

MANN KI BAAT 2.0, 24th Edition

My dear countrymen, Namaskar. We are seeing how the country is fighting against Covid-19 with all her might. This has been the biggest pandemic in the last hundred years and during this very pandemic, India has confronted many a natural disaster with fortitude. Meanwhile, there were cyclone Amphan and cyclone Nisarg...many states had floods...there were many minor and major earthquakes; there were landslides. Just recently, in the past ten days, the country faced two major cyclones – cyclone Taukte on the west coast and cyclone Yaas on the east coast. Both these cyclones affected a number of States. The country and her people fought them with all their strength, ensuring minimum loss of life. We experience now that compared to earlier times, we are being able to save the lives of maximum people. Under these trying and extraordinary calamitous circumstances, people of all these cyclone affected States have displayed courage...they've faced this moment of crisis with immense patience and discipline. I wish to commend all citizens respectfully, wholeheartedly. People who led rescue and relief work deserve more appreciation than can be expressed. I salute all of them. The Centre, State governments and local administration have come together to face this calamity. My heart goes out to all the people who've lost their near and dear ones. Let us all firmly stand by those who have borne the brunt of this disaster.

My dear countrymen, however big the challenge be, India's victory-resolve, her Vijay-Sankalp has always been equal in magnitude. Her collective strength and our spirit of service has always rescued the country from the midst of every storm. We've seen in the days gone by how our doctors, nurses and frontline warriors have toiled day and night without bothering about themselves, and continue to do so. Amidst all this, there indeed are people who've played a major role in the fight against the second wave of Corona. Many listeners of Mann Ki Baat, on NamOApp and through letters, have urged me to touch upon these warriors.

Friends, when the second wave came, the demand for oxygen surged all of a sudden...this was a very big challenge...delivering medical oxygen to remote parts of the country was indeed a huge task. If an oxygen tanker moves fast, the slightest error can lead to the risk of a big explosion. Many plants manufacturing industrial oxygen are located in the eastern parts of the country...transporting oxygen from there to other states of the country requires many days. In confronting this challenge, the country was helped by cryogenic tanker drivers, the Oxygen Express and Air Force pilots...many such people worked on a war footing, saving the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. Joining us in Mann Ki Baat today is one such friend – Shriman Dinesh Upadhyay ji, resident of Jaunpur, U.P.

Modi ji – Dinesh ji, Namaskar

Dinesh Upadhyay ji – Sir ji Pranaam.

Modi ji – First of all, I'd want you to definitely tell us something about yourself.

Dinesh ji – Sir, my name is Dinesh Babulnath Upadhyay. I am a resident of village Hasanpur, Post Jamua, District Jaunpur.

Modi ji – You are from U.P.!

Dinesh ji – Yes...Yes Sir

Modi ji – Ji

Dinesh ji – And Sir, I have a son, two daughters...also my wife and parents.

Modi ji – And what do you do?

Dinesh ji – Sir, I drive an oxygen tanker...for liquid oxygen.

Modi ji – Are the children carrying on well with their studies?

Dinesh ji – Yes Sir. They are studying. Both daughters as well as the son are studying Sir.

Modi ji – Are their online studies going on well?

Dinesh ji – Yes Sir, they are doing it well. Right now, my daughters are studying, that too online Sir. I've been driving an oxygen tanker for 15 – 17 years Sir.

Modi ji – Okay, you’ve been transporting oxygen for 15 – 17 years! Then you are not just a truck driver! In a way, you are engaged in saving the lives of lakhs of people.

Dinesh ji – Sir, our line of work is like that! Sir, our Company of oxygen tankers, Inox Company also takes good care of us. And wherever we deliver oxygen, it gives us a lot of happiness.

Modi ji – But during these Corona times, your responsibilities have increased a lot!

Dinesh ji – Yes Sir, it has increased a lot.

Modi ji – When you are on the driving seat of your truck, what thoughts cross your mind? Any new experience compared to earlier times? There must be a lot of pressure...a lot of stress! Concerns regarding the family, the Corona atmosphere, pressures from people, demands! What all must be happening!

Dinesh ji – Sir, that doesn’t bother us. For us, it’s just that we are fulfilling our duty...if delivering oxygen on time gives life to someone, it is a matter of great honour for us.

Modi ji – You are expressing your sentiment very well. Okay, tell us...today, during these pandemic times when people are noticing the importance of your work, which perhaps they didn’t realise earlier...has it led to a change in the way they view you and your work?

Dinesh ji – Yes Sir. Earlier, oxygen drivers like us used to be caught up in jams, somewhere or the other. But in present times, the administration has helped us a lot. And wherever we go, we feel an inner eagerness within...how soon can we reach and save people's lives! Whether one gets to eat or not...or facing any other problem...when we reach hospital with the tanker, we see people at the hospital there gesturing at us with a V sign...people whose family members are admitted.

Modi ji – Okay, they indicate the V for victory!

Dinesh ji – Yes Sir. Some show a V, others raise a thumbs up. It gives us a lot of satisfaction...we must have done a good deed in life to get an opportunity to offer such service.

Modi ji – All your fatigue must be vanishing!

Dinesh ji – Yes...Yes Sir.

Modi ji – So, do you come home and tell your children about that?

Dinesh ji – No sir. My children stay in the village. I am here at Inox Air Products as a driver. I go home after 8-9 months.

Modi ji – So, at times, you must be talking to the children on the phone!

Dinesh ji – Yes Sir. Regularly.

Modi ji – Then they must be feeling that their father should take care of himself amidst all this!

Dinesh ji – Sir, they say, “Papa, work...but do it with along with your own safety.” And we work with safety. We have a plant in Maangaon too. Inox helps us a lot.

Modi ji – Fine. Dinesh ji, I felt really nice listening to you. And even the country will get to know how people are working in this fight against Corona. For nine odd months, you are not meeting your children and family, just to ensure that people’s lives are saved. When the country listens to this, she will feel proud that we shall win the battle, since lakhs of people like Dinesh Upadhyaya ji are persevering, leaving no stone unturned!

Dinesh ji – Sir, one day or the other, we shall certainly defeat Corona!

Modi ji – Fine Dinesh ji...your sentiment is the strength of the country. Many thanks Dinesh ji. And please convey my blessings to your children.

Dinesh ji – Shall do it Sir. Pranaam.

Modi ji – Thank you.

Dinesh ji – Pranaam, pranaam.

Modi ji – Thank you.

Friends, truly, as Dinesh ji was mentioning, when a tanker driver reaches a hospital with oxygen, he comes across as a godsent messenger. We can understand the magnitude of

responsibility involved in such work...and the resultant mental pressure one undergoes.

Friends, at this very moment of challenge, to facilitate transportation of oxygen, Indian Railway too has stepped forward. Oxygen Express, oxygen rail has transported larger quantities of oxygen to all corners of the country, faster than oxygen tankers travelling by road. Mothers and sisters would be proud to hear that one oxygen express is being run fully by women. Every woman of the country will feel proud at that. Not just that, every Indian will feel proud. I have invited Shirisha Gajni, a loco pilot of Oxygen Express, to Mann ki Baat.

Modi ji- Shirisha ji namastey!

Shirisha- Namastey sir! How are you?

Modi ji- I am very fine. Shirisha ji, I have heard that you are working as a railway pilot and I was told that your entire team of women is running this oxygen express. Shirisha ji you are doing a wonderful work. During corona times many women like you have come forward to give strength to the country to fight corona. You too are a very big example of woman power. But the country would like to know, I want to know where do you get this motivation from?

Shirisha- Sir, for me my motivation are my father – mother, sir. My father is a government employee, sir. *Actually I have two elder sisters, sir. We are three members, ladies only but my father encourages us to work. My first sister is doing a government job in bank and I am settled in railways. My parents are very encouraging.*

Modi ji- Ok Shirisha ji, you have served railways during normal days too. You have driven trains routinely but on the one hand there was so much demand for oxygen....you were ferrying oxygen... then it must have been a task with much responsibility; being a bit more responsible. Ferrying normal goods is a different matter, Oxygen is a very delicate thing too, what experience did you undergo?

Shirisha- I felt happy in doing this work. During oxygen special time I observed all – safety wise, formation wise and for any leakage. Next, Indian Railway too is supportive, sir. I was given green path to drive this oxygen, I reached 125 kilometres in one and a half hour with this train. Railway took this much responsibility, I also took responsibility, sir.

Modi ji- Great... Shirisha ji I congratulate you a lot and convey my special pranam to your father- mother who motivated their three daughters so much and promoted them greatly and thus encouraged them. And I feel... pranam to such parents too and

to you all sisters as well who served the country like this and displayed such a spirit also. Many many thanks Shirisha ji.

Shirish- Thanks sir. Thank you, sir. I need your blessings.

Modi ji- May the blessings of All Mighty remain with you, blessings of mother-father be with you. Thanks ji.

Shirisha- Thanks sir.

Friends, just now we heard Shirisha ji. Her experiences inspire us, make us emotional too. In fact, this battle is so big... that in this like the railways our country is working through all the three ways- water, land, sky. On the one hand empty tankers are being flown to oxygen plants by Air Force planes, on the other, work on construction of new oxygen plants too is being completed. Along with that, oxygen, oxygen concentrators and cryogenic tankers from abroad also are being brought into the country. That is why, in this task Navy , Air Force, Army and our institutions like DRDO are also involved. So many of our scientists, industry experts and technicians too are working on a war footing. The countrymen are keen to know and to understand the work of all of them. That is why Group Captain Patnaik ji from the Air Force is joining us.

Modi ji- Patnaik ji, Jai Hind.

Grp. Cpt.- Sir Jai Hind. Sir I am Group Captain A.K. Patanik. Speaking from Air Force station Hindon.

Modi ji- Patnaik ji, during the war against corona you are handling a big responsibility. Going around the world to bring tankers, delivering tankers here. I would like to know as a soldier you have done a different kind of work. One has to run in warfare; today you are running to save lives. How are you feeling?

Group Captain- Sir we are fortunate to be able to help our countrymen at this moment of crisis. And these missions that have been assigned to us we are fulfilling them very well. Our training and support services that we have are assisting us fully and the best thing, Sir, is that the job satisfaction derived is of a very high level. And this is why we are able to do continuous operations.

Modi ji- Captain the efforts that you made these days... that too you had to do in very short time...How have you been placed these days?.

Group Captain- Sir, from the last one month we have been continuously lifting oxygen tankers and liquid oxygen containers from both domestic and international destinations, Sir. Sir, the Air force has completed more than about 1600 sorties and we have flown more than 3000 hours. We have completed nearly 160 international missions; due to which,

from all places, oxygen tankers from domestic destinations which earlier took two to three days, now we can deliver from one place to another in two to three hours; in international missions too within 24 hours by doing continuous round the clock operations... Entire Air Force is engaged in this so that we can help the country by bringing in as many tankers as soon as possible.

Modi ji- Captain, internationally what all places did you have to run around?

Grp Cpt.- Sir, for us on short notice to Singapore, Dubai, Belgium, Germany and UK. To all these places different fleets of the Indian Air Force sir, IL-76 , C-17 and other planes had gone... C-130 which had gone by planning at very short notice. Because of our training and zeal, we were able to complete these missions timely sir.

Modi ji- See this time the country feels proud that whether it is water, land, sky our soldiers are engaged in fighting the battle against corona and captain you have fulfilled a big responsibility...many congratulations to you.

Group Captain- Sir thank you so much sir. We are trying our best. My daughter Aditi too is with me Sir.

Modi ji- That is nice!

Aditi- Namastey Modi ji

Modi ji- Namastey beti,namastey. Aditi how old are you?

Aditi- I am 12 years old and I study in class 8th.

Modi ji- So your father goes out, is in uniform!

Aditi-Yes! I feel very proud of him. Feel very proud that he is doing all this important work, helping so many people suffering from corona and bringing oxygen tankers and containers from so many countries.

Modi ji- But the daughter does miss her father so much, doesn't she?

Aditi- Yes, I miss him a lot. Now a days he is not able to stay home much as he is going on so many international flights and delivering containers and tankers to production plants so that the people suffering from corona can get oxygen timely and their lives can be saved.

Modi ji- So beti, this work of saving lives through oxygen is now known to people in every house hold.

Aditi- Yes.

Modi ji - When your friend circle, your fellow students learn that your father is engaged in oxygen service, they must be looking at you with great respect?

Aditi - Yes, all my friends also say that your father is doing such an important job and you must be feeling very proud and it is then I do feel extremely proud and all of my family, my maternal grandparents, paternal grandmother, all of them are very proud of my father... my mother and her doctor colleagues they are also working day and night... and all the Armed Forces, uncles in my father's squadron, and all the forces, all of the people, the army is working quite a lot....and I am sure that with everyone's efforts, we will definitely win this battle against Corona.

Modi ji –It is said here that when a daughter speaks, Goddess Saraswati is very much present in her words and when Aditi is saying that we will definitely win, then in a way it becomes the voice of God. Ok Aditi, right now you must be studying online?

Aditi - Yes, right now all our classes are going on online and right now we are taking full precautions at home... and if one has to go out, then you must wear a double mask and everything else...we are maintaining all precautions and personal hygiene. We are observing safeguards with regards to everything.

Modi ji –Good beta, what are your hobbies? What do you like?

Aditi - My hobbies are swimming and basketball but now that has stopped a bit and during this lockdown and corona virus I

have become very fond of baking and cooking and I do all the baking and cooking for my dad so when he returns after doing so much work then I make cookies and cakes for him!

Modi ji –Wah! It is really nice! Alright Beta after a long time you have got a chance to spend some time with your father, and it feels very good and I congratulate you captain and when I congratulate the captain I mean not only him but all our Forces- navy, army and air force, I salute everyone, the way they are operating cohesively! Thank you brother.

Grp. Cpt. - Thank You Sir.

PM Modi- Friends, the nation salutes these soldiers of ours, these warriors of ours for the work that they have done. Similarly, millions of people are toiling day and night. The tasks they are performing is not part of their routine work. This type of disaster has hit the world in a hundred years. We have met such a big calamity after a century, therefore, no one had any experience of this kind of work. Behind it lies the spirit of service for the country, and power of resolve. This is why the country has been able to do work that has never been done before. You can guess for yourself, in normal circumstances we used to produce 900 Metric Tonnes of liquid medical oxygen in a day. Now, it has expanded to generating more than 10 times the normal output and producing around 9500 Metric Tonnes

per day. Our warriors are transporting this oxygen to far-flung corners of the country.

My dear countrymen, so many efforts were made in the country to distribute and provide oxygen, so many people came together that as a citizen, all these endeavors inspire you. Everyone has done their duty as part of a team. I have been told by Urmila ji from Bengaluru that her husband is a lab technician, and how he has been continuously performing task of testing in the midst of so many challenges.

Friends, at the beginning of Corona, there was only one testing lab in the country, but today more than two and a half thousand labs are in operation. Initially, only a few hundred tests could be conducted in a day, now more than 20 lakh tests are being carried out in a single day. So far, more than 33 crore samples have been tested in the country. This huge task is made possible only because of our colleagues like those mentioned. There are countless frontline workers engaged in the work of sample collection, going amidst infected patients, and taking their sample is an example of yeoman service. To protect themselves, these friends have to wear PPE Kit continuously even in sweltering heat. After that the sample reaches the lab. Therefore, when I was reading your suggestions and queries, I decided that these friends engaged in such services should also be discussed. We will also get to know a lot from

their experiences. So now let's talk to our friend Prakash Kandpal ji who works as a lab technician in Delhi.

Modi ji - Prakash ji Namaskar

Prakash Ji - Namaskar respected Prime Minister ji

Modi ji - Prakash ji, first of all tell about yourself to all of our listeners of 'Mann Ki Baat'. How long have you been doing this work and what has been your experience during the time of Corona, because the people of the country *neither* get to see you on television nor appear in newspapers, even then working and living in the lab like a sage! So I would like that through your account the countrymen will also get information about how work is going on in the country.

Prakash ji - I have been working as a lab technician for the last 10 years in the hospital called Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences, an autonomus institution, under the Government of Delhi. My experience in health sector is of 22 years. Even before ILBS, I have worked in prestigious institutions like Apollo Hospital, Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Hospital, Rotary Blood Bank, Delhi. Sir, although in all of these medical institutions I served in the blood bank department, but since 1st April, 2020 last year, I have been working in the Covid testing lab under the Virology department of ILBS.

Undoubtedly during the Covid *pandemic*, there was a lot of strain on all the means and resources related to health but I

personally consider this phase of cataclysm as an opportunity during which the nation, humanity, society expects and hopes for display of all that more responsibility, cooperation, strength and capability from us. And sir, when according to the expectation and hope of the nation, humanity and society, we function at our optimum which is equal to a drop of water, we work according to those standards and measure upto them, then there is a feeling of pride. Sometimes when our family members are apprehensive or even a little scared, on such an occasion, I remind them that the soldiers of our country on the borders who are always away from their families protecting the country in dire and extraordinary circumstances, compared to them whatever risk we undertake is less, is very less. So they too understand this thing and in a way they also cooperate with me and they also contribute in whatever kind of cooperation there is during the time of this calamity.

Modi ji - Prakash ji, on one hand the government is advocating everyone to keep a distance –or maintain distance from each other during the Corona pandemic. And you have to be in the midst of the corona virus by being at the forefront. You have to encounter it from the front. So it is a life-threatening affair in itself, and therefore it is very natural for the family to be worried. But still, this lab technician's job is one of the common professions. And in such a pandemic, another dimension gets added to the work that you are doing. Therefore the working

hours must have increased. You must be spending many an overnight in the lab. And because so many crores of people are being tested, the burden must have also increased. But for your own safety also, do you take precautions or not?

Prakash ji –Yes Sir, we do. Our ILBS lab is accredited by WHO, and thus all the protocols observed are of international standards. We follow the three-tier safety protocol with regards to our dress. We go to lab in it, and wearing it we work. And then there is a complete protocol of discarding the dress, another for labelling and also for testing! We work under these protocols. So sir, it is God's grace that my family and most of my acquaintances are still untouched by this infection. And there is one thing that, if you are careful and observe caution you can avoid it to an extent.

Modi ji - Prakash ji, thousands of people like you have been stationed in the labs for the last one year and have been doing such arduous work, saving innumerable people, about which the nation is getting to know today! Prakash ji, through you I, thank all the members of your fraternity. I thank you wholeheartedly on behalf of the countrymen. And you stay healthy. May you and your family stay healthy. I wish you all the best.

Prakash Ji - Thank you, Prime Minister ji. I am very grateful to you for giving me this opportunity.

Mr. Modi - Thank you brother.

PM Modi: Friends, I may have conversed with Bhai Prakash ji but in way, through his words, the fragrance of service rendered by thousands of lab technicians is reaching us. In his words you not only get a glimpse of the sense of service evident in thousands and lakhs of people but we also come to realize our responsibility. The kind of hard work and commitment that our friends like Bhai Prakash ji are putting in their work, that very quantum of cooperation from them will greatly help in defeating Corona.

My dear countrymen, while at present we were discussing our 'Corona Warriors' we have been a witness of their dedication and hard work in the last one and a half years. But there also has been a very big role in this fight displayed by many such warriors across the country. Think for yourself, our country faced such a big crisis that it affected every system of the country. The agricultural sector protected itself from this attack to a great extent. Not only did it keep itself safe, but the sector also progressed, moving forward. Do you know that even in this pandemic, our farmers have achieved record produce! The farmers produced record output and this time the country went on to procure record amount of crops. This time in many places farmers have got more than the minimum support price (MSP) for mustard. Due to the record food grain production, our country has been able to provide support to

every countryman. Today, 800 million underprivileged denizens are being provided free ration in this hour of crisis. So, no such a day ever occurs in a needy home when the stove is not lit!

Friends, today the farmers of our country are doing wonders in many areas by taking advantage of the new arrangements. Take for example, the farmers of Agartala. These farmers produce very good jackfruit harvest. Anticipating their demand in the country and abroad, this time the jackfruit of farmers of Agartala was brought to Guwahati by rail. These jackfruit are now being sent to London from Guwahati. Similarly, you must have also heard the name of the Shahi Litchi of Bihar. In 2018, the Government also gave GI Tag to Shahi Litchi so that its identity would be reinforced and the farmers would get more benefits. This time the Shahi Litchi of Bihar has also been sent to London by air. From East to West, North to South our country is full of such unique flavors and products. You must definitely have heard about the mangoes of Vizianagaram in South India. Now who wouldn't like to eat this mango? Therefore, now the Kisan Rail is ferrying hundreds of tons of Vizianagaram mangoes to Delhi. The people of Delhi and North India will get to eat Vizianagaram mangoes, and the farmers of Vizianagaram will earn well. The Kisan Rail has so far transported nearly 2 lakh tonnes of produce. Now the farmers are able to send fruits, vegetables, grains to other remote parts

of the country at a very low cost.

My dear countrymen, today on 30th May we are having 'Mann Ki Baat' and incidentally it also marks the completion of 7 years of the government. Over these years, the country has followed the mantra of 'Sabka-Saath, Sabka-Vikas, Sabka-Vishwas'. All of us have worked every moment with dedication in the service of the country. Many friends have sent me letters and said that in 'Mann Ki Baat', I should also discuss our mutual journey of 7 years. Friends, whatever we have accomplished in these 7 years, it has been of the country, of the countrymen. Together, we have experienced many moments of national pride in these years. When we observe that now India moves ahead not with the thought and pressure of other countries but with her own conviction, then we all feel proud. When we witness that now India gives a befitting reply to those who conspire against us, then our confidence soars. When India does not compromise on the issues of national security, when the strength of our armed forces increases, we feel that yes, we are on the right path.

Friends, I get messages and letters from countless countrymen spanning every corner of the country. Many people are thankful to the country that electricity has reached their village for the

first time in 70 years, that their sons and daughters are studying in the light, under the fan. Many people say that our village too is now connected to the city by a paved road. I remember some friends from a tribal area had sent me a message that after the road was built, for the first time they felt that they too had joined the rest of the world. Similarly, someone shares the joy of opening a bank account, someone starts a new employment with the help of different schemes, then they also invite me in sharing that happiness. I keep receiving many invitations from our countrymen for the occasion of 'GrihPravesh' - the house warming ceremony, after receiving their home under the 'Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana'. In these 7 years, I have been associated with a million moments of your happiness. Just a few days ago, a family from a village sent me a photo of the water tap installed in their house under the 'Jal Jeevan Mission'. They had captioned the photo 'मेरेगाँवकीजीवनधारा' - the lifeline of my village, there are many such families! In the 7 decades after independence, only three and a half crore rural homes of our country had water connections. However, just in the last 21 months, four and a half crore houses have been given clean water connections. Of these, 15 months were of the Corona period! A similar confidence has come to the country through the 'Ayushman Yojana'. When the poor come home healthy with free treatment, they feel that they have got a new life. They feel confident that the country stands by them. With

the blessing of such families, the blessings of crores of mothers, our country is moving towards development with strength.

Friends, in these 7 years, India has worked to show the world a new direction in digital transactions. Today, you can make digital payments with absolute ease at any place; it is proving very useful even in this time of Corona. Today, the seriousness and awareness of the countrymen towards cleanliness is increasing. We are also launching record satellites and constructing record roads too. In these 7 years, many old contestations of the country have also been resolved with complete peace and harmony. A new confidence of peace and development has arisen from the northeast to Kashmir. Friends, have you thought all such work which could not be achieved even in decades, how were they done in these 7 years? All this was possible because in these 7 years, more than as the Government or as the people, we worked together as one country. We worked as a team. We worked as Team India. Every citizen has tried to take a few steps forward in advancing the country. Yes! Where there are successes, there are also trials. In these 7 years together, we have overcome many difficult tests as well, and each time we have all emerged stronger. In the form of the Corona pandemic, we are being continuously put to test. This is a crisis that has plagued the

whole world, so many people have lost their loved ones. Even big countries were not spared from its devastation. In the midst of this pandemic, India is moving forward with the resolve of 'सेवा और सहयोग'- 'service and cooperation'. In the first wave, we fought courageously; this time too India will be victorious in the ongoing fight against the virus. Be it 'दो गज की दूरी' social distancing, rules related to masks or vaccines, there should be no letup in our efforts. This indeed is the path to our victory. Next time when we meet in Mann Ki Baat, we will talk about many more inspiring examples of countrymen and discuss new topics. Do continue to keep sending me your suggestions. May all of you stay healthy, keep the country moving forward in this manner. Many many thanks!

