

Press Release

Civic Reception in honour of Vice President

**Younger generation should be enlightened about
country's hard earned freedom: VP**

**Atrocities against women should be
condemned & not politicized**



Port Blair, June 5: The younger generation of the country should be enlightened about the great contributions of the freedom fighters of our country. "The air of freedom we breathe today is because of the sacrifices they made and torture & innumerable hardships they endured; and we have to remember and salute them for these", the Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu said while addressing a huge gathering during the Civic Reception hosted by the Port Blair Municipal Council in his honour at Dr.B.R Ambedkar Auditorium here this evening. The Lt. Governor, A&N Islands, Admiral DK Joshi, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, NM, VSM (Retd.), Member of Parliament, Shri Bishnu Pada Ray, State President, BJP, Shri Vishal Jolly, Chief Secretary, Shri Vikram Dev Dutt, Adhyaksha, ZPSA, Smti Baby Fareeda, Chairperson, PBMC, Shri Indra Pal Singh, senior officers of the Administration, Municipal Councillors & Ward Members, PRIs and general public also attended the programme.

The Vice President of India said that the picturesque Andaman & Nicobar Islands not only represent the nature's splendor but are also a microcosm of India's multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-linguistic

social mosaic. The Vice President made a clarion call to the Central and State Governments to motivate youths to visit the National Memorial Cellular Jail and derive inspiration and acknowledge the contributions made by the valiant freedom fighters for liberating our country from the alien rule. He also appreciated the hard work of the people of these Islands, who are trying to realize the dreams of the freedom fighters. "I salute the contributions made by freedom fighters, Veer Savarkar and others, who were incarcerated and tortured during their confinement inside the Cellular Jail", said Shri Naidu.

The Vice President described A&N Islands as a perfect example of a 'Mini India' where people hailing from different linguistic, cultural & religious backgrounds live in perfect harmony. Shri Naidu urged the countrymen to emulate the example of 'Unity in Diversity' prevailing here in A&N Islands. He said, the agenda of any Government, should be based solely on 'development' and ensuring that required facilities are made available for the citizens.

Describing Ram as an embodiment of Indian culture, the Vice President said 'Ram Rajya' in real term is nowhere connected with a religion and it specifically means "a country where there is no poverty, corruption, violence, fear, division based on caste, creed or religion". This, he said, should be inculcated in the minds of the citizens, so that we can march towards the path of development. He reminded everyone that 'Share & Care' has been the core of Indian philosophy.

The Vice President urged the citizens to inculcate the feelings of 'one nation', 'one country' and 'one people' and to rise above all caste, creed, religion and gender disparity, as these are very dangerous negative tendencies for the functioning of democracy. "From Kashmir to Campbell Bay, the southernmost point of India, we must foster the feeling of togetherness", said Shri Naidu.

Opining that "we should take short term pain for long term gain", the Vice President said, demonetization had a positive impact on the country's economy, adding that today there are 35 crore bank account holders in the country, which is a historic achievement. This, he said has massively helped the Government to curb corruption and the benefits of various schemes are reaching the target population. Stating that online is the way forward, the Vice President said, we are now moving towards digital India and together we must fight to end the menace of corruption.

Highlighting the functioning of Parliament, the Vice President said the Parliament should function in a dignified way. Though there may be political differences, but all issues should be discussed and debated with no disruption, so that the solutions for the issues can be worked out. The

Vice President mentioned that the schemes floated by the Government should reach the beneficiaries and the citizens must join hands in achieving the desired results. Emphasizing that 'health is wealth', the Vice President said, the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' should be a mass movement and it is the responsibility of every individual to keep the society clean.

The Vice President stated that atrocities against women should be condemned and not politicized. "We must ensure that women are rightly empowered as they play pivotal role for the growth and development of the country", he said adding that women should be respected and not ill treated.

The Vice President called the Islands a precious jewel given by Mother Nature and said that they must be preserved in their pristine purity. Let us add more lustre to them by making them hubs of sustainable socio-economic development. Let us make them the inspirational lighthouses of historical legacy, he added.

Speaking on the occasion the Lt. Governor A&N Islands Admiral DK Joshi PVSM, AVSM, YSM, NM, VSM (Retd.), said the strategically important A&N Islands, guarding the most busy sea lanes of the world is capable of playing an important role in the 'Act East Policy' of India and can become the gateway to East Asian and South East Asian countries. The sea surrounding the A&N Islands provides opportunities as well as challenges to it. We have 25% of the countries cost line as well as 30% Exclusive Economic Zone.

The Lt. Governor said the Administration is efficiently providing basic facilities to the people here viz. Education, Health, Electricity, Water, despite the connectivity problems. "However during the last 2-3 years, the A&N Islands have made unprecedented Scio-economic development, and we thank the Central Government for its constant support in the overall development of the Islands" said the Lt. Governor, expressing confidence that the issues concerning Shipping, Civil Aviation and internet connectivity will be solved soon with the support of the Central Government

Mentioning about the unique feature of the Islands that makes it a Mini India, the Lt. Governor informed about the cultural exchange programe between A&N Islands and Lakshadweep under 'Ek Bharat-Shreshth Bharat' and the student exchange programme between Kashmir and A&N Islands (Kashmir to Campbell Bay) with Jammu & Kashmir.

Highlighting the development activities of the Islands the Lt. Governor informed about the constitution of Islands Development Agency under the chairmanship of the Home Minister as per the direction of the Prime Minister. Under this, various important projects are being

implemented for tourism and infrastructural development. Last year, 4.87 lakh tourists visited these Islands and every year this data is growing by 20%. The undersea OFC project work has been awarded during May 2018, which will be completed by December 2019. The works of construction of National Highway 4 and the two bridges are progressing well. The proposal for bridge between Chatham and Bambooflat is also ready, said the Lt. Governor.

He also informed that under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, the A&N Islands have been declared 'Open Defecation Free' on Jan 31, 2018. Rain water harvesting and solar roof top has been made compulsory in all the buildings to be constructed in the Municipal area. This will also be implemented in the rural areas soon, he said. The A&N Islands have 86.93% forest area. Despite being a major part of Carbon Sink of the country, land diversion for important developmental and Agricultural projects here is very difficult; he said urging that land may be made available for these activities.

The A&N Administration has also proposed for dual use of various Defence and Civil infrastructures in the Islands. The dual use of proposed extended Airports in Diglipur, Car Nicobar and Campbell Bay will benefit the people and economy of these Islands the Lt. Governor said, expressing confidence that the Islands will continue to receive the special attention of the Central Government.

Speaking on the occasion the Member of Parliament, Shri Bishnu Pada Ray at the outset thanked the Vice President for choosing A&N Islands under Smart City project while he was the Urban Development Minister. He further stated that following implementation of GST in the country in July 2017, the PBMC has lost its octroi. On the other hand more number of Wards have been included in the Jurisdiction of PBMC. Therefore, more funds should be provided to PBMC, he said. He also requested that the Councilors be provided with some fund to help the people of their area during any disaster. The Member of Parliament also requested to include sugar under PDS and increase the quantity of rice under PDS. He also requested that a special package is given to the Rural Development Department for carrying out various Developmental; activities in rural areas, restarting the flight between Port Blair and Nicobar and urged that a package is provide to the Sri Lankan refugee living in Katchal Island.

Welcoming the Vice President of India Shri M Venkaiah Naidu, the PBMC Chairman, Shri Indra Pal Singh informed him about the prime responsibilities of the Port Blair Municipal Council viz. providing drinking water, sanitation, solid waste management, foothpaths, street lights and public toilets. He also informed that PBMC has initiated the Digitalization in the Municipal Council to bring good governance to the citizens of the Port Blair City. Digitalization has brought transparency and corruption free

environment for the people, he said, adding that PBMC will soon launch the online building plan approval system for the people, which is also one step ahead towards digitalization.

He further mentioned that, following implementation of the GST, the octroi has been subsumed in the GST, resulted in 85% reduction in the revenue of PBMC and requested to provide budgetary grant to PBMC besides additional funds to meet various requirement.

The PBMC Chairman also presented the Appreciation Letter to the Vice President. The function concluded with the vote of thanks proposed by the Sr. Vice Chairperson, PBMC Smti Vinita Malhotra.