

Every year we assemble at Red Fort to celebrate Independence Day. We have a long history behind us. But new India is only twenty-one years old. During these twenty-one years, we have faced many problems—drought, floods, famine and shortages. At the same time, we have seen large development projects take shape before our eyes. These are our new temples. In the midst of hopes and disappointments, we have continued to march forward.

Our people have faced innumerable difficulties with courage and fortitude. I congratulate them for the courage displayed by them in facing multifarious problems. We owe our strength to the sacrifices and the hard work of our great leaders.

On this day we take stock of the past and look at the future with hope. Undoubtedly, we are a great nation. But let us not forget that we have a long road to traverse. I have no doubt that if we follow the path shown by our great leaders and hold fast to the principles laid down by them, we will be able to achieve our goal without delay.

It is a matter of regret that in this land of the Buddha, Akbar and Gandhi, there should be violence. It is inevitable that in a country of the size of India there should be differences among various sections of the people. These differences should be settled across the table. It is the duty of every citizen to assist in this process. We should help create conditions in which violence does not thrive; we should not allow riots to take place. A vast majority of our people are peace-loving. Why is it that a handful of people are able to disturb peace? Harijans and people of other minority communities have sometimes suffered atrocities. Several lives have been lost. There has also been a loss of national resources. All this has weakened the nation's strength. There has also been an attempt to create differences and doubts, which have the effect of undermining the confidence of the people.

Let us resolve on this day that we shall give no quarter to such deleterious tendencies. Undoubtedly, the Government has a duty to perform. But political parties, social organisations and the citizens of India

have also a responsibility to discharge. The reconstituted National Integration Council has taken certain decisions which are being implemented. I have every hope that we will succeed in creating a new climate of peace and national integration in the country.

Peace is the foundation of our progress. During the last twenty-one years, we have strengthened this foundation. We are beginning to stand on our own feet. After centuries of neglect, we are emerging; we are moving towards self-reliance.

We have witnessed a revolution in agriculture. We have had a bumper crop. However, some parts are affected by drought, and some by floods. Our hearts go out to those who have suffered as a result of drought and floods. We are making every effort to relieve their suffering.

Our bumper crop has been the result of a planned effort. Our kisans [farmers] have made good use of the agricultural inputs provided to them. Higher yields have not been the result of good rains alone. The revolution in agriculture will impart strength to our economy. Industry will also benefit.

The successes we have had should not blind us to certain problems. Let us not forget that agricultural inputs have been made use of only by farmers who enjoyed irrigation facilities. A vast majority of kisans do not have irrigation facilities and were, therefore, unable to make good use of agricultural inputs. This disparity between kisans possessing irrigation facilities and those without irrigation facilities is growing. We have to ensure that the 'dry' farmers receive all possible assistance from us so that they can play a useful role in stepping up agricultural production.

Our industrial progress is to some extent dependent on agriculture. Improved agricultural production has had a beneficial effect on our industry. I have every hope that we will continue to make progress in this field. Last year I had said on this occasion that India would soon emerge from her difficulties. The dark days are ending. We have not solved all our problems. But if we continue to march forward with determination, we will be able to usher in a new era.

As we make progress, we are faced with the rising expectations of people. Several sections of people and several unions have made certain demands. Some of these demands are just and need to be met. We have, however, to realise that workers, teachers and office employees can voice their demands but a vast majority of people who are illiterate, unskilled and much poorer are unable to give expression to their demands. We cannot ignore them. In taking a decision on the demands of organised sections of the community, we have naturally to consider what effect the acceptance of even just demands will have on those whose demands are unrepresented. We have also to weigh very carefully what overall effect the acceptance of demands will have on the general economic condition. I, therefore, appeal to my brethren, be they workers, teachers or others, to view their demands in the national perspective. We are fully seized of their difficulties and we have all sympathy for them. Let them compare their own difficulties with those of other sections of the community.

When we talk of indiscipline among workers, I would like to say that industrialists and moneyed businessmen cannot escape responsibility. They cannot ensure discipline if they continue to make big profits and draw fat salaries. I would appeal to them to give thought to this problem and find a solution. We should be able to reduce the disparity between the rich and the poor. If we want our country to prosper, we should subordinate personal gain to the national good. We should develop a spirit of sacrifice. Our aim should be more production. Every section of the community should realise its responsibility to the nation. Then and then alone can we have discipline and devolution of responsibility. We should also develop a spirit of co-operation. We should not forget for a minute that our chief aim is to eradicate poverty.

We have the problem of unemployment among engineers and other educated people. We are trying to solve this problem. We have to consider how we can set up new industries and provide employment to a large number of people. I would appeal to the educated people not to hankers after government jobs. They should try and create new opportunities for

themselves. There is ample scope for them in our developing economy. They should develop a spirit of self-help and self-reliance.

We have invested hundreds of crores of rupees in our public sector projects. This money does not belong to capitalists or industrialists. It is public money. Profits made by public sector undertakings are spent on public welfare—for building roads, schools, hospitals, etc. It is our duty to ensure that public sector projects are run efficiently and successfully and yield profits. The entire Indian public is a partner in these enterprises. Workers and managers employed in public undertakings have a special responsibility. Public sector undertakings suffer from many deficiencies. We do not want to hide these deficiencies. But it does not mean that all public sector undertakings are badly run. Some of them are being run very efficiently.

Our progress is dependent on national unity, on peace and on economic and political stability. We have witnessed political changes in our country recently. The prophets of gloom in India and abroad predicted that our democracy would collapse. But the soundness of our democratic structure has been fully vindicated. The Indian electorate is fully aware of its democratic rights and I have every hope that it will always exercise these rights with discretion and for the national good.

Our actions produce repercussions in the international sphere. We are living in a fast-moving world. Each country is trying to cultivate and maintain friendly relations with other countries. No nation severs relations with another even if there are differences between the two. Even friendly countries do not wish to be involved when there are disputes.

India has always followed a policy of non-alignment and of judging every issue on its merits. Other countries are also taking to this policy. Old alignments are weakening.

The Soviet Union recently decided to sell arms to Pakistan. This decision caused us concern. In our view it was an unfortunate decision. But we should not be unduly perturbed. We should not present to the world the picture of a grumbling, discontented and scared nation. We are a strong

nation. During the last two years, we have taken steps to make the nation stronger. Our troops are guarding our frontiers with courage. No matter what other countries say, we should have faith in our own strength. In the present-day world, real strength is not military strength alone. We have to have a sound industrial base and a united nation. We should not lose faith in our ability and capacity to defend ourselves.

Are we succumbing to pressures from any nation? I want to declare categorically that India shall not succumb to any pressure. Men of strong conviction never succumb and we have a firm conviction and a strong determination.

We have had differences with Pakistan. Perhaps, these differences are due to the fact that we have had close relations. Sometimes brothers develop serious differences. aggression and of hostile propaganda. We have been the victims of aggression and of hostile propaganda. In spite of this, Pandit Nehru and Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri offered a No-War Pact to Pakistan. On this day, I once again commend a No-War Pact for Pakistan's consideration. A No-War Pact will be of mutual advantage to both and will afford us an opportunity to face internal problems and to make progress.

Swami Vivekananda had said, "Blessed are those who take birth in this Great Land." It is equally true that blessed is the nation where great men are born. One such great man was Mahatma Gandhi. In October this year, we begin the centenary celebrations of his birth. Gandhiji had enunciated some noble principles which are as valid today as they were during his lifetime. These principles will have validity even in the future. Gandhiji had dedicated his life to the service of Harijans, the poor and the backward people. He sacrificed his life to maintain unity. We have to learn a lesson from his teachings and the noble principles enunciated by him.

Naturally on this day we think of the youth of India. They are the backbone of India. The strength of the nation depends on their strength. There is ferment in the minds of the youth in India and elsewhere in the world. There are many reasons for this ferment. Perhaps one reason is that traditional methods cannot provide a solution to problems of the new age.

We can provide leadership to the youth only up to a point. From that point, they have to carve out a new path for themselves and for the nation's future. They will have to face many difficulties and challenges. They have either to climb the mountain of difficulties or cut through it. There is no other way. Our hopes are pinned on the youth of India. They can impart strength to the nation in many fields. I have every hope that they will engage in the mighty endeavour of building a great nation. Their energy and their enthusiasm will be a source of inspiration and encouragement to the entire nation.

Brothers and sisters, the welfare of each one of us is indissolubly linked with a prosperous India. We should forget our own difficulties and only think of making India strong and prosperous. We should face unitedly the many problems facing us. No matter where we are— in the plains, in the hills, on the borders or the sea-coast— we are all citizens of this great country. We should not do anything, wittingly or unwittingly, which will lower the prestige of the country. We should so conduct ourselves that the future generations remember us for laying the foundation of a strong nation for ushering in a new era.

I congratulate you all on the occasion of the twenty-first anniversary of India. I congratulate the kisans who, through their hard work, have solved the food problem to some extent. I congratulate the industrial workers for their effort in increasing production. congratulate all others who have faced difficulties with courage.

I call upon the people to join hands in making this ancient land a modern, powerful and prosperous nation.

Gandhiji's selfless service has left an imprint on history. He will be remembered for all times to come. We should draw inspiration from his teachings and his noble principles and make an effort translate his dream into reality.

On this day, as I speak to you from the ramparts of Red Fort two names that are associated with Red Fort come to mind. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had exhorted the 'Indian National Army' to march to the Red

Fort. He had also given us the 'Jai Hind' slogan. Pandit Nehru carried this slogan to every nook and corner of India. Today this slogan has become a symbol of our unity and strength. Jai Hind.