

'Mann Ki Baat' (102nd episode)

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My dear countrymen, Namaskar. Once again a warm welcome to all of you in 'Mann Ki Baat'. Usually 'Mann Ki Baat' comes your way on the last Sunday of every month, but this time it is being held a week earlier. All of you know, I'll be in America next week and there the schedule is going to be pretty hectic, and hence I thought I'd talk to you before I go, what could be better than that! The blessings of the Janata-Janardan, the people, your inspiration, will also continue to enhance my energy.

Friends, many people say that as Prime Minister I did a certain good work, or some other great work. Many listeners of 'Mann Ki Baat' shower praises in their letters. Some say a particular task was performed; others refer to a job well done; some express that a certain work was much better; in fact very good at that! But when I see the efforts of the common man of India, the sheer hard work, the will power, I myself am moved. Be it the loftiest goal, be it the toughest challenge, the collective might of the people of India, the collective power, provides a solution to every challenge. Just two-three days ago, we saw how big a cyclone hit the western part of the country... Strong winds, heavy rain. Cyclone Biparjoy caused a lot of destruction in

Kutch. But, the courage and preparedness with which the people of Kutch fought such a dangerous cyclone is equally unprecedented too. Just a couple of days later, the people of Kutch are also going to celebrate their new year, that is, Ashadhi Beej. It is also a coincidence that Ashadhi Beej is considered a symbol of the onset of rains in Kutch. I have been going to Kutch for many years... I have also had the good fortune to serve the people there... and that's how I know very well the zest and fortitude of the people of Kutch. Kutch, was once termed as never to be able to recover after the devastating earthquake two decades ago... Today, the same district is one of the fastest growing districts of the country. I am sure the people of Kutch will rapidly emerge from the devastation caused by Cyclone Biparjoy.

Friends, no one has any control over natural calamities, but, the strength of disaster management that India has developed over the years, is becoming an example today. There is a significant way to combat natural calamities –viz. conservation of nature. These days during monsoon, our responsibility in this direction increases manifold. That is why today the country is making collective efforts through campaigns like 'Catch the Rain'. Last month in 'Mann Ki Baat', we had discussed about start-ups associated with water conservation. This time too I have come to know through letters about many people who are trying their very best to save every drop of water. One such friend is Tulsiram Yadav ji of Banda district of UP. Tulsiram Yadav ji is the Pradhan of

Luktara Gram Panchayat. You too know that there have always been hardships regarding water in Banda and Bundelkhand regions. To overcome this challenge, Tulsiram ji has built more than 40 ponds in the area, taking the people of the village along with him. Tulsiram ji has made the basis of his campaign – farm water in farms, village water in villages. Today, the result of his hard work is that the ground water level in his village is improving. Similarly in Hapur district in U.P., people collectively have revived an extinct river. A long time ago, there used to be a river here named Neem. As time went by, she disappeared, but was always remembered in local memories and folklore. Eventually, people decided to revive this natural heritage of theirs. On account of the collective efforts of the people, the Neem river has started flowing again. The point of origin of the river, the headwater is also being developed as an Amrit Sarovar.

Friends, these rivers, canals, lakes are not only water sources... life's myriad hues & emotions are also associated with them. A similar scene was observed in Maharashtra just a few days ago. This particular area mostly remains in the grip of drought. After waiting for five decades, the canal work of Nilwande Dam is now being completed here. A few days ago, water was released in the canal during testing. The pictures that came up during this time were really emotional. The people of the village were rejoicing as if it were the Holi-Diwali festival!

Friends, when it comes to management, I will also remember Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj today. Along with the bravery of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, there is a lot to learn from his governance and management skills. In particular, the work done by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj regarding water management and navy, they raise the glory of Indian history even today. The Sea-forts built by him still stand proudly in the middle of the sea even after so many centuries. The beginning of this month itself marks the completion of 350 years of the coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. This occasion is being celebrated as a big festival. During this, grand programs related to it were organized in Raigad Fort in Maharashtra. I remember, many years ago in 2014, I had the good fortune to go to Raigad and pay obeisance to that holy land. It is the duty of all of us to know about the management skills of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on this occasion, learn from him. This will instill in us a sense of pride in our heritage, and will also inspire us to perform our duties in the future.

My dear countrymen, you must have heard about the tiny squirrel from the Ramayana, who came forward to help build the Ram Setu. What I mean to say is that when the intention is noble, there is honesty in the efforts, no goal remains insurmountable. Today, India too, with a noble intention, is facing a huge challenge. The challenge is— T.B., or tuberculosis. India has resolved to create a T.B. free India by 2025. The goal is certainly a lofty one. There was a time when, after coming to

know about T.B., family members used to turn away, but today T.B. patients are being helped by making them family members. To eliminate tuberculosis from the root, Nikshay Mitras have taken the lead. A large number of varied social organizations have become Nikshay Mitra in the country. Thousands of people in villages & Panchayats have come forward themselves and adopted T.B. patients. There are many children who have come forward to help TB patients. This public participation is the biggest strength of this campaign. It is due to this participation, that today, more than 10 lakh TB patients in the country have been adopted... and this is a noble deed on the part of close to 85 thousand Nikshay Mitras. I am happy that many sarpanchs of the country, even the village heads, have taken this initiative that they will spare no effort to uproot TB from their villages.

Shriman Dikar Singh Mewari, a Nikshay friend of a village in Nainital, has adopted six TB patients. Similarly, Shriman Gyan Singh, head of a village panchayat of Kinnaur and a Nikshay Mitra also is engaged in providing every necessary help to TB patients in his block. Our children and young friends are also not far behind in the campaign to make India TB free. Look at the wonder of Nalini Singh, a 7-year-old daughter from Una, Himachal Pradesh. Daughter Nalini, is helping T. B. patients through her pocket money. You know how much kids love piggy banks, but 13-year-old Meenakshi from Katni district of MP and 11-year-old Bashwar Mukherjee from Diamond Harbor in West Bengal are both

different kids. Both these children have also handed over their piggy bank money to the T.B.-free-India campaign. All these examples, apart from evoking emotions, are also very inspiring. I heartily appreciate all these children who are thinking big at a tender age.

My dear countrymen, it is the nature of us Indians to be always ready to welcome new ideas. We love our things and also imbibe new things. An example of this is - Japan's technique Miyawaki; if the soil at some place has not been fertile, then the Miyawaki technique is a very good way to make that area green again. Miyawaki forests spread rapidly and become biodiversity spots in two to three decades. This is now spreading very fast in different parts of India too. Shriman Raafi Ramnath, a teacher from Kerala, changed the scenario of the area with this technique. Actually, Ramnath ji wanted to explain deeply about nature and environment to his students. For this he went to the extent of creating a herbal garden. His garden has now become a Biodiversity Zone. This success of his inspired him even more. After this, Raafi ji grew a mini forest with the Miyawaki technique and named it - 'Vidyavanam'. Now only a teacher can come up with such a beautiful name – 'Vidyavanam'. In the tiny space in this Vidyavanam of Ramnathji, over 450 trees of 115 varieties were planted. His students also help him in their maintenance. School children from the neighbourhood & common citizens throng in hordes to view this beautiful place. Miyawaki forests can be easily grown anywhere, even

in cities. Some time ago, I had inaugurated a Miyawaki forest in Kevadia, Ekta Nagar in Gujarat. In Kutch too, in the memory of the people who died in the 2001 earthquake, a Smriti-Van has been built in the Miyawaki style. Its success in a place like Kutch shows how effective this technology is, even in the toughest of natural environments. Similarly, saplings have been planted in Ambaji and Pavagadh by the Miyawaki method. I have come to know that a Miyawaki garden is also being created in Aliganj, Lucknow. In the last four years, work has been done on more than 60 such forests in Mumbai and its surrounding areas. Now this technique is being appreciated all over the world. It is being used extensively in many countries like Singapore, Paris, Australia, Malaysia. I would urge the countrymen, especially those living in cities, to make an effort to learn about the Miyawaki method. Through this, you can make invaluable contribution in making our earth and nature green and clean.

My dear countrymen, nowadays there is a lot of discussion about Jammu and Kashmir in our country. Sometimes due to rising tourism, at times due to the spectacular events of G-20. Some time ago I had told you in 'Mann Ki Baat' how 'Nadru' of Kashmir are being relished outside the country as well. Now the people of Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir have done a wonderful job. Farming has been going on in Baramulla for a long time, but here, there was a shortage of milk. The people of Baramulla took this challenge as an opportunity. A

large number of people started dairy farming here. The women here came to the forefront of this task, such as a sister – Ishrat Nabi. Ishrat, a graduate, has started Mir Sisters Dairy Farm. About 150 litres of milk is being sold every day from their dairy farm. Similarly, one such friend is from Sopore... Wasim Anayat. Wasim has more than two dozen animals and he sells more than two hundred liters of milk every day. Another youth Abid Hussain is also doing dairy farming. His work is also progressing a lot. Due to the hard work of such people, 5.5 lakh liters of milk is being produced daily in Baramulla. The entire Baramulla is turning into the symbol of a new white revolution. During the last two-and-a-half - three years, more than 500 dairy units have come up here. The dairy industry of Baramulla is a testimony to the fact that every part of our country is full of possibilities. The collective will of the people of a region can achieve any goal.

My dear countrymen, this month many a great news has come in for India from the sports world. The Indian team has raised the glory of the Tricolor by winning the Women's Junior Asia Cup for the first time. This month itself our Men's Hockey Team has also won the Junior Asia Cup. With that, we have also become the team with the most wins in the history of this tournament. Our junior team also did wonders in the Junior Shooting World Cup. The Indian team has secured the first position in this tournament. Out of the total gold medals in this tournament, 20% have come in India's account alone. The Asian under



Twenty Athletics Championship has also been held this June. In this, India remained in the top three in the medal tally among 45 countries.

Friends, earlier there used to be a time when we used to come to know about international events, but, often there was no mention of India in them. But, today, I am just mentioning the successes of the past few weeks, even then the list becomes so long. This is the real strength of our youth. There are many such sports and competitions, where today, for the first time, India is making her presence felt. For example, in long jump, Shrishankar Murali has won a bronze for the country in a prestigious event like the Paris Diamond League. This is India's first medal in this competition. One such similar success has been registered by our Under Seventeen Women Wrestling Team in Kyrgyzstan. I congratulate all these athletes of the country, their parents and coaches for their efforts.

Friends, behind this success of the country in international events, is the hard work of our sportspersons at the national level. Today, sports are organized with a new enthusiasm in different states of the country. They give players a chance to play, win and to learn from defeat. For example, Khelo India University Games were organized in Uttar Pradesh recently. A lot of enthusiasm was observed in the youth. Our youth have broken 11 records in these games... Punjab University,

Amritsar's Guru Nanak Dev University and Karnataka's Jain University have occupied the first three places in the medal tally.

Friends, a major aspect of such tournaments is that many inspiring stories of young players come to the fore. In the rowing event at the Khelo India University Games, Assam's Cotton University's Anyatam Rajkumar became the first Divyang athlete to participate in it. Nidhi Pawaiya of Barkatullah University managed to win a Gold Medal in Shot-put despite a serious knee injury. Shubham Bhandare of Savitribai Phule Pune University, who had suffered a disappointment in Bangalore last year due to an ankle injury, has become a Gold Medalist in Steeplechase this time. Similarly, Saraswati Kundu of Burdwan University is the captain of her Kabaddi team. She has crossed many difficulties and reached there. Many of the best performing Athletes are also getting a lot of help from the TOPS Scheme. The more our sportspersons play, the more they'll bloom.

My dear countrymen, 21st June is also round the corner. This time too, people in every nook and corner of the world are eagerly waiting for the International Day of Yoga. This year the theme of Yoga Day is – ‘Yoga For Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ i.e. Yoga for the welfare of all in the form of 'One World-One Family'. It expresses the spirit of Yoga, which unites and takes everyone along. Like every time, this time too

programs related to yoga will be organized in every corner of the country.

Friends, this time I will get the opportunity to participate in the Yoga Day program to be held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. I see that even on social media, there is tremendous enthusiasm about Yoga Day.

Friends, I urge all of you to adopt yoga in your life, make it a part of your daily routine. If you are still not connected with yoga, then the 21st of June is a great opportunity for this resolve. There is no need for many frills in yoga anyway. See, when you join yoga, what a big change will come in your life.

My dear countrymen, the day after tomorrow i.e. the 20th of June is the day of the historical Rath Yatra. Rath Yatra bears a unique identity through out the world. Lord Jagannath's Rath Yatra is taken out with great fanfare in different states of the country. The Rath Yatra in Puri, Odisha is a wonder in itself. When I was in Gujarat, I used to get the opportunity to attend the great Rath Yatra in Ahmedabad. The way people from all over the country, every society, every class turn up in these Rath Yatras is exemplary in itself. Along with inner faith, it is also a reflection of the spirit of Ek Bharat- Shreshtha Bharat. My best wishes

to all of you on this auspicious occasion. I pray that Lord Jagannath blesses all countrymen with good health, happiness and prosperity.

Friends, while discussing the festivals related to Indian tradition and culture, I must also mention the interesting events held in the Raj Bhavans of the country. Now Raj Bhavans in the country are being identified with social and development work. Today, our Raj Bhavans are becoming the flag bearers of the T.B.-Free India campaign & the campaign related to Organic farming. In the past, be it Gujarat, Goa, Telangana, Maharashtra, Sikkim, the enthusiasm with which different Raj Bhavans celebrated their foundation days is an example in itself. This is a wonderful initiative which empowers the spirit of 'Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat'.

Friends, India is the mother of democracy. We consider our democratic ideals as paramount, we consider our Constitution as Supreme... therefore, we can never forget June the 25th. This is the very day when Emergency was imposed on our country. It was a dark period in the history of India. Lakhs of people opposed the emergency with full might. The supporters of democracy were tortured so much during that time, that even today, it makes the mind tremble. Many books have been written on these atrocities; the punishment meted out by the police and administration. I had also got the opportunity to write a book named 'Sangharsh Mein Gujarat' at that time. A few days ago I came across

another book written on the Emergency, - Torture of Political Prisoners in India. This book, published during the Emergency, describes how, at that time, the government was treating the guardians of democracy most cruelly. There are many case studies in this book, there are many pictures. I wish that, today, when we are celebrating the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav we must also have a glance at such crimes which endanger the freedom of the country. This will make it easier for today's young generation to understand the meaning and significance of democracy.

My dear countrymen, 'Mann Ki Baat' is a beautiful garland adorned with colourful pearls... each pearl unique and priceless in itself. Every episode of this program is full of life. Along with the feeling of collectivity, it fills us with a sense of duty and service towards the society. Here those topics are discussed openly, about which we usually get to read and hear very little. We often see how many countrymen got new inspiration after a certain topic was mentioned in 'Mann Ki Baat'. Recently I received a letter from the country's famous Indian classical dancer Ananda Shankar Jayant. In her letter, she has written about that episode of 'Mann Ki Baat', in which we had discussed about story telling. In that program, we had acknowledged the talent of the people associated with this field. Inspired by that program of 'Mann Ki Baat', Ananda Shankar Jayant has prepared 'Kutti Kahani'. This is a great collection of stories from different languages meant for children. This

effort is very good, also since it deepens our children's attachment to their culture. She has also uploaded some interesting videos of these stories on her YouTube channel. I specifically mentioned this effort of Ananda Shankar Jayant because I felt very happy to see how the good deeds of the countrymen are inspiring others too. Learning from this, they also try to do something better for the country and society with their skills. This is the collective power of the people of India, which is instilling new strength in the progress of the country.

My dear countrymen, that's all this time with me in 'Mann Ki Baat'. See you again, next time, with new topics. It is the seasons of rains, hence, take good care of your health. Have a balanced diet and stay healthy. And yes! Certainly do yoga. Now summer vacations are about to end in many schools. I would also tell the children not to keep their homework pending for the last day. Finish your work and be at ease. Thank you very much!