

Thirty years ago the British left this country on this day India became Independent. Jawaharlalji unfurled our National flag at this very historic place and on this same day Gandhiji fasted to bring peace to Calcutta. Ever since on this historic day for the last 30 years, every year we have been greeting the nation.

During these 30 years we saw many ups and downs, passed through many crises and also shared common joys and sorrows. We made some progress, specially in industries. We made gentle headway in the field of education, and we achieved some targets in agriculture as well. But, during these thirty years, we were attacked thrice. We came out successful and emerged stronger from these wars retaining our national pride. We made progress, but the fruits of progress did not reach all specially 60 to 70 per cent of our population, who could benefit from it only marginally. I do not like to find fault with anyone. We all are to be blamed. But we should learn from whatever had happened. If we do not ponder over it and continue to repeat the same mistakes the very purpose of our freedom, which was to improve the lot of our countrymen and to invest Indian culture with dignity so that we could hold our head high in the world, otherwise our dreams would remain unfulfilled. It was not possible either to full it during the past thirty years.

But the greatest drawback we have suffered from is that at we have drifted from the path shown by Gandhiji a bid to emulate the West. Today we lack a feeling of pride in our country's strength, and therefore, we have moved away from that path. The situation the country deteriorated to a great extent during the past six to seven years. Democracy was in danger. Our prestige in the world went done. People were of the view that democracy could not function in this country and that Indians do not have faith in democracy. It has caused immense harm.

An atmosphere of terror was prevalent and many excesses were committed during the past two years. The Emergency that was imposed was uncalled for. There should not be any doubt about it. But some people commit mistakes. It is not so blameworthy to commit a mistake as to justify

it and continue to maintain it. The public had to suffer much during emergency. An atmosphere of terror and despondence prevailed everywhere.

A new wind of change appeared as soon as the elections were announced. Those who were detained were slowly released. The number of those detained ran into thousands and was certainly over a lakh. The feeling of helplessness began to disappear and the atmosphere of fear began to melt away. I can not say that fear has completely disappeared. Fear does not disappear suddenly. But it has considerably lessened. With the formation of Janata Party in accordance with the wishes of the people, a new era was ushered in for the first time. We had been fighting among ourselves since the fifteenth century which had made us weak. We knew only to split one into two and two into four, but we did not know how to unite two into one. That is why we were placed in such a predicament.

Even after Independence, this state of things continued in the national parties and also other parties. Each of them continued splitting. A change came about for the first time when five parties united into one. What was more important was that all the constituents discarded their previous ways and accepted the Gandhian way. They decided to take this course and all of those who had been elected took an oath at Rajgadh. Thus started a new phase. This need was felt by us for some years past. This unity of purpose adds to the responsibilities of all of us, particularly those whom the people have given the reins of power with great enthusiasm and hopes. Their duties to the people are greater than all the other duties. They have to mould their lives in the service of the country in such a way as to enable the people to march to progress and to become fearless, and to raise the country to such heights as to make it the happiest nation in the world within the occurs of the next 10 years. This task has to be performed by all of us. There are many difficulties in the way. What has been done during the last 6-7 years has been responsible for many trouble and several shortcomings.

I hope that our people will appreciate that it takes time to start any

new work but how can it be started without correcting the past defects. We have undertaken this work, we have to work fast and have to remove those defects within the shortest possible time in order to march forward speedily. I hope all will cooperate with us in this task, the people will cooperate and those who have been given the opportunity to administer the country, will continue to serve the people. Not that, they will simply pass Orders. The path is beset with difficulties.

We have to see to it particularly that the backward classes, who are not small but very large in numbers, do not remain backward. They should breathe new courage, become fearless and free from anxieties, and should attain equality with the rest. I would rather wish that they forge ahead of others. We have to create such a situation. Atrocities are being perpetrated on our Harijan brothers even today, of course, those who used to defame, the opposition parties for the past seven months, are engaged in this business even today. I am, however, not bothered by it. We will work steadily in the hope that those who make such derogatory efforts will have to correct themselves and understand the situation. If the Harijans are attacked, no one will want to deny it. Such incidents will continue until untouchability is completely wiped out. We have not worked as much in this direction during the last 30 years as we should have done. We are all responsible for it. We have to wipe out this stigma completely during the next five years. We have been subjected to much suffering because half of our people are poor and destitute. We have to pay for our sins. It is not a small sin, but a very big sin that has been committed in this country all along. Even today, we have not come out of it completely, we have to expiate it and have to atone for the past. If we do not do so, we will not gain strength necessary to make our country happy. That is why we have to wipe out the stigma of untouchability completely during the next five years. Not only that; we have to create an atmosphere to instil equality in the hearts of all we have to work in a manner that this feeling of equality is maintained.

Government officers will have to change their attitude. They should

do so, I don't blame them as much as those we gave them orders. It will be our endeavour to harness the administrative apparatus completely to the service of the people. It will then really become the government worthy of our administration. But the Officers will also have to recognise that they have a duty. Those, who have gone astray should have remembered that they are the servants of the people and are paid to serve them. They must perform this service to the best of their capacity. If all of them discharge their duties, repression will be a thing of the past. We can then create an atmosphere in which such things will not be possible again. That is why we have issued directives to all of them that they should serve the people in such a manner. If they fail to do so, they will be punished. Let there be no doubt about it. This is the manner in which we have to march forward. Our tasks will be accomplished, only if we are able to inspire confidence in the hearts of our countrymen. That is why we request the people to be vigilant and fearless. Otherwise, laxity can overtake the administrators.

Administrators will never dare go wrong, if the people are awake and express themselves without any fear. We want to create and maintain an awareness of this power in the people. Therefore we want to turn our attention to our villages, which have been neglected in the past. I do not say that they have been allowed to languish completely, but they have certainly not received the attention that should have been given to them. Eighty per cent, of our people live in the villages which are plagued with unemployment and underemployment. Many people run out to the cities, where slums come up in increasing numbers. The responsibilities towards them also go on increasing. No one can live decently in these slums. If I live there, I will also become like them. There is no doubt about it. So, we have to improve conditions of these slums. It is more important to avoid their creation. So we have to develop our villages so that people may not run upto the

cities. On the other hand we would like the urban dweller to go back to villages to improve chances of better health and happiness. We have to

accomplish a tremendous job. The job is difficult but it is worth doing. We can do it only when we strive hard for it. There is no cause for hopelessness. Hopelessness kills a man. It finishes him. The atmosphere of fear create helplessness. We have to get out of this atmosphere. Therefore government has to instil courage in the people, so that they may become fearless, I think this is the most urgent task before the government. So long as this is not achieved, we cannot really be effective. I realize we may not be able to achieve it full. There are so many difficulties.

Janata Party has come into existence. It is a new party. If certain old things linger in it, it does not mean that the strength of the Janata Party has been impaired. The party will emerge stronger. It will continuously derive sustenance and strength from the people. I am confident that nobody will be able to break the party. We want people's help in this task. I request you not to be misled by anyone. If you have any doubt or misgiving, you may ask me. I will certainly explain things to you. I can assure you that wherever any corrective action, is needed, I and my colleagues will take that action. Therefore, you should be vigilant, fearless and stand by the right things. You have the right to point out to us our mistakes. We will listen to you. We will also tell you the correct position. Wherever mistakes are detected we will remove them. It is our duty to rectify mistakes and we want people's assistance in this task. My dream that the whole of India should be like a family is bound to come true. We are marching towards this goal with confidence. Our country will really become one when we are transformed into one family. Only then will India be able to cooperate with the whole world and help it. We have to become competent to serve the world. We have to serve others rather than be served by them. If we accept, such service, it is only to enable us serve the world better. Only then, Gandhiji's dream will come true. Gandhiji wanted Ram-Rajya in this country. Ram Rajya means that those. Who run the Government should bear the difficulties themselves but not allow the people to suffer.

They should set an example to the people of their own lives of simplicity. We should not forget that we have to serve the people all the

time. We should be people's servants and the people should keep us as such. We want to create this power in the people. That is why I have been repeatedly requesting the people to let us know our shortcomings. They should point out our drawbacks without any hesitation.

Once I had said that if I am on the wrong path you can pull up my ears, and also those of my colleagues. We colleagues are all one. We are not separate. All are combined to make us one. There is nobody, who is high or low among us. But one should not forget that the people are even bigger. This is what we have to prepare our people to realise. This is our main duty, I have no doubt about this; But all these things cannot be completed till unemployment is removed. We have to provide full employment in our villages. Nobody should be unemployed or underemployed. Only then production will increase and the cost of production will go down which is very essential. If prices fall, the country's prestige will go up. It is very essential to bring down prices. Some people have been disappointed that even now this has not been accomplished. But I would plead with you to remember that such messy conditions were bequeathed to us that to bring about immediate result was impossible. But we have taken certain steps and there have been some results. I know their impact has not yet reached the people. But I am sure that very soon, such an impact will be created and people will realise this. We have to increase production which can be done by the people and government together. We have to go ahead with full confidence, with cooperation and with affection for each other. This is the lesson that every Indian has to adopt in his life. Only then we will be able to make the country as great as Gandhiji wanted it to be. We will then have Ram Raj, which will be free from strife or sorrow, and where people will help each other. The basis of our culture is that man should not think about himself alone. He should be able to have consideration for others and share their joys and sorrows. This foundation of our culture has weakened. We have to reinforce it with this quality. I have every hope that people will cooperate in this. Therefore we must move ahead with hope and faith. We should discard despondency. We should take this pledge today. I have no doubt about our capacity to

march ahead. Nobody has been able to destroy India. Many civilizations have disappeared from the surface of this earth. But our country has survived. Poet Iqbal had said “Kuch bat hai hasti mit ti nahin hamari” (That there is something which keeps us going). This is the beauty and characteristic of our culture. We should never lose heart. Let us pledge today to march forward. Then nobody will be able to stop us and we will be able to serve the entire world.

Jai Hind!