

'Mann Ki Baat' (85th episode)

My dear countrymen, Namaskar. Today we are coming together through yet another episode of 'Mann Ki Baat'. This is the first 'Mann Ki Baat' of 2022. Today we will once again take forward discussions which are related to the positive inspirations and collective efforts of our country and countrymen. Today is also the death anniversary of our revered Bapu Mahatma Gandhi ji. The 30th of January reminds us of the teachings of Bapu. Just a few days ago, we celebrated Republic Day as well. The display of the nation's valour and strength, which we witnessed on Rajpath in Delhi filled everyone with pride and enthusiasm. One change you must have noticed is that now the Republic Day functions will start from the 23rd of January, i.e. the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and will continue till the 30th of January i.e. Gandhiji's death anniversary. A digital sculpture of Netaji has also been installed at India Gate. We can never forget the way the country welcomed this, the wave of joy that arose from every corner of the country; the kind of feelings expressed by every countryman.

Friends, in the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, the country is re-establishing its national symbols through these efforts. We saw that the 'Amar Jawan Jyoti' near India Gate and the Jyoti lit at the 'National War Memorial' in the vicinity, were merged. There were tears in the eyes of many countrymen and martyr families on this emotional occasion. At the 'National War Memorial', the names of all the bravehearts of the country who have been martyred since Independence have been inscribed. Some former soldiers of the army have written to me saying that - "The 'Amar Jawan Jyoti' lit at the memorial is a symbol of the immortality of the martyrs". Truly, like 'Amar Jawan Jyoti' our martyrs, their inspiration and their contribution are also immortal. I would urge all of you to certainly visit the 'National War Memorial' whenever you get an opportunity. Do take along your family and children too. Here you will feel a different energy and inspiration.

Friends, in the midst of these events of Amrit Mahotsav, many important national awards were also given away in the country. One of them is the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Baal Puraskaar. These

awards are given to the children who have rendered courageous and inspirational work at a young age. We all must highlight about these children in our homes. Our children will also get inspiration from this and the enthusiasm to bring glory to the country will be awakened in them. Padma awards have also just been announced in the country. There are many names among the recipients of Padma awards, about whom very few people know. These are the unsung heroes of our country, who have done extraordinary deeds in ordinary circumstances. For example, Basanti Devi of Uttarakhand, who has been honored with Padma Shri, lived her whole life in the midst of struggles. Her husband died at an early age and she had started living in an ashram. Staying there, she fought to save the river and made an extraordinary contribution to the environment. She has also done a lot of work for the empowerment of women. Similarly, 77-year-old Lorembam Beino Devi of Manipur has been conserving the Liba textile art of Manipur for decades. She has also been awarded the Padma Shri. Arjun Singh of Madhya Pradesh has received Padma award for imparting recognition to the art of Baiga tribal dance.

Another person to receive the Padma award is Shriman Amai Mahalinga Naik. He is a farmer and hails from Karnataka. Some people also call him Tunnel Man. He has made such innovations in agriculture, seeing which anyone could be surprised. Small farmers are getting huge benefit from his efforts. There are many more such unsung heroes who have been honoured by the country for their contribution. You must try to know about them. We will get to learn a lot from them in life.

My dear countrymen, all of you send a lot of letters and messages, including many suggestions in connection with The Amrit Mahotsav. Under this series something has happened which is unforgettable for me. More than one crore children have written to me through their 'Mann Ki Baat' post cards. These one crore post cards have come from different parts of the country; they have also come from abroad. I have tried to take time out to read many of these post cards. These postcards show how broad and wide is the vision of our new generation for the future of the country. I have shortlisted some postcards for the listeners of 'Mann Ki Baat' which I want to share

with you. Like this one is the post card of Riddhima Swargiyari from Guwahati, Assam. Riddhima is a student of class 7th and she has written that she wants to see an India in the 100th year of independence which is the cleanest country in the world, completely free of terrorism, included in the 100 percent literate countries, Zero accident country, and be capable of food security with sustainable technology. Riddhima, what our daughters think, the dreams they see for the country, do come true. When everyone's efforts come together, when your young generation will work towards this goal, you will definitely make India the way you want her to be. I have also got a post card of Navya Verma of Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. Navya has written that her dream for 2047 is of an India where everyone has a dignified life, where farmers are prosperous and there is no corruption.

Navya, your dream for the country is very commendable. The country is also moving rapidly in this direction. You talked about a corruption free India. Corruption hollows the country like a termite. Why wait for 2047 to get rid of it? All of us countrymen, today's

youth have to do this work together, as soon as possible and for this it is very important that we give priority to our duties. Where duty is felt, Duty is paramount, corruption cannot even think of entering there.

Friends, in front of me is another postcard of Mohammed Ibrahim from Chennai. Ibrahim wants to see India as a major power in the field of defence in 2047. He wants that India should have its own research base on the Moon, and that India should start the work of settling the human population on Mars. Ibrahim also sees a big role for India in making the earth free from pollution. Ibrahim, nothing is impossible for a country that has youth like you.

Friends, I have another letter in front of me sent by Bhavna, a class 10th student of Saraswati Vidya Mandir in Raisen, Madhya Pradesh. First of all, I will say to Bhavna that I really liked the way you have decorated your postcard with the Tricolor. Bhavna has written about revolutionary Shirish Kumar.

Friends, I have also received Laurencio Pereira's postcard from Goa. She is a student of class 12th. The subject of her letter is also - Unsung Heroes of Freedom. I am sharing with you its essence in Hindi. She has written that Bhikaji Cama was one of the bravest women involved in the Indian freedom struggle. She carried out many campaigns in the country and abroad to empower daughters; organized many exhibitions. Certainly Bhikaji Cama was one of the most courageous women of the freedom movement. In 1907, she hoisted the Tricolor in Germany. The person who supported her in designing this Tricolor was Shri Shyamji Krishna Varma. Shri Shyamji Krishna Varma ji died in 1930 in Geneva. His last wish was that after India's independence, his ashes should be brought to India. Although his ashes should have been brought back to India on the very next day of independence in 1947, this did not happen. Maybe it was the wish of the Almighty to assign me this work... and I was fortunate to fulfil this duty. In the year 2003, when I was the Chief Minister of Gujarat, his ashes were brought to India. A memorial has also been

constructed in the memory of Shyamji Krishna Varma ji at his birth place, Mandvi in Kutch.

Friends, the enthusiasm of India's Azaadi ka Amrit Mahotsav is not limited to our country. I have also received 75 postcards from Croatia, a friendly country of India. Students of the School of Applied Arts and Design in Zagreb, Croatia have sent these 75 cards to the people of India and congratulated them on the Amrit Mahotsav. On behalf of all countrymen, I thank Croatia and her people.

My dear countrymen, India has been the sacred land of education and knowledge. We have not confined education to bookish knowledge, but have seen it as a holistic experience of life. The great personalities of our country have also had a deep relationship with education. While Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya ji founded the Banaras Hindu University, Mahatma Gandhi played an important role in the establishment of Gujarat Vidyapeeth. There is a very lovely place in Anand, Gujarat – Vallabh Vidyanagar. On the insistence of Sardar Patel, two of his associates, Bhai Kaka and Bhikha Bhai,

established education centres for the youth there. Similarly, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore established Shantiniketan in West Bengal. Maharaja Gaikwad was also one of the ardent supporters of education. He got many educational institutions built and inspired many personalities including Dr. Ambedkar and Shri Aurobindo for higher education. In the list of such great personalities, there is also the name of Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh ji. Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh ji had handed over his house for the establishment of a technical school. He gave a lot of financial help for the construction of education centers in Aligarh and Mathura. Sometime back I also had the privilege of laying the foundation stone of a university in his name in Aligarh. I am happy that the same vibrant spirit of taking the light of education to the people continues in India even today. Do you know what is the most beautiful thing about this feeling? That is, this awareness about education is visible at every level in the society. The example of Taimmal ji living in Udumalpet block of Trippur district of Tamil Nadu is very inspiring. Taimmal ji does not have any land of his own. For years, his family is making a living by selling

coconut water. The financial condition may not be good, but Taimmal ji had left no stone unturned to educate his son and daughter. His children studied in Chinnaveerampatti Panchayat Union Middle School. One day in the meeting with the parents in the school, it was raised that the condition of the classrooms and school should be improved; the school infrastructure should be fixed. Taimmal ji was also in that meeting. He heard everything. In the same meeting, the discussion again came to a halt on the paucity of money for these works. After this, no one could have imagined what Taimmal did. Taimmal ji, who had accumulated some capital by selling coconut water, doanted one lakh rupees to the school.

Indeed, it takes a big heart, a sense of service, to do this. Taimmal ji says that in the school that is there has classes till 8th standard. Now when the infrastructure of the school improves, classes till higher secondary education will be held. This is the same sentiment I was talking about regarding education in our country. I have also come to know about a similar donation by an alumnus of IIT BHU. Jai

Chaudhary, alumnus of BHU, donated one million dollars i.e. about seven and a half crores to IIT BHU Foundation.

Friends, in our country there are many people belonging to different fields, who are fulfilling their responsibility towards the society by helping others. I am very happy that such efforts are being seen continuously in the field of higher education especially in our different IITs. There is no dearth of such inspiring examples in Central Universities as well. To further enhance such efforts, from September last year, Vidyanjali Abhiyan has also been started in the country. Its objective is to improve the quality of education in schools across the country with the participation of various organizations, CSR and private sector. Vidyanjali is furthering the spirit of community participation and ownership. To be constantly connected with your school, college, to contribute something according to your ability, it is something whose fulfilment and joy can be felt only through experience.

My dear countrymen, love for nature and compassion for every living being, this is our culture as well as innate nature. A glimpse of these *Sanskaras* of ours was seen recently when a tigress left the world in Pench Tiger Reserve of Madhya Pradesh. People used to call this tigress collared tigress. The Forest Department named it T-15. The death of this tigress made people so emotional as if someone of their own had left the world. People performed her last rites, bid her farewell with full respect and affection. You must have also seen these pictures on social media. This love of Indians for nature and living beings was greatly appreciated the world over. The collared tigress gave birth to 29 cubs in her lifetime and raised 25 of them to maturity. We also celebrated this life of T-15 and when she left the world, we also gave her a heartfelt farewell. This is the specialty of the people of India. We make a relationship of love with every conscious being. We also got to see a similar sight this time in the Republic Day parade as well. In this parade, the charger mount of the President's Bodyguard, Virat took part in his last parade. Horse Virat came to Rashtrapati Bhavan in 2003 and used to lead the parade

every time on Republic Day as Commandant Charger. Even when a foreign head of state was welcomed in Rashtrapati Bhavan, Virat used to play this role. This year, on Army Day, horse Virat was also given COAS Commendation Card by the Army Chief. In view of Virat's immense services, after his retirement he was given farewell in an equally grand manner.

My dear countrymen, when there is a sincere effort, work is done with a noble intention, results also follow. A great example of this has emerged from Assam. As soon as the name of Assam is taken, the thought of tea plantation and many national parks come to mind. Along with this, the picture of one horned rhinoceros i.e. one horn rhino also emerges in our mind. You all know that the one horned rhinoceros has always been a part of Assamese culture. This song of Bharat Ratna Bhupen Hazarika ji will resonate in every ear.

#Song byte

Friends, the meaning of this song is very relevant. This song says, the lush green surroundings of Kaziranga, the abode of elephants and

tigers, the Earth watches one horned rhinoceros and listens to the melodious chirping of birds. The images of the rhinoceros are also seen in the *Moonga* and *Eri* dresses woven on the world famous handlooms of Assam. The rhinoceros, which has such great glory in the culture of Assam, also had to face difficulties. In 2013, 37 and in 2014, 32 rhinos were killed by poachers. To tackle this challenge, a huge campaign against the poaching of rhinoceros was launched in the last seven years with the special efforts of the Assam government. On the 22nd of September last year, on the occasion of World Rhino Day, more than 2400 horns seized from smugglers were burnt. This was a stern message to the poachers. The result of such efforts is that now there is a steady decrease in the hunting of rhinos in Assam. Where 37 rhinos were killed in 2013, 2 killings in 2020 and only 1 in 2021 have come to the fore. I appreciate the resolve of the people of Assam to save the rhinoceros.

Friends, the diverse colours and spiritual strength of Indian culture have always attracted people from all over the world. If I tell you that Indian culture is very popular in America, Canada, Dubai, Singapore,

Western Europe and Japan, you will find this very common; you will not be surprised. But, if I say that Indian culture has a big attraction in Latin America and South America too, you will definitely think once. Whether it is a matter of promoting Khadi in Mexico or an attempt to popularize Indian traditions in Brazil, we have discussed these topics earlier in 'Mann Ki Baat'. Today I will tell you about the Indian culture making its mark in Argentina. Our culture is very much liked in Argentina. In 2018, during my visit to Argentina, I participated in a yoga program – 'Yoga for Peace'. There is an organization in Argentina – Hastinapur Foundation. You will be surprised to hear... whither Argentina... and Hastinapur Foundation there too! This foundation is involved in the propagation of Indian Vedic traditions in Argentina. It was founded 40 years ago by a lady, Professor Aida Albrecht. Professor Aida Albrecht is going to turn 90 today. How her association with India happened is also very interesting. When she was 18 years old, she was first introduced to the power of Indian culture. She also spent a lot of time in India. She studied about Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads in depth. Today the

Hastinapur Foundation has more than 40,000 members and about 30 branches in Argentina and other Latin American countries. Hastinapur Foundation has also published more than 100 Vedic and philosophical texts in Spanish language. Her ashram is also very enchanting. Twelve temples have been built in the ashram, in which there are idols of many Gods and Goddesses. There is also a temple at the center of all this which has been built for *Advaitwadi Dhyan*.

Friends, hundreds of such examples prove that our culture is a priceless heritage not only for us, but for the whole world. People all over the world want to know it, want to understand it, and want to live it. We should also try to make our cultural heritage a part of our life with full responsibility and try to take it to all the people.

My dear countrymen, I now want to ask a question to you and especially to our youth. Now imagine how many push-ups you can do at once. What I am about to tell you will surely fill you with wonder? Thounaojam Niranjay Singh, a 24-year-old youth in Manipur, has made a record of 109 push-ups in a minute. Breaking the record is

nothing new for Niranjay Singh, earlier also, he had held the record for most Knuckle push-ups with one hand in a minute. I am sure you will be inspired by Niranjay Singh and make physical fitness a part of your life.

Friends, today I want to share with you one such information about Ladakh which you will definitely be proud to know about. Ladakh will soon be blessed with an impressive Open Synthetic Track and Astro Turf Football Stadium. This stadium is being built at a height of more than 10,000 feet and its construction is going to be completed soon. This will be the largest open stadium in Ladakh where 30,000 spectators can sit together. This modern football stadium in Ladakh will also have a synthetic track with 8 lanes. Apart from this, there will also be a hostel facility with one thousand beds. You will also like to know that this stadium has also been certified by FIFA, the biggest organization of football. Whenever such a big sports infrastructure comes up, it brings great opportunities to the youth of the country. Alongwith such an arrangement, movement of people from all over the country takes place, tourism gets promoted and many

employment opportunities are created. The stadium will also benefit many of our youth in Ladakh.

My dear countrymen, this time also in 'Mann Ki Baat' we touched upon many topics. There is one more topic, which is on everyone's mind at this time and that is of Corona. India is fighting with great success with the new wave of corona, it is also a matter of pride that till now about four and a half crore children have been administered the dose of Corona Vaccine. This means that about 60% of youth in the age group of 15 to 18 years have got their vaccines within three to four weeks. This will not only protect our youth but will also help them to continue with their studies. Another good thing is that within 20 days, one crore people have taken the precaution dose as well. This trust of our countrymen on the indigenous vaccine is our great strength. Now the cases of corona infection have also started decreasing - this is a very positive sign. People should be safe, the pace of economic activities of the country should be maintained - this is the wish of every countryman. And you already know, in 'Mann Ki Baat', there are certain things, I cannot stay without

mentioning... like, we should not forget the 'Swachhta Abhiyan' ; we should accelerate the campaign against single use plastic; Vocal for Local mantra is our responsibility, we have to work wholeheartedly for the *Atma Nirbhar Bharat* campaign. With the efforts of all of us, the country will reach new heights of development. With this wish, I bid you farewell. Thank you very much
