

For the second successive year, I have unfurled the National Flag on Red Fort. You will recall that last year we were drenched in rain on this occasion and there were earth tremors. The tremors were said to be a warning of coming difficulties. While on this day last year we stood in rain, there was a severe drought in many parts of the country. The people were faced with immense difficulties. Today, at this time, there is no rain here, but India is having an excellent monsoon. Let us hope that we have the required rainfall and the country will new turn. Let us hope there will be no more drought and food shortages. Let us hope that we will begin a new life.

The people in the drought-affected areas have faced innumerable difficulties with great courage and fortitude. This is not surprising. Our people have always been known to overcome difficulties. Our people have gone through difficult times in the past; they have faced many aggressions.

Why has the Red Fort been chosen for this ceremony? Because it is in Delhi, which is the door-step of India. The banner of freedom was raised here on many occasions. When the last battle of freedom was fought and the country was partitioned and there were riots, the message of unity and independence went out from here.

The people of India have survived many crises. Today, there is a feeling of despondency in the country. Only a few days ago; we observed the 25th anniversary of the Quit India movement. Twenty-five years ago there was gloom in the world. The world was in the midst of World War II. At that time, Gandhiji gave us the 'do or die' message to achieve deliverance from foreign rule. There was not a ray of hope of India becoming free. But in a short period of five years our dream came true. From this we have to learn the lesson that gloom is not perpetual. The darkness will end soon and the dawn is near. We will soon overcome our difficulties. We need courage and determination to do so.

Much has happened during the last twenty years. Perhaps we could have achieved much more. Nevertheless, our achievements are many. A new generation has been born. It is not aware that India lived in slavery. It is not aware of our freedom struggle. It is not aware that the poor and

hungry masses of India fought the mighty battle of freedom and won.

Some voices are raised that there has been no improvement in the lot of the Indian people. Publicity is given to it in India and abroad. But if we look around we will find that, while milk, sugar and other articles of daily necessity were cheaper in the past, there avenues of progress for the people. There were few facilities for the education of children. The living conditions of farmers and other rural folk were not satisfactory. Their children did not attend school. They did not own bicycles. The spirit of enterprise was lacking. We have definitely made progress during the last twenty years. Maybe the pace of progress has not been fast enough, but it has been continuous.

Rural folk are aware of the difficulty of having to wade or swim across swollen rivers and rivulets during the monsoon. The current flows most swiftly in midstream and it is there too that the water is deepest. India is in a somewhat similar situation. We are in midstream. I have no doubt that, given courage and determination, the people of India will be able to cross the deep waters and reach the other bank. We cannot afford to look back; we cannot afford to wait even for a single second. We must continue our progress. We must cross the swollen river. Once across, our progress will be easier.

Violence has no place in India. We must fight communalism, linguism and casteism if we have to make speedier progress. Regionalism also poses a danger. One can understand the desire of every State to make progress but no individual or State can make progress in isolation. We must keep the picture of a united India before us all the time. We have faced many challenges and many difficulties in the past. We have always overcome them. Today we are faced with food shortages not in one State but in many parts of the country. Food shortages have created a new problem and new doubts in our minds. We may recall that when India became free, we were assailed with doubts whether we would be able to form a stable Government and maintain the unity of the country. After the partition of the country, there was aggression on Kashmir. Later Gandhiji

was assassinated. Our great leaders left us one by one. However, side by side, the people of India gained strength. The vast mass of people living in every part of India are the nation's real strength.

We have undoubtedly made progress in the economic sphere. We have set up new industries. We have increased agricultural production. We have to maintain the rate of progress in the agricultural and industrial fields.

We have made every effort to reach food-grains to deficit areas. You are aware that West Bengal, Kerala, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and many other parts of the country are faced with food shortages. Through the efforts of the Government and non-official organisations, the needs of the people were met to some extent. I would like to congratulate the people of these States for the courage with which they faced difficulties. They have upheld the honour of India. They have shown that a free nation is capable of overcoming difficulties.

The people of India are faced with many other problems. There is the problem of rising prices. There is a demand for higher wages. This problem is not confined to India. The whole world is faced with the problem of rising prices and the demand for higher wages. It is a vicious circle of rising prices, higher rents, higher wages and again higher prices. It is our endeavour to break this vicious circle. We want to stabilise prices. We have all to co-operate to solve this problem. We have to make sacrifices. We should restrict our purchases of consumer goods. It is not an easy problem. The poorer sections of the community are the worst sufferers. I have the greatest sympathy for them. We have to find ways and means of solving this problem.

I know that everyone wants an increase in his wages. People are also worried that they can buy very little even with increased wages. We have to find a solution to the problem of people's needs. We have limited resources. We have to consider ways and means of augmenting our resources. If we can increase our resources by suffering hardship, we should not hesitate to do so. Then our difficulties will end soon.

Our Constitution envisages the formation of Governments by different

parties in different States. Today we have Governments of different complexions. They have freedom to follow their own paths. It has always been our endeavour to extend the fullest co-operation to them. Sometimes, perhaps in anger, or perhaps because of their helplessness in the face of difficulties, the States accuse us of discriminatory treatment. The charge of discrimination is absolutely baseless. India is one nation. We treat all citizens equally. All States are equal in our eyes. It is our endeavour to ensure equitable distribution of food and other resources. We want to remove the difficulties of all. But as our resources are limited, we can only share what we have. I do hope that the people will appreciate our difficulty and co-operate with us.

We have taken up many projects for the development of the country. We have spread education. Progress in such fields as women's welfare, development of communications and brought many changes. We have opened up new vistas of progress. But as we progress in new fields, new difficulties arise. All sections of the community are faced with difficulties. Unrest is a world phenomenon, whether it is among students or other sections. There are problems of race, language or other similar problems facing various countries. We should not magnify our difficulties.

Two years ago, our leaders put forward a proposal that education up to the university level should be in the mother tongue so that the benefits of education could reach everyone and the talents of the people could find a natural outlet. Can we achieve this? Even a good proposal sometimes contains the seeds of danger. It is feared that this proposal might encourage separatism. This proposal could prove beneficial if there is a link language which can bind the people together and thus help maintain national unity. Similarly, there is need to maintain links with the world. We cannot afford to live in isolation in the present-day world. It will prove harmful to our interests. Therefore, there should be three languages—the regional language, a national link-language and an international language. We have to keep in view the difficulties of the people in the matter of language. We have to consider how the difficulties of the people in various

parts of the country can be minimised and how they can be helped in every possible way. No one should have the feeling that something is being thrust on him or that impediments are being put in his path.

Sometimes we think that a particular view is beneficial to the people at large. But there are people holding other views. In this matter we have to carry the people with us. We cannot ignore the views of others. We have to find a solution which is acceptable to all, and which does not weaken our democratic structure or our national unity. The question of language generates emotion and anger. If a proper solution is found, language can become a force for national unity and national progress.

Regional tendencies have been on the increase. The people of each State think that if development schemes are implemented in that particular State, India will make rapid progress. Unfortunately, our resources are limited. We have to determine an order of priorities for different development schemes. We must look upon all States as our own. There is no need to feel upset if a development scheme is implemented in another State. We should be patient. Gradually, all development schemes will be implemented. We should draw inspiration from our past when we overcame innumerable difficulties.

We need peace for our progress. We want peace at home and abroad. We stand for world peace. There are tensions sometimes. All kinds of questions arise. There are tensions even in a family, between brothers and sisters. We have always stood for a peaceful solution of all questions. It has always been and continues to be our endeavour that all questions should be solved through peaceful means. But if there is aggression on our borders, we will meet it with all our might. A few days ago, I visited some forward areas. Our officers and Jawans are guarding our borders with courage. They are not deterred by adverse weather conditions. I have seen them guard the snowy mountains. I assured them that the entire nation was behind them. I conveyed to them the good wishes of the Government and people of India. I have full confidence that the honour of India is safe in the hands of our Armed Forces. Let us not forget that we have a responsibility

too. Our officers and Jawans are bearing hardship and are prepared to sacrifice their lives to protect the territorial integrity of India. We should also be ready to bear hardship and make sacrifices. We should keep in view our objectives.

What is socialism ? There are differing definitions. A simple definition of socialism is that poverty should be eradicated; disparities between the rich and the poor should be reduced; the backward people- be they Harijans, adivasis or the hill people— should have equal opportunities to make progress; and there should be equal distribution of national resources. This is our socialism and this is our goal. We want to achieve this goal rapidly.

Sons and daughters of India— be you workers or kisans [farmers], businessmen or industrialists, teachers or students, writers or artists— you are all inhabitants of this great country. You should not forget this for a moment. Through your veins runs the blood of heroes, and great men. Let diffidence give way to confidence; let despair give way to hope. We will then be able to build a strong nation; we will then be able to raise the structure of a beautiful Bharat. We are capable of doing so. We have embarked on an exciting venture. We shall face every difficulty— be it war or famine— with courage and determination. We shall not let the nation go under.

My countrymen, join me with all your heart in raising the national slogan. Let this slogan echo all over. Let it be a symbol of our national strength. Let it guide us towards national progress. Jai Hind.