

Regarding Need to declare 15th January observed as Pongal festival across the country, a gazetted holiday-Laid

DR. GANAPATHY RAJKUMAR P.(COIMBATORE): Pongal is a harvest festival celebrated by Tamils every year on January, 15. This festival is dedicated to the Hindu god Surya and nature. This festival is also celebrated in all countries where Tamils live, including South India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, European countries, North America, South Africa, and Mauritius. Further, a significant Tamil minority in neighbouring states like Karnataka, Kerala, Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar also celebrate Pongal every year. Tamil population in India is concentrated in Tamil Nadu (official language, over 72 million speakers as of recent data) and significant minorities in neighbouring states like Karnataka (33% population), Kerala (30% population), Puducherry (88% Population) Andhra Pradesh (35% population) and Maharashtra (37 lakhs) and in Delhi hosts a significant Tamil population, estimated around 7,00,000 in the mid-2000s. With smaller populations elsewhere, reflecting migration patterns and historical links, the total World Tamil population is about 13.578 Crores. In Tamil Nadu, this festival being celebrated for 03 days starting from January 14, 15 and 16 every year with state government gazetted holidays. In view of the above, I urge upon the Union govt. to declare 15 January every year as a gazetted holiday to all the Union Government's and Union Territories Offices/Establishments across the country for Pongal festival so as to enable all Tamil people across the country to celebrate this Pongal festival with family happily and peacefully.