



English rendering of the text of PM's 'Mann ki Baat' programme on All India Radio on 25.06.2017

Posted On: 25 JUN 2017 9:20PM by PIB Bhubaneswar

My Dear Countrymen. Namaskar. The weather is changing. It has been extremely hot this year. But it is good that the monsoon is moving ahead on schedule on its natural course. The weather has become pleasant in several parts of the country with abundant showers. As a result of the rains, the cool breeze has brought about some respite from the oppressive heat of past few days. One has seen that no matter how hectic the life is, no matter how tense we are, whether its one's personal or public life, the arrival of the rains does lift one's spirits.

The Car festival of Lord Jagannath, the Rath Yatra, is being celebrated in several parts of the country with great piety and fervour. This festival is now also celebrated in some parts of the world. The underprivileged of the country are deeply connected to Lord Jagannath. Those who have studied the life and works of Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar, would have observed that he had wholeheartedly praised the Lord Jagannath temple and its traditions, since, social justice and social equality were inherent to these. Lord Jagannath is the God of the poor. But few would know that in English, there is a word, 'juggernaut' which means, a magnificent chariot, that is unstoppable. In the dictionary, the etymology of the word 'juggernaut' traces its roots to the chariot of Lord Jagannath. And therefore, we can observe that the world has in its own way accepted the significance of the Car Festival of Lord Jagannath, The Rath Yatra. On the occasion of Lord Jagannath's Car Festival, I extend my heartiest greetings to all my fellow countrymen, and offer my obeisance to Lord Jagannath.

India's diversity is its unique characteristic, and India's diversity is also its strength. The holy month of Ramzan is observed all across, in prayer with piety. And now the festival of Eid is here. On the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, my heartiest greetings to one and all. Ramzan is a month of charity, and sharing joy. The more you share joy, the more it multiplies. Let us come together and take inspiration from these holy festivals and share their joyous treasures, and take the nation forward.

In this holy month of Ramzan, I came across a very inspiring incident at Mubarakpur village of Bijnor in Uttar Pradesh. About three and a half thousand families of our Muslim brethren reside in that little village and in a way, form a majority of its population. During this Ramzan the villagers decided to get together and construct toilets. Now, to construct these household toilets, the government gives financial assistance, under which, they were provided a sum of 17 lakh rupees. You will be pleasantly surprised and happy to know that, during this holy month of Ramzan, these Muslim brothers and sisters, returned this money to the government, saying, they would construct these toilets with their own labour and their own money; and that this sum of 17 lakh rupees be used for providing other facilities in the village. I felicitate the residents of Mubarakpur, for transforming the pious occasion of Ramzan into an opportunity for the welfare of society on. Each and everything about them is inspiring. And the most important of it all is that they have freed Mubarakpur of the scourge of open defecation. We know that in our country there are three states that have already been declared Open Defecation Free states, that is, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala. Uttarakhand and Haryana have also been declared ODF, this week. I express my gratitude to the administration, government and especially the people of these five states, for achieving this objective.

We know very well, that tremendous hard work is required to achieve anything worthwhile, whether it is in one's own life or for the society. If we have bad handwriting, and we want to improve it, we have to consciously practice for a long time. Only then will the habit of the body and mind will change. Cleanliness is also similar to this. These bad habits have become a part of our nature. We have become accustomed to them. To free ourselves of these habits we will have to constantly strive and persevere. Everyone's attention will have to be drawn. We will have to repeatedly remind ourselves of good inspirational incidents. And I'm happy to see that cleanliness is no longer confined to being a government programme. It is getting transformed into a movement by the society and the people. And when government functionaries take this initiative forward with the participation of the masses, it becomes even stronger.

Recently I came across a wonderful incident, which I would like to share with you. This happened in the Vizianagaram District of Andhra Pradesh. The district administration there undertook a huge task with people's participation. From 6 a.m. on the 10th of March, till 10 am of the 14th of March. A hundred-hour non-stop campaign. And what was the objective? To construct 10,000 household toilets in 71 gram panchayats in those hundred hours. And my Dear Countrymen, you will be happy to learn that the administration and the people together did construct 10,000 toilets in hundred hours successfully. 71 villages became ODF. I congratulate the people in the government, government officials and the citizens of Vizianagaram district on this great accomplishment of achieving this feat through immense hard work and setting a very inspiring example in the process.

These days, people have been regularly sending their suggestions for 'Mann Ki Baat', on the NarendraModiApp, on MyGov.in, through letters and Akashvani.

Shri Prakash Tripathi reminiscing about the Emergency, has written, presenting 25th of June as a Dark period in the history of Democracy. Prakash Tripathi ji's commitment to democracy is praiseworthy. Not only is Democracy a system, but also a 'sanskar'- a part of our ethos. Eternal Vigilance is the Price of Liberty. One needs to be constantly alert about our Democracy, that is why we must also keep remembering the events that inflicted harm upon our democracy; and at the same time move ahead, carrying forward the virtues of democracy. 1975 - 25th June - it was a dark night that no devotee of democracy can ever forget. No Indian can ever forget. The country had virtually become a prison. The voice of the opposition had been smothered. Several prominent leaders including Jai Prakash Narayan had been jailed. The judicial system too could not escape the sinister shadows of the Emergency. The press was completely muffled. The present-day students of journalism and the champions of democracy have been endeavouring towards raising awareness about that dark period, by constant reminders, and should continue to do so. Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji was also in jail at that time. After one year of Emergency, Atal ji wrote a poem, in which he describes the state of mind during those turbulent times.

The scorching summer month,
The sad winter moonlight,
The sobbing monsoon,
An emptiness pervading within
An entire year has gone by.

The world confined behind bars,
But the soul like a restless bird
The freedom song resonates
From the earth to the sky,

An entire year has gone by.

The eyes are in anticipation
Counting days and moments
The beloved who went away,
Shall return one day,
An entire year has gone by.

The believers of democracy fought a prolonged war, and the great nation that India is, where the spirit of democracy pervades the very being of all its people, the strength of that spirit was demonstrated when the opportunity of elections came. We have to further fortify that legacy.

My dear countrymen, every Indian today, is proud and holds his head high. 21st June 2017 – Yoga has permeated the entire world. From the seashores to the mountains, people welcomed the first rays of the sun, with Yoga. Which Indian wouldn't be proud of this! It isn't as if Yoga didn't exist before, but now the threads of Yoga have bound everyone together, and have become the means to unite the world. Almost all the countries in the world made Yoga Day their own. In China, Yoga was practiced on the Great Wall of China, and on the World Heritage site of Machu Picchu in Peru, at 2400 metres above sea level. In France, yoga was performed in the vicinity of the Eiffel Tower. In Abu Dhabi in UAE, more than 4000 persons participated in mass yoga. In Herat, in Afghanistan, on the India Afghan Friendship Dam, Salma Dam, Yoga added a new aspect to India's friendship. In a small country like Singapore, programs were organised in 70 places, with a week long campaign. On the occasion of International Day of Yoga, the UN released ten stamps. A 'Yoga Session with Yoga Masters' was organised at the UN headquarters. The staff of the UN and diplomats from across the world participated.

Yoga has created a world record again this time also. In Ahmedabad in Gujarat, around 55 thousand people performed Yoga together and created a new world record. I too had the opportunity to participate in the Yoga event held in Lucknow. But I also had the good fortune to practice Yoga in the rain for the first time. Our soldiers practiced yoga in Siachen where temperatures reach minus 20, 25, 40 degrees. Whether it is our armed forces, or the BSF, ITBP, CRPF and CISF, each one of them, apart from their duties has made Yoga a part of their lives. On this Yoga Day, since this was the third International Day of Yoga, I had asked you to share photos of three generations of the family doing yoga together. Some TV channels also took this idea forward. I received a lot of photographs out of which, selected photographs are compiled and uploaded on the NarendraModiApp. One significant outcome of the way the yoga is being talked about all around the world is the portent that today's health conscious society is now taking steps from fitness to wellness, and they have realised that fitness is, of course, important, but for true wellness, yoga is the best way.

Sound bite.

"Respected Prime Minister Sir, I am Dr. Anil Sonara speaking from Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Sir, I have a question. Recently in Kerala, we heard you speak about replacing bouquets that we give as gifts, with good books as mementos. You had started this practice while you were in office in Gujarat, Sir, but in the recent days we have not been seeing much of this. So, can we do something about it? Is there nothing we can do to have this implemented throughout the country, Sir?"

Recently, I had the opportunity to go to one of my favorite events. A very good programme is being run in Kerala for the past few years, by the P.N. Panicker Foundation, which encourages people to cultivate the habit of reading books and to enhance their awareness towards this, by organising celebrations such as 'Reading Day', and 'Reading Month'. I had the opportunity to go for the inaugural function, where I was told that instead of bouquets, they gift books. I liked it. Thus I was also reminded of what had slipped my mind. Because when I was in Gujarat, I had set this tradition of welcoming, by not giving bouquets, but books or handkerchiefs instead. And that too, a 'Khadi' handkerchief, so that it promotes 'Khadi'. Till the time I was in Gujarat, this habit had been ingrained in us, but after coming here, I had lost that habit. When I went to Kerala, it was rekindled. I have already begun to issue instructions in the government. Here too we can gradually nurture this habit. And the life span of a bouquet is very short. You receive it in your hand for a moment and then abandon it. But when you present a book, it becomes a part of the household, a part of the family. One can also use a 'Khadi' handkerchief to welcome people, and be a support to the innumerable underprivileged. The expenses are reduced as well, and the gift is well utilized too. I say this, thinking of the historical value of such gifts. During my past UK visit, in London, the Queen of Britain, Queen Elizabeth had invited me to dine with her. The atmosphere was imbued with maternal warmth, and I was served with great affection. Afterwards when she showed me a small thread-spun khadi handkerchief, her eyes lit up. With great respect and in an emotion filled voice, she said, that Mahatma Gandhi had sent this handkerchief to her as a wedding gift. So many years have passed and yet, Queen Elizabeth has treasured the handkerchief gifted by Mahatma Gandhi. And she was happy to show it to me, when I went there. As I gazed at it, the Queen encouraged me to touch it. A small gift by Mahatma Gandhi, has become a part of her life and a part of history. I know that these habits do not change overnight, and when we talk about it, we invite criticism. Despite that, one should keep talking about it, and keep making the effort. Now, I cannot say that if I go somewhere and somebody brings a bouquet I will refuse it. No, I won't do that, but we will talk about it even though there is criticism, and then gradually, the change will happen.

My dear countrymen, as Prime Minister, there are numerous tasks to be handled. I have to remain deeply absorbed in files, but for my own self, I have developed a habit of reading daily, at least a few of the letters I receive and because of that I get a chance to connect with the common man. I get a variety of letters, written by all sorts of people. Recently, I had the opportunity to read a letter, which I feel, I should share with you. From the far south, in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, Arulmozhi Sarvanan, a housewife, sent me a letter. And what was in that letter? She wrote, that she thought about engaging in some economic activity keeping in mind her responsibilities such as children's education, to lend some financial assistance to her family. She got some money from the bank, under the 'Mudra' Scheme and commenced working towards procuring some items from the market for sale. Then she came to know of the 'Government E-Marketplace' system initiated by the government. She tried to find out the details, and asked people about it. And then she registered herself for the scheme. Here I want to tell my countrymen, that if you get the opportunity, you should also visit, the E-G-E-M, E-GEM website on the Internet. This is a great new system. Whoever wants to supply any item to the government, small things such as electric bulbs, dustbins, brooms, chairs and tables, they can register themselves. They can mention the quality of the goods, the rate at which they sell, and it is compulsory for the government departments to visit the site and see whether the supplier can supply the goods at reasonable prices without compromising on the quality. And then the orders can be placed. That is how the middlemen can be removed from the system. The entire process becomes transparent. There is no interface. Everything is done through technology. So, when people register in E-GEM, all the government departments become aware of them. As there are no middlemen, the goods are available at very reasonable rates. Now whatever goods Arulmozhi Madam could supply, she got all those registered on this government website. And the best part is, what she has written in this letter is very interesting. She has written that she got the money from the 'Mudra' Scheme and started her business, then she registered the inventory of all her products on the E-GEM website, and then she got an order from the Prime Minister's Office. It was news to me also, I wondered what the PMO would have ordered. She wrote that the PMO had ordered two thermoses, and she was paid Rupees 1600/-. This is empowerment. This is an opportunity for encouraging entrepreneurship. Had Arulmozhi not written to me I wouldn't have realised that because of E-GEM, a housewife living far away and running a small business can have the items on her inventory purchased directly by the Prime Minister's Office. This is the nation's strength. This has transparency, this has empowerment, this has entrepreneurship too. Government E-Marketplace - GEM. I would certainly like that whoever wishes to sell their products or business items to the government, should increasingly get connected with this website. I believe that this is an excellent example of Minimum Government and Maximum Governance, and it's objective is Minimum Price and Maximum Ease, Efficiency and Transparency.

My dear countrymen, on the one hand, we take pride in Yoga, on the other we can also take pride in our achievements in space science. And this is the unique attribute of India, that whereas we have our feet firmly on the ground with Yoga, we have our dreams to soar beyond horizons to far away skies. Recently, India has had many achievements in sports, as well as science. Today, India's flag is flying high not only on earth but also in space. Just two days ago, ISRO launched 30 Nano satellites with the 'Cartosat-2 Series Satellite.' And besides India, these satellites are of France, Germany, Italy, Japan,

Britain and America, nearly 14 such countries. And with India's Nano Satellite Mission, we will get a lot of help in the field of agriculture, farming, and dealing with natural disasters. We are all aware that a few days ago, ISRO has successfully launched the GSAT-19. And of all the satellites launched by India, this was the heaviest satellite. The newspapers of our country have compared it with elephantine weights. You can well imagine the magnitude of the achievement of our scientists in space. On the 19th of June, our Mars Mission completed one thousand days. You may be aware that when we had successfully created a place for the Mars Mission in orbit, this entire mission was planned for a duration of 6 months. It had a life expectancy of 6 months. But I'm happy that the strength of the endeavours of our scientists has been such that not only has this crossed six months; even after a thousand days, our Mangalyaan Mission is at work, sending images, providing information, collating scientific data, way beyond its expected duration and life expectancy. The completion of one thousand days, is an important milestone in our scientific journey, our space odyssey.

These days we see that our youth are getting increasingly inclined to the field of sports. It is becoming evident that along with studies, our new generations can see a future in sports as well. And our sportspersons, through their prowess, skills and accomplishments win laurels for the country as well. Recently India's Badminton player, Kidambi Shrikant has brought glory to the nation by winning Indonesia Open. I extend my heartiest congratulations to him and his coach for this victory. I had the opportunity, a few days ago to be associated with the inaugural function of the Synthetic Track of the renowned athlete, P.T. Usha's Usha School of Athletics. The more we promote sports, the more we see the spirit of sportsmanship. Sports play an important role in personality development also. There is a great significance of sports in overall personality development. There is no dearth of talent in our country. If the children in our family are interested in sports, they should be given opportunities. They should not be forced off the playing fields to be locked in rooms with books. They should study as well, if they can do well in studies, they should certainly do so, but if they have the potential and the inclination to do well in sports, that should be encouraged and supported by the school, college, family and all the people around them. Each one should nurture dreams for the next Olympics.

My dear countrymen, let me mention once again, that this Season of Rains, with its abundance of festivals and festivities, brings with it a unique new feeling of the times. I extend my heartiest greetings to you all, until the next episode of 'Mann Ki Baat', when I shall share my thoughts with you once again. Namaskar.

(Release ID: 1493806) Visitor Counter : 143

