



English rendering of Prime Minister's address at Pongal celebrations in New Delhi

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Vaṇakkam!

Iniya Pongal Nalvāḷttukkaḷ! Greetings on this joyous occasion of Pongal!

Today, Pongal has truly become a global festival. Across the world, the Tamil community and those who cherish Tamil culture celebrate it with great enthusiasm and I am one among them. It is my privilege to join you in celebrating this special festival. In Tamil life, Pongal is a delightful experience, embodying gratitude towards our farmers, the earth, and the sun. It teaches us the importance of harmony with nature, family, and society. At this time, other regions of India too are immersed in festivities- Lohri, Makar Sankranti, Magh Bihu, and more. I extend my heartfelt greetings to all Tamil brothers and sisters in India and across the globe on Pongal and on all these festivals.

Friends,

It has been a source of great joy for me that last year I had the opportunity to participate in several events connected with Tamil culture. I offered prayers at the thousand-year-old Gangaikonda Cholapuram temple in Tamil Nadu. During the Kashi Tamil Sangamam in Varanasi, I felt the vibrant energy of cultural unity every moment I was there. When I visited Rameswaram for the inauguration of the Pamban Bridge, I once again witnessed the grandeur of Tamil history. Tamil culture is not only India's shared heritage, but also humanity's shared heritage. The spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat finds strength in festivals like Pongal.

Friends,

Almost every civilization in the world celebrates a festival linked to harvest. In Tamil culture, the farmer is regarded as the foundation of life. The Thirukkural speaks extensively about agriculture and farmers. Our farmers are strong partners in nation-building, and their efforts are giving immense strength to the mission of Atmanirbhar Bharat- a self-reliant India. The central government too remains committed to empowering farmers and is working continuously in this direction.

Friends,

The festival of Pongal inspires us to ensure that gratitude towards nature is not confined to words, but becomes a way of life. When the earth gives us so much, it is our responsibility to preserve it. For the next generation, keeping the soil healthy, conserving water, and using resources wisely are of utmost importance. Initiatives like Mission LiFE, Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam and Amrit Sarovar embody this spirit. We are working to make agriculture more sustainable and environmentally friendly. In the coming years, sustainable farming practices, water management- as I often say, Per Drop More Crop natural farming, agri-tech, and value addition will play a crucial role. Our youth are advancing in all these areas with fresh ideas. Just a few months ago, I attended a conference on natural farming in Tamil Nadu, where I saw how wonderfully Tamil youth are working leaving behind big professional pursuits to dedicate themselves to

the fields. I urge my young Tamil friends engaged in agriculture to expand this movement for a revolution in sustainable farming. Our goal must be that our plates remain full, our pockets remain full, and our planet remains safe.

Friends,

Tamil culture is one of the world's oldest living civilizations. It connects centuries together, learning from history and guiding the present towards the future. Inspired by this, today's India draws strength from its roots and moves forward towards new possibilities. On this sacred occasion of Pongal, we feel the faith that propels India forward a nation deeply connected to its culture, respectful of its land, and confident about its future.

Iniya Pongal Nalvaazhthukkal! Vālgā Tamil, Vālgā Bhāratam! Once again, I convey my warmest greetings to all of you on Pongal. Thank you very much.

Vanakkam!

MJPS/VJ/ST

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