



English rendering of 38th edition of PM's 'Mann Ki Baat' programme on All India Radio on 26th November 2017

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My dear countrymen, namaskar! A while ago, I had a chance to have an indirect dialogue, with young friends from Karnataka. The Times Group Newspaper "Vijaya Karnataka" started a new initiative urging the children to write a letter to the Prime Minister of the country. And, then they published some selected letters. I read those letters and liked the initiative. Even these little children are conversant with problems confronting the nation; aware of the deliberations going on in the country. Kirti Hegde from North Kannada had appreciated Digital India and Smart City schemes and she put forth a suggestion that we need to transform our education system and said that the present-day children do not like classroom reading, they love to know more and more about nature. And if we impart knowledge about nature to our children then in future they may prove very useful in protecting the environment.

A child Reeda Nadaf from Laxmeshwara has written that she is the daughter of an army man and feels proud of being so. Which Indian would not be proud of our soldiers? And, you being a soldier's daughter should naturally take pride in that. Irfana Begum from Kalburgi has written that her school is 5 Kilometres away from her village and she has to start early in the morning and it gets quite late in the evening by the time she returns home. She says that as such she does not find time to spend with her friends and has suggested that there should be a school nearby. But, my countrymen, I liked this initiative taken by a newspaper that helped these letters reach me and I got an opportunity to go through these. This was a very good experience for me.

My dear countrymen, today is 26/11. The 26th of November is our Constitution Day. The Constitution of India was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on this day in the year nineteen forty-nine. Our constitution was implemented on the 26th of January, 1950 which we celebrate as our Republic Day. The Constitution of India is the spirit of our democracy. This is the day to remember the members of the Constituent Assembly. They all worked hard for about three years to draft the Constitution. And, whoever reads that debate will feel proud about what actually the vision of a life dedicated to the nation is. Can you imagine how hard their task would have been to frame the Constitution of our country which has such big diversities? They must have shown a great sense of understanding and farsightedness and that too at a juncture when the country was getting rid of the bondage of slavery. Now, this is the responsibility of all of us to make a New India in the light of the thinking of the makers of our Constitution. Our Constitution is all encompassing. There probably is no area, no aspect of nature which remained untouched.

Equality for all and sensitivity towards all is the unique characteristic of our Constitution. It guarantees fundamental rights to each & every citizen, whether underprivileged or oppressed, backward or deprived, a tribal or a woman. It protects their fundamental rights and safeguards their interests. It is our duty that we abide by our Constitution in letter and spirit. Citizens and administrators alike must move ahead in accordance with the spirit of our Constitution. The message that our Constitution conveys is that no one should be harmed in any way. It is but natural to remember Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar on the Constitution Day today. Seventeen separate committees were constituted by the Constituent Assembly on various important issues. One of most significant of these was the drafting committee and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was the Chairman of this drafting committee. He was playing a pivotal role in it. The Constitution of India, which we feel so very proud of, bears an indelible stamp of his able leadership. He ensured the welfare of every section of society. We remember him and bow before him on his Mahaparinirvan Diwas on 6th of December. Babasaheb's contribution in making the country prosperous and strong can never be forgotten. 15th of December is the death anniversary of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel. Sardar Patel rose from being a farmer's son to be known as the Iron Man of the country, undertaking the extraordinary task of uniting India into one nation. Sardar Saheb was also a member of the constituent Assembly. He was also the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on fundamental rights, minorities and tribals.

26/11 is our Constitution Day but how can the nation forget that on this very day nine years ago, terrorists had launched an attack on Mumbai. The country remembers and bows to those brave citizens, policemen, security men and each one who lost their lives then. This country can never forget their sacrifice. Terrorism has taken an ugly shape and has become a global threat almost as a daily routine. We, in India, are facing a lot for the last 40 years on account of terrorism. Thousands of our innocent people have lost their lives. But, a few years ago, when India used to talk about the severe threats of terrorism many people in the world were not ready to take it seriously. Now that, terrorism is knocking at their doors, every Government in the world, those who believe in humanity, Governments having faith in democracy are seeing this as one of the biggest challenges. Terrorism has threatened humanity across the globe. Terrorism has challenged humanity. It is bent upon destroying the humanitarian forces. So, not only India but all humanitarian forces will have to keep fighting unitedly to defeat the menace of terrorism. Lord Budha, Lord Mahavir, Guru Nanak, Mahatma Gandhi - this is the land which gave the message of love and non-violence to the world.

Terrorism and extremism are trying to weaken and destroy our social fabric. That is why, the need of the hour is that humanitarian forces should become more alert and cautious.

My dear countrymen, we shall observe Navy Day on the 4th of December. Indian Navy secures and protects our maritime boundaries. I congratulate all those who belong to the Navy. All of you must be knowing that our civilization developed along river banks. Be it the Indus, the Ganges, the Yamuna or the Saraswati - our rivers and seas are both economically and strategically important. These are our gateway to the whole world. This country, our land has an unbreakable bond with oceans. And as we peep into our history, we come to know that about 800 to 900 (eight to nine hundred) years ago, during the rule of the Cholas, the Chola Navy was considered one of the strongest navies. This navy had a big role in the expansion of the Chola-rule and in making it an economic super power. Numerous references of voyages and expeditions of the Chola-Navy are found even today in "Sangam - literature". Very few people might be aware that most navies of the world allowed women on their warships pretty later. But in the Chola Navy, a large number of women played leading roles and that too about eight to nine hundred years ago; to the extent that women actively took part in battles. The Chola rulers possessed a very rich and sound knowledge of ship building. When we talk of navy, who can ignore Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and the capabilities & might of his navy. Konkan coast, where the sea has a significant role, was under Shivaji Maharaj's realm. Many forts associated with Shivaji Maharaj like Sindhu Durg, Murud Janjira, Swarn Durg, etc were either situated on the sea coast or were encircled by sea. The security of these forts was the responsibility of the Maratha Navy. There was a combination of large ships and small boats in the Maratha Navy. His naval forces were very efficient and skilled in attacking the enemy and in defending their attacks. And how can we refer to the Maratha Navy and not remember Kanhoji Angre! He took the Maratha Navy to newer heights and established Maratha Naval Bases at a number of places. After Independence, our Indian Navy showed its valour on various occasions; be it the liberation struggle of Goa or the Indo-Pak war. When we talk of the Navy, we see only war but the Indian Navy has come forward in humanitarian ventures as well. In June this year when Cyclone Mora hit Bangladesh and Myanmar, our naval ship INS SUMITRA rendered a big help in rescue operations; many fishermen were rescued from the sea and handed over to Bangladesh.

In May-June this year when there was a severe flood in Sri Lanka, three ships of our navy reached there immediately and helped the government and the people there. In September, during the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh, our naval ship INS GHADIYAL delivered humanitarian assistance there. The Government of Papua New Guinea sent an SOS-message to us in June and our navy rendered help in saving the fishermen of a fishing boat. On 21st November, during an incident of piracy in a merchant vessel in the Western Gulf, our naval ship INS TRIKAND reached there to help them. Carrying medical supplies to Fiji, sending urgent relief, or delivering humanitarian aid during crisis to a neighbouring country - our navy has always rendered

glorious service. We Indians, always nurture a feeling of pride and respect towards our security forces- be it the army, the navy or the air force and every countryman salutes the courage, bravery, valour, chivalry and sacrifice of our soldiers. They sacrifice their youth for the country so that 125 crore countrymen may live in peace. We observe ARMED FORCES FLAG DAY every year on 7th December. This is a day to feel proud of and show respect to our country's armed forces.

I am happy that the Ministry of Defence has decided to run a campaign from December 1 to December 7 during which they will reach out to the people of the country to disseminate information about our ARMED FORCES and to make them aware. Throughout the week every one, old or young, should wear the flag. A movement to instill respect for our forces will come into being in the country. We can distribute ARMED FORCES FLAGS on this occasion. Experiences and acts of valour of those from the armed forces who are our neighbours or acquaintances and related videos and pictures can be posted on hash-tag armed forces flag day (#armedforcesflagday). People from the forces could be invited to schools and colleges to share information about the forces. Our new generation can get a good opportunity to get information about the forces. This is also an occasion to collect funds for the welfare of the jawans of our armed forces. This amount is spent through the Sainik Kalyan Board on the dependents of those who lost their lives and also for those who got injured during wars, for their rehabilitation. More information about sending in monetary contributions can be had on ksb.gov.in. You can also make cashless payment for this. Come, let us do something on this occasion which may raise the morale of our armed forces. We should also contribute towards their welfare.

My dear countrymen, World Soil Day is on the 5th of December. I want to tell something to my farmer brothers and sisters. An important component of the Earth is "soil". Whatever we eat is linked only to this soil. In a way, the complete food chain is connected to soil. Just imagine, what will happen if there is no fertile soil in the world? The very thought is dreadful. There will be no soil, no plants and trees will grow; how will human life be possible? How will animals and birds survive? This concern was touched upon a long time ago in our culture and that is why we are aware of the significance of soil since ancient times. In our culture, there has been efforts to foster a feeling of devotion and gratitude towards our farms, our soil among the people and at the same time scientific farming methods and techniques have been adopted which provide nutrients to the soil. In the life of the farmer of this country both aspects have been important- reverence to his soil and preserving & nurturing it scientifically. We all feel proud of the fact that the farmers of our country are rooted to traditions and also take interest in modern science, they keep trying and resolve. I had heard about the farmers, of Tohoo village in Bhoranj block of Hamirpur district in Himachal Pradesh.

Farmers here were earlier using chemical fertilizers indiscriminately which deteriorated the soil-health. Produce reduced which resulted in lower income and gradually the productivity of the soil also was going down. Some enlightened and alert farmers in the village noticed and understood the gravity of the situation, and after that got their soil tested on time and followed the advice about the quantity of fertilizers, micro-nutrients and organic fertilizers to be used. And, you will be surprised to know about the results achieved after the farmers received the information and guidelines about soil health. In the Rabi season of 2016-17, wheat production per acre increased three to four times and their income also increased by four to six thousand rupees per acre. Besides, the soil quality also improved. Cut in fertilizer usage resulted in monetary saving. I am very glad to see that my farmer brothers have come forward to implement the suggestions made in the soil health card and as better results are showing, they are getting more and more inspired. And, now the farmer also realizes that proper soil care is needed if production is to be increased and that if we take care of our soil, it will also care for all of us.

Our farmers across the country have got more than 10 crore soil health cards made so that they may understand their soil better and accordingly sow the crop.

We worship mother Earth but have we ever thought as to how much damage is caused to the health of our mother- Earth because of the usage of fertilizers like Urea? This has been proved by all scientific methods that a serious damage is caused because of an excessive use of urea. The Farmer is the son of the soil, how can a farmer see the mother Earth falling sick? The need of the hour is to revive the mother-son relationship. Can our farmers, the sons of our soil make a resolve that by the year 2022, when we complete 75 year of our independence, they will cut down the urea usage to half of what is being used presently? If this son of the soil, my farmer brother once make this resolve then we will see the health of mother Earth improve and production will increase. A transformation shall start to usher into the life of the farmer.

All of us are experiencing Global warming, climate change now. There was a time when winter would set in even before Diwali. And now, December is knocking on our doors, yet winter is advancing at a leisurely pace. But the moment winter sets in, we all have experienced that we don't like coming out of our quilts one bit. Despite such inclement weather there are some extraordinarily aware people who deliver results that are exemplary and inspiring for all of us. You will be amazed to learn that Tushar, an eight year old differently - abled, divyang lad from Madhya Pradesh had taken a firm resolve to make his village Open defecation free. It was a young boy vis-à-vis an enormous task at hand. But his grit and determination were exponentially greater and mightier. The eight year old is speech impaired, but he used a whistle as an armament. He would wake up at 5 in the morning, visit households one by one, awaken them and used gesticulations to wean them away from Open defecation. Covering 30 to 40 homes everyday, spreading the message of cleanliness, this boy transformed the village into Open defecation free. Promoting the virtues of cleanliness, this little lad has done inspiring work. This proves that cleanliness suffers from no barriers of age; there are no boundaries. A child or an elderly person, a woman or a man, everyone needs cleanliness. And everyone should contribute towards the cause of cleanliness. Our Divyang brothers and sisters are firm in their resolve; they are competent, capable, courageous and determined.

We get to learn something or the other every moment. They are performing well in every walk of life. Whether it be the field of sports, any kind of competition or a social initiative, our Divyang brethren are second to none. You must be aware that our Divyang sportspersons won 4 medals in the Rio Olympics through their stellar performances. They also emerged champions in the T-20 Cricket World Cup for the Visually Challenged. Myriad competitions take place all over the country. Recently, the 17th National Para-Swimming Competition was held in Udaipur. Divyang brothers & sisters from different parts of the country participated & displayed their stellar skills. One of them happens to be 19 year old Jigar Thakkar from Gujarat, whose body suffers from 80% muscle atrophy.

Just look at his fortitude, resolve & perseverance. Despite his 80% muscle atrophy, the 19 year old Jigar Thakkar won 11 medals in the National Para Swimming Competition. It is on account of this feat that he has been chosen as one of the 32 Para Swimmers for the 20-20 Paralympics by the Sports Authority of India. They will be imparted training at the Centre for excellence at Gandhinagar in Gujarat. I salute the spirit of the young Jigar Thakkar & wish him the best. These days special emphasis is being laid on accessibilities & opportunities for persons with disabilities, our Divyang brethren. Our endeavour is to ensure that each & every person in the country is empowered. Let the essence of 'Sama' & 'Mama', that is a confluence of collective & the individual, foster a sense of syncretic harmony in our society; let us move forward with each other, together.

A few days from now, the pious occasion of Id-e-milad-un-nabi will be observed. Paighambar Hazrat Mohammad Sahab was born on this day. I extend best wishes to all countrymen. And I hope that this holy occasion of Id gives us new inspiration, fresh energy and the strength to resolve anew, to foster peace & communal amity.

(Phone call)

'Hello Mr. Prime Minister, I am Neeraj Singh calling from Kanpur. I request you that out of the entire gamut of your thoughts reflected during the programme 'Mann Ki Baat' throughout the year, if you could share ten of your best thoughts, so that we all remember these opinions and we get to learn something from them. Thank you

(End of phone call)

You are quite right that 2017 is near completion, and the year 2018 is knocking on the door. And you have given some sound advice. But continuing from your point of view I feel like adding something more to it and modifying it a bit. And as in our villages, our elders, the old people of the village are always reminding us - forget the sorrow but also do not forget the joy. You too forget your sorrow and also do not forget the joy. I think we should propagate this wisdom. We must usher in the auspicious in 2018, enter the New Year with the resolution of the auspicious

We know that in our part of the world, and probably all around the world around the ending of the year we take a stock, contemplate, and draw plans for the next year. In our media many interesting events of the year gone by are broadcast again to reflect on the previous year. The previous year is both a mixture of both positive and negative memories. But don't you think that we should enter into the year 2018, remembering the positive events, to do some good?

I suggest to all of you that of all the 5-10 positive things that you might have heard, seen or would have had experienced were to be disseminated, so that other people would get to know of them and this would lead to a spirit of benevolence. Can we not contribute in this endeavour? Can't we share 5 of our positive life experiences of the past year? Whether they be conveyed through photographs, in the form of a small story, or as a small video, I invite all of you to welcome the year 2018 in a benefic atmosphere, with positive memories, with positive thinking and with positive tidings.

Come, let us share our positive experiences with #PositiveIndia (Hashtag Positive India) on the Narendra Modi App or MyGov portal. Remember to recollect the incidents that inspire others. If you remember positive events, then you will be in a mood to do good around you. Positive events provide energy to do good. Positive thoughts beget positive resolve, positive resolve takes you forward towards auspicious results.

Let all of us together witness the strength of this collective momentum and its impact. And I will definitely share the positive thoughts that arrive on #positiveindia (hashtag positive India) with the rest of our denizens in the next episode of 'Mann Ki Baat.'

My dear countrymen, I will be back amidst you next month, with another episode of 'Mann Ki Baat.' We will have another opportunity to talk a lot. Many - Many thanks!

AKT/AK

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