



ADDRESS TO THE NATION BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA SMT. DROUPADI MURMU ON THE EVE OF THE 80TH INDEPENDENCE DAY

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My dear fellow citizens,

Namaskar!

On the eve of our Independence Day, I convey my warm greetings to all of you for this national festival. In a few hours from now, our country will witness the auspicious beginning of the 80th year since its independence. All Indians, living in the country and abroad, celebrate this festival with great joy. Our Tricolour is the symbol of our freedom. We unfurl it with immense pride.

On the 15th of August 1947, Bharat Mata was liberated from the shackles of subjugation. Every citizen became an architect of the destiny of Independent India. The true meaning of freedom lies in ensuring that all citizens are able to utilise opportunities to fulfil their aspirations, and work towards the goal of making India the foremost nation in the world.

Dedicated students and teachers, scientists and engineers committed to development, doctors and healthcare workers providing health services, industrious workers and our Annadata farmers are all contributing to nation-building through their efforts. Talented sportspersons, craftpersons and artists, visionary intellectuals, diligent members of the workforce in private and public sectors, people's representatives devoted to serving them, officials in the judicial system, dutiful civil servants, big and small investors contributing to our economy, selfless social workers, and all Safai Mitra who are frontline workers of the Swachhata Abhiyan are all playing an important role in the nation's progress. Numerous citizens engaged in various other activities, and every citizen who faithfully discharges the Fundamental Duties enshrined in our Constitution, are active partners in our nation-building process. I wholeheartedly appreciate each one of them. I specially commend the devotion of our soldiers in the three Armed Forces, Armed Police Forces, and all police personnel for their unwavering dedication to duty. I also praise the Indian diaspora and the officials serving in our embassies who enhance India's prestige and honour on the global stage.

My dear fellow citizens,

We are moving ahead towards building Viksit Bharat by the centenary year of our Independence in 2047. Guided by the spirit of Antyodaya, it is our resolve to ensure that the fruits of development reach every individual. Embracing our rich heritage and the ideals of the freedom movement, we march ahead on the path of modern development. The Ved-Vakya, 'Vayam Rashtre Jagriyam' inspires us to always remain ready to serve the nation.

During our freedom struggle, people with diverse ideologies were united by one common goal – India's Independence. During the Swadeshi Movement, the song Vande Mataram became a song of the masses. Countless Indians plunged themselves into our freedom struggle under the leadership of the

Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar embodied the highest ideals of social reform and patriotism. I humbly bow to all those great sons and daughters of Bharat Mata whose ideals guided our country to its freedom and its progress thereafter.

Today, on the 14th of August, we observe Vibhajan Vibheeshika Smriti Divas. We solemnly remember those lakhs of Indians who lost their lives in the violence resulting from the partition, or were forced to endure the tragedy of displacement. Lakhs of people had to become refugees due to communal violence and endure the horrors of partition. Yet, they did not give up their identity.

At the time of our independence, along with the grave consequences of partition, was the extraordinary challenge of unifying more than 550 princely states with a newly independent India. Sardar Patel put an end to the system of kingdoms and integrated the princely states into our independent democracy. On behalf of a grateful nation, I pay my respectful tributes to the sacred memory of the sculptor of the unity of modern India Lahu Purush Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

My dear fellow citizens,

The Constitution framed by the People of India rests on the foundation of people's participation. The spirit of public participation has always been inherent in the people of our country which is the cradle of democracy. With renewed vigour, our fellow citizens are promoting the same tradition of people's participation. National campaigns are being implemented through active participation of the people. This is an inspiring achievement of our democracy.

Equality of status and of opportunity, along with the dignity of the individual, are among the cherished ideals of our Constitution. Today, people from ordinary backgrounds are making extraordinary contributions in many fields. This strengthens my belief that in today's Bharat, everyone can dream big and also realise such dreams.

Our Constitution clearly lays down the responsibilities of the Executive, the Legislature, and the Judiciary. Giving voice to the aspirations of the people is the duty of their representatives in the legislature. The Executive is responsible for implementing policies that serve the interests of the nation and its people. It is the duty of every person associated with the judicial system to ensure that no one is deprived of justice due to lack of resources. All citizens, especially those belonging to deprived sections of the society, should have equal access to timely justice with dignity.

My Dear Fellow Citizens,

During the period of a little over a decade, our country has witnessed:

Rapid and inclusive development;

Priority to harmonising heritage and development; and,

Removal of numerous, decades-old obstacles to development.

Our country is celebrating the 200th birth anniversary of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule. Mahatma Phule and Kranti-Jyoti Savitribai Phule made historic contributions to social justice, education, women's empowerment, and equality. Following their ideals, the upliftment of the deprived sections of society has been given priority at the national level during the past few years. New standards have been set in the area of women's education. More than 25 crore people have been lifted out of poverty. Under 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana', the world's largest program of financial inclusion, nearly 59 crore account holders have joined the banking system. Out of these, more than 32 crore account holders are women. Food security has been ensured for more than 80 crore people by providing them with free rations. Under 'Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana', free healthcare coverage of up

to 5 lakh rupees per year has been provided to 60 crore people. Kisan Samman Nidhi and Kisan Credit Cards have provided support to farmers engaged in activities such as farming, dairy, poultry, fisheries, and beekeeping.

History of the world bears witness to the fact that development rooted in a strong sense of cultural identity is both rapid and sustainable. Today, there is a growing awareness in the country that a sense of cultural pride bolsters the inner strength of the nation. Our ancestors have passed on a rich legacy of learning, science, art and culture, spirituality, and virtuous conduct. We are moving ahead, harmonizing our heritage and development.

India has developed the world's largest and best digital infrastructure. Digital payments are now common even in small rural shops and among street vendors. More than half of the world's real-time digital transactions take place in India. Together, the people of India and the Government have presented an example of digital revolution to the global community. By using technology, the Government has provided benefits of welfare schemes to the people in a transparent manner.

Our country has seen an unprecedented expansion of modern infrastructure in the form of highways, waterways, railways and airways. This is creating opportunities for new enterprises, generating employment, and boosting investor confidence.

My Dear Fellow Citizens,

Warfare and instability prevailing in several parts of the world are affecting every country. Even in such trying circumstances, our economy is moving ahead as the fastest growing major economy in the world. According to economic projections, the growth rate of the Indian economy is expected to be more than twice the average global growth rate. 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' has further strengthened the foundation of our economic progress and national security.

While moving ahead on the path of modern development, India is also playing a leading role at the global level in protecting the environment. Our country has achieved some of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, ahead of schedule. Over the past few years, the development of renewable energy has gained unprecedented momentum.

National interest is the foundation of our foreign policy. Peace, cooperation, dialogue, and the ideal of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam are the pillars of our foreign policy. We have entered into Free Trade Agreements with many countries to enhance economic cooperation and strengthen mutual relations. We are playing a leading role among the countries of the Global South. Our country has grown in stature on the global stage. We believe in a rules based international order. Our endeavour is to ensure that the global community receives appropriate representation in the United Nations and other multilateral organizations. This endeavour of our country has been getting strong support from many countries.

My dear fellow citizens,

Future generations have as much right over natural resources as we do. We must ensure that none of our actions result in the slightest encroachment upon the exercise of this right by future generations. We should make all efforts so that we are able to leave for them even richer bounties of nature. Our faith in conserving the environment is an integral part of our tradition. A simple song in the Santali language carries a profound message. A few lines from that song, written by Pandit Raghunath Murmu are:

Dare Gujug Kan Nyel Te

Miru Cheney Rag Bayaha Daya Haya Ge.

Chedag Babon Rag Bayaha Abo Ana Nyel Te.

In this song, the poet describes an inconsolable parrot crying in grief because a tree has completely dried up. He says: "O my dear brothers! The parrot wails on seeing a dying tree. O my brothers! Why do we, human beings, not grieve when the tree of human culture is being destroyed?" The message of this song is that all people must remain committed to preserving nature and human values. A lush green tree symbolizes the moral ideals and wellbeing of human society. In the spirit of campaigns such as 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' and 'Lifestyle for Environment' or LiFE, we should make individual and collective efforts to protect the environment.

My dear fellow citizens,

It gives me immense pleasure to see our girls performing exceptionally well in the field of education. Also, women's participation is increasing across diverse sectors from the Drone Didi who contributes to enhancing agricultural productivity, to the Fighter Combat Leader in the Air Force. In the recently concluded Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, women have won 8 out of India's total tally of 13 gold medals. Our women are increasingly achieving economic self-reliance. More than 10 crore women are members of Self Help Groups. A target was set to create 3 crore Lakhpati Didis. This target has been achieved. Now our country is moving towards the goal of creating 3 crore new Lakhpati Didis. About two thirds of the entrepreneurs who have received financial assistance under 'MUDRA Yojana' are women.

Along with efforts for economic self-reliance of women, we are also seeing them in leadership roles in many fields. It is a remarkable achievement of our democratic republic that the number of women exercising their right to vote is growing. 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam' has been enacted in 2023 with the purpose of reserving 33 percent representation for women in the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies. Achieving the objectives of this Act will enhance women's role in leadership and make our democracy more inclusive.

65 percent of our country's population is below the age of 35. This young population is our most valuable asset. The youth of our country are talented, committed, and skilled. I have seen the innovative and practical solutions that young people are developing to address various challenges at the grassroots level. This reflects the dedication of our youth to society and the nation. A new phase of space exploration has been ushered in through the recent successful rocket launch by a young team with an average age of just 28 years.

Many of our youth are embracing the culture of job creation as they pursue the path of self-employment. The participation of young entrepreneurs has led to the creation of a strong start-up ecosystem in our country. Major global enterprises are impressed by the talent and dedication of Indian youth and entrust them with leadership roles. Such young achievers have enhanced the reputation of India's youth power across the world. Our younger generations strengthen my faith in India's bright and prosperous future.

Our students are the architects of India's future. Just as the government and society must remain united to ensure national security, everyone must contribute through joint and concerted efforts to safeguard the present and future of our students. Public examinations become gateways to the opportunities for our students. The Government is undertaking comprehensive steps to reform these examinations. The objectives of these reforms are to completely curb the use of unfair means in public examinations, make the examination system more transparent, more secure, and more trustworthy for the youth.

Through the Government's initiatives and emerging economic activities, a wide range of new avenues are opening up for the youth. By exploring such new opportunities, our young people can embark on new paths to success.

Physical and mental wellbeing of our youth forms the cornerstone of our country's future. Families and society also share the responsibility to motivate our youth to move ahead with enthusiasm.

Sports are being adopted as a medium for promoting the development of our youth and for nation-building. Under the Khelo India program, sports ecosystem is being developed across the country, from the grassroots to the national level. The Government is making unprecedented investments to promote sports. These efforts are yielding good results. In international sports tournaments, there has been a remarkable leap in the performance and achievements of our sportspersons.

While our country has the world's largest young population, the number of senior citizens is also on the rise. The Government has taken several initiatives to improve the quality of life of senior citizens. About 6 crore senior citizens of the age of 70 years and above can avail of free healthcare services of up to 5 lakh rupees per year. Society as a whole should be sensitive towards senior citizens, fostering a sense of belonging towards them and upholding their self-respect.

My Dear Fellow Citizens,

We take pride in our tradition of overcoming the forces hostile to humanity, for upholding truth and justice. On the 26th of July, we observed Kargil Vijay Diwas. Earlier, on the 7th of May, we commemorated the completion of one year since the launch of Operation Sindoor. We remembered the unmatched valour of our Armed Forces. That historic operation against terrorism demonstrated the capability of the Indian Armed Forces to act with precision. It sent a clear and firm message to terrorists and those who support them, that no matter where they hide, they will have to face the consequences of their actions. Suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty with the country that harbours terrorism is a decisive step in the interest of our nation, especially the farmers.

For decades, Naxalism posed a serious challenge to the nation. Making India Naxal free is a major achievement. Today, enthusiasm prevails in the areas once affected by Naxalism. All-inclusive development is underway in these regions. A large number of players took part in the Bastar Olympics, and many artists showcased their talent in Bastar Pandum, which were enjoyed by large number of people.

12 forts built to safeguard national pride, associated with the Maratha military tradition, have been included in the UNESCO World Heritage List last year. And, this year, Sarnath, the site of Bhagwan Buddha's first sermon, has been included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. On the one hand, Bharat Bhoomi has monuments of spirituality associated with Bhagwan Buddha. It also has symbols of our impressive ability to fight for preserving our pride and glorious traditions, on the other.

My Dear Fellow Citizens,

The development and wellbeing of every Indian is the real objective of building Viksit Bharat. The great nationalist writer, Gurajada Apparao, who wrote in Telugu, conveyed a timeless message of patriotism in one of his songs:

Desamunu preminchumanna, manchi annadi penchumanna.

Desamante matti kaadoy, desamante manushuloy.

The essence of these lines is:

Love your country,

Foster goodness.

A nation is not just its land,

A nation is all its people.

It is my belief that with the participation of the society and efforts of the Government, people in every village, each town, and all households across India will become healthier, happier, and prosperous.

With this all-inclusive spirit of patriotism, let us devote ourselves to the sacred national goal of transforming Swatantra Bharat into Viksit Bharat.

Thank you!

Jai Hind!

Jai Bharat!

MJPS/SS/PRK

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