

SNOWFALL SAFETY

Heavy snowfall, while scenic and vital for replenishing water resources, often brings life to a grinding halt, particularly in hilly and snow-bound regions. Disrupted transportation, power outages, blocked roads, avalanches, and medical emergencies are common challenges during intense winter spells. In such situations, preparedness and coordinated safety measures are not just administrative duties but a shared responsibility of authorities and citizens alike.

One of the most critical safety concerns during heavy snowfall is mobility. Slippery roads, reduced visibility, and snow accumulation significantly increase the risk of accidents. Authorities must ensure timely deployment of snow-clearing machinery on highways, link roads, and emergency routes. Priority should be given to roads leading to hospitals, fire stations, and essential service centers. Simultaneously, citizens must avoid unnecessary travel, follow traffic advisories, use snow chains where required, and strictly adhere to instructions issued by traffic police and disaster management agencies.

Power and communication infrastructure is another major casualty during heavy snowfall. Snow-laden trees and damaged transmission lines often lead to prolonged power cuts, affecting heating, water supply, and communication. Power departments must keep emergency restoration teams on standby, while residents should stock essential items such as torches, batteries, power banks, and backup heating arrangements. Caution must be exercised while using heating appliances to prevent fire hazards and carbon monoxide poisoning.

Healthcare preparedness assumes utmost importance during extreme winter conditions. Hospitals and primary health centers must remain fully functional with adequate staff, medicines, and fuel supplies for generators. Special attention should be given to elderly people, children, pregnant women, and those suffering from chronic illnesses. Community-level coordination can play a crucial role in checking on vulnerable individuals and ensuring timely medical assistance. Heavy snowfall also heightens the risk of avalanches and roof collapses, especially in areas with old structures and poorly designed buildings. Residents should regularly clear snow from rooftops, avoid staying near avalanche-prone slopes, and follow advisories issued by meteorological and disaster management authorities. Construction norms suited to snow-load conditions must be strictly enforced to minimize structural damage.

Public awareness and communication remain the backbone of effective disaster response. Timely weather warnings, helpline numbers, and safety advisories should be disseminated through multiple platforms, including social media, radio, and local administration networks. Citizens must rely on verified information and avoid spreading rumors that may create panic.

Ultimately, safety during heavy snowfall depends on coordination, caution, and community spirit. While government agencies have a vital role in preparedness and response, public cooperation is equally essential. Responsible behavior, mutual assistance, and adherence to safety guidelines can significantly reduce risks and ensure that the challenges posed by heavy snowfall are faced with resilience rather than chaos.

A People-First Republic: Governance in Service of Citizens

■ RAJNATH SINGH



On 16th May 1952, while addressing the first popularly elected Parliament, the first President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad, underscored the historic significance of the moment. He also reminded the members that this marked only the completion of one stage of India's journey and in the second phase, there will be "no resting place for a nation or a people on their onward march."

It was a subtle yet profound reminder that while political independence and constitutional sovereignty had been achieved, the work of the Republic was far from complete. As Dr Prasad put it, the true task before India was "to bring a measure of happiness to our people and a lessening of the burdens they suffer from"-a charge that defined the moral purpose of the new Republic.

By placing this moral obligation at the heart of democratic governance, Dr Prasad reshaped the relationship between the State and its people. India would no longer be a nation of subjects, but a republic of citizens-equal in political voice, bound by the Constitution, and united as fellow travellers in a shared national journey.

The Indian Republic, therefore, was not born merely of freedom, but of a conscious constitutional choice that established democracy in the truest sense.

Democracy is often summed up as the government "of the people, by the people, and for the people"-a phrase that captures its essential philosophy.

The principle of "of the people" was realised through the adoption of the Constitution, which vested sovereignty in citizens and subjected State power to constitutional limits. The principle of "by the people" found expression in the first General Elections of 1952, when universal adult franchise entrusted every adult Indian, regardless of background, with an equal political voice.

However, the third strand, "for the people," entails an ongoing obligation on the part of the State to provide agency and well-being to citizens. Every state action must be directed

towards the goal of socio-economic justice and the uplift of marginalised and underprivileged sections. The Indian Constitution also enjoins the state to secure a social order for the promotion of the welfare of the people.

The success of a democratic republic lies in the extent to which governance serves the people. Democratic legitimacy is sustained not by procedures alone, but by performance-by the State's ability to respond to social needs, reduce inequalities, and uphold human dignity. The strength of a republic is measured by how it treats its weakest citizens.

Indian political thought has consistently emphasised a human-centric understanding of democracy. In ancient India, the concept of "Yoga-Kshema" advocated well-being and protection of the individual. Mahatma Gandhi's idea of Sarvodaya envisioned the upliftment of all, particularly the last person. Deendayal Upadhyaya's Ekatma Manavad articulated a holistic, human-centred approach to development.

In contemporary governance, the vision of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" echoes an enduring ideological commitment to inclusive, people-centric governance. This commitment, in which the State actively works "for the people" by prioritising the uplift of the weakest and most vulnerable, has yielded remarkable results over the last 12 years under the leadership of PM Modi. The government has translated ideological vision into tangible action, delivering inclusive growth that reaches every corner and section of society.

Under Part 4 of the Constitution, the state is duty-bound to make provision for just and humane conditions of work. By consolidating twenty-nine labour laws into four comprehensive Labour Codes, an efficient framework has been created to promote workers' rights and welfare in accordance with the constitutional directive.

In the last decade, socio-economic justice has been given increased priority to promote inclusive development "for the people". According to the World Bank's Spring 2025 Poverty and Equity Brief, over the past decade, India has lifted 171 million people out of extreme poverty. Economically Weaker Sections have been provided reservations in educational institutions and employment to

further the goal of affirmative action.

Progressive legislation, such as the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019, has been enacted to uphold dignity and equality and to provide substantive justice for historically disadvantaged groups.

One of the most powerful illustrations of this people-centric governance is the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM). The Mission operationalised the democratic ideal of "for the people" at the grassroots level. Far more than a sanitation initiative, it became a nationwide movement centred on human dignity, public health, women's safety, and social inclusion. By addressing an issue long neglected despite its profound impact on everyday life, the Swachh Bharat Mission has emerged as the world's largest and most successful people-led and people-driven public movement of this century.

Welfare of the deprived, less-abled, aged, and those facing personal tragedy/misfortune is necessary to ensure equality of opportunity and status. The provision of free food to more than 80 crore persons under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana is an example of this.

For millions of Indian families, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana has meant more than just a policy-it has meant dignity and hope in their darkest hours. With 53% of beneficiaries being women and over 72% from rural India, the scheme has expanded access to life insurance nationwide.

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave the clarion call for Aatmanirbhar Bharat, it was not merely an economic slogan but an extension of self-reliance at the individual level. Through initiatives such as the Mudra Yojana and the Skill India Mission, the emphasis was on empowering citizens to become self-reliant, entrepreneurial, and confident in their own abilities. Self-reliance lies at the core of individual autonomy, and these interventions gave it a decisive boost.

Similarly, Ayushman Bharat sought to expand freedom by ensuring access to dignified and affordable healthcare, while the Jan Dhan Yojana brought millions of the

poor into the formal banking system. By freeing them from dependence on unscrupulous moneylenders, it restored financial security and personal dignity to those who had long been excluded from institutional support.

This same democratic imperative of governance "for the people" finds powerful expression in the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, which provides 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.

This reform reinforces "of the people" by widening the social base from which sovereignty is exercised. It enriches "by the people" by making representative institutions more reflective of society's diversity. Most importantly, it advances the principle of "for the people" by ensuring that governance outcomes are shaped by perspectives rooted in lived experiences.

India's democratic journey, therefore, is not a static constitutional achievement but a continuous national project. While the Constitution and elections establish the framework of democracy, the Republic is sustained through responsive governance, ethical leadership, and constant engagement with the people's aspirations. Democracy, in its truest sense, endures when the State remains unwaveringly committed to governing "for the people".

The strength of the Republic lies not only in the endurance of its institutions but in the continual effort to align governance with the lived realities of its people. Each generation is called upon to renew the constitutional promise-that freedom must translate into dignity, opportunity, and justice for all. The Indian Republic is not a finished project; it is a shared responsibility, sustained by democratic participation and judged by how faithfully the State serves its citizens.

On this 77th Republic Day, it can be said that citizens are at the centre of governance today, and the Indian Republic is advancing, strengthening social justice, enabling economic inclusion, and reinforcing the constitutional vision of a welfare-oriented democratic republic.

(The Author is the Union Minister of Defence)

The Significance of Republic Day: Unity and Diversity

■ DR. BANARSI LAL

Every year 26th of January is celebrated as the Republic Day in India, a day of immense pride and significance. This day marks the adoption of India's constitution and the country's transition to a republic on 26th of January, 1950. This year India will celebrate its 77th Republic Day, a milestone that highlights the progress the nation has made since it became a republic. 26th January, 2026 will be day to reflect on the journey India has undertaken to ensure justice, equality and democracy for all its citizens. This day holds great importance in India's history as it symbolizes the transition from a colonial past to a democratic, sovereign nation. This day is etched in the heart of every Indian. This day is a moment of pride for every Indian, a day to honour the journey of our nation from independence to becoming a republic. This day is celebrated with great zeal and pride. It's not a commemoration, it's a reaffirmation of the power vested in the people, emphasizing their collective responsibility in shaping country's destiny. This day reminds us our duties as citizens and the sacrifices made by the countless individuals to secure our freedom. This day is not just about celebrating the past but also about taking responsibility for our future. This day is marked as the day when India's Constitution came into effect, signifying a monumental shift from a constitutional monarchy to a republic. On this day we pay tribute to the visionaries who tirelessly worked towards crafting a Constitution that would serve as guiding light for a diverse and vibrant nation. On this day

we celebrate the anniversary of the Constitution of India and the transition of India from a British Dominion to a republic. Though India became a free nation on 15th of August, 1947, it declared itself a Sovereign, Democratic and Republic state with the adoption of the Constitution on 26th of January, 1950. On this day we proudly fly our tricolor flag, sing patriotic songs and pay tributes to our freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for the freedom of the nation. The significance of the republic date lies in association with the fundamental document that outlines the rights, duties and aspirations of every citizen of the nation. This day encapsulates the spirit of India's journey towards self-governance. This day is a testament to the unity and diversity of the country, echoed in the grand parades down the Rajpath in New Delhi and the Republic Day celebration across the nation. It is a celebration of liberty, equality and fraternity. The importance of 26th January can be understood not only from a political standpoint but also from a cultural and historical perspective.

The word democracy has been derived from the Greek word 'demokratia' which consists of the two components namely 'demos' meaning people and 'kratos' meaning rule. Together we mean people's rule. The western scholars such as Bertrand Russell and Will Durant trace the origin of the democratic to the city of Athens in Attica which flourished in the fifth century B.C. The word 'Republic' is of Latin origin meaning a state in which the government is carried on by the people or through their elected representatives. The essence of an

ideal republic is free and enlightened citizenship. In such a republic, the citizen is a sovereign and subject. As a sovereign he enacts laws, as a subject he obeys them. The corner-stone of a republic is equality and its prime essentiality is equality. The Sanskritologists believe that the republics first came to India. The Lichhvis and the Mallas of the pre-Mauryan India of the Buddhist times were the earliest republics of the time. Even much before Lichhavis and Mallas, there were Panchayat republics in the Vedic Age. The Vedic Sabha and the Vedic Samiti were not only elected but also representative in character with full voting rights to women. These institutions were probing the conduct of kings, abuse of power by the powerful and misdeeds of the ministers. The 73rd and the 74th Constitutional Amendments derive their inspiration from the village republics of ancient India.

The Republic Day history signifies not just a change in political structure but a profound transformation that echoes the heart and soul of the country. The significance of Republic Day contributes to the rich tapestry of India's democratic legacy, reminding us of the supreme sacrifices made and the principles that continue to guide the world's largest democracy. The Indian republic stood not only for welfare but also for human development. The concept of limited monarchy also arose from the Indian soil. There was no such thing as monarchy in ancient India. When we became independent in 1947, we abolished the value of sovereignty centered in the far-off person of the king of England but not the value of sovereignty

itself which our Constitution gave its people. In our country there is equal opportunity for all right from the ancient times. In the similar way, there is always the freedom of speech. The Guru-Shishya Parampara while acknowledging the authority of the Guru admitted the right of dissent of the Shishya. Buddha tells his followers "Don't follow me blindly. Verify the things for yourself". The verification of knowledge and transparency of facts is Vedanta. Constitution of India is Indian in spirit and Indian in content. It is some total of the best in Indian culture which is many centuries old. Before adoption of the Constitution of India i.e. on November 25, 1949, Dr.B.R.Ambedkar and the architect of the Indian Constitution said that we should not be content with the only political democracy. The constituent Assembly led by Dr.B.R. Ambedkar, spent nearly three years in drafting a permanent Constitution to replace this colonial act. By late 1949, their work was complete. He said that the idea behind the Indian Constitution was not only holding elections, it was the social and economic democracy. Our political democracy should be of social type. Political democracy cannot last unless social democracy lies at its base. Social democracy means, a way of life which recognises equality, liberty and fraternity as the principles of life. These three principles should not be treated separately. The constitution of India came into force on 26th January, 1950 and India became a republic. The Indian constitution is constituted of 395 articles and twelve schedules. With that the

Government of India Act 1935 and the Indian Independence Act 1947 were repealed. The soul of the Constitution lies in its Directive Principles. The Directive Principles are directives to the State about its objectives, goals, and the line on which it is to grow. If there are Fundamental Rights, there are Fundamental Duties also for every citizen of the country. In ancient India, the democracy was a free gift of its rulers to the people, while in modern India, the people themselves resolve to constitute India into sovereign, socialist, democratic republic, secular and to secure for all its citizens social, economic and political justice, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, equality of opportunity and status and to promote the fraternity among the people assuring the dignity, unity and integrity of the nation. One of the Directive Principles of the State Policy enunciated in the Constitution of India is the separation of the judicial powers from the stateside Executive Powers. Judiciary is the shield of innocence and impartial guardian of every private civil right. Judiciary plays a vital role in a federal system. At an apex is the Supreme Court of India. Then there are High Courts at the state level and a subordinate court below them. The power is transferred to the successive governments. We have the largest number of voters in the world. Now the voting age is 18 years of old. The electronic voting has been successively introduced and every voter has an identity card. The multi-party system has contributed significantly to the growth of opposition in India. The Parliament Committee System has ensured the

accountability of the Government. The Comptroller and Auditor General Annual Reports keep the Government alert and responsive. In our Constitution there are Group Insurance and Welfare Fund schemes. The laws passed by the Parliament and the state legislatures provide social security and social justice to the people. Our labour laws provide the medical care, maternity protection, provident fund injury compensation and pension for the industrial workers.

The 73rd and 74th Amendments in the Constitution have heralded a new chapter in the process of democratic decentralisation. Education is the fundamental right of every child in India up to the age of 14. Culture which was a preserve of the last six decades ago is the concern of the common man today. The benefits of the Republic have reached more than 94% of our country children and adults through 'Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan'-a scheme to remove illiteracy and elementary education. For the average Indian Republic means the onward march of the Indian civilization, the cultural continuity of India, its integrity and solidarity. Democracy in India is not mere casting of franchise, holding elections and declaring results. It is a way of life leading to the reorganization of civil order. Now the people in India are anxious to participate in the processes which shape their lives and destinies. Let's honour the sacrifices of the past and build a bright future for all on this Republic Day. Each of us has a role to play in building a stronger and more inclusive India.

(The writer is Chief Scientist & Head of KVK Reasi SKUAST-J)

Republic Day: National festival of democratic sovereign Bharat

■ ER. PRABHAT KISHORE

After a long struggle, Bharat got independence from British monarchy on 15 August 1947. At that time, the nation did not have its own constitution, on the basis of which the governance could be run under a democratic system. On 29 August 1947, the Indian Constituent Assembly constituted a 7-member drafting committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Ambedkar, which submitted the draft copy of the Constitution to the Assembly on 4 November 1948.

After thorough discussion and debate, the Constitution prepared was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on behalf of the people of Bharat on 26 November 1949 (Margashirsha Shukla Saptami, Samvat 2006 Vikrami) with the signatures of 284 members. But the date for its implementation was fixed two months later 26 January 1950, because on this historic day, i.e. 26 January 1930, on the auspicious occasion of Vasant

Panchami, the resolution of "Purna Swaraj" (complete independence) was passed in the Lahore session of the Indian National Congress and the stagnant freedom struggle got new momentum and energy.

It took 2 years 11 months and 18 days to give a concrete shape to the Constitution of Bharat. The Constitution of Bharat is the longest, most comprehensive and detailed written constitution in the world. The Constitution as originally adopted had a preamble, 395 chapters (divided into 22 parts) and 8 schedules. The controversial Government of India Act 1935, passed by the United Kingdom Parliament, was replaced by the Constitution of Bharat on 26 January 1950 and it became a legal indigenous document. On the same day, Deshratna Dr. Rajendra Prasad was sworn in as the first President of Bharat, the supreme constitutional head, and the Constituent Assembly was transitioned into the

Parliament of Bharat under the transitional provisions of new constitution.

In fact, after attaining independence on 15 August 1947, first Governor General Lord Mountbatten and afterwards Chakravarti Rajagopalachari discharged the responsibility as constitutional head. There was a lot of political manoeuvrings, upheaval and checkmate moves in the then Congress in the selection of the first President of Bharat. On the one hand, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru wanted to continue with the then Governor General Rajagopalachari as the first President by making it a question of his prestige; while on the other hand, Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Sardar Patel, who had a strong hold on the Congress organization as well as the government, and most Congressmen were in favour of the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Ultimately, ignoring all the chess moves,

Rajendra Babu was given the command of the first constitutional head of the nation.

Bharat is called the mother of democracy. The democratic system here is much older than the western concept of democracy. The constitution of any country is the foundation of its governance system. The preamble of the Constitution of Bharat begins with the words "WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA", which emphasises the basic spirit of our Constitution i.e. democracy. The preamble states that this constitution ensures social, economic and political Justice, Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, Equality of status and of opportunity and promotes Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation.

However, after independence, more than a hundred amendments have been made to the original constitution from time to time till September 2024, some of which were also termed

controversial. As of today, the constitution consists of a preamble, 448 chapters (divided into 25 parts) and 12 schedules. While the Constitution of Bharat on the one hand gives the nation the character of a sovereign democratic republic, it also guarantees its citizens their duties and rights. We are proud to be citizens of a nation where every citizen has equal rights. Accordingly, it is the duty of every citizen to respect this right and make his valuable contribution towards nation building.

The historic day of Republic Day gives all the countrymen the pride and self-realization of being the largest democratic nation in the world. It not only reflects the power of the Constitution, but also reaffirms the democratic values and rights of the country. This day inspires us to work together and contribute to the all-round development of the nation.

(The author is an engineer and educationist)

EMPOWERING MINDS: The Holistic Excellence of Carmel Convent School Jammu

■ DEVHARI



Every morning as I walk through the gates of Carmel Convent I fell a sense of pride and excitement to be a part of such a wonderful institution.

School is not just a place where we come to study; it is a place where we grow, make friends, learn to be better people. Our school is like second home.

Our school has everything a student needs. We have big classrooms with smart boards, which make lessons very interesting. Our library is full of amazing storybooks and knowledge.

But Carmel is not just about exams and homework! We have a huge playground where we play basketball, badminton, and other games. Our school also encourages us to take part in dancing, singing, and debate competitions. These activities help us build confidence and show our talents.

The teachers at Carmel Convent are very kind and helpful. They always guide us like mothers. The most important thing we learn here is our school motto: "Belief Enhances Life".

As a student of Class 5, I feel very lucky to be a part of this school. Weather it is celebrating Annual Day or just sitting with friends during lunch break, every moment here is special. I am proud to be a Carmelite and I want to make my school proud one day!

(The writer is 5th class student)