

Brothers, sisters and children, I am happy that this rain has come. It might have worried some of you whose clothes are slightly drenched. But in this rain I see a symbol of our country's prosperity, of its becoming green and fertile and our hearts also being refreshed. Children, my greetings to you on this auspicious day, it is you who will build the future of this country. You have to prepare yourselves with firm determination and stout hearts to embark on the journey of wiping out poverty from the country in the same united way in which we wiped out slavery. We have completed one journey of consolidating our freedom, the foundations of which were laid a hundred years ago by our people with their blood sweat and tears. We have before us now another journey of emancipating our people economically. But any nation that undertakes the mighty task of wiping out unemployment and poverty is bound to meet with reverses. We often stumbled and fell in our struggle for freedom. We faced heartbreaking reverses, but we did not give up. We again rose and marched on. In the same way today we have to face the challenges of these economic and other difficulties in a united and firm manner and rebuild a new India.

How many among you here remember the face of India before freedom? If you do not remember it, you cannot compare the conditions in those days in the cities and villages with the present times? It was a tremendous task, requiring hard work to change those conditions. It could not be done by magic. It was hard and persistent work, which brought India freedom. We require this capacity for hard work and unity to rebuild a new India. Whenever a country wants to go forward rapidly, it has to face the challenge of many odds. We have to understand that we may stumble and fall. Only those people do not stumble, who are always sitting at ease or just reclining. When people march forward, they are bound to stumble. We have gone forward in this way:

Is tarah tave kee hain hamnain manzilen

Gir paray, gir kar uthay, uth kar chalev

(We have reached our goals in a manner where we stumbled fell down and rose, and marched again.)

Many people when faced with difficulties tend to lose heart and turn their backs and slink away. They are frightened by these difficulties which appear to them like a big mountain. But big things are only achieved by facing difficulties of every kind. One can see the progress India has achieved by looking around at the conditions in the neighbouring countries. We are not so much worried about the world as we are about our own duty to our country. We have taken a big job on our hands. We are doing it. And we will do it.

On this historic day, memories of a hundred years of glorious struggle and achievements beckon us to greater effort. The torch of freedom, lit by the freedom fighters a hundred years ago like Tatya Tope, Nana Sahib, Kunwar Singh, Liaquat Ali Khan and above all the Rani of Jhansi, was kept aloft and burning by those who succeeded them. Dadabhai Naoroji, Lokmanya Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi in their turn carried the torch and faced the might of British Imperialism. We have today to remember the lessons of unity, religious tolerance and fellow feeling taught by Mahatma Gandhi and other great sons of India and go forward in a united and determined manner.

India is celebrating today the Tenth Anniversary of her Independence and the First Centenary of the 1857 Struggle. Some historians have tried to belittle the importance of the War of Independence of a hundred years ago. But the basic fact is that the India of those times did rise gloriously against the foreign yoke and a large majority of common people joined the struggle. And people of all religions, Hindus, Muslims and others, together rose and bore every suffering to attain freedom. There is no doubt that it was a War of Independence in which the foundations of freedom were laid with the blood of the people. The most lovable name of the freedom fighters of those times is of Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi. These names are in our hearts and will remain in our hearts always. Their memory will remain fresh for centuries.

Now, our neighbour Pakistan is a part of our heart and body. How can we ever think of fighting against Pakistan? This would only be

tantamount to harming ourselves. If Pakistan through its foolishness entertained enmity towards us, it would be only harming itself. No doubt our relationship with Pakistan is strange because even if there is bitterness against each other, even if there is some anger, it is a very close relationship of thousands of years which mere laws cannot obliterate. If some harm comes to India, it is bound to harm Pakistan also. Similarly, if Pakistan is harmed, it will affect India too.

So, we want that we remain in peace and friendship with Pakistan and our relations grow in such a manner that they remain happy in their freedom and we remain happy in our freedom. This does not imply that India can be cowed down by threats and made to abandon her rights. It will be neither doing justice to ourselves, nor to Pakistan nor to others. It would not be a good example too. So, we will remain firm on our rights and defend them with all our strength and with cool minds and go forward. We will be friends of all.

Coming to the international situation, India does not like the cold war which is raging in the world. We think this cold war engenders jealousy in the heart. It is a wrong thing. It makes the heart narrow. No country can grow in this manner. India's hand of friendship is stretched out towards all countries. We want to shake hands with all countries.

But in the ultimate analysis, India's position in the world will depend on her own internal achievements. If India is respected today in the world, it is because of our achievements during the last ten years. The world has taken note of a strong nation having entered the world arena, a nation which is making progress rapidly. So, it is only after seeing our ten years' work, that the world has begun to respect us.

There may be passing difficulties but they have to be overcome with determined effort. We will overcome them and step by step our nation will go forward. There will be more work and we will be able to eliminate unemployment and especially the suffering of our people, living in villages or cities today, who for centuries have borne the burdens of poverty. We have completed one journey of freedom. The second journey has just

begun. It is before us. We will reach its end also by remaining united.

We have gathered here in hundreds and thousands to celebrate this day. This day is the Tenth Anniversary of our Free India and the Centenary of the big War of Independence, which took place here a hundred years ago. You are here in your big numbers, but more than that, other people were gathered here too. The memories of those caravans which came here, caravans of people who showed courage, served India, served our nation, and went away after doing their duty. They may be here or they may be in our minds or they may be seeing what India's position today is after a hundred years. It is ultimately the efforts made by these people through their blood, sweat and tears, who gave their lives for the country, that have brought the results which we see today. It is this story of ups and downs of a hundred years that we see today in this city of Delhi and especially in this Red Fort, whose every stone relates this story.

Before me is Chandni Chowk, the famous bazar of Delhi for centuries. This Chandni Chowk has seen mighty processions of kings and emperors, it has seen the country taking a turn in its history, it has seen the fall of a mighty empire and the birth of a new State. Here processions went by of old India, of Moghul emperors, of British rulers, on big elephants. Those times came and went and now Free India's time has come. We are today seeing the truths of a hundred years of struggle. We have now to see that we preserve the fruits of this struggle.

In these ten years the face of India has changed to some extent and our voice has reached the ears of other people in the world. This is a voice which is a little different from the voices they have been hearing. We did not growl, we did not shout because we learnt our lessons under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, who worked silently. But behind this silent work of ours there is determination and strength. India entered the world arena as one of the wrestlers. But it is not to fight anyone, but to serve ourselves and to some extent serve the world also. During the last ten years, the path has been cleared to some extent for the people of India to go forward. Many thorns in this path have been cleared and brushed aside.

But still some more thorns remain. In the political field, the path has been very much cleared. India has now to clear the economic path and go forward.

Now, the world is facing a strange situation. The atomic and hydrogen bombs are hanging on the head of the world menacingly and no one knows when they explode. Yet, this same atomic power can be used for the good of humanity.

India today is facing many problems. The one relating to foodgrains is especially important. The prices of foodgrains are rising, affecting everyone, But the burden on those whose income is low is more than on others. That is a matter which certainly cause worry. But it is a worldwide phenomenon, India, however, will get over that and other problems. The trouble is that big projects like steel plants and river valley schemes take some time to complete. The results that flowed from them will come only after some time. But all those are definite signs of the people going forward. The whole of India today is like a big workshop where the kisan, the mill worker and the engineer or anybody else are immersed in their daily tasks. The day is coming nearer when the entire nation will reap the fruits of these big projects. We must remember that we have to stand on our own legs. Nobody will come from outside to take us forward. We have to depend on our own efforts. India is both an old country and a new one. It has its past of 5,000 years. Yet, it is a young country which is only ten years old. We have to see where we are going today. Our War of Independence was started 100 years ago with blood. It was suppressed. Even though it was put down for the time being, the battle was not over. It was continued by others in later years who consolidated the unity of the people, and brought them together.

The Buddha Jayanti celebrations took place last year and the 2,500th birth anniversary of the great son of India had refreshed the minds of the people and the impact that his teachings made on vast masses of humanity is tremendous. It is that message of peace and love taught by the Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi that has given strength and unity to the people of

India. We can go forward only when we continue to follow these principles and work in a cooperative and united manner. Jai Hind!