

Jai Hind. Greetings to all of you on the ninth anniversary of Indian independence. The new star of independent India blazed out in the firmament nine years ago. India was new and yet very old too, at the same time, a country moulded by centuries of experience and by the sacrifice, hard work, blood, sweat and tears of its people. India donned a new garb in the time of Mahatma Gandhi, she acquired a new glitter and a new manner. You will remember how we fought for freedom during the last two generations. We struggled, millions of us, with courage and bravery. We struggled gloriously, in a civilized manner, without lifting a finger against anyone. We fought with the enemy but made a friend of him. It was a unique method that we adopted. Rather Gandhiji did, and we followed him as best as we could. That is how the millions of human beings in this country of ours have been moulded. This is how we became independent.

The independence of India has had an impact on other nations also. Not because we are a vast country in size with some 35-37 crore living here. But because the world saw a unique method unfolding before them, an entirely novel method of fighting a war in a civilized manner. I want to remind you that the real greatness of India lies in this and it has had a great impact on the world. We acquired a new pride in ourselves and were emboldened to play a role on the world stage. We had a hand in solving some big international problems. At the moment when war drums can be heard in the distance and the world is preparing for war, all eyes are drawn towards India. Not because we have big armies or that we use threats to achieve our ends but because we have learnt to serve and make friends with others. It is because we have helped to bring about peace in war-torn areas, and to unravel knotty problems, that India has become famous in the world. There are grave dangers facing the world today. Therefore we must refresh our memories about the lessons learnt long ago and try to serve the world.

You must have heard of the expression Panchsheel. It had its origin in our country thousands of years ago but has acquired a new meaning now. It is a code of conduct between the nations of the world. There are

long traditions as well as new ideas behind this concept which has gradually spread and come to be accepted by many nations of the world. There are only two courses open to the world today. One is of war and ruin and the second is of peace and Panchsheel. There is no third path. The world is gradually beginning to realize this.

Today grave danger threatens us once again and the world is in deadly peril. Good as well as bad things have happened in this month of August. We meet here on the 15th of August to celebrate the anniversary of our independence and the end of centuries of colonialism and imperialism, and the beginning of a new era. It was in August that both the world wars, in 1914 as well as 1939, began. It was in August that the Second World War came to an end when Japan laid down its arms on the 15th of August. So it is an eventful month, full of dangers and at the same time of a number of good things too. So we must be vigilant. Danger there is in plenty because this is the age of nuclear weapons. There is no room for complacency or forgetting our responsibilities even for a minute. Nor can we afford to forget the lessons taught by Gandhiji. If we do, it is bound to lead to ruin.

I hope that in the conference which is going to be held in London from tomorrow in connection with the Suez crisis, a way will be found to settle this matter peacefully. We have friendly relations with all the countries and particularly with Egypt and England. Therefore we are given the opportunity to be of service to both through friendship. We do not use threats, for whom can we threaten? I hope that through mutual consultations the participants in the conference will find some way to uphold the honour and self-respect of both sides. It is only those decisions which do not humiliate one side or the other that are enduring. Humiliation sows the seeds of enmity and war. If matters are settled by friendly methods, the solution is more permanent.

Do you remember how the centuries old problem of India's independence was solved? In spite of great difficulties and the atrocities which were committed, it was solved by peaceful methods, friendship and cooperation, with the result that there is no vestige of bitterness between

the British and us. We have even tried to forget the old bitterness altogether and now we have friendly relations with England. We solved our problems peacefully, in a civilized manner. If we had tried to use violence or coercion, the pattern would have been quite different. We would have become free but the bitterness would have remained for a long time. So there is only one way of solving problems and that is by not humiliating anyone and the preservation of rights and the self-respect of both sides. I hope that the Suez crisis will also be solved like this. Even if it is not solved in London efforts should continue. No problem will be solved by military strength or threats because the consequences of such actions would be disastrous. It could start a conflagration which would engulf the world.

I just now mentioned Panchsheel, words which originated in India and have spread all over the world. But when I look at India, I wonder how far we have been able to understand the five principles ourselves. In the last seven or eight months, we have seen some strange spectacles in the country, with men fighting against their own kin. We fought the enemy successfully and made friends with them and yet we do not have the patience and understanding to solve our own internal problems. Has the influence of Mahatma Gandhi vanished completely? Is it only the people of my generation who were moulded by his teachings? Has it left the succeeding generations so untouched that there is no self-control, mental or physical, among them? What is the matter? I want you to think about this. Our youth go out on the streets and beat up people. Is this the way to show their bravery, by beating up their own kith and kin? In our time, we have faced the guns and the might of a great empire without a word of complaint. What are the youth made of today? Have the qualities in which we were moulded and which led to India's freedom and fame in the world disappeared? I am getting old. We have become old in the service of the country. Our days are almost over. But we have proved what we were capable of in the service of the country. We learnt a unique method of working at Gandhiji's feet and we were proud of that. India acquired a great name in the world. Therefore when people come out on the streets to fight over petty issues, one wonders where India is going. All of you must think

about this.

As you know the question of the reorganization of states has come up. It is not a great political or economic issue but merely a matter of administrative arrangement. I agree that it is a sentimental issue. I agree that people are interested in it and their sentiments ought to be respected. But it is absurd for people to fight with one another, and resort to arson, loot and damaging public property. These will lead to the country's ruin. After all, the ultimate decision will be taken by the Parliament which has representatives from all over the country. And the people of India should accept the decision of Parliament

It is absurd that there should be riots against the decisions of Parliament - there are cases of burning of government buildings, beating up the police and what not. I want all of you and all the opposition parties in India to think seriously about these matters. In a large country like ours, there are bound to be different opinions and strands of thoughts. We want that there should be complete freedom of expression so that we can choose a path which is best suited to us. But debate is one thing, violence another. Any party which leads India towards violence is not patriotic. It strikes at the roots of India's freedom. Every individual and party in India must think carefully about these things.

Soon we are going to have general elections. Everyone has the right to express his views and parties can present their programme to the people and try to bring them round to their opinion. If you do not like the present government, you are welcome to change it. I will be happy to serve in any capacity. But violence and chaos have no connection with democracy. We must think carefully where all this will lead us. Is the carefully moulded civilization of India beginning to develop cracks? India has been moulded by thousands of years of culture which cannot be taken away from us. Secondly, we have been moulded by the freedom struggle. If the people represent neither the old nor the new but believe only in hooliganism, how can they serve India?

New avenues are opening up. The Five Year Plans are big steps. But

they also impose a tremendous burden. We will have to face a great challenge in the years to come and we will have to pit all our strength and energy into the tasks ahead. To argue over the boundaries of states is absurd. I want everyone, particularly the youth, to think where they are going. Are we adhering to the principle of Panchsheel in our own country?

Panchsheel means friendship with all the countries. How can we practise that when we are not able to be friendly towards our own neighbours? So long as we continue to fight over petty issues, no decision can be arrived at. As far as the government is concerned, you have every right to remove it from power. But threats will have no impact on us. The decision of Parliament is binding and will be implemented. It cannot be changed by such obstructionist tactics.

Everyone must understand quite clearly that the decision of the Lok Sabha about the states reorganization will be binding. You have put me in a position of great honour. But ultimately it is the will of Parliament which is supreme and all of us will have to bow to it. Everyone must understand this clearly. There are legal, constitutional methods of changing the decisions of Parliament. But anyone who thinks he can change the decisions by rioting is mistaken. It would be an unpatriotic act against national interest.

On this ninth anniversary of our independence, we must look back as well as to the future. India has come a long way in nine years and the new India which is emerging is held in great respect in the world. We must keep our eyes on the future and march ahead. We must implement the Five Year Plans with strength and determination and pour all our energy into it. We cannot afford to fritter away our strength in futile acts. We have to build a new India by getting rid of poverty and unemployment and reducing the disparity between the haves and the have-nots. India must emerge as a strong and prosperous nation and serve humanity and the cause of peace. These are difficult tasks. But we are accustomed to difficulties. On this day, we must not only look back on our past, but also look at the future and take a pledge to abide by our ancient culture and civilization, and not stray from our chosen path.

This year we are celebrating yet another great anniversary. Two thousand and five hundred years ago Gautama Buddha attained nirvana. The Buddha is held in great reverence not only in India but all over the world because what he stood for are enduring, eternal truths which do not disappear with the passing of time.

One feels proud that the soil on which we have been born has produced great souls like Gautama Buddha and Gandhiji. There is something in this soil which has kept the nation together by a strong bond. It is something spiritual which is reflected in our ancient culture and civilization. Let us refresh our memories once again and pay homage to Gautama Buddha and Gandhiji and great souls like them who have moulded this country. Let us follow the path shown by them with strength and determination and cooperation.

Jai Hind. Please say Jai Hind with me thrice.