



GOVERNMENT OF PUDUCHERRY

Address by

Dr. KIRAN BED

Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor

to

THE PUDUCHERRY LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

26th March, 2018



Kanagan Lake, Puducherry

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**To incline to neither side, but to rest impartial
as the even-fixed scale is the ornament of
the wise.**

—Kural

**Like a weighing scale that is balanced and
sways correctly, the grace of noble scholars
lies in dispassionate assessment.**

**Hon'ble Speaker and distinguished Members of this
august House,**

I am extremely happy indeed, to be here to address the third session of the Legislative Assembly of the present Government. This Government has taken many initiatives to improve the quality of life through housing for poor, affordable healthcare, safe drinking water and sanitation, and access to clean energy. I congratulate all those who have put in their sincere efforts and made their contribution to ensure that the benefits reach the targeted groups of the society.

2. The Government has shown its commitment to address the reasonable and just needs of the people of Union Territory of Puducherry. I express my thanks to Hon'ble Chief Minister and Hon'ble Ministers for their efforts to ensure that the State's resources are effectively utilised to fulfil the genuine aspirations of the people.

3. The Government is spending major portion of its financial resources on committed liabilities like salaries, pension, debt services, etc. The timely action initiated by this Government for Rationalization of Expenditure without compromising on unavoidable expenditure under social security programmes for the deserving people of the Union Territory of Puducherry is really laudable. As you all know, this Government is very keen on transparency and accountability in Governance and introduced various measures in this direction. The GST, introduced by the Government of India has been implemented in the Union Territory of Puducherry.

4. I am very much happy to share with the Hon'ble Members of this august House that due to the efforts taken by this Government in desilting some of the ponds and lakes, the underground water level has risen in many areas. This Government has initiated the desilting work in 20 lakes out of existing 84 lakes in the Union Territory of Puducherry to protect the water bodies. The Government is poised to keep the environment clean and healthy.

5. On the finance side, the anticipated Plan expenditure during the current year would be ₹ 2,334 crore, which is 11.67% higher compared to last year's achievement. Hon'ble Members are well aware that this Union Territory is facing financial constraints due to servicing of past debt. Now, there is an urgent need to reduce our debt burden and Hon'ble Members will certainly appreciate the need for austerity measures.

6. I would like to inform the Hon'ble Members that the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) is one of the major indicators for measuring the economic growth of

a State. The GSDP of the Union Territory has been estimated at ₹ 30,845.43 crore (current price) for 2017-18 which is 11.82% higher than the previous year figure of ₹ 27,586.09 crore (current price). The *per capita* income of Puducherry increased from ₹ 1,73,687 (current price) for the year 2016-17 to ₹ 1,89,124 (current price) for the year 2017-18, showing a growth rate of 8.89%. The GSDP growth augurs well for the Union Territory's economy.

7. With these introduction, I would like to highlight some of the major achievements made by the Government under various sectors during the current financial year.

AGRICULTURE

8. Hon'ble Members are well aware that as a part of our initiatives to strengthen the agriculture sector, this Government is extending various support to agriculture. Back ended subsidy for samba season has been distributed to 8,933 paddy farmers for an amount of ₹ 2 crore

in addition to the subsidy given for agricultural inputs like seeds, fertilizers, bio-pesticides, etc. As a measure to motivate the agriculturists in Horticulture, pre-season training in Horticulture was given to 600 farmers. In addition, training on bee keeping, roof top and terrace vegetable cultivation were organized to the interested people and bee keeping equipments were also distributed. An amount of ₹ 20 lakh have been released to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru College of Agriculture (PAJANCOA) for establishment of Tissue Culture Lab. The department is providing cultivation kits at 50% subsidy for roof-top gardening.

9. The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) has been implemented in Puducherry, Karaikal and Yanam regions. In other States, the insurance premium is paid by the farmers whereas Government of Puducherry bears the farmers' contribution of insurance premium also, in addition to the subsidy extended by the State and Central share. Much thrust is being given to encourage the farmers to raise the notified crops such as Paddy, Sugarcane, Pulses and Cotton.

10. Consequent upon the deficit and uneven distribution of rainfall during the North East Monsoon and inadequate receipt of Cauvery Water, Puducherry and Karaikal Regions were declared as drought hit area. The affected farmers have been disbursed ₹ 13 crore towards the inputs subsidy as per NDRF norms.

11. The introduction of Soil Health Card scheme helps the farmers to know the quality of their land. Soil Health Card will be given to the farmers based on the soil sample collected by using GPS for which Dr. M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation is being involved. In the first instance, 3,000 soil samples were collected from the villages.

12. Under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY), District Irrigation Plans (DIP) for Puducherry and Karaikal have been prepared by NABARD Consultancy Services (NABCONS) for undertaking the water resources planning and management programmes. The approval of the Government of India has been obtained and necessary

funds have been sought for from the Government of India. This Government has approached the Central Government for funds to enhance water resources for irrigation.

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

13. This Government has accorded priority to sustain the livestock health and productivity. All the Veterinary services are being provided free of cost through the network of field Veterinary institutions.

14. Ear tags showing 12 Digit Unique Identification Number (UID) to all breedable cattle including milch animals in Puducherry for monitoring of milk production and health status of cattle through Information Network for Animal Productivity and Health (INAPH) by the software developed by National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) is being implemented. For encouraging backyard poultry production, Giriraja and Girirani birds are reared at Government Poultry Farms and distributed at 50 per cent subsidy to farmers. The Government is in the process of enhancing supply of better yielding milch cattle.

15. In order to update knowledge and inculcate interest among farmers in livestock rearing, 7 days skill oriented training programme is conducted at Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Veterinary Education and Research (RIVER) with their collaboration. In order to provide better health care services to the animals, the renovation works has been started at Veterinary Dispensary building at Puducherry and is about to be completed. For Veterinary education, grant-in-aid to an extent of ₹ 12 crore has been released to Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Veterinary Education and Research (RIVER).

ART AND CULTURE

16. Cultural Programmes in association with Tourism department are being conducted during weekends. This attracts more domestic as well as foreign tourists. The exhibition time of the museum has been revised without lunch break.

CIVIL SUPPLIES AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

17. Hon'ble Members are well aware that this Government has been implementing the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) under National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA) for food grains in all the four regions of the Union Territory of Puducherry. Cash subsidy is being directly credited to the beneficiaries' Bank Account in respect of "Antyodaya Anna Yojana" (AAY) card holders @ ₹ 933 per card for 35 kg. of rice and for Below Poverty Line (BPL) card holders ₹ 133 per member for 5 kg. of rice. The Government is making all the required efforts to implement food security law in letter and spirit.

CO-OPERATION

18. As requested by the farmers, this Government has completely waived the farmers' loan to the extent of ₹ 19 crore. This has enabled the farmers to obtain fresh crop loan. This farm loan waiver has benefitted 4,908 farmers. A sum of ₹ 386 lakh has been released

to the PONLAIT for supply of cattle feed at 75% subsidy to the primary milk producers societies functioning in Puducherry and Karaikal regions. The PONLAIT has received financial assistance of ₹ 72 lakh under National Programme on Dairy Development for installation of Automatic Milk Collection Unit in 80 Primary Co-operative Producers Societies in Puducherry region and ₹ 168 lakh for installation of bulk milk cooler and Automatic Milk Collection Units in 15 Primary Co-operative Milk Producers Societies.

SCHOOL EDUCATION

19. Hon'ble Members will agree that the growth and future of our Union Territory highly depends upon the quality of education system and it is imperative to facilitate and provide quality education for all. A series of In-service Training Programme for Primary School Teachers with innovative pedagogical methods with more focus on ICT methods of teaching to improve the quality of primary education were imparted. "Reading Corner"

has been set up in all Government schools having class I to V to improve reading habit. 29,589 students were given scholarship to the extent of ₹ 2 crore. Students studying Higher Secondary Course who secured 60% and above in SSLC are granted ₹ 600 per annum. I am glad to inform that due to the sincere efforts of the teachers, 26 Government High Schools have achieved cent percent result in SSLC Public Examination during the Academic year 2016-17.

20. Nutritious Breakfast and Midday Meals are being provided in schools which benefit 65,477 students and 74,950 students respectively. In order to prepare the food items quickly as well as in eco-friendly environment, 9 Central Kitchens have been converted from Diesel based to LPG based kitchens in Puducherry region.

21. This Government pays utmost importance and is taking various measures to achieve 100% enrolment and retention of children in Government schools. In order to achieve this goal, Uniforms, Text-books and Exercise

Note Books are distributed at free of cost to all students studying in LKG to XII Standards in Government schools and I to X Standards of Government-aided Private Schools of all the regions of this Union Territory irrespective of annual parental income ceiling. 1,06,986 students have benefitted in the current academic year involving financial implication of ₹ 13 crore. "Students Special Buses" continue to provide transport facilities to students at concessional rate. 58 Students Special Buses in Puducherry region and 13 buses in Karaikal region are being operated for which an amount of ₹ 6 crore is spent per annum. Government is planning to make select Government schools as "Model Schools" of excellence.

HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

22. Union Territory of Puducherry has become an Educational Hub particularly in higher education learning. I am glad to inform that according to the report of Ministry of Human Resource Development, the Union Territory of Puducherry stands 5th in higher education. With the

National Institute of Technology at Karaikal, 2 Engineering Colleges, 11 Arts and Science Colleges, 1 Law College, 6 Polytechnic Colleges, 1 B.Ed. College under the purview of the Directorate of Higher and Technical Education and more than 100 higher learning Institutions both Government and Private sector have set the right tone for Puducherry to play as "Knowledge Hub" among the southern states. Government has established Pondicherry State Higher Education Council (PSHEC) for the implementation of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abiyan" (RUSA) to improve access, equity and quality in Higher Education by providing funds to State Universities and Colleges. Government is exploring to convert Pondicherry Engineering College into Puducherry Technological University. The Government is also keen to facilitate the role of private sector in Higher Education.

23. "Perunthalaivar Kamarajar Financial Assistance Scheme" is being implemented for the benefits of students who got admission through CENTAC. This Government has increased 1180 seats from the Academic year 2017-18 in

Government and Society-run Arts and Science Colleges to facilitate the students to pursue their desired courses.

3 new Post Graduate Courses have been started at Arignar Anna Arts and Science College, Karaikal.

24. As an innovative measure, the Mentor system has been introduced from the month of November 2017 in 10 Government and Society Colleges (Arts and Science, Engineering, Polytechnics and Law) in the Puducherry region, by which each faculty member will adopt 10-15 students and will guide them to improve their academic performance, developing their communication skills, inculcating good habits and addressing their issues which hinders their overall performance. Due to intensive efforts taken by us, the Union Territory of Puducherry is now among the best performers and stands 5th towards the implementation of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abiyan" (RUSA). MHRD has released an amount of ₹ 5 crore in the current financial year under RUSA. Pondicherry Engineering College has been

selected as the Mentor Institution for the "TEQIP-Phase III" (Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme) a Centrally Sponsored Scheme of the MHRD.

ELECTRICITY

25. Our Union Territory is having adequate power but the need of the hour is to fulfil the requirements on infrastructure development in the distribution grid. The long time demand of Industrialists in Mettupalayam Industrial Estate and the adjoining areas has been fulfilled by energizing an additional 25 MVA Power Transformer at a cost of ₹ 6 crore at Kurumbapet 110 K.V. Substation. Similarly, the power demand of the Villianur and the adjoining areas was fulfilled by energizing an additional 25 MVA Power Transformer at a cost of ₹ 6 crore at Villianur 110 K.V. Substation.

26. In order to provide renewable energy Roof Top Solar PV Power plants with a total capacity of 451.80 KW has been installed and connected to the Grid.

The Government is encouraging more roof top solar based system. To ensure more reliable power supply, 5 new 11 K.V. Underground Cable feeders from Venkata Nagar 110 K.V. Substation at a cost of ₹ 15 crore were energized under Coastal Disaster Risk Reduction Programme (CDRRP) funded by World Bank. Three numbers of new Circuit Breakers were erected and energized at Surakudy Substation, Karaikal. Government is encouraging use of LED as an energy saving device.

FISHERIES AND FISHERMEN WELFARE

27. Hon'ble Members may be aware that fisheries play a key economic role in coastal areas, where directly or indirectly, they represent the main source of employment and livelihood. Destitute women, widows, roadside / head load fish vendors have been allotted permanent fish stalls at the hygienic fish market built under World Bank aid in Puducherry which commenced its functioning recently. I am glad to inform that this Government has given priority to the fisheries and fishermen welfare and implemented various welfare programmes which involved

around ₹ 33 crore. There is a need to strengthen the fishing infrastructure by way of larger boats equipped with safety equipments.

FORESTRY

28. I am sure that the Hon'ble Members are conscious about protecting our natural resources namely water bodies, mangroves and trees. This Government is implementing various schemes aimed at enhancing green cover in Union Territory. Further, this Administration is strictly following Hon'ble High Court directions on issuing of tree felling permission for developmental activities, *viz.*, the user agencies plant 10 nos. of tree saplings for each felled tree and also provide written assurance for post care activities from the user agencies.

HEALTH

29. This Government is committed to improve the health services to create better health care with more emphasis on health promotion and prevention through the existing health institutions.

30. I am happy to share with the Hon'ble Members that the Union Territory of Puducherry stands first among the Union Territories and second in All India level in Infant Mortality Rate which is 10 per 1,000 live births against the National level ratio of 34 per 1,000 live births. The key indicators attained by this Union Territory under Health sector are very commendable. 99.98% are Institutional Deliveries out of 41,480 Deliveries. District Early Intervention Centre (DEIC) has been introduced at Rajiv Gandhi Government Women and Children Hospital, Puducherry. Iron sucrose Injection is provided to pregnant women at PHC level to treat Anaemia. In Puducherry Union Territory, the number of severely malnourished under 5 years children is 0.02% and moderate malnourished children is 0.1% only.

31. Puducherry stands first with a least HIV Prevalence rate of 0.2%, among all the States and Union Territories. The HIV Prevalence rate in the country is 2.69%. This Union Territory ranked first in achieving Zero Prevalence in HIV as per the HIV Sentinels Surveillance done by NACO in 2017 for ante-natal women.

32. 2 Nos. of 500 mA High Frequency X-ray Units, Video Endoscope for ENT Department, Upper GI Video Endoscope and Colonoscope Narrow Band Imaging for the Surgery Department have been procured in Indira Gandhi Government General Hospital (IGGGH). Ph.D. in Pharmacy Programme has been started with an initial intake of 4 students. Medical equipments such as 300 mA Digital X-Ray, Film Processor for CT Scan / AMC CT Scan, 2 Nos. of ECG Machines have been purchased. Oxygen pipe lines for all the wards and OT block have been provided.

33. Surveillance of Hospital Acquired Infections (HAI) has been started. Regular inspection of scan centres, Infertility Clinics, Medical Colleges, Private Hospitals and Government Hospitals are carried out to ensure strict adherence to PCPNDT Act, 1994. A branch of JIPMER Medical College has been established at Karaikal with the introduction of latest new syllabus and with an intake of 50 students for MBBS course and out of this, 14 seats have been allocated to the students of

Union Territory of Puducherry. In addition, JIPMER Outreach centre is functioning regularly inside the premises of Government General Hospital, Karaikal on every alternate Saturday.

LABOUR

34. This Government is primarily focussing on Labour welfare and creating a decent working condition and improved quality of life of workers. This Government intends to keep skilling a main area of its focus. As a part of Ease of Doing Business, the plan approval and license to start factory are being issued online.

35. 1260 candidates were offered jobs through Mega Job Melas and Job Fairs. The Maternity Benefits being extended to the Building and Construction Workers has been enhanced from ₹ 3,000 to ₹ 5,000; Marriage Assistance from ₹ 5,000 to ₹ 7,000 and Funeral Assistance from ₹ 5,000 to ₹ 7,000. In case of Natural Death, the Board provides a sum of ₹ 70,000 in addition to the

benefit of ₹ 30,000 extended through LIC. Construction workers and unorganized labourers were given monetary benefit to the tune of ₹ 10 crore during festival seasons.

POLICE

36. To make the society free from crime and criminals, this Government is committed to introduce the modern scientific equipments as integral part of the Police machinery. As part of implementing the latest technology, the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) connecting all Police Stations with State Crime Record Bureau (SCRB), National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) has been implemented in this Union Territory at a cost of ₹ 10 crore. The Citizen Police Portal for public has been made fully operational.

37. A fully equipped Indoor Physical Training Centre (Gymnasium) at Gorimedu has been constructed for Police Personnel undergoing training at PTS / Posted in PAP Gorimedu, Puducherry at a cost of ₹ 2 crore. Equipments

have already been installed and commissioned. To strengthen the Coastal security, construction of Coastal Police Station and a Jetty have been completed at an estimated cost of ₹ 2 crore.

PUBLIC WORKS

38. Under Roads and Bridges sector, 6 works at a cost of ₹ 19 crore have been completed which includes strengthening of NH45A from Ariyur to Indira Gandhi Square at a cost of ₹ 12 crore. Under augmentation of water supply system, works were carried out at 4 areas *viz.*, Sedarapet Village (₹ 3 crore), Vambupet Village (₹ 1 crore), Kunichempet Village (₹ 2 crore), Karayampattur Village (₹ 2 crore). Construction of bed dam-cum-bridge across Pambaiyar near the confluence point at Sellipet Village, Mannadipet commune, Puducherry was completed at a cost of ₹ 3 crore. In addition, 15 infrastructure development programmes of various nature are under progress in all 4 regions of the Union Territory at an estimated cost of ₹ 158 crore. The Government is also in the process of starting the water supply

project funded through French Development Agency (AFD). The construction of Road Over Bridge at Ulandai Keerapalayam was completed at a cost of ₹ 35 crore and opened for public use.

REVENUE

39. Financial assistance to a tune of ₹ 6 crore has been disbursed under the scheme "Rajiv Gandhi Social Security Scheme for Poor Families". To provide public services, Data digitization of Index Registers in the Sub Registries of Puducherry, Oulgaret have been completed and is ready for online issue of Encumbrance Certificate.

INDUSTRIES

40. The New Industrial Policy 2016 announced by this Government envisages strong initiative to ensure timely and hassle free guidance / clearance to new entrepreneurs within 30 days. Industrial Development generates employment opportunities as well as Socio-economic Development of

this Union Territory under the scheme "Motivation of Entrepreneurs to start industries and fiscal assistance to industries", the capital investment subsidy to a tune of ₹ 3 crore has been released to 27 industrial units. To provide skill development for the school dropouts and upto the level of Graduate Engineers to make them employable, a tool-room-cum-Technology Development Centre is being set up at Pillaichavady, Puducherry.

41. The Entrepreneurship Development Cell has been established for creating awareness and opportunities of entrepreneurship in Union Territory of Puducherry and "Student Entrepreneurship Idea Competition" was conducted among the college and school students to initiate start up projects. "Pradhan Mantri Yuva Udyamita Vikas Abhiyan Yojana (PMYUVAY) has been initiated in three Government colleges. 126 Udyog Aadhaar Memorandum (UAM) have been registered and provided employment to 747 persons with an investment of ₹ 15 crore. From the inception of New Industrial Policy 2016, projects have been cleared which envisaged an investment of ₹ 178 crore.

42. PIPDIC has approved 121 projects and allocated 183 acres of land, 17 industrial sheds and 7 plots with the investment proposal of ₹ 620 crore which will create employment for 2,440 persons. Financial assistance in terms of Term Loan extended to 14 industrial units to a tune of ₹ 4 crore with the employment generation of 108 persons. To create employment opportunities to unemployed youths, various training programmes with stipends are imparted every year. This year, 914 unemployed youths were trained involving an expenditure of ₹ 61 lakh of which 196 SC candidates benefitted. Under the Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), 27 entrepreneurs have been sanctioned loan of ₹ 144 lakh through various banks with the subsidy of ₹ 51 lakh. Under the Motivation of Unemployed Persons to start Self employed Enterprises Scheme 2006 (MUPSES), 231 entrepreneurs were sanctioned loan of ₹ 243 lakh through various banks with subsidy of ₹ 57 lakh.

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

43. I am very happy to inform that due to sincere efforts taken by this Government, Smart City proposal for Puducherry Municipality was sanctioned in June 2017 and a special purpose vehicle "Puducherry Smart City Development Ltd." has been incorporated to ensure the speedy implementation of smart city projects. ₹ 98 crore has been released by the Government of India in the current financial year. Under MLA-LAD Scheme, various civil works *viz.*, Construction of Community Halls, Toilet Blocks, Anganwadi building and laying of cement concrete road have been completed for an amount of ₹ 30 crore. ₹ 27 crore has been released for Sanitation and garbage cleaning works in Puducherry, Karaikal and Yanam urban agglomeration areas. ₹ 6 crore has been incurred in implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission Scheme. This Government is committed to enforce the solid waste management rules to ensure neat and clean Puducherry. Mahe and Yanam regions have been declared as Open Defecation Free (ODF) areas.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

44. Under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 519 works were completed by incurring an expenditure of ₹ 13 crore involving 31,576 households which generated 6 lakh mandays so far. 26,623 households mobilized 2,223 Self Help Groups (SHGs) and 95 Panchayat Level Federation (PLF) were formed. 6,361 toilets have been constructed by incurring an expenditure of ₹ 11 crore under Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin). In addition, 9,921 toilets are under construction. I am glad to share that 4 Gram Panchayats consisting of 22 villages have been declared as Open Defecation Free (ODF) in the Union Territory of Puducherry. This Government is mobilizing the public at grass-root level in implementing the Swachh Bharat scheme.

ADI-DRAVIDAR WELFARE

45. This Government is implementing various Welfare Schemes for the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes people to improve their socio-economic and educational

status in this Union Territory. With the current year allocation of ₹ 144 crore under SCSP component, 23 welfare schemes are implemented. In order to provide basic civic amenities such as road, water supply, side drainage, community latrines, electricity, etc to the SC colonies, ₹ 24 crore was allocated. To improve educational development and to motivate training and self employments to the SC students, financial assistance to a tune of ₹ 25 crore were disbursed to 23,302 SC beneficiaries.

SOCIAL WELFARE

46. The Hon'ble Members will agree that the well-being of the people of this Union Territory holds the key to the overall development. Accordingly, this Government is extending various welfare measures to the poor and deserving people such as financial assistance, providing aid appliances and also taking measures for protection of children. This Government is extending many welfare schemes for the benefit of the old aged and differently abled persons.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

47. As a measure to control industrial pollution, Eight industrial units have installed "Continuous Online Emission Monitoring System" (COEMS) for continuously monitoring the quality and quantity of waste water discharge and / or air emissions. Online Consent Management Monitoring System (OCMMS) has been implemented on trial basis for issue of Consent to Establish (CTE) / Consent to Operate (CTO) for the industrial units. Financial assistance of ₹ 20 lakh each has been extended to Puducherry and Karaikal Municipalities for establishing bio-methanation plant for disposal of Municipal Solid Waste. A series of State Level Waste Management Awareness Programme for implementing Student / Faculty / Staff / Community driven waste management solutions to foster sustainable development were conducted at a cost of ₹ 7 lakh.

SURVEY

48. Under Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme, the facility of issuing FMB copies through Common Service Centres in Karaikal Region has been implemented.

TOURISM

49. Government of India has sanctioned ₹ 66 crore under "Heritage Circuit" and ₹ 41 crore under "Spiritual Circuit" in the current financial year through the flagship scheme "Swadesh Darshan". This will help Puducherry and its outlying regions of Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam to preserve its heritage value and enhance the spiritual atmosphere apart from attracting tourists in large scale. During 2017 calendar year, Puducherry witnessed a growth of 9.5% in tourist arrivals over the previous year.

50. For the first time in Puducherry, "International Sailing Regatta" was conducted by Government of Puducherry in collaboration with Embassy of France and the Puducherry Sailing Association as a part of "Bonjour India" Festival. As per the directives of the Ministry of Tourism, a week-long celebration of events was held under the banner "PARYATAN PARV" to highlight the salient aspects of tourism.

51. The 24th International Yoga Festival and 3rd International Yoga Day were celebrated in a befitting manner. The Velrampet lake and the Kanakan lake are now rehabilitated and necessary amenities are being created to cater to the needs of public/tourists. Under "Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat", cultural exchange programmes were conducted between Union Territory of Daman and Diu and Puducherry. The International Tourism Day, Heritage Car Rally, Puducherry Liberation Day, Yanam Peoples' Festival, etc. were some of the events organised during last year.

52. The flight service from Puducherry Airport was resumed from August 2017 commencing with a flight operation to Hyderabad. Subsequently, flight service to Bengaluru has also been started. This Government is taking all efforts to get the required lands from Government of Tamil Nadu for the expansion of Puducherry Airport.

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING

53. Under "Perunthalaivar Kamarajar Centenary Housing Scheme" in this Union Territory 516 Houseless poor were provided financial assistance for construction of houses involving an expenditure of ₹ 3 crore in the current financial year. In addition, under "Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Housing for All (Urban)", work orders have already been issued to 2,468 beneficiaries involving ₹ 28 crore. The Government of India has sanctioned construction of 7,666 Economically Weaker Section Houses under the Beneficiary led Construction Component of this Scheme.

WELFARE OF BACKWARD CLASSES AND MINORITIES

54. 1745 students of Backward Classes got benefit under Pre-Matric/Post-Matric scholarship and 32 meritorious students in the school final examination were awarded Thiyagi V. Subbiah Award along with Cash prize. Under the scheme "Free distribution of Thavil and Nadaswaram

to poor artisans", musical instruments were given. This Government is managing 5 Students Hostels in Puducherry, Karaikal and Yanam region wherein 225 inmates are staying. Students belonging to Minority communities were awarded a total of ₹ 77 lakh towards Pre-Matric/ Post-Matric / Merit-cum-Means based scholarship during the current financial year.

WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

55. Marriage Allowance towards Marriage of Daughter of Destitute Widows, NSC certificates to single girl children studying 8th to 10th standard and Incentive to family having one girl / two girl children and parents who have undergone Family Planning are provided financial assistance.

56. "Old Age Pension" scheme is being successfully implemented by this Government. Old age persons, widows, destitute, unmarried women and transgender totalling 1.44 lakh beneficiaries are availing monthly financial assistance which involves an annual expenditure of ₹ 330 crore. Supplementary nutrition is provided throughout the year

under Integrated Child Development Services scheme through 855 Anganwadi centres. 28,200 children and 9,500 mothers are benefitted for which a sum of ₹ 15 crore has been spent under the scheme. Under the newly launched Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, cash incentive of ₹ 5,000 has been transferred directly to the bank account of Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers (PW & LM) for the first living child. A sum of ₹ 13 lakh has been spent so far.

57. Education, health, industrial development, improving tourism potential, building infrastructure, employment generation and better quality of life to people are the priorities of this Government.

58. I wish you all success in your deliberations in this session.

NANDRI !

JAI HIND !

CLEAN INDIA



GREEN PUDUCHERRY