

**Pongal and Tamil – New Year Celebrations**  
**14 – 18<sup>th</sup> January 2009**  
**Tamil New Year**  
**Press Note**

Though New Year Day is commonly celebrated on 1<sup>st</sup> January, in view of the consensus amongst almost all Tamil Scholars that the first day of the Tamil month *Thai*, the opening month of the *Thiruvalluvar* year, is the first day of the Tamil year, Government of Tamil Nadu has declared 1<sup>st</sup> *Thai* as the Tamil New Year Day and a legislation to this effect was enacted on 1.2.2008. Pongal, the most popular and fervently celebrated festival of Tamilians, also fall on the same day.

The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has expressed his wish that this day must be celebrated in all cities, towns and villages and hamlets with programmes depicting Tamil Nadu's traditional art forms and portray, the greatness of its culture and the richness of its heritage, Government is desirous that on this day let the people plant trees bearing the 'Mukkani' fruits of banana, mango and jack fruit; draw colourful *kolams*; decorate their houses with array of lamps showing them in new splendor and tiny tots, students and women rejoice by wearing new clothes and singing and dancing in praise of Tamil pride and self respect; and spread the message of equality, hailing it as the Tamil New Year day.

It is with this spirit that Tamil New Year Day is being celebrated in Delhi on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2009 with due pomp and show. It is a historic day as it shall be the first time in the history of Tamil Nadu that Tamil New Year shall be celebrated on 1<sup>st</sup> day of the Thai month.

**Note on PONGAL**

Pongal is an ancient and undoubtedly the most popular and fervently celebrated festival of Tamils. It is the harvest festival of Tamil Nadu celebrated on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Tamil month, *Thai*, that is 14<sup>th</sup> January of every year.

“**Pongal**” is actually the name of a rice and lentil dish cooked commonly in Tamil Nadu, and specifically on the festive day of Pongal. Traditionally Pongal is celebrated for four consecutive days. **Bhogi** is celebrated on January 13, Pongal on January 14, **Maattu Pongal** on January 15, and **Kannum Pongal** on January 16.

**BHOGI** is intended to rid the society of evil. People clean up their houses of all the junk that they have accumulated in the past year and the waste stuff is burnt. Houses are freshly painted. Farm animals are bathed and decorated with colored powders and paint.

Next day is **PONGAL** when the Sun God is worshipped. In rural areas, people gather in front of their houses and cook pongal in new pots. Stoves are made with clay and wood is used as fuel. When the pongal is almost made, everybody shouts in ecstasy “*pongalo-pongalo*”. When milk is boiled, if it overflows, it is believed to be a sign of a prosperous agriculture during the coming season. People visit their friends and relatives. Pongal food and sweets are exchanged among neighbours and relatives.

**MATTU PONGAL**, celebrated the day after, is the day for farm animals, especially the bulls, which are an integral part of a farmer’s house hold. Like any other Diety, bulls, cows and other farm animals are worshipped on this day. Bull fights or Manju Virattu/Jallikattu also takes place on this day.

The last day is KANNUM PONGAL. On this day, the farmer and his entire family, go for the sightseeing.

### **Cultural Activities**

An Artist team consisting of 122 artists will perform Traditional Classical and Folk dances of Tamil Nadu. The team incorporate the artists of Thappattam, Kummi Kolattam, Karagam, Kavadi, Kalialattam, Deverattam, Silampattam, Mohiniattam and Bharathanattiam. In addition to these South Indian Art Forms the North Indian Art Forms of Bangra, Gidda will also be performed in a Choreographic presentation.

### **Handicrafts**

The Tamil Nadu Handicrafts Development Corporation popularly known as Poombuhar is organizing a exhibition cum sales with following highlights.

- Bronzes
- Wood Carvings
- Varity of Brass Lamps
- Thanjore Paintings
- Temple Jewellery
- Perfumed Candles
- Agarbathies

### **Handlooms**

The Tamil Nadu Handlooms and Textile Corporation Co-optex is bringing out the following items for sales and exhibition.

- Sarees of Pure Silk and Cotton
- Cotton Bedsheeds
- Dhoties and Lungies
- Readymade Cotton Shirts
- Churidhar materials in Cotton and Silk

### **TIDCO**

Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation is organizing a stall for sale and exhibition of spices and also brings fresh Chocolates, Herbal Oils, Garden fresh tea.

### **South Indian Cuisine**

- Traditional Chetti Nadu Cuisine
- South Indian Savarion
- Herbal Coffee
- Varity of Dosas and Iddly Vada
- Authentic South Indian Dishes prepared by Cheffs from Tamil Nadu

**HIGH LIGHTS**  
**Traditional Tamil Customs**

|                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| - Bon fire ( Boghi)        | - Mass Cooking of Pongal |
| - Cattle Worship           | - Kollattam              |
| - Public Drawing of Kolams |                          |

- **Cultural Extravaganza** (Sponsored by South Zone Cultural Center, Ministry of Culture , Government of India, Thanjavur). Over 100 artists specially arrived from Tamil Nadu to present a dozen art forms of Tamil Nadu.
  - Classical Dances
  - Folk Dances
  - Music : Instrumental & vocal
  - Special Attraction : Choreographic Presentation by Mrs.Maitrayee Pahari

- **Food Court**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| - Authentic Traditional Cuisines of Tamil Nadu | - Special Sweets and Savouries<br>Sweet Pongal, Thirunelveli Halwa, Athirasam, Kovil Patty Kadalai Mittai |
| Milk Products                                  |   |

- **Exhibition – cum – Sale**

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| - Handicrafts                     | - Thanjavur Paintings                       |
| - Wooden, Stone and metal statues | - Handloom and Silk Sarees                  |
| - Dress Materials                 | - Southern Spices                           |
| - Nilgiris Hand made Chocolates   | - Medicinal and Aromatic Oils from Nilgiris |

- **Competitions**

- Kolams (Rangoli)
- Essay Writing
- Fancy Dress

**Programme**

**Tamil New Year Day and Pongal Celebrations**  
**at**  
**Old Tamil Nadu House**  
**(6, Kaultiya Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi)**  
**January 14 – 18, 2009 (11.00 a.m. – 09.00 p.m.)**

| Date/Day/<br>Time          | Tuesday<br>13.01.2009  | Wednesday<br>14.01.2009  | Thursday<br>15.01.2009                                       | Friday<br>16.01.2009 | Saturday<br>17.01.2009                  | Sunday<br>18.01.2009               |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|----------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| 11.30 to<br>12.00 pm       |  | Folk Dance   | Kummi<br>Kolattam  | Silambattam          | Kalialattam                             | Silambattam                        |
| 12.30 to<br>01.00 pm       |  | Devarattam   | Thappattam   | Karagam<br>Kavadi    | Kummi<br>Kolattam                       | Thappattam                         |
| 02.30 pm<br>to 5.30        | Kolam<br>(Rangoli)<br>competition<br>with<br>Kolaattam<br>by Delhi<br>Tamil<br>Sangam.<br>Boghi<br>(Bon Fire)<br>with folk<br>music and<br>dance | Mass Pongal<br>Preparation &<br>Celebration  | Mattu Pongal<br>& Cattle<br>Procession<br>with folk<br>dance | Tamil Movie          | Tamil Movie                             | Devarattam &<br>Kummi<br>Killattam |
| 05.30 to<br>06.00 pm       |  | Violin recital<br>by Thiru<br>R. Sreedhar,<br>New Delhi                                    | Dance<br>Recital by<br>Ms. Ragini                            | Music                | Bharatha-<br>nattiyam by<br>Ms. Kabilan | Price<br>Distribution              |
| 06.00 to<br>08.00 pm       |  | Choreographic Presentation by Mrs. Maitrayee Pahari<br>(South and North folk dance fusion) |  |                      |   | Tamil Movie                        |
| 11.00 am<br>to<br>09.00 pm | FOOD COURT-EXHIBITION CUM SALES – TANJORE PAINTING – HANDICRAFTS-SILK<br>SARESS-HANDLOOMS-MILK PRODUCTS AND MUCH MORE                            |  |  |                      |   |                                    |