

Today, on the occasion of Independence Day, I offer my hearty greetings to you. History took a turn about 43 years ago and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru hoisted the beautiful tricolour of independent India at this very place raising waves of hopes among crores of people. This flag of ours symbolises our struggle, our resolve and our strength. On this occasion, we express our respect to the freedom fighters and offer our tribute to martyrs. Entire nation bows its head in honour of their memory.

In fact a country, where memorials to the martyrs are in shambles, gets ruined. We, therefore, remember our martyrs, freedom fighters who have strengthened our nation. Today, we remember Bapu, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Jayaprakash Narayan, Sardar Patel, Maulana Azad, Sardar Bhagat Singh, Subhas Chandra Bose. The names of martyrs and freedom fighters are legion and it is not possible to recount all those names. I also want to recall those names which never found a mention in newspapers and nobody knows about them but who sacrificed themselves to win independence for the country. We also remember them today. I recall those days when the British showered bullets, but those were the days of freedom struggle. The British ran short of bullets but the number of freedom fighters prepared to brave the bullets ever declined. We got our independence after much sacrifice.

Today is not only a historic day, but the place also is historic. Delhi has been a witness to a procession of history. Kurukshetra is not far off where Lord Krishna gave a clarion call for the Mahabharata and gave his messages of the Gita. There is Panipat whose memory still reverberates with clinking of swords. We can still see afresh the old grandeur if we just scratch these stones of Red Fort.

Chandni Chowk has witnessed the rise and fall of many emperors. Ours is a long history. Even after independence, there is no reduction in our ordeals. The country has passed through difficult times. But the great people of this land have emerged with greater strength from each ordeal. We passed through periods of war and national calamities. We have also witnessed transfer of power in a democratic manner. From all these trials

and ordeals, one aspect has come out prominently, that democracy has taken firm roots here and there is no one who can shake it. People have always kept the respect and honour of the country high and herein lies our greater strength.

The country today is faced with dual challenges. On the one hand, there is separatism and on the other, violence. Separatism is posing a challenge for the country's unity and violence is a challenge to democracy. They pose a challenge to the history of our entire freedom struggle. They are challenges to our political and social values and to our system. It is not a challenge to a party or a class but to the entire system. Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Assam are names of different places. Their problems may also be different. But so far as the challenges of violence and separatism are concerned it is the same everywhere. We must, therefore, face them unitedly. Divided they cannot be faced and it had been our endeavour to unitedly face them. My heart goes to the people of Jammu and Kashmir for they participated in the freedom struggle. Similarly I feel for the people of Punjab for they shed blood for the achievement of freedom. We find the blood marks of both Hindus and Sikhs in Jallianwala Bagh.

Assam had been our most peaceful State and a solution to its problem will be found by the people there. I want to tell the people of Kashmir that secularism has been the symbol of our freedom. Not only the valley of Kashmir or Assam but the entire country belongs to them. If we have committed certain mistakes, we are prepared to amend them for they are our own people. If under the influence of misguided propaganda by another country, they think about secession, they should recall the tragic episodes following the independence when lakhs of people migrated to a neighbouring country where they are still called Muhajirs. They have not been accepted in that country and are subjected to bullets. Therefore, those living in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Assam should not think that they are alone. Entire India with all its power is prepared to fight against their problems, their difficulties and their woes. They are partners in the prosperity of the country, I am confident that a day will come when our

misguided youth will realise this and will have equal role in making India a great nation.

Soon after this Government assumed office, we went to Harmandir Sahib to offer our obeisance. We also visited the Durgiana Temple. We went to the martyrs' memorial at Jallianwala Bagh and prayed for peace in Punjab.

But peace has not so far come to Punjab. However, there was a purpose behind visiting those places. An atmosphere had been created in the country in which every Sikh was looked at with suspicion. Their self respect had been hurt. It was to honour them, to show our trust in them, to tell them that the country recognises with gratitude the sacrifice they have made for the country and for the freedom, for the success of the green revolution, for industrial advancement. Now an atmosphere has been created where there is no air of suspicion and a sense of trust has been generated.

The violence, of course, has increased and this is a matter of concern for us. We have done a lot during this period so as to assuage the hurt feelings of our Sikh brothers. For this, we have rescinded the 59th Amendment which was brought about for Punjab. We have released many innocents who were in jails. Those who left the Army for some reason were also released from the jails. Courts have been set up for 1984 Delhi riots victims. It was not done with the intention of bargaining. It was a confidence building effort. For I believe that the people of Punjab want peace, want to stay with India, and it would be unjust to club the people of Punjab with separatists. We will never do so. We have unflinching faith in the people of Punjab.

However, on this occasion we will also have to see who is with India and who is not with India. We cannot have any compromise with forces which are not with India. We may lose everything but there cannot be any compromise with the integrity of India.

Our policy is clear. We will win the people of Punjab with love but will

win anti-national elements through force. We will use both love and arms.

Today on the occasion of Independence Day, we have to resolve to fight another freedom struggle. The struggle is under way and before us. We have to join it. One generation gave us this flag. Our responsibility is to keep the flag flying. Our Armed forces, our Police forces are bravely facing the challenges, but it is the duty not only of the Army to die for the country but of every citizen. Only that country has survived where the citizens have risen to the occasion. Whether it is Vietnam or Leningrad, the country has saved itself when the people have stood up. Today we need the same spirit. If the 80 crore people and youth of the country stand up, we can put up a human wall on our borders. Then who can dare to cross our borders. We do not have enough resources to pay salaries and raise the number of the Army to the level required. We are proud of the sacrifices made by our Armed Forces. But what we have to consider now is whether Mahatma Gandhi fought for the freedom by paying salaries to the freedom fighters. He asked people to make sacrifices for the country and the entire country responded.

We desire that the Jawans defend the nation even though we may have a fistful of grams. It is not the riches that have saved the country but pledges and sacrifices that saved it. All of us whether those who are sitting in the ramparts or on the grounds will have to join together to face the danger on our border. Crossing of borders with arms, we will have to mentally prepare ourselves. On the occasion of Independence Day, we remind ourselves of need for vigilance by people. The people should come forward and I am ready to go with them. It is better to die on the borders than to watch border violations take place sitting in Delhi. Today the country demands sacrifice. We must prepare ourselves for this sacrifice by remembering our martyrs. The fight is to be waged not in the secretariat or in the North or South Blocks. It has to be carried to the fields of granaries. The people will rise in the streets. Eighty crore people with hundred sixty crore hands will rise together and the country will be invincible. No one can threaten us. But the heart of 80 crore people beat with those of the people

of Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir and they are not different from the rest of the people of the country.

We are prepared to make the same sacrifice to protect and to see that no injustice is done to them. We want to establish there an atmosphere of peace and justice.

Along with other problems there is yet another major challenge which I mentioned about on the very first day, and that is Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid controversy. It is our endeavour to solve this problem by mutual understanding amicably, because that is the only method to solve our problems. But I would like to say that the greatest temple or mosque is the heart of the human being and if the heart is broken, there shall neither be a temple nor a mosque. The only abode of God is the conscience and the heart of the human being. In this context, all our efforts are aimed at finding an amicable solution to this problem. But along with that we have to uphold the dignity of the courts. We have got different religions, different faiths, different languages and people of different regions. Though we have our own faith, we don't want to hurt anyone because we have to respect the faith of everyone. But if there are differences among them, then we have to respect the verdict of the higher court as the judiciary is above the Government. However, there is still hope that we shall find a way out.

Today the people are affected by rising prices. We are concerned, as the price rise hurts poor people like labourers, rickshaw-pullers, porters most. We are trying to cope with the economic conditions and inflation for sometime. There is also the budget deficit. We are trying to overcome these problems. It will take sometime to bring the situation under control. We want to make it clear that we will take stern action against those trying to exploit people's difficulties for profiteering. There shall be no slackness on this front. It is a fact that higher prices paid by us to the farmers for sugarcane, wheat and rice had, to some extent, contributed towards the increase in prices of a few commodities. But those people who toil in the fields have got their share in the overall prosperity of the country. The most

difficult situation is that of edible oils. The main reason for this is that production was less by 10 lakh tonnes and therefore, there is a problem this year. There has been good rainfall everywhere and this would have a salutary effect on prices. This is a God's gift. But the Saurashtra region, which is known for its groundnut production did not have the desired rainfall even this year. I pray today that clouds must go to Saurashtra and shower rains there, so that they may give substantial relief to us. As far as the sudden spurt in the prices of petrol, diesel and other petroleum products is concerned, this problem has been caused by the Middle East situation. If the price of crude oil goes up even by \$1, then the import bill of crude oil goes up by 400 crore.

We have to pay Rs 400 crore more in foreign exchange. That is how our foreign exchange burden has increased from Rs 1600 crore to Rs 2000 crore within the recent few weeks. I want to pose this question before my countrymen, there is an easy option that we take loans from outside to import oil. Some quantity will anyway have to be imported. By taking a loan to cover the entire import of oil, the prices could certainly be brought down. This will please you, the popularity of the Government will increase and perhaps my continuance in power will also be more certain. But would you like me to compromise with the long-term interests of the country to make my position stronger? This would certainly make the people happy, but this would not be in public interest. This will be like a doctor prescribing sweets to a patient of diabetes, simply for the fear that if he doesn't do so the patient would reject him and he would lose his fees. That doctor would certainly make the patient happy, but he would also drive the patient to his death. Every political leader should have the courage and spirit of sacrifice to present the complete picture and facts before the people to lead them on the path which is in public interest. I have full faith that once the people know the real difficulties, they would be willing to make sacrifices and I am sure that if the farmers get remunerative prices for a year or two, they will raise bumper crops of oilseeds which will not only meet our internal requirement, but also enable us to export. I would appeal to you to have patience. But if anybody indulges in exploiting the difficulties of the people

as regards other commodities, they would be dealt with firmly. There shall be no let up in this. Along with this, I want to repeat from this platform the same sentence that I spoke while addressing the nation for the first time. At that time I said that we have come into power with trust from the villages and bylanes and we have to uphold the sanctity of the soil and in the last few months we have tried to do that. We had promised that 50 per cent of the resources would be invested in the villages and the Eighth Five Year Plan is being formulated on this very basis. It is provided in this year's Budget that two-thirds of the debt relief given to the farmers, labourers, weavers and artisans will be met by the Central Government. As soon as this Government came into power, I ordered that principles should be laid down to fix prices to be given to farmers for their produce in a manner that justice is done to them.

The farmers got better prices for wheat and rice. Howsoever, much we may attempt to give benefit to the farmers through the Budget, it does not reach the poor, like the canal water which is diverted, does not reach the poor at the other end. By fixing higher prices we have been able to ensure that these resources amounting to thousands and crores of rupees reach the farmers without any interruption.

Today, we have five deficiencies in the agricultural system. We want to remove them. One is that the per capita national production has gone down in rural areas. The production has gone up, but the per capita production has decreased because the population of the villages has remained same as its percentage in total national production has come down. There was no balance in the price that farmer secured for his produce and the price he had to pay for his purchases. The balance was against him. The third deficiency is that our green revolution was confined mainly to a few foodgrains. It was mainly for wheat, but oilseeds and pulses remained outside the purview of this revolution. This imbalance has to be corrected. The green revolution did not cover all the areas and only few regions drew benefit out of it. What is causing maximum concern is that capital investment in agriculture has become almost stagnant. If we take

the price rise into account the farmers did not get fair prices. Keeping all these problems in view, we shall announce a national agricultural policy this year. This resolution will earmark the complete agricultural policy. The Industrial Policy was declared in 1956, but in this country where agriculture is the backbone of the economy, agricultural policy was never declared. Therefore, we want to announce a national agricultural resolution so that future governments are bound by it. We shall be bound by it; succeeding governments should also abide by it so that the villages continue to prosper. In this connection we are reminded of the slogan 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan' given by Lal Bahadur Shastri. We shall march ahead by making Jai Jawan or Jai Kisan as our aim and the next decade of the 90s would be observed as the farmers' decade. During this decade, we will undo the injustice which has been done to the farmers during the previous decades. The decade of the 90s would be a decade of the farmers as agriculture is the nation's first industry. A doubt was expressed whether agriculture is an industry or not. I believe that agriculture is the foremost industry of our nation. Without this industry other industries cannot be sustained. But there are many ifs and buts in this and during this decade we want to remove them. This cannot be accomplished overnight but we shall strive with all our strength to achieve this. There are many hindrances in the trade of the farmer and we shall remove them. He should be free to sell his produce anywhere in the country and there should be no restriction on this. If there is any restriction, that should be done away with. All these limitations should be removed. There are restrictions on its export. They cannot be removed altogether but we should endeavour to remove them. We have waived the loans given to the farmers once, but it is not possible to do so every time. We should find ways to make resources available to them so that they don't slide into debts.

Irrigation and power are two main inputs. During the Kisan decade our effort would be to provide maximum resources to these two sectors. We also want to dovetail agro-industries with agriculture, because if there are agro-industries in the villages there will be no exodus of population to the cities. In the formulation of the Eighth Five Year Plan, the generation of



employment is our main aim and this is done in order to provide non-farming employment to youth in the villages. We are conscious of the fact that if the country is to be strengthened, industry also will have to be strengthened and we cannot ignore it. Industry cannot be strong without a strong base. It will be our endeavour to make this base strong. We shall pay special attention towards export promotion. Small-scale industries require special attention. Red tapism has tied down the potential of industry and therefore, we have to cut this red tape so that the productive forces get an impetus. We are happy that demands are being made to give importance to the poor.

In my first address to the nation, I had asserted that if our Government is a sword it will be wielded to secure justice for the poor and on this auspicious occasion I want to reaffirm that assertion. The place of poor in the present system where there is a nexus between capital and power-centres is not new, this struggle has been continuing for centuries. We know the emperors who occupied the throne in Red Fort, but the craftsmen who built this magnificent building remain unknown. The statue in a temple is carved out by a sculptor but when it is installed in a temple, people know only about the King in whose period the temple was made and that sculptor is not allowed to enter the temple, leave aside any credit being given to him. It is the offshoot of the same society and system that there was no portrait of Bharat Ratna Babasaheb Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar in the Central Hall of Parliament though he was the architect who gave the Constitution to this country. Now we want to ask the question whether we can give any pride of place to the poor in our system. The poor have a hand in forming the government through elections but the poor have no hand in running the government. Do we have the courage to give a share to the poor in running the government. Those who are called depressed classes had lost a political battle thousands of years ago. Till today the result of that political battle has not been reversed. Therefore, it is not the question of treasury but it is the question of throne. One who occupies the throne will also control the treasury. Gone are the days when we used to give doles to the poor from the treasury. He is not fighting for doles. He has

been poor for thousands of years and may endure to remain like that for a few years more. He is fighting the last battle for his dignity and to live like a human being. Therefore, we will have to eradicate the system where we are always the donors, and the poor remain receivers. This relationship of donors and the receivers will have to be replaced by a feeling of brotherhood. This would be the change in the new system as we have seen that in the name of poverty the poor people have been exploited.

Those who professed to remove poverty kept on vanishing poverty but the poor continued to recede to the background. Let the persons engaged in eradication of poverty remove themselves and yield their place to the poor. The poor would rather get rid of the poverty or be contented with his destiny. I had said in Rajya Sabha that we waste our time in making small laws for the poor. We should have the courage to pass a law in Rajya Sabha, Lok Sabha or Assemblies where decisions are taken to run the country, that if we have 40 per cent poor in our population, we shall give 40 per cent seats in Rajya Sabha, Lok Sabha and the Assemblies to the poor.

I am happy that leaders of every party, be it leftist or Bhartiya Janata Party or the Congress, welcomed and supported the suggestion.

This wide support has enthused us. We want to start this debate throughout the country and today, on the occasion of the Independence Day, I want this country to debate this issue. This issue should not only be debated but we should also take a decision and implement it because the slogan is: "Give power and not wealth to the poor and he would bring about a transformation." We believe that no section can be uplifted merely by money. They can develop only if they have a share in power and we are prepared to provide this share. In this year of justice, in memory of Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar, the Government has recently taken a decision to give reservation to the backward classes in the jobs in government and public sectors. It is being debated as to how many persons would get economic benefit out of it. In a sense, taking into account the population of this country, the government jobs account for only one per cent and out of that

one percent, if one-fourth is given to anyone, it cannot be a course for his economic betterment though it may have some effect. But our outlook is clear. Bureaucracy is an important organ of the power structure. It has a decisive role in decision-making. We want to give an effective share in the power structure and running of the country to the depressed, downtrodden and backward people.

Let us have a look at the system. The backward classes constitute 52 per cent of our population, but in the government jobs its representation is only 14.5 per cent and among the Class I officers, this is only 4.5 per cent. How long will this injustice continue? We shall have to do justice. And when we start doing justice the system gets a jolt and a commotion takes place. But let us search our conscience and leaving aside as to what we can get from our country, we should think about giving to those who are have-nots. This thinking should mould our life. Only such an approach can bring a change in the lives of people living in huts and toiling masses and this would be the right change. Ministers and ministries change, even Prime Ministers change, but the question is as to when the life of people living under thatched roofs will change? That change would be the correct change. To bring about such a change we will have to arouse social forces. I call upon the youth to work for this awakening. I invite them to cooperate in building a just society because the tear in the eyes of a poor person tear for some time but later it becomes acid. He tears the page of history to build his own heaven on earth. So long as the tears in the eyes of poor keep the eyes wet, it is alright; but after it gets dried his eyes spit fire. It is the lesson of history that when the eyes of poor turn fiery the palaces of gold melt and go down the drain. It is not enough to ponder over; we have to act. Therefore, we have made reservation for the backward classes, gave statutory status to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission and brought forward a law to ensure workers' participation in management to protect their rights and to ensure that the labour have a share in the management of the country.

Similarly, in Delhi we see the poor people who come from villages

and live in sewage pipes as they have no roof on their heads. They live on the road side. We intend to enact a law for their settlement. So many labourers come from villages to Delhi and construct palatial buildings here, but they do not have even a hut for themselves. In this context, we are reminded of Guru Nanak's saying. He had said that we should rate everybody high and nobody should be considered low. This saying will become the voice of justice. We also have to see that wealth, which is not contributing to the growth of the country, is put to productive purposes. In our country an iron plough is more useful than a diamond necklace as a diamond necklace does not contribute to productivity. The iron plough of a farmer, on the other hand, helps us in production. As far as the urban property is concerned the existing laws have many loopholes and we have to remove them. We shall also have to decide whether a single person needs a big bungalow for his accommodation. In a country where even huts are not available, what is the justification of building houses spread over acres. This matter should be debated and on this also we will take a decision. Youth are the mainstay of the nation. Theirs is the voice of new age. But the biggest problem of the youth is employment. In the Eighth Five Year Plan, employment has been given a pivotal importance. We are determined to fulfil our resolve to give constitutional status to the right to work with the support and cooperation of all the parties. Within the resources available for development and our commitments in other fields, we will certainly make a beginning. No government can assure government jobs to all. But if one is prepared to work, job opportunities should be available. But the problem is that we are more interested in management rather than in actual work. Therefore, we want to become managers and not workers. So far as we are concerned, we are not among workers. When we talk about right to work, we will have to keep in view the social parameters according to which a worker should be respected, then only the right to work can be really fruitful. You will be happy to know that the Government has increased budget provision from Rs 20 crore to Rs 265 crore for the welfare of youth. This amount will be spent during the current year.

Under this provision, the young people who are qualified in different professions, will be given assistance and loan through the banks to the tune of Rs 120 crore for employment. Similarly, provision has been made for Rs 50 crore for giving loans from banks to the poor students who are unable to pursue higher studies. In the same manner, for the rural youth a sum of Rs 70 crore will be provided under different employment schemes. However, this is a question of resources. As far as young people are concerned, all the resources of the nation are theirs and they are to inherit all the national resources. But the greatest resource are the young people themselves. They are more important than the budget of any country and the government. Therefore, when the young generation is called upon to do something, it is not for an ordinary task, the call to bring about a complete transformation. Today, I exhort the young people to remove the curse of the illiteracy. If one literate young person imparts the light of knowledge by teaching 4 or 5 persons, the entire country will be illuminated by the light of knowledge and the darkness of ignorance and illiteracy will be dispelled.

Let us make a resolve. If every young person makes such a resolve, it would be a great service to the nation. Similarly, there is a question of population and we have to think about it. The young generation should take up a programme to educate and motivate people to limit the size of their families. The government also will give all support and facilities. In this manner we can find a solution to a big problem.

Women in India have been always enjoying great respect in the society. But the present social and economic system has pushed them backward. It is not because they lack competence or capability: they are also not wanting in courage but we have tied them down to household chores. A nation grows in the lap of women. They bring up the nation, nurture our traditions and uphold our culture. But in spite of this great contribution, they have no role in running the country. If we keep a mother in chains, there can be no vitality in the nation. How a nation can vibrate with life if women who are the sources of life remain suffocated. Therefore, we have decided to make a beginning by giving them their share in power.

In this very session, a bill is being tabled in Parliament to provide for 30 per cent seats for women in Panchayati Raj. Along with this the National Commission for Justice for Women with Judicial powers will also be set up. I hope that all these measures will help us in solving their innumerable problems.

On this day, we can't forget our valiant Defence forces: our Army, our Navy and our Air force. When we think of them, we feel proud. They have always upheld the dignity of the nation by their sacrifices. When even my thoughts go to the Jawans in Siachen, and the Himalayas, I feel that the morale of our Jawans in Siachen is higher than the Himalayas.

You will be happy to note that Akash missile which we had been developing was successfully launched yesterday. This is a matter of great pride for us and our scientists. I want to express my gratitude to them.

On this occasion we cannot forget our ex-servicemen. The Government have already taken important decisions about their pension and soon it will be placed before the Parliament. But I do not consider ex-servicemen to be merely pensioners. They are the symbol of our unity. When they were in uniform they had together taken a vow for sacrifice irrespective of the fact whether they were Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian or whether they were Tamil speaking, Punjabi speaking, Rajasthani speaking or Bengali speaking. My dear ex-servicemen, you are not only pensioners, you had provided leadership when you were in uniform. Today, when you are not in uniform you should provide leadership to the society and foster the same sense of unity as you did while you were in uniform. There, all were one. Be it Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian or whatever may be the language, you should remove this feeling wherever you are and you should provide leadership to the society. This emotional unity is our biggest strength and this has not been achieved in a day. It has taken centuries to bring about this composite culture embracing different religions and beliefs. We cannot afford to lose this legacy. Any strain on it will also affect the nation. The country is not a map on a paper. The map of the nation is in the hearts of people of that country. If there are divisive lines in the hearts, they

will be reflected on the land also. We would not allow these divisive lines to emerge. Here, I want to quote Jan Nisar Akhtar who presents a profile of this culture, "This country is a synthesis of Hindu and Muslim cultures. This saying is centuries old but this is so fresh even today." We have to maintain this freshness.

A challenge has come before us. The question is not of poverty but is that of alienation. The human being can tolerate poverty; but he cannot tolerate that he should be treated as an alien. The question is not of convenience but is that of participation and we want to involve the minorities in the development of the country and in education. Whatever may be our development, be it the case of banks or jobs, justice should be done to the minorities. We want to march towards justice.

It has been the demand that in this country we have holiday on the birthday of the propounders of all the religions, but there is no holiday on the birthday of Prophet Mohammad. Today, I want to declare that the Government has decided that the birthday of Prophet Mohammad will be observed as a holiday. This was the grouse that the facility given to all the religions was denied to a big minority.

Today, the relation between Iraq and Kuwait is causing anxiety to us. We do not support violence anywhere in the world, nor do we endorse military intervention. Along with this, there should be no unilateral action. We are worried about the life and property of the Indians there. Therefore, we have sent our Cabinet colleague, Shri Arif Mohammad Khan to have a firsthand assessment of the difficulties and problems of Indians there and to make arrangements for those who want to come. We are in touch with different countries to find out a solution without the use of force or armies. Our relations with other countries have generally improved. I have been to Russia. President Gorbachev has taken a new initiative in the world and is bringing about revolutionary changes in his country. I had an occasion to see them and exchange ideas. My discussions with President Gorbachev have not only strengthened the traditional friendship between India and the USSR but they also helped us in deciding the course we have to follow in

the world. Our relations with America have improved. Their stand has come closer to our position on issues of Jammu and Kashmir, plebiscite and Simla Agreement. We welcome this. With China, exchange of views is continuing in a positive manner. We have solved the problems with Nepal and our good relations with Bhutan, Maldives and Mauritius are being maintained. With Bangladesh also our relations have improved. Tin Bigha was an irritant which has been removed and now the talks on distribution of waters are continuing in an atmosphere of understanding. We are concerned about the Tamils of Indian origin in Sri Lanka and about their life and property. For them we have taken an initiative that within Sri Lanka, there should be a camp where they should live securely. The talks are continuing and I hope, other countries will also be helpful in these efforts. But I will not allow the extremists or militants to use Indian soil as their centre. We want peace, peace in Sri Lanka and peace in India, and will pursue this policy. While our relations have improved with others, it is unfortunate that in spite of our friendly intentions, our relations with Pakistan have not shown any improvement. All these are before you and much has been said about them. I do not want to repeat them on this occasion, but would like to say two things. We want friendship and if they move one step forward we will reciprocate by moving two steps. But along with this, there should be no compromise on the sovereignty and integrity of the country. If there is any evil intention, the whole country would rise and face it. We have tried to establish democratic values. In place of personalised politics we are pursuing issue-based politics. If today we are getting support from BJP and Leftist parties it is not for an individual, it is for programmes.

We are getting the support on the basis of issues. There are some maladies in the institutions of this country. We need your support to change this. We have strengthened the foundations of democracy by decentralisation of power, by introducing Panchayati Raj, the Lok Pal Bill, giving autonomy to TV and Radio and setting up the Inter-State Council. But these are institutional changes. Today, our thoughts go to the greatness of India and its past. On this occasion, I pledge that I will not all



the dignity of this flag to be sullied. I call upon farmers, workers, young people, women, industrialists, writers, children -- who may not be eligible to vote for a change of government but even a child can come forward to save the country - to maintain the dignity of India. This is not an easy path. There are many difficulties, but we are brave sons and daughters of a brave India. Bravery flows in our blood. We cannot be disheartened even if there are storms. Not a thread of this flag can be separated. We will not be terrified even if there are thunderstorms or lightning. We will convert this lightning into beacon light for the nation and in this light we will find a way out. On this occasion, I would like you to join me in raising the slogan given by Subhas Chandra Bose, at the top of your voice so that the country reverberates with its echo from the Himalayas to Kanya Kumari. That slogan is: "Jai Hind".