

ADDRESS TO THE NATION BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
ON THE EVE OF THE REPUBLIC DAY 2022
New Delhi, January 25, 2022

Dear Fellow Citizens!

Namaskar!

1. My heartiest greetings to all of you, in India and abroad, on the eve of the 73rd Republic Day! It is an occasion to celebrate what is common to us all, our Indian-ness. It was on this day in 1950 that this sacred essence of us all assumed a formal shape. That day, India was established as the largest democratic republic and 'we the people' put into effect a Constitution that is an inspired document of our collective vision. The diversity and vibrancy of our democracy is appreciated world-wide. It is this spirit of unity and of being one nation which is celebrated every year as Republic Day. This year's celebrations may be muted due to the pandemic, but the spirit is as strong as ever.
2. On this occasion, let us also remember the great freedom fighters who showed incomparable courage in their pursuit of the dream of Swaraj and fired up the people to fight for it. Two days ago, on 23rd January, all of us observed the one hundred twenty-fifth birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, who had adopted the energising salutation of 'Jai-Hind'. His quest for independence and his ambition to make India proud inspire all of us.
3. We are immensely fortunate that the Constituent Assembly which prepared the document included some of the best minds of their generation. They were the leading lights of our great Freedom Struggle. After long years, the soul of India was re-awakening, and these exceptional men and women were the harbingers of a new dawn. They discussed threadbare every Article, every phrase and every word, on behalf of the people. The churning went on for close to three years. Eventually, it was Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar who, as chairman of the drafting committee, prepared the final version that has become our founding document.
4. While the text of the Constitution, dealing with the details of the workings of the State, is quite long, the Preamble sums up its guiding principles – Democracy, Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. They form the bedrock on which our Republic stands. These are the values that form our collective inheritance.
5. These values have been accorded primacy in our Constitution in the form of Fundamental Rights and Fundamental Duties of the citizens. Rights and duties are

two sides of the same coin. The observance of the Fundamental Duties mentioned in the Constitution by the citizens creates the proper environment for enjoyment of Fundamental Rights. By fulfilling the fundamental duty of rendering national service when called upon to do so, crores of our people have transformed the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and the COVID vaccination drive into mass movements. A great deal of credit for the success of such campaigns goes to our dutiful citizens. I am sure that our people will continue to strengthen the campaigns of national interest with their active participation and will demonstrate the same dedication.

6. The Constitution of India was enacted and adopted by the Constituent Assembly on 26th November 1949, which we now celebrate as Constitution Day. But it was made effective two months later. This was done to mark that day in 1930 when India resolved to win complete freedom. From 1930 to 1947, every year 26th January was celebrated as ‘Purna Swaraj Day’, and that was the day chosen to put the Constitution into force.
7. Writing in 1930, Mahatma Gandhi had advised fellow citizens how ‘Purna Swaraj Day’ was to be celebrated. He had said and I quote:

“Remember that since we desire to attain our end by non-violent and truthful means only, we can do so only through self-purification. We should therefore devote the day to doing such constructive work as lies in our power to do.” [UNQUOTE]
8. Needless to say, Gandhiji’s advice is timeless. He would have liked us to celebrate the Republic Day in the same manner. He wanted us to look inside, introspect and strive to become better human beings, and then also look outside, join hands with others, and contribute towards the making of a better India and a better world.

Dear Fellow Citizens,

9. The world has never been in so much need of help as now. It has been over two years now and humankind is still battling with the corona-virus. Hundreds of thousands of lives have been lost, and the world economy has been reeling under the impact. The world has suffered from unprecedented misery, and surge after surge of new variants have been posing new crises. It has been an extraordinary challenge to humankind.
10. The pandemic management was bound to be all the more difficult in India. We have high population density, and as a developing economy we did not have the level of resources and infrastructure needed to battle this invisible enemy. But it is only in

such difficult times that the resilience of a nation shines forth. I am proud to say that we have shown an unmatched resolve against the corona virus. In the first year itself, we raised the healthcare infrastructure and also reached out to help others. By the second year, we had developed indigenous vaccines and launched the world's biggest vaccination drive in history. The vaccination drive is progressing at a quick pace in our country. During the pandemic, we have reached out to several other countries with vaccines and other medical help. This contribution by India has been appreciated by international organizations.

11. There have been setbacks, unfortunately, as the virus makes a comeback with new mutations. Countless families have gone through a harrowing time. There are no words to express our collective trauma. The only saving grace is that many lives could be saved. As the pandemic is still wide-spread, we must remain alert and not let our guard down. The precautions we have taken till now have to be continued. Wearing mask and maintaining social distancing have been essential parts of COVID appropriate behaviour. In the fight against the COVID pandemic, it has now become a sacred national duty of every citizen to follow the precautions suggested by our scientists and experts. We have to discharge this duty till the crisis is behind us.
12. A time of crisis has also made us appreciate how we all Indians are connected as one family. The time of social distancing has brought us close to each other. We have realised how much we depend on each other. Doctors, nurses and paramedics have risen to the challenge, working long hours in difficult conditions even at the risk of their lives to attend to patients. Others have kept the nation moving, managing supply chains and utilities. The leadership, policy-makers, administrators and others at the central and state levels have made timely interventions.
13. Due to such interventions the economy is on the move again. It is a testimony to India's spirit in the face of adversity that the economy is projected to grow at an impressive rate in this fiscal, after going through contraction last year. This shows the success of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan launched in the previous year. The government has shown relentless focus on reforming every economic sector and providing a helping hand wherever necessary. The impressive economic performance is made possible due to improvement in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. I am happy to note that our farmers, especially young farmers with small holdings, are enthusiastically adopting natural farming.
14. Small and medium enterprises have played an important role in providing employment to people and imparting impetus to the economy. Our innovative young entrepreneurs have set new benchmarks of success by making effective use of the start-up eco-system. It is a testimony to the success of our country's massive and

robust digital payment platform that millions of digital transactions are being done every month.

15. To reap the demographic dividend, the government has created the right environment with the National Education Policy that makes a perfect blend of traditional values and modern skills. It is gratifying to note that India has found a place among the top 50 innovative economies. It is all the more satisfying to note that we have been able to promote merit while also stressing upon all-round inclusion.

Ladies and gentlemen,

16. In the past year, our sports-persons also brought cheers as they made their mark at the Olympics. The self-confidence of these young champions inspires millions today.
17. In the recent months, I have witnessed remarkable examples of our people strengthening the country and the society through their commitment and action in diverse areas. However, I will mention only two such instances. The dedicated teams of the Indian Navy and Cochin Shipyard Limited have built an indigenous state-of-the-art aircraft carrier IAC Vikrant which is to be inducted into our Navy. Due to such modern military capabilities, India is now counted among the world's leading naval powers. This is an impressive example of moving towards self-reliance in the field of defence. Apart from this, I found one special experience very touching. In a village called Sui in Bhiwani district of Haryana, some enlightened citizens who belong to that village have transformed the village under the 'Swa-Prerit Adarsh Gram Yojana', demonstrating sensitivity and diligence. This example of expressing affection and gratitude for one's village or native land is worth emulating. There remains life-long love and reverence for their native land in the hearts of grateful people. This example strengthens my belief that a new India is emerging – a Strong India and a Sensitive India; Sashakt Bharat, Samvedan-sheel Bharat. I am sure that taking inspiration from this example, other resourceful people will also contribute for the development of their villages and cities.
18. In this context, I would like to share a personal experience with all of you. I had the privilege of visiting my birth-place, that is, my village Paraunkh at Kanpur Dehat district in the month of June last year. On reaching there, I naturally felt the urge to express respect for the sacred soil of my village and applied it on my forehead because I believe that I have been able to reach Rashtrapati Bhavan only due to the blessings of my village. Wherever in the world I may be, my village and my country remain in my heart. I request the people of India who are successful in life due to their hard work and talent, to always remember their roots, their village, town or city. Also, all of you must serve your place of birth and your country in whatever way you can. If all the successful people of India work sincerely for the development of their

birth-places, then the whole country will benefit from the outcome of such local development.

Dear Fellow Citizens,

19. Today, it is our soldiers and security personnel who carry on the legacy of national pride. In the unbearable cold of the Himalayas and in the excruciating heat of the desert, far away from their families, they continue to guard the motherland. It is thanks to the constant vigil of the armed forces securing our borders and the police personnel maintaining internal security within the country that their fellow citizens enjoy peaceful life. When a brave soldier dies on duty, the entire country feels sad. Last month, in an unfortunate accident, we lost one of the bravest commanders of the country - General Bipin Rawat - his wife and many brave soldiers. The entire country was deeply saddened by the tragic loss.

Ladies and gentlemen,

20. Patriotism strengthens the sense of duty among citizens. Whether you are a doctor or a lawyer, a shopkeeper or office-worker, a sanitation employee or a labourer, doing one's duty well and efficiently is the first and foremost contribution you make to the nation.
21. As the supreme commander of the Armed Forces, I am glad to note that it has been a water-shed year for women empowerment in the Armed Forces. Our daughters have broken a glass ceiling, and permanent commission has now been allowed for women officers in new areas. Also, the talent pipeline for the forces will be strengthened with women coming through Sainik Schools and the prestigious National Defence Academy. Consequently, our Armed Forces will benefit from better gender balance.
22. I am confident that India is better placed today to meet the challenges of the future. The twenty-first century is turning out to be the age of climate change, and India has taken a leadership position on the world stage in showing the way, especially with its bold and ambitious push for renewable energy. At the individual level, each one of us can remember Gandhiji's advice and help improve the world around us. India has always considered the whole world as one family. I am sure that, inspired by this spirit of universal brother-hood, our country and the entire global community will move towards a more equitable and prosperous future.

Dear Fellow Citizens,

23. This year, India will cross a milestone when it completes 75 years of Independence. We are celebrating this occasion as 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav'. It is heartening to

note that our people, especially youngsters, are participating enthusiastically in a variety of events and programmes organised to commemorate the landmark year. It is a great opportunity for not only the next generation but all of us to re-connect with our past. Our freedom struggle was an inspiring chapter in our splendid saga. In this seventy-fifth year of Independence, let us re-discover the values that animated our glorious national movement. Many men and women laid down their lives for our freedom. Our freedom fighters have suffered un-imaginable torture and made countless sacrifices for us to enjoy the festivals of Independence Day and Republic Day. Let us gratefully recall their immortal sacrifices on the occasion of Republic Day.

Ladies and gentlemen,

24. India is an ancient civilisation but a young republic. For us, nation-building is a constant endeavour. As in a family, so in a nation; one generation works hard to ensure a better future for the next generation. When we won independence, the exploitation of colonial rule had left us in utter poverty, but in seventy-five years, we have made impressive progress. New opportunities await the next generation. Our youth have taken advantage of these opportunities and set new benchmarks of success. I am sure that with this energy, confidence and entrepreneurship, our country will continue to march ahead on the path of progress and will definitely secure its rightful place, befitting its potential, in the global community.
25. I once again wish all of you a Happy Republic Day!

Thank you,

Jai Hind!