

Today we are assembled once again on the anniversary of India's independence. Greetings to everyone on this auspicious occasion. Do you remember that day when we reached this goal after a long journey and many ups and downs? Many people stumbled and fell, picked themselves up and moved on again. Do you remember the dreams we dreamt and the hopes that filled our hearts. Then came a day when those dreams and hopes were fulfilled and we saw the sun emerging on free India. Eight years have passed since that day when the whole of India went wild with joy. But in the moment of joy and triumph came tears too at the inhuman atrocities that took place on both sides of the border. Innumerable refugees trekked for hundreds of miles to cross the borders on both sides. We had to face this grave crisis. Well, we bore our troubles and tried to solve those problems quite successfully. We will undoubtedly solve the rest too. In this way, eight years have passed, with a great many ups and downs. Just think back to the condition we were in eight years ago and the way world saw us and the difference that has come about in the entire scene since then. Independent India is still in her infancy, though our nation is thousands of years old. But the world knows of our achievements and the capacity to advance that we have shown even in these few years.

So when we meet here, we look back towards the past and the last eight years especially, as well as to the future. We must take stock of what we have done and what remains to be done. There is a tremendous amount that still has to be dealt with. We must pay special attention to our weaknesses, for it is only to the extent that we succeed in removing those weaknesses will the country advance and the people prosper. Turning towards the world, you will find that we have not raised our hand against any nation of the world and I hope that we shall never do so. We have looked upon everyone with friendly eyes and extended the hand of friendship and peace. There have been some complicated issues but that was no reason for us to be hostile to anyone. Ultimately, the policy of peace and friendship that we are following is the only right one for the world. We want to have friendly relations and cooperation with our neighbouring countries. You would have known about the strengthening of

relations in the recent past. You must have heard about Panch Shila which lays down the norms of conduct between nations. Gradually all the newly independent countries have accepted these principles and the atmosphere in the world has changed for the better. I do not say that this is because of us there have been other events in the world. So we must not be proud or boastful about it. It is sufficient if we can help in our own small way. But what makes us happy is that the atmosphere in the world is definitely better than before, the fear and anxiety with which nations used to regard one another have become less, and there is a readiness among them to extend the hand of a we are happy.

We are at peace with all the countries of the world. But on this day, the 15th of August, our thoughts turn towards Goa. When we were busy fighting for our freedom, could you or anyone in the world have thought that while India would become free, the small pockets of Goa or Pondicherry or any other place would remain under European rule? It was inconceivable and we did not even dream of such a thing. Pondicherry and Goa have been separated from us for the last two or three hundred years. They could flourish separately under the protection of the huge British empire in India just as the innumerable princely states existed with the blessings of the British. The moment the British left, all those princely states also had to go. So it is rather strange that anyone should ask us why we want Goa to merge with India. Where is the question of merging with India? Hasn't anyone seen the map of India and the world and where Goa is? It is a part of India and nobody can separate it. Today we are celebrating the eighth anniversary of our independence. As the world has seen, we have shown a great deal of patience in these eight years. We have exercised great self-control because we want that this issue should be solved peacefully. Let me tell you once again today that we have no intention of taking military action in Goa but will solve it by peaceful methods. Let no one be under a misconception that we are going to take military action. I am saying this because people abroad as well as in India are sometimes misled. Rumours are being circulated abroad that we are amassing tanks and guns and our army there. It is all wrong. There are no forces near Goa. People within the

country want to create a situation by making a great deal of noise whereby we will be forced to march in. We will not send in our forces and we will settle the matter peacefully. Let everyone understand this clearly. Those who are going into Goa are welcome to do so, but if they call themselves satyagrahis, let them remember the principles of satyagraha and behave accordingly. Armies do not march behind satyagrahis. Nor is there a call for them. They are supposed to face the issue themselves in a completely different way.

We have seen recently that the satyagrahis were fired upon on a number of occasions and some young men died as a result. Guns are fired in wars and that has to be faced. But the world must seriously consider how far it is proper or right for any nation to fire upon unarmed people. If a law is broken, the government has the right to arrest the culprits and put them in jails. But nowhere in international law or any law governing civilized behaviour is it written that unarmed people who are not mounting any kind of an attack should be fired upon. It is absolutely wrong. I would like to point out very politely that the world and the Portuguese Government must understand quite clearly that they must not indulge in such uncivilized behaviour. There is a conflict between us but whatever their views may be, we wish to solve the problem peacefully and will undoubtedly do so, no matter how long it takes. Please bear in mind that it is wrong to think that such issues can be resolved by magic immediately. If we wish to arrive at a proper solution, being in a hurry will not help. We must wait because anything which is done slowly and with patience is likely to be more firm and abiding.

I mentioned Panch Shila and drew your attention to the changing atmosphere in the world. Take the internal situation, for ultimately, our stature in the world depends on what we do in our own country. We shall not gain in stature by shouting slogans or talking irresponsibly. We are judged by what we are doing in the country. I feel that we have achieved a great deal in the last eight years and have laid the foundation of the edifice of new India and now the time has come to build on it. The foundations are

strong and will become stronger still. The First Five Year Plan will come to an end soon and the Second will start in a few months. We must prepare ourselves for it by tightening our belts and must be ready for any hardship because we are building a nation not merely for the present but for the future and all the coming generations. It has to be a strong nation and built with hard labour.

I talked about Panch Shila in the context of international relations. In the olden days this word was used in a different sense. It meant discipline and self-control, good behaviour towards others and so on. How can we have a high stature in the world if we are weak internally? How can we talk about peace elsewhere if there is no peace in our hearts? If we cannot cooperate with one another, how can we advise others? Therefore, it is even more important for us to remove our weaknesses.

This wonderful country of ours, India, has so many facets and forms, so many religions, and shades of opinions, so many regions and provinces. All of them together have gone into the making of modern India. We are one large family and there should be no barriers of province and religion and caste among us. We must break down any barriers that exist. We must remove casteism, for it is responsible for our living in separate compartments. It has weakened India, a great deal in the past. So while we must preserve India's wonderful diversity, we must at the same time remember that we belong to one family and have to march together towards the new goal that is before us.

Secondly, whatever we do, it must be done by peaceful methods. I want to remind you of this particularly because we talk of peace but often raise our hands in violence against one another. What is the meaning of such things? Just two days ago an incident occurred in the city of Patna. Why are we so ready to do violence? Why is it that our students get so easily involved in such things? Do they lack patience and understanding? Don't they know that they are citizens of independent India? Have they failed to breathe in the air of freedom and are still thinking on the old lines? Those times are gone now. If there is tension among workers or anyone

else, and especially if the students come into conflict with their teachers and indulge in violence, they earn a bad name for themselves as well as for the country, instead of preparing themselves for the responsibilities that the future will bring. I plead with all of you, especially our youth, to realize your responsibilities and understand the spirit of modern age. The whole world has taken a new turn. This is the age of the atom and atomic energy. We have to change our thinking and get out of the old rut of petty feuds and quarrels. I want the people of India to understand these things and take advantage of the new forces being generated in the world. Therefore, it becomes necessary for us to solve all our problems by peaceful methods.

Another complex problem is about to come up in the country. As you may remember, some time ago a commission was appointed called the States Reorganisation Commission. It will make recommendations for reorganizing the boundaries of the various provinces. We selected three eminent people to study this question in depth and make their recommendations. They have been working on it for the last year and a half. I think they will present their report within the next two months. I do not know what their recommendations will be. I cannot express an opinion. But what I want to say is that in spite of the great heat that is bound to be generated over this issue from the Punjab to the south and from east to west, we must take a decision on the recommendations of the Commission peacefully. Whoever creates a stir over it will not be a well-wisher of the country. For after all it is only a question of separate provinces, not separate countries. These divisions have been made for our administrative convenience. No decision will be acceptable to everyone. But an effort will be made and I hope that the Commission is already making such an effort to recommend whatever will be acceptable to the majority. Whatever happens, we must accept it peacefully after due consideration. There should be no quarrel over this issue. We must show the world how we solve our problems peacefully, and with confidence in ourselves. That is the real sign of strength, not shouting slogans and making a noise. That is childishness. Though independent India is only eight years old, our country is an ancient one. It is a grand country which speaks with a serious voice. It

is not our practice to shout or rant and rave. This is not the time for such things. We have to add to our strength, always act peacefully and with patience, extend the hand of friendship towards other countries and behave in a civilized way. Whatever problems arise, they must be solved peacefully and harmoniously.

I talked to you about Panch Shila. There are two aspects to it. One concerns international relations of friendship, non-interference in one another's internal affairs, equality and mutual cooperation. The second aspect of Panch Shila concerns us internally, it consists of right conduct, alertness, self-control, unity and harmony, through these we can build, strengthen the large family of the people of India. This is a very old lesson taught to us thousands of years ago and is before us once again. Please bear in mind that unless we teach ourselves this lesson. we have no right to preach it to others. It would be arrogance to presume to teach others. If we learn the lesson well and put it into practice, we can show the others by example. Therefore, while it is proper that we should celebrate the eighth anniversary of India's freedom and take stock of our achievements in the last eight years, in reality we must concentrate our attention on the tasks that are waiting to be done. We have reached one goal and now we have to travel towards another, and that journey should also be peaceful.

Let us pay homage to the thousands of people by whose toil and sacrifice and martyrdom, India became free. Let us hear once again the ancient voice of India, and at the same time pay heed to the new voice of the modern age too. The voice of our ancestors is ringing in our ears.

A year from now we shall be celebrating a great event in this country and the world. Next year it will be 2500 years since the death of Gautama Buddha, one of the greatest souls of India. This anniversary will be celebrated all over the world. On this occasion we must remember once again the principles and ideals that this great Indian gave to this country. We must also remember the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, who lived and toiled in our own lifetime. India owes her present greatness to him

and the path shown by him. If we follow those principles our steps will be firm and we shall be stout-hearted and straightforward. Let us think about all this and march ahead. Jai Hind. Please say Jai Hind with me thrice.