



ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE
24, AKBAR ROAD, NEW DELHI
COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

Highlights of Speech

25 February, 2023

Smt. Sonia Gandhi, CPP Chairperson, addressed the 85th Congress Plenary Session in Nava Raipur, Chhattisgarh, today.

Smt. Sonia Gandhi said- Mallikarjun Kharge Ji, members of the CWC, Bhupesh Baghel Ji, Mohan Markam Ji, all my fellow Congressmen and Congresswomen, First of all, I want to express my gratitude for what has been said about me and for what we have done within- under my Presidentship and under the UPA govt. It also shows how old I have become, and now young people under the leadership of Kharge ji must move forward.

I would like to renew my congratulations to Mallikarjun Kharge ji and offer my best wishes for his Presidency. Kharge ji has held organisational and political posts from the block to the national level. His grounded wisdom and deep experience is a crucial asset for the Congress, especially in these challenging times. His journey from a dedicated grassroots worker to the highest post in the Congress is a matter of pride for all of us. It reflects the ideals of India for which our freedom struggle was fought, and the values of our Constitution. It continues our rich and unparalleled tradition of internal democracy.

I had the honour of taking office as President for the first time in 1998. Over these twenty-five years, our party has seen times of high achievement as well as deep disappointment. The support, goodwill and understanding of each one of you and all the Congress party workers throughout the country has given us all strength. Our victories in 2004 and 2009, along with the able leadership of Dr. Manmohan Singh ji, gave me personal satisfaction, but what gratifies me most is that my innings could conclude with the Bharat Jodo Yatra.

The Yatra has come as a turning point. It has proved that the people of India overwhelmingly want harmony, tolerance and equality. It has renewed the rich legacy of dialogue between our party and the people through mass contact programmes. It has shown us all that the Congress stands with the people, and is ready to fight for them. I congratulate all party workers who have worked hard for the Yatra, the colleagues – young and old - who took part in it, and the lakhs of people of India for their participation, support and affection. I specially

thank Rahul ji whose determination and leadership were crucial in the Yatra's success.

Friends, this is a particularly challenging time, for the Congress and for the country as a whole. Prime Minister Modi and the BJP-RSS regime has relentlessly captured and subverted every single institution. It ruthlessly silences any voice of Opposition. It has caused economic ruin by favouring a few chosen businessmen at the expense of all others and of the people, of the ordinary people. And most distressingly, it fuels the fires of fear and hatred against fellow Indians. It viciously targeted minorities, and ignored crimes and discrimination against them, against women, against Dalits and against Adivasis. It mocked Gandhiji, and through its words and actions shows its contempt for the values of our Constitution.

In many ways, the situation today reminds me of the time when I first entered politics. Then, as now, we faced a difficult struggle ahead. At this crucial time, each one of us bears a special responsibility towards our party and towards our country. The Congress is not just a political party. We are the vehicle through which the people of India fight for liberty, equality, fraternity and justice for all. We reflect the voices of people of all states, religions, languages, castes and genders. We work to uphold the dignity and fulfil the dreams of each and every Indian.

So, the path ahead is not easy. But my experience, as well as the rich history of the Congress, tells me that victory will be ours. To achieve it under Kharge ji's leadership, we must tackle the regime with boldness and vigour, and stand side-by-side with the people it attacks. We must reach out to people, and convey our message with clarity and cohesion. We must work with discipline and timeliness, to respond quickly in this fast-paced age. Above all, we must be ready to put aside our personal expectations, make sacrifices, and work with unity and a sense of common purpose.

Today, let us all remind ourselves of the battles our party has won in the past, and prepare ourselves for the battle to come. Let us remember that victory for the party is victory for the country, and for each and everyone of us.

Thank you! Jai Hind!

Sd/-
Secretary
Communication Deptt.
AICC