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VISIT OF PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION FROM ICELAND

ADDRESS

BY

Hon. Thiru. P. Dhanapal,
Speaker,
Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly

on

24th November 2012

at

Hon. Speaker's Chamber,
L.A. Secretariat, Chennai 600 009

Hon'ble President and
Hon. Vice-President, Parliament of Iceland

Hon. Chairperson of the Parliamentary Group of the Social Democratic Alliance,
Secretary to the President of parliament of Iceland

Mr. and Mrs. Ambassador, Icelandic Embassy,

Liaison Officer from Lok Sabha Secretariat

and

Secretary, Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly.

On behalf of our Hon'ble Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi Amma and people of Tamil Nadu, I welcome you all to the glorious and ancient land of the Tamils and I hope that your visit to our State and the capital city, Chennai has been enriching and interesting, offering you a hands-on experience on the dynamics of this State.

I am happy to say that human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, respect for others, selflessness, discipline and respect for human rights are the core values of the Iceland. I also read that the Iceland is known for its sagas.

I think you have a multiparty parliamentary system and have a different election system. I read that your term of office is four years, but ours is five years.

It is interesting to note that for generating electricity and for heating buildings, you are using the huge reserves of natural heat.

I wish to take this opportunity to provide you a bird's eye view of our State, its Legislature and the developmental measures announced by our Hon'ble Chief Minister.

The State of Tamil Nadu enjoys a tropical climate and is endowed with all kinds of natural wealth, talented manpower and is populated by warm and friendly people.

Tamil Nadu is the eleventh largest state in India by area and the seventh most populous state. The population as per the latest census is about 72 million with a literacy rate of 80%. It is the fourth largest contributor to India's GDP. Tamil Nadu is also the most urbanised state in

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India. The state has the highest number of business enterprises and stands second in total employment in India. Tamil Nadu is ranked first in the number of factories and industrial workers and ranked third in terms of investment and net value addition.

Tamil Nadu has several places of tourist interest and has eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites including Mammalapuram.

Tamil is one of the oldest classical languages and we have had several enlightened scholars like Thiruvalluvar, Avvaiyar and Kambar.

The State under the dynamic and able leadership of Hon'ble Chief Minister, very popularly and fondly referred by the people as Puratchi Thalaivi Amma, is haven of peace where people belonging to all religions, races and linguistic groups live in complete harmony and brotherhood.

The Tamil Nadu Legislature is situated within Fort. St. George which was established by the English East India Company in April 1640. The Assembly Chamber was built in 1911. It has a beautiful appearance overlooking the sea, with the portraits of important visionaries and leaders adorning the walls inside.

After India's independence in 1947, the first elections under the new Constitution were held in 1952 and the first House was constituted on 1st March 1952. The present 14th Assembly was constituted on 14th May 2011. In the 2011 elections, the AIADMK-led alliance, headed by **Hon. Puratchi Thalaivi Amma**, had a landslide victory winning 203 Constituencies out of 234 and the Ruling AIADMK Party on its own had captured 150 seats and formed the Government. The House has 19 women members and 3 of them are in the Cabinet. Coming 30th we are going to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee Celebration of the Assembly. In this connection, Yesterday our Hon'ble Chief Minister opened a photo exhibition which also we can see after this meeting.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister is a five-time Member of the Assembly serving since 1989. Our Hon'ble Chief Minister was the first woman to be a Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly in 1989 and was the first elected woman Chief Minister of the State and the first woman to serve as Chief Minister thrice. Hon'ble Chief Minister has also served as a Member of the Rajya Sabha from 1984 to 1989.

Right from the 1950s, the State had pioneered and shown the way in different ways, namely in education, health, nutrition, family welfare, social security and rural development. Traditionally our State is strong in the fields of engineering, automobiles, textiles, cotton, leather products, etc.

The supply of rice under Public Distribution System without cost benefiting 1.97 crore families, enhancing the Social Security Pension to Rs.

1,000 benefiting 26.82 lakhs elderly and destitute persons, distribution of mixies, grinders and fans to women without cost, provision of marriage assistance to poor girls, cash compensation to fishermen during the fishing ban period, construction of 60,000 solar powered green houses for the poor, provision of solar powered street lights, construction of one lakh concrete houses in cyclone ravaged districts, poverty reduction measures, continuance of free electricity for agriculturists, implementation of Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme, issue of one lakh house site ownership documents, distribution of milch cows, goats and sheep to the rural poor without cost are some of the noteworthy schemes. A total sum of Rs.30,331 crores, nearly 30% of the total budget, has been allotted this year for social security net and welfare schemes.

Our **Hon'ble Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi Amma** had announced number of innovative schemes, such as, the Cradle baby scheme, Girl child protection scheme, All Women Police Stations, All Women Commando Force, which are first of its kind.

With a view to improving the green cover, the Government has launched a massive programme for planting 64 lakh tree saplings at a cost of Rs.29.44 crores.

Tamil Nadu offers a number of competitive advantages to attract industries with rich human resources. Our State is the most technically powerful, knowledge State in the country. We have well laid out infrastructure and logistics with 4 major sea ports and 20 minor ports. It is ranked first in electronic hardware manufacture and exports. Our Hon'ble Chief Minister Amma has set a goal to make Chennai the world's largest auto hub. Many multi-national companies are investing in our State. The Government headed by our Hon'ble Chief Minister, Puratchi Thalaivi Amma recently signed MoUs with 12 companies attracting an investment of Rs.21 thousand Crores on 5.11.2012, providing employment opportunities to more than 1.25 lakhs persons.

Our Hon'ble Chief Minister Amma is also taking a lot of steps to improve the tourism sector. Health care has received high priority and Government hospitals are being upgraded and provided with all facilities. I wish to point out that the Chennai is the health hub of India. I came to know that in Iceland also there is a similar public insurance system.

Our beloved leader **Hon. Amma** has touched each and every facet of the people's lives through a number of innovative and far-sighted schemes and has displayed indomitable will to ensure strict implementation of whatever has been promised. Tamil Nadu will soon be the number one State in the country. I am running out of time, but still there is an endless list of achievements that stand to Hon. Chief Minister's credit.

Last but not the least, the Hon'ble Chief Minister had released the "**Tamil Nadu Vision 2023**" Document, which envisages a total investment of Rs. 15 lakh crores and aspires for a six fold growth in per-

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capital income over the next 10 years and aims at inclusive growth, making the State poverty free. Tamil Nadu will have the best infrastructure facilities in all vital sectors as well as the highest Human Development Index ranking in India. The fruits of this vision will be there for you to see when you visit Tamil Nadu the next time. I again welcome you to Tamil Nadu.

I hope that your stay in Chennai is a pleasant one. I am sure that your visit to India and our State would help social ties between the Iceland and India.

With these few words, I conclude my speech.

Thank you.

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