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First stone laid for Rajaji memorial

Express News Service
MADRAS, Feb. 16.

The memorial to Rajaji to be erected by the Tamil Nadu Government will come up on 40-ground site near the Gandhi Mantap at Adyar at an initial estimate cost of Rs. 5 lakhs.

Chief Minister Karunanidhi, who announced this here yesterday said the memorial, a Mantap, would truly reflect Rajaji's life of sacrifice. A life-size statue of Rajaji would also be erected at the entrance of the Mantap.

Mr. Karunanidhi said the State Government had already taken steps to acquire the house at Thorapalli in Salem district where Rajaji was born to convert into a memorial.

President Giri, who laid the foundation stone at the memorial site, said that the memorial was only symbolic of the people's homage to a great son of India. "The best memorial we can erect for him is in our hearts. What should be our prime concern is to rededicate ourselves to the values he cherished most, of human freedom and integrity in personal and public life.

Then alone can we consider ourselves as worthy inheritors of what he lived and died for."

Paying glowing tributes to Rajaji, Mr. Giri said that Rajaji's was a life of unequalled brilliance, unswerving patriotism, unquestioned integrity, moral strength and courage.

Rajaji was truly a Rajarishi as described by many and his facile pen could analyse complex issues in a simple and allegorical manner. Whether he interpreted the epics and Upanishads or whether he wrote short stories for children, his writings endeared him to people from all walks of life, Mr. Giri said.

Governor K. K. Shah, who presided, said to raise a memorial for Rajaji next to Gandhi Maudapam in the construction of which Rajaji himself had a share and responsibility, was itself a precious tribute.

Mr. Shah said Rajaji was a mighty example and a demonstrative proof, if any proof was needed, of an intellectual of high calibre accepting the existence of God.



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PERSONAL

As you are aware, the General Elections to the Legislative Assemblies of several States are due to be held in March.

Notwithstanding the severe reverses we suffered in the recent Elections to the Lok Sabha and in the State Assembly Election in Madras (and also, to some extent, in Orissa), we intend contesting the forthcoming State Assembly Elections in a big way, especially in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Mysore and Andhra Pradesh. And we propose to do so on our own steam, as a Party "recognised" as an All-India Party by the Election Commission and without any "alliances" with any other Party (except perhaps by way of electoral adjustments at purely local levels.)

- (1) It was a fatal mistake for us to have contested the recent Lok Sabha Elections on a mere "anti-Indira" platform in alliance with other Parties with whom we had nothing, not even an agreed programme, in common.

The so-called "Grand Alliance"

- completely blunted our ideology i.e. our principles, policies and programmes;
- landed us into impossible "contradictions" in endeavouring to mount our election campaign; and
- did not even work amicably at the ground level in many of the constituencies we contested.

- (2) Fortunately, our Party organisation still remains strong and active, especially in the four States where we intend to mount an all-out campaign.
- (3) Our ideology, and consequently our principles, policies and programmes continue to be both distinctive and valid; and they still command considerable acceptance with the rural public.