



English rendering of the text of PM's 'Mann ki Baat' programme on All India Radio on 29.10.2017

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My dear countrymen, Namaskar. The mega festival of Chatth, celebrated 6 days after Diwali, is one of those festivals which are celebrated in accordance with strict rituals & regimen. In everything associated with it like cuisine or attire, traditional norms are adhered to. The unique festival Chhath Pooja is deeply linked with nature & worshipping nature. Surya & Jal -The Sun & Water are central to the veneration in Chhath, whereas utensils made of bamboo & clay and tubers are an essential part of the Pooja articles. In this mega festival of faith, veneration of the rising sun and worship of the setting sun convey a message that is replete with unparalleled Sanskar. The world respects & venerates those who rise; the Chatth Pooja bestows upon us the sanskaar to respect & revere those whose setting, whose dusk is imminent. The expression of the significance of cleanliness in our lives is intrinsic to this festival. Before the advent of Chatth, people come together to clean up their homes, and along with that cleansing of rivers, lakes, pond banks and pooja locations, that is ghats, with utmost enthusiasm & fervour. Sun worship or Chhath Pooja is a festival of protecting the environment, ushering in wellness and discipline.

Usually, people shy away from borrowing from others. But in Chhath Pooja, it is specially customary to ask for Prasad after the morning Arghya ritual. It is believed that the rationale behind this tradition is that, it destroys his ego that proves to be an impediment in one's path of progress. It is natural for each one of us to feel proud of this great tradition of India.

My dear countrymen, 'Mann - Ki - Baat' has garnered accolades; it has also attracted criticism. But whenever I look at the overall outcome of 'Mann Ki Baat', it reinforces my belief, that it is intrinsically, inseparably woven into the warp & weft of our common citizens' lives, cent per cent. Take the examples of Khadi and handloom. On Gandhi Jayanti I have always advocated the use of handloom and Khadi. What has it led to? You will be glad to know that on the 17th of this month on the day of Dhanteras, the Khadi Gramodyog Bhavan store in Delhi witnessed a record sale of Rupees one crore, twenty lakhs. You too must be feeling happy with a sense of satisfaction at this mega sale in just one Khadi & Handloom store. During Diwali, Khadi gift coupon sales recorded an overwhelming 680 per cent rise. Compared to last year, the total sales of Khadi & Handicrafts have risen almost by 90%. One can clearly see that today, the youth, the elderly, women, in fact every age group is taking to Khadi & handloom.

I can imagine how many weaver families, poor families, and the families working on handlooms must have benefitted from this. Khadi was Khadi foundation earlier and we talked of Khadi fashion but with my recent experience I can say that after Khadi for nation and Khadi for fashion now, it is becoming Khadi for transformation. Khadi and handloom have transformed the lives of the poorest of the poor and are emerging as a powerful means of empowering them. It is playing a very important role for gramodaya.

Shriman Rajan Bhatt has written on NarendramodiApp that he wants to know about my experience of celebrating Diwali with security forces and he also wants to know how the security forces celebrate Diwali. Shriman Tejas Gaikwad has also written on NarendramodiApp whether there could be an arrangement to send our homemade sweets to the security forces. We also remember our brave security forces. We also feel that our homemade sweets must reach our country's soldiers. All of you must have celebrated Deepawali with traditional fervour. To me, Diwali brought a special experience. Luckily I got another chance to celebrate Deepawali with our courageous and brave heart security personnel. Memories of Diwali celebrations with our security forces in Gurez sector of Jammu & Kashmir will stay long cherished in my heart. On behalf of all our countrymen, I salute every soldier of our security forces who guard the country's borders with utmost dedication and a spirit of sacrifice, braving all odds. Whenever we get a chance or whenever there is an opportunity we must try to know the experiences of our soldiers and listen to their tales of valour. Many of us may not be aware that the jawans of our security forces play an important role not only on our borders but they play a very vital role in establishing peace the world over. As UN Peacekeepers, they are bringing glory to the nation in the comity of nations. United Nations Day was observed recently all over the world on the 24th of October.

Everybody recalls the efforts and constructive role of the UN in establishing peace throughout the world. And, we are believers in "Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam" which means the whole world is our family. And with this belief, India has been cooperating very actively in various important initiatives taken by the UN. You may be aware that the preface of the Indian Constitution and the preface of the UN Charter; both start with the words 'We the people'. India has always stressed on the importance of equality for women and the UN Declaration of Human Rights is a living example of this.

In its initial phrase, it was proposed as 'all men are born free and equal' which was amended and adopted as 'all human beings are born free and equal' with the efforts of the Indian representative Hansa Mehta. It appears to be a minor change but it reflects a vision of a healthy thought. India's most important contribution under the UN umbrella is its role in UN Peacekeeping Operations. India has always been extending active support to UN Peace Missions.

Many of you may be getting to know this for the first time. More than 18 thousand Indian security personnel have lent their services in UN Peacekeeping Operations. Presently, about seven thousand Indian soldiers are associated with UN Peacekeeping initiatives which is the third highest number of soldiers from any country. Till August 2017, Indian soldiers had lent their services in about 50 of the total of 71 Peacekeeping operations undertaken by the UN the world over. These operations have been carried out in Korea, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Congo, Cyprus, Liberia, Lebanon, Sudan and many other parts of the world. In Congo and Southern Sudan more than twenty thousand patients were treated in hospitals of the Indian army and countless lives were saved.

Indian security forces have not only saved people in various countries but also won their hearts with their people friendly operations. Indian women have played a leading role in peace keeping efforts. Very few people may know that India was the first country which sent a female police unit to Liberia for the United Nations Peace Mission. And see how this initiative from India became a big source of motivation for other countries too. Later, all countries started sending their women police units. You will surely feel proud to know that India's contribution is not limited to just peacekeeping operations but it is also providing training to peacekeepers from about eighty five countries. The brave peacekeepers from this land of Mahatma Gandhi and Gautam Budha have sent a message of peace and amity around the world. Peacekeeping operation is not an easy task. Jawans from our security forces have to perform duties in difficult and remote areas. They have to live amongst many different people. They need to know and adapt to various situations and different cultures. They have to mould themselves according to the local needs and environment. While remembering our brave UN Peacekeepers today, who can forget the sacrifice of Captain Gurbachan Singh Salaria who laid down his life while fighting in Congo in Africa?

Every Indian feels proud while remembering him. He was the only UN peacekeeper, a brave-heart, who was awarded the Param Veer Chakra. Lieutenant General Prem Chand ji is one among those Indian Peacekeepers who carved a special niche for themselves in Cyprus. In 1989, at the age of 72, he was appointed the Force Commander for an operation in Namibia and he gave his services to ensure the Independence of that country. General Thimaiyya, who had been India's army chief, lead the UN Peacekeeping force in Cyprus and sacrificed everything for those peace efforts. India has always been giving a message of peace, unity and harmony to the world. We believe that everyone must live in peace and harmony and move ahead to carve a better and peaceful tomorrow.

My dear countrymen, our holy land has given great souls who selflessly served humanity. Sister Nivedita, whom we also know as Bhagini Nivedita, was one such extraordinary person. She was born in Ireland as Margret Elizabeth Noble but Swami Vivekanand gave her the name NIVEDITA. And Nivedita means the one who is fully dedicated. She later proved herself true to her name. Yesterday was the 150th birth anniversary of Sister Nivedita.

She was so impressed by Swami Vivekanand that she renounced her happy- prosperous life and dedicated herself to the service of the poor. Sister Nivedita felt very hurt by the atrocities of the British rule. The Britishers not only made us slaves but they tried to enslave us mentally as well. Constant efforts to belittle our culture and make us feel inferior were on. Bhagini Nivedita ji revived the dignity and pride of Indian culture. She brought the people together by infusing a sense of national-awakening. She travelled to various countries and raised her voice against the mischievous propaganda against Sanatan Dharma and ideology. Renowned nationalist and Tamil poet Subramanya Bharati is well known for his revolutionary poem Pudhumai Penn or New woman and is renowned for his efforts for Women empowerment.

It is said that Bhagini Nivedita was the inspiration. Bhagini Nivedita ji also helped the great scientist Jagdish Chandra Basu. She helped publication of Basu's research and publicity through her articles and conferences.

This is India's unique beauty that spirituality and science complement each other in our culture.

Sister Nivedita and Scientist Jagdish Chandra Basu are a powerful testimony to this. In 1899, plague broke out in Calcutta and hundreds of people lost their lives in no time. Sister Nivedita, without caring for her health, started cleaning drains and roads. She was a woman who could live a luxurious life but she dedicatedly worked for the poor. Getting inspiration from her sacrifice, people came forward and joined her.

Through her work, she spread the message of the importance of cleanliness and service to mankind. And, it is inscribed on her grave - "Here reposes Sister Nivedita who gave her all to India". Undoubtedly, she did so. There cannot be any other befitting tribute to this great soul than every Indian taking a lesson from her life and emulating her.

Thank you for your phone call. First of all, many felicitations to all the children on the occasion of Children's Day celebrated on the birthday of our first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru ji. Children are the emerging heroes in the creation of new India. Your concern is correct that the diseases which surfaced in old age, or emerged around the last lap of life - have started to appear in children nowadays. It is indeed surprising today, when we hear that children are suffering from diabetes.

In earlier times, such diseases were known as 'Raj-Rog' which means diseases that used to afflict only the rich or those who lived a life of luxury. Such diseases were very rare in young people. But our lifestyle has changed. Today these diseases are known as 'lifestyle disorders.' One of the main reasons for being afflicted with such diseases at a young age is the lack of physical activity in our lifestyle and the changes in our eating habits.

Society and the family need to pay attention towards this crisis. If you'll start paying attention to it, you will see that there is no need to do anything extraordinary. You just need to make small regular changes in order to transform your habits, making them a part of your way of life. I would like the family to consciously try to inculcate in children the habit of playing in open grounds. If possible, we can make the elder family members accompany these children to the playground and play with them.

The children can be made to take the stairs instead of taking the lift. After dinner, the entire family can go for a walk with the children. Yoga for Young India. Yoga will be helpful for especially our young friends, in maintaining a healthy lifestyle and protecting them from lifestyle disorders. The practice of Yoga 30 minutes before school can impart much benefit. It can also be practised at home and the specialty of Yoga is that it is easy, simple and accessible to all. I am saying this because a person of any age can easily practise it. It is simple because it can be easily learned and it is accessible, since it can be done anywhere.

No special tools or fields are needed. There are several studies being conducted on how Yoga is effective in curbing diabetes. These studies are being carried out in AIIMS too and the results that have emerged so far are very encouraging. Do not look at Ayurveda and Yoga as a means of medical treatment only; instead of this we should make them a part of our life.

My dear countrymen, especially my young friends, we have been getting glad tidings from the field of sports. In different games, our athletes have made the country proud. In hockey, India has won the Asia Cup hockey title through its dazzling performance. Our players performed magnificently and on the basis of their sterling efforts, India has become the Asia Cup champion after an interval of ten years. India had earlier won the Asia Cup in Hockey in the years 2003 and 2007. I extend felicitations on behalf of the entire nation to the entire team and support staff.

After hockey, good news for India also came in badminton. Badminton star Kidambi Srikanth has filled every Indian's heart with pride by clinching the Denmark Open title with his excellent performance. After Indonesia Open and Australia Open, this win has completed the triad of the super series premiere title. I congratulate our young friend, Kidambi Srikanth for this feat and enhancing the prestige of India.

Friends, the FIFA Under-17 World Cup was organized this month. Teams from all over the world came to India and all of them exhibited their skills on the football field. I also got an opportunity to go and watch a match. There was a lot of enthusiasm among the players and the spectators. This world cup was a super event where the whole world was watching you. Such a big spectacle, I was astounded to see the energy, enthusiasm, and zeal of all the young players. The world cup was successfully organized and all the teams performed their best.

Regardless of the fact that India could not win the title, the young players of India won the hearts of everyone. The whole world including India enjoyed this mega festival of sports and this whole tournament was both full of interest and entertainment for football lovers. The signs that the future of football is very bright have started to appear. I extend my congratulations and good wishes to all the players, their colleagues, and all the sports lovers once again.

My dear countrymen, a multitude of people write to me about 'Swachh Bharat', I feel that if I have to do justice to their feelings then I will have to do the program 'Mann Ki Baat' every day and every day 'Mann Ki Baat' will be dedicated solely to the subject of cleanliness. Some listeners send photo graphs of the efforts undertaken by children whereas others mention the role of youth in these efforts. Sometimes there is a story of an innovation to bring about cleanliness or winds of change that get ushered due to an official's zeal.

A few days ago I received a very detailed report highlighting the story of transformation of Chandrapur Fort in Maharashtra. An NGO called Ecological Protection Organization launched a cleanliness campaign in Chandrapur Fort. In this campaign lasting for two hundred days, people performed the task of cleaning the fort, non-stop, without any fatigue and with team-work. Just think Two-hundred-days of continuous labour! They sent me photographs with a caption- 'Before and After'! I was overwhelmed on seeing these and whoever will see these photographs, no matter how upset he is on witnessing the filth around him, and wondering how the mission of cleanliness will be fulfilled - then I have to tell such people that you can see for yourself the toil, resolve and determination of the members of the Ecological Protection Organization, in these living pictures.

Just on seeing these pictures, your disappointment will transform into hope. This mammoth effort of bringing about cleanliness is a wonderful example of fostering aesthetics, co-operation and continuum. Forts are symbols of our heritage. And it is the duty of all countrymen to keep our historical heritage safe and clean. I congratulate Ecological Protection Organization, their entire team and the people of Chandrapur.

My dear countrymen, we'll celebrate Guru Nanak Jayanti on the 4th of November. Guru Nanak Dev ji is not only the first guru of Sikhs; he's guru to the entire world. He envisioned the welfare of all humanity and considered all castes to be equal. He stressed on women empowerment and respect for women. Guru Nanak Dev ji undertook a 28 thousand kilometre journey on foot and throughout the journey spread the message of true humanity. He entered into a dialogue with people and showed them the path of truth, sacrifice & dedication. He advocated the message of equality in society, not through mere words but through concrete endeavour. He ran a LANGAR which sowed the seeds of the spirit of service amongst fellow beings. Partaking of LANGAR together created a feeling of unity & oneness in people. Guru Nanak Dev ji voiced three messages for a meaningful, fulfilling life- Chant the name of the Almighty, work hard and help the needy. In order to convey his ideals, Guru Nanak Dev ji composed the Gurbani. Come 2019, we are going to celebrate the 550th PRAKASH VARSH of Guru Nanak Dev ji. Come, let us try & advance on the path of his ideals & teachings.

My dear countrymen, we shall celebrate the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel ji, two days from now, on the 31st of October. All of us know that he was the one who laid the foundation stone of modern, unified India. We can learn a lot from the unparalleled saga of this great son of Mother India. The 31st of October was also the day on which Smt. Indira Gandhi left this world. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's speciality was that he not only put forth revolutionary ideas; he was immensely capable of devising practical solutions to the most complicated problems in the way. Translating a thought into reality was his forte'. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel took on the reins of weaving a unified India. He ensured that millions of Indians were brought under the ambit of one nation & one constitution. His decision making ability infused in him the strength to overcome all obstacles. Wherever respectful coercion was needed, he proceeded gently. Wherever the use of force was imperative, he did not hesitate. He set a definite goal and moved forward on its path with grit & determination. It was only he who could achieve this task of uniting India. He conceived a nation where everyone was equal. One ideal of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel will always be inspiring to all of us. He had said "No division of caste or creed should be able to stop us, all are the sons & daughters of India, all of us should love our country and we should carve out our destiny on the foundation of mutual love & harmony.

These lofty ideals of Sardar Sahab are relevant to and inspiring for our vision for a New India, even today. And that is why his birthday is celebrated as National Unity Day. His contribution in giving a unified texture to the nation is without parallel. On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Sardar Sahab, Run for Unity will be organized throughout the country, which will see the participation of children, youth, women, in fact people of all age groups. I urge you to participate in Run for Unity, the festival of mutual harmony.

My dear countrymen, you must've returned to your respective routines after the Diwali vacation, with a new resolve, with a new determination. May all your dreams come true, my best wishes to you.

Many many Thanks.

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