

**Address to the Nation by the President of India
Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam on the eve of 57th Republic Day - 2006**

ONE BILLION PEOPLE: ONE VISION

Dear Citizens, on the eve of the 57th Republic Day of India, my greetings to all of you in the country and those living abroad. I convey my special greetings, to the members of our Armed Forces and the Paramilitary Forces, who guard our frontiers on the land, the sea and the air and also the central and state level police including the other internal security forces. I am also happy to inform that my government has decided to increase the pensionary benefits of JCOs and NCOs of our Armed Forces from 1st January 2006, which will benefit around 1.2 million pensioners.

Critical national needs

In today's Republic Day address, I would like to share with you two critical needs of our nation. One is about the national mission and its progress. The second is to protect our progress and further sustain the earning capacity of individuals and people. For this, it is essential to increase the boundary conditions of our life, which comes out of our long cherished civilizational heritage. This is the time, we must launch and build-up an intensive and extensive movement of cherishing our value systems in all walks of life. This is particularly important since the nation has to provide leadership to the 540 million ignited minds of the youth who are the most powerful resource for translating our vision of transforming India into a developed nation, well before 2020 in an integrated way.

Progressive Momentum towards National Missions

Friends, I have visited all the States and Union Territories and have addressed the Members of Parliament and a number of State Assemblies. I have met and interacted with over one million youth. I have met many spiritual leaders. In addition, I have addressed a number of Ministries, professional bodies, educational and scientific institutions, industries, healthcare organizations, judicial establishments, law enforcement agencies, Armed Forces units, media, non-governmental organizations, artists, creative personalities, rural people and many others. I have also interacted with differently abled persons. In all my interactions

with various constituents and specialists of the society, the prime focus of my communication was to present the linkages between the particular institution and the goal of national development. These have resulted in specific missions for the organizations and individuals converging towards Vision 2020. When I visited and interacted with different cross sections of the people at a later time, I have found several of these missions are being translated into actions providing fruitful results.

For example, the interlinking of rivers has made a beginning in Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. In Tamil Nadu, the State is considering creation of water ways connecting Palar, Kaveri, Vaigai and Thamiraparani. I have seen and experienced the functioning of four operational PURAs (Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas) namely Periyar PURA at Vallam, Tamil Nadu, Loni PURA in Maharashtra, Chitrakoot PURA in Madhya Pradesh and Byrraju PURA in Bhimavaram, Andhra Pradesh. BAIF (Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation) has brought a new dimension in rural and tribal development, through empowering the rural people with know-how, technology and networks; for water conservation, dairy development, fruit orchard and animal husbandry. In addition, Governments of Kerala, Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh have taken up the PURA missions in their respective States and have completed the planning process. In the 93rd Indian Science Congress, I have suggested to the Ministry of Rural Development to allocate Rs. 500 Cr. for initiation of 100 PURA clusters, each consisting of 20 to 30 villages across the country. Action is progressing. Leadership for these PURA Clusters will be provided by the selected educational institutions located in the respective rural areas. Chhattisgarh, Mizoram and Uttranchal have undertaken large scale plantation of Jatropha in both Government and private lands to produce bio-fuel. I have seen a solar power plant of 120 KW capacity in Kaylapara village in Sagar Island at Sundarbans in West Bengal. This power plant along with a number of 20 to 30 KW plants is supplying six hours of electricity to 33 villages in the Sagar Island. This is going to be expanded to 150 villages very soon. Bangalore Municipal Corporation is in the process of implementing a 8 MW power plant using solid municipal waste through BOOT (Build, Own, Operate and Transfer) scheme. The power plant is similar to what we have in Hyderabad and Vijayawada. India's first virtual university has been created by the three 150 year old universities namely Madras, Mumbai and Calcutta. I have delivered the inaugural address for this virtual university and interacted with 15,000 students spread across the country through EDUSAT using virtual tele-education delivery system. A Virtual University by definition is meant to cut across the geographical and administrative boundaries and provide the best of education. It is our responsibility to make it happen in the new environment. I have seen the accelerated learning programme using computers in Karnataka Government schools in association with Azim Premji Foundation to reduce the

dropouts. Akshaya Computer Literacy Programme of Kerala has made at least one member in each family a computer literate in whole of Malapuram district of the State. Also, I saw a high profile scientist after his retirement from Light Combat Aircraft Programme has taken up the mission of removing the illiteracy in his native village Bour in Darbhanga district of Bihar. Jamsetji Tata Virtual Academy has started the creation of Village Knowledge Centers using the selected fellows of virtual academy in association with M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation. I interacted with a number of village knowledge centers established in different parts of the country from Coimbatore and Hyderabad through EDUSAT connectivity and discussed the problem faced by the farmers, fisher folk and crafts personnel. At Peda Amiram near Bhimavaram, I have visited an International Cancer Centre with all modern facilities for treatment of cancer patients. At Parumala in Kerala, the International Centre for Cardio Thoracic and Vascular Diseases is providing specialized treatment to heart patients in rural areas. I also met 1000 physically challenged children wearing the light weight calipers at Nalgonda in Andhra Pradesh and most importantly the first and the 10,000th child benefited from Defence Technology spin off. All these results indicate that the development has started reaching certain parts of our rural areas. What does it all symbolize? The 5000 years old civilization is awakening to new technology and towards development. I can see that developed India is on the rise.

In order to strengthen this process, scientists, technologists and healthcare specialists have a special role to play.

Mission for Scientists and Technologists: For the scientists and technologists of the nation, I have five immediate national missions: **(a).** Increasing the Solar Photo Voltaic Cell efficiency from 14% to 45% using nano technology; **(b).** Research in proteomics to identify the disease causing mechanism and to develop new methods to treat diseases; **(c).** Earthquake forecasting using multiple parameter pre-cursors such as pre-shock conditions and electromagnetic phenomena, prior to the final rupture; **(d).** Building a validated mathematical model for predicting the quantum of rain for a particular cloud conditions in a particular region in a prescribed time using the new type of Polarimetric radar and; **(e).** Developing the products in the healthcare, electronics and materials to meet the national requirements using the convergence of nano, bio and info technologies.

Healthcare: Health care community should give highest priority for treatment of HIV/AIDS and accelerate the development of effective anti-vaccine for certain types of HIV before 2007, by networking with national and international institutions working in this area. They should integrate research efforts of malaria, typhoid, and diarrhoeal disorders for facilitating development of

combination vaccine by 2007. Healthcare personnel, doctors, psychologists, researchers, pharmacologists, economists and environmentalists should all work together coherently towards the mission of providing good health to all citizens of India and make the nation near disease free.

Bharat Nirman Programme: The Government has already launched the Bharat Nirman Programme with an outlay of Rs. 1,74,000 Crore for providing rural infrastructure within the next four years. This will facilitate the rural programme like PURA to progress faster in an integrated way.

Awakening and change

These actions from multiple agencies spread across the country gives me confidence that we are well on our way on the path of development and transforming India into a developed nation before 2020. Every awakening and change, bring with them certain responsibilities and a code of conduct. Therefore, we need to promote ethical values in all walks of life which will enable creation of synergy between establishments for realizing our dream of seeing the smiles on the billion faces. Now I would like to discuss the need for important changes required in our mind-set.

Transparency starts from Home: On 21st November 2005, I had visited Adhichunchanagiri Math, attended a function of FUREC (Foundation for Unity of Religions and Enlightened Citizenship) and interacted with over 54,000 students of various schools and colleges of Karnataka. There a 10th class student Bhavani studying in Adichunchanagiri Composite High School, Shimoga asked me the following question:

“Dear Sir, What is the role of students to stop corruption which is deeply rooted in our county just like cancer?”

Agony of the young mind is reflected in this question. For me it was an important question, since it comes from a young mind. I was thinking what type of solutions we could give. My thought process was the following:

I said there are one billion people in the country and nearly 200 million homes. In general most of them are good people. However, if we find that people in few million houses are not transparent and not amenable to the laws of the country, what can we do? These houses apart from parents have one daughter or one son or both. If the parents in these houses are deviating from the transparent path the children can use the tool of love and affection and correct the parents to come back to the right path. I asked all the children assembled in that gathering,

whether parents of a few children get deviated from transparency, will you children boldly tell your parents, father or mother you are not doing the right thing. That is what we are taught by you and in the school. Most of the children spontaneously responded, "We will do it". The confidence comes from them that they have love as a tool. Similarly I have also asked the parents in some other meeting, initially there was a silence, later, many of them hesitantly agreed that they would abide by the children's suggestion since it is driven by love. The children took an oath. The oath was "I will lead an honest life free from all corruption and will set an example for others to adopt a transparent way of life". Finally I told the students that they should start a movement starting from their home.

Gift extinguishes the dignity of human life

It was around 1940 and the Second World War was in progress. At that time Panchayat board elections took place in Rameswaram. My father was elected as Panchayat Board member and on the same day he was also elected as the President of Rameswaram Panchayat Board. Rameswaram Island is a beautiful place with 20,000 populations at that time. They elected my father as Panchayat Board President not because he belonged to a particular religion or a particular caste or particular language or for his economic status. He was elected only on the basis of his being a good human being. I would like to narrate one incident that took place on the day he was elected as President of Panchayat board.

I was a school boy at that time studying in fourth class in Rameswaram Panchayat School. Those days we did not have electricity and we used to study in kerosene lamp. I was reading the lessons loudly and I heard a knock on my door. We never used to lock the door in Rameswaram in those years. Some body opened the door, came in and asked me where my father was? I told him that father had gone for Namaz for evening prayers. Then he said, I have brought something for him, can I keep it there. Then since my father had gone for Namaz, I shouted for my mother to get her permission to receive the items. Since she was also on the Namaz there was no response. I asked the person to leave the items on the cot. After that I went for my studies.

I used to learn by reading aloud in my younger days. I was reading loud and fully concentrating on my studies. At that time my father landed and saw a tambalum kept in the cot. He asked me what is this? Who has given that? I told him somebody came and has kept this for you. He opened the cover of the tambalum and found there was a costly dhoti, angawastram, some fruits and some sweets and he could see the slip that the person had left behind. I was the last son of my father, he really loved me and I also loved him a lot. This was the first time

I saw him very angry and also this was the first time I had a beating by him. I got frightened and I was weeping. Then he touched my shoulder lovingly with affection and advised me not to receive any gift without his permission. It is not a good habit. Receiving gift with a purpose is a very dangerous thing in life. He quoted a verse from Hadith which means “Gifts accompany poisonous intentions”. This lesson stands out prominently in my mind. This experience taught me a valuable lesson for my life.

I would like to mention the writings in Manu Smriti which warns every individual against accepting gifts given with the motive since it places the acceptor under an obligation in favour of the person who gave the gift. Ultimately it results in making a person to do things which are not permitted according to law, in order to favour the person who has given the gift. Therefore it is necessary that the quality of not yielding to attraction of gifts and presents must be inculcated in individuals, so that he/she may develop immunity against the desire for receiving gifts. It is also said that by accepting gifts the divine light in the person gets extinguished. I am sharing this, with all of you particularly the young ones, to emphasize that, not to be carried away by any gift with a motive through which one loses his personality greatly. I will be very happy if you can practice this sincerely.

Mother gives principle of truth

Now, I will narrate to you a story surrounding the life of a great saint Sheikh Abdul Qadir Al-Gelani which happened about one thousand years ago. One day child Abdul Qadir heard a cow saying, “what are you doing here in the grazing fields, it is not for this you have been created”. He ran back to his house feeling utterly terrified and climbed on to the roof of his house. From there he saw a large group of people returning from Arafat Mountain, thousands of miles away from his place in the neighbourhood of Mecca after performing Haj. Bewildered Abdul Qadir went to his mother and asked her permission to make a journey to Baghdad in order to pursue a career in knowledge. Mother understood the divine call and promptly gave the permission for him to go. She gave him 40 gold coins which was his share he inherited from his father. She stitched these 40 gold coins inside the lining of his coat and gave him permission to leave. When she stepped out of the door to bid him a farewell, she said, “Oh, my son! You are going! I have detached myself from you for the sake of Allah knowing that I shall not see your face again until the day of last judgement. But take one advice from me. My son, you always feel the truth, speak the truth and propagate the truth even when your life is at stake”.

Abdul Qadir travelled with a small caravan heading for Baghdad. During the journey, when the caravan was passing through the tough terrains, a group of robbers on horses suddenly attacked the caravan and started looting. None of them however took the slightest notice of Abdul Qadir, until one of the looters turned to him and said. “You are here poor boy! Do you have anything with you? Abdul Qadir replied, “I have got 40 gold coins which are stitched by my mother in the lining of my coat underneath my armpit.” The looter smiled and thought that Abdul Qadir was just joking. He left him alone and moved elsewhere. When their leader came and the looters took this boy to their leader and said to him, “A poor boy claims that he is in possession of 40 gold coins. We looted everybody but we have not touched him because we hardly believed that he has got gold coins with him”. Then the leader put the same question but Abdul Qadir replied the same. Then the leader ripped through his coat and discovered that he indeed got 40 gold coins inside the lining of his coat.

The astonished leader asked Abdul Qadir, what prompted him to make this confession? Abdul Qadir replied. “My mother made me promise to always be truthful even at the cost of my life. Here, it was a matter of only 40 Gold coins. I promised her and never betrayed her trust, so I told the truth”. The looters started weeping and said, you have adhered to the advice of your great mother but we have been betraying the trust of our parents and the covenant of our Creator for many years. From now onwards, you would become our leader in our repentance and they all decided to give up robbery and from that day, became righteous persons. Here the world saw the birth of a great saint, Shiekh Abdul Qadir Al-Gilani out of a message of truth a mother gave to her child. At this juncture, let me recall a Thirukkural composed by Poet Saint Thiruvalluvar, 2200 years ago.

மனத்தோடு வாய்மை மொழியின் தவத்தோடு
தானஞ்செய் வாரின் தலை

This means that “Truth in thinking and action will have a power higher than enduring Tapas and generous Charity.

Influence of Teacher: Mission of my life

I have talked to you many times about my primary school teacher Shri Sivasubramanya Iyer. He was a great teacher and he imbibed in many of his students a vision for future. For example, once he explained about bird flight and asked whether we understood or not. Seeing our response, he took us to the seashore and showed the birds actually flying and explained the flight mechanism.

Above all, the way he explained he injected into me, what should be the goal of my life. He is an excellent role model for all the teachers.

So far, I have discussed the need of transparent life, problems connected with the motivated Gift which extinguishes the human dignity, mother giving the principle of truth and teacher imbibing the vision to the students. Now, I would like to discuss about the importance of developmental politics.

Politics = Political Politics + Developmental Politics

We have been proud at the unparalleled distinction of India being the world's largest thriving Parliamentary democracy of multi-religions, multi-languages and multi-culture, is a matter of self-esteem for the nation and each one of us. We have completed 56 years of our Republic, with a flourishing democratic edifice, that is the envy of many other countries. What amazes the world perhaps is the sagacity and maturity of the Indian voters who have always tried to exercise their mandate conscientiously and enthusiastically proving once again that as envisaged in our Constitution, the people are sovereign and the power flows from them. People have a right and an urge to live in a developed India. Therefore, we need to orient ourselves towards Developmental Politics.

In politics there are two dimensions, the first one is the political politics and the other is the developmental politics. Political politics is required during the election process. Immediately after the election all parties must converge on developmental politics with a common mission. Translating this into action, all parties have to work with zeal to uplift the 260 million people living below poverty line and remove the illiteracy and unemployment. I would like to visualize a situation in which the political parties perform in the environment of developmental politics in our country, competing with each other, in putting forth their focused developmental vision through their manifesto.

Our 540 million youth, who are below 25 years of age, should see an imprint of great leaders in every action of the parliament members. They can become their role models to bring a dynamic change in politics and the developmental missions. Here, I am reminded of the famous statement by Swami Vivekananda "the basis of all systems social or political rests upon the goodness of men. No nation is great or good because parliament enacts this or that, but its men are great and good."

The story of the Lost Sheep

Dear Friends, when I am talking to you, I am reminded of the Biblical story of the “Lost sheep”, as said by The Jesus Christ. “If anyone of you has a hundred sheep and one of them gets lost, what will you do? Won’t you leave the ninety nine in the field and go and look for the lost sheep until you find it, and when you find it, you will be so glad that you will put it on your shoulder and carry it home. Then you will call in your friends and neighbours and say, let us have a feast, I have found my lost sheep.”

As the Lost Sheep is most important for the Shepherd, the message for every citizen of our country from this story is that you may find around you a house which is not lit. Please help to light that house. Similarly, teachers in the class room may find hundreds of bright students but a few may need knowledge with kindness. All teachers must locate such students and impart the knowledge. Leaders of my nation, you may meet many people and help them, but you immediately look for those who need your utmost help and bring them to the mainstream. Those who deal with public administration, look for the last person to be serviced and make him or her feel that he or she is serviced with the kind heart. Similarly, judiciary and law enforcement agencies should look for the marginalized persons, who cannot even reach you because of the multiple gates and layers between the judiciary and the citizen. Media as partner in national development should celebrate the success of our people whether it is in fishing, farming, craftsmanship or achievement of a rural area. The micro world of rural realities lives in the macro reality of a globally acclaimed India. Media has to capture this.

There are many such examples, which can be cited. Dear Citizens, if all of us do this, God will be with us and I am sure the whole nation will be happy, prosperous and safe. This is fully corroborated by the advice given to Mahatma Gandhi by his mother. Gandhiji says, "My mother had given an advice "Son, in your entire life time if you can save or better someone's life, your birth as a human being and your life is a success. You have the blessing of the Almighty God".

Conclusion

Infallibility is divinity. We are not divine. We are fallible. To err is human. Divinity would demand that we realize this irrefutable truth and correct ourselves when we become fallible. The spirit of life and thirst for success and rectitude should propel ourselves to correct our mistakes on our way instead of ruing over mistakes and slips that have been committed even inadvertently. The need of the hour is disciplined action by all citizens. This will lead to the creation of enlightened citizens. Any country is as good as its citizens. Their ethos, their values and their character will be reflected in the country’s make up. They are

crucial factors that will determine whether the country will move forward on a progressive path or stagnate. Hence, there is a need to cultivate a sense of eternal values in each of its citizens, instill in him or her with a sense of discipline. The education system right from the primary level has to concentrate on this aspect. For inculcating discipline among citizens, I visualize the necessity for providing compulsory NCC training for a minimum period of 18 months to all our youth either during the senior secondary stage and or during graduation in all educational institutions, both Government and private. This will ensure disciplined politics, business, judiciary, bureaucracy, scientific pursuits and sports and games. All of us have to practice the values of honesty, sincerity and tolerance in our day-to-day living. This will elevate our politics to statesmanship. We have to collectively inculcate a positive attitude of what we can do for our country so that we together will be able to benefit ourselves. We have immensely benefited from what our ancestors did and left for us. We have a right and responsibility to leave a positive legacy to the posterity for which we all will be remembered for. The land, water and sky of this nation are the witnesses.

*Our righteous toil is our guiding light,
If we work hard, we all can prosper.
Nurture great thoughts, rise up in actions,
May righteous methods be our guide;
May the nation prosper ever with Almighty's grace.*

Allow me again, my dear citizens to wish you a very purposeful and happy Republic Day.

May God bless you.

Jai Hind.