

Mann Ki Baat' (Episode 90)

Hello my dear countrymen Namaskar! I have received many letters from all of you for 'Mann Ki Baat'; I have also received many messages on social media and NaMoApp. I am very thankful to you for that. In this program, it is our endeavour to discuss each other's inspiring efforts; to tell the story of change through mass movement to the entire country. In this episode, I want to discuss with you today one such mass movement of the country, that holds great importance in the life of every citizen of the country. But, before that I want to ask a question to the youth of today's generation, to the youth in the age group of 24-25 years, and the question is very serious... do ponder my question over. Did you know that when your parents were your age, once even their right to life was snatched away from them? You must be thinking how could have this happened? This is just impossible! But my young friends, this had happened once in our country. This took place years ago in 1975. It was the month of June when emergency was imposed. In that, all the rights were taken away from the citizens of the country. One amongst those rights was the 'Right to Life and Personal Liberty' provided to all Indians under Article 21 of the Constitution. At that time an attempt was made to crush the democracy of India. The country's courts,

every constitutional institution, the press, were put under control. The condition of censorship was such that nothing could be printed without approval. I remember when famous singer Kishore Kumar refused to applaud the government, he was banned. His entry on the radio was done away with. But even after many attempts, thousands of arrests, and atrocities on lakhs of people, the faith of the people of India in democracy did not shake... not at all! For us, the people of India, the sanskars of democracy which we have been carrying on for centuries; the democratic spirit which is in our veins, finally won. The people of India got rid of the emergency and re-established democracy in a democratic way. It is difficult to find such an example of defeating a dictatorial mindset, a dictatorial tendency in a democratic way, in the whole world. During the Emergency, I had the good fortune to have been a witness; to be a partner in the struggle of the countrymen - as a soldier of democracy. Today, when the country is celebrating 75 years of its independence, celebrating Amrit Mahotsav, we should never forget that dreadful period of emergency. The generations to come should also not forget. The Amrit Mahotsav not only encompasses the victory saga of freedom from hundreds of years of slavery, but also the journey of 75 years after independence. We move forward, learning from every important stage of history.

My dear countrymen, there is hardly any of us who, in one's life, has not had fantasies pertaining to the sky. During one's childhood, stories of the moon and stars in the sky attract everyone. For the youth, touching the sky is synonymous with making dreams come true. Today, when our India is touching the sky of success in so many fields, how can the skies, or space, remain untouched by it! In the past few years, many big feats related to the space sector have been accomplished in our country. One of these achievements of the country has been the creation of an agency named In-Space... an agency that is promoting new opportunities in the space sector for the private sector of India. This beginning has especially attracted the youth of our country. I have received messages related to this from many young people.

A few days ago when I had gone to dedicate to the people the headquarters of In-Space, I saw the ideas and enthusiasm of many young start-ups. I also talked to them for a long time. You too will not be able to help being surprised when you learn about them. For example, take just the number and speed of space start-ups. Till a few years ago, in our country, in the space sector, no one even thought about start-ups. Today their number is more than a hundred. All these start-ups are working on ideas, which were either not thought about earlier, or were considered impossible for the private sector. For example, Chennai and Hyderabad have two start-ups – Agnikul and

Skyroot! These start-ups are developing launch vehicles that will take small payloads into space. Through this, the cost of Space Launching is estimated to come down significantly. Similarly, Dhruva Space, another Start-Up of Hyderabad, is working on High Technology Solar Panels for Satellite Deployer and Satellites. I also met Tanveer Ahmed of Digantara, another space start-up who is trying to map waste in space. I have also given him a challenge that they should evolve work technology, which can solve the problem of waste in space. Both Digantara and Dhruva Space are going to make their first launch from ISRO's launch vehicle on the 30th of June. Similarly, Neha, the founder of Astrome, a space start-up based in Bangalore, is also working on an amazing idea. This start-up is making such flat antennas which will not only be small, but their cost will also be very low. Demand for this technology can be all over the world.

Friends, in the program of In-Space, I also met beti Tanvi Patel, a school student of Mehsana. She is working on a very small satellite, which is going to be launched in space in the next few months. Tanvi told me about her work very simply in Gujarati. Like Tanvi, about seven hundred and fifty school students in the country are working on 75 such satellites in the Amrit Mahotsav, and it is also a matter of joy that, most of these students are from small towns of the country.

Friends, these are the same youth, in whose mind the image of the space sector was like a secret mission a few years ago, but, the country undertook space reforms, and the same youth are now launching their own satellites. When the youth of the country is ready to touch the sky, how can our country be left behind?

My dear countrymen, in 'Mann Ki Baat', let's now talk about a topic that will delight your mind and inspire you as well. Recently, our Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra was again in the headlines. Even after the Olympics, he is setting new records of success, one after the other. Neeraj won the silver at Paavo Nurmi Games in Finland. Not only that, He also broke the record of his own Javelin Throw. Neeraj once again made the country proud by winning the gold in Kuortane Games. He won this gold in conditions when the weather there was also inclement. This zest is the hallmark of today's youth. From Start-Ups to the Sports World, the youth of India are making new records. In the recently held Khelo India Youth Games too, our players set many records. You would love to know that a total of 12 records have been broken in these games - not only that, 11 records have been registered in the names of female players. M. Martina Devi of Manipur has made eight records in weightlifting.

Similarly, Sanjana, Sonakshi and Bhavna have also made different records. With their hard work, these players have proven how much India's prestige is going to rise in international sports arena in the coming times. I also congratulate all these players and wish them all the best for the future.

Friends, there has been another special feature of Khelo India Youth Games. This time too many such talents have emerged, who are from very ordinary families. These players have struggled a lot in their lives to reach this stage of success. In their success, their family, and parents too, have had a big role to play.

Father of Adil Altaf from Srinagar, who won the gold in 70 km cycling, does tailoring work, but, has left no stone unturned to fulfill his son's dreams. Today Adil has brought pride to his father and the entire Jammu-Kashmir. Gold winner L. Dhanush's father is a carpenter in Chennai. Sangli's daughter Kajol Sargar's father works as a tea vendor. Kajol would help her father and practice weight lifting as well. This hard work of hers and her family paid off and Kajol has won a lot of accolades in weight lifting. Tanu of Rohtak has performed a similar kind of miracle. Tanu's father Rajbir Singh is a school bus driver in Rohtak. By winning the gold medal in wrestling, Tanu has realized her own, her family's and her father's dream.

Friends, in the sports world, now, the dominance of Indian players is increasing; at the same time, a new image of Indian sports is also emerging. For example, in Khelo India Youth Games, besides disciplines that are in Olympics, five indigenous sports, were also included this time. These five sports are – Gatka, Thang Ta, Yogasan, Kalaripayattu and Mallakhamb.

Friends, there is going to be an international tournament of a game which was born centuries ago in our own country...in India. This is the event of Chess Olympiad beginning from the 28th July. This time, more than 180 countries are participating in the Chess Olympiad. Today's discussion of sports and fitness cannot be complete without another name - this is the name of Telangana's mountaineer Poorna Malavath. By completing the 7 summit challenge Poorna has added another feather in her cap of success. The seven summit challenge...that is the challenge of surmounting seven most difficult and highest mountain peaks. With her indomitable spirit, Purva ascended the highest peak of North America Mount Denali and brought honour to the country. Poorna is the same daughter of India who had accomplished the amazing feat of done a conquering Mount Everest at the age of just 13.

Friends, when it comes to sports, today I would also like to discuss Mithali Raj, one of the most talented cricketers in India.

Just this month, she has announced her retirement from cricket which has emotionally moved many sports lovers. Mithali has not only been an extraordinary player, but has also been an inspiration to many players. I wish Mithali all the very best for her future.

My dear countrymen, in 'Mann Ki Baat' we have been discussing the successful efforts related to 'waste to wealth'. One such example is that of Aizwal, the capital of Mizoram. There is a beautiful river 'Chitte Lui' in Aizwal, which due to neglect for years, had turned into a heap of dirt and garbage. Efforts have started in the last few years to save this river. For this, local agencies, voluntary organizations and local people, together, are also running the Save Chitte Lui action plan. This campaign of cleaning the river has also made an opportunity for wealth creation from waste. Actually, this river and its banks were full of plastic and polythene waste. The organization working to save the river, decided to build a road using this polythene, that is, the waste that came out of the river. From that, in a village in Mizoram, the state's first plastic road was built... that is cleanliness and development as well.

Friends, one such effort has also been undertaken by the youth of Puducherry through their voluntary organizations. Puducherry is situated along the sea coast. A large number of people come to see the beaches and marine beauty there. But,

the pollution caused by plastic was also increasing on the sea coast of Puducherry, therefore, to save its sea, beaches and ecology, people here have started the 'Recycling for Life' campaign. Today, thousands of kilograms of garbage is collected and segregated every day in Karaikal, Puducherry. The organic waste from that is made into compost; the rest of the matter is separated and recycled. Such efforts are not only inspiring, but also lend momentum to India's campaign against single use plastic.

Friends, at this time when I am talking to you, a unique cycling rally is also going on in Himachal Pradesh. I want to tell you about this too. A group of cyclists have started from Shimla to Mandi carrying the message of cleanliness. These people will complete this distance of about one hundred and seventy five kilometers on mountain roads, only by cycling. There are children as well as the elderly in this group. If our environment is clean, our mountains and rivers, our seas remain clean; our health also gets better. You must keep writing me about such efforts.

My dear countrymen, monsoon is continuously progressing in our country. Rain is increasing in many states. This is also the time to make special efforts in the direction of 'water' and 'water conservation'. In our country, for centuries, this responsibility has been taken by the society together. You will

remember, in 'Mann Ki Baat' we once discussed the legacy of step wells. The Baolis are those big wells which are reached by descending stairs. In Udaipur, Rajasthan, there is one such stepwell which is hundreds of years old - 'Sultan Ki Baoli'. It was built by Rao Sultan Singh, but due to neglect, gradually this place has become deserted and has turned into a pile of garbage. One day some youths roaming around reached this stepwell and were very sad to see its condition. At that very moment these youths resolved to change the picture and destiny of Sultan Ki Baoli. They named this mission of their - 'Sultan se Sur-Tan'. You must be wondering, what is this 'Sur Tan! In fact, with their efforts, these youths have not only rejuvenated the step well, but have also linked it to the notes and melody of the music. After cleaning the Sultan's stepwell, after decorating it, takes place a program of harmony and music. There is so much talk of this change, that many people from abroad have started coming to see it. The most important thing about this successful effort is that the youth who started the campaign are chartered accountants. Coincidentally, a few days from now, July 1 is observed as chartered accountants day. I congratulate all the CAs of the country in advance. We can create a similar sense of awareness about our water bodies by connecting them with music and other social programs. Water conservation is actually life conservation. You must have seen, nowadays, how many 'river festivals' are being held!

Whichever water sources are there in your cities, you must organize one event or the other.

My dear countrymen, our Upanishads mention about a life mantra- 'Charaiveti-Charaiveti-Charaiveti'- you must have heard this mantra too. It means – keep going, keep going. This mantra is so popular in our country because it is part of our nature to keep moving, to be dynamic; to keep moving. As a nation, we have come this far through a journey of development spanning thousands of years. As a society, we have always moved ahead by accepting new ideas, new changes. Our cultural mobility and travels have contributed a lot in this. That is why our sages and saints had entrusted us with spiritual responsibilities like pilgrimage. All of us go on varied pilgrimages. You must have seen that this time a large number of devotees participated in the Chardham Yatra. In our country, from time to time, different Dev-yatras also take place. Dev Yatras... that is, in which not only the devotees but also our Gods go on a journey. In just a few days from now on the 1st of July, the famous journey of Lord Jagannath is going to commence. All of us are familiar with the Puri yatra in Odisha. People make efforts to ensure that on this occasion they get the good fortune of going to Puri. In other states too, Jagannath Yatras are taken out with great gaiety and fervour. Bhagwan Jagannath Yatra begins on Dwitiya, the second day of the month of Ashadha. In our texts 'Ashadhasya Dwitiya divase...

Rath Yatra', this is how the description is found in Sanskrit shlokas. In Ahmedabad, Gujrat too, every year Rath Yatra begins from Ashadh Dwitiya. I was in Gujarat, so I also used to get the privilege of serving in this Yatra every year. Ashadha Dwitiya, also known as Ashadhi Bij, marks the beginning of the new year of Kutch on this day. I also wish Happy New Year to all my Kutchi brothers and sisters. For me this day is also very special - I remember, a day before Ashadha Dwitiya, that is, on the first Tithi of Ashadha, we started a Sanskrit festival in Gujarat, which comprises songs, music and cultural programs in Sanskrit language. The name of this event is – 'Ashadhasya Pratham Diwase'. There is also a reason behind giving this special name to the festival. Actually, the great Sanskrit poet Kalidas wrote the Meghdootam on the arrival of rain from the month of Ashadh. There is a verse in Meghdootam – Ashadhasya Pratham Diwase, Megham Ashlishta Sanum, that is, mountain peaks covered with clouds on the first day of Ashadha, this verse became the basis of this event.

Friends, be it Ahmedabad or Puri, Lord Jagannath also gives us many deep human messages through this journey. Bhagwan Jagannath is the lord of the world, but the poor and downtrodden have a special participation in his journey. God also walks along with every section and person of the society. Similarly, in all the journeys that take place in our country, there is no such distinction between poor and rich, high and

low. Rising above all discrimination, the journey itself is paramount. As you must have heard about the Yatra of Pandharpur in Maharashtra.... In the Pandharpur Yatra, one is neither big nor small. Everyone is a Varkari, a servant of Bhagwan Vitthal. Just 4 days later, the Amarnath Yatra is also going to start from the 30th of June. Devotees from all over the country reach Jammu Kashmir for the Amarnath Yatra. The local people of Jammu Kashmir take the responsibility of this Yatra with equal reverence, and cooperate with the pilgrims.

Friends, the Sabarimala Yatra has the same importance in the South. This pilgrimage to seek Darshan of Bhagwan Ayyappa on the hills of Sabarimala has been going on from the times when this path was completely surrounded by forests. Even today, when people go on these yatras, how many opportunities are created for the poor... from religious rituals to lodging arrangements... that is, these yatras directly give us an opportunity to serve the poor and are equally beneficial to them. That is why the country, too, is now making many efforts to increase the facilities for the devotees in their spiritual journeys. If you too go on such a journey, you will also have a glance of Ek Bharat- Shreshtha Bharat along with spirituality.

My dear countrymen, as always, this time also it was a very pleasant experience to connect with all of you through 'Mann Ki Baat'. We discussed the successes and achievements of the

countrymen. In the midst of all this, we also have to take precautions against Corona. However, it is a matter of satisfaction that today the country has a comprehensive protective shield of a vaccine. We have reached close to 200 crore vaccine doses. Precaution dose is also being rapidly administered in the country. If it is time for a precaution dose after your second dose, then you must take this third dose. Make your family members, especially the elderly, take a precautionary dose. We also have to take necessary precautions like hand hygiene and masks. We also have to be alert of the diseases caused by the surrounding filth during the rainy season. All of you stay alert, stay healthy and keep moving forward with similar positive energy. We'll meet again next month, until then, many many thanks. Namaskar!