

INDEPENDENCE DAY SPEECH 15 August 2021 In English

Dear Citizens,

I convey my heartiest greetings to you all on the 75th Independence Day.

15th August holds an everlasting place in our national memory and commands the respect of every Indian. On this auspicious day, I would like to pay my tribute to all those brave soldiers who fought for our unity, integrity, and independence.

Our Nation has gone through many difficult times including wars and has emerged unscathed and victorious. Today, we are collectively facing a COVID 19 pandemic threat that has created a global health crisis and has had a deep impact on our lives. These are difficult times when we must join our hands in a common endeavor with a strong belief that better days are ahead of us. Nations across the globe have also joined this fight by using the great advances of science and technology. Together we are tackling this pandemic, and I want to reassure you that if we remain united, resolute, and responsible then we will be able to overcome it.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to our Hon'ble Prime Minister, Sh. Narendra Modi for extending unparalleled support to us in fighting the novel Coronavirus. Under his clear vision and strong leadership, we have been able to sustain ourselves during these times. India has demonstrated how it rises to challenges and explores opportunities. The clarion call given by the Hon'ble Prime Minister to use these challenging times to become Atmanirbhar has been very well received to enable the revival of the Indian economy. The government of India under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan has been marching forward to make the country independent against the tough competition in the global supply chain and to help in empowering the poor, laborers, migrants who have been adversely affected by COVID.

Chandigarh and Punjab, on the other hand, have also shown exceptional recovery rates in tackling the coronavirus. We have had our share of struggles and difficulties in fighting this pandemic, but after all, it is with your support and collective efforts of the COVID warriors that we have been able to handle the situation effectively. The World Health Organization has also recognized the success of the Chandigarh Administration, particularly in containing the spread of infection in the Bapu Dham Colony.

I understand that the war against COVID 19 is going to challenge us more, and we are prepared for it. A lesson is well learned, and we are all geared up to make Chandigarh a medical hub with exceptional facilities to tackle any such health threat.

We all know that until a vaccine is developed to fight this pandemic, we will have to take care of ourselves and our families in a more precautionary way. Every citizen must respect nature and follow certain rules that are necessary for our well-being. I urge all of you to maintain social distancing, wear masks, and most of all avoid crowded places for the welfare of your family members. Let us all be resolute to fight this together and emerge stronger as always.

It will be unfair not to mention the hard work and dedication of our true Corona Warriors who have been at the forefront of fighting this pandemic and coming forward voluntarily to extend their helping hands. I would like to express my gratitude to all Doctors, Nurses, Health Workers, Police Officials, Municipal Workers, Revenue Officials, NGOs, Political parties, Resident Welfare Associations, and friends from the Media for standing strong and shielding us throughout this pandemic. Your selfless contribution and tireless efforts have helped in averting a serious threat that is yet far from over. I am certain that you all will keep these spirits alive and come together as before in containing the spread of this virus. From setting up flu clinics, Covid dedicated hospitals, Covid care centers, quarantine centers, providing round-the-clock ambulance services, making provision of the house to house surveys with special emphasis on urban slums and colonies, the Health Department has done it all.

This pandemic had badly affected the migrant laborers the most, and to assist them, our officials ensured that they got every possible support from the Administration. More than 45000 migrant laborers were sent home during these tough times via the Shramik trains and buses and assisted in every possible way.

The Red Cross Society has been on wheels to provide food to all the needy during the curfew lockdown period. Food packets were distributed to ensure that no family is left with an empty stomach and hungry.

Also under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKY), we distributed food grains free of cost at the doorstep of beneficiaries. The Chandigarh Administration has successfully implemented the Atma Nirbhar Bharat scheme to distribute free food grains for the migrants/stranded laborers to help mitigate their plight during this precarious COVID-19 situation and to ensure the availability of food grain to them.

To provide some relief to the Ex-servicemen who are retired/ released without pension and are above 65 years of age, financial assistance has been increased from Rs 2500 to Rs 5000 per month and financial assistance of widows of Sub Major Rank or the same rank in Navy and Air Forces is also enhanced from Rs 500 to Rs 1000 per month.

To lessen the hardships of commissioning mothers and surrogate mothers, maternity leave will be granted to all outsourced/ contractual employees of the Chandigarh Administration.

Amid this crisis also, our officials have been dedicated to performing their duties and assured that life in this vibrant city does not come to halt. The BBC has also tagged this City Beautiful as a perfect city. The Municipal Corporation is working towards various Smart City projects like Implementation of E-governance Services, SCADA for Recycled Water Distribution Network, Implementation of Smart School and Basic Infrastructure in School in ABD areas, Underground Utility Mapping (SUE), Legacy Waste Mining at Daddu Majra, Public Bike Sharing, etc. In addition to this, a Biomining of Legacy waste at Daddu Majra is being carried out to get rid of foul odor and to bring some respite to the nearby residents. For handling of segregated waste,

435 vehicles of 3.2 & 5.0 CUM capacity will be deployed in the city to make the city a bin-free city.

I commend the Mayor, all the councilors, Commissioner Municipal Corporation, and staff members who substantially contributed to our war against Corona by providing essential commodities at the doorsteps of the residents during the curfew period. Our Administration's buses from Chandigarh Transport Undertaking (CTU) were utilized to ensure smooth delivery and all marketplaces and Mandis are being regularly sanitized.

A grave issue such as Drug Addiction has emerged to be a serious problem in the country. As per the direction of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, today Chandigarh Administration will officially launch State-level Campaign Nasha Mukta Bharat focusing on components for preventive education and awareness generation, treatment and rehabilitation, etc.

One of the most important responsibilities of the Administration is maintaining and improving infrastructure. I am happy to announce that the Construction of Govt. High School in Manimajra is at advanced stages and construction of additional 216 houses for Chandigarh Police personnel will begin soon. A New Mini Sports Complex in Sector-8 is completed and another Mini Sports Complex in Sector-27 is at an advanced stage of completion. Construction of New International type Shooting Range in Sector-25 and Mini Sports Infrastructure for Billiards and Snooker in Sports Complex, Sector 42 Chandigarh is going to come up short.

The Chandigarh Housing Board has planned to rent out 2500 vacant small flats in Maloya for the migrant laborers and urban poor under the recently announced Affordable Rental Housing Complexes scheme by the Government of India.

I feel overwhelmed in sharing that Chandigarh has once again secured the First Position in the country in the Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2018-19 declared by MHRD. The overall pass percentage of class XII CBSE was 91.57% with an improvement of 9.81% over the previous session.

The teachers have smoothly shifted to online teaching during this pandemic so that the learning of students is not disrupted. School counselors are in regular touch with students for academic help and other stress/anxiety issues of the students.

The Chandigarh Police has an excellent record of maintenance of law and order. I must compliment Chandigarh Police for its excellent work in our fight against corona. The Police officials were on duty round the clock, ensuring checking at inter-state borders, perimeter control of Containment Zones, and enforcement of social distancing, mask-wearing, curfew timings, etc.

Dear Citizens,

Complacency in respect of a global pandemic like corona is not a fitting approach. Therefore, I urge the citizens of Chandigarh to remain alert and cautious. Determination and patience are two key factors that can help us in combating this global threat. Chandigarh Administration is constantly keeping a close watch on this situation, and we assure you that we will take every possible step to keep our city safe and livable.

I compliment the Chandigarh Administration and Punjab Government for their stupendous progress and urge them to continue working hard. And as we increase the level of our ambition for our people, we will also have to increase the scale of our efforts.

Stay Safe and Cautious.

Jai Hind!!!