

**ADDRESS TO THE NATION BY HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SMT. DROUPADI MURMU
ON THE EVE OF THE 76TH INDEPENDENCE DAY**

New Delhi, August 14, 2022

My dear fellow citizens,

Namaskar!

My heartiest greetings in advance to all Indians living in the country and abroad on the eve of the 76th Independence Day. I am delighted to address you on this momentous occasion. India is completing 75 years as an independent nation. Fourteenth August is observed as 'Partition Horrors Remembrance Day' so as to promote social harmony, unity and empowerment of people. Tomorrow marks the day when we had freed ourselves from the shackles of colonial rulers and decided to reshape our destiny. As all of us celebrate the anniversary of that day, we bow to all those men and women who made enormous sacrifices to make it possible for us to live in a free India.

It is a cause of celebration not only for all of us but also for every advocate of democracy around the world. When India won independence, there were many international leaders and experts who were skeptical about the success of democratic form of government in India. They had their reasons to be doubtful. In those days, democracy was limited to economically advanced nations. India, after so many years of exploitation at the hands of foreign rulers, was marked by poverty and illiteracy. But we Indians proved the skeptics wrong. Democracy not only grew roots in this soil, it was enriched too.

In most other well-established democracies, women had to wage long-drawn struggles to get the right to vote. But India adopted universal adult franchise right since the beginning of the Republic. Thus, the makers of modern India enabled each and every adult citizen to participate in the collective process of nation-building. Thus, India can be credited to have helped the world discover the true potential of democracy.

I believe this was not a coincidence. At the beginning of civilisation, saints and seers of this land had developed a vision of humanity that was defined by equality of all; indeed, oneness of all. The great Freedom Struggle and its

leaders like Mahatma Gandhi re-discovered our ancient values for modern times. Then, it is no wonder our democracy has Indian characteristics. Gandhiji advocated decentralisation and power to the people.

For 75 weeks now, the nation has been commemorating these noble ideals that won us freedom. In March 2021, we began the 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' with the re-enactment of the Dandi March. This way, our celebrations began with a tribute to that watershed event which had put our struggle on the world map. This festival is dedicated to the people of India. Based on the success achieved by the people, the resolve to build 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' is also a part of this Mahotsav. Citizens from all age-groups have keenly participated in a series of events held across the country. This grand festival is going ahead with the 'Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan'. The Indian tricolours are fluttering in every nook and corner of the country. Great martyrs would have been thrilled to see the spirit of the Independence Movement coming alive again on such a massive scale.

Our glorious Freedom Struggle was waged bravely across the vast territory of our country. Many great freedom fighters did their duty and passed on the torch of awakening leaving little trace of their heroic deeds. Forgotten for long were many heroes and their struggles, especially among the peasant and tribal populations. The government's decision last year to observe 15th November as 'Janajatiya Gaurav Divas' is welcome because our tribal heroes are not merely local or regional icons but they inspire the entire nation.

Dear Citizens,

For a nation, particularly an ancient one such as India, the passage of 75 years is merely a blink of an eye. But for us as individuals, it is a lifetime. Senior citizens among us have witnessed a dramatic change in their lifetime. They have seen how, after Independence, all the generations have toiled hard; how we met great challenges and how we have taken charge of our destiny. The lessons learnt in the process will prove useful as we move towards the next milestone in the journey of the nation – the Amrit Kaal, the 25 years to the celebration of the centenary of our Independence.

By the year 2047, we will have fully realised the dreams of our freedom fighters. We will have given a concrete shape to the vision of those who, led by Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar, drafted the Constitution. We are already on course to build an Atmanirbhar Bharat, an India that would have realised its true potential.

The world has seen a new India rising in recent years, more so after the outbreak of COVID-19. Our response to the pandemic has been appreciated everywhere. We launched the biggest vaccination drive in human history with vaccines manufactured in the country itself. Last month we crossed the 200-crore mark in cumulative vaccine coverage. In combating the pandemic, our achievements have been better than those of many developed countries. For this feat, we are grateful to our scientists, doctors, nurses, paramedics and the staff associated with vaccination.

The pandemic has uprooted lives and also economies in the entire world. When the world has been battling the economic consequences of the great crisis, India got its act together and is now moving forward. India is among the fastest growing major economies in the world. India's start-up eco-system ranks high in the world. The success of start-ups in our country, especially the growing number of unicorns is a shining example of our industrial progress. The government and policy-makers deserve credit for beating the global trend and helping the economy flourish. During the last few years, unprecedented progress has been made in the development of physical and digital infrastructure. Through the Pradhan Mantri Gati-Shakti Yojana, all the modes of connectivity based on water, land, air etc. are being integrated in the whole country to enable seamless transportation across the country. For the vibrancy of growth visible in our country, credit must also be given to workers and farmers whose hard work has made it possible and entrepreneurs whose business acumen has created wealth. What is all the more heartening is that the growth is becoming more inclusive and regional disparities too are reducing.

But this is only the beginning. A series of economic reforms and policy initiatives have been preparing the ground for a long term. Digital India, for example, is creating the bedrock of a knowledge economy. The 'National Education Policy' is aimed at preparing the future generation for the next stage of industrial revolution while also reconnecting it with our heritage.

Economic success is leading to an ease in living too. Economic reforms are rightly accompanied by innovative welfare initiatives. A home of one's own is no longer a dream for the poor, but a reality for more and more people, thanks to the 'Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana'. Similarly, under the 'Jal Jeevan Mission', tap water connection is being provided to every household since the launch of the 'Har Ghar Jal' scheme.

The aim of these and many other similar efforts is to provide basic amenities to all, particularly the poor. The keyword for India today is compassion; for the

downtrodden, for the needy and for those on the margins. Some of our national values have been incorporated in our Constitution as the Fundamental Duties of the citizens. I appeal to every citizen to know about their Fundamental Duties and follow them in letter and spirit so that our nation reaches new heights.

Dear Citizens,

At the core of the transformation, we have been witnessing in healthcare, education, economy as well as a number of related areas is the stress on good governance. When work is done with the spirit of 'Nation First', it is bound to reflect in every decision and every sector. This is also reflected in India's standing in the world.

India's new-found confidence stems from the spirit of its youth, its farmers, and above all, its women. Gender inequalities are reducing and women are moving ahead, breaking many glass ceilings. Their increasing participation in social and political processes will prove decisive. At the grassroots level, we have more than 14 lakh elected women representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Our daughters are the biggest hope for the nation. Some of them brought laurels for the country at the recently held Commonwealth Games. Of course, India's sportspersons have been making the country proud by their performance in international competitions. A large number of our winners come from underprivileged segments of society. From becoming fighter pilots to space scientists, our daughters are scaling great heights.

Dear Citizens,

In celebrating Independence Day, we are celebrating our 'Bharatiyata'. Our country is full of diversity. But, at the same time, we all have something in common. It is this common thread which binds all of us together and inspires us to walk together with the spirit of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat.

India is a very beautiful country, also because of its mountains, rivers, lakes and forests and the animals and birds that live in such landscapes. When the environment is facing new challenges, we must remain determined to preserve all that makes India beautiful. Conserving water, soil and biodiversity is our duty towards our children. Caring for Mother Nature has been part and parcel of Indian culture. With our traditional life style, we Indians can

show the way to the rest of the world. Yoga and Ayurveda are India's invaluable gifts to the world. Their popularity is on the rise all over the globe.

Dear fellow citizens,

Our beloved country has given us everything we have in our life. We should pledge to give everything we can for the sake of safety, security, progress and prosperity of our country. Our existence will become meaningful only in building a glorious India. The great nationalist poet Kuvempu, who enriched Indian literature through Kannada language, had written:

Naanu aliwe, Neenu aliwe
Namma elubugal mele
Mooduvudu – Mooduvudu
Navabharatda leele

Which means:

'I will pass
So will you
But on our bones will arise
The great tale of a new India'

This is a clarion call of the nationalist poet for making total sacrifice for the motherland and upliftment of fellow citizens. To follow these ideals is my special appeal to the youth of the country who are going to build the India of 2047.

Before I conclude, I would like to extend Independence Day greetings to the armed forces, to the members of Indian missions abroad, and to the Indian diaspora who continue to make their motherland proud. My best wishes to all of you.

Thank you,
Jai Hind!