

**Address by the Hon'ble President of India
Shri Ram Nath Kovind
On the occasion of birth centenary celebrations of Maharaja of
Mysore, late Shri Jayachamaraja Wadiyar**

1. This year we are celebrating the birth centenary of His Highness Maharaja Jayachamaraja Wadiyar. On this occasion, let us ponder what it was about that age which produced so many titans. Those who shaped our nation were not only visionary leaders but each was a personality with many talents. Maharaja Wadiyar, the 25th Maharaja of the Kingdom of Mysore, was an exceptional ruler and able administrator. He was also a noted philosopher, music exponent, political thinker and philanthropist.
2. It gives us immense pleasure and satisfaction to see his legacy is being carried forward by the Maharaja's family members and friends. I am particularly impressed by devotion of Smt. Pramoda Devi Wadiyar, the worthy daughter in law of Maharaja Wadiyar, in restoring and preserving this priceless heritage. She deserves appreciation and praise.
3. As we remember Maharaja Wadiyar here today, he can best be described as the most eminent monarch-democrat.
4. Prince Wadiyar was only 21 when he lost his father, Narasimharaja Wadiyar, on 11th March, 1940, and he was duly anointed as the Yuvaraja. But only five months later, his uncle, Maharaja Krishna Raja Wadiyar also died, and the Yuvaraja ascended the throne on 8th September, 1940.
5. He immediately implemented the reformed constitution of 1940 on Mysore Kingdom. While inaugurating the joint session of the two houses of the Mysore state legislature on 9th June, 1941, he said (I quote) "The torch of constitutional progress has been handed down to me as a family heritage. It is my ambition, as I am sure it is yours, to ensure that its light

does not grow dim but will burn ever brighter with the passage of time..."(unquote).

6. When India won independence, he was the first among the rulers of India's princely states to accept the Instrument of Accession. The Maharaja signed it on 9th August, 1947 and the Union Government accepted it on 16th August. He should be thus regarded as the icon of India's transition to democracy. His pioneering contribution to the unity and integrity of the newly independent nation will never be forgotten.
7. After the Accession the Maharaja held the position of Rajpramukh of the state of Mysore till 1st November 1956. Thanks to the popular demand, the President of India appointed him as the Governor of the newly formed state of Mysore the same day. (Mysore was later renamed as Karnataka in 1975). He held the position till 4th May, 1964.
8. Can we think as to what is unique about this land that nourishes the best of social values and impulses? That was exactly what drove a Maharaja to put his people first. Maharaja Wadiyar's decision on the eve of the independence shows that the democratic ethos was always deeply rooted in this land. Here, in Karnataka, the great Basaveshwara had stressed the importance of democratic and people-centric rule in the 12th century, long before the West discovered democracy.
9. Maharaja Wadiyar had imbibed progressive values from the rich local traditions, even as he absorbed the positive attributes that the Western civilisation had to offer. Like many great leaders of his generation, his personal values were an amalgamation of tradition and modernity. This was best expressed by Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation who said and I quote "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all

lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other people's houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave.”
[unquote]

10. Both Gandhiji and Maharaja Wadiyar surely would have the Vedic advice in mind. The Rig Veda says, आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः

Let noble thoughts come to me from all directions.

11. For the Maharaja, the attitude of an open mind was reflected in his passion for music. He was equally at home in Western classic music as well as in Karnatic classical music, and enriched both traditions. He composed kritis in classical ragas and also facilitated great composers and musicians of the West. He also channeled his enthusiasm for arts through the Sangeet Natak Akademi, which he served as a first member of the executive board and also a president. I feel privileged to have distributed the Sangeet Natak academy awards in February this year.

12. The Maharaja was not only an exceptional scholar of Indian philosophy himself but also promoted scholarship through the 'Jayachamaraja Grantha Ratna Mala'. The series enriched Kannada language and literature. Among the works published under it are translations of several scriptures and classics from Sanskrit to Kannada, including parts of the Rig Veda. In his own published works, he remained in search of the supreme reality by exploring the vision of our original seers. Today's young scholars will profit from reading a range of the Maharaja's works on the Gita, Advaita, the Yoga Shastra, the Puranas to sublime issues like beauty and art.

13. His support for entrepreneurship is also an inspiring story. As the ruler of the Mysore state, he actively encouraged the establishment of an industrial facility in Bengaluru by a company called Hindustan Aircraft in 1940. It was aimed to

support the government's efforts in the Second World War. It has grown to become Hindustan Aeronautics of today, a pioneer public sector unit.

14. I am glad to learn that the Maharaja gifted the magnificent Cheluvamba Mansion in Mysore to the Government to start the Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI). His similar donations helped the government set up the National Tuberculosis Institute in Bangalore and the All India Institute of Speech and Hearing at Mysore.
15. Amid such hectic activity in a short life span of only 55 years, he amazingly also found time for ecology and served the national board for wild life too.
16. Legendary leaders like Maharaja Wadiyar have shaped the life we lead today. The best tribute we can pay him on the occasion of his birth centenary is to emulate his values and his vision in our daily lives.
17. In paying tribute to such a legend, I recall that one of my illustrious predecessors Dr. S. Radhakrishnan had aptly described the Maharaja as an Aradhaka and Sadhaka. He was indeed an exception. With these words, I commend this function in the memory of this great sage, Maharaja of Mysore Jayachamaraja Wadiyar.

Thank you,
Jai Hind!