



English rendering of PM's speech during the felicitation of Rajya Sabha Chairman Thiru C P Radhakrishnan

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Hon'ble Mr Chairperson Sir,

The Winter Session (of Parliament) is beginning, and today is a moment of pride for all the honourable members of this House. While welcoming you, this is a great opportunity for all of us to have the opportunity to discuss important matters through this House under your guidance, to take the nation on the path of progress, to take important decisions, and to receive your invaluable guidance. On behalf of the House, and on my own behalf, I heartily congratulate you, extend my greetings, and offer my best wishes. I also assure you that all the honourable members in this House will always uphold the dignity of this Upper House, will always respect and uphold your dignity as well. This is my assurance to you.

Our Chairperson comes from an ordinary family, a farmer's family. He has dedicated his entire life to social service. Social service has been his constant path. Politics has been one aspect of it, but the main stream of his life has always been service to society. From his youth till now, he has worked with full dedication towards society. For all of us who have an interest in social service, he is an inspiration and a guiding light. Coming from an ordinary family, an ordinary society, navigating the changing political landscape, yet reaching this position and guiding all of us is the greatest strength of Bharat's democracy. I consider it my good fortune that I have known you for a long time, and have had the opportunity to work with you in public life. But when I received responsibilities here as Prime Minister and watched your work in various roles, it was natural for me to feel deeply positive about it.

As the Chairman of the Coir Board, you transformed the institution into one with the historically highest profits. You have shown how much development is possible when a person is dedicated to an institution, and how its identity can be elevated globally. Very few people in Bharat get such opportunities across many regions. You have shouldered responsibilities as Governor and Lieutenant Governor in Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Telangana, and Puducherry. I have seen how, especially in Jharkhand, you built such a deep connection with the tribal communities. You would visit even the smallest villages. The Chief Minister there would proudly mention this whenever we met. And sometimes, politicians there would be concerned because you travelled without worrying whether a helicopter was available or not. You would simply take whatever vehicle was there, travel continuously, and even stay overnight in small places. This spirit of service, which you upheld even while holding the position of Governor, and the new heights you gave to that role, are well-known to all of us.

I have seen you as a karyakarta, as a colleague with whom I have worked. I have seen you as a Member of Parliament and in various other positions before you reached this chair. But one thing I have always felt is that, typically in public life, when people reach a high office, they sometimes feel the weight of the position or get trapped in protocol. But I have seen that you have no connection with protocol at all. You

have always stayed beyond protocol. And I believe that in public life, there is a unique strength in living beyond protocol, and we have always experienced that strength in you. This is a matter of pride for all of us.

Hon'ble Mr Chairperson Sir,

We are all well acquainted with the qualities of service, dedication, and restraint that define your personality. Although you were born in the “Dollar City,” which has its own identity, you still chose to dedicate your life to antyodaya. Even in Dollar City, you always cared for those who were oppressed, deprived, and struggling families.

Hon'ble Mr Chairperson Sir,

I must mention two incidents which I once heard from you and your family members, and which had a profound impact on your life. The first was in your childhood, when you were on the verge of drowning in the pond of the Avinashi Temple. For you, it always remained a mystery that I was drowning; who saved me, how was I saved? I don't know, but I survived. Your family always recounts this with a sense of divine grace upon you. The second incident is something all of us know very well. Just before Lal Krishna Advani ji's yatra was to take place in Coimbatore, there was a horrific bomb blast. Around 60–70 people were killed. It was a devastating bomb blast. And at that time, you narrowly escaped. When you interpreted both these incidents as signs of divine intervention and decided to devote yourself even more fully to the service of society, it became a reflection of a life shaped by deeply positive thinking.

Hon'ble Mr Chairperson Sir,

There is one thing I did not know earlier, but recently came to know. Perhaps after becoming Vice President, when you went to Kashi, I naturally felt that everything there would go well as I represent Kashi as a Member of Parliament. But you mentioned something there which was new to me. You said that although you earlier used to eat non-vegetarian food regularly, but when you visited Kashi for the first time in your life, performed puja, and received the blessings of Maa Ganga, something changed within you. From that very day, you resolved that you would no longer eat non-vegetarian food. Now, I am not saying that eating non-vegetarian food is bad, or that those who eat it are wrong. But the thought that arose in your mind on the sacred soil of Kashi is something I, too, as a Member of Parliament from Kashi, will always remember. That some inner spiritual feeling inspired you in this direction is indeed remarkable.

Hon'ble Mr Chairperson Sir,

From your student days, you have possessed strong leadership abilities. Today, as you sit here to guide us on the path of national leadership, it is a matter of great pride for all of us.

Hon'ble Mr Chairperson Sir,

As a defender of democracy, at an age when most young people look for an easy path, you did not choose the simple route. You chose the path of struggle. You chose to confront the crisis that had arisen before democracy. During the Emergency, you fought like a true soldier of democracy. There were limitations of resources, there were constraints, but your spirit was something entirely different. Even today, all the youth of that generation in your region remember your fight against the Emergency. The programs you undertook to spread public awareness, the way you inspired people remain a lasting source of inspiration for all lovers of democracy. You have been an excellent organizer; I know this very well. In every responsibility you were given within the organization, you enhanced the role with your hard work. You always tried to bring people together, to accept new ideas, to provide opportunities to the new generation. This has always been a hallmark of your organizational work. The people of Coimbatore sent you here to serve as their Member of Parliament, and even then, you consistently raised the issues of your region with great emphasis before this House. Your vast experience as Chairperson of this House and as Vice President

of the nation will continue to inspire us and guide us. I am confident that, just as I feel, all the members of this House will carry forward this proud moment with a deep sense of responsibility. With this sentiment, I extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to you, on my own behalf and on behalf of the House.

LIVE: PM Modi's remarks during the felicitation of Thiru C...



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