

Speech by Ambassador Anurag Bhushan
Independence Day of India
15 August 2025
Norra Latin, Stockholm

Namaskar!!

Good morning, Ambassador Daniel Wolvén, distinguished guests, and members of the Indian diaspora,

It is a true honour and privilege to welcome you all as we gather here in the heart of Stockholm to celebrate the 79th Independence Day of India. Though we are thousands of miles away from our homeland, the spirit of India is very much alive among us today.

This occasion fills me with immense pride—not just as an Indian, but as a member of a vibrant and growing community here in Sweden. It is heartening to see so many of you gathered here in such large numbers, reflecting the strength, unity, and diversity of the Indian diaspora.

I will now read the excerpts from our Hon. President Smt. Draupadi Murumu address to the nation on the eve of Independence Day, both in Hindi and English:

स्वतंत्रता दिवस की पूर्व संध्या पर आप सभी को मैं हार्दिक बधाई देती हूँ। हम सभी के लिए यह गर्व की बात है कि स्वाधीनता दिवस और गणतंत्र दिवस, सभी भारतीय उत्साह और उमंग के साथ मनाते हैं। ये दिवस हमें भारतीय होने के गौरव का विशेष स्मरण कराते हैं।

The fifteenth of August is a date etched in our collective memory. During the long years of colonial rule, generations of Indians dreamt of the day of independence. Men and women, old and young, from all parts of the country, yearned to throw away the yoke of foreign rule. Their struggle was marked by robust optimism, which has continued to propel our progress since Independence too. As we salute the tricolour tomorrow, we will also be paying homage to the memory of all freedom fighters whose sacrifices won India Independence on the 15th of August, 78 years ago.

Dear Fellow Citizens,

Our Constitution contains four values as the four pillars upholding our democracy. They are - justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. These are our civilisational principles that we re-discovered during the Freedom Struggle. At the heart of them all, I believe, is the notion of human dignity. Every human being is equal, and everyone deserves to be treated with dignity. Everyone should have equal access to healthcare and education. Everyone should have equal opportunity. Those who had been traditionally at a disadvantage needed to be given a helping hand.

In the healthcare sector, we have been witnessing a paradigm shift with a variety of initiatives under Ayushman Bharat, the largest healthcare scheme of its kind in the world. This scheme has already provided cover to more than 55 crore people. The government extended this benefit to all senior citizens of the age of 70 years and above, regardless of their income. As inequalities in access are removed, the poor and the lower middle-class also benefit from the best possible health-care facilities.

In this Digital Age, it is apt that one sector in India that has seen the most dramatic advances is information technology. Nearly all villages have 4G mobile connectivity, and the remaining few thousands will be covered soon. This has made possible large-scale adoption of digital payment technologies, in which India has become a world leader in a short span. It has also supported Direct Benefit Transfer, which ensures that welfare benefits reach the intended beneficiaries without glitch and leakage. More than half of the total number of digital transactions in the world take place in India. These developments have created a vibrant digital economy whose contribution to the country's GDP is increasing year on year.

Artificial intelligence is the next stage of technological advancement and has already entered our lives. The government has launched the India-AI mission to strengthen the country's AI capabilities. It is also helping to build AI models that answer to India's specific requirements. As we aspire to become a global-AI-hub by 2047, our focus will remain on making the best use of the advances in technology for the common people, to improve their lives by improving governance.

प्यारे देशवासियो,

इस वर्ष, हमें आतंकवाद का दंश झेलना पड़ा। कश्मीर घूमने गए निर्दोष नागरिकों की हत्या, कायरतापूर्ण और नितांत अमानवीय थी। इसका जवाब भारत ने, फौलादी संकल्प के साथ निर्णायक तरीके से दिया। ऑपरेशन सिंदूर ने यह दिखा दिया कि जब राष्ट्र की सुरक्षा का प्रश्न सामने आता है तब हमारे सशस्त्र बल किसी भी स्थिति का सामना करने के लिए पूरी तरह सक्षम सिद्ध होते हैं। रणनीतिक स्पष्टता और तकनीकी दक्षता के साथ, हमारी सेना ने सीमा पार के आतंकवादी ठिकानों को नष्ट कर दिया। मेरा विश्वास है कि ऑपरेशन सिंदूर, आतंकवाद के विरुद्ध मानवता की लड़ाई में एक मिसाल के तौर पर इतिहास में दर्ज होगा।

हमारी एकता ही हमारी जवाबी कार्रवाई की सबसे बड़ी विशेषता थी। यही एकता, उन सभी तत्वों के लिए सबसे करारा जवाब भी है जो हमें विभाजित देखना चाहते हैं। भारत के दृष्टिकोण को स्पष्ट करने के लिए, विभिन्न देशों में गए संसद-सदस्यों के बहुदलीय प्रतिनिधि-मंडलों में भी हमारी यही एकता दिखाई दी। विश्व-समुदाय ने, भारत की इस नीति का संज्ञान लिया है कि हम आक्रमणकारी तो नहीं बनेंगे, लेकिन अपने नागरिकों की रक्षा के लिए जवाबी कार्रवाई करने में तनिक भी संकोच नहीं करेंगे।

ऑपरेशन सिंदूर, प्रतिरक्षा के क्षेत्र में, 'आत्मनिर्भर भारत मिशन' की परीक्षा का भी अवसर था। अब यह सिद्ध हो गया है कि हम सही रास्ते पर हैं। हमारा स्वदेशी विनिर्माण उस निर्णायक स्तर पर पहुंच गया है जहां हम अपनी बहुत सी सुरक्षा-आवश्यकताओं को पूरा करने में भी आत्मनिर्भर बन गए हैं। ये उपलब्धियां स्वाधीन भारत के रक्षा इतिहास में एक नए अध्याय का सूत्रपात हैं।

Dear Fellow Citizens,

I would like to take this opportunity to urge all of you to do what you can, to protect the environment. To respond to the challenge of climate change, we must also change. We must change our habits and our world-view. We must change our

relationship with our land, rivers, mountains, and with flora and fauna. With contribution from all of us, we will leave behind a planet in which life will be flourishing in natural order.

Dear Fellow Citizens,

I have in mind especially the soldiers guarding our borders, and the police as well as Central Armed Police Forces. I extend my greetings to the members of the judiciary and the civil services. My Independence Day greetings to the Indian officials in the missions abroad and also to the Indian diaspora!

I once again extend my greetings for Independence Day.

Before I conclude, I thank all my fellow members of Indian Diaspora in making and working tirelessly in strengthening India-Sweden relations and maintaining India's prestige & reputation worldwide.

Happy Independence Day. **Jai Hind!**

Now, may I please welcome Ambassador Wolvén to say a few words.

Thank you.