

National Day Address
By H.E. Nitirooge Phoneprasert
Consul General, Royal Thai Consulate-General, Chennai
5th December 2022, Taj Coromandel Hotel

The Honourable Minister for Finance and Human Resources Management of Tamil Nadu, Dr. Palanivel Thiaga Rajan.

Excellencies,

Distinguished guests, Ladies & Gentlemen,

1) Vanakkam and Sawasdee Krub. On behalf of the Royal Thai Consulate-General, Chennai, I would like to thank and welcome with deep respect all the esteemed guests for being part of this year's National Day Celebration of Thailand. I am deeply grateful that the Honorable Minister Dr. Palanivel Thiaga Rajan could be here as the Chief Guest from the Indian/Tamil Nadu Government. Your presence will be indelible in our memories. My appreciation also goes to CPF (India), RBL Bank, and Vfs Global for their unwavering support in organizing this event.

2) I would also like to express my sincerest gratitude to all related Indian government agencies and business sectors, officials, and individuals, especially in the State of Tamil Nadu, who have given us their support and solidarity in fostering friendship between Thailand and the Southern Indian states. I can say for sure that these cordial ties and increased cooperation will only continue to grow leaps and bounds in the years to come.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

3) National days are celebrated the world over, mostly in recognition of the period when the countries gained independence from their colonizers. But as a nation which has never been under an imperial power, Thailand has a different story. Our National Day is celebrated to commemorate the Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great, or King Rama IX. Today, on behalf of the entire Thai community in the southern India, I take an immense pride in paying tribute to the life and work of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great, who was the longest-reigning monarch of Thailand.

4) During His Majesty's 70-year reign, Thailand underwent phenomenal transformation from an 'underdeveloped country' into an upper middle-income

country. His Majesty was a symbol of unity for the Thai people. His Majesty's love for the people and tireless devotion to empowering the poorest was recognized by the United Nations which conferred the first ever United Nation's Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award to His Majesty in 2006.

5) Rightly called the 'Development King,' His Majesty was the pioneer of the development agenda of Thailand. The King's countless rural development projects have benefited millions of people across Thailand, promoting small-scale agriculture, appropriate farming technologies, sustainable use of water, conservation, flood and drought mitigation. His Majesty also came up with a development theory known as **the 'Sufficiency Economy Philosophy' or SEP**. It is an innovative developmental approach that emphasises on moderation, responsible consumption, and resilience to external shocks as core principles.

6) Until today, the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) continues to serve as the guiding light of the Thai Government to embrace sustainable development practices against the risks and uncertainties of the global economy and environment. The SEP development approach is in conformity with the core principle of the UN 2030 Agenda or the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) to address the global challenges, including poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental degradation.

7) The **Bio Circular Green (BCG) Economy Model** of the current Thai Government under Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-Cha is a development initiative **that grew out of the idea of His Majesty's 'Sufficiency Economy Philosophy.'** The BCG model is an economic approach for inclusive, sustainable, and balanced growth in five key areas namely: (1) food & agriculture, (2) medical services & wellness, (3) bioenergy, biomaterial and biochemicals (4) sustainable tourism & creative economy and (5) circular economy. **Today, through thousands of royally initiated projects, the royal legacy of King Bhumibol continues under the new reign of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaochaoyuhua.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

8) This day is also significant for two other reasons. First and foremost, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great is recognized by the Thai people as 'Father of the nation,' hence **His Majesty's Birthday has also been observed as the Father's Day in Thailand**. Secondly, as a tribute to His Majesty's lifelong work on soil management, **the United Nations has designated His Majesty's**

Birthday on 5th December as the ‘World Soil Day.’ It was so done to raise global awareness on the importance of healthy soil, a matter so vital to climate change mitigation and sustainable food security.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

9) Bilaterally, 2022 has been a milestone in the history of India-Thailand relations as it marks the **75th year of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Thailand**. Over the years, our countries maintained a multi-faceted partnership based on mutual good will. Regionally, India and Thailand have been working constructively under the umbrella of **ASEAN-India Dialogue Partner and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectorial Technical and Economic Cooperation or BIMSTEC**, which Thailand is currently the Chairman for 2022-2023, to foster a progressive relationship for all in the region.

10) At this juncture I am happy to share with you that the Royal Thai Consulate-General in Chennai has organized a series of activities to celebrate this auspicious occasion. To kick start the celebration, we organized a reception in June this year, during which **The Thailand-Tamil Nadu Friendship Awards of Excellence** were given to honour outstanding individuals, institutions, and organisations from different spectrums of the Tamil Nadu society. They are the real heroes that have significantly contributed to the enduring friendship between Thailand and Tamil Nadu. As Thomas Aquinas once said, “There is nothing on this earth to be prized than true friendship.”

11) Apart from the award function, the Royal Thai Consulate-General has led various business and trade delegations from relevant agencies in Southern India to visit Thailand to celebrate this 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations. For instance, in May 2022, a trade delegation from Telangana visited Thailand to attend the THAIFEX-Anuga Asia, which is the largest and most comprehensive food and beverage trade fair in Asia. In July 2022, the Royal Thai Consulate led a 38-strong business delegation from **the Southern India Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI), the Tamil Nadu Start-up and Innovation Mission (TANSIM) and the MSME Trade and Investment Promotion Bureau (M-TIPB)**, to visit the Future Mobility Asia and the Future Energy Asia. During this visit, an MoU has been signed between SICCI and the Thai Chamber of Commerce and Industry to provide a fresh start to a renewed partnership and serve as a framework for trade and investment promotion between the private sector of both sides. In September 2022, there were three business delegations - **the Federation of Andhra Pradesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

(FAPCCI), the Federation of Telangana Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI), and the Cochin Chamber of Commerce & Industry - visiting Bangkok under the auspices of the Royal Thai Consulate-General and the Office of Thai Trade.

12) On the trade side, we organized the Thai Fiesta with Lulu Mall in Trivandrum, Kochi, and Bengaluru in July and the Thai Trade Expo with Sarath City Mall in Hyderabad in September this year. We also organized the Thai Food Festival with different partners, including the Café de Bangkok in Kochi in June, Crowne Plaza Chennai in September, and Sheraton Hyderabad in November. On the education front, an MoU was signed between Saveetha Dental College, Chennai and Khon Kean University, Thailand on 3 October 2022 to cooperate on student exchanges, faculty visits and joint research collaborations in healthcare and dentistry. Next week, another MoU between Saveetha Dental College and the Prince of Songkla University in the south of Thailand, will also be signed.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

13) All these initiatives, I believe, will further strengthen the bonds that Thailand shares with India, particularly with Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, as well as the Union Territory of Puducherry. Our two countries are bound by friendship that have gained in depth, dimension, and content over the years. The Royal Thai Consulate-General pledges to work with determination and faith to move forward the shared goals, whether in business and trade, investment, education, arts and culture, tourism, and people-to-people connection, for the mutual benefits of Thailand and India.

14) In that spirit, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me propose a toast to the continued good health and longevity of **His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaochaoyuhua of Thailand and Her Excellency Droupadi Murmu, President of the Republic of India**, and to the growth and prosperity of both our people and countries.

Nanri, Thank You and Kob Khun Krub
