

Agarwal, NITIM (Compiled by)
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Grapevine India

nation, and have our every activity linked to the interest of the nation. Only then this festival of freedom can be a festival of inspiration to take India to newer heights.

My dear countrymen, this nation has neither been built by political leaders nor by rulers nor by governments. This nation has been built by our farmers, our workers, our mothers and sisters, our youth. The country has reached here today because of the generation to generation rigours undertaken by our sages, our saints, our maestros, our teachers, our scientists and social workers. These great people and these great generations who had worked for the country throughout their lives, deserve our deepest respect.

This is the beauty of India's Constitution, this is its capability which has made it possible that today a boy from a small town, a poor family, has got the opportunity to pay homage to the tricolour of India at the ramparts of Lal Quila (Red Fort). This is the strength of India's democracy. This is an invaluable legacy which we have inherited from the architects of our Constitution. I pay my respects to those architects of the Constitution of India today.

Brothers and sisters, today if we have reached here after independence, it is because of the contribution of all the Prime Ministers, all the governments and even the governments of all the states. I want to express my feelings of respect and gratitude to all those previous governments and ex-Prime Ministers who have endeavoured to take our present day India to such heights and who have added to the country's glory.

This country has been built on such foundations of

My dear countrymen,
Today, all Indians in the country and abroad are celebrating the festival of independence. On this sacred festival of independence, the prime servant of India extends greetings to all dear countrymen.

I am present amidst you not as the Prime Minister, but as the Prime Servant. The freedom struggle was fought for so many years, so many generations laid down their lives, innumerable people sacrificed their lives and youth, spent their entire lives behind bars. Today, I pay my respect, greetings and homage to all those who laid their lives for the country's independence.

I also pay my respects to the crores of citizens of this country on the pious occasion of India's independence, and recall all those martyrs who laid down their lives in India's struggle for freedom. The day of independence is a festival when we take a solemn pledge of working for the welfare of Mother India, and also for the welfare of the poor, oppressed, Dalits, the exploited and the backward people of our country.

My dear countrymen, a national festival is an occasion to refine and rebuild the national character. This national festival inspires us to resolve ourselves to lead a life where our character gets refined further, to dedicate ourselves to the

ancient cultural heritage, where we were told only one mantra during Vedic period, which is indicative of our work culture and that we have learned - "*Sangachchhdhvam samvadadhvam sam wo manansi jaanataam.*" We walk together, we move together, we think together, we resolve together and together we take this country forward.

Having imbibed this basic mantra, 125 crore countrymen have taken the nation forward. Yesterday only the first parliamentary session of the new government had concluded.

Today, I can proudly say that the session of Parliament reflects our thinking and it is a reflection of our intentions. We are not for moving forward on the basis of virtue of majority. We want to move ahead on the basis of strong consensus - "*Sangachchhdhvam*" and therefore, the nation has witnessed the entire session of Parliament.

Having taken all the parties and opposition along while working shoulder to shoulder, we achieved an unprecedented success and the credit for this does not go to the Prime Minister alone, the credit does not go to the people sitting in the government, the credit for this goes to the opposition also, the credit goes to all the leaders and members of the opposition.

From the ramparts of Red Fort, quite proudly I salute all the Members of Parliament, I also salute all the political parties and by virtue of their strong support, we could take some important decisions intended to take the nation forward.

Brothers and sisters, I am an outsider for Delhi; I am not a native of Delhi. I have no idea about the administration and

working of this place. I have been quite isolated from the elite class of this place but during the last two months while being an outsider, I had an insider view and I was astonished. It is not a political platform, rather it is a platform of a national policy and, therefore, my views should not be evaluated from a political perspective.

I have already said, I salute all the ex-Prime Ministers and earlier governments who have brought the country thus far. But I am going to say something else and it may not be seen from a political point of view. When I came to Delhi and looked at things from an insider view, I felt what it was and I was surprised to see it. It seemed as if dozens of separate governments are running at the same time in one main government. It appeared that everyone has their own fiefdom. I could observe disunity and conflict among them. One department is taking on the other department and taking on to the extent that two departments of the same government are fighting against each other by approaching Supreme Court. This disunity, this conflict among people of the same country! How can we take the country forward? That is why I have started making efforts to raze those walls; I have started making efforts at making the government not an assembled entity, but an organic unity, an organic entity, a harmonious whole - with one aim, one mind, one direction, one energy.

Let's resolve to steer the country to one destination. We have it in us to move in that direction. A few days back... Nowadays newspapers are full of news that Modi-jis government has come, officers are reaching office on time, offices open in time, and people get there in time. I observed that India's national newspapers, TV media were carrying

these news items prominently.

As the head of government I could have derived pleasure in the fact that everything started going on time, cleanliness got the attention it deserved, but I was not taking pleasure, I was feeling pained. Why? Because if government officers arrive office in time, does that make news? And if that makes news, it shows how low we have fallen. It is proof of that, and is that how, brothers and sisters, the governments have run? Today in the face of global competition, when we have to realise the dreams of millions of Indians, the country cannot run on the lines of "it happens", "it goes".

In order to fulfill the aspirations of masses, we have to sharpen the tool called 'government machinery', we have to make it keen, more dynamic, and it is in this direction that we are working.

My countrymen, it's not long since I have come from outside Delhi, but I give you an assurance that the people in the government are very capable - from the peon to the Cabinet Secretary, everybody is capable, everybody has a power, they have experience. I want to awaken that power, I want to unite that power and want to accelerate the pace of the welfare of nation through that power and I shall definitely do it. I want to assure the countrymen that we will achieve that, we will definitely do that. I could not say this on 16th May, but today after my experience of two-two and half months, keeping the Tricolour as witness, I am saying on 15th of August that it is possible, and it will be achieved.

Brothers and sisters, the time has come to give serious

thought to the fact, whether we have a duty to create India of the dreams of those great people who gave us freedom, or do we have a national character? Can someone please tell me if anyone has ever introspected in the evening after a full day's work as to whether his or her acts have helped the poor of the country or not, whether his or her actions have resulted in safeguarding the interest of the country or not, whether the actions have been directed in the country's welfare or not? Should it not be the motto of one and a quarter billion countrymen that every step in life should be in the country's interests?

Unfortunately, we have an environment today wherein if you approach anyone with some work, he begins by saying, "What does it mean for me?" He begins by saying, "What does it have for me?" and when he comes to know that it does not entail any benefit for him, immediately he says, "Why should I bother?" We have to rise above these feelings. Everything is not for self-interest only. There are certain things which are meant for the country and we have to refine this national character. We have to rise above the feelings of "Why should I bother?" and "What does it mean for me?" and instead we have to think, "I am for the nation's interest and in this field, I am going to lead". We have to inculcate this sentiment.

Brothers and sisters, when we hear about the incidents of rape, we hang our heads in shame. People come out with different arguments, someone indulges in psycho analysis, but today from this platform, I want to ask those parents, I want to ask every parent, you have a daughter of 10 or 12 years' age, you are always on the alert, every now and then you keep on asking - where are you going, when would you come