

PARLIAMENT IS THE TEMPLE OF DEMOCRACY, SAYS PRESIDENT

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Wise counsel: President Ram Nath Kovind addressing the nation on the eve of Independence Day, in New Delhi. ANIANI

Parliament is the temple of democracy which provides the highest forum to discuss, debate and decide issues for the well being of the people, President Ram Nath Kovind said on Friday addressing the nation on the eve of the 75th Independence Day.

President Kovind's assertion is significant as it comes days after the monsoon session of Parliament ended on an acrimonious note, with the Opposition accusing the Narendra Modi government of "murdering democracy".

Note of caution

Referring to the "terrible second wave" of the pandemic, the President said the country is yet to come out of its devastating effects and expressed "deep sadness" over the loss of many lives. He, however, asserted that "no infrastructure, even of advanced economies, could withstand a crisis of such enormous proportions." Mr. Kovind also urged the citizens for extra caution and not to let their guard down and vaccinate themselves at the earliest.

The President also sought to address the issues raised by protesting farmers' unions against the three farm laws saying "the series of agricultural marketing reforms will empower our 'annadata' farmers and help them get better price for their produce".

Mr. Kovind also lauded the sportspersons for their 'stellar' performance in the Tokyo Olympics, noting that they brought the highest medal tally in India's 121-year-old history of participation in the Olympics.

Talking about the roots of democracy, he said, "When India won Independence 75 years ago, many sceptics thought democracy would not survive in India. Little did they know that roots of democracy were nurtured in this soil in ancient times, and even in modern times India was ahead of many western nations in offering franchise to all adults, regardless of any distinctions.

"We have adopted the system of parliamentary democracy. Therefore, our Parliament is the temple of our democracy which provides us highest forum where we discuss, debate and decide issues for the well-being of our people."

The President said it is a matter of great pride for all Indians that our Parliament will soon be housed in a new building. "It will be a fitting statement of our outlook: It will honour our legacy while also walking in step with the contemporary world. It is more than symbolic that the new building will be inaugurated in the year of the 75th anniversary of Independence," he said.

'New dawn in J&K'

Stating that Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing the rise of a "new dawn" with the Centre starting consultations with various stake-holders, Mr. Kovind urged the people of J&K to realise their aspirations through democratic institutions.

Talking about the Olympics, the President praised the women athletes and said India's daughters have not only excelled in playgrounds overcoming many adversities but epoch-making changes are taking place in the participation and success of women in all walks of life. "In this success of our daughters, I see a glimpse of a developed India of the future."

Earlier in the day, he hosted a "high tea" at the Rashtrapati Bhavan cultural centre here for the Indian contingent that participated in the Tokyo Olympics 2020.

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