

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND  
TO THE JOINT SITTING OF TWO HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT**

**New Delhi: 29.01.2018**

**Honourable Members,**

I welcome you all to the Joint Sitting of the Two Houses of Parliament. We have all recently celebrated the festivals of Pongal, Bihu, Lohri, Makar Sankranti and Vasant Panchami. For us, the Republic Day is also a major festival. The presence of Heads of States and Governments of ten ASEAN countries during this year's Republic Day celebrations added a special dimension to our vision of 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam'.

2018 is an important year for realising our vision of a New India. I am confident that peoples' representatives present here, who have come from different parts of the country, would play an active role in accelerating this great journey for the development of our nation.

**Honourable Members,**

The architect of our Constitution, Baba Saheb Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar used to say that political democracy cannot survive without social and economic democracy. Guided by this fundamental spirit of the Constitution and committed to the welfare of weaker sections, my Government is working towards strengthening social justice and economic democracy and to usher ease of living for the common man.

Perhaps no one had imagined that construction of toilets could also contribute towards social justice. Construction of toilets not only protects their dignity but also fosters a feeling of social justice in women. The movement for social justice is becoming widespread day by day. It is our collective responsibility to pay a befitting tribute to Pujya Bapu by making the country Swachh by 2019 when we celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi.

Here in this House, there are many like me who for years have seen women collecting firewood for cooking. They and their children had no option but to endure the ill effects of smoky kitchens causing disease and suffering. 'Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana' has empowered these poor women to enjoy equal rights with their privileged counterparts thereby addressing a hitherto ignored aspect of social justice. So far, under this scheme, over 3 crore 30 lakh cooking gas connections have been provided.

**Honourable Members,**

For decades, the dignity of Muslim women has remained captive to political cost-benefit. Now the Nation has an opportunity to emancipate them from this situation. My Government has tabled a Bill on Triple Talaq in Parliament. I hope that the Parliament will soon pass it into a law. The law on Triple Talaq, once enacted, will also enable Muslim sisters and daughters to live a life of self-respect with courage.

To eradicate discrimination against daughters, my Government had introduced the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' scheme. Seeing its positive results, the scheme has been extended from 161 districts to 640 districts.

The Government has also taken a big step by amending the Maternity Benefit Act. It now provides for 26 weeks of paid leave in place of 12 weeks. Working women will now be able to devote more time towards their new born children during their crucial formative years.

**Honourable Members,**

My Government which feels for the poor is implementing schemes for further strengthening economic democracy in the country. We are moving towards bridging the gap between the country's banking system and the poor completely. Under the 'Jan Dhan Yojana', so far, about 31 crore bank accounts have been opened for the poor. Women have especially benefitted from the scheme with the percentage of Savings Bank accounts held by them going up to more than 40 per cent from the earlier 28 per cent.

To make bank credit accessible to the poor and middle class and to encourage self-employment, my Government has facilitated provision of credit without insisting on bank guarantee. Through easy access to credit, people are now able to fulfil their dream of setting up their own enterprise. Under the 'Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana', about 10 crore loans have been sanctioned so far and more than Rs. 4 lakh crore worth of loans have been disbursed. About 3 crore first time beneficiaries have received assistance under this scheme for self employment.

The endeavour of the Government towards strengthening economic and social democracy is helping redefine our national life. These efforts are establishing a new social order in the country which provides equal opportunity to the poor to march ahead.

### **Honourable Members,**

The highest priority of my Government is to remove various difficulties faced by farmers and to raise their standard of living. The schemes of my Government are not only removing their hardships but also reducing the expenditure incurred by them on farming.

As a result of Government's policies and the hardwork of farmers, a record production of more than 275 million tonnes of food grain and about 300 million tonnes of horticultural produce has been achieved in the country.

My Government is committed to doubling of farmers' income by 2022. To ensure remunerative price to the farmers for their produce, the agriculture mandis are being connected online. So far, agricultural commodities valued at about Rs. 36 thousand crore have been traded on e-NAM portal.

The work of completing 99 Irrigation projects that were held up for decades is in progress.

Government is also protecting the interests of farmers by giving production bonus on pulses and oil seeds. As a result of Government's policy for pulses, their production went up by more than 38 per cent as compared to last year, which is a record.

To prevent damage to agriculture produce before it reaches the market and to ensure its safe storage, “Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana” has been launched. The supply chain and infrastructure in the agricultural sector are being modernized under this scheme.

To enhance the income of farmers, an ambitious scheme has been introduced in the Dairy sector under which a ‘Dairy Processing Infrastructure Development Fund’ with a corpus of Rs. 11 thousand crore is being set up.

While on one hand, my Government’s policies have helped in increasing the production of urea, on the other, mandatory 100 per cent Neem coating of urea has eliminated its black marketing. The work on reopening of fertilizer plants at Gorakhpur, Barauni, Sindri, Talcher and Ramagundam is progressing at a fast pace.

**Honourable Members,**

My Government is working actively and with sensitivity to remove the feeling of economic insecurity among the poor, farmers and senior citizens.

Under ‘Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana’, farmers are being provided affordable and simple crop insurance services. During 2017, under Rabi & Kharif crops, 5 crore 71 lakh farmers were provided protective coverage under this scheme.

Similarly, my Government has introduced insurance schemes for the poor at a premium of 1 rupee per month and 90 paise per day. More than 18 crore poor have been covered under the ‘Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana’ and ‘Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana’ and about Rs. 2 thousand crore has been paid out as claims.

My Government is also committed towards social security of senior citizens. Under the ‘Atal Pension Yojana’, about 80 lakh senior citizens have benefitted.

**Honourable Members,**

Following the path of Ekatm Manav-vad (Integral Humanism) propounded by Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, my Government is developing mechanisms to ensure that benefits of development reach the poorest of the poor.

About 2 lakh 70 thousand Common Service Centres have been set up that provide digital services at low cost, even in the remotest areas of the country.

Under the 'Bharat Net Project', the Government is providing broadband connectivity to 2 lakh 50 thousand Gram Panchayats. In the first phase, more than one lakh Panchayats have already been connected. This project will play a major role in taking e-health, e-education, e-governance and e-commerce to each village of the country.

To illuminate the lives of the poor and to enable them to move forward on the path to development, my Government is providing electricity connections to 4 crore poor people under the "Saubhagya" Yojana.

To ensure that benefits of development reach all sections of society, my Government is actively pursuing the work of connecting all villages under the 'Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana'. As compared to 2014 when only 56 per cent of the villages had road connectivity, now more than 82 per cent villages mostly in far flung and inaccessible areas have been connected by roads. Our target is to provide road connectivity to every village by 2019.

To ensure availability of two square meals to every poor person, effective enforcement of National Food Security Act is necessary. The distribution of food grains at cheap rates under this Act is being made transparent and leakage proof in all States of the country.

**Honourable Members,**

Working for the upliftment and dignity of all weaker and deprived sections of society is my Government's priority.

My Government is sensitive towards the aspirations of every section of society and has introduced a Constitution Amendment Bill to provide Constitutional Status to the National Commission for Backward Classes.

A Commission has been constituted to examine the sub-categorization of backward classes so that the benefits of higher education and jobs can be availed by the most backward sections among the backward classes.

Minimum Support Price of several forest produce collected by the tribal people has been increased.

Lives of lakhs of people in tribal areas especially in the North East region are dependent on bamboo industry. Inclusion of bamboo in the category of tree had adversely affected livelihoods associated with it. Keeping in mind these difficulties, my Government has excluded bamboo from the category of tree. This has now provided freedom to cut, transport and use bamboo.

Adivasi Swatantrata Sangram Sangrahalayas are being established to honour the invaluable contribution of tribal communities in the independence struggle. Recently, the foundation stone of first such museum was laid in Kevadia, Gujarat on the banks of Narmada, near the Sardar Sarovar Dam. Proposals of Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chattishgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Manipur and other States are also under consideration.

### **Honourable Members,**

There are more than 2 crore 50 lakh Divyang jan in our country. My Government is continuously working with utmost sensitivity towards their empowerment and economic inclusion. Government has enacted the 'Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016'. Provision has been made for 4 per cent reservation in government jobs and 5 per cent reservation in higher education for Divyang jan. In the last three years, over 6 thousand camps have been organised benefitting more than 9 lakh needy Divyang jan with necessary aids and assistive devices.

### **Honourable Members,**

Committed to “Empowerment and not Appeasement”, my Government is making intensive efforts for economic, social and educational empowerment of the minorities.

Employment opportunities have been provided to the youth belonging to Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, Parsi and Jain communities through programmes, such as, ‘Seekho Aur Kamao’, ‘Usttad’, ‘Garib Nawaz Kaushal Vikas Yojana’, ‘Nai Roshni’ etc.

More than 45 lakh students have also benefitted from scholarships, fellowships, skill development and coaching schemes during the last one year.

Keeping in mind the objective of womens’ empowerment, for the first time since independence, the restriction on women above 45 years of age to perform Haj pilgrimage unaccompanied by their male relatives has been removed. This year, more than 1300 women are going on Haj pilgrimage without Mehram.

### **Honourable Members,**

With a sensitive approach towards providing housing with availability of water-electricity-toilet facility to all, my Government is targeting to provide a house to every poor and homeless household by the year 2022.

Over the last three and a half years, more than 93 lakh houses have been constructed by the Government in rural and urban areas. Under the ‘ Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana- Urban’ , interest subvention of 6 percent is being provided to the poor. In addition, for the first time, two new schemes have been launched keeping the middle class in mind.

### **Honourable Members,**

One of the major worries of the poor and middle class relates to treatment of diseases. The financial burden of treatment of disease further aggravates the suffering.

A new ‘National Health Policy’ has been formulated by my Government for providing better and affordable healthcare facilities to the poor and middle

class. In addition, under the 'National AYUSH Mission', traditional methods of treatment, such as, Yoga and Ayurveda are being promoted. It gives me pleasure to share with you that:

- Through the 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi' Kendras, 800 different medicines are being made available to the poor people at affordable rates. More than 3 thousand such kendras have been established in the country.
- Under the 'Deendayal Amrut Yojana', over 5200 lifesaving branded medicines and surgical implants are being provided through 111 outlets at discounts ranging from 60 per cent to 90 per cent.
- In addition to medicines for heart patients, the cost of stent has been reduced up to 80 percent. The cost of knee implant has also been regulated.
- Under the 'Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme', in over 500 districts, more than 22 lakh dialysis sessions for 2.25 lakh patients have been conducted at discounted rates.
- To enhance the availability of doctors, 7 thousand post graduate seats and over 13 thousand MBBS seats have been approved.
- To ensure quality and transparency in medical education, Government has also introduced the 'National Medical Commission Bill' in the Lok Sabha.
- I am happy to inform that the annual rate of increase in immunization coverage in the country has increased from 1 percent to 6.7 percent. This has benefitted children living in far-flung and particularly tribal areas of our country. Recently, my Government has also launched the 'Intensified Mission Indradhanush'.

**Honourable Members,**

Education provides the foundation for building the future of the Nation. My Government is committed to strengthening and modernising School and Higher Education system in the country.



My Government has approved over 2400 'Atal Tinkering Labs' under 'Atal Innovation Mission', in order to inculcate a spirit of entrepreneurship and creativity in children at an early age.

My Government has approved setting up of a 'National Testing Agency' as an autonomous and self-sufficient organization to conduct all examinations of higher educational institutions in the country.

To ensure a bright future for the youth, my Government is working actively towards setting up of 20 'Institutes of Eminence'. Under this Mission, selected public sector institutions will be provided financial assistance of Rs.10 thousand crore.

A law has also been enacted to provide autonomy to all 'Indian Institutes of Management' in order to upgrade them further.

### **Honourable Members,**

Our country is the youngest among all nations in the world. My Government is implementing programmes like Start Up India, Stand Up India, Skill India Mission, Mudra Yojana to provide self-employment to the youth and to enable them to fulfill their dreams.

My Government has recently approved two schemes – 'SANKALP' and 'STRIVE' for skill development of youth in line with the needs of the industry.

Enterprises or companies creating new employment opportunities are being provided financial assistance under the 'Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana'. Over 20 lakh people have benefited under this scheme.

About 5 lakh youth have benefitted under the 'National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme'.

Our workers play a central role in Nation Building. Sensitive towards safeguarding their interests, my Government is continuously working for reforms in Labour laws.

My Government has increased the minimum wage of workers by more than 40 per cent. The number of registers for compliance of Labour laws has also been reduced from 56 to 5. All returns are now filed online on the Shram Suvidha Portal.

**Honourable Members,**

Excellence in sporting arena is viewed as an indicator of progress in the world. Alive to all round development of youth, my Government is working towards registering an effective presence in sports on the world stage.

In recent months, International Sports Competitions like FIFA Under-17 World Cup and Asian Athletic Championship have been successfully organized in the country. This has not only enhanced the prestige of the country in the sports arena but has also increased attraction towards sport disciplines like Football.

My Government has started an ambitious campaign namely 'Khelo India Programme' with an outlay of over Rs. 1750 crore.

For transparent selection of talented sportspersons, a 'Sports Talent Search Portal' has been started.

A scheme has been launched to provide stipend of Rs. 6 lakh per annum to one thousand talented sportspersons.

**Honourable Members,**

The cultural heritage of our country is a part of our identity and provides the foundation for 'Ek Bharat- Shreshtra Bharat'.

It is a matter of pride for us that recently Kumbh Mela was included in the list of 'Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity'. Last year, UNESCO has accorded Ahmedabad the status of India's first 'Heritage City'. Chennai, on account of its glorious tradition of music, has been included in the list of Creative Cities by UNESCO.

It is my Government's continuous endeavor to preserve and protect our historical heritage through programmes such as 'Swadesh Darshan' and 'Amrut Yojana'.

**Honourable Members,**

Our Space programme contributes immensely in providing right information in a timely manner to farmers, fishermen, students, scientists, thus contributing to the development of the country. Towards this end, India's ambitious space programme is accomplishing new heights in promoting national development and in furthering regional and international cooperation.

For the first time in the world, 104 Satellites were launched successfully at one go by ISRO.

In June 2017, the first developmental flight of India's GSLV MK-III was successfully launched which marked an important step in taking forward the launch capability of the country.

Last year on 5<sup>th</sup> May, ISRO launched the South Asian Satellite which demonstrated India's commitment towards sharing benefits of its technical capabilities with neighbouring countries.

This year on 12<sup>th</sup> January, ISRO made the country proud by successfully launching the PSLV-C40. On this day, ISRO also scored a century of satellites launched.

**Honourable Members,**

In this modern era of digital connectivity, my Government is continuously working towards ensuring that our countrymen and future generations are able to harness the power of digital technology. The Digital India Mission is proving to be a milestone in providing due recognition and in securing the rights of the poor and deprived.

My Government is implementing the largest Digital Literacy Programme of the world under the 'Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharata Abhiyan'. So far, one crore people have been made digitally literate.

'BHIM App' is playing a major role in promoting digital transactions. The recently launched 'Umang App' has made more than 100 public services available on mobile phones.

'Aadhar' has helped in securing the rights of the poor by eliminating middlemen. At present, Digital Payments are being carried out in more than 400 schemes of the Government. As a result, it has become possible to provide Government benefits to the genuine beneficiaries. Till now, more than Rs. 57 thousand crore have been prevented from going into the wrong hands.

As a result of commendable efforts in the field of electronic manufacturing, the number of mobile companies in the country have gone up from a mere 2 in 2014 to 113. This has helped in providing new employment opportunities to our youth in small towns of the country.

### **Honourable Members,**

Digital and physical connectivity play a big role in country's balanced development. My Government is striving towards enhancing connectivity and is equipping the transport sector to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Modern transport arrangements are being developed in a manner that different modes complement each other.

Railways remain the main mode of transport even today and that is why investment in Railways for capacity development and modernization is being enhanced continuously. My Government is committed to the construction of world class Railways. Work on Mumbai-Ahmedabad High speed bullet train has commenced.

My Government has formulated a new Metro Rail Policy which lays emphasis on 'last mile connectivity'. Presently, Metro work is in progress in 11 cities of the country.

Recently, my Government has approved an ambitious programme for development of highways namely 'Bharatmala'. A provision of Rs. 5 lakh 35 thousand crore has been made for this. Under this project, in order to enhance National Corridor Efficiency, about 53 thousand km. of National Highways have been identified.

Under 'Jalmarg Vikas Pariyojana', major projects on Ganga river have started in Varanasi, Sahibganj, Farakka and Haldia.

Under the 'Sagarmala programme', works on Special Economic Zone in Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust and 'Smart Port Industrial Cities' in Paradip and Deen Dayal Port Trust have been taken up.

To provide air connectivity to smaller cities and to enable the lower middle class, middle class and young people to fly, "Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik" or 'UDAN' scheme has been launched. While only 76 airports of the country were connected with commercial flights since Independence, under the aegis of 'UDAN', work has been initiated to connect 56 airports and 31 helipads in a short span of 15 months. So far, flights have commenced from 16 such airports.

Along with improving connectivity, these schemes are also generating new employment opportunities.

### **Honourable Members,**

For the first time, increase in Power generation capacity in the country has exceeded the target. Today, India has become a net exporter of power.

My Government has ensured power availability to States at cheap rates by completing work on the 'One Nation, One Grid'. Schemes worth Rs. 1.5 lakh crore have been implemented to strengthen the power distribution network in all villages and towns of the country. The work of electrifying 18 thousand villages is also nearing completion.

As of now, more than 28 crore LED bulbs have been distributed under 'UJALA scheme' and the private sector has also sold over 50 crore LED

bulbs. This has resulted in an annual saving of over Rs. 40 thousand crore in the electricity bills for poor and middle class. In addition to conserving the environment, this has also resulted in an annual saving of 10 thousand crore units of electricity to the nation.

Mission to save electricity and efforts to increase electricity production are moving hand in hand. In last three years, solar energy generation has increased by seven times.

With Indian efforts, the International Solar Alliance has now become a legal entity. Its headquarter has been set up in India.

### **Honourable Members,**

With the objective of taking the benefits of development to every part of the country, my Government is working with sensitivity towards achieving the hopes and aspirations of the people of North-East.

To accelerate the pace of development of this area, North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme has been sanctioned recently, with 100 percent central assistance. Under this scheme, projects relating to drinking water supply, energy, education and health will be completed.

To strengthen electricity transmission and distribution network in the North Eastern States, Government has sanctioned schemes worth Rs. 10 thousand crore in the last three years.

In Mizoram, a Hydro Electric Power Project constructed at a cost of Rs. 913 crore has been dedicated to the nation recently.

My Government is also striving to enhance road connectivity in the North-East.

Work on Agartala-Akhaura rail-link which will connect India and Bangladesh is progressing rapidly.

Shillong –Tura road project was dedicated to the people last year in December. This road will improve connectivity in the entire North-East region.

Last year, the longest river-bridge of the country- Dhola-Sadiyaa- was also dedicated to the nation. This bridge has reduced distance between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh by 165 kilometers.

My Government has also decided to develop the Barak River as National Waterway-16.

### **Honourable Members,**

Due to regular efforts of the Central and State Governments, there has been a significant improvement in internal security of the country. The North East has also witnessed an improvement in the security situation. There has been a reduction in incidents of Naxal-Maoist violence. For this, the enlightened citizens of the region, our military, paramilitary and police forces deserve to be congratulated. We commend all our security personnel and pay heartfelt tribute to the martyrs.

Terrorist violence in the interiors of Jammu & Kashmir is directly related to cross-border infiltration. With better coordination, our Army, Para-Military Forces and Jammu-Kashmir Police are giving a befitting response to the perpetrators.

My Government has kept open the path of dialogue with those who wish to shun violence and join the main stream, while reposing faith in the Constitution of India. In the past three years, maximum number of youth influenced by the Naxal-Maoist ideology, have surrendered and joined the main stream.

My Government has also recently sanctioned a scheme of more than Rs. 18 thousand crore for the modernization of Police Forces.

The policy related to Strategic Partnership in Defence Manufacturing sector has also been given a final shape. This will encourage maximum participation of private sector in the manufacture of major defence

platforms and equipment and would provide a fillip to employment generation.

My Government has fulfilled its commitment of 'One Rank One Pension' and disbursed arrears of more than Rs. 10 thousand crore to over 20 lakh retired armed forces personnel.

**Honourable Members,**

Service to humanity is an integral part of India's cultural heritage. Because of these values, India has always remained the First Responder in times of crises, such as the earthquake in Nepal, flood calamity in Sri Lanka and drinking water crisis in Maldives.

Today, all Indians residing in any corner of the world are confident that in case of a crisis, their Government will provide them with a safe passage to the country. More than 90 thousand Indians stranded abroad have been safely brought back since 2014.

Due to the successful diplomatic efforts of my Government, there has been a new found respect for India. As a result, India has been able to secure representation in the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, International Maritime Organization and Economic and Social Council. In a keenly contested election to the International Court of Justice, India emerged victorious.

Subsequent to inclusion in the Missile Technology Control Regime last year, India has been inducted as a member in the Wassenaar Arrangement and Australia Group this year. This success has come after a long wait and with prolonged efforts and is an important achievement of my Government.

The commencement of operations at Chabahar Port is a historic event. First shipment of wheat has been sent to Afghanistan through this Port. An Air-corridor between India and Afghanistan has been made operational this year and shipment of freight has started.

Ties with Indian Diaspora are being progressively strengthened. On 9<sup>th</sup> January this year, on the occasion of 'Parvasi Bhartiya Divas', a



Conference of Parliamentarians of Indian origin was organized for the first time in which elected representatives from 24 countries participated.

The Ministry of External Affairs, in collaboration with Department of Posts, has embarked upon a comprehensive programme for expansion of Passport services in the country. Under this programme, establishment of 251 Passport Service Kendras has been announced, of which 60 centres have started functioning.

**Honourable Members,**

To consolidate the foundation of development in the country, my Government has taken up the strengthening of financial institutions on priority.

As a result of this, India's growth rate remained impressive despite global economic slow-down. During the first quarter of 2016-17, the economy witnessed a temporary slowdown in GDP growth. The second quarter of 2017-18, however, has seen a reversal of this trend. In the last 3 and a half years, the rate of inflation as well as Government's fiscal and current account deficits have, on an average, shown a decline.

In 2017, Foreign Exchange Reserves have risen to a level of more than US dollar 410 billion. Appropriate policies adopted by my Government have contributed to an increase in Foreign Direct Investment from US Dollar 36 billion to US Dollar 60 billion during the last three years.

**Honourable Members,**

With a view to resolving the problems of citizens, my Government has accorded priority to simplification of procedures. In the last three years, 1428 obsolete laws have been repealed and this is a continuous process.

Working towards achieving robust and inclusive development, my Government is striving to institutionalize honesty and develop transparent systems in the country.

To achieve economic integration of the country, my Government has introduced GST which is the biggest tax-reform since Independence. My

Government has also constituted the National Anti-profiteering Authority so that benefits of lower prices of goods and services are passed on to the consumers.

My Government is also committed to revitalizing the banking system and to make it transparent. It has been decided to re-capitalise the public sector banks by infusing more than Rs. 2 lakh crore of capital in them.

Our fight against corruption continues. Towards this end, registration of about 3 lakh 50 thousand dubious companies has been cancelled in the last one year.

To bring transparency in government procurement and to provide opportunity to maximum number of entrepreneurs, a new system - Government E-market place has been created by the name of GeM. With the help of GeM portal, even the smallest of entrepreneurs are now capable of selling their products to Government.

To give preference to Make in India in public procurement, a new policy has been formulated. This policy promotes domestic manufacturing and services which in turn would create new opportunities for employment.

The Central Government is working together with States for creating a favourable business environment.

As a result of these efforts of my Government, India has moved up from 142<sup>nd</sup> to 100<sup>th</sup> rank in the *Ease of Doing Business* ranking of the World Bank. This has improved the credibility of the country in the global market.

**Honourable Members,**

The effort of my Government is to achieve welfare of the people through public participation. My Government is taking feedback by communicating with the youth, women, farmers, entrepreneurs, students, workers and also from the people of civil society. Their suggestions are being incorporated in the policies and decisions of the Government.

**Honourable Members,**

Citizens alive to the state of governance in the country are concerned about the frequent elections in one part of the country or another, which adversely impact the economy and development. Frequent elections not only impose a huge burden on human resources but also impede the development process due to the promulgation of the model code of conduct. Therefore, a sustained debate is required on the subject of simultaneous elections and all political parties need to arrive at a consensus on this issue.

**Honourable Members,**

Nation building is a continuous process in which each citizen of the country has a role to play. It is our responsibility to exhibit exemplary conduct before the nation. The completion of time bound goals towards Nation Building is our collective responsibility.

Attaining these goals by 2022, when the Nation celebrates the 75<sup>th</sup> year of Independence, would not only fulfil the dream of our freedom fighters and founding fathers but also strengthen the foundation of New India.

Dream of a New India does not belong to one political party or organization. It is an embodiment of the aspirations and expectations of 1 hundred 30 crore countrymen. To fulfil this dream, we all have to work together with complete dedication.

Come, let us all work towards achieving the ideals of equality and fraternity enshrined in our Constitution. Let us move ahead together in one direction with full commitment and energy towards creating a glorious India.

**Jai Hind!**