

Sisters, brothers and comrades, today we are assembled here once again to celebrate the anniversary of independent India. On this day, we look back a little at our achievements in the past and to the future as well on this day. Twelve years is a very short period in India's history of thousands of years. The soil and stones of Delhi have seen thousands of years go by as well as the last twelve years when the people of India have been trying to take their country out of the old rut of poverty and the hardships that afflicted it. This is a far more difficult task than even the struggle for freedom because it involves getting rid of our weaknesses and the burdens of the past under which we have been groaning for centuries. What we have been able to achieve in the last twelve years is there for everyone to see. A number of good things have happened and some bad too. Many things have happened which I think will find a place in the history of India in the future. At the same time, other things have happened which have weakened us and exposed our shortcomings.

So all of us are assembled here near the Red Fort and the tri-colour has been unfurled once again. What are the thoughts in your minds about the future? We have had to face innumerable difficulties in the last twelve years both internal and external. There have been great national disasters, floods and droughts and failure of crops, etc., and our weaknesses have dogged our footsteps relentlessly. Many people in the country have gone astray in their greed and forgotten the interests of the nation in their own narrow selfish interests, forgotten the great tasks that we are engaged in to build a great nation once again and caused great harm to their country in the hope of some immediate benefit to themselves. Even today you are facing great difficulties, inflation and other things and to some extent, we are helpless and unable to bring the matter fully under control. It is partly a result of man's narrow self-interest. Well, whatever it is, it will have to be faced. On this day especially we must remember what we are and what we wish to become and where we are going. We must refresh our memories once again about the events of twelve years ago when our beloved leader Mahatma Gandhi was still with us and we looked to him for guidance. We had been looking to him for guidance for years and years and tried to follow

the path shown by him and achieved success by doing so. How much do we remember of those days? We cannot afford to forget at any time that the most important task before us is to establish unity in the country because if we break up into separate parts, whether on the basis of language, province, religion or caste, we will lose all our strength and fall. We cannot progress and instead of a bright and shining future, India's history will be one of small communities fighting among themselves.

Therefore the first thing to remember is unity. We must break down the innumerable barriers, old and new, among us and always put the country first before a part of it, no matter how good that part may be. If a part of India has any greatness, it lies in the fact that it is part of India. Without that, the various parts of the country will have no greatness or importance. So we must remember this because we have become so used to living in small little compartments in the past due to the caste system that the habit has not gone fully yet. We must get rid of it and conquer it.

Secondly, what are our goals for the future? There are social and economic goals before us and we wish to remove poverty from India. All this is true. But what is the yard-stick for measuring these things? One yard-stick shown by Mahatma Gandhi was to see how far the common man in India benefitted. We do not have to bother about the handful of rich men for they can look after themselves. It is the common people who are often silent about their hardships especially the people who live in the rural areas, who need to be looked after. Please remember that though Delhi is a very special city of India and the world, and all of us who are the citizens of Delhi are extremely fortunate in a sense, Delhi is not India. India consists of millions of villages and until they progress, India cannot progress even if the cities of Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta or Madras advance. Therefore we must always keep the picture of India's villages in mind and devise ways and means for their progress. We can all help but ultimately they will progress only by their own effort, daring and self-reliance. The biggest disaster that has occurred in the country today is that our people are forgetting how to be self-reliant and expect others to do their work for them.

Our villagers are strong people, good people. But they have got into the habit of looking to government officials to do things for them, instead of standing on their own feet. The plans are aimed at making them self-reliant. If the community projects and national extension schemes work well, it will be a revolutionary thing for India and the world for it will be a reawakening of five and a half lakh villages of India. If the government officials run these things it will be no revolution it will be an ordinary, lifeless affair. Life has to flow from within a nation and cannot be put into it artificially.

Therefore it has become a big challenge to this country to the people living in cities as well as villages, to learn to stand on their own feet and work in mutual cooperation. The government must certainly help in every way. But a nation cannot progress by the efforts of government servants alone. It has to learn to stand on its own feet. This is true specially of the villages. Therefore we have decided that there should be cooperative societies to make the people strong and teach them to work together and trust one another that does not mean that the government should interfere constantly. I want that government interference should be as little as possible and the people must learn to hold the reins of government in their own hands. The fundamental policies may be decided by the government.

Now another thing to be kept in mind is the yard stick that is to be used to measure India's progress. The only yard-stick is the progress of the forty crores of Indians. How does a nation progress? It can be only through its own effort. How can you make a poor country prosperous? Again, it can be done only through the effort of the people. No nation can progress by depending on the charity of others. So we can progress only by our own effort and by increasing the production of wealth in the country. How have the countries in the West advanced? Whether it is Europe or the United States, they have become wealthy by their own effort. Behind the wealth and progress of each one of them lies tremendous hard work and unity. No nation can progress without these two things.

The habit of working hard has not developed in our country. It is not our fault. We have got into such habits due to circumstances. But it is a fact

that we cannot work as hard as people in Europe, Japan, China, the Soviet Union or the United States. Please do not think that those nations have become prosperous by magic. It is only by their hard work and intelligence that they have advanced so far. So we can also progress by working hard and using our intelligence. There is no other way. We cannot progress by magic. The whole world moves by the effort of human beings. The wealth of the entire world is produced by the hard work of human beings, whether they work on land or industries or shops or at some handicrafts. A handful of officers sitting in their offices do not produce any wealth. It is the farmer or the artisan who produces wealth by his work.

I was happy to see that recently the Punjab Government have increased their working hours. The wealth of the Punjab will definitely increase and the people will benefit. There are so many holidays in this country that nobody can compete with us in this matter. Holidays are good things and refresh a man. But too many holidays are not good because the people get out of the habit of working.

So, as you know, we are on the threshold of the Third Five Year Plan. Two Plans are over and we have benefitted greatly from them. The more we have progressed, our problems have increased proportionately. We are hemmed in by problems from all sides and sometimes the burden has seemed great. But we have progressed and all these problems are a sign of that progress. Those who do not move need face no problems nor find any answers. Even today when we are surrounded by problems and difficulties, they are the problems of a growing nation, a nation which is progressing from very strong foundations. Huge steel plants and other projects are coming up. What do they stand for? They are not merely industries but a symbol of the new life that they will provide in various corners of India. The big industries that are coming up will form the foundation of our progress. They will provide employment to millions of people who will produce new wealth. So in this way, the Five Year Plans are not merely putting up plants and industries but are building the edifice of an independent and prosperous India. It is essential to lay the

foundations well. We cannot see the foundations though the two Five Year Plans have done so. Now we are on the threshold of the Third Plan for which we are preparing from now. I want you to understand it because even the Third Plan is not going to usher in an era of leisure and rest. We will have to work hard to complete it. No nation can progress without working hard and bearing some hardships. Those who do not learn to face difficulties become slack and listless and the nation slows down.

So there is a great challenge before us and the eyes of the world are upon us. They want to see what a great country like India which has produced even in these times a man like Mahatma Gandhi does now. It is not only a question of putting up industries, increasing food production, expanding community projects, etc. The main thing is how we go about these things and whether it is with our heads held high or following the wrong path. We must remember this because the most important lesson that Gandhiji taught us was to hold our heads high, not to adopt wrong means, not to tell lies and cause harm to the nation for selfish interests. This was the basic lesson taught by him to everyone, adults and children, and the moment we forget that lesson, we will fall.

Therefore as we enter the thirteenth year, let us do so with heads held high and march in step with the firm determination that we shall reach our goal in time.

Jai Hind. Please say Jai Hind with me thrice. Jai Hind, Jai Hind, Jai Hind!