

**SPEECH OF HON'BLE LT. GOVERNOR AT THE "IDEA OF
INDIA" LECTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
CENTER IN DELHI ON 23 JULY 2015**

Topic - Role played by the Armed Forces in preserving the
Indian Culture and instilling National Pride in her
Citizens

Directors and officials of Yes Bank and Yes Institute, ladies and gentlemen,

1. At the very outset I wish to congratulate Yes Bank & Yes Institute for conceiving the "The Idea of India" symposium with the aim of bringing together scholars, thinkers, journalists and leaders under one roof and make them speak on a variety of topics related to Indian culture, Indian history, Indian society and India as a concept, an "Idea", that existed since times immemorial.

2. The fact is that "The Idea of India" is an evolving concept, a process that has been going on for ages and may evolve further in the future.

3. Enlightened Leaders of Ancient India, in all walks of life conceived these ideas and preserved them in the form of the Vedas, the Puranas and our ancient epics, which form a part of our collective wisdom and memory.

4. Whilst the concept of India as a social and cultural entity stretches back into ancient history, the idea of India in the modern world derives from the choices we have made as a Nation State since independence. The Constituent Assembly and the process of writing a Constitution for free India provided the crucible in which the idea of India was forged and burnished through articulation, discussion and debate. It is an idea which has taken firmer shape through successive governments and electoral cycles as India has matured as a democracy.

5. Democracy is the beating heart of India. Governance with the consent of those governed was the choice that we made. In 1947, it may have appeared an audacious decision to opt for universal, adult franchise in a Nation that was so desperately poor and with such low levels of literacy and not many outside our country thought we will succeed. Yet, it is this conscious choice which has made India politically robust and given value to the voice of the people. An independent judiciary and a free media, along with the separation of legislative and executive power have created a system of democratic checks and balances, which act as a safeguard against authoritarianism. Today India is the world's largest democracy and our people participate in the democratic process with enthusiasm and gusto, voting and changing governments and political power changes hands, peacefully.

6. Fundamental freedoms are intrinsic to our Democracy and the "Idea of India" – the freedom to practise a religion of one's choice, freedom of speech and assembly. No Indian citizen needs to look over his shoulder while stating his views and non-discrimination on grounds of caste, creed or gender are the foundation stone for equal rights for all our citizens. We may not always live up to our ideals and many entrenched injustices and prejudices have still to be overcome, but the ideals we have before us of the kind of country we seek to be, are the beacon lights which should guide us in shaping our destiny.

7. Free India has also not been content to preserve the status quo. It has constantly sought to broaden political, economic and social inclusion, including through reservations for hitherto marginalised communities. While this is still a work in progress, there has been a genuine broadening and deepening of our democratic processes with the accommodation of ever new voices and groups conscious of their ability to influence and affect political outcomes. Pluralism defines India's reality – major religions of the world are represented here. Linguistically, India is a virtual continent with a

multitude of languages. Our ethnic diversity is amazing. India has embraced this diversity and provided space for these identities to flourish within the larger framework of the Indian state. The concept of unity in diversity is uniquely Indian, drawing inspiration from our cultural traditions and also better equipping us to navigate the world of the future, a world where boundaries are shrinking and the ability to deal with cultural differences is a virtue.

8. India has also sought to pursue economic growth and development within the framework of our often noisy democracy. There are voices which argue that it is not possible for a poor country to develop within the democratic process as this imposes intrinsic inefficiencies on economic choices. The model of benevolent authoritarianism is put forward as a better alternative. India, on the contrary, believes that democracy strengthens development as it provides better answers to the question “development for whom” and in what manner. Indeed, India can succeed only through democracy, given our size and diversity.

9. Whilst harnessing the present and looking at a vibrant future, we also need to understand the rich culture and wisdom of Ancient India – which the whole world is looking at again to find solutions to the problems of the modern age. The acceptance of Yoga, world over, an initiative of our Hon’ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi is a very recent example, you all are familiar with.

10. How have we done in the past 6-7 decades?

(a) Positives:

(i) Democracy and federalism has taken roots & the world admires & looks upto us. But there are dangers lurking. Money and muscle power still influences elections, as does caste and religion based politics.

(ii) Compared to 1947- our wealth has increased; life expectancy has gone up; Education & Health parameters have enhanced; but while quantity is there, what about quality?

(b) Negatives:

(i) Whilst there are reasons to celebrate, there are many reasons to worry.

(ii) Religious & regional strife still prevail, but luckily extreme ideologies have not succeeded in striking roots.

(iii) Large numbers still remain under the grip of poverty.

(iv) The widening gap between Haves and Have Nots is a cause of concern.

(v) There are different economic theories to bridge this gap & bring about prosperity, but have we found the right answer?

(c) How do we rid ourselves of Corruption which is gnawing away at our core. The answer in my view is “Top Down-Top First”.

(d) The Youth Bulge is a great asset, but also a grave concern, if we are not able to provide the Youth opportunities to pursue their dreams.

11. So how do I sum up the Idea of Modern India:-

(a) Enlightened Society - “Responsive Governance”.

(b) Democracy; Pluralism; Opportunities ;Basic amenities to all; Contributing to the world – Aspirations & obligations.

(c) An India, where every citizen can pursue his/her dreams and realize their genius.

12. I have been tasked with presenting my views on the `Role played by the armed forces in preserving Indian culture and instilling national pride in our citizens and also to speak about the various aspects of Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Both topics are close to my heart.

13. Let me start with the Armed Forces first. I may tend to use the word 'Army' more, but it would signify the Armed Forces: The Army, Navy, Air Force and the Coast Guard.

The Indian Armed Forces

14. Having been in uniform for over 40 years, it is my pleasure to use this forum to share a few thoughts on matters military.

Role

15. We have a primary and secondary role, which you are well aware of.

(a) Primary Role. Preserve National Interests and safeguard sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of India against any external threat by deterrence or by waging war.

(b) Secondary Role. Assist civil authority to cope with 'Proxy War' and other internal threats and provide aid to civil authority when requisitioned to do so.

(c) But we also have a derived role which encompasses:

- (i) National building specially in remote areas.
- (ii) Employment generation
- (iii) Enhancing India's image through our conduct & professionalism (Trg Teams & Def Co-op)
- (iv) Pool of Disciplined & Skilled manpower (60000) which retires every year and contributes to society
- (v) Sports, environment etc.

Core Values

16. Apolitical, Secular & high levels of Personnel & Professional integrity.
A true reflection of the Constitution of India .

The Army's motto:

17. “The safety and honour of the Country first, always & every time, The safety and welfare of the men you command come next, Your own safety, ease and comfort come last, always & every time”

18. Just three days ago I was delivering a memorial lecture in a college in Port Blair in honour of an officer from the islands, Late Capt Ashim Bhattacharjee who laid down his life fighting militants in the Uri sector in 2000. How did a young man from these distant islands, son of a Bengali school teacher, become a martyr in the mountains of J&K? This is an example of what our armed forces are today. They draw the best of our youth from all corners of the country, irrespective of language, caste or creed and instil in them a sense of National pride, a sense of sacrifice to protect the nation's frontiers.

19. The most important question we need to answer is – how does the Army produce leaders like Capt Ashim, who put their lives on the line in the call of duty. Its all about leadership. Leadership is present in all walks of life, so whats so different about `Mil Leadership`.

(a) Military Leadership is not about Event Management or Entrepreneurship, or even about Profit and Loss.

(b) It is about life and death; about standing up for what is right and being counted; taking charge when the chips are down; Leading from the front and putting yourself in harms way before you do that to your subordinates.

(c) Its about an unlimited liability contract between the soldier and the Nation; and finally its about never failing the Nation – for the Army cannot afford to be runners up even once – The Nation will have to pay a heavy price if we do not win.

20. In fact, the 21st century Leader in India must be someone who preserves what is good, but is not hesitant to challenge the status quo, when required. A Leader who leads from the front, accepts responsibility and related accountability and works without Fear or Favour. For too long we have allowed mediocrity to flourish at the expense of the more deserving. It is time to change.

21. To put the Indian Army/Soldier in perspective, I will now show you a small clip highlighting how we serve the Nation and secure the “Idea of India”.

 VIDEO

Andaman & Nicobar Islands

22. At the outset, let me briefly introduce my Union Territory. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands comprise of 556 islands of which 37 are inhabited. These Islands are located around 1200 Kms from mainland India and are spread over 750 Kms in the Bay of Bengal – this makes this UT logistically one of the most challenging parts of the country.

23. The Islands are only a couple of hundred kilometres from South East Asia, and are located at the junction of South Asia and South East Asia. They are not only the maritime gateway to the East but also overlook major international sea lanes.

24. With a coastline of 1962 Kms, around one quarter of India's coastline and around 30% of India's Exclusive Economic Zone, the strategic importance of these Islands get enhanced.

25. Nearly 94% of the territory is under forest cover, with 96 Wild Life Sanctuaries, 9 National Parks including 2 Marine National Parks and 1 Biosphere Reserve – the largest number of protected areas in any Indian State.

26. We are endowed with rich marine resources and tremendous potential for fisheries. Because of our forest wealth, coastal flora and fauna, along with beaches of extraordinary beauty, our Islands have the potential for becoming one of the premier tourist destinations in the world.

27. These Islands may be the remotest part of the country but are an integral part of its history and heritage. They are closely associated with the struggle for our country's Independence. The Cellular Jail at Port Blair has become a part of our Pilgrimage.

28. People from different parts of India, and in fact, the Indian subcontinent have made the Islands their home along with our indigenous tribes. This harmonious blend of different languages, religions, customs and traditions has enriched the culture of the Islands and gives it a unique vibrancy.

29. Our population of around 4 lakhs, is distributed over different Islands. Apart from transportation and communication challenges, this necessitates Island-specific standalone projects for water supply, power generation etc.

30. With people drawn from almost all corners of India, including the ex-servicemen settlers living in complete harmony gave the Islands the name of **Mini India**. There has never been a case of racial/religious disharmony in the Islands and therefore I say that along with the Armed Forces, the Andaman & Nicobar Islands also represent the true spirit of the Constitution of India.

Development challenges

31. We face a number of developmental challenges every day.

32. With around 94% of the land area under forest cover, the Islands are one of the last remaining undisturbed tropical rain forests in the world. With this also came the realization that our country's EEZ was increased by 30% due to the islands, thus giving us exclusive rights over the marine resources and what lies on the sea bed. The stringent restrictions on land use including the presence of tribal reserves and environmental concerns make development a delicate balancing act.

Vision for Development

33. During the last two years, I have been working hard to make development and conservation go hand in hand and at the same time keep an eye on the security aspects.

34. I have travelled extensively all over the islands, visiting even the remotest areas. There were times when I had to use a motorcycle, the only available vehicle on an island during an inspection tour. I have interacted not only with public representatives and officers of the Administration but also with a wide cross-section of the people to gain first hand information about their problems. The weekly Public Meeting at Raj Niwas draws large number of people where many issues are settled on the spot.

35. As per my understanding, Andaman & Nicobar Islands have multiple, in fact, 4 Centres of Gravity:-

- (a) First is the Strategic Nature of these Islands and related security issues.
- (b) Next is the over 4 lakh people who inhabit these Islands, their hopes and aspirations.
- (c) Our indigenous Tribes (around 28000 plus) who have inhabited these Islands for thousands of years are important and their well-being and welfare has to be ensured.
- (d) And fourthly Ecology, which is the defining character of these Islands.

These 4 Centres of Gravity have to coexist harmoniously.

36. Based on these experiences, I have outlined a vision for the development for the Islands:

- (a) Promote sustainable and inclusive growth while being sensitive to our fragile ecosystem and concern for our indigenous tribes.
- (b) Enhance employment opportunities for our youth.
- (c) Improve connectivity with mainland and between the Islands.
- (d) Ensure Strategic security.

37. Key target areas have been identified under infrastructure, Energy, Connectivity, Education, Health Care, Social Welfare, Tribal Welfare, Fisheries, Tourism & Culture and Disaster Preparedness.

(Example of communication & connectivity : Sea to Air

38. Coastal Security Schemes are also being implemented to prevent infiltration from the seaward side. Modern equipment and vessels are being procured. Training of personnel is in progress.

39. Our Social indicators are excellent in comparison with other State and National figures. (Health & Edn)

40. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands have thus an important role to play in the future. They are perhaps the best example of civil military cooperation in promoting regional growth and security. From the days of the lonely outpost - **Kalapani** in the Bay of Bengal, we have come a long way, and are poised to emerge as a springboard for our engagement with South East Asia and the Pacific Region. On this note, I rest my case.

“Nikle thhe akele manzil ki oar, log milte gaye aur caravan Ban gaya”