land in 53 sites. So far,

369 acres of land have been reclaimed and are being transformed into green spaces. In order to fulfil the drinking water needs of citizens, this Government has sanctioned 103 combined water supply schemes at an estimated cost of Rs.15,734 crore under the Jal Jeevan Mission. Further, works to ensure drinking water supply in urban areas have been sanctioned at a cost of Rs.3,166 crore under AMRUT scheme. As a result, 1.64 crore people across the State will be benefitted.

45. With a view to ensure planned urbanization in cities, 6 new Urban Development Authorities have been established. As Chennai and its surrounding areas are developing at a fast pace, it is essential to facilitate economic growth by

ensuring provision of basic amenities in such urban agglomerations. Towards this end, this Government has announced a five-fold expansion of the Chennai metropolitan area to 5,904 sq.km.

46. The Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA) was constituted in 2010 for preparation of transportation plans and institutional coordination across agencies and departments involved in urban mobility in the Chennai metropolitan area. This Government has revived this body which had been defunct for several years. The first meeting of this Authority was conducted under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Chief Minister last November. Initiatives such as integrated ticketing facility, comprehensive mobility plans and

safe commutes to women and students will be undertaken.

47. This Government recognises the importance of planned growth in surrounding areas of Chennai to ensure sustainability of the city's fast-paced growth. In this regard, Chennai Metropolitan Development Agency (CMDA) is embarking on a pioneering effort to create a new growth cluster through land pooling in Madampakkam, spanning 600 acres. Land will be pooled with the consent of land owners and classified based on their usage to promote planned development, while ensuring that the benefits of development are shared with the land owners. Majority of the land owners have given their willingness to participate in this project and the works will be completed

shortly. In the next phase, **a satellite town is proposed to be created near Mamallapuram along East Coast Road (ECR)** following the same model. The upgradation of ECR as a four-lane road coupled with development of this satellite town will anchor future growth of the Chennai metropolitan area.

48. The Government is taking several steps to ensure quality and safe road networks across the State, which are imperative for economic growth. This Government has sanctioned 2,263 new works under the Comprehensive Road Infrastructure Development Programme at a cost of Rs.5,582 crore. New works for converting 131 causeways to High-level bridges at a cost of Rs.560 crore,

construction of bye-passes at a cost of Rs.142 crore and 8 railway over bridges at a cost of Rs.327 crore have been taken up in the current year.

49. Self-help groups (SHG) have been instrumental in enhancing the status of women through livelihood improvement, skill development and self-reliance. In the current year, 42,845 new SHGs have been formed with 3.97 lakh women. So far, bank credit has been given to 3.07 lakh SHGs to the tune of Rs.16,949 crore in the current financial year. In order to improve the quality of SHG products and to provide an opportunity for marketing through e-commerce, brand 'MaThi' is being promoted by the Government.

50. The revolutionary scheme of providing **free travel to all women in ordinary town buses** has led to not only economic upliftment but also social empowerment of women in the State. On a daily basis, 36 lakh trips are being undertaken by women. A study commissioned by the State Planning Commission has revealed that a woman passenger saves approximately Rs.888 per month as a result of this scheme.

51. This Government is committed to replace the existing aged fleet with environment-friendly new green buses. Steps are being taken to procure 2,213 BS-VI buses and 500 electric buses with KfW funding and 1,000 BS-VI buses with

State funding, and they will come into operation this year.

52. The first phase of Chennai Metro Rail, covering 54 km in two corridors, is providing world-class metro rail services. The ridership has seen a steady increase after the Covid pandemic from an average of 1.76 lakh per day in June 2022 to 2.07 lakh per day in December 2022. The implementation of Phase II of this project for a length of 118.9 km at a total project cost of Rs.63,246 crore is progressing at a fast pace.

53. This Government is harnessing the immense tourism potential of the State and has adopted an integrated strategy to propel tourism-based economy. Adventure and eco-camping sites are being set up in

lesser known places to provide unique experiences to tourists and also create livelihood opportunities for the local populace.

54. To commemorate the legacy of the inimitable great Tamil emperor, Rajaraja Cholan, the Government has announced that his birth anniversary, 'Sadaya Vizha', will henceforth be celebrated as a Government function. Further, the Rajaraja Cholan Manimandapam will be renovated and embellished to showcase the glory of the Chola empire. The Hon'ble Chief Minister has also announced that the birth anniversary 'Aadi Thiruvaadhirai' of the mighty Tamil emperor Rajendra Cholan who reigned over vast swathes of the world, will henceforth be celebrated as a Government function.

55. This Government has been taking proactive steps to preserve the rich heritage of archaeological and historical monuments in the State. Construction of a new world-class museum to showcase the artefacts found in Keezhadi excavations is nearing completion. Similarly, works are underway to set up the '**Porunai Museum**' where excavated artefacts from Adichanallur, Korkai and Sivakalai will be displayed.

56. This Government has been taking all necessary measures to safeguard temple lands and properties since it assumed office. **So far, land and properties worth Rs.3,657 crore have been retrieved by the Government.** I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Government of Tamil Nadu for this remarkable feat.

During this year, the Government has commenced new works in 34 temples at a total cost of Rs.158 crore. Further, the Hon'ble Chief Minister laid the foundation for works, as part of the Master Plan of Tiruchendur Temple, at an estimated cost of Rs.300 crore.

57. This Government, true to its philosophy of furthering inclusive growth, is implementing various special schemes towards socio-economic and educational development of the marginalized and weaker sections of the society. Several works including construction of new hostels, smart classrooms and upgradation of residential schools for Adi Dravidar and Tribal students are being undertaken at a cost of Rs.425.40 crore.

58. Works are in progress for the construction of 1,537 houses for particularly vulnerable homeless tribals throughout the State. To protect the rights of forest dwelling tribes, 2,293 tribal families have been given forest rights under the Forest Rights Act, 2006 during the last one and a half years.

59. Tamil Nadu has adopted a unique reservation system to further social justice in the State and ensure advancement of socially backward classes. This Government is firm on continuing the present reservation policy in the State, as the 10 per cent quota for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) is against the ideals of social justice.

60. To ensure economic development of socially backward sections in the society, steps are being taken to provide loans worth

Rs.210 crore through the Tamil Nadu Backward Classes Economic Development Corporation and Tamil Nadu Minorities Economic Development Corporation.

61. The Government is firmly committed to safeguard the rights and interests of minorities in the State. The scheme of providing subsidy to pilgrims undertaking Haj and Jerusalem pilgrimage will be continued.

62. The upliftment of weaker and marginalized sections of the society is an important objective of this Government. The Hon'ble Chief Minister has ordered that **pension for differently abled persons will be enhanced from Rs.1,000 to Rs.1,500 per month and maintenance allowance from**

Rs.1,500 to Rs.2,000 for severely affected persons with disabilities.

The enhanced amounts are being provided at an annual additional cost of Rs.388 crore, benefitting 6.45 lakh differently abled persons across the State.

63. This Government has announced an increase in dearness allowance from 34 per cent to 38 per cent, effective from 01.01.2023, keeping in mind the welfare of Government employees. This will benefit around 16 lakh Government employees, teachers, pensioners and family pensioners. This will result in an additional expenditure of Rs.2,359 crore per annum. The process of receiving life certificate for pensioners has been digitized and made easier, allowing the

pensioners to avail this service from the comfort of their homes.

64. Since this Government took office . . .

- In 2021, the State was severely affected by heavy flooding and rains, and normal life was disrupted. Based on the learnings of that disaster, **this Government has effectively managed the recent cyclone and rains.**
- The State's economy was in doldrums due to several reasons including Covid. Within the last year and a half, due to the economic reforms, welfare schemes and development works carried out by this Government,

the economy has been revived and the State has been marching ahead in the path of development.

- Because of stellar management of law and order, Tamil Nadu continues to be a haven of peace. As a result, **the State is attracting numerous foreign investments and is becoming a forerunner in all sectors.**

65. This Government is founded on the ideals of social justice, self-respect, inclusive growth, equality, women empowerment, secularism and compassion towards all. Following the principles and ideals of stalwarts like Thanthai Periyar, Annal Ambedkar, Perunthalaivar Kamarajar, Perarignar Anna and Muthamizh Arignar

Kalaignar, this Government has been delivering the much-acclaimed Dravidian model of governance to its people.

66. This Government is tirelessly striving to achieve the twin objectives of welfare of Tamils and prosperity of Tamil Nadu. This Government will overcome any challenges in achieving this goal and successfully take Tamil Nadu on a high growth trajectory. This year, I hope that all of you will constructively participate in legislative debates, enact required legislations for the welfare of people and socio-economic growth of the State and extend co-operation to the Government's endeavor in achieving these objectives.

67. I once again wish everyone a very happy New Year and Pongal and conclude my address with the immortal words of Mahakavi Bharathiyar.

Vazhiya Senthamizh!

Vazhga Natramizhar!

Vazhiya Bharatha Mani Thiru Nadu!

