

## Today's Paper» NATIONAL

Published: December 5, 2011 00:00 IST | Updated: December 5, 2011 04:24 IST

### "RV, father of industrialisation in Tamil Nadu"

Special Correspondent



Tamil Nadu Governor K. Rosaiah speaks at the birth centenary celebrations of the former President, R. Venkataraman, in Chennai on Sunday. — Photo: V. Ganesan

Apart from the rich tributes, there were some rare insights and a few warm anecdotes as some of Chennai's finest remembered the former President, R. Venkataraman, on the occasion of his birth centenary celebrations here on Sunday.

The man who took the long road from Rajamadam village in Thanjavur to the Rashtrapati Bhavan to become India's eighth President was variously described by speakers as the "Father of Industrialisation" in Tamil Nadu, distinguished parliamentarian, gracious statesman and humanist to the core.

Tamil Nadu Governor K. Rosaiah, who was the chief guest, said it was important that "we not only remember him but also should enable the young generation to know about him, imbibe his values and emulate him as a role model."

As much as he served as an example of courtesy, cordiality and equable temper through his life, Venkataraman also dealt with issues and persons around him in a straightforward and open-minded manner. Beneath the multi-faceted personality of this grassroots politician, who had sound political sense in understanding the needs of the people ran the thread of humane values, probity and dedication, Mr. Rosaiah said.

Making a rare departure from his written speech, the Governor recalled an occasion when he called on Venkataraman at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Based on his experience of having lost an election to a greenhorn in a constituency that he had served well, Venkataraman advised him that such events were the stuff of politics and that one had to look beyond nursing a constituency, Mr. Rosaiah said.

The former Governor of West Bengal, Gopalkrishna Gandhi, said Venkataraman possessed the kinds of courage required for a politician to approach statesmanship — courage to be unpopular with the popular, be tough with the strong, embrace defeat, own a mistake and the courage to be content in retirement.

Mr. Gandhi said he felt hollowed out in the absence of more people like "RV" who assumed power without ego, left office without regret and lived without illusions, to guide us in these troubled times.

The former Supreme Court judge, S. Mohan, said well-wishers should get together to erect a statue in Venkataraman's honour.

Era Sezhiyan, former parliamentarian, who shared childhood reminiscences — both went to the same school in Pattukottai — said Venkataraman was a staunch Congressman and a democrat who observed every rule. Even when their paths crossed in their political careers when he was in the Opposition and Venkataraman occupied the treasury bench, they would still share constructive dialogue, unlike Parliament of these days, he said.

N. Ram, Editor-in-Chief of *The Hindu*, said a distinguishing feature of R. Venkataraman was the extreme grace, maturity and perspective he brought to his response to critical newspaper coverage about the government which is in sharp contrast to the intolerance of dissent that is encountered these days. A good biography of this towering figure from south India who served public life with distinction for long was overdue, Mr. Ram said.

S. S. Badrinath, Chairman Emeritus, Sankara Nethralaya, deemed it a rare privilege to have offered ophthalmologic services, as honorary surgeon to the President, to R. Venkataraman, who also had a humorous trait.

Padma Subrahmanyam, president, Nrithyodaya, remembered him as a great patron of arts who, as President, had thrown open the gates of the Rashtrapati Bhavan to dancers and musicians.

Vyjayantimala Bali, dancer and former Congress MP, presented excerpts from her autobiography "Bonding" to recall how an invitation from the President to perform for a show by the ICCR was instrumental in getting her back to the stage when she was in mourning after the death of her spouse.

M.A.M. Ramaswamy, convener, celebration committee and committee of hosts, described RV as a role model for anyone who wanted to come up in life.

K.V. Kanakambaram, president of the Guindy Industrial Manufacturers Association, said the Guindy Estate was celebrating the former President's contribution to industrialisation in its own way.

Padma Venkataraman said the family was indeed overwhelmed by the show of affection and reverence.

---

***We should enable youth to emulate him as role model: Rosaiah***

***His response to critical newspaper coverage was mature: N. Ram***

---

Like | Send

0

0

[Ads by Google](#)

[The BlackBerry® Bold™](#)

Get the 3G BlackBerry Bold 9000. Now available in stores.

[IN.BlackBerry.com](#)