

**ADDRESS TO THE NATION**  
**BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA**  
**SMT. DROUPADI MURMU**  
**ON THE EVE OF THE 77TH INDEPENDENCE DAY**

**New Delhi, August 14, 2023**

My Dear Fellow Citizens,

My heartiest greetings to all of you on our 77th Independence Day! It is a glorious and auspicious occasion for all of us. I am overjoyed to see that festivity is in the air. It is a matter of delight as well as pride for us to see how everyone – children, youth and the elderly, in cities and villages, everywhere in India – are excited and preparing to celebrate this festival of our freedom. The people have been celebrating 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' with great enthusiasm.

Independence Day celebrations also remind me of my childhood days. We could not contain our excitement of participating in the Independence Day celebrations in our village school. When the tricolour was hoisted, we felt an electrifying energy pass through us. With our hearts full of patriotic pride, we saluted the national flag and sang the national anthem. Sweets were distributed and patriotic songs were sung, which kept playing in our minds for many days. I was fortunate in having an opportunity to re-live these experiences when I became a school teacher.

When we grow up, we may not remain as expressive of our joy as children are, but I am sure that the intensity of the patriotic feeling associated with the celebration of national festivals is not diminished at all. Independence Day reminds us that we are not merely individuals, but we are part of a great community of people. It happens to be the biggest and the greatest community of its kind. It is the community of the citizens of the world's largest democracy.

What we celebrate on Independence Day is the fact that we are part of a great democracy. Each of us has many identities – apart from caste,

creed, language and region, we are also identified with our families and professions – but there is one identity that is above all. That is our identity as citizens of India. Each one of us is an equal citizen; each one of us has an equal opportunity, equal rights and equal duties, in this land.

But it was not always so. India is the Mother of Democracy and since ancient times we had democratic institutions functioning at the grassroots. But long years of colonial rule wiped them out. On 15th August 1947, the nation woke up to a new dawn. We not only won freedom from foreign rule, but also the freedom to rewrite our destiny.

With our Independence began the era of foreign rulers withdrawing from many colonies and colonialism drew close to its end. What is special about our freedom struggle is not only the fact that its objective was achieved, but also how it was fought. Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and a galaxy of extraordinary visionary leaders, our national movement was animated by a unique set of ideals. Gandhiji and others re-kindled the soul of India and helped the nation rediscover its civilisational values. Following India's shining example, 'truth and non-violence', the cornerstone of our resistance, has been successfully employed in many political struggles around the world.

On the eve of Independence Day, I join my fellow citizens in paying grateful tribute to the known and unknown freedom fighters whose sacrifices have made it possible for India to regain its rightful place in the comity of nations. Great women freedom fighters like Matangini Hazra and Kanaklata Baruah laid down their lives for Bharat-Mata. Maa Kasturba matched the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi every step of the way on the difficult path of Satyagraha. Many great women leaders like Sarojini Naidu, Ammu Swaminathan, Rama Devi, Aruna Asaf-Ali and Sucheta Kriplani had set inspiring ideals for all future generations of women, to serve the nation and the society with self-confidence. Today, women are contributing extensively in every field of development and service to the country and are enhancing the nation's pride. Today our women have made their special place in many such fields in which their participation was unimaginable a few decades ago.

I am happy to note that the economic empowerment of women is being given special focus in our country. Economic empowerment strengthens the position of women in the family and society. I urge all fellow citizens to give priority to women empowerment. I would like our sisters and daughters to overcome challenges with courage and move ahead in life. Development of women was among the ideals of our freedom struggle.

Dear Citizens,

Independence Day is an occasion to reconnect with our history. It is also an occasion to assess our present and reflect about our way forward. Looking at the present, we see that India has not only regained its rightful place on the world stage, but it has also enhanced its standing in the international order. During my visits and interactions with the members of the Indian diaspora, I have observed a new confidence in the India story. India is playing a crucial role in promoting developmental and humanitarian goals around the world. It has also assumed leadership of international forums, especially the presidency of G-20.

As the G-20 represents two-thirds of the world population, this is a unique opportunity to help shape global discourse in the right direction. With the G-20 presidency, India can nudge decision-making in trade and finance towards equitable progress. Beyond trade and finance, matters of human development too are on the agenda. There are many global issues that concern all humanity and are not limited by geographical boundaries. I am confident that with India's proven leadership in dealing with global issues, member-nations will be able to advance effective action on these fronts.

What is notable in India's presidency of G-20 is the way this diplomatic activity has been taken to the grassroots. There has been a first-of-its-kind campaign to encourage people's participation. It is delightful to see, for example, students enthusiastically participating in diverse contests organised in schools and colleges touching upon the themes of G-20. All the citizens are enthusiastic about events related to G-20.

Dear fellow citizens,

This enthusiasm, along with a sense of empowerment, is possible, because the nation has been taking great strides on all fronts. India's

economy has proven to be not only resilient during turbulent times but is also a beacon of hope for others. The world economy is passing through a delicate stage, as the pandemic has been followed by international events that have added to the air of uncertainty. Yet, the Government has been able to navigate the stormy waters very well. India has converted challenges into opportunities and has recorded high GDP growth. Our Annadata farmers have contributed significantly to our economic growth. The nation feels indebted to them.

Inflation at the global level remains a cause for worry. But in India the Government and the Reserve Bank have managed to contain it. The Government has succeeded in protecting the common people from high inflation while also providing a more extensive security cover to the poor. The world looks up to India for global economic growth.

The continued economic progress is driven by a two-pronged strategy. On the one hand, there is a sustained push to unleash the forces of enterprise by making it easier to do business and generate job opportunities. On the other, proactive and expanded welfare initiatives for the needy have been taken in various domains. Giving priority to the deprived remains the focus of our policies and actions that have lifted a large number of people out of poverty in the last decade. Similarly, there are specific programmes to improve the conditions of tribals and encourage them to join the journey of progress. I appeal to our tribal brothers and sisters to enrich their traditions while embracing modernity.

I am happy to note that along with economic growth, human-development-concerns have also been accorded high priority. Having been a teacher also, I have realised that education is the greatest tool of social empowerment. The National Education Policy of 2020 has started making a difference. From my interactions with students as well as educationists at various levels, I gather that the learning process has become more flexible. The visionary policy, which aims to merge ancient values with modern skills, will bring in unprecedented changes in the education sector over the years, leading to a great transformation of the nation. India's economic progress is powered by the dreams of its people, particularly the young generation for whom limitless opportunities have opened up. From start-ups to sports, our youth have explored new horizons of excellence.

The aspirations of the new India have infinite dimensions. The Indian Space Research Organisation keeps scaling new heights and setting higher benchmarks of excellence. This year, ISRO launched Chandrayaan-3, and its lander named 'Vikram' and its rover named 'Pragyan' are slated to land on the moon in the next few days. It will be a proud moment for all of us and I look forward to it. But the mission to the moon is only a stepping stone for our future space programmes. We have to go far ahead.

For their work in space and also on earth, our scientists and technologists are bringing laurels to the country. To foster the spirit of research, innovation and entrepreneurship, the Government is setting up the Anusandhan National Research Foundation, with an amount of Rs. 50,000 crore for next five years. The foundation will seed, grow and promote research and development in our colleges, universities and research institutions.

Dear Citizens,

For us, science or knowledge are not ends-in-themselves but are a means for the betterment of all the people. One area that merits urgent attention of scientists and policymakers all over the world is climate change. We have faced numerous extreme-weather events in recent years. Parts of India have faced extraordinary floods. At the same time, there are places facing drought. These events are also attributed to the phenomenon of global warming. Therefore, it is necessary to make efforts at the local, national and global levels for the environment. In this context, it is noteworthy that we have achieved unprecedented goals in the field of renewable energy. India is providing leadership to the International Solar Alliance. Our country is playing a leading role in fulfilling international commitments. We have given the mantra of LiFE i.e. Lifestyle for Environment to the global community.

Dear fellow citizens,

Extreme weather events affect all. But their impact is far more severe on the poor and the marginalised. Cities and hilly terrains especially need to be made more resilient.

The larger point here is that the culture of greed takes the world away from nature. We now realise the dire need to return to our roots. I know that there are still many tribal communities who live very close to nature and in harmony with it. Their values and lifestyle offer invaluable lessons for climate action.

The secret of the survival of the tribal communities through ages can be summarised in one word. That single word is 'Empathy'. They have empathy for all Mother Nature's fellow children, flora and fauna alike. Sometimes, however, the world seems to be suffering from a deficit of empathy. But history shows that such periods are only aberrations, and kindness is our fundamental nature. It is my experience that women have empathy in greater measure and they show the way when humanity goes astray.

Our country has entered the 'Amrit Kaal' with new resolutions and we are moving forward towards making India an inclusive and developed nation by the year 2047. Let us all take a pledge to perform our fundamental duty to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement.

Dear fellow citizens,

Our Constitution is our guiding document. Its Preamble contains the ideals of our freedom struggle. Let us move forward with the spirit of harmony and brotherhood to realise the dreams of our nation-builders.

On the eve of Independence Day, I once again extend my greetings to you, specially to our soldiers guarding the borders, jawans of the forces and the police providing internal security and to the members of our diaspora living in every part of the world. I convey my best wishes to you all.

Thank you.

Jai Hind!

Jai Bharat!