

We assemble here on August 15, every year. It is not a mere ritual function. We assemble here in the memory of those of our brave countrymen who suffered during the long struggle for Independence and also sacrificed their lives. This movement had a long time-span and people today do not know about it as much as they should. The younger generation is hardly familiar with it. I cannot describe it all here. However, just to illustrate, how people belonging to different religions were associated with the struggle, I should like to mention some of our leaders who participated in the freedom movement. Tilak, Dadabhai Naoroji, Dr. Ansari of Delhi, Tayabji Saheb were people of one generation. Then, Mahatma Gandhi returned to India and the course of the freedom movement took a new turn in which not only the intelligentsia and other distinguished people participated, but also farmers, workers, the younger generation and people drawn from various walks of life became co-partners.

Why do we hoist the national flag on the Red Fort? This place had not been a symbol of Independence. In fact, it is a symbol of the olden days. Netaji Subhas Bose declared that when we became independent, we would hoist the national flag on the Red Fort. For this reason, the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, hoisted the national in August 1947, and since then, every Prime Minister is performing this duty. Prior to that, three of our brave countrymen were imprisoned in this Red Fort. They had not adopted our path. Although their path was different, they too were prepared to sacrifice everything for the cause of freedom and their love for the country. People of Delhi know Shri Shah Nawaz Khan. He was a Muslim. Then, there were Prem Sehgal and Dhillon. This selection was neither ours, nor of the alien rulers. Still, by coincidence, they belonged to three different religions. I am saying all this because I feel we should know how the country became independent.

We got independence because people of all religions, all provinces and all communities were united. There was only one objective-- freedom of the country. Freedom is our birthright. Today we have different issues

before us. During those days, we had only one objective and we fought for it. Today, we have to preserve the Independence thus gained and the efforts for this cannot be less arduous. The obstacles, the barriers, the dangers and the threats we faced during those days are all present even today, though in different shapes.

Some people say that I talk of these external dangers in order to divert the people's attention from the domestic issues. There cannot be a greater misunderstanding than this, because we cannot maintain the solidarity of the nation and solve our problems without knowing fully the travails the country is confronted with and the difficulties that people of all walks of life are facing. We are glad that we are free, but our hearts today are not full of joy. We have sorrows and anxieties. We are sad because we have not learnt the lessons of our history. We are sad because such forces are again raising their head which may endanger the unity of the country by spreading poison.

I should like to remind you that communal disturbances which take place in the name of religion and cost lives of numerous innocent people and lead to destruction of property, are not communal alone, though they appear to be so. Behind these are political and economic considerations and narrowness of mind.

Communal disturbances have occurred in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh in the recent past. Some have also taken place in other States. The sorrow is not only that of individuals, families or communities but of entire India. It is a black spot on the entire country and it is our duty to root out all such elements from our soil.

In our democratic system, there may be differences in many spheres but we rise above them. To achieve the objective of keeping the country united, we have to transcend political and party-based differences which create dissensions between one another. If we cannot remain united and the country does not remain strong, with whom shall we have differences? Against whom shall we fight? With whom shall we make friendship, if nobody exists? Brothers and sisters, if the country falls, nobody survives.

When we were fighting for the freedom of our country, it did not mean only political freedom. It also meant social justice, equality and economic justice. Only one phase is over and another one is under way. We have to cover a long and difficult path. Whereas the enemies were visible during those days, now they are in disguise. Some of them are open enemies, but many become unintentional pawns of others.

Everyone of us has now Punjab in mind. I do not want to go into the story of Punjab here. I have spoken about it a number of times. However, since some sinister propaganda is being carried on, I should like to say a few words. A vast number of people are participating in this function though all of them are not present and visible here.

Since I spoke to you last year, TV and radio have reached a large number of remote villages. So also power supply has improved and drinking water has reached many new areas. All efforts have been made to help the poor, be it in the field of medical assistance or educational. I shall talk about this later. At the moment, I should like to say that whatever movements are conducted in one or another State with any ostensible purpose, in course of time these pass into the hands of elements who do not subscribe to the objectives of the movement or have something else in their mind, giving a new turn to the entire movement. They bring violence, murder, intimidation and so on into the movements and the organizers of the movement lose control over the situation. This is exactly what has happened in Punjab.

Propaganda is being carried on, specially in foreign newspapers and television, giving the impression as if we did not even discuss the demands that had been put forward. You all know how long-drawn-out the discussions were. Differences were narrowed down to only a few points. As taught by Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad, it has been our policy, whether within the country or in the international field, to reach the maximum possible extent of understanding, thus maintaining friendship, and not giving any offence from our side.

Whosoever has any demand, be he pro or against me, I have always listened to it and have tried to meet it as far as possible. But I have my limitations. The resources are limited. Funds are limited. We cannot go beyond these limitations. Sometimes there are demands which please some sections of the people but annoy others and can lead to serious discontent in other States. Therefore, we have to consider all the relevant factors. I should like to request those who have some demands either in the name of a State or a religion or a language or some other issue, to look around to ensure that the fulfilment of their demand does not aggrieve others. They should think whether their demand would not impose an economic burden on the country which may weaken the country or crush it altogether under its load. Economic hardship will not spare them either. We have taken care of everyone in our plans and it is our effort to help all sections of the people and States, so that they may all progress and develop.

Nowadays, the relations between the Centre and the States are being discussed. I too, have said that we can discuss them and I am confident that if the issue is approached sincerely, a compromise can be arrived at easily.

In 1960-61, the States were getting a sum of Rs. 500 crore from the Centre. Now, they are getting Rs. 12,000 crore. A stupendous increase, indeed. Still neither the States are happy nor the Central Ministries contented. They all say that they are not getting enough. I agree that amount does not suffice for their needs but we must also not forget that even in rich countries, the needs of all cannot be met fully.

Demands will not only remain, but will in fact increase. What we have to see is that while meeting the demands of those people who are comparatively well off, we do not ignore or cause harm to those people who are weak and underprivileged. They must not get poorer as a result of the fulfilment of the demands of the affluent. The country will become strong only if the poor people of the country also become strong. In their strength lies the welfare of the affluent as well.

I hope that demands will be put forth not to further self-interests but to secure the welfare of the country and for helping the relatively weaker sections as well as for the all-round progress of the country. This is why our emphasis has been on helping the weaker sections as far as possible. This is the objective of the 20-Point Programme through which 15 million families have been helped to raise their standard of living. Many countries do not have even a total population of 15 million. But in a country with a population of 700 million, the figure is not that impressive. There is no magic that can benefit all these 700 million people immediately.

The 20-Point Programme was initiated only recently. Employment has been arranged through it and successes have been achieved in providing employment to a good number of young men, rural as well as urban. Progress has also been made in providing loans as well as in other fields. I know there are shortcomings. I know that some people have made mistakes. Some people have complained to me in this regard.

Those who do not reside in Delhi, or are listening to me for the first time, may be surprised to know that whenever I am in Delhi, barring the holidays, I meet people in my house every morning, ranging from a few to a few thousand. These people come from all walks of life, all religions and all parts of the country. Some people say they come just to see me, some others narrate their woes, a few others lodge complaints and some others praise the progress made. There are people who think that I waste my time by meeting them. Many leaders of other countries do not do so. But I feel that this helps me in getting an idea of the true picture of the country and the feelings of the people. It is certainly not a waste of time.

The area under irrigation has increased considerably. Some of our farmer friends have launched agitations. But whatever we could achieve for the farmers during the last four years remains unparalleled. Of course, the farmers were always given due consideration during the freedom movement as also afterwards. Actually, they were at the root of our movement. They are our food-givers. I know that the prices of some of the commodities that they consume have gone up. We are trying to help them,

have actually done so. Chemical fertilizers are being supplied to them at rates lower than the actuals by providing subsidies to the extent of Rs. 800 crore. This is not an easy task for a poor country. The prices of their products have also comparatively increased. It is, however, true that the commodities that they need have become dearer in our country as well as in other countries. It is also true that along with progress, demands keep on increasing.

People who could not even think of tractors and threshers and were not using chemical fertilizers or pesticides two or three years ago have now started using them and their demands for these commodities are on the increase. Demands, however, outpace production. This results in rise in prices. We have to take all these factors into consideration. If we are dependent on them, they too are dependent on the production of the factories. We have to pay attention to the industrial workers also and ensure justice to them. Sometimes we are at fault, at times the millowners are to blame and at other times they are themselves at fault. The existence of many unions in a factory or a unit and their internal rivalries not only result in wastage of time, but also harm production. We have to pay attention to such things.

Every section should view its problems in the larger perspective of India to be able to appreciate the difficulties of others-farmers, industrial workers, housewives, etc. Housewives are trying to run their households most economically in these days of rising prices. Not only the people of India but of the entire world are victims of rising prices. We are trying our best to make available essential commodities to the people throughout the country.

A sum of Rs. 850 crore is being spent to help the rationing system to carry food grains to the remotest areas. We are trying to augment this amount. If somebody indulges in dishonest practices and corruption, stringent action should be taken against him. For this, however, it is necessary to know immediately who did what and where. If people say it is done by all and everywhere, it will be difficult to take action against the

culprits. Local people have to be vigilant in this regard. If they remain alert, no atrocities can be perpetuated on the Harijans, people of the minority communities and womenfolk. Alertness will help solutions to problems. We are trying to further tighten legislation in this regard. We also try to foresee the problems and solutions thereof, even before they come to the surface.

This is an age of self-reliance. Our slogan is that our nation should be self-reliant. What does a nation mean? It is not the land, but each one of you wheresoever you may be living. We want all of you to be self-reliant. We are trying to help you to become that. It casts a responsibility upon you -- the responsibility to do your duty. Please see that violence does not take place. Please see that holy or religious places are not converted into focal points of violence and crime and accumulation of arms. It is your duty to see that communalism does not raise its head. Wherever there are indications, please go there, as our workers used to do during the days of the freedom movement. They used to bring about peace in the area by pacifying the people's anger.

This is feasible, because we have done it in the past. India has accomplished many tremendous tasks in the past and I am confident about the future as well.

Dangers always exist in a country. In a country of diversities of religions and languages, beliefs and traditions, internal rivalries are quite natural to an extent. But we have never considered diversities to be a symbol of weakness. On the contrary, diversities enrich us and add to the picturesqueness of our society. We do not want any religion or tradition to be curtailed. Everyone should be able to follow his own path.

But all the paths should merge in the ocean of Indianness, as the rivers merge into the sea. The synthesis of different beliefs and traditions constitutes Indianness: We must follow our faiths sincerely and should not impose ourselves on people not belonging to our own faith. If the people follow their faiths sincerely, they will prove better citizens. No religion preaches violence. Every religion urges brotherhood, love and compassion. If the country follows this path, we shall be able to build a new society.

A new society is even now being shaped, and modernity is emerging out of the old traditions. This is one reason why some problems have cropped up in our country. Some pressures and problems have also come from outside. Life is a mixture of sorrows and happiness. Each one of you, whether a child or the grown up, must have experienced this in your life. To rise above our sorrows or to be crushed under them lies in our hands. No Government or political party can offer help in this regard. It is our self-confidence and the internal power that help us to overcome them. Today, on Independence Day, we should bear this in mind.

During the last four years, as you would have seen or heard or read, some events have taken place every year which enhanced the prestige of our country in the community of nations and also in our hearts. We, however, do not take advantage of that as other countries do. By 'we', I do not mean me or the Government, but the people of India. We did not make use of them to strengthen further our unity and the national pride, as all others do. This has been our shortcoming.

When the Asian Games were held here, I know how pleased the people of Delhi were. Young men belonging to Opposition parties also came to me and expressed their happiness and thanked me for holding the Games, although they said they did not agree with me in many other matters. A propaganda was, however, carried on that so much of money was being wasted without any useful return. You saw recently, in what spirit another country took up the same job. We have to see in what spirit the entire country should utilize such occasions so as to strengthen the unity, morale and self-respect of the country, instead of viewing events from a partisan angle. This is the greatest need.

Now, another responsibility has developed upon us the responsibility for some other countries besides our own. People call it leadership. I am not fond of becoming a leader. I would only say that we have been provided with an opportunity to serve a hundred other countries in the best possible manner. I admit there are differences amongst us.

Fighting is going on in some countries and we are trying to stop it,



although we have not succeeded so far. For example, the war between Iran and Iraq. We are in constant touch with the leaders of these countries. We are also corresponding with other leaders to explore possible solutions. Many people have come here. Our officers and ministers have also visited these two countries besides other countries and our efforts are still on. Some other countries are also facing disturbances.

Recently, disturbances have broken out in one of our neighbouring countries. As you know, our policy has been of friendship and we have not ignored any avenue that leads to improved friendship, whether it is Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, or Sri Lanka. They are our close neighbours. Many years ago, when Jawaharlal Nehru was Prime Minister, he had suggested that India and Pakistan should enter into a No-War Pact. The same thing was repeated by the late respected Shastriji and myself in different forms and on different occasions. Pakistan, however, did not respond. After I became the Prime Minister again, and they acquired sophisticated weapons, they linked it with the idea of such a pact. We are not against it. We ourselves want it, but we said: So far you had been ignoring our suggestions and now, since you have raised this issue, will it not be proper to have a treaty of friendship, co-operation and peace between us, so as to create a better atmosphere? If we enter into such a pact, naturally, there will be no war. Otherwise also, all these were part of the Simla Agreement. These have been recorded and duly signed by the two countries. If, however, you do not like that agreement, we can have a new agreement on these lines. But to say no to a treaty of friendship, cooperation and peace, and still ask for a No-War Pact, I ask you, my friends, how is it possible? How can we take it seriously? Still, we are trying to have something. I am sorry to find that their TV and newspapers carry reports about India which are far from reality and which may also be termed as interference in our internal matters. Still, we are taking up matters with them in all courtesy and in a friendly manner. But no government can overlook the interests of the country and its self-respect.

The situation in Sri Lanka is quite grave and my heart is full of grief

for those innocent people who are being attacked without having done anything wrong. There are extremists and terrorists there as well and it is evident that a government is required to counter them. But the manner in which a particular community is being attacked for the last so many years has come in the way of restoration of peace and the situation has gradually deteriorated. We do not want to interfere. We do not want to put any obstacle in the unity of another country. That would not be in our interest. We want our neighbouring countries to be stable and friendly towards us. We extended our hand of friendship and offered help in having a dialogue and arriving at some conclusions acceptable to all.

The grief is of our entire country, although our Tamil brothers are affected most by the happenings there. Already 40,000 refugees have arrived. It is possible that people other than the sufferers may also have come with them and there may also be some spies amongst them. I cannot say what is the actual position. Our frontiers are such that in spite of our best efforts, such intrusions cannot always be checked. Still, we are making efforts. Patrolling has been intensified. I urged the President of Sri Lanka to have a dialogue somehow. He had himself suggested this and we had hoped that under his leadership progress would be made and an agreement would be arrived at. But so far I find only reports of unpleasant incidents. We are fully seized of the problem and we have all sympathy for the suffering people.

Our sea frontiers are vulnerable. But when I talk about these, it is not for diverting attention from our internal problems. I want our internal problems to be solved expeditiously so that we remain united and strong enough to face any danger. By accusing each other, or by lowering the morale of the police force and the army, we cannot make the country strong. Whenever aggressions have taken place, our jawans have faced them bravely and sacrificed their lives. Whenever a calamity has occurred, whether in the form of floods or something else- our jawans have participated in the fight for peace and helped people. How can we not praise them? It is natural for a human being to err sometimes, whether a

jawan or a politician or a public servant. Just because of the fault of one, we should not weaken the morale of the country. This will be neither in the interest of the country nor in that of a citizen, or a political party. I am very sorry to see that some people do not hesitate in raising any point if it helps them get some publicity or benefit. I do not think that will really benefit them. On the other hand, this will harm the country and our morale.

We must remember, on this Independence Day, that just to attain Independence is not enough. We have to strive consistently to preserve it. We must guard this flame of freedom from every storm through our labour and, if necessary, by laying down our life. Each one of us must take this vow today.

Earlier, when I referred to the 20-Point Programme, I stated that the uplift of the poor people and weaker sections of the society and to help the small farmers were our objectives. More than Rs. 1.000 crore have been allotted for these programmes. If a problem is faced in any part of the country, we take care of it. Soon the Seventh Plan will be launched. The objectives of this Plan are already known to you. These are: food, employment and productivity. All these are interrelated. If production does not increase, there cannot be employment, as also food. To achieve these objectives, we have placed adequate funds exclusively for the purpose. This will strengthen further the foundations of our country. Simultaneously, we have to help each other.

The struggle for the country's freedom had started even prior to our movement, but it did not succeed, because it was not a combined effort. You know what happened in 1857. You may hear about it more this evening. Why did not that revolution succeed? Because the people, in spite of sympathizing with it, did not step forward as soldiers for the cause.

We know that the last phase of the movement led by Gandhiji started on August 9, 1942. We celebrate the day every year. Why did we succeed? It was not because of violence, or enmity towards anyone. Our enmity was not towards Englishmen or England, but towards imperialism. We fought against imperialism and even today we are with people fighting against

imperialism, as in South Africa. Besides the local population, Indians too are there. They do not have any freedom. They do not enjoy even the elementary rights of citizenship. Therefore, how can we not raise our voice in their favour?

You have to think over all this. One great leader had said, if one person is deprived of freedom, all of us lose our freedom. If any country is enslaved, the shadows of slavery fall on us all. Freedom and peace must prevail universally. Their blessing must be available to all.

India had been trying for peace everywhere. Recently, along with the Presidents or Prime Ministers of five other countries, I issued an appeal to the nations of the world against nuclear weapons. A one-hundredth part of the nuclear weapons now in store is enough to annihilate the entire humanity. Still, these weapons are being manufactured and accumulated. And India is blamed. India has some nuclear capacity. Our scientists have proved that they can do it. But we do not want to develop our nuclear capacity to produce a bomb. We do not have a single bomb. We want to use nuclear power to produce energy so as to help the farmers, we want to use it for medical science.

No programme of ours, whether it relates to space, sports, or science, can succeed if our young men do not come forward. Had they not enough capability, we could not have advanced. We are doing all this to minimize the sufferings of the poor people and the middle class people of the country in whom lies the nation's strength. In some fields we lag behind. This is but natural in view of the fact that the industrial revolution took place in some major countries 200 years ago. Now, how do we catch up with them, if our young people do not engage themselves in constructive work but indulge in destruction?

I am repeating this time and again because I know the creative capacity of our new generation. Our young people who are at school or college or in other institutions, have constructive talents. We have only to bring them out. We are forgetting our ancient ideals. We talk of religions and tradition, but do not pay attention to their basics. Their spirit calls for

being good to others, helping others and creating a peaceful atmosphere. If we forget these ideals, we cannot advance. We have to bring about a social change and improve economic conditions. At the same time, we have to develop our spiritual strength without which we cannot be a great nation. We have to develop our moral values which are in abundance in India. We must not lose them.

This flag is a symbol, and not a mere piece of cloth. It is a symbol of the Independence of India, the sacrifice of India and the bright future of India. Today, we all express our sympathies for all those who are suffering on account of drought or floods or communal riots or some other reasons, and pray for their well-being. I also pray for good rains, so that food production goes up and reaches one and all. This will help our country to march on the path of progress and show to the world a new road of peace and friendship.