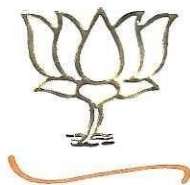


Jagat Prakash Nadda
National President



Bharatiya Janata Party

My fellow Indians,

India's growth trajectory is at a critical juncture. This is a time when we are marking 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' or 75 years of Independence. This is an occasion to think ahead and plan for how we all feel the nation must be when we mark a hundred years of independence in 2047.

This is also a time when the eyes of the world are on India. A nation of 135 crore people, which was believed would be the sore point in the global fight against COVID-19 is instead recognised and respected as the pharmacy of the world. Our economy is seen as open and transparent. The recent reforms have increased economic prosperity across the board. At the same time, poverty is being alleviated at a quicker pace.

Indian politics has undergone a rapid transformation in the last 8 years. The tried, tested, or I should say dusted and rusted approach of vote bank politics, divisive politics, and selective politics is no longer working. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and his emphasis on 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas' every Indian is being empowered and is getting the wings to rise further. Unfortunately, this thrust towards development politics is being bitterly resisted by the rejected and dejected parties who are once again taking refuge in vote bank and divisive politics.

Today, India is seeing two distinctive styles of politics - the NDA's efforts which are seen in their work and the petty politics of a group of parties, which is seen in their acerbic words. In the last few days, we have seen these parties come together yet again in letter (whether in spirit too, time will tell) in which they have waged a direct onslaught on the spirit of our nation and cast aspersions on our hardworking citizens.

I want to remind the rejected and dejected political parties - since you talk about vote bank politics, why have you forgotten the shameful happenings in Karol, Rajasthan? What are the compulsions that are driving your haunting silence on the issue?

In November 1966, then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi opened fire on Hindu Sadhus sitting outside Parliament who had marched towards Delhi with the demand of banning cow slaughter in India.

And who can forget Rajiv Gandhi's infamous words - "When a big tree falls, the earth shakes" - that justified the killing of thousands of Sikhs in the wake of PM Indira Gandhi's death.

Gujarat in 1969, Moradabad 1980, Bhiwandi 1984, Meerut 1987, various incidents against the Hindus in Kashmir valley throughout the 1980s, 1989 Bhagalpur, 1994 Hubballi...the list of communal violence during Congress rule is long. Under which Government did the Muzaffarnagar Riots happen in 2013 or the Assam Riots in 2012?

Let me remind everyone that it was the UPA, controlled by an extra-constitutional NAC that brought in the most horrific Communal Violence Bill, which stooped to new lows of vote bank politics by even UPA standards.

Similarly, the most horrific massacres against Dalits and Tribals have taken place under Congress regimes. This is the same Congress that even got Dr. Ambedkar defeated in Parliamentary elections.

In Tamil Nadu, elements aligned to the ruling party in the state have left no stone unturned in verbally lynching, smearing and humiliating one of India's tallest musical maestros just because he has views not palatable to one political party and their allies. Is this democratic? One can have different views and yet coexist happily but why take to insults?

The shameful political violence in West Bengal and Kerala, and the repeated killing and targeting of BJP workers offers a glimpse of how some of our political parties view democracy.

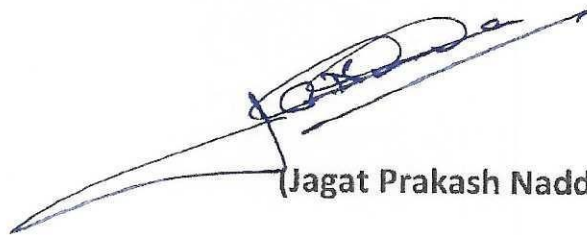
In Maharashtra, two Cabinet Ministers have been arrested on serious charges of corruption, extortion and links with anti-social elements. Is this not worrisome for us as a nation that a state which houses India's financial capital has such an uninspiring coalition where top Cabinet ministers have such extortionist tendencies?

This brings me to my next point. The reason for the shameful conduct by a select group of political parties lies in the above list of incidents that I have shared. Dyed in the wool proponents of vote bank politics that they are, these

parties are fearing that their shenanigans are being finally exposed comprehensively. For decades, they freely patronised lumpen, anti-social elements who bullied common people. Now that these elements are being subjected to the laws of the land, the parties which sheltered these elements are panicking and thus taking to this bizarre conduct.

The results of the recently held Assembly election should be an eye-opener for those who thrive on vote bank politics. India's largest state on the electoral map, a coastal state on the western coast, a state in the Northeast and a hill state have given a resounding mandate to the BJP. Due to the BJP, India is seeing a sentiment of pro-incumbency where developmental politics is being resoundingly rewarded. The BJP also became the first party in many years to cross the 100 figure in the Rajya Sabha and get an absolute majority in the UP legislative council. The Opposition should introspect why the parties that ruled the nation for so many decades have been confined to the margins of history now.

The youth of India want opportunities, not obstacles. They want development, not divisions. Today, when people across all faiths, all age groups as well as from all walks of life have come together to defeat poverty and take India to new heights of progress, I would urge the Opposition to change track and embrace the politics of development. We owe this to our coming generations.



(Jagat Prakash Nadda)