

'Mann Ki Baat' (97th episode)

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My dear countrymen, Namaskar. This is the first 'Mann Ki Baat' of 2023 and along with it, it is also the ninety-seventh episode of the programme. It gives me great pleasure to interact with all of you once again. Every year, the month of January is quite eventful. This month, around the 14th of January, the glitter of festivals abound across the country from north to south and from east to west. After this, the country also celebrates her Republic Day. This time also many aspects of the Republic Day celebrations are being praised a lot. Pulkit from Jaisalmer writes to me that it was great to see the workers who built the Kartavya path during the 26th January parade. Jaya from Kanpur writes that she enjoyed seeing different aspects of Indian culture in the tableaux included in the parade. Women Camel Riders and the women contingent of CRPF, who took part in this parade for the first time, are also being highly appreciated.

Friends, Vatsal ji from Dehradun has written to me that I always wait for the 25th of January because the Padma Awards are announced that day; and in a way, the evening of the 25th itself raises my enthusiasm for the 26th January. Many people have also shared their feelings about People's Padma to those who have achieved through their dedication and service at the grassroots level. This time there has been a good representation of the tribal community and people associated with tribal life among the Padma awardees. Tribal life is different from the hustle and bustle of the cities; its challenges are also different. Despite this, tribal societies are always ready to preserve their traditions. Efforts are also made to preserve and research aspects related to tribal communities. Similarly, many great personalities who have worked on tribal languages like Toto, Ho, Kui, Kuvi and Manda have received Padma Awards. It is a matter of pride for all of us. **Dhani Ram Toto, Janum Singh Soy and B. Ramakrishna Reddy ji**...the whole country has become familiar with them now. People working with tribals like Siddhi, Jarawa and Onge have also been honoured this time. Such as...Hirabai Lobi, Ratan Chandra Kar

and Ishwar Chandra Verma Ji. Tribal communities have been an integral part of our land, our heritage. Their contribution in the development of the country and society is very important. Honouring the personalities who worked for them, will also inspire the new generation. This year the echoes of the Padma Awards are being heard even in those areas which used to be Naxal affected. Due to their efforts, those who show the right path to the misguided youth in Naxalite affected areas have been honoured with Padma awards. For this, Ajay Kumar Mandavi, who does wood carving in Kanker, and Parshuram Komaji Khune, associated with the famous Jharipatti Rangbhoomi of Gadchiroli, have also received this honour. Similarly, Ramkuiwangbe Niume, Bikram Bahadur Jamatia and Karma Wangchu, who are involved in the preservation of their culture in the North-East, have also been honoured.

Friends, there are many people who have enriched the world of music among those who have been honoured with the Padma Awards this time. Who does not like music? Everyone's choice of music may be different, but music is a part of everyone's life. This

time among the Padma awardees are those people who have expertise in spreading the melody of our traditional musical instruments like Santoor, Bamhum, Dwitara. Ghulam Mohammad Zaz, Moa Su-Pong, Ri-Singhbor Kurka-Long, Muni-Venkatappa and Mangal Kanti Rai are just a few of the names that are being discussed all around.

Friends, many Padma awardees are those friends among us, who always kept the country paramount, dedicating their lives to the principle of "Nation first". They remained engaged in their work with devotion and never expected any reward for it. The satisfaction on the face of those for whom they are working is the biggest award for them. The pride of our countrymen has risen by honouring such dedicated people. I may not be able to take the names of all the Padma awardees here, but I definitely request you to know in detail about the inspirational life of these Padma awardees and tell others as well.

Friends, today when we are discussing our Republic Day during the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, I will also mention an interesting book here. A very interesting subject has been discussed in this book which I received a few weeks ago. The name of this book is India - The Mother of Democracy and it has many excellent essays. India is the largest democracy in the world and we Indians are also proud of the fact that our country is also the Mother of Democracy. Democracy is in our veins, it is in our culture - it has been an integral part of our work for centuries. By nature, we are a Democratic Society. Dr. Ambedkar had compared the Buddhist monks union to the Indian Parliament. He described it as an institution where there were many rules for Motions, Resolutions, Quorum, Voting and counting of votes. Babasaheb believed that Lord Buddha must have got inspiration from the political systems of that time.

There is a small but famous village in Tamil Nadu – Utirmerur. Here an inscription of 1100-1200 years ago surprises the whole world. This rock-edict is like a mini-constitution. It has been explained in detail how the Gram Sabha should be conducted and what the procedure

for selection of its members shall be. Another example of Democratic Values in the history of our country is the Anubhav Mandapam of Lord Basaveshwara of the 12th century. Here, free debate and discussion were encouraged. You will be surprised to know that it is even before the Magna Carta. The republican traditions of the Kakatiya dynasty kings of Warangal were also very famous. The Bhakti movement furthered the culture of democracy in western India. An article has also been included in the book on the democratic spirit of the Sikh Panth which throws light on the decisions taken by the consensus of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. The book also has good information on community driven and consensus driven decision making - in Oraon and Munda tribes of central India. After reading this book, you will feel how the spirit of democracy has been flowing in every part of the country for centuries. As the Mother of Democracy, we should constantly think deeply about this topic, discuss it and also inform the world. This will further strengthen the spirit of democracy in the country.

My dear countrymen, if I ask you, what is common between Yoga Day and our different types of coarse grains - Millets, then you might think...what is this comparison? If I say that both have a lot in common, you will be surprised. In fact, the United Nations has taken the decision of both International Yoga Day and International Year of Millets after India's proposal. Secondly, yoga is also related to health and millets also play an important role in health. The third thing is more important – a revolution is on the way because of public participation in both campaigns. Just as people have made yoga and fitness a part of their lives by taking active participation on a large scale; similarly people are adopting millets on a large scale. People are now making millets a part of their diet. A huge impact of this change is also visible. On the one hand, the small farmers who traditionally used to produce millets are very excited. They are very happy that the world has now started understanding the importance of millets. On the other hand, FPOs and entrepreneurs have started efforts to market millets and make them available to people.

A resident of Nandyal district of Andhra Pradesh, K.V. Rama Subba Reddy Ji left a well paying job for the sake of millets. The taste of millets made by his mother's hands was such that he started a millet processing unit in his village. Subba Reddy ji also explains the benefits of millets to the people and also makes it easily available. Sharmila Oswal, a resident of Kenad village near Alibaug in Maharashtra, has been contributing in a unique way in the production of millets for the last 20 years. She is imparting training in smart agriculture to farmers. Her efforts have not only increased the yield of millets, but also increased the income of the farmers.

If you get a chance to visit Raigarh in Chhattisgarh, you must visit the Millets Cafe here. Items like Chilla, Dosa, Momos, Pizza and Manchurian are becoming very popular in this Millets Cafe which started a few months back.

May I ask you one more thing? You must have heard the word entrepreneur, but have you heard Milletpreneurs? Milletpreneurs of Odisha are in the limelight these days. A Self Help Group of about

1500 women of the tribal district Sundergarh is associated with the Odisha Millets Mission. Here women are making everything from millets... to cookies, rasgulla, gulab jamun, and even cakes. Due to their great demand in the market, the income of women is also increasing.

The Aland Bhootai (Aland Bhutai) Millets Farmers Producer Company started work last year under the supervision of the Indian Institute of Millets Research in Kalaburgi, Karnataka. People are liking the khakra, biscuits and laddoos here. In Karnataka's Bidar district, women associated with the Hulsoor Millet Producer Company are cultivating millets as well as preparing their flour. Through this, their earnings have also increased a lot. Farmers from 12 states have joined the FPO of Chhattisgarh's Sandeep Sharma, who is associated with natural farming. This FPO of Bilaspur is making 8 types of millets flour and their dishes.

Friends, Today G-20 summit events are going on in every corner of India and I am happy that in every corner of the country, wherever

the G-20 summit is being held, nutritious and tasty dishes made from millets are included in it. Dishes like Bajra-khichdi, poha, kheer and roti, as well as Ragi-based payasam, puri and dosa are also served here. Health drinks, cereals and noodles made from millets were showcased in the Millets Exhibitions at all G20 venues. Indian Missions around the world are also making a lot of efforts to increase their popularity. You can imagine that this effort of the country and the increasing demand of Millets in the world is going to give strength to our small farmers. It gives joy to me to see that the variety of new things that have started being made from Millets today is being liked equally by the young generation. I also congratulate the listeners of 'Mann Ki Baat' for such a wonderful start to the International Year of Millets and for relentlessly taking it forward.

My dear countrymen, what comes to your mind when someone talks about the Tourist Hub Goa?

Naturally, as soon as the name of Goa is referred to; first of all, the beautiful Coastline, Beaches and favourite food items come to mind. But something happened in Goa this month, which is in the headlines. Today in 'Mann Ki Baat', I want to share this with all of you. This event happened in Goa - Purple Fest. This fest was organized in Panaji from 6 to 8 January. This was a unique effort in itself for the welfare of the divyangs. How big an occasion Purple Fest was, you can all guess from the fact that more than 50 thousand brothers and sisters of ours participated in it. The people who came here were thrilled about the fact that they could now enjoy the 'Miramar Beach' to the fullest. In fact, 'Miramar Beach' has become one of the accessible beaches of Goa for our Divyang brothers and sisters. Along with a Cricket Tournament, Table Tennis Tournament, Marathon Competition, a Deaf-Blind Convention was also organized here. Apart from the Unique Bird Watching Program, a film was also shown here. Special arrangements were made for this, so that all our Divyang brothers and sisters and children could enjoy it to the fullest. One special thing about Purple Fest was the participation of the

private sector of the country in it. Products which are Divyang Friendly were showcased on their behalf. Many efforts were seen in this fest to raise awareness about the welfare of the divyangs. For making Purple Fest a success, I congratulate all the people who participated in it. Along with this, I also congratulate those volunteers, who came together to work day and night to organize this. I have full faith that such campaigns will prove to be very effective in realizing our Vision of Accessible India.

My dear countrymen, now in 'Mann Ki Baat', I will talk on a topic, in which you will feel joy and pride and your mind will say - Wow what a joy! One of the oldest Science Institutions in the country, the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, i.e. IISc, is presenting a wonderful example. In 'Mann Ki Baat', I have discussed earlier, how the two great personalities of India, Jamsetji Tata and Swami Vivekananda, have been the inspiration behind the establishment of this institution. And a matter of joy and pride for us is that in the year 2022, there have been a total of 145 patents in the name of this institute. This means - two patents every five days. This record is

amazing in itself. I would also like to congratulate the team of IISc for this success. Friends, Today India's ranking is 7th in Patent Filing and 5th in Trademarks. Talking about patents only, there has been an increase of about 50 percent in the last five years. In the Global Innovation Index too, India's ranking has improved tremendously and now it has reached 40th position, while in 2015, India was behind even the 80th position in the Global Innovation Index. I want to tell you one more interesting thing. For the first time in the last 11 years in India, the number of Domestic Patent Filing was seen more than Foreign Filing. It also shows the growing scientific prowess of India.

Friends, we all know that knowledge is paramount in the global economy of the 21st century. I believe that the dream of India's Techade will definitely be fulfilled on the strength of our Innovators and their Patents. With this, we all will be able to take full advantage of world class technology and products prepared in our own country.

My dear countrymen, I saw a post on NaMoApp by engineer Vijay ji from Telangana. In this, Vijayji has written about E-Waste. Vijay ji

requests that I discuss this in 'Mann Ki Baat'. Earlier too in this programme we have talked about 'Waste to Wealth' i.e. 'Kachre se Kanchan', but come, today, let's discuss E-Waste related to this.

Friends, today devices like Mobile Phone, Laptop, Tablet have become common in every household. Their number will be in Billions across the country. Today's latest devices are also future's E-Waste. Whenever someone buys a new device or replaces one's old device, it becomes necessary to keep in mind whether it is discarded properly or not. If E-Waste is not disposed of properly, it can also harm our environment. But, if done carefully, it can become a great force in the Circular Economy of Recycle and Reuse. It was mentioned in a United Nations report that 50 million tonnes of E-Waste is being thrown every year. Can you guess how much? Even if the weight of all the commercial planes that have been built in the history of mankind is combined, it will not equal the amount of E-Waste being released. It is like every second 800 laptops are being thrown away. You will be amazed to know that about 17 types of Precious Metals can be extracted from this E-Waste through

different processes. This includes Gold, Silver, Copper and Nickel, so utilizing E-Waste is no less than making 'Kachre Ko Kanchan'. Today there is no dearth of start-ups that are doing innovative work in this direction. At present, around 500 E-Waste Recyclers are associated with this sector and many new entrepreneurs are also being associated with it. This sector has also given direct employment to thousands of people. E-Parisaraa of Bengaluru is engaged in one such effort. It has developed an indigenous technology for extracting precious metals from Printed Circuit Boards.

Similarly, Ecoreco working in Mumbai has developed a system to collect E-Waste through a Mobile App. Attero Recycling of Roorkee, Uttarakhand has obtained many patents in this field worldwide. It has also earned a lot of awards by preparing its own E-Waste Recycling Technology. Tonnes of E-Waste are being collected in Bhopal through a Mobile App and the Website 'Kabadiwala'. There are many such examples. All these are helping to make India a Global Recycling Hub; but, there is also an essential condition for the success of such Initiatives – that is, people have to be made aware

about safe useful methods of disposal of E-Waste. Those working in the field of E-Waste say that at present, only 15-17 percent E-Waste is being recycled every year.

My dear countrymen, today there is a lot of talk about climate change and conservation of Biodiversity all over the world. We have been continuously talking about India's concrete efforts in this direction. You will also be very happy to know the work that India has done for its wetlands. Some listeners might be wondering what wetlands are ? 'Wetland sites' means those places where water remains accumulated throughout the year on marshy soil-like land. A few days later, on February 2, it is World Wetlands Day. Wetlands are very important for the existence of our earth, because many birds and animals depend on them. Along with enriching Biodiversity, they also ensure Flood control and Ground Water Recharge. Many of you must be knowing that Ramsar Sites are such wetlands which are of International Importance. Wetlands may be there in any country; but they have to fulfill many criteria; only then are they declared as Ramsar Sites. Ramsar Sites should have 20,000 or more water birds.

It is important to have a large number of local fish species. On 75 years of independence during the Amrit Mahotsav, I would like to share with you some good information related to Ramsar Sites. Now the total number of Ramsar Sites in our country has increased to 75, whereas, before 2014 there were only 26 Ramsar Sites in the country. For this, the local community deserves congratulations, who have preserved this Biodiversity. It is also a tribute to our age-old culture and tradition of living in harmony with nature. These wetlands of India are also an example of our natural potential. Chilika Lake of Odisha is known to shelter more than 40 waterbird species. Kaibul-Lamjaa, Loktak is considered to be the only natural habitat of the Swamp Deer. Vedanthangal of Tamil Nadu was declared a Ramsar Site in 2022. The entire credit for preserving the bird population here goes to the farmers in the neighbourhood. The Panjath Nag community in Kashmir spends a day specially cleaning the village spring during the Annual Fruit Blossom festival. Most of the Ramsar Sites also have a Unique cultural heritage. Manipur's cultures have a deep connection with Loktak and the

sacred lake Renuka. Similarly, Sambhar is also related to Shakambhari Devi, an incarnation of Maa Durga. This expansion of Wetlands in India is possible because of the people who live around Ramsar Sites. I greatly appreciate all such people, on behalf of the listeners of 'Mann Ki Baat', and wish them all the best.

My dear countrymen, this time in our country, especially in North India, there was severe winter. In this winter, people also enjoyed snowfall on the mountains. Some pictures came in from Jammu and Kashmir which captivated hearts in the entire country. People from all over the world are liking these pictures on social media. Due to snowfall, our Kashmir valley has become very beautiful like every year this time too! People also particularly like the video of the train going from Banihal to Budgam. Beautiful snowfall, white sheet like snow all around. People are saying that this scene looks like a fairy tale! Many people are saying that these are not pictures of any foreign country, but of Kashmir in our own country.

A social media user has written – 'What would be more beautiful than this heaven?' This is absolutely correct - that is why Kashmir is called heaven on earth. Seeing these pictures, you too must be thinking of going on a trip to Kashmir. I would like you to go there yourself and take your friends along. Snow-capped mountains in Kashmir, along with natural beauty; there are many more things to see and know. For example, Winter Games were organized in Suedabad, Kashmir. The theme of these Games was - Snow Cricket! You might be thinking that Snow Cricket would be a very exciting game –and you are absolutely right. Kashmiri youth make cricket even more amazing in the snow. Through this, there is also a search for young players in Kashmir, who will later play as Team India. In a way, this is also an extension of the Khelo India Movement. In Kashmir, there is a lot of enthusiasm among the youth regarding sports. In the coming times, many of these youth will win medals for the country, and will hoist the tricolor. I would suggest that the next time you plan a trip to Kashmir, take out time to visit such events. These experiences will make your trip even more memorable.

My dear countrymen, our efforts to strengthen our Republic should go on relentlessly. The Republic becomes strong 'by public participation', 'by everyone's effort', 'by performing one's duties towards the country', and I am satisfied that, our 'Mann Ki Baat', is the emphatic voice of such dutiful fighters. We will meet again next time with interesting and inspiring stories of such dedicated people. Thank you very much.