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Vice President's Secretariat

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### **Inaugurates 2-day event of 12th Civil Services Day**

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The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that translating “legislative intent” into “programmatic content” and demonstrating to the common citizens what “Surajya” actually looks like in day to day administration, the civil services have an enormous opportunity today. He was delivering the inaugural address at the 2-day event of the 12th Civil Services Day, here today. The Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region (I/C), Prime Minister’s Office, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

The Vice President said that a clean, competent, people-friendly, proactive administrative leadership is the need of the hour. He further said that ‘Swarajya’ has to be meaningful for each Indian and, for this ‘Surajya’ is inevitable. There is a need for honest introspection into the effectiveness and efficiency of our administrative structures and processes, he added.

The Vice President said that the focus has shifted to “implementation” and “innovation” and it is becoming increasingly clear that “business as usual” approach will not do. We must collectively transform India into a nation that we can all be proud of, he added.

The Vice President called on officers of Civil Services to reorient their approach to look upon themselves as catalysts of change, as facilitators of change, as inspirational leaders for an aspirational India. He further said that it is the collective responsibility of the executive, the legislature, the judiciary and the media to identify, combat and root out evils including casteism, communalism, corruption, inequality, discrimination and violence. We need to be sensitive to these unpleasant realities and try to alter them by being unbiased and evenhanded, he added.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

“It is indeed a great privilege to be a part of the two day celebration of Civil Services Day and address this gathering of change makers.

Today is a day of celebration, a day that reaffirms the competence, commitment and confidence of the civil services to make a difference to the governance landscape of our country.

I am happy to be with the officers who are being recognized for their quest for excellence. I compliment them as well as those who are engaged in similar innovative initiatives across the country.

Our country's civil services are among the best in the world.

They constitute the best and the brightest minds of our country.

They have the ability to absorb new information and knowledge, adapt to a rapidly changing socio-political environment and address the key challenges in contemporary society.

Many of them have the forward looking, strategic vision to guide policy formulation and the drive to make a difference in service delivery.

The essential gap today is between the grandiose conception and the ground level implementation.

There is an urgent need to re-think our existing governance paradigm.

There is a need for honest introspection into the effectiveness and efficiency of our administrative structures and processes.

It is this introspection and reflection that has made many civil servants, some of whom are getting awards today, to come up with alternative strategies for improving the system.

I wish and hope that many more civil servants would also think afresh and keep raising the bar through innovative solutions.

After all, even for the best, there is always a possibility to become better.

And there is no better time than now.

There is an unmistakable air of buoyant optimism today.

The clarion call of the Prime Minister to “Reform, Perform and Transform” has found a rare resonance everywhere.

The focus has shifted to “implementation” and “innovation”. It is becoming increasingly clear that “business as usual” approach will not do.

Age –old institutions like the Planning Commission are being reinvented. The overarching idea is clear. We must collectively transform India into a nation that we can all be proud of.

'Swarajya' has to be meaningful for each Indian. And, for this 'Surajya' is inevitable. Nothing short of a paradigm shift in governance will be adequate.

A clean, competent, people-friendly, proactive administrative leadership is the need of the hour.

Translating "legislative intent" into "programmatic content" and demonstrating to the common citizens what "Surajya" actually looks like in day to day administration, the civil services have an enormous opportunity today, like never before, to serve the country and our people.

With the mantra of 'Reform, Perform and Transform' and focusing on 'Gaon, Garib, Kisan, Mahila aur Yuva' government has taken up several schemes and programs like Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri, Atal Pension Yojana, Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, Ujjwala Yojana, Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, JAM- Direct Benefit Transfer, Mudra Yojana, Start up India, Stand Up, Skill India, Swachh Bharat, Housing for all, Ayushman Bharat, Mission Indradhanush, Power for All, Ujala Scheme (Led's), Make In India, Swadesh Darshan, Smart Cities, Amrut, Hriday, Namami Gange, Sagarmala, Look east, Khelo India,

Government E Market place – GEM to root out corruption in Government Procurements, GST: One Nation, One Tax and may more.

All these schemes and programmes are building blocks of a new resurgent India we wish to build, for the renaissance we are ushering in. Effective and timely implementation of these schemes and programmes are huge managerial challenge.

We have the strength within our country to achieve results. We have only to get our act together.

As the Vedic sages have said, "Samgachadhvam", let us walk together.

As the Prime minister has envisaged, we should work as Team India with people as the main agents of change.

We must aspire for a new India where everyone will become part in the developmental process and get the fruits of it.

Civil Services have to reorient their approach to look upon themselves as catalysts of change, as facilitators of change, as inspirational leaders for an aspirational India.

Sisters and Brothers,

This I said was a renaissance and resurgence. Probably, I should add that this is probably the second renaissance, the first one occurred when India became independent and the all India Services were established.

Modern Indian civil service initially established by the British underwent a metamorphosis after independence. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the chief architect of an integrated India and the visionary 'Iron' man who established the 'steel frame' of all India services had succinctly envisaged this metamorphosis in his stirring address to the civil service probationers at Metcalfe House in New Delhi on 21<sup>st</sup> April, 1947:

"The service will now be free to or will have to adopt its true role of national service without being trammelled by traditions and habits of the past; officers must be guided by a real spirit of service in

their day-to-day administration, for in no other manner can they fit in the scheme of things.”

This is the expectation expressed by the founder of India’s civil services nearly seventy years ago.

As we commemorate that extraordinary speech of the great legendary unifier of the country, we need to examine how far we have lived upto those expectations.

The shift and the transformation that Sardar Patel envisaged was a shift in attitude, a shift in our behavior.

It is a shift from doing a ‘job’ to ‘serving the people’. The job has a higher objective, a different yardstick for success. It should have ‘people’ at the centre and it should be done with a “spirit of service”.

The first is ‘empathy’. The civil service is the most visible ‘face’ of the government since citizens contact the civil servants for various services. The government’s image depends to a large extent on the image of the civil service and the manner in which it responds to people’s needs and aspirations. Empathy and courtesy at the cutting edge level can really enhance customer satisfaction. In fact, the hallmark of a well-functioning civil service is the ability to ‘serve’ the citizens with respect and alacrity.

What does this spirit of service to people entail? It necessitates, in my view, a number of attitudinal shifts. Let me mention just a few important ones.

First and foremost, it requires us to have the ‘humility’ to hear the voices of the people, the humility to learn from different people and the humility to accept if there are deficiencies.

Second is the ‘agility’, the ability to access information and knowledge and creatively apply them to new situations. Keeping our eyes and mind open and our ears and feet to the ground, we need to innovate and improvise to suit the life contexts of the people we are serving.

Third, is to re-define “accountability” and shifting the focus to ‘outcomes’ and not merely concentrating on ‘activities’. If we have to serve the people, we must know what the real concerns are and be able to address them. We must have the ability to measure our success by the tangible outcomes, by the changes we are able to bring about in the lives of our people.

In this context, it is good to recall Mahatma Gandhiji’s wise counsel:

*“Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man [woman] whom you may have seen, and ask yourself, if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him [her]. Will he [she] gain anything by it? ... Then you will find your doubts and yourself melt away.”*

When we talk of ‘service to people’, it is good to look at the segmentation of our society and shift our focus towards those segments of people which are marginalized and voiceless. We ought to be especially attentive to these feeble but important voices. As Dr. B.R. Ambedkar said in his speech to the Constituent Assembly on December 9, 1946:

*“If we wish to preserve the Constitution in which we have sought to enshrine the principle of Government of the people, for the people and by the people, let us resolve not to be tardy in the recognition of the evils that lie across our path and which induce people to prefer Government for the people to Government by the people, nor to be weak in our initiative to remove them. That is*

*the only way to serve the country. I know of no better.”*

The evils that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had hinted at are the social evils including casteism, communalism, corruption, inequality, discrimination and violence. These evils continue to raise their ugly heads in different parts of the country at different times. They are a blot on our country's history.

As leaders in country's governance, it is the collective responsibility of the executive, the legislature, the judiciary and the media to identify, combat and root out these evils.

We need to be sensitive to these unpleasant realities and try to alter them by being unbiased and evenhanded. This can accelerate the building of a new India, an inclusive India, an integrated India and an innovative India. Sardar Patel's exhortation to the All India Service probationers, on April 21, 1947, to maintain utmost impartiality in administration is as relevant today as it was then. He cautioned: "A civil servant cannot afford to, and must not, take part in politics. Nor must he involve himself in communal wrangles. To depart from the path of rectitude in either of these respects is to debase public service and to lower its dignity".

Sisters and brothers,

You, as civil servants, have been the sheet anchor of our democratic polity. You have provided the 'continuity' and 'stability' we need in governance. Now, I am happy that you are also revamping the system to induce greater 'predictability', 'accountability' and 'agility'.

We are living in interesting times. On the one hand, we have formidable challenges, some of them seemingly intractable ones. On the other, we have new frontiers of knowledge, science and technology opening up new possibilities. You are uniquely positioned to find the best fit between the problem and ideal solutions.

This is, I realize, a constant search because the nature of the problems as well as the range of solutions keep changing very rapidly.

But, if you keep the constitutional mandate of civil services in view and the larger picture of serving India as the overarching objective of your mission, a lot of good ideas can emerge and get translated into people-centered policies and programmes.

Sisters and Brothers,

We are an aspirational young democracy, the largest in the world and in the throes of a socio-economic transformation. We need to blend the competencies of diverse stakeholders to achieve a synergistic momentum towards inclusive growth.

I know that many of you have been thinking and acting on these lines. India needs more of your kind. India needs a civil service that constantly refines itself and delivers the finest service at the cutting edge level effectively and efficiently.

I am glad that you are conducting a number of sessions today focused on the areas of Artificial Intelligence, Agriculture, Housing, Skilling and Digital Payments. I hope the discussions will lead to substantive recommendations which will help further advance the cause of developing strong responsive public administration and governance systems. I shall be delighted to hear of the outcomes of your deliberations.

I once again congratulate all the civil servants on their tireless efforts to make our country and our

planet a better place to live and work. As our ancient sages have said “*Shubhaaste Panthaaanah Santu*” (Let your path be full of goodness).

Thank You!

Jai Hind!”

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