

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA  
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND  
AT THE FAREWELL FUNCTION IN THE CENTRAL HALL IN  
PARLIAMENT HOUSE**

**New Delhi, July 23, 2022**

Standing before you here today, I find myself overcome by many emotions and memories. It was here that, for many years, as a Member of Parliament, I used to interact with fellow MPs. It was also here, in this very Central Hall, that I was sworn in as the President of India about five years ago. You all, honourable members, occupy an august place in this 'Temple of Democracy'. You also hold a special place in my heart which shall remain there forever.

It must be a matter of special pride for all of you that you are all elected representatives of the people of India. To them, I remain eternally grateful for giving me an opportunity to serve the country as President. What the Almighty had wanted me to accomplish could not have been accomplished without the support from you all for which I remain grateful to you. During my term I have tried to discharge my duties to the best of my ability. But for the strength I derived from your sustained faith in me, my task might have been difficult. I have also drawn inspiration from all my illustrious predecessors.

Honourable Members,

Whether one is the President or an MP, we are all fellow travellers on this path which is taking our country to greater heights. This path was marked out by the wise men and women who founded the Republic and wrote its Constitution. While they wrote the Constitution, the fact remains that it was adopted and enacted by 'We the People,' that is, all the people of India. They are the ones who have continued to guide the journey of the Republic – through their representatives, all you honourable Members of Parliament. That is why the Parliament is also called 'The Temple of Democracy'.

Article 79 of our Constitution provides for a Parliament consisting of the President and the two houses. In keeping with this constitutional provision and adding my sentiment to it, I look at the President as an integral part of the Parliamentary family. As with any family, there are bound to be differences within this Parliamentary family too; there would be diverging views about how to proceed further. But we remain a family, and the interest of the nation remains our top priority. Political processes operate through the mechanism of party organisations, but the parties must rise above a partisan approach and consider what is good, what is essential for the common man and woman, with the spirit of 'nation first'.

When we consider the whole nation as a family, we also understand that differences are bound to crop up once in a while. Such differences can be resolved peacefully and harmoniously through dialogue. Citizens and political parties have many constitutional avenues open to them, including protests. After all, the Father of our Nation employed the weapon of Satyagraha for that purpose. But he was equally concerned about the other side. Citizens have a right to protest to press for their demands, but it should always be in the peaceful Gandhian mould.

Honourable Members,

There have been two high points of my term in the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Memorable events have been organised all over the country as befitting commemoration of the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. In this context, I would like to mention the transformational achievements of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. It can be said that this national campaign of sanitation has been a true tribute to Mahatma Gandhi by the government and the people. As the second historic event, 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' is being celebrated enthusiastically by citizens to commemorate 75 years of India's Independence. I would like to congratulate the government for the successful organisation of the two historic events. It is especially touching to see the people, young and old alike, participate in them and reaffirm their links with history.

In the year 2020, in a matter of a few days, our world changed like never before. After nearly hundred years, a pandemic jolted the

entire humanity. It has been an unprecedented tragedy in our times, and the whole world is still struggling with it. At this stage, one can only hope that the world will draw the right lessons from it. The chief lesson is that we human beings have forgotten that we are part of nature. The reality is that we are neither separate from nature, nor we are above it. The outbreak of the pandemic was partly linked with the disruption in ecological balance. The last two years have also reminded us that we are after all one human family and our survival depends on mutual cooperation. India's efforts in combating COVID have been appreciated worldwide. With everyone's efforts, we have achieved the target of 200 crore vaccinations in just 18 months. During the Corona period, we had provided free ration to 80 crore people.

I believe that by internalising these learnings in our policy frameworks, we will be able to face the next big crisis, if it occurs, with more confidence. Climate change is no longer a matter of debate; its effects are already impacting our lives. But respect for nature and faith in our shared humanity can help us protect our fragile environment. In this regard, India's leadership in global climate action and initiatives to promote alternative sources of energy are particularly praiseworthy.

Honourable Members,

Looking back on my career in public service, and the efforts of the governments, if I speak collectively for my generation, we must accept that, although much has been achieved yet so much more remains to be done to raise the living standards of the marginalised. The country has been, slowly but surely, realising the dreams of Dr. Ambedkar. I grew up in a mud house, but far fewer children have to live in thatched houses with leaking roofs now. More and more of the poor people have been shifting to pucca houses, partly with the direct support from the government. Our sisters and daughters walking miles to fetch drinking water is becoming a thing of the past, because it is our endeavour that every house gets water from the tap. We have also installed toilets in every house, which are laying the foundation for building a clean and healthy India. Memories of

lighting up lanterns and diyas after sunset are also fading as almost all villages have finally been provided electricity connections.

Indeed, as the basic necessities are taken care of, aspirations are changing too. I realised that when an old woman who lives in an ashram in Vrindavan requested me, during my visit last month, to let her have a helicopter ride! What it means is that the dreams of average Indians have got wings now. This has been made possible by good governance, which by definition is without any kind of discrimination. This all-round progress is in tune with what Babasaheb Ambedkar had visualised.

What is particularly satisfying for me to note is the sense of empowerment among women. This empowerment is more visible in the younger generation. In most of the convocations that I have attended, I have observed that girls have been outshining boys. I am confident that the 'National Education Policy 2020' will accelerate the momentum of this change. I believe that women empowerment will strengthen our society in the years to come. The march towards equality in the domain of gender is matched by similar progress in other domains.

Honourable Members,

Before I conclude, I extend my warm greetings and best wishes to Smt. Droupadi Murmu who has been elected to the post of the President of India. Her election to the highest constitutional post is going to strengthen the cause of women empowerment and infuse ambition among the struggling segments of society. I am sure that her experience, wisdom and personal ideals will inspire and guide the entire nation.

I once again express my gratitude to you all. It has been a great experience working with you. All of you have contributed to the well-being of the people through your actions, inside and outside Parliament. I compliment all of you for serving the people of India. During my term, I have frequently interacted with you on various platforms and I have also met numerous delegations of

parliamentarians and of people from other domains. I must appreciate the honour you have continued to bestow upon the office I have held. During this period, I also got the opportunity of working with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and members of his Council of Ministers. I am thankful to all of them for the special regard they have given me.

I would like to thank Vice-President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu for his unstinted cooperation. He, as Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha, and Shri Om Birla as the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, also deserve congratulations and appreciation for the way they have conducted proceedings of Parliament and continued its great traditions. I have been receiving utmost assistance from the Governors and Chief Ministers of the States, Lieutenant Governors and Administrators of the Union Territories. To them, I express my sincere thanks.

I am confident all of you will continue to make the best efforts to serve all citizens, especially those on the margins, and will also uphold the highest democratic traditions, in keeping with our great Constitution. I convey my best wishes to all of you for your success in the efforts to make our society and the nation stronger.

Thank you,

Jai Hind!