

For us, August 15 holds a special significance...

by Narendra Modi 14. August 2009 21:12

Friends,

August by far is the month of revolution.
August is a month of festivals, fairs and fete.

But...

For us, August 15 holds a special significance for a lot more reasons.
Breaking the shackles of years of slavery, our country gained freedom.

We all experience a sense of delight for our independence. Today, if you and I can exchange our views so freely it's only because of our freedom.

This is an occasion to salute the sacrifices of all those who won us independence.

Friends, today I wish to share with you an experience, an incidence that touched me deeply.

After independence, our enemies had created such situation that unfurling the Tricolour in Srinagar was equivalent to confronting death in Independent India.

The terrorists and separatists used to burn the Tricolour in Lal Chowk of Srinagar in broad daylight...

The Tricolour used to be trampled underfoot by them...

Each such incidence dealt a big blow to the faith and confidence of millions of Indians. During such dreadful days of 1991-92, the Bharatiya Janta Party under the leadership of the then Party President Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, decided to hoist the Tricolour at Lal Chowk of Srinagar.

The date decided for this historic event was January 26, 1992. For this 'Ekta Yatra' was undertaken, proudly carrying the Tricolour, from Kanyakumari criss-crossing the country to Kashmir. Fortunately, the BJP entrusted upon me the responsibility to ensure the success of this task. One incidence during this 'Ekta Yatra' particularly touched me...

We were traversing Tamil Nadu on a 'rath' for our 'Ekta Yatra'; a poor farmer working in fields with just 'lungi' on him came rushing towards us. He tried to stop our caravan mid way and stood in the middle of the road with determination.

When our 'rath' stopped...

Our caravan came to a halt...

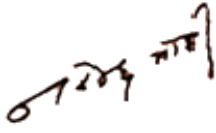
With gleams in his eyes, he approached us handing Rs.11 to me. He then bowed to the 'rath' and looked on as if appreciating the efforts. He then uttered something in Tamil which later our Tamil leader explained. The gist of his words fired with patriotism was I can not make it the Lal Chowk, Srinagar but on my behalf do hoist the flag there.

That day I saw glorious future of India's freedom in the expressions of that poor farmer.

Friends, the way I felt glad and was filled with pride in hoisting the Tricolour in Srinagar's Lal Chowk amid enemy-firing of terrorists. The same way I felt a sense of contentment to be a witness to the poor farmer's humongous patriotism.

My best wishes to you all for the Independence Day.

Yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Narendra Modi".