

## **66<sup>th</sup> Republic Day Address**

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Dear colleagues, teaching and non-teaching staff members, my dear young students and fellow citizens, a very good morning to all of you.

At the outset I extend my warm greetings on this 66<sup>th</sup> Republic Day of our Nation.

- ✓ The Republic Day commands the respect of every Indian. On this day, sixty five years ago, in a remarkable display of idealism and courage, we the people of India gave to ourselves a sovereign democratic republic to secure all its citizens justice, liberty and equality. We undertook to promote among all citizens fraternity, the dignity of the individual and the unity of the nation. These ideals became the lodestar of the modern Indian State.
- ✓ Democracy became our most precious guide towards peace and regeneration from the swamp of poverty created by centuries of colonial rule. From the spacious provisions of our Constitution, India has grown into a beautiful, vibrant, and sometimes noisy democracy. For us, the democracy is not a gift, but the fundamental right of every citizen; for those in power democracy is a sacred trust. Those who violate this trust commit sacrilege against the nation.
- ✓ Corruption is a cancer that erodes democracy, and weakens the foundations of our state. If Indians are enraged, it is because they are witnessing corruption and wastage of national resources.
- ✓ The aspirational young Indian will not forgive a betrayal of her future. Those in office must eliminate the trust deficit between them and the people. Those in politics should understand that every election comes with a warning sign: perform, or perish.
- ✓ The last decade witnessed the emergence of India as one of the fastest growing economies in the world.

The 65-years of republic have seen many changes in the socio-economic landscape of Asia's third largest economy.

### **Agriculture**

- ✓ Even as the country has progressed in laying out the basic framework to take the economy to high growth path by building roads and ports and ramping up the food grain production, a fast growing population and infrastructure woes demand more work to be done on multiple fronts.

### **Food grain production**

- ✓ India's food grain production has more than doubled over the decades that followed colonial rule to a record 264 million tonnes in the fiscal year 2014. But, to feed the fast growing population, with more than a quarter of them still estimated to be below the poverty line, the country needs to produce more.
- ✓ Agricultural GDP growth accelerated in the Eleventh Plan, to an average rate of 3.3 per cent, compared with 2.4 per cent in the Tenth Plan, and 2.5 per cent in the Ninth Plan.
- ✓ The percentage of the population below the poverty line declined at the rate of 1.5 percentage points (ppt) per year during the period 2004–05 to 2009–10, twice the rate at which it declined in the previous period 1993–94 to 2004–05.
- ✓ Rural real wages increased by 6.8 per cent annually in the Eleventh Plan.

### **Medical**

- ✓ The health care system of the country has also witnessed a significant improvement. Therefore, Life expectancy of Indians has increased from 32 years (in 1951) to 65 years.

## Education

- ✓ India has achieved significant developments in education. In 1950-51, there were only 236,000 students, in 750 colleges and 30 Universities.
- ✓ Now, more than 11 million students are studying in 325 State Universities, 128 Deemed to be Universities, 45 Central Universities and 195 Private Universities. The enrolment grows at about 5 per cent per year. Today, India is acknowledged as the **third largest storehouse** in the world for technically qualified workforce.

## Industry

- ✓ Renewable energy, especially wind energy and solar energy, are potentially promising alternatives to conventional fossil fuel-based electric power. They are more expensive at present, but given likely trends in fossil fuel prices globally, and technological developments in these sectors there is a need to expand the contribution from these sectors.
- ✓ **Innovation** is the key to sustainable agrarian development: through innovation, we can maintain the competitiveness of the agri-food sector and create more and better jobs in rural areas, all the while safe-guarding the planet for future generations. Innovation in agriculture is happening everywhere.
- ✓ A democratic nation is always involved in argument with itself. This is welcome, as we solve problems through discussion and consent, not by force. But, healthy differences of opinion must not lead to an unhealthy strife. Passions are rising over whether we should have smaller states to extend equitable development to all parts of a state. A debate is legitimate but it should conform to democratic norms. The politics of divide and rule has extracted a heavy price on our subcontinent. If we do not work together, nothing ever will work.
- ✓ India must find its own solutions to its problems. We must be open to all knowledge; to do otherwise would be to condemn our nation to the misery of stagnant mire. But we should not indulge in the easy option of mindless imitation.

- ✓ India has the intellectual prowess, the human resource and financial capital to shape a glorious future. We possess a dynamic civil society with an innovative mindset. Our people, whether in villages or cities, share a vibrant, unique consciousness and culture. Our finest assets are human.
- ✓ India can become an example to the world. Because, the human mind flourishes best when it is, as the great sage Rabindranath Tagore said, free from fear; when it has the liberty to roam into spheres unknown; in search of wisdom; and when the people have the fundamental right to propose as well as oppose.
- ✓ Our problems will not disappear overnight. We live in a turbulent part of the world where factors of instability have grown in the recent past. Communal forces and terrorists will still seek to destabilize the harmony of our people and the integrity of our state but they will never win.
- ✓ Our security and armed forces, backed by the steel of popular support, have proved that they can crush an enemy within; with as much felicity as they guard our frontiers. Mavericks who question the integrity of our armed services are irresponsible and should find no place in public life.
- ✓ **Developed India by 2020 is a vision of a billion people.** Every one of us has a role to play. It will be a reality if everyone "Gives - What I can give", through individual, societal and nationwide participation in a national movement facilitated by the Government. When the nation marches towards its missions, many challenges will come on the way.
- ✓ Courage is a very important trait for all sections of society in overcoming these challenges. These challenges also provide you ample opportunities. Therefore, I earnestly request all my young friends to take up these challenges and work hard.

Let us all work together towards achieving this vision.

My dear fellow citizens, I once again wish you a very purposeful and happy Republic Day.

Jai Hind.