

SPEECH ON THE OCCASION OF INDEPENDENCE DAY ON 15TH AUGUST, 2022 BY THE HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF GOA

My dear fellow citizens,

On this grand and glorious occasion of completion of 75 years of India's Independence, I convey my warm wishes and heartiest greetings to all of you. First of all, let us remember with deep gratitude all our great freedom fighters who sacrificed their life to give us freedom. Today, we bow our heads in reverence to these valorous souls. We also remain profoundly indebted to the makers of our Constitution who gave us this visionary document to realize social and economic justice for the people of India. Today, we also pay tribute to all these august leaders who have gifted the people of India with one of the best Constitutions of the world that has stood us in good stead over the past 75 years. On this historic occasion, I would like to also hail our Armed forces who have been admirably protecting the independence and integrity of the nation marked by highest traditions of devotion, dedication and valor.

2. In preparation for this momentous occasion, we have been celebrating the past 75 weeks as "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav". The most remarkable aspect of celebration is "Jan Bhagidari" with people from all walks of life and every section of society participating in thousands of programmes across length and breadth of country connected to the five themes – Freedom Struggle, Ideas at 75, Resolve at 75, Actions at

75, and Achievements at 75. Hon'ble Prime Minister in one of his recent messages has urged the people of India to build an India of the dreams of the freedom fighters. In order to achieve Amrit Kaal for next 25 years, he appealed to the people to do their duty with full devotion calling it as Kartavya Kaal.

3. The journey over the last 75 years has been a remarkable and eventful one. We have blossomed in all spheres of life, be it, agricultural production, industrial growth, health care, educational institutions, nuclear energy, space technology, information and communication technology and start up eco-system. Our economy has transformed into a robust one with excellent prospects for sustaining the growth over the next 25 years. During the last 8 years, particularly, India has witnessed tremendous transformation, reformation and performance in its governance. The rapid pace of digital transformation, especially, has been spectacular. All this, thanks to the passionate, dynamic and courageous leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji. This period is indeed a watershed in the history of India's progress and development.

4. The most remarkable achievement in recent times has been the successful fight against COVID-19 pandemic. On 17.07.2022, India's vaccination programme against COVID-19 surpassed the 200 crore mark. This astonishing milestone was "unparalleled in scale and speed". The vaccines have been indigenously research developed and manufactured by our brilliant scientists and are demonstration of

fulfilling the clarion call of AtmaNirbhar Bharat given by the Hon'ble Prime Minister. The whole world has praised the achievement of India and dedication of India's scientists, doctors, and health workers. It was indeed a proud moment for all of us. The support of all people and the States in the fight against COVID-19 stands testimony to the strength of India's federal structure and vibrant cooperative federalism. In Goa, having completed double dose of vaccination for eligible population, the State Government is now focusing on providing booster dose for about 10 lakh population. On this occasion, I would like to exhort all the men and women who are eligible for precaution dose to go to the nearest health centre and take the booster dose as quickly as possible.

5. Goa has witnessed two elections during the past one year. The Assembly Elections took place in March to elect a new Government and then the Village Panchayat elections have recently concluded. I would like to commend the Election Commission of India and State Election Commission for having successfully conducted elections in a free, fair, safe and peaceful manner.

6. Goa continues to march ahead under the able leadership of Dr.Pramod Sawant. Besides successfully implementing several Central Government schemes, the State Government has been working tirelessly for the welfare of the people of Goa by rolling out a number of progressive schemes and programmes. Goa continues to retain its top position as the State with the highest per capita income.

For the fourth time in a row, Goa is the best performing in the Food Safety Index. The State has earned another feather in the cap by securing fourth rank in Sustainable Development Goals and achieving two goals namely Clean Water/ Sanitation and Affordable Clean Energy. In the Business Reform Action Plan for 2020, the Ministry of Finance has placed Goa in the “Aspirers” category. In the third edition of NITI Ayog, India Innovation Index, Goa bagged the 5th position among the Union Territories and States. Last December, at the concluding ceremony of 60th year of Goa Liberation, Hon’ble Prime Minister complimented the people of Goa and praised the State Government for topping good governance parameters. He said that when it comes to good governance Goa is at the top.

7. The State Government has launched Swayampurna Goa in October, 2020 with a vision to make Goa self-reliant. Government Officers known as ‘Swayampurna Mitras’ have been appointed for every Panchayat and Municipality and they have dedicatedly attended to the people and inspired them to take the benefits of various Government schemes and facilities which will help them to be ‘Swayampurna’. Under Swayampurna Goa 1.0, 1900 programmes have been organised benefitting more than 24,235 beneficiaries. Recently, the State Government has launched Swayampurna Goa 2.0 with a vision to generate employment by developing skills and encouraging budding young talented entrepreneurs to take up start-ups in the field of IT.

8. In the infrastructure sector, several projects of water supply, sewerage, power, roads, buildings and bridges have either been completed or in brisk progress. Two major projects of 8 lane Zuari Bridge and New International Airport at Mopa are nearing completion and will shortly be inaugurated.

9. Goa is blessed with bountiful natural beauty, rich flora and fauna, vibrant culture, social amity and peace and harmony. All these factors have contributed to the growth of Goa as a top tourist destination in the world. It is heartening to note that the tourism sector is now on the upswing. The State Government is focusing on eco-tourism as a major area of development. There is vast potential for the development of eco-tourism as this sector can generate gainful employment opportunities for local people in and around forest area.

10. In conclusion, while the entire nation soaks in the festive spirit of 75 years of independence, let us not forget that there is still long hard journey ahead of us and many more milestones to achieve. Today, let us re-affirm our faith in our Constitution. With the guiding spirit, 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas aur Sabka Prayas', let us all pledge to work together as dedicated and responsible citizens towards achieving Amrit Kaal in next 25 years and realizing the dream of a strong new self-reliant India.

Jai Hind.