

My greetings to you all on the auspicious occasion of the 48th Independence Day. I offer my best wishes for the betterment of our country and the world as a whole. May you all live happily and the country move ahead on the path of progress.

You are aware of the tremendous changes taking place the world over in recent years, the maps of several countries have been redrawn. Such has been the magnitude of the changes in these countries that we cannot even recognise the picture which has now emerged. We are also trying to keep pace with this changing world. At the same time we do not want and, in fact, we cannot give up our intrinsic values. As Mahatma Gandhi said, freedom does not mean mere change of masters; the essence of freedom lies in changing the lot of Daridranarayan — our poor brethren. I would like to assure you that we have been following and will continue to follow the same mission. This is the policy of the Government.

This Government has been in office for a little more than three years. Many things have happened during these years and I have been informing you about them from time to time. The overall picture that emerges will make it clear that during these three years considerable progress has been made. On the whole, peace and harmony prevails in the country and people are busy in their work — in the task of development and country's progress. We have made and are making sincere efforts to solve the problems. Nor will there be any slackening of such efforts in future.

Punjab is peaceful. The State continues to hold the first position in the field of foodgrains production and in many other fields of development. The problem of Assam has been resolved. There was some problem regarding Bodoland but that too is being tackled. Some agitations and disturbances are taking place there, but that should not cause undue worry.

In our North-Eastern States there are occasional disturbances. Sometimes our tribal brothers inhabiting that region clash with one another. But on the whole, the situation is fully under control.

Now, let me speak about Kashmir which, for some time has been a problem for us. Though there has been considerable improvement in the

situation, it has not reached the level of normalcy as yet. The reason is not very far to seek. Everybody knows, how Pakistan has been actively encouraging terrorism in the State from across the border, how it has been training the terrorists on its land and giving them financial help, how it has been arming and then sending them across the border into the State. There is no doubt about this. For so many years, we have been collecting evidence of the misdeeds of Pakistan, bringing that to the notice of the countries friendly to us and telling them what Pakistan has been doing all these years. Now, after 14th August, 1994, I think no further proof is required when they have themselves openly declared that they would continue their help to the terrorists in Kashmir, give them arms and send reinforcements. They have said that this would continue forever.

I would like to ask these friendly countries, "Respected friends, what do you say now? Till yesterday, you believed us only partially. Sometimes you would tell us that perhaps Pakistan had earlier been doing it but not now?" Only recently, I had had occasions to listen to this kind of talk in some of the countries I visited. Now I want to ask them if they still have any doubt about it. So it is very obvious that Pakistan does not want to stop these activities. Instead, it has openly announced before the world that it would continue with them. Our reply can only be that we are also not going to sit back until we have completely rooted out this blatant interference in our internal affairs. It is our resolve and we want to make this clear to them.

Meanwhile, we have taken several steps in Kashmir to bring peace to the State and to identify the terrorists. I say "terrorists", for no other word can befit them. They have been mercilessly killing people, especially opinion leaders of the State -- lawyers, doctors and religious leaders. Recently they also killed the Assembly Speaker. Their victims include staff of media installations, like All India Radio and Doordarshan. They killed the Vice-Chancellor of a university. They have been killing government servants who are simply performing their duties and who have nothing to do with politics. And there is no count of innocent civilians being killed by them. How would you describe these heinous acts? What else is it, if not

terrorism? I have no other word to describe this. But you can rest assured that we will completely wipe out terrorism.

Recently, we have taken several initiatives in J & K for accelerating the pace of development and boosting the morale of the civil administration terrorised by guns. I may tell you that we are going to take up the revision of electoral rolls shortly. We are also engaged in delimiting the constituencies for conducting elections. This clearly shows the direction in which we are moving. We are moving towards holding elections in the State. I don't want to give you any specific date because that might unduly provoke the terrorists to indulge in more violence. But there is no doubt about the direction in which we are moving. Now when we have been doing all this, we would expect the international community to take note of it and to see who is the one actually trampling the human rights. They will have an opportunity to judge this.

It is very unfortunate that not only something bad is done but it is openly declared that what they are doing is good and that they will continue to do the same in future also. This type of language does not behove friends. I want to appeal to Pakistan, please accept the hand of friendship we have extended. There can be several meeting grounds between us. Sometimes differences may crop up, but they can be resolved. I would however, like to make it clear to Pakistan, you may or may not cooperate with us, but, 'with you, without you, in spite of you' Kashmir will remain with us. It is an integral part of India. This will not change, never, not in the least. They say they are a nation of twelve crores. If they talk of crores, you can understand what my answer would be. However, it is not a question of crores; it is a question of justice, it is a question of law and the Constitution. You cannot negate all this and reverse the course of history. The sooner we all realise this, the better it is for us. This is what I want to convey.

Let us now look at our economic scenario. I have been telling you from time to time about the progress we have made during the three years. Today the situation in our country is not as it was in 1991. It has improved a lot. We have foreign exchange reserves worth Rs. 51,000 crore. Just

imagine, in 1991, we had foreign exchange worth only Rs. 3,000 crore. It is no mean achievement. You can imagine to what extent the creditworthiness of our country has gone up. Not only this, we have even repaid the IMF loan well in advance, so that we may be spared of interest liabilities to that extent. We told our creditors that we have the money now and we want to repay, which you should accept. We would borrow when we are in need. Has it ever happened before? This has happened in a very few countries. In India also, when Indiraji was the Prime Minister, it happened once and after that this has happened a second time, that is this year.

I want to tell you that this is ample proof of our creditworthiness, our solvency: As a result of the confidence that world has come to have in India, investments are flowing into our country from abroad. Large industries are being set up. Only a few days back, we have cleared a foreign project for power in Maharashtra worth about Rs. 8000 crore. I would like to have another ten or twelve such projects to come to our country so that the resources available with us are spared. If such projects had not come, and we had not got funds in the country, the Government would have been obliged to raise the money by taxing you, because we cannot do without electricity. The amount we have saved now, will be spent for the poor, for the children, for the repair of schools, for the programmes relating to education, health and other facilities. I have been emphasising this time and again. Today I am placing before you a concrete example.

A beginning has been made and more projects of similar nature are coming in because people abroad have come to have confidence in India, in its stability, in its economy, in its law and order situation, and they are convinced that there is no risk of losing their money invested here. Instead, they would earn profits. Whilst they earn profits, we are also benefited. People get jobs; our engineers, doctors and thousands of educated persons get employment. Therefore, we would like this process to continue. Ours is a big country. Just one project will not make any impact. If a project comes up in Maharashtra, people in Assam do not think much of it. So it

has to come in Assam as well. It has to be in Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and other regions. In fact, when such big projects come up in all the States, then only it will have an impact and we shall realise what industrialisation means in the real sense of the term.

The investments coming from abroad are not going to deprive us of our freedom. Indian company and Indian partners are investing in such projects along with foreigners. That means our people have a share in them. About 80 per cent of the foreign investments are joint ventures. Therefore, it is entirely fallacious to say that we would be swallowed up. These projects have investments both from Indians and foreigners. Nobody will shift them anywhere else. If the projects come here they will not be compromised in any way. And we really need these projects and investments in the power sector, in oil industry, in metallurgical industry, which are most essential. They are coming in electronics, chemicals and other areas of our priority.

Now I come to agriculture. God has been kind to us. We have had good rains and consequently good harvests for the last three-four years. Our farmers have created a miracle. No other country has, perhaps, witnessed a revolution of this kind.

But we are faced with a problem now. You may not perhaps believe it, but it is a fact that when the Kharif crop is harvested in a couple of weeks, we shall have no space to store the paddy. I had said this earlier also. Today I have got the statistics. You may not perhaps be aware that as on date we have 3.25 crore tonnes of foodgrains in our stock. We do not have enough storage facilities. So, the foodgrains from the new harvest will have to be kept in the open. It may result in some loss, but we are helpless. I would like to utilise foodgrains for our children and students who live in hostels. I have to see that at least 10 to 15 lakh tonnes are out of the godowns for use, so that we have space to store the foodgrains from the new crop. Old stocks are in quite good condition and we want to use them. As of now, there seems to be no chance for exporting them. So we would like to use them for our own people. We want to give some wheat to

Modern Food Industries. They have assured us that if we give them wheat, a rupee cheaper, they will proportionately reduce the price of bread they manufacture out of it. We want to give them the surplus wheat so that the price of bread comes down.

We have our Integrated Child Development Scheme. The Anganwadi Programme for villages has not yet reached all of them. We propose to spread it throughout the length and breadth of the country in a couple of years. In order to enhance the nutritive value of the food served to these children, we would like to give some more wheat out of our stocks. We have in our country thousands of hostels in which mostly students from the poorer sections, including those belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes, reside. They have no means to avail of the facilities of private hostels, so they live in government hostels. Some States have large numbers of such hostels, in which thousands of students live. We would like to provide them more nutritious food and we shall do so out of the surplus stocks with us. In this way, we may be able to dispose of 10 to 15 lakh tonnes of stock which will, at the same time, benefit the students and the tiny tots covered by the Integrated Child Development Scheme.

We are chalking out this programme, the implementation of which will start in a few days. We are trying to solve our problems in this way — not by exporting our foodgrains but by providing more nutrition to our own people.

As you know, we have started the revamped Public Distribution System (PDS) in about 1800 blocks two years back. This scheme has been operating quite well. We would like to provide more foodgrains through the PDS at cheaper prices and overcome the shortcomings which has been there in this system. Towards this end we have constructed several godowns, provided a number of vehicles to the State governments to carry foodgrains to the remote areas. It is a gigantic programme. There is no time to go into details, but I may say that a programme of such dimension has not perhaps been undertaken earlier. And we propose to expand it further

by covering more blocks. We would like to cover about 200 more blocks and eventually spread the programme all over the country.

You are aware of the huge amount we have provided for rural development. You must have heard many times that we have allocated Rs. 30,000 crore in this Five Year Plan and more than Rs. 7000 crore is being given in one year. People come to me from villages and tell me that they have never seen so much money coming to their villages from Delhi. Presently as much as Rs. 40 to 50 crore are at the disposal of each of the District Collectors. It is being used for public works. We feel that a revolution is under way, in fact it is taking place there, in every village. Now Panchayats are being set up in villages under a new law and much of this money will go to them. They would take up the implementation of development works and schemes for the welfare of the people according to their priorities.

I may assure you that now paucity of funds would not be felt that much. But now the local people, local leadership of the Panchayats will have to supervise how the money is spent. Nobody from here would supervise that. At times people from here may go but that would not help. It is the local people who will have to oversee how the money is being used. Later on, nobody should complain that the money was not spent properly. Therefore, I want to warn you in advance that people in all the villages and the youth should be on their alert in this regard. This programme will run very smoothly, if Sarpanchs and other members of Panchayats discharge their responsibilities properly. We intend to provide more money for this in the next Five Year Plan.

I had announced three new schemes last year from these ramparts. As you know, we have been continuing several schemes which were started by Rajivji—Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, Nehru Rozgar Yojana, Indira Awas Yojana. Several schemes of this type started by him continue to be implemented with full vigour. Simultaneously, I had announced three new schemes last year and these schemes are also progressing very well. One of the three schemes is 'Mahila Samriddhi Yojana' which is for our sisters.

You will be surprised to know that within a year, rather within 8-9 months, 13 lakh women, 13 lakh of our sisters, have opened their own accounts in post offices. You may say 13 lakh is not a big number where crores live. But you should try to appreciate the significance of 13 lakh women going to the post offices on their own and opening their accounts within 8 months in their own name. It means that they have liked this scheme a lot and they are very enthusiastic about it. I may add here that out of these 13 lakh women, at least 2 lakh belong to Scheduled Tribe areas which shows how far this awakening has reached and how far it is about to reach.

Some of the States have done very well in this regard, though some others have done very little work under this scheme. Rather, I should say, some have not yet started on this. I would like to appeal to the Chief Ministers of these States that we have had enough of quibbles and quarrels. This programme is above party politics where there is no room for rivalry. This is for the common good of the people, for the good of the women. I would appeal them to go ahead, and implement the scheme by asking their people, their party, their followers, their youth that when other States have been working on this, why should it not be implemented in ours.

Another programme is for rural employment. You know, people in their own villages do not have work for all the 365 days. Our programme is to provide them employment at least for 100 days in a year. It is being implemented very well. According to reports we are receiving, things have improved a lot. Wherever this programme has been launched, people have stopped migrating to the cities during the lean period because we have started many types of work-like construction of roads, small tanks, school buildings. On the one hand people and the villages are being benefited by these construction works and on the other hand a lot of employment opportunities are being generated.

The third programme is for the youth — the urban youth, who have studied only up to 8th standard, 9th standard or matric. The programme is to provide a loan of one lakh of rupees to each such young person. This



amount contains a subsidy of Rs. 7,500. The youths are to be trained for running small business ventures like bicycle repair workshop, shops and the like. Last year, we set a target to give assistance to 40,000 youths. I am happy that about 32,000 or 33,000 youths have received the amount and training under the programme and are now engaged in their work.

This year we want to increase the number of beneficiaries to two lakhs. Funds have been arranged for this. Once again I would like to request the States which have not taken up the programme, to take it up and implement. I would not like to name such States in public as it is not done. The States which have taken up the programme have done very well and I congratulate them. At the same time I appeal to the Chief Ministers of the States where it has not been taken up to implement the programme. Funds are there, provision has already been made, and only attention is needed to make the programme work.

The three programmes are making good progress. We thought about some other programmes, which could be implemented by us. I feel that there are certain programmes, which can be undertaken. A programme for children could not be taken up last year. Now we want to include it. You know that there are around 20 million children in our country who should be attending schools but are not doing so. They are working in factories to increase the income of their parents. Working in the factories means end of their education and the children's development forever. It is a fact which we have to accept. This is unfortunate for our coming generations. We have, therefore, said that the young children working in occupations such as quilt making, carpet weaving, which are very hazardous, and tell adversely upon their health should be withdrawn from there and enrolled in schools. They have to be educated, they have to be trained in various crafts and such vocations which may enable them to earn their livelihood later. We are taking up this programme. There are about 20 lakh children engaged in such hazardous vocations, that tell upon their health adversely. We want to withdraw them from such industries and put in schools in the course of next four-five years.

The only way to achieve this aim is to provide the parents of such children full employment to increase their incomes because the parents are so poor that they cannot sustain themselves without additional income earned by the children. If such parents are provided full employment and their income is raised, there is no reason why they should not be sending their children to school willingly. But they are helpless and we are trying to rid them of their helplessness. The new programme aims at improving the prospects of the children whose life may be ruined because of their early employment in hazardous industries. The programme announced today will be implemented shortly. All the arrangements have been made.

I want to talk about another programme. In bigger cities there are municipal corporations. They get funds and also have other sources of income. So far as villages are concerned, we have already made adequate provisions. But there are smaller towns with a population ranging from 50,000 to 150,000. They are neither cities nor villages. They are beset by the ills of both. There is no agency to look after the well-being of these towns. Since they do not have enough income to provide civic amenities, their condition is becoming worse. People migrate from villages and settle down, and slums grow leading to unhygienic conditions affecting the health of the people. We want to take up 300 such towns with a population upto one lakh and we propose to spend Rs. 800 crore for their betterment on a priority basis in the next five years. The scheme has been drawn up and I have studied it yesterday. I found that it has been well prepared. Now we are in a position to take up its implementation.

Now I would like to take up 2-3 other important issues. We have undertaken quietly a number of programmes for minorities. These programmes have not been advertised but I would like to tell about them. The Rapid Action Force (RAF) was raised for the protection of life and property of the people. Last year I announced that five RAF battalions would be raised. But we have doubled the strength by raising 10 battalions. These have been located at places such as : Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Belgaum, Delhi, Aligarh, Thiruvananthapuram, Jamshedpur,

Bhopal and Meerut. In this Force, women are also included because sometimes we need their help to control the situation. God forbid, we may not need more of them because if people live in peace and harmony we do not need such forces. But still we will be on our guard and if need arises we will try to increase the number of these battalions. We will not hesitate to do so. The members of this Force are trained in a special way, a lot of thinking goes in their selection and they are always ready for every kind of duty. Whenever there is a riot or disturbance, they immediately reach the scene of occurrence and control the situation. They are specially trained for this kind of job and I feel that because of them several riots can be controlled and will be controlled before they do any serious damage. This Force will continue to do its work and its capacity can be increased in the future.

Many a time I have referred to the Minorities Commission. You know that a law has been enacted in this regard. We are fully conscious of the educational foundation in the name of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and as you know there are several similar institutions which especially take care of the education of the minorities. I would not go into details because they have already been mentioned.

Today, I want to draw your attention to another ambitious programme. We wanted to set up a corporation which would help members of the minorities in setting up their own enterprises and in getting proper education. I had made an announcement about this last year. There were some legal hurdles and I am very glad to announce that with a lot of efforts, we have been able to remove them and now the "National Minorities Finance and Development Corporation" will come into being with an authorised capital of Rs. 500 crore. The Union Cabinet has already cleared it and this would take shape in the coming few days. When this Corporation starts working, I would like the lakhs of youth belonging to the minority communities to take full advantage of this. This was a promise made by me last year and I was a little worried about the delay in setting it up. I myself went into all the details and strived to remove all the hurdles. I am glad that we succeeded in our efforts.

I shall give you another very good news. From today, you can watch TV telecast in eleven languages. I recall that I had made an announcement regarding telecast in five languages last year. Today, I am announcing that programmes will be telecast in 11 languages and you need not keep eleven antennas for this facility. Now while sitting in Delhi, you can watch programmes of Calcutta, Madras, Hyderabad, Bombay etc. It is a big achievement and I presume that in the next few months we will be able to telecast the programmes in 13 languages, instead of 11 and you will be able to watch the programmes of all the languages, wherever they are being telecast, on your TV sets through a dish antenna. I am, really, very happy to announce this.

I had addressed our jawans on matters of defence and security last evening. They will get all the encouragement and support from us. We shall provide them any kind of arms they would require — most modern or otherwise. They should not have any apprehension on this. Our soldiers are doing their duty on borders and assisting the people in different parts of the country. Not only this, they are working in some foreign countries also and they have made India proud. They have made a place for themselves in the hearts of the people of Cambodia, Somalia or wherever we have sent them. I congratulate them once again and assure them that they will not find us wanting in our efforts to fulfil their requirements. A good force is always armed with the most modern weapons so that it goes to war without any apprehension and with full confidence. While congratulating our forces, I want to assure our forces that we have already tried to improve the terms and conditions of their service and hope that the new Pay Commission will go further into this matter. But I would like to add here that there is no way we can measure and fully compensate the sentinels of our freedom as their service is an act of patriotism. I would like to greet and congratulate them once again.

Now I will come to matters relating to our Foreign Policy Today, India is maintaining friendly relations with all the countries of the world. I have undertaken visits to several countries like the USA, Russia, China,

England, Germany, France, Iran, Korea Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Mauritius, Indonesia, Oman and others. They have high regards for India. Bilateral cooperation is increasing, cooperation in the economic field is increasing very rapidly. In terms of foreign investment, which is another form of such cooperation, the amounts we have received during the last three years is almost twice the investment we had got during the previous ten years. I am not saying this just for the sake of comparison but the facts speak. I am sure this is going to take place on a larger scale in future. I am going to Singapore, Vietnam and Malaysia. We have very cordial relations with all the countries. I have also told you that we have cordial relations with all our neighbours. I will once again ask our friends in Pakistan that they should accept our hand of friendship, and not spurn it. After all we have to coexist, we have to live as neighbours. We cannot move away from our neighbours. Pakistan will remain where it is, and we will remain here where we are.

There is a big hue and cry about our missiles and missile programme and a lot of propaganda is going on. It is very strange that though Pakistan has with it readymade bought off the shelf missiles, nobody talks about them. We only want to experiment in our laboratories, and conduct some tests and that causes a lot of hue and cry. What kind of justice is this, we fail to understand. We have not increased our expenditure on defence. India is not a small country. Do I have no right, is it not my duty to mobilise resources for the defence requirements of a country so vast, with such vast borders and coastlines? Let anybody say anything, I shall mobilise the resources. Our first priority is the security of the country. There is no scope for any compromise, any reduction in it. That is why, I want to tell my friends that they should not compare India with other countries. They should see the case of India according to its requirements, whether we have spent the same amount as countries of our size are spending. We are spending less than that. To compare our defence expenditure with a small country and to say that we should not spend this much is not just. All that is required to be done for our defence will be done. Let there be no doubt in that regard.

I want to tell you that the whole world is changing but there are some places where things do not change. Some people cannot change their mind-set. Today, I am ready to set aside politics and prepared to go beyond mere political and diplomatic relations. At present, we are expanding economic relations with all. Why shouldn't we expand these economic relations within the SAARC? Why does Pakistan feel so bad about it? Why is it so much hesitant? Let us cooperate in our SAARC network of seven nations. But even this is not acceptable to them. Wherever our Pakistani friends go, they raise the Kashmir issue. I have stopped talking about Kashmir in any forum, nor do I give any reply to any question on the issue. It is not necessary for us to tread the same path they are walking upon. It is not necessary for us to reply to all the questions they raise. The world knows what they have to say and what we have to reply. People are aware of the conditions at the field level. Nothing is hidden from anybody. Only they go on unnecessarily repeating them. I understand, Pakistan is going to raise the Kashmir issue in a conference of the Health Ministers. Now raising the issue in season and out of it will attract only the derision of the world. We want to tell our friends that we share a blood relationship. For God's sake, please for the sake of our relationship, do not do this. We can solve these problems across the table. They talk of an unfinished task. What is this unfinished task? In my well-considered opinion, there is only one unfinished task from our point of view and that is the restoration of Pak-occupied part of Kashmir to India. This is the only unfinished task, nothing else remains.

If this is not acceptable to you, the Simla Agreement is there. Let us extend our hands of friendship to each other and move ahead shoulder to shoulder. Please do not spurn these possibilities and stand in the way of a bright future that looks ahead. But it is your sweet will if you are not prepared to meet half way, we are firm on our own position. I want to tell you that Kashmir is an integral part of India and will ever remain so. I am not using the language of threat. Whatever I am saying, I am doing, is with a cool head, and with a full sense of responsibility. If language is not to change, let there be a change in intentions. Sometimes, one is obliged to

use such language. If one does not do so, people around get angry with that person. I know this sort of compulsions exist at times. We do not have any such constraint. It may, however exist for some people in some countries. Still at least their intentions can be positive and peaceful. We want peace but at the same time, we want to preserve our sovereignty. There can be no compromise on these two issues.

One thing more. Our freedom struggle had a very long run. It was so because it was based on non-violence. It did not come to an end in a few months, rather it continued for years and decades. During the course, many great personalities took part in the struggle. Many of them did not live to see freedom.

But there were others who could see independent India, to which they made great contribution during and after the freedom struggle. They are all venerable souls for us. After independence, they had some differences amongst them, and they parted company, they went to form many political parties. But this does happen in a democracy. All the same, we bow to their sense of patriotism, to the role they played in the freedom struggle. We respect and revere them. On this issue, there is no question of party affiliation or party politics. It is coincidence that this year we are also celebrating the 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. We have chalked out an ambitious programme. The programme is based on the path shown by Gandhiji for the common good of the people. Besides, Acharya Vinoba Bhave's birth centenary falls during the next month, that is September. We also propose to celebrate it on a large scale. Acharya Vinoba Bhave was among those who tried to bring about a revolution by following the path shown by Gandhiji. We still remember him. If we had even one hundredth part of the scholarship, originality of thought and the will to act up to it that he was endowed with, it would have done tremendous good to the country. We would naturally like to celebrate his birth centenary. Then, the birth centenary of Rafi Ahmed Kidwai is being celebrated. A Committee on this has been formed which has its own programmes. We are going to act on those programmes in a befitting way

so that our youth may be made aware of such exemplary personalities.

There is also a Memorial Committee for Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan. It is working for many years now but we want to give a new content to its programmes and intensify them. He had, in his own way, shown a path to the country. There is no doubt that there can be many roads which lead to the same destination. He had also shown us a path, a path of total revolution. I have studied it, so also thousands of youths of this country and others. His was not an ordinary personality but a great one. And we want to pay our tributes to him and give further impetus to his programmes. Shri Morarji Desai will be one hundred years old in coming February. Now he is 99. He is also a great patriot. He has sacrificed a lot and later became the Prime Minister of the country. But let us not look into the status he held. Let us look at the personality. One will rarely come across such a unique personality. We would like to celebrate his centenary next year. Like this, we would like to celebrate quite a few birth centenaries because we had many great leaders in this country. There might be differences of opinion among them in ideologies, in their approaches and other spheres. But they all deserve our respect. We want to celebrate birth centenaries of all these great persons so that people will understand these great personalities, who were the driving force in achieving freedom and who showed what sacrifices are required to strengthen and safeguard it. People must know about them and learn from their lives.

I have taken a lot of your time but I would like to tell you that quite a few things have been left out. In 45 minutes or one hour, everything cannot be covered. Whenever opportunity comes, I would present before you other programmes. There are many programmes which call for a detailed description but because of time constraint, I am not able to touch upon them. I would, however, like to tell you that the country is marching ahead on the road to progress. There is no doubt about it. We should be guided by a new inspiration and a spirit of dedication. Our commitment should not be to any individual but to the future of the country and we are committed to it. As I see this spirit among millions of our countrymen, I am convinced that



our country will be safe in the hands of the coming generations, in the hands of future leadership. Our job is to keep it intact and pass it on to the future leadership in a sound condition. This I would consider as my sincere and humble duty. I want to assure you that no effort will be spared by me to achieve this. Whatever difficulty I may have to face, I shall strive to accomplish this task.