

[Speech of His Excellency on the Silver Jubilee Celebration of Prabhat Khabar on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2009.](#)

I am very happy to participate in the silver jubilee celebration of Prabhat Khabar, an established name in Indian Journalism. Prabhat Khabar, founded by late Congress Rajya Sabha Member Gyanranjan in 1984, has played a pivotal role in informing and educating the people of Jharkhand. Prabhat Khabar is recognised for its proactive role in highlighting the people's problems related with corruption, health, hygiene and education and it is through this identification with public causes that Prabhat Khabar has become an influential, respected & trusted newspaper which is playing its part to make society a better place to live in. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the readership base of Prabhat Khabar has gradually moved from 500 copies in 1989 to 3.59 lacs copies now & the newspaper occupies the 9<sup>th</sup> position in the list of Most Read Hindi Newspapers in India as per Indian Readership Survey,2009. I offer my congratulations and best wishes to Prabhat Khabar for a bright future.

The role of press and media in a democracy is to safeguard the rights and liberty of the people with integrity and steadfastness. Freedom of speech and of the press lies at the foundation of all democratic organizations, for without free political discussion no public education, so essential for proper functioning to the process of popular government, is possible.

The press is a primary instrument for creation of public opinion, and journalists should regard their calling as a trust and act as guardians of public interest. In the discharge of their duties, journalists should hold good faith and observe fair play in their news reports and comments as essential professional obligations. Further, special restraint should be observed in reports and comments dealing with regional, social & communal tensions that may lead to civil disorder.

Press should endeavor at all times to promote the unity of the country and nation, pride in the country, its people, its achievements and its strength in diversity. Freedom of press goes hand in hand with accountability and social

responsibility and harping on one at the cost of the other will be counter productive.

Media growth in India has been buoyant and dynamic, contrasting with the gloomy situation faced by newspapers in the developed world. The world Association of Newspapers, in its latest survey, has put India's newspaper circulation, at 79 million, next only to China's at 97 million; and then came Japan, the United States, and Germany.

Media with its intellectual vigor, analytical attitude and firm foresightedness can address, safeguard and resolve conflicts in a multi-cultural society with diverse people. Media can be a catalyst in the development process by exposing ills of the society on one hand and appreciating good work on the other.

I am happy to say by and large the Indian media are doing their service to the nation.

I thank the Prabhat Khabar management for inviting me in their Silver Jubilee Function and giving me an opportunity to present my views in front of the distinguished audience.