

English rendering of PM's address during the Aadi Thiruvathirai Festival at Gangaikonda Cholapuram Temple in Tamil Nadu

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Vanakkam Chola Mandalam,

The most respected Aadheenam Mathadhishgan (heads), the Chinmaya Mission Swamis, Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi Ji, my cabinet colleague Dr. L Murugan Ji, local MP Thiruma-Valavan Ji, Tamil Nadu ministers present on the dais, my colleague in Parliament respected Sri Ilaiyaraaja Ji, all Oduvars, devotees, students, cultural historians, and my dear brothers and sisters! Namah Shivaya

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I observed that whenever the name of Nayanar Nagendran was mentioned, the atmosphere of excitement all around suddenly changed.

Friends,

In a way, this is the place of reverence of the Raj Raja. And the way Ilaiyaraaja immersed us all in the devotion of Shiva in that land of faith, be it the month of Saavan, be it the land of faith of Raj Raja and be it the penance of Ilaiyaraaja, what a wonderful atmosphere, a very wonderful atmosphere, and I am the MP of Kashi and when I hear Om Namah Shivay, I get goosebumps.

Friends,

The amazing energy of Shiva Darshan, the music of Sri Ilaiyaraaja, the chanting of Oduvar, this spiritual experience truly overwhelms the soul.

Friends,

The holy month of Saavan and the historic occasion of one thousand years of the start of the construction of the Brihadeshwar Shiva temple, in such a wonderful time I have had the good fortune of being present at the feet of Lord Brihadeshwar Shiva and worshipping him. I have prayed for the welfare of 140 crore Indians and the continued progress of India in this historic temple. I wish that everyone gets the blessings of Lord Shiva, :
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Friends,

I was late in coming here, I had reached here early, but the wonderful exhibition that the cultural ministry of the Government of India has put up is informative, inspiring and we all are filled with pride that how our ancestors gave direction for human welfare a thousand years ago. It was so vast, so extensive, so grand, and I was told that thousands of people have been coming to see this exhibition since the last one week. It is worth seeing and I would tell everyone to definitely see it.

Friends,

Today I have also got the opportunity to launch the album of Tamil Geeta here through the efforts of Chinmaya Mission. This effort also energizes our resolve to preserve the heritage. I also congratulate all the people associated with this effort.

Friends,

The Chola kings expanded their diplomatic and trade relations to Sri Lanka, Maldives and Southeast Asia. It is also a coincidence that I have returned from Maldives only yesterday, and today I am a part of this program in Tamil Nadu.

Our scriptures say that devotees of Shiva become immortal like Shiva by merging into Shiva. That is why India's Chola heritage, associated with the exclusive devotion to Shiva, has become immortal today. Raj Raja Chola, Rajendra Chola, these names are synonymous with the identity and pride of India. The history and heritage of the Chola Empire is a proclamation of India's true potential. This is the inspiration of that dream of India, with which we are moving ahead towards the goal of developed India. With this inspiration, I pay my tribute to Rajendra Chola the Great. In the last few days, all of you have celebrated the Aadi Thiruvathirai festival. Today it is culminating in this grand event. I congratulate all those who contributed to this.

Friends,

Historians believe that the Chola Empire was one of the golden eras of India. This era is identified by its strategic power. India's tradition as the mother of Democracy was also carried forward by the Chola Empire. Historians talk about Britain's Magna Carta in the name of democracy, but many centuries ago, elections were held in the Chola Empire through the democratic system from Kudavolai Amai. Today there is so much discussion about water management and ecology preservation all over the world. Our ancestors understood their importance long ago. We hear about many kings who used to bring back gold, silver or livestock after conquering other places. But see, Rajendra Chola is known for bringing Ganga water, he brought Ganga water. Rajendra Chola brought Ganga water from North India and established it in the South. “ ” that water was released here in Chola Ganga Yeri, Chola Ganga Lake, which is today known as Ponneri Lake.

Friends,

Rajendra Chola also established Gangai-Kondacholapuram Kovil. This temple still remains an architectural wonder of the world. It is also the gift of the Chola Empire that the festival of Maa Ganga is being celebrated on this land of Maa Kaveri. I am very happy that today, in memory of that historical event, once again Ganga water has been brought here from Kashi. Just now when I went here to perform puja, the rituals were completed as per the tradition, the abhishek was done with Ganga water and I am a people's representative of Kashi, and I have an intimate bond with Mother Ganga. These works of the Chola kings, these events associated with them, give new energy, new power and new momentum to the Mahayagya of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat'.

Brothers and sisters,

The Chola kings had bound India in the thread of cultural unity. Today our government is carrying forward the same ideas of the Chola era. We are strengthening the centuries-old threads of unity through events like Kashi Tamil Sangamam and Saurashtra Tamil Sangamam. Ancient temples of Tamil Nadu like Gangai-Kondacholapuram are also being preserved through ASI. When the new Parliament of the country was inaugurated, the saints of our Shiva Aadheenam had given spiritual leadership to that event, all of them are present here. The sacred Sengol associated with Tamil culture has been installed in the Parliament. Even today when I remember that moment, I feel filled with pride.

Friends,

I have just met some Dikshitaras of the Nataraja Temple in Chidambaram. They presented me with the holy prasad of this divine temple, where Lord Shiva is worshipped in the form of Nataraja. This form of Nataraja is a symbol of our philosophy and scientific roots. A similar Anand Tandava idol of Lord Nataraja is also adding to the beauty of Bharat Mandapam in Delhi. In this Bharat Mandapam, eminent leaders from all over the world had joined during the G-20.

Friends,

Our Shaiva tradition has played a huge role in the cultural formation of India. The Chola emperors were important architects of this construction. That is why even today Tamil Nadu is very important among the living centers of the Shaiva tradition. The legacy of the great Nayanmar saints, their devotional literature, Tamil literature, the role of our revered Aadheenams, have given birth to a new era in the social and spiritual field.

Friends,

Today, when the world is grappling with problems like instability, violence and environment, Shaiva principles show us the way to solutions. You see, Tirumular had written - “ ”, that is, love is Shiva. Love is Shiva! If the world adopts this idea today, then most of the crises can be solved automatically. Today India is taking this idea forward in the form of One World, One Family, One Future.

Friends,

Today India is moving ahead on the mantra of development as well as heritage. Today's India is proud of its history. In the last decade, we have worked in mission mode on the conservation of the country's heritage. The country's ancient statues and artifacts, which were stolen and sold abroad, have been brought back. Since 2014, more than 600 ancient artefacts and sculptures have returned to India from different countries of the world. Out of these, 36 are especially from our Tamil Nadu. Today, many important heritages like Nataraja, Lingodbhav, Dakshinamoorthy, Ardhanarishwar, Nandikeshwar, Uma Parameshwari, Parvati, Sambandar are once again adding to the beauty of this land.

Friends,

Our heritage and the influence of Shaiva philosophy are no longer limited to India or this earth. When India became the first country to land on the South Pole of the Moon, we named that point of the Moon as Shiva Shakti. That important part of the moon is now identified by the name of Shiva-Shakti.

Friends,

The heights of economic and strategic progress which India reached during the Chola period are our inspiration even today. Raj Raja Chola created a powerful navy. Rajendra Chola strengthened it further. Many administrative reforms were also carried out during his reign. He strengthened the local administrative system. A strong revenue system was implemented. Trade development, use of sea routes, promotion and dissemination of art and culture, India was progressing rapidly in every direction.

Friends,

The Chola Empire is like an ancient roadmap for the creation of a new India. It tells us that if we want to become a developed nation, we have to emphasize on unity. We have to strengthen our Navy, our defense forces. We have to explore new opportunities. And along with all this, we will have to preserve our values as well. And I am satisfied that the country is moving ahead with this inspiration today.

Friends,

Today's India gives utmost importance to its security. Recently, during Operation Sindoor, the world has seen how India responds if someone attacks India's security and sovereignty. Operation Sindoor has shown that no place is safe for India's enemies, for terrorists. And today when I was coming here from the helipad, covering a distance of 3-4 kilometres, suddenly I saw that a big road show was formed and everyone was hailing Operation Sindoor. Operation Sindoor has awakened a new consciousness in the entire country, has generated new self-confidence and the world is also having to accept India's power.

Friends,

We all know that when Rajendra Chola built Gangai-Kondacholapuram, he kept its shikhara smaller than the Brihadeshwara Temple in Thanjavur. He wanted to keep the temple built by his father the highest. Even amidst his greatness, Rajendra Chola showed humility. Today's new India is moving forward on this spirit. We are continuously becoming stronger, but our spirit is of world brotherhood, of world welfare.

Friends,

Carrying forward the feeling of pride in my heritage, today I am taking another pledge here. In the coming times, we will install grand statues of Rajraja Chola and his son and great ruler Rajendra Chola I in Tamil Nadu. These statues will become modern pillars of our historical consciousness.

Friends,

Today is also the death anniversary (Punyatithi) of Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam ji. To lead a developed India, we need lakhs of youth like Dr. Kalam, Chola Rajas. Such youth full of strength and devotion will fulfill the dreams of 140 crore countrymen. Together, we will take forward the resolve of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat. With this feeling, I once again congratulate all of you on this occasion. Thank you very much.

Say with me,

Bharat Mata ki Jai.

Bharat Mata ki Jai.

Bharat Mata ki Jai.

Vanakkam

DISCLAIMER: This is the approximate translation of PM's speech. Original speech was delivered in Hindi.

MJPS/VJ/SS

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